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## The Visual Rhetoric Of Royalty

Barbara Joann Anderson

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# **THE VISUAL RHETORIC OF ROYALTY**

A Masters Thesis

Presented to

The Graduate College of

Missouri State University

In Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Arts, Writing

By

Barbara Joann Anderson

July 2016

# THE VISUAL RHETORIC OF ROYALTY

English

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Barbara Joann Anderson

## ABSTRACT

This thesis examines how three British female royals, Queen Elizabeth II, Diana Princess of Wales, and Catherine, Duchess of Cambridge, use visual rhetoric to gain and maintain power in a world where they are rarely allowed to use their actual voices. The female royals use photographs to convey their messages and gain support from the public. Elizabeth's visual agenda of androgyny allows her to gain the authority that her role of sovereign requires, while Diana used pathos to create a connection with a public to emphasize that she was the *people's* princess. Following their leads, Catherine is learning to use photographs to convey that she exhibits traits of both women. Utilizing Debbie Abilock's visual information literacy theory as well as desired British characteristics from *As Others See Us*, select photographs of these three women will be used for the purpose of examining these women's visual rhetoric. As Cara Finnegan points out, photographs serve as rhetorical images when they are created not just to represent a reality, but to persuade the viewers of a particular interpretation of reality. These "image vernaculars" prompt viewers to engage in an enthymematic mode of reasoning. While all three women use their photographs to convey different messages about who they are and their relationship to the British people, all three have clearly capitalized on the power of visual rhetoric. They understand that such images have the power to create or destroy their popularity.

**KEYWORDS:** rhetoric, visual rhetoric, royalty, british royalty, photography

This abstract is approved as to form and content

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Margaret Weaver  
Chairperson, Advisory Committee  
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## INTRODUCTION

When I was a little girl, I was fascinated by reading about royalty. At first it was because of the glitz and glamour that accompanied the idealized vision of princesses wearing tiaras and ball gowns. But as I got older, I became much more interested in the history and biographies that discussed how being a royal impacted people's lives. I definitely remember reading a biography on Marie Antoinette in the fifth grade that really changed my view on royalty. Previously, I had just known her as the queen who was beheaded. After reading this biography, though, I discovered a young woman who was sent away from everybody she had ever known at a very young age to marry someone who she had never met for the sole purpose of making a political alliance between two countries. With this new knowledge, I began to see her as an actual person. It also prompted me to realize that power is not necessarily a function of birth. Instead, it is something that is constructed by a society. Power can be created or destroyed with a simple snap of the fingers, which Marie Antoinette found out the hard way.

After reading that biography, I plunged into more royalty biographies. However, there was one particular royal family that I ended up reading more about over all of the other royal families--the British Royal Family. Although I loved reading about Queen Victoria and how she inspired the grand Victorian Age, I was definitely drawn more to the modern age. Who wouldn't be with all of the royal scandals that happened in the 1990s? Three of the Queen's four children got divorced due to adultery. Diana died and some people still feel that Prince Phillip was behind it. But, despite all of the turmoil, the country and the Royal Family still have a strong matriarch with Queen Elizabeth II. Well

into her sixth decade on the throne, Elizabeth still manages to be a vital member of not only British culture, but global culture. In fact, many countries that are currently members of the British Commonwealth have said that they will leave once Elizabeth dies and her son, Prince Charles, become king. This is due largely to the Queen's physical and cultural presence in the minds of those who live in these Commonwealth countries. Not only has Elizabeth made numerous visits to the countries that comprise the Commonwealth but she also keeps in contact with the government officials within these countries ("The Commonwealth"). This perpetuates her image of stability and tradition. For many people who live in these Commonwealth countries, they have only known Elizabeth as Queen. Elizabeth, who on her 21<sup>st</sup> birthday pledged her entire life to working to promote the Commonwealth, is more than just the head of the Commonwealth, she is the heart as well. If her people see her, they feel a sense of calm. So, how has an octogenarian great-grandmother with a love for Corgis and racehorses generated such affection from a people who largely distrust her offspring?

That question prompted me to explore the way that visual rhetoric is used by Queen Elizabeth and the other royal women in her family. Visual rhetoric is crucial because the British Royal Family has no power. The British monarchy is considered to be a constitutional monarchy which means that although The Sovereign is Head of State, this role is "purely formal, although the Queen has the right to 'be consulted, to encourage and to warn' her ministers via regular audiences with the Prime Minister" ("The Queen and Government"). So, despite the fact that the King or Queen is still seen as the person ruling the country, he or she is simply the figurehead for all of the Parliament's decisions.

The Parliament has two houses. The House of Lords is the smaller house that is largely composed of “life peers” like baronesses and dukes and clergymen who received their positions from birth, while the larger House of Commons is elected and also has the majority of the power in writing and passing laws. This slight imbalance in power is causing the radical paradigm shift in the country from being an aristocracy to a true democracy. The two houses hold more power in the government than Elizabeth does.

In fact, Elizabeth only participates in a few activities with Parliament. Every year she delivers the Queen’s Speech at the State Opening of Parliament. This speech “is the public statement of the government’s legislative program... for Parliament’s next working year” (House of Lords). This is a grand event in which the Queen wears all of her finest regalia including “the Imperial State Crown and the Robe of State” in order to symbolize her importance. There is a sense of tradition dating back for centuries with this ceremony including the fact that the Queen’s representative in Parliament is shut out of the House of Commons in order to “symbolize...the Commons’ autonomy from the monarchy” (House of Lords). But, what is extremely interesting is the fact that Elizabeth does not write the speech that she delivers. Instead, she simply serves as a mouthpiece for what the government intends to do in the new session of Parliament.

Elizabeth also has royal assent. Elizabeth has to “pass” any bills in order for them to become law. In theory, she has the ability to refuse assent but that has not happened since 1708. In other words, in order to maintain her neutrality, Elizabeth is expected to sign any bills unless they impact her or her family. This idea further illustrates how separated Elizabeth is from the true government. Although she has weekly meetings with

the Prime Minister and reads governmental papers every morning, she has sacrificed her public voice on any political or social matters in order to be considered a good sovereign.

Instead, the Sovereign serves as the head for national unity because he or she represents the best and most desired qualities for the average British citizen. Some of these traits were actually explored in a report by the Culligan, Dubber, and Lotten, an organization promoting a positive relationship between the United Kingdom and other countries called *As Others See Us* which surveyed how 18-34 year old people from six different countries perceived the attractiveness of the people as well as their own beliefs about the British people. This report, published in 2014, identified several characteristics had some interesting results. Of course, there were some negative traits mentioned like drinking too much and being rude, but there were other positive traits mentioned like politeness, “educated and skilled,” friendliness, “respect the rule of law” and a sense of humor (Culligan, Dubber, and Lotten 20-1). If one was to look at these traits besides possibly a sense of humor, Elizabeth is shown to have all of them. Although some call her stiff, she is polite and friendly to the people who wait to hopefully catch a glimpse of the Queen and her royal entourage leaving church. She is seen as being a skilled ruler of a country through her long reign who knows the importance of following not only the rules and customs of her citizens, but the traditions as well. She knows what to wear and how to look in the appropriate events. Because most of the Commonwealth do not attend these various events, the only way Elizabeth has to convey these traits at large is through her use of visual rhetoric, especially in photographs.

Elizabeth has been actively photographed since she was a little girl, and she has effectively utilized this visual medium. She continues to attend events where she can be

photographed talking to her citizens. She does her yearly Christmas addresses where she discusses the events that happened in the country that year. Through these visual images, Elizabeth reassures her subject that she is still leading her country.

Her former daughter-in-law and current granddaughter-in-law are also well versed in using visual rhetoric as a way to convey messages. Diana Princess of Wales was an expert at using the media to attract public attention to her. For example, she used the media frenzy to highlight some controversial causes she supported like AIDS patients and charities that supported women. But, at the same time, she used visual rhetoric during her chaotic split from Prince Charles to persuade the media (and public) that she was the innocent party. Diana's visual rhetoric worked as she still is fondly remembered as being the beautiful, young, and fragile woman whose life was cut too short.

Diana's specter still hangs over the head of her daughter-in-law, The Duchess of Cambridge (nee Kate Middleton). Like Diana, Catherine (as she will be referred to throughout the rest of this thesis) is beautiful and young. However, she is not seen as being as fragile as her late mother-in-law partly because she has a college education and partly because she knew what she was marrying into for the most part, unlike Diana who was seen as naïve and innocent about her future husband's family. Catherine still needs to show to the public two slightly contrasting ideologies. The first is that she could step into Elizabeth's shoes of being a future queen. The second is that she honors Diana's memories. In other words, Catherine has to show that she is tough but she is also feminine at the same time through the visuals that she presents.

These three royal women all excel or excelled in using visual rhetoric to convey a particular image or message to the public. As a result, they were able to increase their

authority to a public that slowly wants to decrease what authority they have. By analyzing the photos taken of these women throughout the times of being a royal, I will explore how visual rhetoric has been used by the women in the Royal Family to convey particular images and/or messages. In a media-driven world, visual rhetoric is becoming one of the most effective means to convey messages. Thus, much can be learned by studying how these particular women have used visual rhetoric to maintain the Sovereignty of the Royals in Britain.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Today, visuals and images matter more than words and text. For example, many social network sites actively promote sharing images rather than sharing long passages of words. If one has the option to choose between using an image or 140 characters, one may be more apt to use an image rather than be forced to shorten his/hertoughts down that much. The prominence of visual culture has come to the point that many people use images to find ideal romantic partners, share inside jokes with friends, and in general, use pictures to tell the story of their lives. That is part of the reason why visual rhetoric matters today.

The history of visual rhetoric is not as concrete as the history of rhetoric. Some have argued that it has existed for as long as rhetoric and images have existed. Indeed, Marguerite Helmers and Charles A. Hill mention that visual rhetoricians “could extend [themselves] as far back in time and place as ancient Egypt and cite the role of hieroglyphics in conveying meaning and recording memory” (1). But others believe that it was not truly recognized as a field of study until the twentieth century. Lester C. Olson, Cara A. Finnegan, and Diane S. Hope note that visual rhetoric was not really established until after the publication of Kenneth Burke’s *A Rhetoric of Motives* in 1950 because Burke’s “attempt...to broaden rhetoric’s traditional focus on speeches and texts” also “inspired [them] to think about the symbolic in ways especially for understanding *visual* symbols” (5).

Following the publication of Burke’s study, some scholars did start to look at the rhetoric of images like Phillip K. Tompkins in 1969, but it was not widespread until

1971. In those twenty-one years, it was not just the rhetoric and composition world that had changed; it was the real world as well. This radical shift in the global culture was aided by the rhetoric that was used during “sit-ins, marches, and rallies of civil rights activists and their adoption by anti-Vietnam War protesters, radical feminists, and activists in the overarching ‘counterculture’ of the 1960s” (Olson, Finnegan, and Hope 5). Such overt rhetoric prompted the “Report of the Committee on the Advancement and Refinement of Rhetorical Criticism,” authored by members of the Speech Communication Association (Olson, Finnegan, and Hope 5). In this document, the authors urged their peers to create a new direction for rhetoric to go in to. According to the authors, “Rhetorical criticism must broaden its scope to examine the full range of rhetorical transactions; that is informal conversations, group settings, public settings, mass media messages, picketing, sloganeering, chanting, singing, marching, gesturing, ritual, institutional and cultural symbols, cross cultural transactions, and so forth” (qtd. in Olson, Finnegan, and Hope 5-6). In other words, the authors of the report wanted to break down the traditional definition of rhetoric in order to encompass the variations of rhetoric that were being used in this new world.

After the publication of the “Report of the Committee on the Advancement and Refinement of Rhetorical Criticism” in 1971, many scholars began using visual rhetoric in their respective subfields, expanding the depths of their research. For example, Bruce Gronbeck focused on visual rhetoric to look at the then-emerging academic fields of Television and Film Studies. He specifically focused on the ideas of “celluloid rhetoric” or “electronic rhetoric” in his works. Visual rhetoric was highlighted in the study of material culture, cultural performance, and popular culture since all three of those



particular fields rely on, in some way, images to pass along messages and information (Olson, Finnegan, and Hope 6). Examples of this includes an Lester Olson's examination of Norman Rockwell's paintings and a study of how the documentary *The City*, conducted by Thomas W. Benson and Martin J. Medhurst, was able to remain relevant 30 years after its release (Olson, Finnegan, and Hope 6). Visual rhetoric was also introduced in the fields of psychology, sociology, and graphic design, through articles like Martin Jay's "Scopic regimes of modernity" and books like Hal Foster's *Vision and Visuality*. As usage of visuals grew, so did the field of visual rhetoric.

