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The Truthful Portrait: Can Posing Be a Tool for Authenticity in Portraiture?

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ABSTRACT

This article explores the compatibility of posing and authenticity in portraiture. Often understood as a source of inauthenticity, I propose that posing in fact functions as an artistic tool that can support a truthful portrayal. My argument first discusses authenticity in relation to portraiture through the lens of Bernard Williams's idea of "truthfulness," which relies on his notions of "accuracy" and "sincerity." Second, I introduce a phenomenology of posing. I identify two aspects of posing that can be present in the portrait; these are the "posing sitter," who holds the actual physical pose, but also point out the use of a "posing effect" in the image, which I call the "posed sitter." Third, I address the worry of posing as a source of inauthenticity and demonstrate how this can be reframed in order to lay bare its capacity for enhancing truthfulness. The pose then need not be regarded with suspicion of artifice that clouds the authenticity of the sitter; instead, it can offer an approach to truthfully portray the sitter.

We expect portraits to display individuals with a compelling genuineness, to reveal something about their subjectivity. Portraiture as a genre maintains revelatory aims of faithfulness to the subject and creative aims of artistic expression to this end (Freeland 2007, 95). Early renditions of European portraiture made use of symbols to construct an identity, for example in Hans Holbein's *The Ambassadors*, 1533. The focus later shifted to an interest in hinting at the sitter's inner life (Freeland 2010, 89). Some were also highly conventionalized, for instance the portraits of nobility that sometimes favored idealized features. Enduring through the expansion of its functions, a feature of portraiture remains precisely its focus on the portrayal of sitters; attempting to grasp the whole or a part of the individual, particular features related to them, or even reflecting something about the artists themselves as persons.

The sitter typically poses for the portrait, in a bodily, intentional act of (self)-presentation. Tension arises when we consider that some poses may present the sitter other than they are and could possibly be misleading, or outright deceitful, if what we see does not conform to how we think or know the sitter to be. There is a less actively deceitful side too, for example in how we find that a person's demeanor can change when they are photographed and appear uncharacteristically awkward or somewhat false (Shusterman 2012, 246). Posing maintains a significant influence over impressions of a person's portrait, more so than, say, determining whether the portrait shows a very naturalistic likeness. The worry that posing might prove inconsistent with authentic portraits becomes very real then, particularly because it can render a person awkward or otherwise unlike themselves.

More recently, avant-garde and modernist portraiture explored innovative ways to capture the sitter's character while lessening their resemblance.[1] Increasingly, these also involved the artist's personal response to the sitter (Gaskell 2020, 12). Truthful portrayal does not equal *mimetic* portrayal, therefore. Over the course of this article, posing and its many interactions with authenticity are reframed to recognize its support for truthful representation. This article explores authenticity as a quality of successful portraiture, connecting it to Bernard Williams's notion of "truthfulness."

I. PORTRAITURE AS A MEDIUM OF AUTHENTIC REPRESENTATION

First, I examine why portraiture is so entwined with an interest in authenticity. Portraiture can be distinguished in a broad and narrow sense. Broadly, it is pure likeness and includes images such as passport photos and mug-shots.[2] Narrowly, we value portraiture most when it goes beyond presenting a mere likeness and instead says something about the wider person. This narrow sense is where portraiture's claim to authenticity resides. When encountering the portrait, we expect it is somehow rooted in the sitter we see—including, but not limited to, their physical likeness, a sense of character, objects relating to their life, or the display of a role and public persona. This does not have to be dishonest, since even public image is no more than the "socially visible face of a being who is presenting it as a target for social interaction" (Velleman quoted by Freeland 2010, 103).

Authenticity's significance becomes apparent when we consider our general viewing experience of portraits: the spectator expects to see a compelling representation of the portrayed sitter. R.G. Collingwood characterized this as "an imaginative vision" of a sitter, more than just likeness, which is rendered by the great portraitist's impression of this person (Collingwood 1960, 307–8). Roland Barthes conceives of an "air," addressed in his search for a picture of his mother in *Camera Lucida*, 1981, which involves a moral attitude, and a type of outlook that summarizes the subject's personality. This helps to understand how portraits "'show who someone is' in the sense of describing for us what kind of person they are, rather than simply showing that the person is a queen, mother, horseman … or whatever" (Freeland 2010, 116). Such an overall attitude can also be applied to the four dimensions of personhood in portraiture identified by Cynthia Freeland: the bodily (outer), reflective (inner), relational, and the moral (84, 116). One anticipates that in some ways the portrait matches what the spectator (imagines they) might experience during an actual encounter with the sitter. This evokes Kendall Walton's notion of the "picture world" of an image, which viewers can imagine in various ways. Freeland uses this to demonstrate that we rely on the skilled artist's ability to render someone's pose and self-presentation to create a nuanced, subtle "imagined world of the portrait interaction" (Freeland 2020, 108).

