THE VISUAL RHETORIC OF THE FAMILY PHOTO: ONE CYBORG'S STORY

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ABSTRACT

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In this partially autobiographical text that challenges the "invisible" intellectual gaze, the author explores how beginning in the early 1900's United States, her "white middleclass" family attempted to seamlessly construct a neatly packaged vision of "Our Family," a vision that intertwined family stories and mythologizing and supported dominant ideologies. However, as the author rhetorically reads her family photographs, she also "reads" acts of resistance by her family members. But the agency needed to resist, is enough for those same family members to visually erase "Others" who supported and labored, others who allowed to come to light the "whole" vision of "Our White Family." Relying on theorists such as Lacan, Haraway, de Certeau, and Spivak, and scholars such as Porter, Powell, Johnson and DeVoss, the author uses rhetorical intervention, animation, and rehabilitation to deconstruct and reconstruct her family story in answer to Malea Powell's call to acknowledge history and attempt whatever redress is possible. As a call to the discipline of Rhetoric and Writing, the author, as she crosses disciplinary boundaries, asks for a more inclusive, interdisciplinary Visual Rhetorics trajectory that maps onto Visual Culture Studies, Critical Theory, and Visual Rhetoric/Technical Writing. After cautioning Rhetoric and Writing scholars writing on Digital Rhetoric and Technology against cognitively fetishizing the term "Cyborg" the author ends by answering the question, what can rhetoric as techne, through the technology of writing, do for the world?

DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my grandmother and Melinda.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to extend my deepest appreciate and gratitude to the Rhetoric & Writing program at Michigan State University for its help and support while I embarked on this excursion. In particular I would like to thank Professors Malea Powell, Ellen Cushman, and Danielle DeVoss for their support, patience, and helpful comments on this Master's Thesis. I'd especially like to thank Malea, Chair of my Master's Thesis Committee for her comments on this piece, and her work in making disciplinary space for this Thesis. I'd also like to thank Bill Hart-Davidson for his generosity, for helping me better visualize "texts," and for treating me like a colleague instead of a student, Jim Porter for his advice, Douglas Noverr, Jeff Grabill, Michael Wojcik, Leonora Smith, Julie Lindquist, Marilyn Wilson, the Department of Writing, Rhetoric, and American Cultures, and the WIDE Research Center. I also thank my mother Jacqueline Walther for her help and support, and my husband Michael Rife, as well as my children Olivia and Ansel Courant who have basically taken over the house so I could write this.

PREFACE

This is a story.

"Understanding the world is about living inside stories. There's no place to be in the world outside of stories" (Haraway, *How Like* 107)

This is a story about "my family" and how we created "our history" through visual images by way of the technologically mediated family photograph. It's a story of Visual Rhetoric. It's a story about culture: how humans interact, negotiate, and manipulate discursive productions. It's a story of human psychology playing out visually in photographs as some people are written in, and some are erased. This is a story about technology: the giant eye, the camera-machine, "everywhere . . . [and] . . . invisible . . . They are as hard to see politically as materially" (Haraway, *Reader* 12). It's story about "us" as technology; "we" are communication systems.

This is a story about what rhetoric can do for the world.

"I offer this beginning, an emergence" (Powell 39).

Here I "see" using rhetoric as techne and "unsee" with the technology of writing. It's about saying no to the pictures on walls and in photo albums, pictures that string together a seamless, whole, linear narrative, a narrative that has a beginning and end. This story is about "seeing" and "unseeing," "coding" and "uncoding." It's about acknowledging history and how history is inscribed as an "event." And, finally, it's all about writing towards alliance, affinity, connectedness and to

redress, restore, and rehabilitate. Here, I engage the art of rhetoric as techne and rehabilitate old stories with new stories through the technology of writing.