But, in order to understand the field of visual rhetoric, one must go back to the days of classic *rhetoric*. In his seminal work, *Rhetoric*, Aristotle looks at the different elements of how people make arguments. His guide is still the backbone of the Rhetoric and Composition field today.

Although there are many elements of *Rhetoric* that remain useful to visual rhetoricians everywhere, arguably the most important one is Aristotle's explanation of how emotions, logic, and credibility can be used in order to win an argument or convey a message. However, even though Aristotle mentions the importance of emotions, he also downplays that importance as well. An example of how Aristotle does this is when he emphasizes how "the arousing of prejudice, pity, anger, and similar emotions has nothing to do with the essential facts, but is *merely* a personal appeal to the man who is judging the case" (Aristotle 3, emphasis added). In a later chapter of *Rhetoric*, Aristotle goes into more detail about the three modes of persuasion; "the personal character of the speaker..., putting the audience into a certain frame of mind, ... the proof, or apparent proof, provided by the words of the speech itself" (Aristotle 8), which are otherwise

known as ethos, pathos, and logos. When he discusses how people can use these modes, Aristotle is more enthusiastic about the potential of ethos and logos than he is about pathos. He discusses how “persuasion is achieved by the speaker’s personal character when the speech is so spoken as to make us think him credible” and “persuasion is effected through the speech itself when we have proved a truth or an apparent truth by means of the persuasive arguments suitable to the case in question” but “persuasion *may* come through the hearers, when the speech stirs their emotions” (Aristotle 8, emphasis added). In Aristotle’s view, emotions are not as effective in persuasion compared to the speaker’s facts and character. That is not to say that emotions are not effective at all, but that effectiveness depends solely on the more irrational audience members since they do not consider rational thoughts as persuasive. As Aristotle states, “Other things affect the result considerable, owing to the defects of our hearers. The arts of language cannot help having a small but real importance, whatever it is we have to expound to others: the way in which a thing is said does affect its intelligibility” (138).

Aristotle goes into more detail about pathos or emotions in Book II of *Rhetoric*. He explains how “the Emotions are all those feelings that so change men as to affect their judgments, and that are also attended by pain or pleasure” (Aristotle 70). Although emotions can get in the way of conveying of a message, they can also be used against an audience in order to get them to be persuaded to agree with a speaker. So, although pathos may be underused by most rhetoricians, Aristotle believes that if used correctly, pathos can be as effective as logos.

Obviously, Aristotle’s *Rhetoric* is a crucial stepping stone for the history of rhetoric. It establishes many terms, ideas, and philosophies that are still used in rhetoric

programs to this day. However, the biggest issue with Aristotle's work is how he constantly sets up how important ethos, logos, and pathos are as a rhetorical unit yet downplays the importance of pathos. He suggests that pathos is only important in the service of logos and ethos.

Sonja K. Foss, a professor at the University of Colorado-Denver, writes in her chapter "Framing the Study of Visual Rhetoric: Toward a Transformation of Rhetorical Theory" for the book *Defining Visual Rhetorics* that "the most important reason for studying visual rhetoric is to develop rhetorical theory that is more comprehensive and inclusive" (303). In other words, she wants to ensure that rhetoricians will focus on linguistic AND visual rhetoric in order to make the discourse of the field more thorough and diverse. This idea contrasts with Aristotle's focus on logos, which is something that Foss herself addresses when she discusses her justification. According to her, "throughout rhetoric's long tradition, discursive constructs and theories have enjoyed ideological hegemony, delimiting the territory of study to linguistic artifacts, suggesting that visual symbols are insignificant or inferior, and largely ignoring the impacts of visual in our world" (303). Foss goes through the many uses and definitions of visual rhetoric. For example, she discusses that visual rhetoric can be both a "a product individuals create as they use visual symbols for the purpose of communicating" and "a perspective scholars apply that focuses on the symbolic processes by which visual artifacts perform communication" (304). These two different definitions impact how people use the term. They are either actively partaking in it or they passively looking at it.

Foss clarifies that academicians within the field of Rhetoric have focused their attention on the second definition. According to Foss, they specifically focus on nature,

“the components, qualities, and characteristics of visual artifacts”, function, “the communicative effects of visual rhetoric”, and evaluation, “the process of assessing visual artifacts” (307). She provides examples of how studies emphasizing each one of those components could look and how they have “the potential to transform rhetorical theory” (Foss 310). The studies may take a deductive approach and “use visual artifacts to illustrate, explain, or investigate rhetorical constructs and theories formulated from the study of discourse” (Foss 311). Other studies may take an inductive approach develop new rhetoric theories through “the investigation of the features of visual images to generate rhetorical theory that takes into account the distinct characteristics of the visual symbol” (Foss 311).

Foss was not the first scholar to publically acknowledge discuss the importance of visual rhetoric. As previously mentioned in 1950, the field of Visual Rhetoric started to take shape with the publication of Kenneth Burke’s *A Rhetoric of Motives*. Burke explicitly says in *A Rhetoric of Motives* how his purpose behind writing his book is to “show... how a rhetorical motive is often present where it is not usually recognized, or thought to belong” (Burke xiii) That idea caused many to become excited about how they could explore and examine rhetoric that was “not usually recognized”. Burke gave rhetoricians, in other words, the justification they needed to explore more than just written and spoken language. Any visual designed to induce action in another could be designed rhetorical, and thus worthy of examination.

Following Burke’s lead, in 1981, Martin J. Medhurst and Thomas W. Benson published “*The City: The Rhetoric of Rhythm*”. In this article, Medhurst and Benson analyze why and how a documentary made about the Great Depression can be still so

relevant over 40 years later. They theorize that it is due to a combination of editing and rhetorical techniques. The major technique they discussed was the editing used throughout the five different sections. They discovered that the filmmakers utilized “a pattern of rhythmic progression from past (rural and slow) to present (urban and fast) to future (suburban and moderate)” in order to “enhance the film’s rhetorical appeal” (Medhurst and Benson 58-9). This documentary was used to promote “greenbelt towns”, one of President Franklin Roosevelt’s New Deal ideas to create “model rural-industrial communities...for leisure living, with numerous open spaces and no through roads” (Medhurst and Benson 56). So, the filmmakers had to heighten the faster-paced “symbolic world...of unemployment, hunger, displacement, and fear” so that the contrast of the idealized “greenbelt towns” would be more effective (Medhurst and Benson 56). This article was particularly groundbreaking because it showed how the disciplines of film and rhetoric can combine to enrich an understanding of a film.

Another landmark visual rhetoric article was published in 1983. Lester C. Olson’s “Portraits in Praise of a People: A Rhetorical Analysis of Norman Rockwell’s Icons in Franklin D. Roosevelt’s ‘Four Freedoms’ Campaign” examined how these iconic posters and their accompanying text used during World War II was effective as propaganda. According to Olson, “the posters exemplify what Americans should strive to protect and preserve, thereby serving a deliberative function that was explicitly amplified by the slogans on the posters, by the accompanying texts in the Post...[that] emphasize that the values depicted in the posters are American in character and are antithetical to the values of the Axis powers” (15-6). He then looks at how Rockwell uses visual American icons like the church and the wedding ring to promote an American cultural image. Therefore,

if somebody disagrees with that image, they must be un-American. The reason why this article is so revelatory is because Olson so clearly explains how Rockwell, with the aid of the government, was able to play with the visual ideals that Americans hold dear.

Although he does analyze the text as well, Olson's description of the posters themselves showed critics that anything can be analyzed; even the portraits that people hold dearly.

Olson's analysis of the painted portraits caused many scholars to explore photography and other visual images as a rhetorical act. One of these authors was Debbie Abilock, an expert in her field of visual information literacy. In her article "Visual Information Literacy: Reading a Documentary Photograph", published in 2008, she shares her theory. Her theory has become one of the most prominent. According to Abilock, visual information literacy is "the ability to understand, evaluate, and use visual information" (7). In this view, reading visuals requires a different sort of understanding and language than reading texts because visuals are not as clear as reading texts. Visuals rely more heavily on the audience than texts. In order to accomplish this goal, Abilock "modified the classical rhetorical stance to model the reading of a photograph" (7). Instead of the traditional ethos/pathos/logos focus of oratory or written rhetoric, Abilock focuses on the content/context/point of view of the photograph. She encourages people to interpret photographs using a five-part process:

1. What do I see?
2. What does it mean to me?
3. What in the photograph leads me to say this?
4. Why was this photograph created?
5. What does it mean? (7)

What should be noted about this theory is that the interpretation is dependent on the viewer/interpreter. That is a major difference between Aristotelian rhetoric, which emphasizes the interpreter is the speaker. Abilock's theory also emphasizes how there

can be multiple truths, which contrasts with Aristotle's view that there is only one truth, which is the speaker's.

In fact, Abilock has developed a chart to show what people bring to the interpretation. For example, if someone looks at a photograph using the cultural lens, he or she might be guided by his or her "knowledge of a group's shared way of life" (Abilock 8). Abilock acknowledges that emotions function as a form of knowledge can be just as important as facts.

Abilock focuses her attention on documentary photography and explains that "a documentary photograph may have been created to represent a reality, but it is also a vehicle for conveying ideas and a medium for personal expression" (9-10). In other words, photographs can convey dual messages. Abilock is convinced that there is always rhetoric involved, even in the most "truthful representation... of reality" (10). That is because these photographs are not true pieces of reality. Photographs have to be taken by someone, so that photographer's natural reaction to things has to be taken account when interpreting photographs. The photographer's own natural rhetorical stance can impact how the photograph looks. In the case of multiple photographs, Abilock believes that "these photographs become an argument with evidence for a claim" (10).

Abilock, however, claims that there is a difference between argument and persuasion. This difference is based on the fact that "writers or speakers argue to find some truth; they persuade when they think they already know it" (qtd. in Abilock 10). That distinction causes Abilock to reflect on how photographers and writers can manipulate their photographs in order to persuade rather than argue. Abilock claims that "a photographer who is out to persuade you of something makes choices which support

his truth rather than reveal the truthfulness of the moment” (11). To Abilock, being argumentative means that one is maintaining the authenticity of the photographs while being persuasive means that the photographer is potentially trying to influence the viewers of the photographs in order to convince others to agree with him or her. That distinction of rhetorical images versus documentary images is significant because it shows that not everything can be analyzed rhetorically, despite the claims of many scholars.

The discussion of visual rhetoric is extremely important to contextualize in order to understand Cara A. Finnegan’s “Recognizing Lincoln: Image Vernaculars in Nineteenth-Century Visual Culture”. In 1895, a shocking image was published in *McClure’s* magazine. Rather than it being an image portraying sex or violence, it was instead a picture of a young Abraham Lincoln that had never been before published to accompany a biographical series on the deceased president, written by famous muckraking journalist Ida Tarbell. It showed Lincoln as “a thirtysomething, well-groomed middle-class gentleman” (Finnegan 61), which went against the popular visual representation of Lincoln as an aged and somber man who dressed in black and had a long beard. The readers of the magazine were pleasantly surprised by the picture due to its rarity so much so that they wrote letters to *McClure’s* to thank them for showing an image that had “not only a Lincoln they recognized physically, but one whose psychology and morality they recognized as well” (Finnegan 61). It was like these pictures had justified their beliefs regarding who they believed Abraham Lincoln to be. This reaction caused Finnegan to explore how these people “were relying upon their social knowledge about photography and exhibiting their comfort with ‘scientific’



discourses of character such as physiognomy and phrenology” (62) when looking at Abraham Lincoln’s picture.

This picture of Abraham Lincoln is an example of an “image vernacular” for Finnegan. The definition of an image vernacular is an “enthymematic mode...of reasoning employed by audiences in the context of specific practices of reading and viewing in visual culture” (Finnegan 62-3). This contrasts sharply with the syllogistic mode of reasoning advocated by Aristotle. For Aristotle, persuasion based on *logos* was much more effective than persuasion based on *pathos*. Finnegan challenges this by suggesting that people are persuaded by enthymematic reasoning, even if the conclusions reached are only probable and only reflect a shared understanding among a particular group of people. For the audience of the Abraham Lincoln photograph, they share the idea that Lincoln was a great man who sacrificed his life for the good of the country. In fact, “Lincoln was probably the only American whose image could produce the kind of public response that tapped directly into contested meanings of national identity in the late nineteenth century” (Finnegan 64). To these people, Lincoln’s face is the visual symbol of the country coming together after such a long and hard-fought war that pitted brother against brother. So, for the majority of the country, they only have positive feelings towards this great leader.

