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1. Introduction

Social media allows users to express, explore and experiment with identity. This "self-branding" (Marwick, 2015) is particularly important for celebrities who, subject to greater scrutiny than the general public, undertake strategic performances designed to promote idealised versions of their self (Redmond, 2014:114). Through selfies, Instagram posts and tweets, celebrities self-style with the aim of gaining social capital and recognisability from others. But how novel are these practices? Perhaps, not as novel as they may seem.

In the late 19th century, Britain was gripped by a burgeoning cult of celebrity as a result of the widespread expansion of photography, which enabled the mass circulation of images in popular forms, such as picture postcards, cigarette cards and newspapers (Stephenson 2013:9). Photography gave celebrities greater control over their appearance and allowed them to present themselves as they wished to be seen (O'Neill and Hatt 2010:17). Consequently, its influence quickly translated into new modes of self-presentation in other media of the period. One such medium was pictorial bookplates – decorative labels used to mark book ownership – which became custom-designed by celebrities to reflect their interests, lifestyles and professions.

Pictorial bookplates can be approached as manifestations of, what Georgakopoulou (2016:306) calls, a rehearsed and stable self, which is consciously produced to construct a durable self-image, much in the same way as Facebook profile and cover pictures are used today. Like modern-day selfies, pictorial bookplates were powerful, portable and semi-public sites of self-fashioning that enabled their owners to use a range of semiotic and material resources to tell a story to others about their lives (O'Hagan 2019: 579-580).

In this paper, we explore, through a narrative-semiotic lens, how 32 Edwardian (1901-1914) celebrities style their persona in pictorial bookplates. In doing so, we contribute to the growing body of transhistorical research that takes place across disciplines (i.e., media and communication studies, sociolinguistics, sociology, cultural studies, social history) and is concerned with situating communication technologies in the wider history of technologically mediated change (e.g. Golden 2010; Gillen 2016; Tagg and Evans 2020). Given its interdisciplinarity, transhistorical research brings together a broad range of methodological and theoretical perspectives and is conducted directly (i.e., through comparative or contrastive analyses) or indirectly (by applying a concept from one time period to another). Our proposed approach is aligned with the latter; we apply discourse analytic frameworks associated with research on selfies, such as Zhao and Zappavigna's (2018a, 2018b) social semiotic approach and Bamberg and Georgakopoulou's (2008) positioning analysis, to the study of pictorial bookplates in order to revisit and enrich our current understanding of these Edwardian artefacts that draws primarily on art history, social history and cultural studies research. In doing so, we also foster a deeper awareness of the wider historical trajectory in which visual artefacts, such as selfies, occur and assess (dis)continuities between contemporary and historical modes of celebrity self-branding. Central to this approach is a recognition of comparison and continuity. In other words, a transhistorical perspective is not

about reading backwards to a finite point, but rather identifying antecedents in the communicative histories of individuals and communities that shape a text's creation (Tagg and Evans 2020:19). This means that when exploring the pictorial bookplate, we pay attention not just to how selfies potentially build upon historical practices of styling the self, but also how bookplates grounded themselves in earlier historical conventions of meaning making.

The paper begins by providing a brief history of the bookplate. It then offers a critical review of celebrification processes in terms of mediatization, personalization and commodification, drawing particular attention to pictorial bookplates and their comparability to selfies. Next, the narrative-semiotic approach used in this study and the data that will be explored are outlined. Building on discourse analytic research on selfies, we offer a new typology of pictorial bookplates and investigate how Edwardian celebrities brand their persona in these historical artefacts. By doing so, we indicate how seemingly innovative identity displays can be situated in wider sociohistorical contexts. The paper concludes with a critical discussion of the study's implications for future transhistorical research by shedding light on how the application of 'new' concepts and frameworks to the study of 'old' media, such as pictorial bookplates, can reveal (dis)continuities between historical and contemporary communication.

2. A Brief History of the Bookplate

All across the world, people have marked their books or documents with ownership inscriptions since as early as the 14th century BC (Fletcher, 2000:131). However, marks of ownership first evolved from simple hand-written inscriptions to custom-designed decorative labels, known as bookplates, in the Middle Ages, when private and public libraries became widespread and owners sought to protect their books and distinguish their copies from others (O'Hagan, 2021:39). In Britain, the first recorded use of a bookplate was in 1574, when Sir Nicholas Bacon, Lord Keeper of the Great Seal, created a bookplate with his heraldic arms, which he pasted into 70 volumes donated to Cambridge Library (O'Hagan, 2019:566).

Up until the late 19th century, most bookplates were similar in style to that of Bacon's: armorial in design with heraldic symbols related to their owner's family heritage. Their ownership, thus, was confined to the aristocracy and politicians who had a legal right to a coat of arms and the financial means to commission artists (O'Hagan 2019). With the diversification of 'celebrity status' in the Edwardian age, public figures who did not have access to a coat of arms began to experiment with pictorial designs, hiring artists to design bookplates that revealed information about their hobbies, professions and educational backgrounds. These bookplates cost between £20 to £50 on average (roughly £2,000 to £5,000 today), ensuring that bookplates remained exclusive and out of reach of 'ordinary' Edwardians.

