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**VISUAL AND
VERBAL
RELATIONSHIPS
IN MEMOIRS BY
ANNIE LEIBOVITZ
AND SALLY MANN**



In 1857, Lady Elizabeth Eastlake noted that photographers were “wanted everywhere and found everywhere”. Though unsympathetically inclined towards the new language of communication, the critic finds the pursuit of photography to be so alluring as to bring together “men of the most diverse lives, habits, and stations, so that whoever enters its ranks finds himself in a kind of republic.”¹ Written culture has been probing its existence and shifting dynamics since the first age of photography.

Surrendering themselves to varieties of verbal autobiographical exposition, photographers foreground the persona and they disclose career and life paths often influenced by other photographers. They provide certain models for reading photography, photographic points of view, and photography’s meanings and self-consciousness. Such personal accounts of photography disclose models for scrutinising professional identities and culture. Julie F. Codell argues that autobiographical narratives reveal artists’ creative journeys, private and public motives, their gendered and national identities, and detailed economic and social relationships with patrons and the public.² Sally Mann, for instance, constructs autobiographical narratives in order to explicate her art and to assert its connection with the “deep pictorial reservoir” in Paul Klee’s organic analogy, the “nourishing sap”³ left by her photographic and literary predecessors. She gestures towards that “enormous condescension of posterity”.⁴ This desire is echoed in many disciplinary narratives. We can trace modes of exchange of such “reservoirs” in them, as well as trace other photographic lives impinging on narrated lives. Photographers, like any social group, share a language, and “each member of a group becomes conscious in and through that language.”⁵

Exhibiting the contours of their selfhood and negotiating diverse identities, in their autobiographical texts, photographers develop as yet critically unexamined poetics of relationships. In this paper, I consider two memoirs by contemporary American photographers, Annie Leibovitz's unforeseen *Pilgrimage* (2011) and Sally Mann's powerful *Hold Still* (2015). Emerging in the aftermath of the memoir boom in the USA (surging global markets in the 1990s), these two narratives catch my attention for a number of reasons. *Pilgrimage* and *Hold Still* are directed to readers familiar with the American neoconfessional brand of life writing by celebrities and acclaimed figures that espouse writing as an enticing practice to catalyse interest in their artistic work. *Pilgrimage* and *Hold Still* are narratives by female subjects who share and authorise particular kinds of experience. In the 21st century, photography is accorded very strong cultural recognition; the two memoirs reawaken claims to very specific and visible selves with special connections to the present moment, as well as to history, both photographic and national. Leibovitz and, though in a strikingly different way, Mann embrace and promote a heightened dialogue of an invasive, often bold self with other professional identities. Additionally, their choice of narrative templates endorses not only inclusion of intimate and public images (absent in other texts), but also the reproduction of photographic images previously exhibited. "Re-photographed" in the memoirs, these images appear bound with unfamiliar stories and embedded in compelling cultural relationships. New meanings, which emerge from the fraught "interaction"⁶ of the verbal and the visual in these memoirs, from the unfolding of the photographs in complex narratives, reshape emphases on the processes of interactive identification. Most importantly, as I will show in the paper, both memoirs are hybrid photo-textual productions – modes of life writing constructed to emancipate the selves of photographers in and through their plural attachments.

William Henry Talbot, one of the founders of photography, thought of his invention as a tool for self-expression, self-exploration, and for imprinting experience. *The Pencil of Nature*, presented to the public in 1844, is the first autobiographical book of a photographer. In this ground-breaking “little work”, Talbot introduced the history of the invention into the autobiographical context, describing personal circumstances of the production of the “specimens of a new art”, and illustrating it with a collection of 24 plates he found most representative; he presented personal notes of commentary accompanying each image. Identifying himself as a fortunate discoverer of “the principles and practice of Photogenic Drawing.”⁷ Talbot chose to “commend the pictures to the indulgence of the Gentle Reader.”⁸