These myths about Lincoln proved to be correct as Finnegan discusses how the people who wrote letters to *McClure’s* “connected the surface aspects of the image to prevailing cultural myths about Lincoln” (67). They brought up how these saw the makings of the great man in this early picture of Lincoln. Every physical feature present in the photograph was noted for being a future indicator of Lincoln’s greatness. His face

was described as being “noble” instead of “long” (qtd. in Finnegan 67). The audience used the photograph in order to produce a more mythical image of “a man for all people, alternately a dreamy romantic and a strong patriot, a ‘pensive’ intellectual and an insightful empathy, a manly ‘military chieftain’ and a feminized figure of ‘sweetness’ and delicacy” (Finnegan 67). It does not matter if it matches who Lincoln truly was. It just matters who people think Lincoln was.

Finnegan explores this idea more thoroughly when she says “as *loci* of generalizable information about character, portraits educated common people about the virtues of the elites and warned them against the danger of vice; thus they served as a way of educating the masses about what it meant to be a virtuous citizen” (68). By looking at photographs and portraits at photo galleries, people will be able to interpret what “good and successful people” look like and model their visuals and their behaviors in order to replicate their lives. They will also look at mug shots and interpret what “bad people” look like in order to avoid making those mistakes. This article forecasts how people today are using images to construct their own identities and perceptions of people. By looking at people like Lincoln, people are able to have a visual example of who is the ideal moral person.

Finnegan’s article highlights how people use shared cultural assumptions in order to analyze the subject of photographs. By looking at the picture of Lincoln, one can see his pensive glance as a sense of how thoughtful he is as a leader. However, Finnegan reminds the reader to remember how long and arduous the photography process was in the early days of the art. In light of that, his pensiveness may not be a suggestion of thoughtfulness but rather of tiredness from being seated for a long set of photographs.

Finnegan focuses exclusively on American standards of virtue. Therefore, she does not account for what traits other nations considered virtuous or vice at time in history. She also does not offer an analysis of how modern day people would analyze the photographs. While she does mention how people from today may not feel the same about Lincoln as people did in 1895, she does not go any deeper. The changes in technology have influenced how people perceive pictures. By looking at the Royal Family, one thing will become clear. Their pictures will be analyzed instantly.

## THE VISUAL RHETORIC OF QUEEN ELIZABETH II

For the past six decades, Elizabeth has been on the throne. She has lived through several major world events while being sovereign, including the end of apartheid in South Africa, almost the entirety of the Cold War, and the attacks of September 11, 2001. Elizabeth has also worked with 12 prime ministers during her long reign. However, she has maintained the same persona over all these years and this has allowed her to stay in power. What makes this particular notable, though, is that she has maintained this persona almost entirely through visual images.

Elizabeth has no true “voice” in the government. Even the speech that she delivers at the State Opening of Parliament is not written by her. Rather the Queen’s Speech is written by the government to indicate the intentions for the new session of Parliament. She also has royal assent, which is her ability to “pass” any bill so it can become a law, unless that particular bill impacts her or her family. She could refuse assent, but that has not happened since 1708. Thus, she is expected to pass everything without question. If she were to question something, anti-monarchy people would say that she wants more power. Instead, she sacrifices that desire to question a bill as well as her public voice in order to be considered a worthy sovereign for her people.

The only rhetorical forum that Elizabeth has to use her “voice” is through photographs. Because of that, the general public is obsessed with taking and looking at photographs of the British Royal Family. In a way, many British people see the royals as part of their family. The commoners are excited when royal births and weddings happen and sad when royal deaths and divorces are announced. With that in mind, many people

think that these photographs of the royals represent what is best about the British people. This idea was explored in Cara Finnegan's article "Recognizing Lincoln: Image Vernaculars in Nineteenth-Century Visual Culture". In this particular article, Finnegan discusses how viewers of an early picture of Abraham Lincoln used it as a way to justify their beliefs that Lincoln did represent the average American by being "alternately a dreamy romantic and a strong patriot, a 'pensive' intellectual and an insightful empath, a manly 'military chieftain' and a feminized figure of 'sweetness' and delicacy" (67).

However, these American qualities are not shared, for the most part, with the British people. Instead, Elizabeth and her family have to symbolize different qualities that would be appropriate for the British people. According to a survey conducted by the British Council, the British people are praised for their "good manners", being "educated and skilled", being "friendly", "respect[ing] the rule of law", their "sense of humour", being "tolerant of people from other countries/with different beliefs", "keep[ing] themselves to themselves", being "innovating and creative", possessing "patriotism" and being "hardworking" (Culligan, Dubber, and Lotten 20). The surveys, conducted from December 2013 to December 2014, focused on what people from Brazil, Germany, China, India, the United States, and the United Kingdom found attractive about the respective countries (Culligan, Dubber, and Lotten 28). So, not only were these traits considered good by the British people, but they were also considered good by other people. Although some of these traits are hard to illustrate with a photograph, Elizabeth shows that she does have traits like "good manners", "educated and skilled", "keep[ing] themselves to themselves" and "hardworking". Not only are these traits greatly desired

for the British people by the British people, but they are the way that Elizabeth can convince the people that she is a worthy sovereign.

This chapter examines several photographs taken at different points during Elizabeth's life to show how Elizabeth represents these desired qualities of the British people, despite her status as Queen. These carefully crafted and highly regimented photographs highlight how Elizabeth has created and controlled the message that she can be a good representative of the people through visual rhetoric. She is able to do this by downplaying the qualities that many people may not want for their sovereign like her age, her gender, and the connotations that come with these essential characteristics. Debbie Abilock's five-step process to understanding visual information literacy, referenced on page 14, is particularly useful for analyzing these photographs. Using this process, with a special focus on the desired characteristics of the British people, one can see how Elizabeth is both a symbol of the British people and one of the British people at the same time.

Elizabeth was photographed by royal photographers like Marcus Adams, Lisa Sheridan, and Cecil Beaton from an extremely young age. These photographs, distributed by the press officers of her parents, were extremely important because they established that the British Royal Family would continue on to the next generation, which was in doubt as the heir to the throne, Elizabeth's uncle, was still unmarried. These early photographs also got the public to reinvest in the royal family. Around the time of Elizabeth's birth, there were plans for a miners' strike along with the worries that "Bolshevism and the terrors of the red menace were sweeping the nation" (Campbell 208). So, the birth of a bouncing baby princess had the potential to a sense of connection

and hope to the British people. Lady Colin Campbell gives this account of what happened after Elizabeth was born:

The skillful way the King had negotiated such dangerous political shoals meant that the monarchy had not been damaged, and the Royal Family, ever keen to promote the people's affection for itself, enlisted the Smiling Duchess [The Queen Mother] to pose for photographs with her baby. Unsurprisingly, mother and daughter were taken up in force by the press. A new wave of popularity for [The Queen Mother] had begun, this time as the young matriarch. (Campbell 212)

This particular passage from Lady Campbell highlights how essential pictures of the royal family were then and still are. Even if it is just a picture of a child who happens to be third in line to the succession, the implication is there: Not only is the Royal Family a strong current presence in British culture, but it will continue to be. The British would not give into Bolshevism and the red menace. With that in mind, Elizabeth continued to be photographed in order to satiate the public's desire to see her, especially around special events like her birthday. The more the public sees of the young princess, the more they will be reassured that the future of the royal family will be secured. One photograph of note comes from the set taken around Elizabeth's second birthday. What is reflected in this photograph (Figure 1) is an innocent child who has been posed by an adult to look upward and express emotions through the eyes and the mouth. The gender is a little hard to tell at first because this was still the time when children were wearing ruffles on clothes, regardless of sex. The child's hair also appears to be fairly short which is often perceived to be a masculine trait, even at the time. The only detail that truly gives away that the subject of the photograph is a female is the fact that she is wearing a necklace. The photographer or Elizabeth's parents may have wanted to ensure the public that Elizabeth was a traditional girl who already loved to wear jewelry, even if the jewelry was clearly fake.



Figure 1. Princess Elizabeth aged two, in 1928. <sup>1</sup>

The photograph also gives the impression that this is a child who is already confident. She is not looking straight at the camera and the photographer, but she is happily looking at what is above the frame. Although some think that people present confidence in a photograph by staring down the lens, it would have been interpreted by the British people as bad manners. Instead, by not noticing the camera or the photographer behind it, Elizabeth projects the image of the lovely and well-behaved child who could cooperate with being photographed in a certain way for a long period of time. This would suggest that Elizabeth is the very model of the British characteristic of having “good manners”. If she could behave for these frivolous photographs, many would believe that she could behave herself during official visits and ceremonies, despite her young age.

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<sup>1</sup> Retrieved from <http://reina-isabel-88-paul-karam-kassab.blogspot.com/2014/04/la-reina-isabel-ii-celebra-88-anos-paul.html>



Elizabeth is also showing emotions in this picture, especially happiness. This is shown through the glow of her eye and the wide smile. That expression symbolizes the desired quality of being “friendly” to people. If Elizabeth can have that reaction to what was probably a prop or one of her parents, she could surely have that reaction to a stranger, like the average British citizen, despite her class at birth.

Although this photograph was ostensibly created for the princess’s second birthday, it also works as an example of visual rhetoric that the next generation of the royal family is healthy. Photographs of children are often an easy way to get positive publicity, especially if they are traditionally attractive like young Elizabeth. They also highlight how well the parents are doing with the child. If the child is perceived to be happy and healthy, then the only logical reason why is because the child is being raised “right”. So, although this picture is of young Elizabeth, it is also a symbol of the success and happiness of her parents’ marriage. With that reassurance the British people can be happy that at least one of the King’s sons is settled and happy.

By 1945, much had changed in Elizabeth’s life. She was now heir presumptive to the throne after her uncle abdicated in 1936 to avoid a larger scandal over his intended bride, the American divorcee Wallis Simpson. World War II had ravaged much of Europe, including England. Elizabeth, realizing that she needed to take part in the efforts, decided to undergo “a three-week stint...at the Mechanical Transport Training Centre run by the Auxiliary Territorial Service” (Bedell Smith 20-21). Through this training, Elizabeth was trained as a truck mechanic and driver alongside other women who happened to not just be older than her, but were from a different social class as well. While some anti-war protesters complain that this brief training was simply a prop to

promote the continuing interest in the British war effort, this was effective for Elizabeth in two different ways. First of all, Elizabeth has said that the time “was the only time she had ever been able to measure herself against her contemporaries” (Bedell Smith 21). As she lived a very sheltered life of luxury, she never got another opportunity to see if she could compare or effectively lead her subjects. Secondly, she was able to gain some of the military service that her predecessors had in order to project a more virile and guardian status.

In order to prove the detractors wrong, Elizabeth was able to display this military service through photographs such as one where she is shown “under the hood” of a military vehicle (Figure 2). She is unaccompanied as she works diligently on what appears to be the engine. Even though Elizabeth had to know that there was a photograph taken of her at the time, she does not show it.



Figure 2. Princess Elizabeth tinkering with an engine during her ATS training in World War II.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Retrieved from <http://imgur.com/gallery/WLyxZ>

This particular photograph highlights a few important qualities to the British people. First of all, Elizabeth is showing her “patriotism” by getting involved with the war effort. Instead of doing the bare minimum of selling war bonds or following the traditional feminine path of being a nurse like many of her previous female relatives, she decided to serve as a mechanic which would give her more exposure to what her troops and future subjects were going through, up close and personal. Secondly, Elizabeth is showing that she is becoming more “educated and skilled” by practicing a useful trade in mechanics. Although this may not be the most useful skill for a future queen, it shows that she is willing to learn and get dirty in the process. Finally, it highlights how “hardworking” Elizabeth is. Instead of facing the camera with tools in her hands, Elizabeth is instead shown actually working on the truck. While Elizabeth may be free from dirt, oil, and sweat, she is still able to present that she does know what she is doing with the truck.