As entrenched gentry and nouveaux riches (i.e., old and new celebrities) sought to secure their places in the social stratosphere of Edwardian society, pictorial bookplates became ever-sophisticated strategies of self-fashioning. As Allen (cited in Koch 1915:19-20) notes, at one

glance, a pictorial bookplate announced that its owner "glorifies in golf, has a regard for roses, rides a wheel, esteems Omar Khayyam very highly, reads Scott and Lowell, can quote Shakespeare, has been to Switzerland, collects butterflies and lives in New Jersey." Their potential for multiple performances of a private, as well as public, persona made bookplates wholly suitable for the new age of media saturation and the global circulation of celebrity images in the Edwardian era. But how do individuals attain celebrity status? In the following section, we review the key processes of celebrification through a transhistorical lens, focusing on the relevance of these processes to our understanding of celebrity culture and visual artefacts through the ages.

3. (Trans)Historicising Celebrification Processes

The prevalence of celebrity culture is ever-present in contemporary mediatised societies, not only in terms of increased media exposure of figures that have already reached stardom but also in terms of the potential for ordinary people to gain micro-celebrity status through (social) media engagement (Marwick and boyd 2011:140). This celebrification, i.e., the process through which public figures or ordinary people are transformed into celebrities, is driven by and interacts with the associated processes of mediatization, personalization and commodification (Driessens 2014:643).

3.1 Mediatization

Driessens (2014:17-18) defines mediatization as the influence of media – in terms of technologies and social practices, as well as organisations and social institutions – on the shaping of broader sociocultural environments and social practices. He argues that media is "a prerequisite and a possible catalyst" for celebrification and is directly responsible for the "diversification of celebrity", which has resulted in an expansion of the term to encompass politicians, academostars and socialites, not just entertainment and sports stars (cf. McKernan 2011). This issue of what he terms "supply and demand" (i.e., creating new supplies of celebrities to meet public demand) is not a product of contemporary society; it, in fact, has its roots in Edwardian Britain, where the 'new' medium of photography paved the way for the rise of 'new' celebrities in the 1900s.

Even before the 1900s, media-afforded artefacts, such as coinage, illuminated manuscripts, woodprints, portrait miniatures, copper engravings and lithographs, were employed as means for circulating the images of monarchs, statesmen and military officials, as well as religious figures, contributing, thus, to the sedimentation of their power and status. The invention of photography, however, broadened the notion of 'celebrity' to encompass individuals from more diverse social domains. As photos of celebrities became mass-produced and distributed through popular forms of media, such as postcards and newspapers, individuals became increasingly desired for their appearance and charisma over their intellect and gallantry. Consequently, traditional celebrities, such as scholars and politicians, were quickly disregarded in favour of the more photogenic actors, artists and sports stars (Wright, 2014). New media affordances, therefore, whether social media

platforms or traditional photography, have led to a diversification in the concept of celebrity, making it possible for mass audiences to access celebrities in new ways.

3.2 Personalization

While technological advances contribute to the mediatization of old and new celebrities, celebrity culture also capitalises on personalization (Driessens 2014:19), which involves an orientation towards the celebrity's individual qualities, their private life and, particularly, their mood, emotions and attitudes. This personalization is often achieved through the mobilisation of stories as (re)tellings of personal experience, as well as through other semiotic and material resources. Selfies, for example, act as "performative statements, a form of visual speech act uttering a presence in the here and now" (Jerslev and Mortensen 2016), displaying an authentic and private persona that is instantly shared with and among followers and fans. However, while personalization is typically considered as a product of the 'new media' age and its affordances for selecting private moments for instant sharing, its origins can again be traced historically.

The artistic tradition of portraiture has long offered artists a platform to design a particular persona by foregrounding individual qualities, often in line with idealising artistic conventions. As photography became increasingly popular in the 1860s, celebrities began to have their portraits taken, mounted onto paper card and turned into *cartes de visite* (visiting cards) that were sold in shops. Aware that their images would be widely circulated, they dressed in fashionable clothing, stood in front of ornate backdrops and adopted flattering poses. In this way, celebrities began to create objectified versions of themselves, which they used as 'social currency' to initiate and maintain relationships with the general public. According to Rudd (2015), *cartes* (and the larger 'cabinet cards' which followed ten years later in the 1870s) were the first visual artefacts to destabilise the public-private boundaries and allowed for a type of identity performance that anticipated the ways that contemporary celebrities make use of social media.

By the turn of the century, the invention of the Kodak Box Brownie camera made it increasingly possible for celebrities to take their own photographs. This led to the emergence of 'real photo' postcards – postcards created from negatives and printed onto card. The 'real photo' postcard enabled celebrities to create a relationship between themselves and familiar objects which defined their tastes, interests and place in their social networks (Edwards, 2004:29). No longer restricted to studios, celebrities now turned to capturing images of their private life (i.e., their houses, gardens, places of work and local landmarks) and enhancing them to hide facial defects by using chemist-bought tinting kits, decals, masking, add-ins and montages– practices that remind us of the application of filters in social media photo apps.

In addition to photographic means of self-presentation, celebrities also used the growing popularity of "portable property" (Plotz 2008:2) to promote individualised versions of self. Everyday artefacts, such as jewellery, handkerchiefs and books, were marked with elaborate, visual markers that personalised such items and transformed them into itinerant status

symbols and public displays of their owners' qualities and identity (O'Hagan 2021). As we will see in this paper, personalization was particularly apparent in the pictorial bookplate.