As François Brunet notes in his incisive study, *Photography and Literature*, Talbot’s self-expressive work of a photographer is an “epochal book... aligning the ‘art’ of photography with a rhetorical, if not a literary, project.”⁹ Talbot introduces photography, explaining it in language and through language. *The Pencil of Nature* is an “encounter of photography and writing,” an artistic experiment “engaging images and words, seeing and reading, picturing and writing/printing, light (or shadow) and ink.”¹⁰ In the 19th century, photographers were not writers and photography did not enjoy the same status as literature. However, photographers painstakingly wrote and published their lives. Brunet observes that “this burst of photographic confessions around 1900 had to do not only with the mere autobiographical impulse of former luminaries, but with the awareness for most of them that the end of their careers coincided with a great mutation in their craft.”¹¹ Photographic autobiography was not just a form of professional self-expression and public assertion by makers of images – a memorial discourse. The impulse was stimulated primarily by “a new awareness of photography as having ‘made history,’ in addition to also having ‘become history.’”¹² Brunet argues that

estranged from literature, photography assumed the status of an art form only in the second half of the 20th century with “the photo-book becoming perhaps the ‘serious’ photographer’s most adequate and desirable mode of expression, and in many prominent examples, involving a ‘serious’ writer’s stance.”¹³ It is then that publishing even serial forms of photographic autobiography became a form of cultural and social history writing, often “away from explicit aesthetic concerns.”¹⁴ In the 20th century, constructing literature of photography became an “ever-expanding”¹⁵ practice, “a mark of photographic achievement”¹⁶ contributing to the social visibility of photographers. Brunet illustrates this argument with references to life narratives by such photographers as Alfred Stieglitz and Edward Weston. Stieglitz set a personal example for artists to complement “the photographic eye” with “the photographic pen,” a potent “auxiliary” to practice.¹⁷ In his *Daybooks*, Weston recorded and exposed his difficult search for the just image.¹⁸ Thus a new discourse of photography included specialised commentaries written in the first person, developed to illuminate the art of emerging cultural heroes – “great photographers”. Incorporation of literary sources and allusions, in addition to collaboration of photographers with writers, paved the way for a reduction of estrangement between the two arts and, in the second half of the 20th century, the process of “evolving literary recognition of photography”.¹⁹ In the 21st century, it has evolved to adopt typically literary modes, like narrative, fiction and poetry.²⁰ It is to photographic practice and photographic thinking that literature is turning for its renewal.²¹ Brunet goes even as far as to posit that photography does not “supplant” literature any more, but that its status has become that of “a new literature”.²² Regular appearances in interviews, short autobiographical films, and multi-media exhibitions showcase the affinity of photography with literature as not only an accepted, but also as a desired presence. In addition, the digital turn marks not

only another mutation in the photographic craft, but also a new way to devise potent modes of self-expression.

Annie Leibovitz

Unlike “too *much* local”²³ Sally Mann, who has spent the last 50 years on her farm, Annie Leibovitz is a worldly photographer, a celebrity who has captured in her lens most of “who is who” in America in the 20th century. This precarious status entails visibility and a strong authority appeal. Celebrity, says Leibovitz, “opens doors which would be shut”.²⁴ It depends on familiarity, and what Sarah Boxer refers to as “branding,” disseminating likeness, linking one thing to another in such a way that the thing captured becomes coincident with the capturer.²⁵ Travelling around the world with a camera, an apparatus that has given her a “licence to go out alone into the world with a purpose,”²⁶ Leibovitz says she has learned to identify “framing” with looking and seeing, with collecting and showing.