My work maps onto the visual rhetoric trajectory of R&W (Rhetoric and Writing). Rhetoric and Writing, as a discipline, moves us towards understanding and interpreting the elements that compose the world, what things mean and how they mean what they do, and, how to change meaning. Here I want to give my current working definition of rhetoric, but withhold the name of the author momentarily (I have amended the following slightly from the original version):

- an art, a techne – a reasoned habit of mind in making . . . concerned with coming into being and contriving and seeing how something may come to be among things that are capable of being and not being.
- an art through which meaning is made and action produced across a variety of human situations;
- an art that links theory (how the world might work) to practice (how we make things work in the world);
- an art that sees *use* as a practice that connects the past to the present and the future through bodies situated in particular configurations of history, culture, economics, genders, and geographies;

- an art that sees *users* as engaged in discursive productions across which human interaction, manipulation, and negotiation are the common threads.

The reason that I have withheld the author's name, is that this particular person's scholarship *is* deeply embedded in rhetoric and writing, but does not particularly (yet) speak specifically and narrowly to issues of the visual, i.e. what we might call "visual rhetoric" (although she *is* specifically concerned with *bodies*). The author of this thick definition of rhetoric, is none other than Professor Malea Powell, PhD (with small help from Aristotle on the first bullet), an author described as a "mixed-blood of Indiana Miami, Eastern Shawnee, and European American ancestry . . . [whose] research focuses on examining the rhetorics of survivance used by nineteenth-century American Indian Intellectuals" (38). Importantly, for scholars such as Powell, their own positionality as authors is critically relevant and germane to their work.

Some might say that in the cultural studies/critical theory strand of R&W, the scholars consider it epistemically violent for an author to remain transparent while representing others. Gayatri Spivak, certainly *not* a writer called up often by visual rhetoric scholars, said it this way: "The banality of leftist intellectuals' lists of self-knowing, politically canny subalterns stands revealed; representing them, the intellectuals represent themselves as transparent" (275). A transparent intellectual erases a huge chunk of the "why" and "how" part of any given intellectual inquiry. Spivak makes clear that a field of inquiry is produced by the questions asked, not by the body of materials determining what questions must

be asked of them (qtd. in Rogoff 384). Images do not determine visual rhetoric as a field of inquiry. Instead, we the scholars, working from our own positionality, determine the questions we ask, or that we will allow to be asked by others. The difference here is important if scholars wish to work towards a collective goal of developing visual rhetoric as a field that is intellectually rigorous. The irony for Visual Rhetoric is that since one of its tenants is that "the creation of an image . . . always involves some degree of subjective choice through selection, framing, and personalization" (Sturken and Cartwright 16), the field fails to play with the notion that the authors of visual rhetoric scholarship are also subjective choosers.

Intellectual transparency momentarily aside, I'll try to explain throughout this thesis how and where my work maps onto multiple trajectories within R&W. Like Susan Sontag, Laura Wexler, Shawn Michelle Smith, and Jo Spence, I've made a story of how the world works visually. I'm a bricoleur patching and piecing together a rhetorical analysis of photographs and their situatedness. I draw upon Wexler, Smith, and Sontag for help with the "photography" analysis, but Spence's work also connects to mine because of its autobiographical nature. Like Susan Sontag, Jo Spence, a photographer by trade, challenges the status quo by seeing users (of rhetoric) as engaged in discursive productions, story making, that photographs try to maintain, first in her 1986 book *Putting Myself in the Picture A Political, Personal and Photographic Autobiography*, and then in the 1991 collection, *Family Snaps The Meanings of Domestic Photography*. Spence challenges visual rhetoric with her own "visual rhetoric." She creates

photographs that tell a different truth. Laura Wexler uses Spence for Spence's proposition that family photography creates coercive, norm making images, images that "mobilize powerful models of social behaviors and appearances according to which the major divisions of age, race, class and sex are made to appear both natural and desirable" (Wexler, *Tender* 4-5). In other words, family photographs manufacture and support ideology. Shawn Michelle Smith uses Spence as a "contemporary feminist photographer and theorist" who investigates and represents "ways in which family photographs document parents' . . . investment in the . . . life of the child" (Smith, *American* 247).

