

Shine Bright LLCE Cycle Terminal

File 15 United Selves of America

Selfie or self-portrait? p. 173

Camera pioneer Robert Cornelius is widely credited with taking the first photo of himself in 1839, though whether or not it was a true “selfie” is debatable.

“Cornelius would probably have had an assistant make the exposure¹,” said the historian and director general of the Royal Photographic Society. “At best, it would be considered a self-portrait. Selfie is stretching the definition.”

The selfie, as it’s known today, first took off² in 2005 with the usage of MySpace, and the trend has only grown in popularity since then. In 2013, the term “selfie” was added to the dictionary – which signified its prevalence in modern culture.

The duck face, the fish gape, the smize³ – these are just a few of the facial expressions and poses that the masses have adopted over the years as occasional selfies have evolved into normal lifestyle impulses.

The selfie boom may be behind us: remember when selfie sticks were everywhere? However, several companies continue to cash in on⁴ people’s self-interest in crafting beautiful images of themselves.

Dalvin Brown, *USA Today*, May 22, 2019

1. take the photograph **2.** become popular **3.** smile using only the eyes **4.** make money from

The original king of selfies p. 173

The Andy Warhol Museum

In early 2014, Huffington Post reported that Andy Warhol was “The Original King of Selfie.” [...] Warhol left behind a vast collection of self-portraits, including Polaroid prints and silkscreen paintings¹, spanning from young adulthood to death.

An early image cut from a photobooth² strip reveals a casual, coolkid Warhol. With dark black shades, the artist used the photobooth to capture his own image and experimented with self-portrayal. The result is strikingly similar to much of what can be seen on a young adult’s Instagram account today. [...]

Warhol’s self-portraits give us an insider’s look into the artist’s personal sphere. From his youthful photobooth moments to his dramatic silkscreen self-portraits, the changing images allow us to observe his lifelong experimentation and to understand his cultural fix tions.

Maybe, however, the answer is much simpler, as Warhol is quoted as saying: “I paint pictures of myself to remind myself that I’m still around.”

Maeve McAllister, *warhol.org*, December 30, 2015

1. *sérigraphies* **2.** *photomaton*

« A man diligent in his calling » p. 174

This library afforded¹ me the means of improvement by constant study, for which I set apart an hour or two each day, and thus repair'd in some degree the loss of the learned education my father once intended for me. Reading was the only amusement I allow'd myself. I spent no time in taverns, games, or frolicks² of any kind; and my industry³ in my business continu'd as indefatigable as it was necessary. I was indebted for my printing-house; I had a young family coming on to be educated, and I had to contend with⁴ for business two printers, who were established in the place before me. My circumstances, however, grew daily easier. My original habits of frugality continuing, and my father having, among his instructions to me when a boy, frequently repeated a proverb of Solomon, "Seest thou a man diligent⁵ in his calling⁶, he shall stand before kings, he shall not stand before mean⁷ men," I from thence considered industry as a means of obtaining wealth and distinction, which encourag'd me, tho' I did not think that I should ever literally stand before kings, which, however, has since happened; for I have stood before five, and even had the honor of sitting down with one, the King of Denmark, to dinner.

Benjamin Franklin, *The Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin*, 1771-1790

1. give 2. parties 3. hard work 4. compete against 5. assidu 6. work 7. common

A self-made woman p. 175

Throughout my childhood, my parents emphasized the importance of pursuing a meaningful life. Dinner discussions often centered on social injustice and those fighting to make the world a better place. As a child, I never thought about what I wanted to be, but I thought a lot about what I wanted to do. As sappy¹ as it sounds, I hoped to change the world. My sister and brother both became doctors, and I always believed I would work at a nonprofit² or in government. That was my dream. And while I don't believe in mapping out each step of a career, I do believe it helps to have a long-term dream or goal.

A long-term dream does not have to be realistic or even specific. It may reflect the desire to work in a particular field or to travel throughout the world. Maybe the dream is to have professional autonomy or a certain amount of free time. Maybe it's to create something lasting or win a coveted³ prize. Some goals require more traditional paths; anyone who aspires to become a Supreme Court justice should probably start by attending law school. But even a vague goal can provide direction, a far-off guidepost to move toward.

With an eye on my childhood dream, the first job I took out of college was at the World Bank as research assistant to Larry Summers, who was serving a term as chief economist. Based in Washington, D.C., the Bank's mission is to reduce global poverty. I spent my first nine months in the stacks of the Bank library on the corner of Nineteenth and Pennsylvania, looking up facts and figures for Larry's papers and speeches. Larry then generously arranged for me to join an India health field mission to get a closer look at what the Bank actually did. Flying to India took me into an entirely different world. [...]

I returned to D.C. with a plan to attend law school, but Lant Pritchett, an economist in Larry's office who has devoted his life to the study of poverty, persuaded me that business school would be a better alternative. I headed back⁴ to Cambridge.