This photograph was taken for two distinct purposes. The main reason was to highlight that Elizabeth’s support of the war effort was not simply a publicity stunt. Of course, the royal press office staged publicity pictures to be placed in newspapers in order to show that, but it still illuminated the fact that Elizabeth was actually getting valuable work experience as well as the fact that she was getting to know her subjects on a more personal level. The other reason is to show that Elizabeth was not the average female royal because she cannot be the average female royal. She has to be seen as a sovereign authority figure because she would eventually have to enter a masculine world. Thus, she decided to train as a mechanic, which is associated with hard manly labor. The set of

photographs that Figure 2 is part of is the start of Elizabeth's turn to androgyny as she readies herself to become Queen. Androgyny can be defined as a movement that "encourages individuals to embrace both the feminine and the masculine within themselves" (Bem 616). That basic idea is shown in this particular picture because Elizabeth is displaying both feminine and masculine traits. She is a feminine girl (noted by her short but curled hair) who is working on a car wearing a standard issue military uniform, which is typically seen as very masculine. Although this is a small step in that direction, she understands that androgyny is a way to gain authority with her future subjects.

The Princess Elizabeth married Prince Phillip of Greece and Denmark when she was 21. Her wedding day was seen as a major celebration, especially since it took place after World War II. In the official wedding photograph (Figure 3), one can see a young bride wearing a white gown, veil, and tiara beside a blond groom in full Naval uniform. The bride and groom are not touching or smiling in the photograph.

From all accounts, it was a happy wedding, but it would be hard to discern that from this picture. However, that is considered appropriate for British people. The lack of visible emotions can be attributed to the desired quality of "keep[ing] themselves to themselves". By not sharing what they are feeling, they are keeping their emotions to themselves rather than sharing their happiness and love for each other with the people who will be looking at the photographs. Elizabeth does not seem to be visually and emotionally impacted by her wedding day. This gave the impression that her more important "wedding day" will be when she marries the British people during her coronation as Queen.



Figure 3. The Queen and The Duke of Edinburgh on their wedding day, 20 November 1947.<sup>3</sup>

This photograph also shows “patriotism”. Not only is Elizabeth a war veteran, but Phillip was currently serving in the British Navy. The fact that both of them served during World War II heightens the connection that the public would have with them, because they actually did something to stop the war.

This photograph, properly distributed in newspapers and magazines all over the world emphasizes a few things. First of all, it serves as proof that Elizabeth fulfilled one of society’s biggest expectations for royal women-get married in order to carry on the blood line. The new married couple acquired the official titles of Duke and Duchess of Edinburgh, but they also acquired official recognition of their relationship from the church, the King, and society in general. The public gained a future consort that was masculine and British in all of the desired ways: he is visually presented as an attractive hardworking patriot who keeps to himself. Interestingly, Phillip was born in Greece and

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<sup>3</sup> Retrieved from <http://www.sofeminine.co.uk/tests-quizzes/queen-elizabeth-ii-quiz-d29742c363637.html>

raised in different countries, before he went to England for boarding school and stayed to join the Navy, so his “Britishness” may be more inferred than his actual qualities. But, she still married what some people considered “an Adonis” (Bedell Smith 27), which shows that she married someone who could be photographed and perceived as so visually virile that would help her gain credibility as a “Queen Mother” to not only her future children, but the people as well. That expectation became true almost exactly a year later when Princess Elizabeth gave birth to Prince Charles, thus continuing the blood line of the British Royal Family.

Four years later, Elizabeth would become not merely a “Queen Mother” but a Queen as well. Elizabeth and Phillip were on route to Australia and New Zealand to undergo a tour of Oceania. They were taking a break in Kenya when news broke that Elizabeth’s father George had died. The new Queen and Prince Consort returned to England immediately to help the nation grieve its beloved King and provide assurance that their new “king” is alive and ready to take charge. One person noted that when Elizabeth was on the plane, “she looked as if she might have been crying” (qtd in Smith 66).

However, in the first photograph taken of Queen Elizabeth II (Figure 4), no tears appear to be present. Instead, she is seen wearing all black as she passes a man in uniform, saluting her. Instead of giving recognition to this man, her head and eyes are down. No other facial expressions can be determined.

The major British quality that can be seen in this photograph is the idea that she is keeping to herself. She does look respectfully solemn, but she is not crying or shown to be grimacing, which are the traditional expressions of mourning. Instead she is showing

the “stiff upper lip” that is associated with the British people. She is grieving the loss of her father, but she cannot stay mired in that feeling for long because she has a country to lead now. The photograph also highlights how she represses showing any emotion publically as a way to gain ethos with her new subjects.



Figure 4. The 25-year-old Queen Elizabeth II returns to London from Kenya...<sup>4</sup>

This photograph, distributed widely in newspapers, illustrates a few distinct elements. First of all, Elizabeth looks more womanly than before. Part of that is due to the fact that she has a more developed figure after having two children. The element is aided in this particular picture because her lower legs are showing in the photograph. Her grandmother even noticed that and admonished her by saying, “Lilibet, your skirts are much too short for mourning” (qtd. in Bedell Smith 66). It was not enough that Elizabeth

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<sup>4</sup> Retrieved from <http://www.mirror.co.uk/news/uk-news/queens-lifelong-friend-pamela-hicks-1414271>

was wearing black, but because her legs were showing, it was perceived as a temporary lapse of judgment by another royal. Elizabeth was not mirroring good British manners.

After she became Queen, Elizabeth worked on transitioning into her new role as Queen, even though she was still a young woman. As stated in Sally Bedell Smith's biography on Elizabeth:

The freedom she enjoyed as a young princess...had to be subdued, at least in public. Keeping her dignity was paramount, and in doing so she frequently obeyed Queen Mary's injunction against smiling, even as her youth and beauty gave her an automatic advantage...Elizabeth II was also fortunate in having said little of consequence in public, which let her maintain an enigmatic aura. (77)

As previously mentioned, "keep[ing] themselves to themselves" is one of the most desired qualities for British people. Her grandmother's request for Elizabeth to not smile is important because it shows that repressing emotions is extremely important in order to maintain authority. If she was to show emotions, she would be perceived as not taking her role as seriously as she could, which would make her lose ethos.

In 1953, Elizabeth went through her elaborate Coronation ceremony. Needless to say, she was subject to many photographs on this momentous day. After all, the public wanted to commemorate the day that Elizabeth became Queen. In the official photograph (Figure 5), Elizabeth is shown in profile with all of her royal regalia. She is wearing the coronet and traditional robes, while also holding the scepter. In addition to not looking at the camera, she is not smiling. She is keeping herself to herself yet again. By doing this, she is shown to have more authority and power than what she has before. Of course, this



idea is elevated by the fact that she has all of the traditional visual items of the coronation. If she was smiling during the picture, her visual rhetoric would be rendered ineffective because she would be seen as not taking this important ceremony seriously. She also shows that she is a patriot for the British cause. After all, she is accepting her rightful duty as Queen, so it has to be assumed that she does love the country and her people.



Figure 5: The Queen on the day of her Coronation, 2 June 1953.<sup>55</sup>

The most important thing about this particular picture, distributed as an official photograph by the government for newspapers and magazines, is that Elizabeth's gender is once again hard to determine. Elizabeth is wearing a coronet, not a tiara. Although this

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<sup>55</sup> Retrieved from <http://orderofsplendor.blogspot.com/2012/02/royal-splendor-101-jewels-for-queen.html>

coronet was made for a woman, it is still a perceived masculine object on her head. She is also holding the scepter and wearing the robes of a traditional king. Obviously, the robes would have to be adjusted for Elizabeth's size, but the robes are still symbolic of a king's power and majesty because it signifies the specialness and importance of the wearer. She is wearing a gown and earrings, but that is not what draws attention. It is the masculine coronation attire that grabs the eyes. In this picture, Elizabeth is a queen in a king's clothing.

The official photograph can be directly contrasted to another photograph that was distributed to fashion magazines. In this photograph (Figure 6), Elizabeth is shown wearing her grand coronation gown designed by Norman Hartnell. She is shown smiling and wearing traditional feminine jewelry (earrings, necklace, and bracelets).

In a reflection of the photographs taken around her second birthday, two of the major British characteristics displayed in Figure 6 are being "polite/good manners" and being "friendly". The "good manners" are displayed in the photograph. Once again, she feels posed in a way that she would not regularly stand. But, she is not resisting the pose. Instead, she goes with it, which shows that she can be polite even if she may not agree with the photographer's directive. She is also seen as being "friendly" because she is smiling. Despite the fact that she is openly breaking her by then-deceased grandmother's mandate, she still shows a sense of approachability while wearing an extremely unapproachable gown.

This photograph is unique because it was taken specifically for an audience of women. The photograph shows how fantastic the white gown is and how grand Elizabeth's jewelry is. So, the message of this picture is "Look at how much of a woman

Queen Elizabeth is". But, the importance of that gown is that the gown is white, which is symbolic for two reasons. The first is the fact that the gown is similar to a wedding dress, which works as Elizabeth is going through another ceremony in order to be "wedded" to her country. The other thing is that according to Bedell Smith, "her garments...were designed to signify her priestlike status" (85). This idea goes back to the symbolism that white equates purity. In order for Elizabeth to successfully become Queen, she must "abject" anything that could taint her ability to be a sovereign ruler, figurehead of the government, and ruler of the military branches.



Figure 6: The Queen in the Throne Room Buckingham Palace <sup>6</sup>

This photograph is unique because it was taken specifically for an audience of women. The photograph shows how fantastic the white gown is and how grand

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<sup>6</sup> Retrieved from <http://www.gettyimages.com/detail/news-photo/queen-elizabeth-ii-wearing-a-gown-designed-by-norman-news-photo/3422058>

Elizabeth's jewelry is. So, the message of this picture is "Look at how much of a woman Queen Elizabeth is". But, the importance of that gown is that the gown is white, which is symbolic for two reasons. The first is the fact that the gown is similar to a wedding dress, which works as Elizabeth is going through another ceremony in order to be "wedded" to her country. The other thing is that according to Bedell Smith, "her garments...were designed to signify her priestlike status" (85). This idea goes back to the symbolism that white equates purity. In order for Elizabeth to successfully become Queen, she must "abject" anything that could taint her ability to be a sovereign ruler, figurehead of the government, and ruler of the military branches.

"Abjection" is defined by Julia Kristeva in her seminal work *Powers of Horror* "as a rite of defilement and pollution in the paganism that accompanies societies with dominant or surviving matrilineal character. It takes on the form of the exclusion of a substance (nutritive or linked to sexuality)" (17). By using that definition, the Coronation can be viewed as the official abjection ceremony where she is removing all of her womanly qualities and effectively becoming androgynous. The ball gown is worn before to highlight that she is still allowed to have her femininity. She is allowed to highlight her figure and smile. But, after her coronation/abjection ceremony, she needs to be solemn and more masculine in her formal robes to highlight how serious she views her new role as sovereign.

One of the events where Elizabeth can display her sovereignty is during Trooping the Colour. This event, a public celebration of the Queen's life, is when Elizabeth surveys various regiments of the British military. For many years, the Queen would do this on horseback even when she was just a Princess. In the following photograph (Figure 7),

Elizabeth is shown on her horse, Burmese. She is wearing a traditional military uniform with the exception of the hat. She is also riding sidesaddle.

The major characteristic that is highlighted in Figure 7 is her “patriotism”. She is not only looking at her troops, but she is wearing her uniform as a sign that she is also one of them, despite the fact that she is not wearing the traditional masculine hat (as seen on the rider behind her). She is also wearing the same amount of medals and honors that a male of her class would wear, despite the fact that she has no major military involvement besides her ATS training. She is also showing that she is “educated and skilled”. It is a major skill to be able to ride confidently while one is riding sidesaddle, and Elizabeth is able to demonstrate that skill. While many people thought that might be disgraceful for her to ride a horse like many of her previous predecessors, she still did it for many years. The final desired British characteristic is that she is a hardworking person. Going through all of the troops takes a lot of time and energy, but she still does it because it is expected of her.

This photograph, which was distributed in newspapers and magazines, was designed to convey the message that the Queen is in charge. The message is that she is still a strong ruler despite her gender. She is not frail or womanly, but strong and able to figuratively lead her troops into battle. While there are many pictures of Elizabeth riding a horse in the traditional masculine style, she always rode using the more feminine saddle during Trooping of the Colour because the public expected to see a strong ruler and an upper class woman at the same time. So, Elizabeth is fulfilling both of these obligations by what she wears and how she rides. This photograph is yet again one more piece of visual rhetoric that conveys her androgynous nature.