Spence's work is the only "published" work I've come across thus far, as a Master's student, where the author reveals herself, her "identity," and explores her own positionality through the visual: photographs. But there is room in R&W for more of this kind of work, which I imagine full of fruitful possibilities. I also want to mention here, that, like Spivak (among others), my decision to write autobiographically and connect my "history" to my scholarship, was exceedingly political (as is my decision here to rely on Spivak, a Third World Woman, instead of Peter Elbow or Beth Daniell—writers clearly within the mainstream canon of Composition). I have ethical issues with some of the "looking" that I see in R&W research, and the focus on "public" performance. Robert R. Johnson, referring to Judith Wacjman, "reminds researchers of technology and culture that we should be interested in the private spheres: spheres that can illuminate the concrete 'lived experience' of women and other marginalized groups " (xiii). With the technological interfaces we now have, the private and the public blend together.

So looking at the private *is* looking at the public. Family photographs are now commonly posted on the WWW. Additionally, my decision to look "inward" and to imbricate "myself" in this project, comes from a political/personal philosophy. I live by the adage, do unto others . . . so it seems to me that the most ethical choice of method was to begin by "looking" at myself and the sacred texts of my own blood kin, before I venture out to look at "others." I like to know how things feel first hand.

Self-reflexivity means listening for other voices. It means being open to interdisciplinarity, being open to what Powell might call alliances: "these voices are a pathway to a middle ground teeming with change and possibility" (40). Powell, for example, intertwines herself and her community in her scholarship. Interdisciplinarity is important -- unless a field wants to be like the law, frozen in precedent. What I'm wrangling with here are "issues of canon and exclusion of . . . scholarly work" (Powell 40). I am asking, in Powell's words, for us to be allies working towards the same shared goals (42). And I am hoping that I will find language allowing us to have "respectful and reciprocal relationships" where we can flourish (Powell 41). For now, I call upon scholars in visual rhetoric to come out from behind their practices of looking, and reveal themselves to the world (in stories). To do otherwise is to represent themselves as transparent, risk unknowingly working towards an essentialist agenda, and flatten out places that beg for deeper rhetorical engagements.

Malea Powell writes that she learned rhetoric from her home community (43); I on the other hand learned rhetoric from Malea Powell. She taught me that

telling a story can be valued in Rhetoric and Writing, and that stories are nothing less than ways of theorizing. This story came to me when I was a student at Michigan State University in Professor Malea Powell's class, Contemporary Theories of Rhetoric, the spring of 2004. In that class, our reading list consisted of among others, Jean Baudrillard, Jean-Francois Lyotard, Michel de Certeau, Jacques Lacan, Sigmund Freud, Michel Foucault, Jacques Derrida, Donna Haraway, Gayatri Spivak, Hortense J. Spillers, Slavoj Zizek and Kaja Silverman. I managed to stumble along in my attempt to grapple with some of this theory. When we came to the readings in *female subjects in black and white race, psychoanalysis, feminism,* I hesitated at Laura Wexler's piece, "Seeing Sentiment: Photography, Race, and the Innocent Eye." Unlike our other readings, this piece actually had pictures.

Wexler's discussion focused on a set of photographs taken around 1865 by Virginia based George Cook, a white studio photographer who specialized in photographing both Union and Confederate military officers. After the war his interest turned to photographing former slaves, and George's son Heustis "grew up to be a photographer like his father but specialized in making pictures of former slaves" (165). In her discussion, Wexler focuses on George Cook's photo of "a nursemaid and her charge," featuring Mr. Cook's African American servant/former slave holding his son Heustis. Using a combination of critical race theory combined with psychoanalysis, Wexler rhetorically "reads" this photograph against the photograph Cook made of his own wife, Heustis's mother. It was the photograph of the "nursemaid" visually and linguistically juxtaposed with the