Leibovitz (now 66) denies validity of isolating purely personal from the public life and work. Her earlier autobiographical work, *Annie Leibovitz: At Work; Women; A Photographer's Life: 1990–2005*, was written with a goal of instructing aspiring photographers and agents to integrate ideas on photographic practice rather than to speculate on the evolving modes of self-expression. Leibovitz writes to explain facts as an expert in the field, rather than as a creative writer with significant literary ambitions, like Sally Mann does. Photography permeates all spheres of Leibovitz's life; she says she lives in her pictures, “I do not have two lives” and I do not take “purely personal pictures”.²⁷

Her subjects are often celebrities she portrays in a manner that is hard to misidentify; her portraits are unmistakably familiar. These portraits engage domesticity and public life as if these were similar spheres; she “always manages to choose the props, the settings, the

clothes, and even the expression that will cling to each person's image."²⁸ Because her images are commissioned and accepted by agents, they do not underscore; they are not provoking. Gestures and poses tend to be similar, bodies given full value, formats are usually large, and colours bold. Her photographic career, spanning almost 50 years, features recognised American people, men and women, coloured, young and old, dying and dead. Most bodies though are strong, healthy and very beautiful. Susan Sontag, prefacing Leibovitz's *Women*, pays tribute to the sheer number and diversity of portraits of women captured by Leibovitz. Sontag praises the "confirmation of the stereotypes of what women are like and the challenge to those stereotypes."²⁹ But she also says that *Women* is not just a new "zone of achievement". The album of 170 portraits of women, in which Leibovitz offers a unique way to "sample, explore, revisit, choose, arrange," is important because in the moment of changes of consciousness [...], it manages to "raise the question of women."³⁰ Despite provoking and revealing the nature of this *oeuvre*, Leibovitz herself stays sceptical about the power of portraiture to objectify subjectivity; portraits give "only a tiny slice of a subject. A piece of them in a moment. It seems presumptuous to think that you can get more than that."³¹ Many of her critics agree.

Leibovitz' latest photographic project is called *Pilgrimage*. Leibovitz says it went a different way than any other work she has ever done. It was also much more meaningful personally. It replenished and filled her up.³² *Pilgrimage* was not an assignment; there was no agenda, no usual army of technical assistants, and no living celebrities to capture. This autobiographical people-less word and image project, "coloured by my memory of Susan"³³, is truly relational. She does not conceal the presence of curators who made the objects and places Leibovitz photographed accessible. The narrative arch (which does not line up with images) is produced by Sharon DeLano, who

“put the stories into narrative and added historical information that we thought would illuminate the visual narrative.”³⁴ Leibovitz clearly mistrusts her writing skills, as she mistrusts language. “Talking,” she observes, “demystifies the process.”³⁵

The photographs in *Pilgrimage* were shot with a digital camera with no additional lights. It was a convenient apparatus, giving “none of the color distortion that you get with film when you push it”; the digital camera is a preferred medium, she says, because of its “rendering things most the way I was seeing them.”³⁶ Thus she asserts authenticity and spontaneity of this project, qualities that do not characterise her commercial, very deliberate body of work. The new digital technology features as a more intimate medium than does the analogue. Critically, the transition to the digital provokes important rethinking of the entire life investment in an earlier phase of development of the craft. She negotiates the contradictions, constantly emphasising the newly gained proximity to the subject.

In *Pilgrimage*, Leibovitz collected images of 27 places in the US and a few in Britain. The original list of places to see and to photograph had started with the idea of the *Beauty Book* she had been planning with Susan Sontag. *Pilgrimage* is thus a multi-layered image collection of places credited with having made a strong impression on Leibovitz and Sontag and that Leibovitz re-visits. We look at the marked humanised and familiar places, among others, Emily Dickinson’s (Sontag’s favourite poet) house in Amherst, Massachusetts; we look at Thoreau’s cabin in Walden Pond, Ralph Waldo Emerson’s home and Orchard House, Niagara Falls, and houses of Virginia Woolf, Charles Darwin, and Sigmund Freud in England. Leibovitz includes images of places preserving the work of famous photographers like Alexander Gardner and Mathew Brady, as well as Ansel Adams (Yosemite home where Adams worked for 50 years); places where Georgia O’Keeffe lived and worked, and houses

of Eleanor Roosevelt and Elvis Presley. Reverence and desire for contact inform this wide-ranging ensemble.