It is worth considering how scholars have thought about the nature of portraiture, to make sense of what makes a good portrait. In "What is a Portrait?" Hans Maes compares the accounts of portraiture put forward by Freeland and Paolo Spinicci. Freeland overall defines portraiture as "an image that presents a recognizably distinct individual who has emotional or conscious states, and who is able to participate in the creative process by posing" (Maes 2015, 305). Maes teases out that the insistence on physical likeness troubles the existence of portraits with a high degree of abstraction, in which there might not be a very visibly recognizable sitter present, or portraits that rely on objects that show us something about the sitter without showing the sitter themselves. He does not consider posing necessary, arguing that it is too restrictive and would mean that no portrait could be created from memory or an absent subject[3] (306–37). Maes's account of portraiture is a substantive concept. It allows portrait-relevant features to shift through time, while maintaining a continuity through their makers, who must have principal knowledge of the nature of portraiture that also matches the notion of portraiture by a group of prior portrait makers (315). He draws attention to the overlap between artists like Rembrandt, Goya, and Dijkstra, who "share the idea of a portrait as representing Y, or a group of Y's, where Y is considered to possess selfhood and a capacity of self-presentation, in such a way that Y's looks, inner life, social standing, and/or public identity are revealed" (Maes 2015, 319).

So, what makes a good portrait? Considering the manner in which features of portraiture persist, authenticity can be a part of the substantive concept of portraiture. It remains present in the creative context of portraitists to use or react against, such as the avant-garde and modernist artists, and offers a framework that viewers use to engage with the representation of self. Authenticity has implications for both the act of making and viewing of portraits and affects all parties involved. Rudolph Arnheim speaks of two distinguishable authenticities in photographic media. They either "do justice to the facts of reality" or express "the qualities of human experience by any means suitable to that purpose." He, rightfully, worries that those boundaries become muddled with the intensification of digital photography and editing (Arnheim 1993, 537, 540). Arnheim briefly remarks that for an image to be readable, it has to be organized in a manner that conveys the intended meaning, which comes remark-

ably close to Bernard Williams's notion of truthfulness that I apply to both traditional visual art and photography (538).

There is a much longer philosophical tradition that concerns itself with human nature and authenticity, reaching back to existentialist thinkers such as Kierkegaard, Heidegger, Sartre, and de Beauvoir. I cannot do justice to their explorations of authenticity here, as I am more concerned with advancing an account of authenticity in portraiture grounded in Williams's truthfulness. However, I will briefly consider the influence of Heidegger, it being his neologism *Eigentlichkeit* that motivated a now common use of the term "authenticity," though a more literal understanding would be "ownness" or "ownedness" (McManus 2019, 1181). The authentic person owns up to their actions and choices and "is resolute in being true to her own judgement—she deploys her capacity to judge for herself—but her doing so is her being open to her concrete situation" (McManus 2019, 1201). Heidegger allows for authenticity as arising out of actions and decisions we engage in and stand up for, which constitutes a self that is in ongoing development.

Freeland discusses recent views on the social self, in particular Richard Brilliant's remarks that portraiture supports the construction of people's identities. Crucially, identity itself is a wholly social phenomenon existing around people's relations. It is a condition of our social existence that we present ourselves to others. This provides a challenge for portrait artists especially, since they are required to interpret both the person's physical appearance as well as their "impersonation of a self" (Freeland 2010, 100). Freeland respecifies Brilliant's views, "people present a self to the outside world as part of *who they are*, in and of themselves" (102). Research in evolutionary psychology supports this, like Michael Tomasello's work that reveals how a child's sense of self already develops in their very first year, understanding that she engages with another intentional agent when adults interact with her. Similarly, David Velleman argues that when we experience feelings of shame, these result in fact from an inappropriate public scrutiny of the private self. Velleman proposes that "the public self simply *is* the self" (quoted by Freeland 2010, 103). Marya Schechtman offers a seminal discussion on theories of personhood and personal identity. She sets apart the differences between characterization and reidentification questions that arise and are easily conflated. Schechtman then reconnects how they interact with personal identity and each other, developing the narrative self-constitution view (Schechtman 2007 [1996], 161). "A person's identity … is created by narrating and living a life that recognizes the general cultural conception of a person, the objective view of one's life, and facts about the world" (135). This narrative self-constitution view allows for identity to be defined as a "deeply unified and persisting subject of experience" (161). Schechtman is right in stating, however, that personal existence is diverse; not one theory can account for all of our interests and concerns, though theories should aim to find general coherence and interrelations (161–2).

The usefulness, then, of Bernard Williams's concept of "truthfulness" in relation to portraiture will be its applicability regardless of the theory of self, whether psychological, naturalistic, or social. Truthfulness as an application to the self, complemented by Freeland's dimensions of personhood in portraiture, should bring us to understanding how good portraiture achieves authentic portrayal. One worry with these dimensions of personhood is that it may be hard to determine when something is authentic, or when it is merely showing something inauthentically about a person in that dimension. A photographic portrait can be inauthentic regardless of its very precise likeness, if the sitter was implored to take on a posture that renders him or her uncomfortable and unlike themselves, as Richard Shusterman indicated. In contrast, an experimental mixed-media "pasta shell on sugar paper" portrait could prove more accurate in portraying some of its sitter's characteristics and playful nature through the associative and formal qualities of the pasta.[4] While admittedly quite an eccentric example to make this point, I introduce the mixed media artist and illustrator Jim Taliana's *Self-Portrait in Pasta and Crackers*, the last piece he made before his death in 2012. In a call to build a memory bench for his contributions to and presence in the community of Boothbay Harbor, Maine, USA, it is written that Taliana will be "remembered for as many things colorful and diverse as the assorted pasta, beans and popcorn kernels that make up his portrait. … what a sense of humor he had, and what a huge talent he had" (Leighton 2013). What matters is the truthfulness with which the piece is created, not likeness. Those who knew him have given testimony of his good-humored nature, for which the pasta shapes and so forth are appropriate. Truthfulness therefore need not be *mimetic*.