Sheryl Sandberg, *Lean In: Women, Work and the Will to Lead*, 2013

1. sentimental 2. association à but non lucratif 3. highly desired 4. return

A slave's story p. 176

I was born in Tuckahoe, near Hillsborough, and about twelve miles from Easton, in Talbot county, Maryland. I have no accurate knowledge of my age, never having seen any authentic record containing it. By far the larger part of the slaves know as little of their ages as horses know of theirs, and it is the wish of most masters within my knowledge to keep their slaves thus ignorant. I do not remember to have ever met a slave who could tell of his birthday. They seldom¹ come nearer to it than planting-time, harvest-time, cherrytime, spring-time, or fall-time. A want of information concerning my own was a source of unhappiness to me even in childhood. [...]

As to my own treatment while I lived on Colonel Lloyd's plantation, it was very similar to that of the other slave children. [...] I was seldom whipped² by my old master, and suffered little from any thing else than hunger and cold. I suffered much from hunger, but much more from cold. In hottest summer and coldest winter, I was kept almost naked — no shoes, no stockings, no jacket, no trousers, nothing on but a coarse³ tow linen shirt, reaching only to my knees. I had no bed. I must have perished with cold, but that, the coldest nights, I used to steal a bag which was used for carrying corn to the mill. I would crawl into this bag, and there sleep on the cold, damp, clay floor, with my head in and feet out. My feet have been so cracked with the frost⁴, that the pen with which I am writing might be laid in the gashes⁵.

We were not regularly allowed⁶. Our food was coarse corn meal boiled. This was called mush. It was put into a large wooden tray or trough⁷, and set down upon the ground. The children were then called, like so many pigs, and like so many pigs they would come and devour the mush; some with oyster-shells, others with pieces of a shingle⁸, some with naked hands, and none with spoons. He that ate fastest got most; he that was strongest secured the best place; and few left the trough satisfied.

I was probably between seven and eight years old when I left Colonel Lloyd's plantation. I left it with joy.

Frederick Douglass, *My Bondage and My Freedom*, 1855

1. rarely 2. flagellate 3. rudimentary 4. *givre* 5. cuts 6. provided for 7. *auge* 8. *tuile*,
ardoise

Native self-portraits p. 177

Edward Curtis, a photographer known for his prolific documentation of Native Americans, created over 40,000 images of Native American life. These images are thought of as a glimpse¹ into the past; they did not necessarily represent Native Americans as they were, but how whites wanted them to be remembered. They craved² the imagery and a romanticized American past, but not the Indian himself.

In response to the widespread erasure³ of their subjectivity in popular images, an increasing number of indigenous artists are pushing back, and working to change the face of Native representation. They are portraying themselves and their communities, showing how they want to be seen and heard. Wendy Red Star, a Crow⁴ photographer based in Portland, Oregon, is one such artist. Red Star's work is humorous, surreal, and often abrasive, yet deeply rooted in a celebration for Crow life. Red Star's work responds, on her own terms, to these misrepresentations of Native Americans.

Abaki Beck, *aperture.org*, December 14, 2016

1. look 2. strongly desire 3. deletion 4. a Native American tribe from present-day Montana

An immigrant's song p. 178

Learning to love America

because it has no pure products
because the Pacific Ocean sweeps along the coastline
because the water of the ocean is cold
and because land is better than ocean

because I say we rather than they

because I live in California
I have eaten fresh artichokes
and jacaranda bloom in April and May

because my senses have caught up with¹ my body
my breath with the air it swallows
my hunger with my mouth

because I walk barefoot in my house

because I have nursed² my son at my breast
because he is a strong American boy
because I have seen his eyes redden when he is asked
who he is
because he answers I don't know

because to have a son is to have a country
because my son will bury me here
because countries are in our blood and we bleed them

because it is late and too late to change my mind
because it is time.

Shirley Geok-lin Lim, "Learning to Love America", 1998

1. *rattraper* 2. breastfeed

« My name is America » p. 179

My name is America, and at nine years old, I hate my name. Not because I hate my country. No! In fact, at nine years old I love my country! When the national anthem plays, I cry into my Dodger Dog¹ thinking about how lucky I am to live in the only nation in the world where someone like me will grow up to be the first girl to play for the Dodgers. I do hate the Pledge of Allegiance², though, not because I don't believe in it. I believe every word of it, especially the "liberty and justice for all" part. I believe the Pledge of Allegiance to my bones. And at nine years old I feel honored, selfrighteous³, and quite smug⁴ that I was smart enough to be born in the one country in the whole world that stands for the things my little heart knows to be true: we are all the same and deserve an equal shot at life, liberty, and a place on the Dodgers' batting lineup⁵. I hate the Pledge of Allegiance because for as long as I can remember there is always at least one smart-ass⁶ in class who turns to face me with his hand over his heart to recite it, you know, 'cause my name is America.

The first day of every school year is always hell. Teachers always make a big deal of my name in front of the whole class. They either think it's a typo⁷ and want to know what my real name is, or they want to know how to pronounce it (ridiculous, I know), and they always follow up with, "America? You mean, like the country?"

"Yes, like the country," I say, with my eyes on my desk and my skin burning hot.

America Ferrera, *American Like Me*, Introduction, 2018

1. hot dog named for the Dodgers, a Los Angeles baseball team **2.** patriotic saying recited by schoolchildren **3.** morally superior **4.** self-satisfied **5.** list of batters (baseball) **6.** *petit malin* **7.** mistake, misprint