Leibovitz acknowledges a shift in perception, *Pilgrimage* she says “taught me to see”.³⁷ She turns her lens towards places, offering some sustaining identifications, to the houses of the famous (re-inscribed as familiar but also as monumental spaces) in search of home, within proximity to familiar places. Leibovitz seems to be appealing here to some collective ethos. These are new terms of her self-identification, constructed around visual and emotional properties of culturally and historically significant places. *Pilgrimage*, then, marks a way of working through a personal quest to locate, design and visualise an “interior self”. Jean François Lyotard observes that “it is impossible to think or to write without some façade or a house rising up, a phantom to receive and to make work of our peregrinations.”³⁸ The turn to the domestic space is the turn to structures that symbolise not the flight from the self, but rather the gestures towards it, in addition to gestures towards some effort at bringing a lot of networks together. Journeying, looking and seeing constitute an important experience in this project: “I have seen some ways I wish I could live.”³⁹ The house-museum of O’Keeffe, which was also her studio, connoting such qualities as simplicity, solitude, and peace, trigger an intense emotional response. Crying, Leibovitz says, looking at O’Keeffe’s studio, “you can tell what’s important for her.”⁴⁰ Having spent her life scouting for locations to shoot, she has not come to inhabit such a place herself.

In this idiosyncratic project, Leibovitz collects very straightforward, and some critics say unaccomplished, images of rooms, objects, and curiosities that belonged to past greats. Such artefacts as personal dresses of Emily Dickinson or Mary Anderson, and gloves of Lincoln encode autobiographical information; they are materials from the lives of celebrated Americans. Leibovitz is drawn to their

life stories, finding them irresistibly alluring. She exhibits these artefacts for our viewing. By rendering them in their familiar contexts, she enhances their value; she also establishes a new network of connections for these objects: the “domestic effect” of her album in which they are deposited. The large (mostly American) homes she photographs are replete with objects, bearing traces of experiences of their extraordinary inhabitants: “Who would not want to live in such homes?” she wonders in an interview.⁴¹ Despite their appeal, she admits that it is not easy to “get them”. Looking at other people’s homes, “shooting” other people’s belongings, entails provoking exposition. It is about interruption and transformation of the intimate space of a subject who is not captured in it. Perhaps it is of some significance that this complex aesthetic transposition was taking place at the height of Leibovitz’s much publicised “financial moment,” threatening the loss of all the houses she ever owned and all the rights to any property and to her photographs.

Allocating special importance to photographers and photographs in this project, Leibovitz emphasises their central impact on her. She writes about select photographs, some of which she reproduces. Most of these re-photographs are portraits. She is attentive to the physical presence of photographs in the domestic spaces she traverses; she notes the role of photography in the lives of subjects whose lives she scrutinises. For example, when she speaks of Lincoln, she considers the portraits that were taken of him (mentioning 130 different takes). Lincoln was photographed from every possible angle. Pondering that fact, as she does in her earlier work, Leibovitz wonders, “if you can ever get a true likeness of a person.”⁴² Major portraitists she alludes to like Alexander Garner, Anthony Berger, Mathew Brady, Barbara Morgan, Julia Cameron, and Ansel Adams figure as artists whose lives were filled with passion and lasting success, measured not with references to claims to truth, claims they made about their subjects.

They are the admired community whose special experiences led to the creation of an impressive body of work. She accrues it to her idea of home and to her project of identity construction.

In *Pilgrimage*, Leibovitz looks back to look forward; she looks in to look out. This memoir is characterised by exteriorisation, pulling away from the linearity, by what Mieke Bal describes in terms of narrative “embedding” or “enfolding” of one thing into another, of the body into a house.⁴³ The Library of Congress designated Leibovitz as a “living legend”. She has written her memoir to enfold her life in the domestic spaces of other legends. Reanimated and secured, she is determined to ensure her lasting impact in the history of photography and in the making of memory.