Thinking of the different aspects of personhood that Freeland proposes, there is a multitude of ways in which a person can be conveyed physically, reflectively, relationally, and morally. The way to determine whether what we see is an authentic aspect of that person is indeed rooted in the truthfulness with which their image is presented. Otherwise it remains unclear when a particular creative method constitutes inauthentic flattery, for example, and when it is authentic portrayal.

Bernard Williams emphasizes one's "commitment to truthfulness" as the underlying value of truth that consists of various states and activities associated with truth (Williams 2002, 1). These are embedded in virtues as qualities of people that reveal themselves in wanting to know the truth, then finding out the truth, and finally communicating this truth to others. Most useful to apply to portraiture is his idea that it matters not how capable of truth these narratives supporting our society and understanding are, nor how necessary it is that they do this, but whether they can be truthful without being absolutely true. Williams's findings on the value of truthfulness offer a framework to deal with the selection and representational processes that lead to authentic portrayal. He relies on two fundamental virtues of truth: *accuracy* and *sincerity*. When someone is being truthful, they have made the best possible attempt to acquire true beliefs (accuracy), followed by that what they explain reveals what they believe (sincerity) (6–7, 14).

Accuracy is versatile: many things can be accurate, yet still differ greatly among each other. For example, one can accurately describe what they did last weekend, or how to take an accurate measurement for a functioning dress pattern. Accuracy approximates something in our reality closely enough for it to correspond to that reality, in conjunction with a particular aim. What matters is a near enough approximation that is workable in function of the goal. Accuracy, as Williams uses it, is crucially *truth-acquiring*; its investigators must have the will to examine and resist wishful thinking, self-deception, and fantasy, while maintaining a method that allows them to discover true beliefs (Williams 2002, 127). Sincerity then ensures that the attempt for accuracy is communicated in a way that reveals this effort. Sincerity, importantly, is dependent on "sustaining and developing relations with others that involve different kinds and degrees of trust." Such an attitude allows its agent to assess their relations to other people, the structure of mutual respect, and a sense of oneself without self-deceit within these relations (121).

The idea of an investigative investment, and related ideas of investigative strategies, implies that inquiry will encounter obstacles. This is the basic reason why accuracy can be properly treated as a *virtue*, and not simply as a disposition to pick up reliable information—just as sincerity is a virtue, and not just a reliable disposition to express inner informational states, because it operates in a space that is structured by motivations to conceal or dissimulate (Williams 2002, 124).

Importantly, the truthful investigator will face both internal and external obstacles in their search. Internally, one must hone the skills and attitudes that resist self-deception and wishful thinking "in all its forms, from a gross need to believe the agreeable, to mere laziness in checking one's investigations." Externally, the world can be resistant to one's will to investigate, and "beliefs are answerable to an order of things that lies beyond our own determination" (Williams 2002, 125).

This is precisely what good portraiture does: it accurately selects aspects related to the sitter, which are then represented in the portrait and communicated to viewers—allowing for the dimensions of personhood to be filled in truthfully. Vital, then, to understanding authenticity in portraiture is this realization of the art genre's connection to truthful portrayal. This is where we do not need to commit to whether the self is or is not constructed. Whatever it is, all one needs is a truthful attempt in relaying a self. The artists themselves may be uncertain and not ascribe to a philosophy of self. Or artists (and sitters) might have differing notions of self altogether. What matters is the commitment to truthfulness. Our idea of authenticity then becomes an attitude in a process and takes part in the process of truthful creation. This process has two components in which it relates to truthfulness. First, the good portrait artist seeks to be truthful, by making an accurate and sincere effort to portray someone—and this constitutes virtues that the artist has. Second is the work they create. The portrait carries over those virtuous qualities. The hope is that the artist gets the sitter to also be truthful. Recognizing this enhances our aesthetic understanding of such pieces when we consider that portraiture's qualities operate within a context of truthfulness, especially once it is applied to posing—which I explore more in-depth in the second section. It shines light on why

those pieces that are masterfully truthful have such an appeal to viewers. Conversely, it clarifies what makes something inauthentic.