Figure 7: Queen Elizabeth on horseback during Trooping of the Colour<sup>7</sup>

Although she largely has downplayed the stereotypical feminine aspects of her personality and image, she still retains certain aspects to show to her public that she is also the Queen Mother of her people. These aspects were shown in a photograph from the christening of her great-grandson, Prince George of Cambridge, from 2013. This event was symbolic of the fact that Elizabeth now has three direct heirs to the throne, which is an extremely rare event. In the photograph (Figure 8), Prince George is shown wearing a christening gown and being held by his smiling father, Prince William, Duke of Cambridge. He is standing next to his father, Charles, Prince of Wales, who is standing behind Queen Elizabeth's chair. Queen Elizabeth is seated and smiling with her hands folded neatly in her lap.

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<sup>7</sup> Retrieved from <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/picturegalleries/royalty/9717179/Her-Majesty-new-book-of-photographs-celebrating-the-life-of-Queen-Elizabeth-II.html?frame=2415967>

This photograph highlights two distinct characteristics that are heavily desired by the British people. First of all, she is showing her “good manners” by being appropriately dressed and willing to be posed for yet another seated photograph. While some may think that she is being impolite by the fact that she has her bag under the seat and wearing dark gloves for an indoor event, she has to have her bag there just in case she is called away from the christening for an important and urgent task. As a result, she gets excused from that standard due to her royal role because she has to display loyalty to the British people above everything else, including her own family. The second characteristic is being “friendly”. Her smile may not be very wide, but she is showing that she is happy and approachable on this very important day. However, it is still unusual that Elizabeth would be smiling at all, which illustrates how important this day is, not only to her people, but her royal family as well.

However, this is a strategic move in regards to her visual rhetoric. Holding-and being proud of-a baby would be considered by some to be too emotional for a sovereign ruler, no matter the connection between the ruler and the infant. After all, it is a connection to that raw essential element of motherhood she rejected through the Coronation/“abjection” ceremony many decades before. The photograph also shows the line of succession in a counter-clockwise way. It shows that although Elizabeth is not going to live forever; she has three men behind her. Although Charles is not exactly young, there is William and George who are not only young but photogenic as well.



Figure 8: Queen Elizabeth, The Prince of Wales, The Duke of Cambridge, and Prince George <sup>8</sup>

It is important that George's mother, Catherine, is not included in the photograph because she is not part of the succession. She is just seen as the mother of the future king and nothing more. The final significant thing about this photo is the fact that George is already being indoctrinated into the family tradition of introducing the young members into a life in front of the cameras. Will George be as confident as Elizabeth or as reticent as William? Only time will tell, but people are already speculating that he will be living in the massive shadow of his deceased grandmother, Diana.

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<sup>8</sup> Retrieved from <http://www.livelaughdo.com/official-photos-of-royal-christenings-princess-charlotte-prince-george-and-others/3/>



## THE VISUAL RHETORIC OF DIANA, PRINCESS OF WALES

February 24, 1981 was the day that many British people had waited for. Prince Charles was finally settling down with a woman that the public deemed to be worthy of being the next Queen of England. After many years of bachelorhood as well as many rumored relationships with ladies, everybody was ecstatic to see Charles had chosen. Who they saw was a shy blonde nineteen year old nursery teacher who came from old British aristocratic stock. Lady Diana Spencer, who had been hounded by photographers for the past few months, was the ideal choice. Charles even acknowledged, "I couldn't have married anyone the British people wouldn't have liked" (qtd. in Kelley 272). After all, royals did not marry for love. They married to ensure that there would be a next generation of the royal family that would represent the future of the British people. Although it was not required that Charles's future spouse be British, it was expected that she would be from a certain social class so that she could be considered worthy of being a royal as well being suited for all of the responsibilities of a future consort like supporting her husband in domestic and foreign state trips and supporting different charity organizations. It also helped if the future bride did not have a scandalous history of sexual exploits or wild nights out on the town, even if she was marrying a prince who had that exact past. For Charles, whose love life before Diana filled the issues of many tabloids, his proposal to Diana was prompted by two distinct pressures. First of all, he was being pressured by his parents and his future subjects to finally settle down and start a family. The fact that the heir to the throne was an unmarried thirty-something reminded some people of the Queen's uncle, who abdicated the throne so he could marry the woman he

loved. In order to prevent that unfortunate fate suffered from Charles's uncle case, the public wanted their future ruler to have the stability that was often associated with being in a committed and loving relationship and having the royal blood line continued. The second pressure was for Charles to marry Diana. Not only did she have the "requirements" to be a future Queen, but she also fit the visual requirements as well. She was young, pretty, and showed a deep affection for children, which meant to the public that she would be a "good" Queen. By marrying someone who seemed to be the picture perfect princess, Charles, and by default Elizabeth, would be able to maintain the power that comes with being sovereign as well as gain positive support from the public.

When their engagement pictures were taken (Figure 9), people got their first official glimpse of the couple. Diana, wearing a blue and white outfit, poses in a way to showcase her sapphire and diamond engagement ring. Behind her is Charles with one hand in his pocket and the other hand on Diana's shoulder. Both of them have small smiles on their faces.

With this photograph, the fairy tale myth about their life and love began based on the fact that they were so picture perfect. Here was the fair maiden who was plucked from obscurity by the handsome heir to the throne. It was like a real life version of Cinderella, except the Cinderella in this case was also well-to-do.

But the vibe in this picture is very awkward. Both of their smiles are very small, which does go in line with the royal standard of now showing emotions. However, these smiles do not mesh with the traditional ideal of engagement pictures. Something else in this particular picture does not seem to gel with the ideal engagement image. It is the way that they are touching each other. Traditionally, the engaged couple would either hold

each other's waist or hand, but instead Charles is just holding her shoulder and standing *behind* Diana, rather than *beside* Diana. It is like he is hiding behind Diana, rather than sharing the spotlight with her. Of course, the pose suggests that he already understands the public's demands to see Diana. Even though he was the heir apparent, she was the main attraction in their relationship. Charles just looks distant in the photograph. One of his hands is in his coat pocket, which is a typically casual stance. This is a formal picture, which requires a formal stance. By having his hand in his pocket, it reads like he is not fully committed to the picture.



Figure 9. Prince Charles and Lady Diana Spencer on the day of their engagement.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Retrieved from <http://us.hola.com/hombre/galeria/2011111655550/estilo-cumpleanos-carlos-inglaterra/10/>

Meanwhile Diana's visual presence seems to be telling another different story. First of all, although it is not her well-known radiant smile, she is still smiling to show how excited she is about the impending nuptials. But, as previously mentioned, it is a subdued smile that fits with the maxim that royals show as little emotion as possible. But, the biggest takeaway in this particular picture is Diana's general stance. She was so well-known for being photographed with "her head tilted coyly to one side or her eyes demurely cast down" that she earned the tabloid moniker of "Shy Di" (Kelley 263). While her head in the engagement photo is tilted down, her eyes are not "demurely cast down". Instead, she is facing towards the camera and her future subjects, which shows confidence. For someone whose best known personality trait before her engagement was reticence, she certainly is not shy towards photographers.

This photograph not only officially introduced Diana to the British public, but it also introduced Diana's skills in visual rhetoric. First of all, she displays knowledge of the royal rhetoric. Instead of being overly joyful with her engagement, she instead wears a small smile. This "royally accepted" version of her is also confident and self-assured, which shows that she is ready to become what everybody expects to see of her as a princess. That confidence can be seen in how she uses her youthful beauty and visual charisma to get attention in the picture. Just by wearing a bright color and smiling, Diana grab one's eyes away from looking at Charles, which suggests that she is not a regular royal. If she was, she would have not stolen the limelight away from the heir to the throne.

How Diana was able to use her "voice" is through photographs. People got to "know" Diana as a person based solely on the photographs that were taken of her,

because she was able to project certain emotions through visuals. In this particular photograph, she is showing her happiness with the engagement to Prince Charles while maintaining the royal rule of not openly showing too much emotions.

What is extremely unique in Diana's situation is that she doesn't stick with the traditional desired British characteristics. Although she was "friendly", "hardworking" and "tolerant of people from other countries/with different beliefs", she certainly did not keep her emotions to herself or "respect the rule of law" (in this case, the idea that royals did not show emotions) (Culligan, Dubber, and Lotten 20). Diana is extremely unusual in the fact that one of the desired British traits, "keep[ing] themselves to themselves", goes against her use of emotions to generate public support. In fact, one of the worst British characteristics is the tendency to "complain too much" (Culligan, Dubber, and Lotten 20), which many anti-Diana people believe was what she was doing towards the end of her life. So, why does Diana's visual rhetoric still succeed to make her the "People's Princess"? Because she was able to show that even though she was married into the British Royal Family, she was not a true royal but rather one of the people by giving the impressions that she felt uncomfortable taking on some of these particular characteristics. This would be especially true towards the end of her life.

In this chapter, the photographs of Diana explored will be focused on the time period surrounding her painful divorce from Charles. These photographs not only highlight specific desired British characteristics that Diana possessed but they also emphasize the pathos that Diana was able to create in the audience specifically through her use of emotional appeal and physical attraction. Diana's image became so iconic that it still leaves a shadow cast on the image of the Royal Family.

By the end of the eighties, the marriage of Charles and Diana was already in trouble. However, her tumultuous personal life did not stop Diana from investing her time and energy into charity work. She was photographed often supporting the causes that she loved with a big and energetic smile on her face. That massive smile heightened the difference between Diana and the rest of the royals because it showed that Diana created different expectations for herself. She wanted to be perceived as a royal woman of the times that promotes the causes of the age. But one of these causes would prove to be more controversial than the others. In 1987, Diana went to visit victims at an AIDS clinic. Before this visit, many feared for the young princess's safety since it was still believed that one could get AIDS from just air contact. But, Diana would be photographed doing something that would shatter that popular misconception.

In this photograph (Figure 10), Diana is seen in a seated position facing the camera. In front of her is a man that appears to be kneeling so that he could recognize her royal position. Diana and the man are shaking hands, with Diana making eye contact and smiling at the man.

In this particular picture, Diana is displaying a few different desired British characteristics. First of all, she is showing that she is "tolerant of people from other countries/with different beliefs". Many members of the royal family still viewed homosexuals as abject and perverted people who needed to be kept at a distance. However, Diana decided to show the public that she was willing to embrace these people and turn away from the previous royal standard by going to an AIDS clinic. It was still widely assumed that only homosexuals, especially homosexual men, were the only victims of AIDS. So, for Diana, a member of the British royal family, to be seen in the

company of an AIDS victims shows that she can understand that particular culture even if she does not belong to that culture. She also shows how “polite” she is. She is shaking hands with this man, even though it may go against people’s natural tendencies towards AIDS victims at the time. If she would have declined the handshake, people would have understood. Instead she still shook his hand. This idea also shows how “friendly” she is. She is smiling really wide with her mouth and her eyes, which shows approachability to a rather unapproachable situation.



Figure 10. Diana shaking hands with an AIDS victim, 1987<sup>10</sup>

This photograph was taken for a few different reasons. First of all, it helps to take away some of the stigmas associated with AIDS. Here was the pretty young princess shaking hands with a (presumably) gay man who was dying due to his sexual preference. This photograph is more than just a sign that AIDS is not spread by shaking hands. It is a

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<sup>10</sup> Retrieved from <http://www.webmd.com/hiv-aids/ss/slideshow-aids-retrospective>

symbol that Diana was willing to stand up for those who could not speak for themselves and happy to do so, based on the fact that she is smiling and making direct eye contact with the unknown male.

The photograph also shows that Diana and the man are not equals. After all, he is still bowing to show respect for her royal rank. However, he is also symbolically bowing to show respect for her support of his disease. That respect gives her ethos and credibility as a compassionate woman who does not play the traditional royal game. She is seen as one of the people, not one of the elite who are above the other people because she was willing to show some emotion to express her feelings rather than just a blank smile. This has to be due to the fact that the public expects to see open emotions from her, despite her royal rank. By having this small show of emotion and compassion, she was trying to distance herself from the “cold” Royal Family. However, the exact opposite happened in that she became the image of the modern Royal Family, even during her long divorce from Charles.

In 1980, while he was in India, Prince Charles visited the Taj Mahal. Being at awe with the architecture and the love story that inspired it, Charles mentioned, “I can understand that love could make a man build the Taj Mahal for his wife. One day I would like to bring my own back here” (Kelley 266-67). So, when a royal tour of India was announced for Prince Charles and his wife in 1992, royal reporters were excited to get the picture of them together in front of the ultimate visual symbol of undying love. That atmosphere was heightened by the reports that the marriage was failing and both parties were having affairs. They thought that this picture in front of the monument would be



proof that those reports were false. However, what they got instead was proof that those troubling reports were indeed true.