Sally Mann

Published in 2015, *Hold Still: A Memoir with Photographs* is a fiercely powerful narrative by Sally Mann. One of the most renowned American artists, in addition to being a creative writer with a degree from Hollins University, Mann summarises her life work as being concentrated on a few recurring themes and motifs: “the landscape of the rural South, with its keen ache of loss and memory; relationships among people; the human form; and the ineffable beauty of decrepitude, of evanescence, of mortality.”⁴⁴ In *Hold Still*, she reproduces many of her canonical images, providing a large cultural context for their reading. By re-contextualising them, Mann asserts the belief in a transgressive potential of the photographic call to “hold still”. The titular call evokes anticipation of the “rush of exultation”, the moment before catching what Mann describes, evoking Hemingway’s sentence from *A Moveable Feast*, as “that incubating purity and grace that happens, sometimes, when all parts come together.”⁴⁵ The *animus* of the memoir is thus tied to the conviction about the unassailable, though fraught, power of photography to adduct good

moments from some flow – to remain. What Mann expects to remain though, more than the acclaimed pictures, more than riveting writing in which Mann has been inscribing her understanding of photography, is the place – her farm where she has been living and writing: “what will last, beyond all of it, is the place.”⁴⁶ Mann’s light writing and life writing pay tribute to a particular place, a unique and sustaining source of her emotional and intellectual growth.

Mann (now 64) writes herself as a very experienced photographer, one, however, who is “not that exceptional” maker of ordinary art.⁴⁷ And by art, Sally Mann – “this grey-haired old gumboil in her silverwear-clothes stained with silver nitrite stains”⁴⁸ – means “hard work and skills learned and tenaciously practiced by regular people.”⁴⁹ Making pictures is a “plodding, obdurate effort,”⁵⁰ bringing, amid failures, rare moments of relief and benediction. The labour, all-consuming and obsessively emphasised, clearly evokes American work ethics. Everyday, she says, she is making “as many prints as my washers could hold... I would often reprint an image several days in a row, tossing out hundreds of sheets (now precious) [of] silver printing paper, noting each day’s detailed printing instructions on the negative’s envelope.”⁵¹ Mann makes every print herself, “even the 40X50 inch landscapes”, compulsively reprinting⁵², recording and archiving her changes. *Hold Still* maps a life spent in the darkroom from early morning until evening. This is a life lived in the dark intimate realm; its reach is breathtaking.

The life of a photographer is marked by the burden of uncertainty. Mann writes that to photograph is to be always reminded that no matter how good the last image was, the next ones should be better. It is to be painfully conscious that the last picture “raises the ante for the ones that follow.”⁵³ Addressing young photographers, Mann suggests to always think about new projects, the next body of art to animate imagination; this project-to-be should be seductive like a new lover.⁵⁴

Continuity both safeguards and puts at risk the flow of creative energy. Yet Mann valorises the sheer activity of making images, no matter how unaccomplished. There is virtue in the very act of making something, “and often the near-misses ... are the beckoning hands that bring you to perfection just around the blind corner”.⁵⁵ New work changes and “subverts” old work; it is “intractable,” which is so much more apparent against the “after-the-fact-infallibility that the old work so confidently glories in.”⁵⁶ This dedication to acts of making leads to the creation of the paradoxical “commonplace singular”.⁵⁷

Mann infuses her thinking on photography with language of emotions: “To be able to make my pictures, I have to look, all the time, at the people and places I care about. And I must do so with both warm ardor and cool appraisal, with the passions of both eye and heart, but in that ardent heart, there must be also a splinter of ice.”⁵⁸ The creative process induces revelatory emotions, moments of real seeing, and moments that are “weirdly expansive,” which produce a sense of “hyperannuated visual awareness”.⁵⁹ In addition, acts of re-creation, of handling the images of others, of saving old prints from ruin, and of looking at photographs trigger potent emotional investments.