One might wonder how this can possibly be judged for sitters we do not know, or whether a portrait can be made of an absentee (whether dead, fictional, or never met face-to-face) sitter? This is where the importance of *trust* in truthfulness comes in. Breaking or disrespecting such trust has, of course, been the subject of many lamentations. Freeland argues that posing is simply part of how and who the sitter is, as well as the artist's own professional approach, which might seem contradictory to the idea of conveying an inner core, "the person an artist depicts *is* the person as he or she has chosen to pose or appear." Within the portrait, one finds a struggle between what the artist wishes to accomplish artistically, versus how the sitter desires to be seen, as well as anticipating what a later audience might think (Freeland 2010, 115; Guyer 2020, 56–7). One such example is the portrait of Alfred Krupp by Arnold Newman, 1963. Affluent German industrialist Krupp posed within a factory of his, which Newman, himself Jewish American and objecting to Krupp's employment of Jewish slave labor in these factories during World War II, rendered more like an evil mastermind, or Satan in Hell, than wealthy and important industrialist in postwar German reconstruction. The artist's understanding of who the sitter really is can pull against the sitter's own self-understanding. Sitter, artist, and image then are not necessarily a harmonious unit, complicating how they interrelate.

We cannot truly know unless we have special access to the sitter. We can, however, rely on great portraitists' bodies of work and the many experiences we enjoy when engaging with their work. These experiences refine our sense of detecting when someone is being truthful. This works as it does in everyday life, where we similarly refine our ability to identify (dis)honesty and at times can be fooled.

It is all the more important that we recognize the significance of trust for the artist to draw out particular features of their sitter when they do sit in person. Richard Avedon's portrait series with Marilyn Monroe on May 6, 1957 resulted in an intriguing photograph: *Marilyn Monroe, Actress, New York*. After her usual performance, he captured her sitting expressionless and quietly by herself. Avedon shows us a different Marilyn, with an inner life that her previous posing did not render visible. This exemplifies the importance of mutual trust, in terms of accessing something intimately related to the sitter. A relationship of trust also exists between the portrait and its viewer. As a viewer, we want to trust that what we see shows something authentic about its sitter, in any of the four dimensions of personhood. We trust that the artist has made an effort to communicate something truthful about the person, some or all of their likeness, character, relations, or a moral quality. An artist can do this based on archival material or literary accounts in the case of absentee or dead sitters, through conversation, and so on. There are different ways of portraying someone authentically; from truthfully rendering someone's physical features via a photograph or description, to endeavors of portraying deeper notions of character, or abstracting sitters to enhance other associative qualities related to their person, to give some examples.

Among the personal obstacles to truthfulness are self-deception and wishful thinking. These feed into a concern about how others view us and whether we are esteemed correctly (or as we *want* to be). They impact our experience and potential suspicion of portraits, both as sitter and viewer. One occurrence of inauthentic portraiture are heavily edited social media photographs by "influencers" who amend their pictures to even out pores, tailor waists, and pronounce body parts like their chest and buttocks. What they show is how they wish they could be (seen). This is a fabricated display of appearance and character for flattery's sake, which intentionally conceals the reality of the sitter. They are (self-)deceptive and conceal their wish to be different from how they are, to lead a particular lifestyle that comes with all the associated features. Such images untruthfully represent the sitters as if this is how they really are.

One might wonder about pieces that forsake the self, considering artists like Andy Warhol and Cindy Sherman. Warhol relies on prefabricated images in which the self dissolves, and portrays celebrities who disintegrate the distinction between their private and public lives. Sherman masquerades herself to create estranged, voyeuristic images. There is still a concern for inner life in Sherman's work, and ordinary people can usually separate private from public, without lacking selves (Freeland 2010, 288–9). They are part of portraiture in the wider sense. While they create great art, they are not examples of great portraiture and what we value about it in the narrow sense.

II. ON A PHENOMENOLOGY OF POSING

I sought to demonstrate that authenticity is an important quality of good portraiture and that I understand it as truthfulness. This second part introduces a phenomenology of posing to help clarify how a pose can be advantageous to authenticity in the third part of this article.

Freeland examines posing in two ways. In one sense posing requires self-awareness and an understanding of the creative process of portrait making, "so that the resulting image can manifest their differing desires and attitudes about it" (Freeland 2010, 17). In the second sense, she also subscribes to human nature involving self-presentation, awareness, and an interest in how one is regarded by others (104). Focusing on portraiture in the narrow sense also benefits to then focus on posing within an artistic context. Some of its qualities present more strongly in those situations, and a different anxiety arises when confronted with posing and image making compared to self-presentation in everyday life. Brilliant, Velleman, and Tomasello each make their case for an inevitably social self. A consequence of this is that it characterizes posing as continuous self-presentation which humans undertake in their social lives. This is a phenomenon explored in depth by Erving Goffman in *The Performance of Self in Everyday Life*, 1956. Such self-presentation takes up a significant portion of our daily interactions with each other. Posing then cannot be unnatural, being an everyday feature of human life.

While the unposed allows a different access to the unaware sitter, it does not automatically render posed images less truthful. An uninterrupted awkward stiffening in front of the camera is a largely unmediated appearance when it concerns posing, but this is rather a momentary instance. As Arthur Danto succinctly puts it, "Catching people unawares does not automatically assure us that we have achieved the truth" (1998, 276). A good artist puts the sitter at ease with themselves and brings this out of them. The artist (implicitly) encourages honesty and gains an impression of how they are. The best portraits are of those who are really you, not just how you would like to be. Freeland's sense of how we are most authentically ourselves then becomes modified here, to a way of being that is in part drawn out by the artist. Even in terms of social presentation that we continuously perform, one can argue that we are not most authentically ourselves at a job interview, for example, trying to impress someone.