photograph of Cook's wife that gave me pause. It reminded me of something I heard once or twice from my mother. That is, my mother told me that while growing up in New Jersey in the 1930's-1940's, she had a "black nanny." During my childhood, this was not an issue my mother was willing to discuss (I *did* inquire), and my grandmother Martine (Hartman) Walther, never mentioned the "servant." Not once. I reflected on the strangeness of the scenario thinking further how I never recalled seeing a photograph of this person, and also wondering how invested "she" was in the life of my mother. So it was specifically with an intellectual-visual-triangulation of the photographic images of Cook's white wife, African-American nursemaid, and my grandmother that this piece began. (See FIGURE 1. Martine's Initial Visual Triangulation)

Researching my family's photographs for "evidence," or "data," led me not only to boxes of unremembered family photographs, but to Shawn Michelle Smith's work which examines the rhetorical functionality of W.E.B. Du Bois's collection of photographs for the 1900 Paris Exposition.

Unlike the widely disseminated [i] photographs by George and Heustis Cook and those collected by Du Bois, the majority of my family photographs were heaped and stacked randomly in discarded, miscellaneous paper boxes (some had been displayed publically – and certainly taken in a "public act" – the taking of photographs is itself a public ritual). I've pulled these out of the old cedar chest, the one my family mythologizes as being built by my great uncle for my grandmother's wedding. Prior to my research, none of these photographs had been placed in albums, and it is difficult for me to trace how I acquired the

photographs. But most of the older pictures, those from the early to mid 1900's (the main focus of this excursion) came to me through my mother.

Near the same time I participated in Malea's class, where we read Wexler and where I began thinking about this project and collecting "data," I also was a student in Professor Danielle Nicole DeVoss's, PhD, Visual Rhetoric class, and I taught my first class at Michigan State University as a Graduate Teaching Assistant. The textbook I selected was *Seeing & Writing 2*, edited by Donald and Christine McQuade. The textbook relies heavily on visual rhetoric to facilitate student writing.[ii] Freshman student writing assignments have used the analysis of advertisements (i.e. visual rhetoric) as a backdrop for over fifty years.[iii] I want to make clear here, that I am a writing and rhetoric teacher, and this project comes out of that identity. During the last five years, I have taught thirty (30) sections of basic writing at three different Mid-Michigan institutions. Prior to my Master's research, the question I had was, how do I talk about "race" as a "white" teacher? I had no language I could use because I was uncertain (and wrong, thinking I was not "raced") about my own positionality as a "white" teacher among students of color and "white" students. From a pedagogical perspective, my research maps onto the Composition (with a capital C) strand of R&W on the issue of "white" teachers needing to examine and interrogate "their own positions as raced subjects within writing classrooms" (Goodburn 71). Amy Goodburn notes that while "[t]heorists and scholars interested in anti-racist and critical pedagogies have focused for years on the ways students resist notions of white privilege . . . English teachers (most of whom are white) have not fully considered

the implications of theorizing their own racial position in terms of their 'whiteness'" (69; 68). Goodburn does what "white" teachers (and visual rhetoric scholars) rarely do, that is she self-reflectively examines her own racial identity and the implications thereof. But this project isn't just an exploration of race, it acknowledges, as Robert Johnson does when he quotes Judith Wacjman, that the effects of race cannot be disentangled from gender and class (xiii). My Master's Thesis research attempts to explore these entanglements. R&W could deepen and make richer its Composition and Visual Rhetoric strand if writing teachers become invested in the kinds of self-explorations they so often ask their students to engage in.

The reason I selected *Seeing & Writing 2*[iv] that first semester teaching at MSU, was so I could tie my scholarship interests to my pedagogy and work through authorial transparency with my students. This thesis has served me well in that regard. One of my basic teaching philosophies is that I shouldn't ask students to do what I myself am not willing to do. So I used my Master's Thesis extensively in my writing classrooms, coupled with an assignment that asks students to develop critical consciousness and critical thinking, by looking at their own family photographs and interpreting. Asking perhaps – what's not stated here? What's the purpose of this picture? Why did my family select this picture to publically display (or not)? Why did this picture get taken? These are the kinds of questions the art of rhetoric encourages us to ask.