Tracing the evolution of her photographic taste and practice, Mann looks back to the very first images in her photographic “reservoir”. She recollects how “captivated and enthralled” she felt looking at the two photographic books: *You Have Seen Their Faces* and *The Family of Man*. Despite the controversial nature of these photo-texts, Mann credits them with having taught her “rudiments of sexual love, family and community life, of personal and social interactions, strife, and perhaps most important, of emphatic compassion for suffering.”⁶⁰ Whether taken for edification, illustration, and understanding, Mann connects personally meaningful photographs with intense positive emotions that define her interpersonal relationships.

Photographing usually in the late afternoon light, Mann exposes shades of grayness, of darkness, of the blurry edges between day and night, love and death. She thinks eliciting the dark in the light makes her “possibly, better at seeing”.⁶¹ Mann accepts limited potential of the camera, intellectually harnessing its limitations. The camera cannot penetrate the truth, as Auden quoted by her on the opening page says: “it must lie”. *Hold Still* is a tribute to photography as well as an extended argument of a sceptic: “All perception is selection, and all photographs – no matter how objectively journalistic the photographer’s intent – exclude aspects of the moment’s complexity. Photographs economise the truth; they are moments more or less illusorily abducted from time’s continuum.”⁶² Photography is an art fraught with “treacheries”⁶³, distortions, and falsifications. It is always ethically compromised. It is irresistible.

To assuage the lie-impact, other media should assist. Without stories, a photograph, by itself, is insufficient.⁶⁴ This paucity becomes most apparent for Mann when she considers the relationship between memory and photography. Photographic portraits of beloved people “rob all of us of memory”; they replace the smells, feelings, and memories with a memory of a photograph: “It isn’t death that stole my father from me; it’s the photographs”⁶⁵. Mann is very harsh on the exploitative character of portraits, their invasive character, which, only at rare moments and only by sheer accident, can produce some “transformative expressions”.⁶⁶ Portraits always disturb her and that is why she is so utterly captivated by them.

She speaks about changes in her interest from the family pictures, her most controversial photographers of her children, to landscape photography, and about her difficult experiences of portraying black communities, a project undertaken to articulate her sense of the historical burden⁶⁷. Mann traces her path from the private to more public realm. She looks back at the evolution of her photographic

technique, her “re-tooling” from very precise methods to “careless aesthetic of shooting with ortho film⁶⁸, and her embrace of the wet-plate collodion: the “fashioning, with fetishistic ceremony, an object whose ragged black edges gave it an appearance of having been torn from time itself.”⁶⁹ Speaking of the technique, Mann often relies on the language of religion. Wet collodion is a “contemplative, solemn, even memorial... sacrament.”⁷⁰ Photographing is a metaphysical and aesthetic experience leading to surprising “essential peculiarities, persuasive consequence, intrigue, drama, and allegory.”⁷¹ *Hold Still*, thus, is an interruption of her daily work of taking photographs to pay tribute to the “ceremonial art” in language.

Relationships

Memoirs by Leibovitz and Mann are embedded in national and communal identities. Unlike autobiographies, memoirs tend to situate the subject in a social environment, in the public sphere, often shifting emphasis away from the narrator towards lives of others. Smith and Watson point out that “currently, the term refers generally to life writing that takes a segment of a life, not its entirety, and focusing [sic] on interconnected experiences.”⁷² Family lives, but also lives of the famous, can dominate the narration over principal accents put on, for example, faith in the subject’s experience of completeness and ensuing will to a unified self-expression and self-revelation. Pronounced emphasis on the materiality of objects recalled and recorded, as well as special attention placed on functions of identifications with images, as sites of shifting associations may allow us to further qualify *Pilgrimage* and *Hold Still* as “autotopographies” – a specific type of memoir defined by Jennifer Gonzalez and Mieke Bal. The critics understand this mode of life writing as “a spatial, local and situational ‘writing’ of the self’s life within a surround of cultural objects that reference specific times, places, and networks of the past.”⁷³ And

of course, in any mode of life writing, autobiographical objects like photographs play a central function in the representation of identity.