Paolo Spinicci discusses poses and their function in portraiture, despite having a different take on its phenomenology. One of his characterizations is that portraits portray still subjects: they are "boring" subjects because, to be portrayed, they must halt their daily activities to engage in a moment of temporary inaction. Essential to the process of posing for a portrait then is that the sitter takes a step back from "cares and opportunities of life … to rise above the pressure of what impinges on him from the world" (Spinicci 2009, 48). While it is undoubtedly true that a pose is intentional, a decision is made to try and appear a certain way, regardless of whether this is received successfully. Active bodily positioning occurs and corresponds to the impulse of how the subjects want to present themselves, and the degree of bodily expertise that they employ in doing so. Spinicci takes the pose as having a dual nature. It is the outcome of a voluntary decision, as well as being conscious of the fact that we are limited to our body's features. He therefore considers the pose a "narration of self," resting on this compromise between "what I am as a perceptual object and what I would like to appear" as (49). Spinicci simultaneously argues for a personal expression, inherently rooted in the sitter's reality, while arguing that posing is removed from daily concerns. The pose is not disconnected from life outside the posing session, as the subject is not—nor the posing session, or the final artwork. The walls of a studio do not keep out pressures of reality. This reality is in fact present, for example in the pose itself because the body has lived a life that affects its physicality and expression, or by appealing to visual convention rooted in our artistic tradition, like the configurations of the Venus Pudica, Apollo Belvedere, as well as many other poses. Additionally, not all poses focus on "disclosing" the subject's own nature. A pose is not necessarily a revelation of self and could for example be mannerist by striving for a purely dynamically interesting physical formation, rather than unveiling something about the subject's private self in a narrative sense. This approach to posing may be more commonly employed for other art genres than portraiture, which maintains its own visual language to represent its subjects.

Freeland's argument against the narration of self in portraiture counters Spinicci. Any perceived narrative would really be the interpretation of viewers who embed the portrait with a story, contrasting the construction of narratives in biographical films that help to create a story structure which

records aims and actions. Even the exchange between filmmaker and subject is different, since the director creates "a characterization through narrative and constructing the person's story" (Freeland 2020, 102). Michael Podro remarks three ways in which a painting relates to the figure it represents, by having the artist rehearse scrutinizing either the figure itself or the movement within the figure, or that the portrait itself is a way for sitters to present themselves in collaboration with the artist (Podro 1998, 93). He points out that rehearsing, for example in a mirror, might help us become more aware of how we appear, actively anticipating others (88–9). Podro also subscribes to a social self, which expresses its attitudes and emotions in postures. His idea can be taken further, however, by thinking of posing not just as something that we all do with greater or lesser awareness but instead as a skill that can be improved. Professional models are experts who mastered posing, with a unique body and interpretation of the artist's needs. They understand and refined posing and its processes.

Spinicci's assumption is that posing requires standing still, removed from daily activities. This cannot hold to the understanding of posing as a very active event. To pose is to present an intentional bodily configuration that communicates something to a spectator, with the aim of being registered. A pose might be taken as still when one thinks of sitting hours for a portrait. There are, however, different timings that influence the interval of the pose, which additionally determine what is physically reasonable to maintain for the sitter within the designated timeframe. One variable is the model's physical fitness, which will directly affect their stamina and ability to physically uphold and maintain a pose. A 1-minute pose will allow much greater physical liberty in its execution than maintaining the same pose for 5 minutes, 30 minutes, 1 hour, or longer—and all will result in different positions. One minute allows the model to take on a configuration that is very physically demanding, much more dynamic than the seated or reclining positions that are more suitable for longer periods of time to remain comfortable. In the strictest sense, a pose is never completely static to begin with. Bodily processes rise to the surface regardless of durational factors. At times the body might sweat, the subject breathes resulting in their chest raising continuously, muscles twitch if a pose proves too taxing to maintain, intestines rumble, and so on. Many of these factors cannot be controlled and are externalized signs of a living, active body. The pose always moves with the body and its processes. These processes illustrate the weakness of Spinicci's argument, because they move beyond this idea of total stillness and disengagement, to accepting certain degrees of movement and tension that interplay during the pose. It is difficult to wholly replace this still understanding of the pose to consider it more like movement, as one risks blurring the lines between a pose and other performances like acting or dancing. Limiting oneself to the pose in a visual art context, however, does maintain different enough qualities to make these points.