3.3 Commodification

Together with the crafting of a highly mediatised and personalised self, modern-day celebrities orient to processes of commodification (Driessens 2014). Individual celebrities are turned into commodities that are bestowed with economic value and promote particular ideologies. In the social media landscape, this is particularly evident in explicit or implicit advertising and promoting of brands, consumer goods and artistic products that are strategically embedded in celebrity selfies, for example.

While commodification is often associated with the recent conditions of globalization and late modernity, we can detect similar processes as early as in the 19th century. The aforementioned *cartes de visite*, cabinet cards and real photo postcards were highly successful at turning celebrities into monetary products and 'domesticising' them by their introduction into the homes of consumers. This craze for celebrity images was defined as 'cartomania', as members of the public avidly sought images to add to their photo albums and scrapbooks. This practice reveals the emergence of a new kind of commodified celebrity in the Edwardian era, while the artefacts themselves reveal unique experiences of tactility and proximity, providing an immediacy between the celebrity and the viewer mediated by a "two-dimensional skin" in the form of a portable hand-sized card (Teukolsky 2015:273). Similar to celebrity selfies, this enabled the instantaneous and continuous sharing of the "extraordinary everyday" with fans (Marshall 2006).

Celebrity bookplates were an additional means for visually crafting the celebrity persona not only for private consumption but also for sharing with family, friends and colleagues. Many celebrities donated their book collections to public libraries under the strict stipulation that their bookplates be left intact (cf. *South Wales Daily News*, 12 December 1900), indicating an awareness of the currency of their 'self as a brand' to be consumed beyond the here and now. For this reason, like photographs, bookplates became commodified, with celebrities regularly commissioning new designs to commemorate special occasions, portray different aspects of personality or even showcase a new item of clothing, hairstyle or furniture (O'Hagan, 2021), much in the same way as we might change our profile photos today. These 'status updates' were followed avidly by 'bookplate hunters' – the Edwardian equivalent of social media followers – who sought copies of these celebrity bookplates in auctions and second-hand shops to add to their own collections.

3.4 Selfies and Pictorial Bookplates: A Transhistorical Perspective

Applying a transhistorical lens to the key celebrification processes demonstrates continuities of practice and reveals the prevalence of visual and portable means in the construction of the celebrity self. More importantly, it situates visual artefacts like the selfie and the pictorial bookplate within a longer trajectory of sociocultural practices, as Edwardian practices come to life and are better understood through insights from contemporary selfie culture. Equally,

we see how the Edwardian bookplate drew upon earlier practices of portraiture, *cartes de visite*, cabinet cards and real photo postcards, thus emphasising how new forms of media do not mark a radical break in perspectives on styling self, but rather represent the "latest development in a complex and ongoing history of technologically mediated social change" (Tagg and Evans, 2020:19).

4. Research Design

Following an indirect approach to transhistorical research, this study analyses a dataset of 32 Edwardian celebrity pictorial bookplates by using tools and methods associated with social media research in order to develop a better understanding of bookplate functions and to situate the selfie within a more extensive lineage of practice.

The data comes from a larger sample of 4,000 Edwardian book inscriptions collected by one of the authors (O'Hagan) as part of five years of doctoral and postdoctoral research exploring identity, class conflict and literacy in Edwardian Britain through book inscriptions. The inscriptions were collected physically from a manual search of shelves at Bookbarn International, the largest secondhand bookshop in Britain, and then subsequently digitised. However, as most celebrity bookplates are held in special collections rather than bookshops due to their historical and monetary value, this data was supplemented by online searches of the digitised collections of the British Museum and the Victoria and Albert Museum. In total, 200 celebrity bookplates were identified, of which 32 were pictorial in nature. Despite this small number, the sample was compared with two private library collections held at Bristol Reference Library (Clake Collection) and Leeds University's Special Collections (Keown Collection) to ensure its representability. The celebrity bookplate owners fall into five domains covering the broad spectrum of 'old' and 'new' celebritism in the early 20th century: aristocracy, politics, professional, arts and sports (van Krieken, 2012:11-13). A detailed list of their names and professions can be found in the Appendix.

Historical classifications of bookplates (Hardy 1893; Hamilton 1895) draw primarily on what is depicted in the image and they identify four main types: portrait, library interior, residential and allegorical. In our analysis, we revisit this classification by applying a social semiotic perspective; namely Zhao and Zappavigna's (2018a, 2018b, 2020) and Ross and Zappavigna's (2019) approach to selfies, which focuses on the photos' perspectives and what these convey about an individual's relationship with the wider world rather than what is featured in the images (e.g. human characters, objects, etc.). Zhao and Zappavigna (2018a) identified four types of selfie – presented, mirrored, inferred and implied – distinguished on the basis of their representational and compositional choices. Ross and Zappavigna (2019) developed this typology further, adding 'still life' as a fifth category based on their investigation of Instagram selfies by cyclists (see Table 1). These typologies foreground the selfie's potential to negotiate different perspectives on the social world around the person, together with his/her relationship with a potential audience (Zappavigna 2012, 2016). According to Zhao and Zappavigna (2018a:1737), when a person takes a selfie, they are looking inwardly into the self but are also simultaneously engaging outwardly with the world, using visual cues to negotiate

certain social positions. When categorising and analysing pictorial bookplates, we adopt a similar perspective in order to tap into their subjective and intersubjective meanings. To mitigate any inaccuracies in the categorisation process, initial classification was conducted by O'Hagan and then cross-checked by Spilioti.