While teaching "visual rhetoric" and reading Wexler in Malea's class, in Danielle's Visual Rhetoric class, I felt dissonance (remember good writing comes

from dissonance) between the cultural studies strand of R&W, and the visual rhetoric strand. We read texts on design, typography, graphics, and color by authors such as Mike Markel who discussed the principles of design, contrast, repetition, alignment, and proximity, and Ann Wysocki who analyzed the rhetorical meaning of fonts and visual placements in multiple media formats. We read texts that discussed creating humanistic visual illustrations (Dragga and Voss). I had difficulty finding a connection between the deeply analytical and theoretical writings of Wexler, Smith, Lacan, and Derrida and the visual rhetoric readings which for the most part came from the professional and technical writing strand of R&W.

Danielle helped me work through this disconnection in her class. Also, it is because of her class that dissonance erupted into this Master's Thesis. Danielle used two textbooks, in addition to our daily readings, Sturken and Cartwright's introduction to "visual culture," and a "visual rhetoric/digital rhetoric" anthology (Handa). As I discuss in chapter one, there is conflict between these two "fields," but there shouldn't be. Regardless, I understand my scholarly responsibility to explain how my work is situated in this place of conflict. There is an empty gap, a void really, in visual rhetoric that needs to be filled with research and scholarship. This gap might create alliances between the R&W traditions of composition, visual rhetoric, and technical writing and layer those with cultural rhetorics and critical theory. The kind of scholarship I need to rely on to theorize this thesis from a position of purely Visual Rhetoric scholarship, has not yet been written from a "Visual Rhetoric" perspective. This is why I found it necessary, as

I will explain later, to draw upon the fields of film studies/critical theory/cultural studies. Jay David Bolter reassures me that such an interdisciplinary effect has manifested itself as R&W scholarship increasingly focuses on electronic writing environments and the breakout of the visual. Because of the dominance of images on the WWW, scholarship/research that's been necessitated, has had to try to braid together critical theory and visual analysis in order to theorize. I want to conclude this paragraph by stating that visual rhetoric as a field, helped me become technologically skilled enough to scan and manipulate images to insert in this text, but did not provide me with a solid theoretical foundation from which to theorize this Master's Thesis. For that I had to turn to other fields, and other theories of rhetoric.

As far as research, I collaborated with my mother in obtaining some of the photographs. As my mother sifted through her compilation she found not just pictures I remembered, but many more photographs, some I've never seen; she located birth certificates and family trees that she also forwarded to me. In later conversations with her, I filled in gaps and constructed dates and places for some of the images. (Of course, many mysteries remain.) She has read my work and commented on it, and I thank her because without her help and support, I couldn't not have completed this project. She has been patient with me as I have ruptured some of the realities formed in that little metanarrative of my own family's "identity." (I hope in the rupture I have also rehabilitated).

Before I proceed to summarize the four sections of my text in the "Introduction," I shall contextualize "My Family's" photo history by describing the

relationship I had with my grandmother, aunt , and mother. For the first two decades of my life, my grandmother lived about three miles away in a rather upscale Dearborn, Michigan neighborhood. I lived in a brick bungalow with my mother in a deeply working class area on the edge of Dearborn, where Dearborn intersects with Allen Park and Dearborn Heights, in the shadow of Veterans' Hospital. My grandfather died the same year my father left: 1966. So that left my grandmother, my mother, and me (an "only" child), to fend for ourselves. My aunt lived about forty-five minutes away first in a working class neighborhood in Madison Heights, Michigan, and later in a upper middleclass area of Troy.[v] She was married to one man and had four children. Her husband died two years ago.