A commonly overlooked exercise in life drawing is the posing sequence in which the model carries out a "movement." Instead of maintaining one pose for *x* time, they will progress from a starting point (or pose, if you will) that slowly progresses, through a series of movements, to a final pose. The artist registers the forms they perceive and select, as they occur through the movement. The pose here is certainly not limited to standing still. What happens, however, is a *slowing down* of gestures and movements, resulting in a deanimation of the living body. This slowing down is crucial to the pose, allowing the key objective of the pose to be fulfilled, which is to be registered. Different from the continuous movement of acting or dancing, the pose acts as an event where the subject takes their body through a particular pose or series of poses, with the aim of being studied and registered to facilitate artmaking. It should not be mistaken for inactivity. In these degrees of gesturing, there is an active, ongoing commitment to presenting oneself. Some examples of movement and posing are the studies that Auguste Rodin made of a visiting troupe of Cambodian dancers in 1906–1907 or more recently the *Motion Study* by London portrait artist Rosalie Watkins.[5]

Joe Klamar's portraits of the 2012 US Olympic Team challenge the photography in which we usually see athletes. He does this by inverting the idea of in-action pictures with the notion of official, stately athletes' portraits, by asking athletes to *reenact* their sport. They are posing as if they are performing, and Klamar's unconventional focus on lighting and composition brings out features (or even outfits) we do not typically see in athletes. Their poses simultaneously convey a sense of their sport, their trained bodies, and embed the pictures with a relatable humanity for the athletes. "Stillness" then is not the best, nor only, way to think of poses.

Spinicci further claims that not all portraits require someone actually posing, all they require is that they "represent a man as if he were posing" (Spinicci 2009, 50). While I refrain from committing to posing as a necessary condition of portraiture, two aspects of posing can be distinguished here as present within the portrait. The first is the sitter who presents themself. They are aware that they are being observed, and the posing constitutes an event of physical self-presentation. It involves a physical, potentially minimal, manipulation of the body.[6] The second aspect starts from the observation that the artist may guide and pose the sitter. She can guide the sitter into more efficient posturing to achieve an anticipated end, which can be the goal of the artist, the sitter, or both, by using knowledge that sitters (who may not be professional models) often lack. This nonetheless results in an intentional bodily configuration, despite not originally conceived by the sitter. Portrait making involves "the expectations of three potentially different persons, artist, subject, and audience" (Guyer 2020, 57). Guyer regards posing as something that sometimes needs to be "broken through" to get the desired result, particularly when we consider such tension in the collaboration. He enters the example of Yousuf Karsh's famed Churchill portrait to demonstrate the complexity and challenge of posing. Churchill was posed more defiantly by Karsh's snatching his cigar, in line with public expectation (57). Karsh's portraits embody the public perception of the sitter, not the person themselves. Truthful portrayal is not a matter of battling the poses people take on but rather understanding how to bring out the person truthfully to achieve an authentic result, for which the pose is used as a tool. Spinicci comes close to the idea that the pose can function as an artistic tool by suggesting that there need not be a present sitter. It can be used in the studio itself, held by the sitter in the familiar meaning of what constitutes a pose. "Posing effect," however, draws on our traditions of artistic convention to still rely on the communicative strengths of poses. This is not a pose in the familiar sense but instead allows the artist to render a *posing effect* onto a figure.

Building on the commitment to truthfulness, this is how an artist can still portray, for example, a deceased person in a truthful manner despite lacking active input from the subject. This is done by accurately and sincerely portraying them with the available information they have, and a significant part of this is the pose that is applied in doing so. This can be applied to both deathbed and fictional portraits. The portrait can adhere in greater or lesser degree to the narrative and knowledge surrounding a person or character. One example is Daphne Todd's *Last portrait of my mother* (2009), which won the 2010 BP Portrait Award. Todd stayed with her mother's body to paint her portrait over 3 days. The undertakers were asked to prop her up in the way that she had been when Todd arrived at her hospital deathbed. Todd had discussed the portrait with her mother beforehand, who agreed to it, though Todd remarks that her mother did not enjoy her more "factual" style of painting and would not have liked this portrait either. Simultaneously, Todd received her permission and took great care to convey the physical reality of her 100-year-old mother's death (Jackson 2011, 48–9). Todd's conversation with her still living mother renders it authentic, cemented by her truthful and compassionate characterization once her mother passed. It conforms to the second, purely visual, aspect of the "posed sitter," to complement the first aspect of the "posing sitter" in the studio. One should not underestimate the pose's manifestation in artworks as pure posing effect. Oftentimes, we cannot be certain without explicit evidence to which degree a sitter did indeed sit for a portrait, and a posing effect—when executed truthfully—need not be dishonest about its sitter.

One stark difference, and difficulty, is that with less input from the sitter, the artist needs to take great care to truthfully convey something about the sitter, potentially leaving one to worry that the posing sitter is always of secondary importance. This need not be the case. The sitter is usually the commissioner and binds the artist to the artwork's context and desired outcome. A second contextual reason is that the artist must be careful about creating something wholly incongruent if they want the portrait to be considered authentic, such as portraits of public figures or entertainers. This remains the case with satire or criticism. The portrait needs to be recognizably connected to the sitter's reality. We find a greater influence of the sitter when we consider the posing professional (e.g., the fashion or life model), who provides a strong template and guiding inspiration during the creative process and becomes an artistic collaborator.