(INSERT TABLE 1 HERE)

In order to tap into the styling and storying of the celebrity persona, we have looked into each category separately and analysed the bookplates through a narrative-semiotic lens, drawing upon elements of positioning analysis (Bamberg and Georgakopoulou 2008) and its application to the study of selfies (Georgakopoulou 2016). Positioning analysis is an interactional approach to narrative and identities that uses three interrelated levels that reveal insights into how users present themselves through specific semiotic choices in specific contexts (Deppermann 2015). Level One is concerned with the characters in an image, their relations, evaluative attributions, activities, overall placement in time and place, visual arrangements and narrative stance-taking elements. Level Two considers audience patterns of engagement and the ways in which stories are told in interaction with other people and through multi-semiotic means, while Level Three draws upon ethnographic insights to look at the broader context of who the storyteller is and their more 'stable' identity in the world.

Our analysis seeks to address the following inter-related questions: (1) how do Edwardian celebrities use pictorial bookplates to brand a celebrity persona? and (2) to what extent can (dis)continuities be noted between celebrity self-branding in pictorial bookplates and on social media? To this end, we combine the social semiotic perspective with primarily the first and third levels of positioning analysis in order to identify particular semiotic and material choices and ground them in ethnohistorical research to explore how celebrities use bookplates to tell narratives that style and brand the celebrity self in particular ways. While we have some knowledge of the ways in which users responded to pictorial bookplates through historical newspaper clippings and archival documents, this interactivity cannot be assessed in the same way as selfies, where audience engagement can be traced and quantified through likes, comments and retweets. For this reason, the impact of audience response to bookplates on the Edwardian celebrities' styling of the self will not be analysed in detail in our study.

5. Edwardian Pictorial Bookplates as Selfies

Having applied Zhao and Zappavigna (2018a, 2018b, 2020) and Ross and Zappavigna's (2019) model to the analysis of Edwardian bookplates, we found that, in terms of representational and compositional choices, there are affinities between pictorial bookplates and three types of contemporary selfies: presented, implied and still life. With respect to the 'presented' category, though, we argue that it does not encompass all of the possible ways in which a person could appear in a bookplate. In many cases, the owner is present, but he/she is represented allegorically to depict a particular quality, characteristic or belief. This draws

explicitly on the earlier practice of portraiture, which equally enabled individuals to take control over presenting themselves in a particular way to the outside world. In accordance with Rettberg's (2014) work on the meaning potentials of selfie filters, we call this new category an 'augmented selfie' because it relies on symbolism to align the owner with broader messages about their identity rather than simply 'present' them to the world. These four types of bookplates and their potential for self-presentation will be analysed in more detail in the sections below. Table 2 provides an overview of the distribution of bookplates in our dataset according to selfie type.

(INSERT TABLE 2 HERE)

5.1 Portrait Pictorials as Presented Selfies

The Edwardian version of the presented selfie was the portrait pictorial – a type of bookplate that depicted the owner's head and upper body and aimed to capture the "essence of their inner state" by drawing upon a range of semiotic resources to express, depict and perform identity (Carbon 2017). The portrait pictorials displayed carefully designed acts of positioning, as the artist's brush, together with the individual's perspective, worked towards visually articulating how the Edwardians saw themselves and their world and how they wished others to see them (Mansfield 2013:78). In terms of compositional choices, and similar to modern-day selfies (Zhao and Zappavigna 2018a:1746), the individual was typically placed at the centre of the frame and was foregrounded. However, portrait pictorials were not uniform in design. Edwardian culture was "caught between nostalgia and revolutionary modernity, tradition and transformation" (Shaw 2013:381). This duality, often conflicting, shines through in celebrities' representational and compositional choices, which result in shaping distinct stories and, thus, creating different positions for the Edwardian celebrities.

The images in Figures 1a and 1b illustrate portrait pictorials of two 'traditional' celebrities: the historian Mandell Creighton and Teresa Blumenfeld, the wife of a newspaper magnate. Both individuals are portrayed on a side angle with their mouth in a neutral position and gaze directed away from the viewer. Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) describe this pose as an "act of offer" because it 'offers' the individuals to viewers as "objects of contemplation [...] as though they were specimens in a display case" (119). The individuals face left – the historically appropriate angle for portraiture in Western tradition. From the Renaissance period to the early 20th century, the left side of a person's face was not only considered more emotionally powerful and a sign of social superiority, but it also signalled a desire for the past (Tagg, 1988; Hall, 2008) – all key traits that traditional celebrities were keen to express to the outside world. Although this association between left-right and past-future/high-low social status was gradually lost as a pictorial code following the two World Wars (O'Hagan, 2021:284), contemporary selfies still reveal a preference for left orientations (Manovich, Ferrari and Bruno, 2017; Bruno, Bode and Bertamini, 2017).