Instead of getting the photograph of Charles and Diana, what they got was a photograph of Diana by herself (Figure 11). She is seated at a bench wearing a jacket and skirt. She is looking at the photographers taking her picture, but her head is tilted down. She is dwarfed by the massive Taj Mahal behind her.

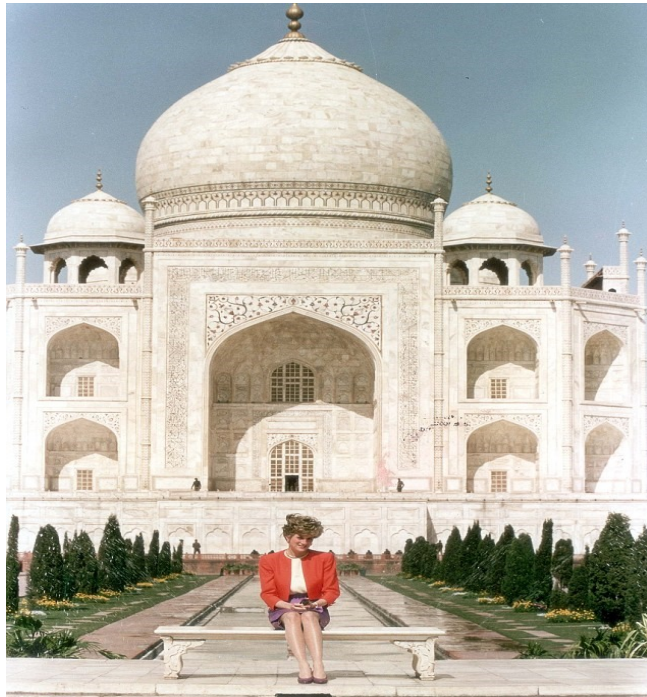


Figure 11. Diana in front of the Taj Mahal, 1992.<sup>11</sup>

The only British characteristic that is on display in this particular picture is “keep[ing] themselves to themselves”. Instead of locking herself into her hotel room and crying over her failing marriage, she put a smile on and continued with the royal

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<sup>11</sup> Retrieved from <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/femail/article-3465579/William-Kate-follow-Princess-Diana-s-footsteps-visit-Taj-Mahal.html>

schedule. It also shows that she is not “complain[ing] too much” over the state of her marriage or her life. She is carrying on, as the British people expect her to.

This photograph, distributed for publication in newspapers, seems to be deeply ironic in hindsight. Diana, an unhappily married woman, is seated in front of the Taj Mahal, a wonderful testament to marital love. Not only that, but she seems to be dwarfed by the building. Of course that could be based on the fact that it is so big it can make anyone look small, but it still stirs some pangs of sympathy in the viewer. It makes Diana look frail and fragile instead of being a confident royal. It also emphasizes how alone she is in the picture. There is plenty of room on the bench, especially since she is sitting in the middle of it.

The final sympathetic touch is the fact that Diana has resorted to one of her old pre-Princess signature visual rhetoric techniques. Her head is tilted to the side, just like she did in her “Shy Di” days. That pose also elevates her physical frailty to the viewers of the photograph because it shows a sense of how physically overwhelmed she is by being at both the metaphorical and physical places that she is in her life. Her appearance in this picture makes her look like the victim to a terrible husband who had so clearly abandoned his duty to her. So, the pity generated by this particular picture helps her to gather more public support. How could people not feel some sort of emotion for a cuckquean wife who so clearly loved her husband? By using visual rhetoric to elicit sympathy, Diana could suggest that the royal family was not without its flaws—something she could have hardly vocalized since she was the people’s Princess. Diana’s emotional touch resonated because it was so refreshing to see that from a royal because it showed that the royals could be human and show emotions just like the commoners do. But, those emotions also

highlight why Diana and Charles's marriage was doomed to fail due to irreconcilable differences.

In 1994, in honor to celebrate the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his investiture as Prince of Wales, Charles decided to do an interview to discuss his life. Of course, he wanted to promote his own agenda of being a royal in the modern world and his pet causes such as organic farming, but that was not the only focus of this interview. Charles was also going to discuss in great detail his failing relationship with Diana. Not only did Charles imply that he was forced into marrying Diana by his parents, but that he had committed adultery with Camilla Parker Bowles, an old girlfriend of hers who was also married at the time of the affair. Needless to say, these disclosures caused a lot of controversy, but it shockingly was not the only royal headline from that evening. Diana created a public frenzy with her appearance at a Vanity Fair party.

In this photograph (Figure 12), Diana is shown arriving at the party and shaking hands with a man. She is dressed in a low-cut and off-the-shoulder dress that appears to be a few inches above her knee. She seems to be confident in this outfit and happy to be at the event.

The two highly desired British characteristics in this particular picture is the fact that Diana is yet again photographed being "polite" and showing that she has "good manners". Even though she is at a very exclusive party, she is still extremely approachable and willing to show her hosts thanks for the invitations to the party. Instead of "keeping to herself" and watching her husband share intimate secrets about their relationship, Diana has decided to attend a party dressed in a way that suggests she does not care about Charles's interview.



Figure 12. Diana at the Vanity Fair Party, 1995<sup>12</sup>

This particular photograph, photographed for a newspaper or a magazine, illuminates how Diana uses her physical beauty to gain visual rhetoric. In fact, in this particular picture she looks like she is playing the part of someone who is extremely confident and comfortable in her own body. She was always known as being a fair and modest beauty, but her appearance at the Vanity Fair party disrupts all of those visual descriptors. Instead of being fair, she has a tan. Instead of being modest, she is wearing a very unroyal dress that shows off both her décolletage and legs.

But, with this particular picture, Diana is still able to generate pathos. She was also able to generate pity because someone so young and physically attractive should not be left by her husband. People felt sorry that she was now forced to listen to the details of

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<sup>12</sup> Retrieved from <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/femail/article-2070449/Marilyn-Monroe-Kate-Middleton-The-unforgettable-dresses-time.html>

her failing marriage being revealed. Diana was also able to generate another emotion, rage. This dress is now known as her “revenge dress” by many royal commentators for good reason. This is a photograph that basically taunts Charles for what he did have and could still have if he had paid more attention to her and not cheated on her. The fact that she looks fantastic in it only heightens the insult against him. It is also evidence to show how young and beautiful she still was at this time. This particular picture of Diana at her most sexually attractive was used to emphasize that Charles had cheated on her with an older and conventionally uglier woman. But, it’s also a black dress. Although black is often assumed to be a slimming color on women, black is also associated with mourning and death. By wearing black, her visual rhetoric announced that her marriage life as she knew it were gone. That dark color would be carried over for her own television tell-all interview.

In 1995, Diana decided to be secretly interviewed by Martin Bashir of *Panorama*, which was one of the first times that she got to tell her story using her actual voice rather than her visual voice. In this interview, she would finally be able to tell her side of the story. In this interview, she was finally able to create and share her own narrative, rather than have a narrative be forced upon the public by someone who did not care about what she had to say. Diana was able to explain what her life being married to Prince was really like:

...[she] discussed her postnatal depression, her suicide attempts, her crying jags, and her bulimia. She said she suffered because her husband made her feel useless and unwanted—a total failure. She said he had taken a mistress and then blamed her, his wife, for getting upset. He said she was an embarrassment to the royal

family, and his friends, ‘the establishment that [she] married into’ considered her unstable enough to be committed to a mental institution...Yet she maintained she did not want a divorce. (Kelley 481)

Although those accusations definitely did the job of impugning the reputations of the British Royal Family and its associates, Diana’s appearance would be the lasting legacy from this particular interview. In a screenshot from the *Panorama* interview (Figure 13), Diana is looking upward. She is wearing fashionable hair, gold earrings, and a dark colored jacket. She is also wearing very visible eyeliner but muted lipstick.

This *Panorama* interview is the very definition of “complain[ing] too much” and going against the standard of “keep[ing] themselves to themselves”. She is literally detailing every complaint about her married life, so she is showing that she is not meant to be a representative of the British people. Even though she is hardworking and polite, she cannot keep her emotions to herself. In fact, she appears to be on the verge of tears in the photograph as she details the struggles of her life. However, since she is losing her royal title soon enough, she does not have worry about being a royal figurehead anymore. Instead, she can just concern herself about doing what makes her happy, rather than what makes the British people happy.

This screenshot of the television interview highlights Diana’s calculated new image.

First of all, Diana is downplaying her famous glamour and playing up her ordinariness. A major attempt in this area is that she has selected to wear a dark blue business suit to this interview. This decision means that she looks like a regular woman rather than someone who married into royalty. By doing this, she is deliberately shifting

her rhetoric from just being someone who people aspire to be to being someone who represents who people are. Yes, she is still beautiful, but she could pass for being any regular working mom. She just happens to be one of the most famous women in the world. This style of rhetoric is also based purely on femininity rather than Elizabeth's rhetorical mixture of femininity and masculinity. She is allowing herself to look frail because she wants to deemphasize her authority and emphasize that she is no longer a royal.



Figure 13. Diana during the *Panorama* interview, 1995<sup>13</sup>

Secondly, Diana has highlighted her eyes throughout the interview. The dark blue color of her outfits ensures that her blue eyes are extremely prominent throughout the interview, but that is not all she did. She also put on black eyeliner for this interview.

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<sup>13</sup> Retrieved from <http://www.express.co.uk/news/royal/560495/BBC-shelved-Diana-tapes-documentary-fear-of-upsetting-the-Palace>

While she did put eye makeup as part of her regular routine, the amount of eyeliner along with the rest of her muted makeup seems to show that she is going to be open with her emotions. If she is going to cry, she is going to cry and everybody watching will be able to see it. She will not repress her emotions anymore. The eyeliner also allows her to emphasize that she is a grown woman now, rather than a young, naïve girl. She knows exactly what she is doing. That further emphasizes that she knows that a change in her royal status is impending, so she is rejecting Elizabeth's desire for her to be an emotionless woman. By being able to show emotions while she tells her side of the marriage, she generates sympathy and support. Like Figure 11, she is able to present herself as the victim, even if she also was at fault for the failure of her marriage. She is also able to stir public opinion away from Charles so that she can continue garnering support for her pet causes. If she is seen as the victim of an unwanted divorce, people will pity her to the point that they will do whatever they can to show that they support her. It helped that after that interview, her image of the desperately lonely woman would be iconic, especially given that she would be dead just a few years later. More importantly, the interview finally accelerated the divorce from Charles. After it became official in 1996, Diana was finally able to live the life that she wanted to live. She was thirty-something, beautiful, and wealthy with two sons who adored her. The world should have been her oyster and it was, for a little while.

In 1997, the year of her death, Diana was finally her ideal version of herself. She finally considered herself sophisticated and fashionable. The public still thought of her as being caring and compassionate with an undying passion for her sons and her charity work. In other words, she was finally able to find balance between the public's image and



her own idealized version of herself. Because of this, she decided to have new official photos taken in order to celebrate this “new” Diana.

In this particular photograph (Figure 14), Diana is laying down on a white sofa. She is wearing a beaded sleeveless gown. She is reclining on the arm of the sofa with her hands posed under her chin. She barely has a smile on her face as she stares directly into the camera.



Figure 14. Diana, 1997<sup>14</sup>

In an odd way, Diana has reverted back into following the British standard of “keep[ing] themselves to themselves” by repressing her emotions. Instead of openly showing her emotions as she has been doing in the past, she has decided to restrain herself. That may be because this particular photograph is part of a set that also includes a couple of her with wider smiles. That way, she has a greater selection to pick from in

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<sup>14</sup> Retrieved from <http://www.mirror.co.uk/news/uk-news/princess-dianas-wedding-dress-designer-179122>.

order to find the perfect image that represents what she feels would be best for the British people to see from her.

This set of photographs, designed to be the first post-divorce official photographs, show Diana at her most glamorous public self and her most happy true self. In a way, this photograph calls back to Figure 9. In both photographs, Diana is looking straight at the camera, but in Figure 14, there is a different feel. In Figure 9, she was awkwardly thrust in the spotlight with her shy fiancée, but in Figure 14, she is confidently by herself and getting all of the attention. She is no longer “Shy Di” who would try to hide from the cameras. Instead she welcomes the invasion of the photographer and the audience into her realm, the photographers. In this photograph, she is showing her true self and her idealized self at the same time. She is wearing a gorgeous gown, the ultimate sign of her new sophisticated persona, but she is also reclining on a couch, which no royal would ever get caught doing. In this set of photographs, she is finally showing that she is happy and comfortable in her skin, which is apparent with the playful look in her eyes.