Annie Kevans's self-described antiportraits demonstrate how a truthful portrait can still be achieved even without a physical sitter, by truthfully engaging with the sitter in their context. She focuses on alternative versions of the sitter's history and reminds us of the ongoing purposeful adjustment and

preservation to which idealized reputations are subjected. Kevans first studies her sitters' biographies and photographs to receive a sense of their personality and life, then paints from memory, and always without a sitter. She calls them antiportrait because the sitters never sat in front of her. Kevans uses the public's familiarity with portraiture to toy with their belief that what they see is a "true likeness." Kevans's portrait of Gabrielle Bonheur "Coco" Chanel was created for her series of Nazi collaborators. Chanel worked as a Nazi spy who had a code name, which is generally less associated with her persona of fashion designer icon (Morley 2016). Kevans's antiportraits are authentic portraits, since they present a posed sitter (relying on posing effect) and put these famous figures in a radically different light with biographical backing, and in new portraits made based on her memories of various documents. The added knowledge changes the harsh lines in Chanel's face; they compel the viewer to characterize more sinister features of her persona in the portrait. Both pose and posing effect greatly influence the way in which a person is presented, and whether or not it is a truthful portrayal.

III.   POSING THE PROBLEM

One might still be left to worry that posing can remain deceptive. How do we know when a pose is truthful and not "mere" posing? I will conclude my argument by demonstrating what some of these suspicions might be, and how posing can overcome them by being considered an artistic tool which supports the creation of an authentic portrait. Like testimony, our default position is to think that we are getting truthfulness in a portrait, especially if we have access to other portraits of the sitter, and often no reason to doubt that truthfulness is at play.

Posing is performative, it is an act that intentionally presents its subject in a particular way. Calling someone a "poser" in the English language indicates that someone is a pretender. This part of common vocabulary picks up on an artificial component: it identifies that what is made apparent is unlike what the person is normally like. The source of worry is not to do with poses that are explicitly obvious, such as dressing up as a comic book character for a party, or posing extravagantly for a photograph. The kind of poses that introduce tension are those that make a claim to truthfulness, "this is how I really am," while what is shown is a construction, far removed from who and how the person really is. The crucial differing factor is this act of communicating an impression that is untruthful yet still intended to be perceived as if truthful.

A more in-depth analysis of Joe Klamar's *Olympic Portraits* series demonstrates the trickiness of reconciling expectations of authenticity on one hand and the impact of posing on the other. As chief celebrity photographer during the US Olympic Committee's Media Summit in May 2012, Klamar received special access to photograph the American athletes.[7] Traditionally, these portraits incorporate the American flag, embodying not only physical sports ideals but also promoting the nation's representation and pride at the Olympics ("Olympic Portraits" 2012). A good illustration is the *Sports Illustrated* cover of August 4, 1975, in which Tim Shaw, Olympic medal winner in both swimming and water polo, is featured as "swimming's new superstar." He responds to something off camera and poses casually flexing muscles, displaying his body in an idealized, sculpted form. Conversely, the way Klamar presents the athletes is by mimicking action shots that feel forced and often comedic, resulting in off-looking poses that very much oppose the expected Olympic standards. His portrait of Diana Lopez shows her not in taekwondo kit but in regular sports clothes and heels as if she just walked into the room after training. She performs a high kick in heels backed by a visibly uneven white paper background. On a technical level, Klamar's lighting is intensely focused on muscularity and creates unexpected, often awkward looking shadows—especially in athletes' faces, in addition to using unconventional framing. The visual ordinariness and even awkwardness of the portraits do not render them unposed: what you see is constructed and purposeful posing.

The transparency of Klamar's process offers a more intimate access to his sitters and enhances their authentic portrayal due to his method of posing them in this way. They are reenacting their sport and offer a very unusual view of themselves as regular people, who also happen to be Olympic athletes. However, it is precisely this lack of conformation to the standard visual repertoire of heroic ideals that disturbed some critics. The portraits have been called outrageous, "shoddy," and an embarrassment for the United States (Curry 2012). Juxtaposing this with past athletic portraits, what critics of Klamar's work call "authentic" is really the myth of the athlete as the living embodiment of exceptional

human achievement and national virtue—exemplified in their poses. This case demonstrates that when considering authenticity, we need to be aware of rigid expectations that anticipate and search for an engrained standard.

The uncertainty over whether poses alter how we view people, or otherwise present something about someone that is inauthentic to the person, is remarked on by several scholars (Soley-Beltran 2006, 38–9; Bruni Lopez y Royo 2015, 301; Guyer 2020, 57). Freeland voices the basic worry quite well: "Perhaps what we now commonly accept as a persuasive portrait is due neither to the subject's power of self-preservation nor the artist's skills at emotional characterization, but to *tricks of props and poses*" (2007, 106, emphasis added). The worry is that poses cultivate a diminished authenticity because they constitute something more like a persuasive rhetorical trick. To sit for a portrait is unlike how you would sit in any other context. Even if we recognize that we take up degrees of posing in our everyday lives, only rarely do we find ourselves in a position of portrait making. This artificiality feeds into the suspicion that posing might hinder an authentic portrayal of a sitter by constructing a misleading representation, or to take the thought further, because portrait sitting in itself is an unusual activity for most sitters—who may not behave "as they normally do" when confronted with this situation. Underpinning the artificiality and inauthenticity concern is the idea that an unposed picture shows us more of a person than a posed picture. An intriguing example of both social self-presentation and posing are the later self-portraits by Lee Friedlander. Friedlander renders himself into an object, challenging the self-reflexive structure of self-portraiture, and declines to return his gaze to the camera. The camera is proxy for the photographer's gaze, who in this case renders himself an object before that same camera. These self-portraits "*eclipse* all possible externality, by occupying the space of external vantage in advance" and "*insist* on such externality, by forgoing perceptual control and determination of the image at the crucial moment" (Costello 2020, 177, 186–7).