Despite these similar poses, the stories told through the male and female portraits differ when we look into the ways in which the individuals are visually styled and positioned vis-à-

vis the viewer's gaze. Men appear scholarly and immersed in their work (note Creighton's crosier, books and St Paul's Cathedral), while women are portrayed as beautiful objects. Blumenfeld, for example, is shown with long, curly hair, thick neck, solid jawline, low-necked dress and faraway gaze, which conforms to traditional images of beauty, and turns her into a fetishised object of the male gaze. Through storying themselves according to conventional and conservative ideals, the owners of these bookplates present themselves as proponents of continuity in the face of the challenges to the Edwardian status quo from both the labour movement and the women's suffrage campaign.

(INSERT FIGURES 1A AND 1B HERE)

On the other hand, pictorial portraits which break free from the Victorian norms of portraiture belong to 'modern' Edwardian celebrities. A representative example is the image in Figure 2a of the actor Harold Chapin, who had this bookplate commissioned when he obtained the role of the Harlequin in J.M. Barrie's play *Pantaloon*. Chapin's portrait goes against expected conventions, displaying a frontal angle from which he gazes directly at the viewer with a smile on his face, arms raised and right foot forward. His confident pose suggests an act of "demand" (Kress and van Leeuwen 2006:124), rather than "offer", and visually constructs him as friendly and charming. Female 'modern' celebrities, on the other hand, still focused on beauty, yet subverted the male gaze by seeking alternative and profoundly personalised representations, which enabled some control over their body aesthetic. This is exemplified in the bookplate of Olive Custance (Figure 2b), a poet and the wife of Lord Douglas, who is shown from a side angle, yet is located outside of the domestic sphere within a theatre and watching the performance below. Rather than being positioned as an object, she is captured in the act of watching a performance and her physically high position in a box construes her metaphorically as superior over others.

In contrast to the portrait pictorials of traditional celebrities, these bookplates construct alternative positions for the men and women of the Edwardian society who moved in fashionable literary or political circles and subscribed to the Aesthetic Movement; a movement that reacted to the conventions of a highly moralistic society through bold dress and sensuality (Almond 2011). As mentioned in section 3, the road to celebrity status is facilitated through highly individualised accounts of the self; the bookplates that do not adhere to traditional conventions of portraiture offer us a glimpse of how this was achieved by the 'new' celebrities in the Edwardian era.

(INSERT FIGURES 2A AND 2B HERE)

5.2 Residential Pictorials as Implied Selfies

Residential pictorials show an external shot of the owner's home and its gardens or a more intimate view of the house taken from the perspective of the inside looking out. They are often accompanied by a strapline with the owner's address, acting as an Edwardian version of a check-in location. These images enabled celebrities to position themselves within their personal space, serving as a snapshot of a particular moment in their lifetime. However, the emphasis was less on their personal interests and more on their financial wealth and social status, captured through the focus on one centralised item. In this way, residential pictorials bear strong similarities with the implied selfie, which comprises an object or objects that imply the photographer emplaced within a scenic location. Like residentials, these types of selfie also carry heavy layers of symbolic meaning because their framing is used to signify the presence of the viewer in the image, yet at the same time keeps him/her at a certain distance.

Residential pictorials capitalised upon the growing public interest in celebrities' homes that the invention of photography and circulation of mass media had brought about. Aware of the general public's desire to consume images of their private lives, Edwardian celebrities used residential pictorials to construct an elusive self, offering an illusion of exclusive access, yet reminding viewers that there were still further layers of intimate spheres that remained beyond their reach (Harrison 2003:48). This balance was achieved through perspective, which, in most cases, showed the owner's house at the furthermost point of the image, poking out mystically amongst trees at the end of a long path and barred off by gates. This perspective appears across the bookplates of traditional and modern celebrities, suggesting that, while their sociocultural and political views may have varied immensely, the book owners remained united in their desire to play with and control which aspects of self would be exposed and, thus, consumed by the general public. This can be seen in the image of Adderstone Hall, the house of the industrialist John William Watson (Figure 3a), and Petworth House, the home of Lady Violet Leconfield (Figure 3b), which create an ambiguous position whereby viewers are being invited into the celebrities' private lives, yet the compositional choices keep them at a distance and emphasise the celebrity's superior status (Wolk-Rager, 2013:43).

(INSERT FIGURES 3A AND 3B HERE)

Although the use of perspective and framing can conceal elements of the celebrities' private lives, attention to the symbolic meaning of the elements strategically emplaced in the bookplate can reveal intimate aspects of their identity. In Leconfield's bookplate, for example, the pedestal of doves, flowers and crosses topped by two cherubs holding a crown and the stylised form of her initials serve to position herself as a religious and respectable figure, whereas in Watson's, the pictorial borders emphasise the house's history of ownership. The

open book – *Dorothy Forster* by Walter Besant – is a subtle reference to the Forsters, who were the original owners of Adderstone Hall, but had to sell the house to the Watson family when they went bankrupt in the early 18th century. Thus, the book may act as a symbol of disparagement and ridicule, further emphasised by the juxtaposition of Watson's own coat of arms and the motto "hic habitabo quia hic felicitas mea" (here is where my happiness dwells).