Mann's literary imagination and her literary aspirations are all too apparent. Writing, she says in an interview, is harder than photographing; in photography, there are some givens – there is always some object given to photograph; in writing, you work primarily with your thoughts, while in photographing, you always have something in front of you⁷⁴. In *Hold Still*, Mann maps her “reading life” in references from her detailed daily journal where she renders her place in “more elastic medium of writing”⁷⁵, and which possesses “the power, interpretative lability, and multifarious hazards”⁷⁶. Mann also describes her “writing life”, her persistence in trying to capture “*the one place... All grief / And all desire / For me.*”⁷⁷ Mann is the poet, the writer, and the photographer, fusing words and images into (poem-) photographs, “silver poems of tone and undertow... heady with beauty, ponderous with loss.”⁷⁸

Leibovitz and Mann's memoirs are enmeshed in questions of spaces of the self, inscribing valences to a sense of place as “the basis (or ‘ground’) for a claim to authenticity”.⁷⁹ Leibovitz and Mann evoke American places, foregrounding particular geographical and historical situatedness as a precondition for a subjectivity definition. Both photographers inscribe a love of “place,” bounded by cultural framing; both focus on emplacement and mediated space. Mann glorifies and Leibovitz searches for “felt space,” which Lawrence Buell defines as “space humanized, rather than material world taken on its own terms.”⁸⁰ Sanctioned as a national symbol and a personal discovery, such space always suggests an emotional index. This is the gravitas of Leibovitz and Mann's photo-textual projects.

Mann, especially, saturates the place with the emotion of penetrating pain. By turning to a word in Welsh, the language of her forebears, she attempts to capture this intense, “genetically ordained”⁸¹

emotion. The word *hiraeth* is not about some “free-floating nostalgia or droopy houndlike wistfulness or the longing we associate with romantic love”; it is about a strong “near umbilical attachment to a place”, in addition to a “distance pain”.⁸² Her relationships with the native soil are both photographic and literary; hers is *hiraeth*-rich writing and photographing.⁸³ Mann’s photographs sing the words of beauty she says she found in Faulkner, Whitman, Merwin, and Rilke,⁸⁴ in addition to in Michael Miley’s photographs that she came across after she had taken very similar pictures. In Miley, she discovered a striking connection, a predecessor who shared not only the same location, but also his aesthetics and spirit. Though separated in time by a century, he was though to be “peering over” her shoulder.⁸⁵ Reinterpreting his pictures, Mann inscribes his art into hers. This is yet another way autobiographical writing complicates the ambiguity of photography.

The interrelationships between photography and life writing may take on a diverse forms of supplementation or verification, stimulation, and mutual inspiration. A focus on place and the desire to “command” it, in Mann’s words, “might hold the key to the secrets of the human heart: place, personal history, and metaphor.”⁸⁶ In their memoirs, both Leibovitz and Mann articulate the artistic and deeply personal challenge they answered, reconciling and making visible their politics of location as a constitutive dimension of personal and professional identities.

KEYWORDS: LITERATURE, PHOTOGRAPHIC IMAGE, INTERPRETATION, PERSONAL DOCUMENT, AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL NARRATIVE

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- 50 *Ibidem*, p. 144.
- 51 *Ibidem*, p. 204.
- 52 *Ibidem*, pp. 203-204.
- 53 *Ibidem*, p. 283.
- 54 *Ibidem*, p. 169.
- 55 *Ibidem*, p. 37.
- 56 *Ibidem*, p. 282.