Like Figure 12, she is dressed in an evening gown but it is not so scandalous. Instead, it says that she has matured as a woman. While “mature” may mean “older” in some contexts, for Diana it signifies that she is “settled”. She is wearing a gown that would accentuate her relatively natural makeup choices as well as her shorter hair cut and lack of jewelry. She seems to know that she is the true highlight, not the dress. She just seems so at ease, which would prove to be even more tragic after her death just a few short months after these photographs. It is also important to notice that this photograph is in black and white, which signifies that she does not need the bright blue dress that she

wore in her engagement photo to stand out from the royals. She has already accomplished that by being relaxed and showing her true self.

Throughout her life, Diana illustrated how she was able to use a different type of visual rhetoric than Elizabeth and the rest of the Royal Family. Instead of repressing her emotions and her gender, she was able to use these to create a connection with the public. When people look at her, they get a sense that they “know” her and how she feels about herself and her life. Her visual rhetoric prompted them to adore her, pity her, and envy her in equal measure. She was also able to shift her message as her life changed. While Elizabeth’s life and visual rhetoric has conveyed a single message for the past six decades, Diana’s life went through several changes, which required her to rethink her visual rhetoric. She could not use the same “Shy Di” rhetoric that she used before she was married after she was divorced because it would not make sense at the time in her life. “Shy Di” was young and scared of the real world, while post-divorce Diana was confident and self-assured because she knew what the real world truly was. Diana’s final glamorous photos would stamp such an indelible image on the British people that they would expect the next future Queen to construct such an image as well.

## THE VISUAL RHETORIC OF CATHERINE, DUCHESS OF CAMBRIDGE

There was an excitement amongst the group of reporters gathered around in the stateroom of St. James's Palace that November morning. They could not believe that this day had finally come. The reason why they had all gathered together was the long-awaited press release that stated simply and definitively, "The Prince of Wales is delighted to announce the engagement of Prince William to Miss Catherine Middleton. The wedding will take place in the spring or summer of 2011 in London" (qtd. in Nicholl 208). Those two sentences started a frenzy of public interest about the couple's impending nuptials not only because it was the wedding of a future king, but that the wedding was a long time coming.

William and Catherine had been dating on-and-off for over 8 years since they were students at University of St. Andrews in Scotland. This long pre-engagement led the British tabloids give Catherine a similar moniker to her deceased mother-in-law, "Waity Katie". Whereas as Diana was shy around the hordes of paparazzi cameras that surrounded her during her courtship with Charles, Kate was perceived as being noncommittal to anything except a marital commitment from William. She had several part-time jobs but would leave them due to the large amount of paparazzi that would follow her everywhere. This would also include her jaunts to several exclusive eateries and nightclubs, which did not help her look like one of the common British people. So, she was perceived as not only overly patient but lazy as well. The message of these photographs was quite negative. The tabloid moniker Catherine had been given was not

meant as a term of endearment, as Diana's had been. Instead the moniker suggested that Catherine might not have the characteristics needed to be a royal since laziness is considered one of the worst characteristics by British people (Culligan, Dubber, and Lotten 20).

However, after a long visual makeover, Catherine was redeemed in the public's eyes as a worthy future queen. Instead of spending nights out in the club, she started being spotted doing charity work to highlight her "royal education". From this, her visual rhetoric went from young girl to mature woman who was ready to marry the heir to the heir to the throne.

William and Catherine's engagement photo (Figure 15) was an important piece of visual rhetoric designed to serve as a makeover for Catherine. The manner in which William and Catherine posed for their engagement photograph made it nearly impossible for comparisons not to be drawn between Catherine and Diana. First and foremost, Catherine wore the same sapphire and diamond ring that Charles had given Diana. Although some believe that that selection was a bad choice because Charles and Diana's marriage ended in divorce, William justified by saying that "It's very special to me. As Kate's very special to me now, it was right to put the two together. It was my way of making sure my mother didn't miss out on today and the excitement and the fact that we are going to spend the rest of our lives together" (qtd. in Nicholl 213-4). It is almost as if William had clearly embraced Diana's pathos to ensure that people would be supportive not only of his decision of engagement ring, but of his decision of spouse. It is also important that Catherine is also wearing blue like Diana did. Although that choice of dress color can be considered ideal for bringing out the color of the ring, it can also be

considered an appropriate homage to her deceased mother-in-law without it being the exact same dress.



Figure 15. William and Catherine at their engagement press conference<sup>15</sup>

The most notable difference between William and Catherine and Charles and Diana's engagement press conference photos (Figure 9) is the body language. First and foremost, William and Catherine are both ecstatically happy as seen by their wide smiles and gleam in their eyes. With that facial expression, it suggests that their relationship is not a business contract, but rather true love, which is a subtle reassurance that this marriage will last. William and Catherine's smiles are extremely wide to the point that they are showing their teeth, while Charles and Diana's smiles almost resembled grimaces. The wide smiles of William and Catherine call back to Diana's wide smile. That smile shows that they are following in her visual footsteps of embracing emotions.

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<sup>15</sup> Retrieved from [http://odysseus-journey.blogspot.com/2011\\_04\\_01\\_archive.html](http://odysseus-journey.blogspot.com/2011_04_01_archive.html)

This difference in smiles also adds to the confident feel in William and Catherine's photo and the awkwardness in Charles and Diana's photo. In Charles and Diana's photos, Charles was almost using Diana's body as protection from the cameras. But in William and Catherine's photos, they are presented as equals who love and respect each other after a long period of time together. Both of them know exactly what is ahead of them, whereas Diana was naïve to the harsh realities of the royal world. This is due to the fact that Catherine and William waited to get married which caused her to be wiser and have a deeper love for William. So, waiting was a good thing for their relationship, rather than a sign that she was lazy. They both exude confidence with each other, while Diana and Charles's picture merely exudes discomfort. With that body language, William and Catherine are going to be a strong unit. All of the emotions displayed in William and Catherine's photo also makes a compelling argument that the royals are people, too.

What audiences did not expect when viewing William and Catherine's picture was how similar it was to his paternal grandparents' official engagement press photos (Figure 16). Elizabeth and Phillip were happy to be engaged with Elizabeth reportedly mentioning how her engagement ring "symbolized the end of her drab years and the beginning of a happy future" (Kelley 68). Despite the fact that Elizabeth and Phillip's engagement happened over six decades before her grandson's, there are still some interesting similarities between the two photos.

The biggest parallel between these photos is the shared body language. Both couples are arm-in-arm with each other, which symbolizes closeness between couples. The females, Elizabeth and Catherine, are both stylishly dressed in modern yet timeless

elegant outfits while the males, Phillip and William, are dressed to establish their masculine status.



Figure 16. Elizabeth and Phillip's engagement photo<sup>16</sup>

However, there is a big difference between these portraits, which is the type of dress. Elizabeth and Phillip are dressed more formally than William and Catherine, with Phillip is even wearing his naval uniform. But, there are two good reasons for that. First of all, these photos were taken in different time periods, so there are naturally different standards for dress. Secondly, there is the rank of the prince/princess in question. Elizabeth was the heiress presumptive to the throne when she got engaged to Phillip, while William is second in line to throne. So, Elizabeth and Phillip had to show how, in theory, they would be ready to take over the throne at that current moment. After all, who is more appropriate to be a sovereign and her spouse than a smartly dressed woman and her naval office husband? William and Catherine do not have to worry about presenting

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<sup>16</sup> Referenced from <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/picturegalleries/royalty/9688343/The-Queen-and-the-Duke-of-Edinburghs-65th-wedding-anniversary.html>.



themselves as being the couple who would take over if Elizabeth dies. They just have worry being presenting themselves as being a solid and strong couple who are learning to be that couple who can take over in the future.

Diana's use of pathos to generate public support and Elizabeth's use of abjection to prove that she is worthy to be ruler are definitely important to Catherine's use of visual rhetoric. Although she has spent a large amount of time studying the royal protocol, it will not matter if Catherine cannot get the support needed to maintain the monarchy in the long run. Thus, she has to rely heavily on both establishing an emotional connection like Diana did, while also establishing authority and credibility like Elizabeth in her visuals. As Catherine is still fairly new in her royal role, she has to display these two contrasting roles through the way that she dresses. Of course, since Catherine is one of the most photographed women in the world, she is bound to be compared to both Diana and Elizabeth by the public at large. That way, they can decide if Catherine is following in those royal footsteps. By exploring the outfits and looks that she picks and comparing them to selections made by her mother-in-law and grandmother-in-law, one would be able to see the contrasts between Catherine using Diana's approach and Catherine using Elizabeth's approach.

After the press conferences, many modern-age royal couples pose for official engagement photographs in a more intimate setting. That precedent was set with Charles and Diana's engagement and was continued with William and Catherine's relationship (Figure 17). While some may say that this is an example of William and Catherine, as a couple, using this chance to begin establishing Catherine's transition into becoming a future royal, I see this as an opportunity to not only get a sense of how the couple are in

real life, but it is also a chance for them to honor his mother who would have loved to share in the couple's happiness.



Figure 17: Charles and Diana's official engagement photo (left); William and Catherine's official engagement photo (right)<sup>17</sup>

The similarities begin with the similar posing of the two smiling couples, both pictures that were published in newspapers and magazines for the consumption of the public. Both prospective brides are showing off the engagement rings while their grooms are hugging them. They, along with their photographer, had to know what they were doing when they did the same pose. But, there is an ease with William and Catherine that is just not apparent with Charles and Diana. Catherine is also wearing the same color as Diana did in her engagement photographs. While white is typically the color that most brides will wear on their wedding day, white also represents purity and hope. White is the perfect color to wear when one is celebrating their impending nuptials. The white tops

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<sup>17</sup> Retrieved from <http://www.metafrost.com/kate-middleton-vs-princesse-diana-qui-est-le-plus-elegant/>.

that both women wear also help to highlight the exact same engagement ring since white is a great backdrop for other colors, such as blue, to stand out. White also makes the woman stand out as both Diana and Catherine grab the attention away from their grooms.

There are two big differences in the two photographs. The first difference is how the groom touches his future wife. In the left photograph, Charles looks to be barely touching Diana, which is reminiscent of their engagement press conference photos and how they had a very limited understanding of visual rhetoric. In the right photograph, William has Catherine in a deep hug. The difference in these two pictures is how comfortable the groom is in expressing his love for his partner. Charles does not seem comfortable just yet with expressing his love for Diana, which causes Diana to look somewhat awkward and younger in her picture. Due to having that confidence as well as being older and more mature than Diana, they both look more comfortable with each other and in front of the camera.

The other difference between the two photographs is the style of dress. Charles and Diana are in more formal wear while Catherine and William are in casual clothes. This style of dress not only fits their ranks, but fits their style of relationship as well. Charles and Diana were just one heartbeat away from being King and Queen, so they had to establish their authority through their dress, just like Charles's parents. That theory is especially true with Diana, since she was so young when she became engaged to Charles. She has to dress in a way that reflects her youth while trying to display authority. In William and Catherine's case, as previously stated, they are not that close to the throne, so they can still have plenty of time to establish their authority. Instead, their photos reflect who they are as a couple, rather than who they will be as future rulers of the

country. As a result, their photos reflect a calm and casual feeling rather than the awkward and posed feeling of Charles and Diana's engagement photo and part of that credit goes to Catherine. She is allowed to be herself rather than be forced to play a role that she is, frankly, not ready for. By being allowed to be herself, she is free to express her happiness, which generates a lot of emotional appeal toward her. William and Catherine were able to marry someone they love, which may be an even better fairy tale than the original feeling surrounding William's parents' engagement and early marriage.

After Catherine got married and became the Duchess of Cambridge, her royal life became full of important duties and tours which require her to dress a certain way. The majority of these events require a lot of walking and talking and transitioning between indoor and outdoor settings, which means that Catherine has to wear an appropriate outfit for the event. Naturally, Catherine looks towards Elizabeth for fashion inspiration due to Elizabeth's long experience with these sorts of events as highlighted in Figure 18 and Figure 19. So, by dressing in the abjection-like style of the current queen, Catherine is slowly gaining respect that will come in handy if she becomes queen by showing her "good manners" and practicality to be "hardworking" (Culligan, Dubber, and Lotten 20). It is also really important to note that she still smiles with teeth like Diana (which emphasizes that she wants to be the people's princess).