5.3 Library Interior Pictorials as Still Life Selfies

Library interior pictorials show an image of the owner's study, with carefully displayed objects, furnishings and decorations that indicate elements of his or her personality and, at the same time, position them at the top of Edwardian Britain's social hierarchy. The symbolic use of everyday objects in visual artefacts echoes the genre of interior voyeuristic art, popularised in 16th-century Holland, where everyday items were read through the lens of Christian religious symbolisms. Similar to residential pictorials, the library pictorials also manipulate point of view and invoke viewers' presence through empty chairs, open books, lit fires and ajar doors, fostering intimacy with viewers, as they immerse themselves in the presented scene, and opening up opportunities for them to consume the private life of the book owners. In their "aestheticisation of experience," library pictorials can be said to share traits with the still life selfie, defined by Ross and Zappavigna (2019) as an image of an object that represents the owner and acts as an "extended self" through a form of still life self-imaging. The backdrop of bookshelves draws attention to the role of furnishings as a form of symbolic material capital – a trait that has become particularly evident in the rise of "shelfies" during the current coronavirus pandemic, showing how contemporary communicative practices are continuously reconfigured from past phenomena.

The library was a key feature of all self-respecting Edwardian middle- and upper-class homes. Advice manuals promoted the domestic library as a room where the head of the family could retreat for business or the woman could go to read, but also as a room that could be used for large social gatherings (Morrish 1994:41). The manuals also instructed readers on the type of furniture they should place in their libraries to present a positive image to the outside world of somebody who is intelligent, respectable and graceful. Both Mrs Beeton's *Housewife's Treasury* (1880) and A.H. Miles's *The 20th-century Household Guide* (1909) recommended libraries to be furnished with purpose-built bookcases in oak, walnut or mahogany, with glazed doors, brass fittings and cupboards at their bottom, as well as armchairs, statuettes, busts, old china and a piano. Most of these features are found across male and female library interior bookplates, as exemplified by the bookplates of Liberal MP Reginald Nicholson (Figure 4a) and writer Marie Hay (Figure 4b).

(INSERT FIGURES 4A AND 4B HERE)

Through their bookplates and design choices, Nicholson and Hay turn their personal possessions into elaborate sign systems that offer a snapshot of their life and tell a story about who they are. At a glance, we can see that Nicholson enjoys reading, shooting and playing badminton, that he has a dog and is part of the peerage. Equally, we learn that Hay enjoys reading (particularly Tennyson) and playing the piano (particularly Schumann), and that she is religious. Nicholson's stained-glass windows, together with the heraldic symbols, also position him as an individual with a rich family heritage and a taste for the latest fashion. Equally, the presence of his initials in a carved shield, the engraved rhyme "Give me a nook & a book" and the lit fire suggest respectability and homeliness. Hay also creates a sense of homeliness in her bookplate with the presence of flowers, candles and the religious motto "esto sol testis" (let the sun be your witness). Despite the warning in Cassell's *Domestic Dictionary* (1884) that books should not be left lying about and should be promptly reshelved once read, books are left on the floor, chair and table in both bookplates. Their casual position gives the impression that viewers have interrupted a private moment and serves to construct a fictional, intimate relationship with the celebrity.

The library interiors of 'modern' celebrities, such as Hay, however, also show touches of modernity blended with tradition, reflecting a more hybrid and ambiguous position towards the 'old' values. Hay's wall borders and patterns on her chair, mirror, cabinets and glass all feature the typical whiplash lines associated with Art Nouveau. According to Penner and Rice (2010:132), these aesthetic choices were one of the most privileged and stable signifiers of bourgeois identity and taste in Edwardian Britain. Therefore, the pictorial bookplates were effective means for crafting a celebrity persona that could orient to either modern celebrity (Hay) or to more traditional (Nicholson) ideals.

5.4. Allegorical Pictorials as Augmented Selfies

Pictorial bookplates that include the head and body of a person but are not portraits of the book owner represent an anomaly as they do not fall within the category of presented selfie. On closer inspection, such bookplates offer an allegorical version of the individual that personifies particular virtues, abstract ideas or beliefs. Drawing primarily on classical mythology, religious iconography or historical legend, these allegorical pictorials can be seen as a form of "rescripting" (Georgakopoulou, 2015), whereby individuals exploit visual manipulations of historical or biblical figures and, in doing so, reposition themselves in relation to such well-known characters and events to emphasise a particular personality trait or personal belief. Selfie filters on social media and videotelephony software allow similar rescripting potentials, albeit typically for parodical or satirical effect. The temporary trend in April 2020 for art recreation on social media also offered similar opportunities for individuals to impersonate famous artworks, often challenging race and gender conventions. Considering these contemporary phenomena and based on the work of Rettberg (2014), we introduce the term 'augmented selfie' in order to refer to such allegorical presentations of the self.

During the Romanticism movement, allegorical artwork showed figures holding objects that symbolised specific concepts, such as scales for justice or a mirror and snake for prudence. By the Edwardian era, this well-known style was being implemented into pictorial bookplates, yet with one fundamental difference: the book owners themselves were personified as the figures (e.g. socialite Margaret Thomson as St Margaret). Furthermore, in many cases, these original allegorical meanings were expanded to encompass particular political opinions (e.g. author Francis Joseph Bigger as a Celtic warrior to express support for Home Rule in Ireland). While allegorical bookplates were used by both traditional and modern, male and female celebrities, our dataset suggests that they were used slightly more frequently by modern women. These augmented selfies provided maximum opportunities for creativity because they were not tied down to particular norms or canons of behaviour that traditional portraiture, houses and furnishings were. In this way, they may have been particularly empowering for women because they enabled them to refashion themselves in new and imaginary roles (Nemer and Freeman 2015:1833), as shown in Figures 5a and 5b.