- 57 Ibidem, p. 153.
58 Ibidem p. 144.
59 Ibidem, p. 212.
60 Ibidem, p. 403.
61 Ibidem, p. 415.
62 Ibidem, p. 151.
63 Ibidem, p. 307.
64 Ibidem, p. 308.
65 Ibidem, p. 302.
66 Ibidem, p. 293.
67 Ibidem, p. 281.
68 Ibidem, p. 221.
69 Ibidem, p. 224.
70 Ibidem, p. 224.
71 Ibidem, p. 224.
72 Ibidem, p. 274.
73 Qtd. in Sidonie Smith and Julia Watson, *Reading Autobiography*, op. cit., p. 45.
74 Charlie Rose interview with Sally Mann, 2003, www.youtube.com.
75 Sally Mann, *Hold Still*, op. cit., p. 284.
76 Sally Mann, *Hold Still*, op. cit., p. 41.
77 *Hold Still*, p. 208.
78 Ibidem, p. 208.
79 Qtd. in Sidonie Smith and Julia Watson, *Reading Autobiography*, op. cit., p. 43.
80 Ibidem, p. 43.
81 Sally Mann, *Hold Still*, op. cit., p. 239.
82 Ibidem, p. 175.
83 Ibidem, p. 208.
84 Ibidem, p. 208.
85 Ibidem, p. 220.
86 Ibidem, p. 210.



Teresa Bruś

VISUAL AND VERBAL RELATIONSHIPS

IN MEMOIRS BY ANNIE LEIBOVITZ AND SALLY MANN

Recent studies on connections between literature and photography reveal a significant shift: literature is no longer a leader that uses photographs or individual photographic images. Reconnaissance by François Brunet (Photography and Literature) provides us with serious arguments testifying to a fruitful assimilation of literature by photography and the evolution of hybrid media in which neither photography nor literature is a central figure.

The article entitled 'Visual and verbal relationships in the memories of Annie Leibovitz and Sally Mann' includes a multi-dimensional analysis of interaction of photography and literature as personal media in recent autobiographical projects by two American artists-photographers. Sally Mann, a graduate of the 'creative writing', concentrates not only on creating a narrative around well-known portraits. She also wrote an excellent critical commentary on possible understanding of the relationship between word and photographic image in the narrative by photographer-writer-critic in the era of so-called 'memoir boom' in the US. The use of literary references in photo-text entitled 'Pilgrimage' by Annie Leibovitz demonstrates the contiguity of literary tropes in photography, carried out as intimate effort to tame the world. In conclusion, autobiographical narratives by modern photographers are connected with specific area between literature and photography and they reveal the growing potential of relational strategies.

Teresa Bruś

WIZUALNE I WERBALNE RELACJE

WE WSPOMNIENIACH ANNIE LEIBOVITZ I SALLY MANN

Najnowsze badania związków literatury z fotografią wskazują na istotne przesunięcia: literatura nie jest już hegemonem wykorzystującym motyw fotografii czy poszczególne obrazy fotograficzne. Rozpoznania François Bruneta (*Photography and Literature*) dostarczają poważnych argumentów świadczących o owocnym przyswajaniu literatury przez fotografię i ewolucji hybrydycznych mediów, w których ani fotografia, ani literatura nie są centralnymi figurami.

W artykule *Wizualne i werbalne relacje we wspomnieniach Annie Leibovitz i Sally Mann* analizuję najnowsze projekty autobiograficzne dwóch amerykańskich artystek-fotografów, w których problematyka interakcji fotografii i literatury jako mediów dokumentu osobistego została wyeksponowana w sposób wielowymiarowy. Sally Mann, absolwentka kierunku „creative writing”, koncentruje uwagę nie tylko na kreowaniu narracji wokół własnych, dobrze znanych portretów. Tworzy również znakomity komentarz krytyczny projektujący możliwe rozumienia zależności pomiędzy słowem a obrazem fotograficznym w narracji fotografa-pisarza-krytyka w dobie tzw. „memoir boom” w USA. Wykorzystanie odniesień literackich w fototekście *Pilgrimage* Annie Leibovitz demonstruje przyległość tropów literackich w pracach fotograficznych, realizowanych jako intymne próby osvajania świata. W konkluzji stwierdzam, iż współczesne narracje autobiograficzne fotografów sytuujące się pomiędzy literaturą i fotografią stanowią specyficzny obszar użycia rosnącego potencjału strategii relacyjnych.

SŁOWA KLUCZOWE: **LITERATURA, OBRAZ FOTOGRAFICZNY, INTERPRETACJA, DOKUMENT OSOBISTY, NARRACJA AUTOBIOGRAFICZNA**