By looking at Figure 18 and Figure 19, there are similar aspects to their outfits, besides just them being the same color. Both women favor wearing dresses, which is associated with feminine qualities, but these are not just regular dresses. These are coat dresses which allows for functionality for these wearers. They can wear the coat dress outside, but when they go inside, they can take off the coat and have a lighter but still

appropriate dress on. However, there is an underlying abjection element to this selection. Both women are abjecting elements of their femininity for this selection. Yes, they are still wearing dresses, hats, and jewelry but the coat dresses hide their feminine form rather than highlight it. The only body parts that can be seen are their calves, and any curves that can be seen are in the design of the dress rather than their natural body types. As a result, they are not seen as overly feminine and can still demand respect and authority, while wearing certain stereotypical feminine items.

Even though Catherine is considered a modern style icon, she is merely coloring within the lines that Elizabeth has set up in her fashion sense. Although Catherine will occasionally have an edge with her other fashion selections, she still wears largely traditional designs that do not emphasize the female body. This decision directly contradicts to the outfits that Diana wore, especially towards the end of her life. But there are other ways for Catherine to honor Diana's memory.



Figure 18. Elizabeth and Catherine wearing red<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Retrieved from <http://www.usmagazine.com/celebrity-style/news/queen-elizabeth-88-matching-style-kate-middleton-2014214>



Figure 19. Elizabeth and Catherine wearing blue<sup>19</sup>

In Figure 20 and Figure 21, Catherine is seen wearing items that are allusions to iconic items that Diana wore during her tenure as Princess of Wales. Arguably the most famous example of this was the outfit that Catherine wore to publicly show her son, Prince George for the first time (Figure 20). Her bespoke Jenny Packham blue polka-dotted dress immediately drew comparisons to a similar dress that Diana wore at Prince William's first public appearance. Many people saw this dress as not only a sign that William and Catherine knew the gender of their child, but they were deliberately ensuring that Diana was present, at least in memory, during the birth of their son, her first grandchild. With that thought in mind, it was seen as a lovely touch to someone who would have loved to have been a grandmother. It was also a nice sign for the public that they should also feel that they are fortunate to have the opportunity to see William's child that Diana did not get.

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<sup>19</sup> <http://www.usmagazine.com/celebrity-style/news/queen-elizabeth-88-matching-style-kate-middleton-2014214>



Figure 20. Diana holding Prince William (left); Catherine holding Prince George (right)<sup>20</sup>

In the fall of 2015, Catherine caused a stir when she attended an event for bureaucrats wearing Diana's iconic tiara, the Cambridge Lover's Knot tiara (Figure 21) in a photograph disseminated in newspapers and social media. Many pundits expected Catherine to never wear it since it was so tied to Diana's image as the fairytale princess. However, this was Catherine's way of saying to her dissenters that she is not afraid of Diana's ghost haunting her items. In fact, she is going to embrace Diana's choices since she is so similar to her deceased mother-in-law. Both women were/are shy, smart, beautiful, and non-royal, so it only makes natural sense that Catherine leans heavily towards following her mother-in-law's example.

Both of these photographic examples draw on the natural pathos and attraction that Diana had with so many people. The public still have a positive feeling and connection with Diana and her story. When Catherine naturally provokes those same emotions, people may have those feelings with Catherine based on absence. If Diana is

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<sup>20</sup> Retrieved from <http://nation.com.pk/international/24-Apr-2015/silent-glamour-after-diana-kate-reinvents-the-job-of-princess>

not around, Catherine can be a natural substitute for her mother-in-law, but without the sadness that is apparent throughout of her history. With Catherine, her happy ending is still happening and the royal lineage can continue, which is the importance of royals being photographed.



Figure 21: Diana wearing the Cambridge Lover's Knot tiara (left); Catherine wearing the Cambridge Lover's Knot tiara (right)<sup>21</sup>

Catherine is able to establish both ethos and pathos through her visual appearance. Catherine has clearly learned from the examples of her mother-in-law and grandmother-in-law how to “speak” through her visual rhetoric. Even though she not been a royal long, she is reaching the public through her photographs. She is assuring them that she is “friendly”, “hardworking” and has “good manners”. This is assuring the British people that she will follow the regal example that Elizabeth has set, but also honor the loss of Diana. She is effectively conveying the message that she has the authority to be the People's Queen without saying a word.

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<sup>21</sup><http://aboutwilliamandkate.blogspot.com/2015/12/duchess-kate-wears-princess-dianas.html>



## CONCLUSION

Visual rhetoric can be used to explain examine how British female royals are able to gain and use their power in a world where they are rarely allowed to use their actual voice. These women were/are able to use these visuals in order to show that they possess the desired British characteristics of having “good manners”, being “educated and skilled”, being “friendly”, “respect[ing] the rule of law”, their “sense of humour”, being “tolerant of people from other countries/with different beliefs”, “keep[ing] themselves to themselves”, being “innovating and creative”, being “patriot[ic]” to her country and being “hardworking” (Culligan, Dubber, and Lotten 20). Queen Elizabeth II uses visual rhetoric and these desired traits in order to become a more credible sovereign. Furthermore, by portraying herself as androgynous, she specifically shows that she can maintain a balance between the visual characteristics of her gender and the masculine-based expectations visuals of her role as ruler of the United Kingdom. Her former daughter-in-law, Diana, Princess of Wales, used visual rhetoric in order to gain a sense of control and confidence that she had long desired. This use was heightened around the time of her divorce in an effort to garner public support of her new non-royal persona. To emphasize this new persona, she actively sought to visually defy British characteristics, aligning herself with the everyday citizen. Diana’s daughter-in-law, Catherine, Duchess of Cambridge, uses visual rhetoric to show how she is following in the footsteps of both Elizabeth and Diana. She is able to do this by adapting Elizabeth’s style of dress and Diana’s display of emotions to construct her own visual identity. Without visual rhetoric,

these women would be voiceless and unable to demonstrate that they are true representatives of the British people.

Without visual rhetoric, royals in general would have no purpose or distinguishing features between them and the people they represent. They know that if they are being photographed, they are showing that they are “friendly” and “hardworking” instead of “lazy” and “rude”, which ensures that they will continue to have the support of the public. They are able to prove that the royal family is something still worth having in this day and age. However, they have to be constantly aware of their visual rhetoric now because of how the medium of photography has changed. Nearly everyone has access to taking pictures and sharing them, which means that visual rhetoric is used constantly. That means that the Royal Family has to be extremely careful with any image that they intentionally or unintentionally create, because the public will have near instant access to that image.

The evolution of photography also means that people are able to analyze photographs at a different speed. In Cara Finnegan’s article “Recognizing Lincoln: Image Vernaculars in Nineteenth-Century Visual Culture”, she looks at how American people in 1895 “connected the surface aspect” of a previously unpublished picture of a young Abraham Lincoln “to prevailing cultural myths about Lincoln” (67). The viewers of the photograph used it as evidence that Lincoln was “a man for all people, alternately a dreamy romantic and a strong patriot, a ‘pensive’ intellectual and an insightful empathy, a manly ‘military chieftain’ and a feminized figure of ‘sweetness’ and delicacy” (Finnegan 67), but these people were three decades away from Lincoln’s tragic death. In that time, Lincoln became a myth rather than a mortal man. In today’s media, people are

analyzing the photographs of Catherine in order to predict what kind of royal she will be. With that amount of pressure, Catherine is bound to make a few mistakes with her visual rhetoric.

A prime example of one of these visual mistakes happened in March 2016. In early 2016, many major British newspapers started criticizing William, Catherine, and Harry for the lack of royal engagements and corresponding photo-ops that they had done so far. This criticism was specifically aimed at William and Catherine due to the fact they are the future king and queen of the country. They were not serving the people through charity work and so were not demonstrating the coveted characteristic of being hard-working as William's grandparents have done. William had only completed four engagements in January and February, which is completely below the expected average. According to Penny Junor, in the eyes of the British public, "Prince William has gone from goodie-two-shoes who can do no wrong, to lazy layabout, not pulling his weight, spending too much time with his children and choosing to live in his hideaway in Norfolk" (qtd. in Holden). This goes against Elizabeth who, despite being the Queen Mother of her own people, was not spending that much time with her grandchild. After all, her first loyalty was to her people, not her family. The fact that they have not been *seen* doing royal events has really infuriated these newspaper writers because if they do not have news and pictures of this popular couple, their papers do not sell nearly as many copies. It also impacts the public's connection to them. If they are not seen actively caring about their royal responsibilities, then they are perceived as not caring. So, the Royal Family had to think of a quick and efficient way to fix this public relations nightmare. Luckily, William and Catherine already had plans on going on holiday with

their children soon. In an unusual move, William and Catherine allowed photographs to be taken of their private family holiday in the French Alps. In one of these photographs (Figure 22), William and Catherine are seen holding their children, Prince George of Cambridge and Princess Charlotte of Cambridge, outside of a lodge. They are all wearing attire appropriate for skiing with William and Catherine even wearing ski goggles. However, Catherine is not wearing gloves as her engagement ring is visible in the picture. William and Catherine are also smiling while the children look extremely confused as to why they are being photographed.



Figure 22: Catherine, Prince George, Princess Charlotte, and William on a family skiing holiday<sup>22</sup>

This photograph was immediately received as the couple allowing a glimpse of their private lives to enter public consumption. The public latched onto the fact that this was one of the few photographs with the entire family. Kensington Palace also

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<sup>22</sup> Referenced in <http://parade.com/462025/roisinkelly/see-the-pictures-kate-middleton-and-prince-william-take-george-and-charlotte-skiing-in-the-alps/>

emphasized that this was the first time either of the children have played in the snow. The fun and happiness generated a lot of positive affection for the young couple. Roisin Kelly noted how “both parents and children look happy and pink-cheeked playing in the snow” (“Fur Gloves and Lazy Lifestyles”). These photographs helped to bring some of the couple’s lost public support back because they were finally seen as a family unit who was committing to living a public life. But other viewers of the photographs saw a more sinister undertone to these particular pictures.

There were several negatives messages generated by the visual rhetoric of these photographs. First and foremost, the release of these pictures felt calculated to many people, particularly in light of the laziness accusations. It felt strange for such a private couple to take and share professional photos from a private vacation. They also got accused of using their children as a ploy to distract people from their public relations issues. One of the major complaints about William and Catherine is that they try to overprotect their children too much, so for them to be so open and public with their children felt out of character. Secondly, those pictures did not help with projecting the image that they are not “lazy”. Instead of being seen as a family doing a royal engagement, they are seen as a family on vacation that was potentially “at the expense of the British taxpayer” (Kelly). Not only that but many people found out that the place they went on holiday was one of the most expensive and exclusive ski resorts in France. That choice in vacation locale goes against their own desired public persona of being just a normal family in extraordinary circumstances, since most normal British families cannot afford to go skiing in France. Finally, Catherine has been attacked for the fact that her gloves in some of these vacation photographs were made from possum fur, which goes

against “William and Prince Harry’s wildlife conservation and anti-poaching campaigns” (Kelly). Even if these gloves were extremely warm and bought before Catherine was a royal, it shows a direct disconnect with one of her husband’s well-known passions in life. All of these mistakes with the visual rhetoric of these photographs can be explained simply because Catherine is such a private person that she is not had enough practice using visual rhetoric. Yes, she does get photographed a lot but not nearly as much as Elizabeth and Diana did at her age. That was because her relationship with William began in the protection of privacy officers, so she did not have worry about her public image or being hunted by paparazzi until she had graduated from college. While this security helped her relationship, it did not help her learn how to construct a royal image.

The interpretations of these photographers show the importance of visual rhetoric. They quickly examined the contexts of the photographs in a way that could enhance their individual readings of the photographs. But it also shows how quickly viewers analyze the images. As soon as these photographs were released, the positive and negative reactions on them were published online and in newspapers and magazines. Even if the interpretations do not agree with other interpretations, it does not matter. These photographs have the power to create or destroy popularity for these royals.

These photographs show a new awareness of visual rhetoric from the British Royal Family. They have realized that they no longer have the final word in visual rhetoric, so they have to pick carefully how to frame their argument. Catherine will learn from this visual rhetoric mistake just as Elizabeth and Diana learned from the mistakes caused by their photographed images. If she does not learn, she will be destroyed by the only tool that she has in her disposal when she cannot use her actual voice.

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