The first bookplate (Figure 5a) belongs to the actress Calypso Chapin. Playing with her own first name, Chapin portrays herself as the nymph Calypso who entices Odysseus in Homer's *Odyssey*. In the image, Chapin's bowed head, closed eyes and turned body act as a bold display of sexualisation, which is further accentuated by her naked body, sandaled feet, headpiece and bosom-like cymbals. Her position on a plinth turns her into a statue, offering her as an object of contemplation. In the Edwardian age, nymphs represented both the 'femme fatale' archetype (Fletcher, 2013:101) and the personification of natural creation, particularly appealing to bourgeois women as a representation of power over one's own fate (Adorno and Horkheimer, 2016:58). Thus, Chapin's choice of character enables her to take a playfully ambiguous position: she expresses her sexuality but in an empowering way that connects her to the beauty and power of the natural world.

(INSERT FIGURES 5A AND 5B HERE)

The second bookplate (Figure 5b) shows the actress Vera Holme personified as Joan of Arc – the national heroine of France who led the French army to victory over the English at Orléans in 1430. The figure of Joan of Arc was revived in the early 20th century by the suffragettes who saw her as a feminist icon (Warner 2013:xvi). Holme was heavily involved in the suffrage movement, serving as a member of the Actresses' Franchise Union and the Women's Social and Political Union and moonlighting as Emmeline's Pankhurst's chauffeur. Thus, her self-presentation as Joan of Arc granted her symbolic power at a time when she was denied political power in real life. The strength of the image is accentuated by the strapline "O freedom beautiful beyond compare thy kingdom is established," taken from Edward

Carpenter's *Towards Democracy* – a poem that expressed his own vision of a free world which embraced direct democracy. Hart (2013:113) notes that history painting in the Edwardian era invited a "participatory response" from viewers, who would thereby be implicated in a moral cause. The way in which Holme rescripts herself in the bookplate functions in this way by drawing upon the rhetoric of martyrdom, sacrifice, honour and chivalry to encourage a call to arms in support of the suffragettes' social campaign.

6. Concluding Discussion

We have set out this paper by asking how novel the current celebrity practices of self-branding through visual artefacts, such as selfies, are. In order to answer this question, we have adopted a transhistorical lens and, through the detailed study of pictorial bookplates of Edwardian celebrities, we have situated both selfies and Edwardian bookplates within a long lineage of self-presentational practices where media technologies and visual affordances play a key role.

The application of discourse analytic tools to the study of pictorial bookplates brought to the fore how particular semiotic choices and resources were mobilised and oriented to the key processes of celebrification. We have shown how self-branding in the Edwardian era capitalises on the personalisation of bookplates by orienting to and, at times, strategically subverting aesthetic norms in order to foreground individual traits, attitudes and positions in the social sphere. This was particularly evident in the portrait pictorial which, similar to contemporary presented selfies, enabled individuals to participate in collaborative acts of self-fashioning that framed celebrity as an organic and dynamic performance rather than a static set of characteristics or labels. However, it was also apparent in the allegorical pictorial, which we termed an 'augmented selfie' because of its use of symbolism to align individuals with well-known figures or events to present broader messages about their identity. This type of (re)presentation of self was absent from Zhao and Zappavigna's (2018) model, but can be found in the social media use of avatars and iconic pictures of well-known figures (such as Che Guevara) which, according to Turkle (2011:153), offer a "fantasy of who we want to be" and enable users to turn somebody else's story into their own.

The concept of a commodified self was also evident in residential and library interior pictorials which, like modern day implied and still life selfies, provided glimpses of the book owner's private life and oriented to the audience's desire to consume intimate details related to the celebrities' home, likes and interests. These processes of personalisation and commodification were mediated through technologies of the era, with the visual, its affordances and historically imbued symbolic meanings used as a key mode of self-representation. Attention to the mediational means also highlighted one of the key differences between selfies and bookplates, as the range of subjectivity perspectives were constrained by the technologies available; the meta-meta-perspective enabled through

contemporary portable cameras (inferred selfie) or mirrors (mirrored selfie), for example, is notably absent in the bookplate practices of Edwardian celebrities.

In the transhistorical approach we propose for the study of celebrity practices of self-branding, we combine *discourse analytic frameworks* that enable the micro-analysis of pictorial bookplates as multi-semiotic constructions of the self, *ethnohistorical research* that sheds light on the wider narratives and discourses mobilised in individual acts of positioning, and *research from cultural studies and social history* that provides insights into the cultural and sociohistorical contexts within which we need to situate and interpret meaning-making strategies and practices attested in the data. This indirect transhistorical approach that applies 'new' concepts and methodologies to the study of 'old' artefacts contributes to both historical research on bookplates and discourse analytic work on selfies and social media. With respect to historical research, we have revisited existing typologies of bookplates and conceptualised them not as static historical artefacts but as dynamic, contextually emergent, displays of self, co-constructed by the book owners, their imagined audiences and the professionals involved in their production. In terms of existing selfie research, together with introducing the 'augmented selfie', we have situated contemporary selfies within a more extensive lineage of practice; against the backdrop of rapid technological developments, this type of transhistorical study enables social media research to capture (visual) genre ecologies and genealogies of vernacular practice, moving beyond a transient focus on the here-and-now or fascination with the 'new'. While this study has focused on Britain, bookplates were – and still are – a global phenomenon, much like the selfie. Preliminary research by one of the authors (O'Hagan) into celebrity bookplates in Sweden during the same time period suggests similar trends in self-styling. However, further exploration in this area and comparisons with celebrity bookplates from other countries would enrich the findings of this paper and shed additional light on our understanding of celebrity culture from a transhistorical perspective.