The worry seems to be that the more one poses, the more one deviates from an authentic "ground-form" of both body and character. The pose projects how it intends to be perceived by a real or an imagined audience. The relationship between body, pose, perceiver, and the state of authenticity is more complex than a certain reduction to insincerity or intentionally misleading spectators. There are multiple ways to consider the self and its expressions. For example:

(1)   who I am
(2)   who I think I am
(3)   who I would like to be
(4)   who/how I would like others to think I am

I work through these considerations of the self in terms of gradation of self-judgment and idealization. (1) aspires to a truthful position and contains a sense of objectivity. (3) includes the desire for certain qualities to be associated with one's identity, this is an ideal self that is factual in its desire, no longer pure judgment. (4) pertains to an ideal self subjected to judgment, as well as (2) which risks self-deception in addition to judgment. The inauthentic social media selfies invert these categories. They deceptively pass off at least (3) and (4) as (1) and potentially engage in self-deception if they come to think of their fabrications as who they think they are. They fall into the trap of wishful thinking and deceit that obscure truthfulness. Portraits "posing as" someone could be positioned between this more factual and judged ideal self. All points seem sincere in their purpose, whether true or not, for example an insecure person posing as overly confident can still be taken as sincerely expressing their desire to be confident when they are not. So where does inauthenticity emerge? We end in a precarious position where any approach plays out as all possibly representing something authentic, even when one misleads or fails what one aspires to.

I argue that a truthful pose can be achieved when the pose identifies accurate features of the sitter in any of the dimensions of personhood and communicates these sincerely in its arrangement. Only those demonstrations of personhood will constitute a truthful account, and we avoid the muddling in which any sort of expression risks seeming authentic. A sitter may not know how to bring out their humorous nature if they stiffen, feeling ill-equipped to hold themselves in front of the camera. It takes the right guidance from a great artist to help bring out these qualities. I do not count this as particularly insincere, since it is still an extension of the person. The commitment to accurately represent nuanced

aspects of a sitter through a truthful rendering of the pose and portrait results in an authentic portrayal and viewing experience. Taking the artistic achievement into consideration, presenting these qualities in a suitable way only strengthens the later portrait that viewers behold. The pose in other words is an artistic tool that brings out precisely those authentic features.

Good portraiture engages with its sitter's authenticity. This becomes even more apparent in the many artistic deviations and innovations that push its boundaries. Annie Kevans and Joe Klamar are two such artists, who challenge how we access and understand sitters by interrogating what may constitute an authentic portrait. I approached the friction within portraiture between posing and its reliance on authenticity with Williams's concept of truthfulness as a virtuous attitude and versatile application to the self and by introducing a phenomenology of posing with two posing aspects that are at work. The portrait is the result of a struggle between potentially differing expectations, and among these there can be attempts at truthfulness. There is the idea, rooted in our language, that seeing is knowing (Freeland 2010, 84). As spectators, we do assume that when we see this sitter in the portrait, we visually access their person in some sense to gain an impression of who they are. Instead of being construed as misleading or inferior to unposed pictures in terms of its claim to authenticity, the pose is an artistic method that helps to convey something about the sitter. Via an attitude of truthfulness, it becomes an authentic portrait.[8]

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END NOTES

1   Modernist portraiture is concerned with negation and self-referentiality, pushing the boundaries of the portrayal of sitters by exploring their absence. The sitter, while not present, can still be represented through mental imagery that the portrait conjures up (Nanay 2020, 114, 125).

2   Some artists, such as Thomas Ruff, consciously pursue a mug-shot aesthetic in some of their fine art portraits.

3   Whether posing is a necessary condition of portraiture is a worthwhile matter, regrettably beyond the scope of this paper. To make my point that posing enhances authenticity, it is sufficient to introduce a phenomenology of posing and those circumstances in which it works.

4   I am grateful for Graeme A. Forbes's striking suggestion.

5   Exhibited at the Royal Society of British Artists' Annual Exhibition in 2016, see https://www.mallgalleries.org.uk/whats-on/exhibitions/royal-society-british-artists-annual-exhibition-2016/motion-study.

6   One can pose as-if-not-posing to give the impression that what the viewer sees is spontaneous.

7   Examples of other portraits: "Awesome or Awful: Joe Klamar's US Olympic Team Portraits" on Flavorwire, http://flavorwire.com/312726/awesome-or-awful-joe-klamars-us-olympic-team-portraits.

8