Beyond bookplates and selfies, a transhistorical approach can be used to situate other seemingly novel social media practices in a longer historical trajectory of communication technologies and their relationship within human social systems, such as birthday notifications (birthday books, used in the 19th century to record the birthdays of loved ones), clean copy challenges (autograph books), memes (parody bookplates) and content sharing (grangerisation – the 19th-century practice of adding new content to books by cutting out text and pictures from other publications). However, it can also be used within other areas, such as marketing, to understand the sociohistorical antecedents of contemporary advertisements, thereby fostering a critical reflection on how certain semiotic choices help construct discourses of truth. Indeed, this approach has already been employed by O'Hagan (2020a, 2020b) and Eriksson and O'Hagan (forthcoming) to situate the use of infographics, consumer storytelling and scientific claims in contemporary food advertisements within a mid-19th century context.

Through its indirect transhistorical approach, our study has revealed that selfies and pictorial bookplates can both function as portable, multi-semiotic, rehearsed constructions of the self. In both cases, users craft a persona that appears as ordinary and extraordinary, thereby blurring the boundaries between public and private life and narrowing the gap between fandom and fame. This is aided by greater control over the design and propagation of the branded self than in earlier periods due to increased opportunities for heavy editing and manipulation of the available semiotic and material resources. However, this development of a particular persona is not a uniform or unidirectional process, but rather a polycentric construction of self where agency and control over particular self-(re)presentations is far from limited to the celebrity alone. For both, the significance of authenticity, appropriacy and intimacy is relevant and crafted in relation to an audience (fans/followers) who engage with the images through likes, shares and memes (in the case of selfies) and clubs, exhibitions and 'hunts' of auction houses and second-hand bookshops (in the case of bookplates). In addition, in performing the self through visual artefacts, Edwardian and contemporary celebrities produce an emulative desire in their audience, although the audience itself lacks the type of connection with the celebrities, as well as the means, needed in order to gain any real social capital from the exchange.

Despite their similarities in composition and purpose, there are some fundamental differences between selfies and pictorial bookplates, namely influenced by technology (in the case of the former) and entrenched class-based codes of conduct (in the case of the latter). For selfies, technology grants advanced visual and mobile affordances for performances of self, networked communication and mobile place-making, allowing users to take further the forms of self-styling seen in pictorial bookplates and opening a space to develop or revise (re)constructions of reality. Pictorial bookplates, on the other hand, were not as democratic as selfies and were largely inaccessible to those with low financial means. Equally, their rules of composition were strongly influenced by traditional canons of use (e.g. portraiture, voyeuristic art) and deeply rooted in societal norms of behaviour, particularly around class and gender. This meant that bookplates were often created with an awareness of the boundaries of social acceptability and the various sociohistorical ways in which meaning could be created through particular semiotic choices. While this had potential constraints for users, it also presented unique affordances not possible in contemporary selfies as bookplates' exclusivity gave them their own special register in which rhetorical meaning was cued based on taste, fashion regulation, semiotic virtuosity and the reproduction of elite status (O'Hagan, 2021:115). This accentuated their worth as objects of material capital, showcasing both the power of materiality and the materiality of power and enabling presentations of self to fulfil a social function of legitimating social difference. Nonetheless, the presence of allegorical bookplates suggests that some modern celebrities used them as empowering and transformative media to push certain ideas that challenged the status quo, thus demonstrating how vernacular art forms can be constitutive of political confrontation and social contention.

Beeston *et al.* (2020) have argued that the increasing standardisation of (social) media platforms is bringing about fewer opportunities for user creativity in terms of presentation of self. A similar phenomenon can be traced to the pictorial bookplate. As its popularity grew amongst Edwardian celebrities, canny booksellers and stationers recognised its commercial potential and began selling cheap mass-produced designs. Their rapid production was facilitated by the application of newspaper print methods and machinery, which allowed them to be printed and bought it bulk. From 1920 onwards, mass-produced bookplates increased the number of bookplate owners exponentially, filtering their usage down to non-celebrities and even the working classes, but in doing so, it limited potential for individuality and exclusivity, leading to the decline and ultimately the 'death' of the custom-designed bookplate. Still today, bookplates survive in mass-produced forms, yet they are a minority practice now that books have become less valuable, more disposable and must compete with 'trendier' forms of media (O'Hagan, 2021). While the selfie is far from dying, Georgakopoulou (2020) has noted its evolution and mutation over time in response to new technological features on social media, such as live-streaming, facial recognition and the vertical format of 'stories'. The pictorial bookplate's changes in response to consumer demands and technological affordances and its ultimate demise remind us of the importance of tracking these modern-day "vernacular genealogies" (Georgakopoulou, 2020) in order to ensure that their digital transience is somehow captured and preserved for future generations. In doing so, the dynamic and dialogic relationship between the visual capabilities, features and sociocultural effects of 'new' and 'old' forms of media can continue to be explored.

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