My father did not participate in my life either financially, emotionally, or with any presence whatsoever. He disappeared. Someday, however, I might write a paper about he re-appeared recently after finding my presence "on the web." He now emails me about once per month, after a thirty year hiatus. My mother, on the other hand, has always been present. During my youth, she worked fulltime as a secretary in the Social Science Department at Henry Ford Community College, and my grandmother worked part-time as a nurse. Because of my mother's work obligations, I spent a significant amount of time alone with my grandmother. I occasionally stayed overnight at her home, and I frequently visited her with my mother.

My grandmother, my mother, and I also went on occasional driving trips in Michigan, staying together in roadside motels along the way. Also, during the years my mother was financially able to travel outside Michigan for summer

vacations to the oceanside in New Jersey, my grandmother met us and stayed with us for several days or a week. As for my aunt, my mother and I saw her mainly on major Christian holidays. Although, in 1969 due to cancer surgery, my mother was hospitalized for over one month and at that time I stayed with my aunt and her family. Around 1980, my grandmother moved to Florida, and I visited her there once. She also traveled from Florida and visited me during the ten years I lived in Colorado. The last time I saw her she met me in Michigan (I lived in Colorado and she in Florida) in 1990 after the birth of my daughter Olivia. My grandmother died in 1991. But that wasn't the end of her story.

Part of this story is of a history I was born into. "The history one was born into is always so naturalized until you reflect back on it and then suddenly everything is meaningful – the multiple layers of insertion in a landscape of social and cultural histories all of a sudden pops out " (Haraway, *How Like* 5-6). I think this is why, as college writing teachers, we often invite our students to begin the semester with their "own" story," so they can see how simply thinking on something takes linearity and makes cat's cradles, esplanades, and networks. For that reason, familiar (literally family-er) stories are always good places to begin.

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[i] Cook's photographs are displayed in the Valentine Museum in Richmond, Virginia and Du Bois's collection is part of the Library of Congress's digital collection and is thus freely available online.

[ii] See *Common Culture* Fourth Edition, Edited by Michael Petracca and Madeline Sorapure, New Jersey: Pearson, 2004 and *Dialogues An Argument Rhetoric and Reader* Fourth Edition, Edited by Gary Goshgarian, Kathleen Krueger, and Janet Barnett Minc, New York: Longman, 2003.
[iii] See (especially page 20) of Diana George's essay, "From Analysis to Design: Visual Communication in the Teaching of Writing," *College Composition and Communication.* 54.1(Sept. 2002): 11 – 39.
[iv] As other rhetoric and writing teachers know, most basic writing textbooks have chapters that help students explore identity. This is a traditional theme in our discipline. *Seeing & Writing 2* took that traditional theme further by pointing out to student readers how identity is constructed in the visual. The book contains chapters on "Embodying Identity," and "Capturing Memorable Moments," with special focus on interpreting photographs.
[v] All of the neighborhoods I mention were "white."

INTRODUCTION

"The cyborg is resolutely committed to partiality, irony, intimacy, and perversity." Donna Haraway. "A Manifesto for Cyborgs."

Radically different theorists agree on the importance of the visual in our culture, theorists such as Haraway, Bolter, Faigley, DeVoss, Lacan, Freud, Frederic Jameson, hooks, Joyce Middleton, Wexler, Hart-Davidson, Haas, Selfe, and Smith, just to name a few from widely different scholarly backgrounds. The rhetoric of the visual has become increasingly important because of the scholarship taking place that examines digital/electronic writing, especially as that writing manifests itself on the WWW. "On the World Wide Web, the images often dominate" (Bolter 47). Scholars remind us of the importance, in our academic work, to engage not just in horizontal research and writing, but also vertical research, scholars such as Powell, DeVoss, Bolter, Porter, Johnson, and Haraway. These scholars insist that we need to acknowledge and unpack history, and we need to "see" how history informs current digital/visual rhetorical practices:

> These new media depend on earlier definitions of self embodied in print and earlier visual media; the electronic self is a remediated version of the printed, filmic, or televisual self. (Bolter 190)

Bolter specifically says that the Web "remediates photography" as web designers take the rhetoric of photography, its design principles, and refashion those principles when they incorporate images into pages and sites (70). Photography "contributed to a crisis in painting" (Bolter 58), and so, in some respects, multi-

media WWW writing contributes to a crisis in photography. The problem as I see it is that our information streams run so fast, we haven't yet theorized the role of family photography in everyday practice, and we're already on to something "else." But how can we understand the visual subjectivities unfolding on the WWW, without understanding how those electronic subjectivities are historically and culturally informed? This Affinity Project is an attempt to look at the Family Picture, still a construct alive and well, and connect its "birth" to present day issues and subjectivities.

I call this project an Affinity Project rather than an Identity Project, because I don't want to seal "Myself" off as containing a single, naturalized, essentialized "Identity." Instead I want to look for connections and potential alliances, alliances that include among others, "cyborgs and goddesses working for earthly survival," alliances that don't form in a space of "natural identification," but instead form in a constructed space of "conscious coalition, of affinity, of political kinship" (Haraway, *Reader* 14-15).

"The cyborg is a king of disassembled and reassembled, post-modern collective and personal self" (Haraway, Reader 23).

And so, the questions I partially (perversely and intimately) answer in this Affinity Project are:

- Why do people make pictures? Whose fantasies are fed? What are people's "habit of mind" when they make family pictures?
- Once made, how does a family picture function rhetorically? What kind of constructs does it help build?

- In the feeding of fantasy and in the mythologizing work completed by family pictures, whose subjectivity is flattened? Who is oppressed? Who is erased? Who leaves traces? And why?
- How, in all of this rhetorical analysis, do we acknowledge history and write towards connection and redress? What is the role of rhetoric and writing in rehabilitation?

Summaries of chapters follow:

Chapter One: Visual Rhetoric(s) and Visual Culture: Lacan (and Haraway) as (Visual) Rhetorician(s)

My use of Lacan (and Haraway) as (visual) rhetoricians is framed, and I discuss how their work is useful for scholars conducting visual analyses. Drawing on Powell, Johnson, Porter, and Aristotle I note rhetoric has always been connected to culture, psychology, and technology. I argue that visual rhetoric, as an emerging field, should be deeply interdisciplinary and I end the chapter by calling for visual rhetoric to be an inclusive Visual Rhetorics because not only will such a field engage intellectually robust scholarship, but it will also allow for scholarly self-reflexivity.

Chapter Two: Vertical and Horizontal Trajectories: The Gaze, The Masquerade, and My Grandmother's Legs

As I attempt to construct a text that is interdisciplinary, in this chapter I engage a visual-rhetorical analysis that horizontally connects cultural rhetorics and critical theory with Visual Rhetorics, and vertically connects historical scripts and how subjectivities were visually articulated through technologically mediated

bodies that travel through space and time (Cyborg Subject Positions). This chapter serves to lay a theoretical and textually specific foundation that I build upon in chapter three where I look at the rhetorical functionality of family photographs through the multiple lenses of psychoanalysis. I end the chapter by calling for more vertical theorizing that looks at how gendered subjectivities were (are) able to visually navigate and manipulate subjectivity through technological interfaces as those interfaces transform through configurations of space and time.

Chapter Three: Rhetorical Animation: A Semiotic View of Family Photographs

In this chapter I look at how (visual) discursive productions (at the family level) take place through the unconscious (i.e. unintentionally), how those (visual) discursive productions function rhetorically, and on a rhetoric as art performance level, I link together theory (psychoanalysis) with practice (family production of photographs). After rhetorically animating the "Kids On Car" image in order to go past Barthes' theory of connotative meaning, I offer up this Affinity Project as a body of knowledge for Visual Rhetorics hoping that other scholars might become more willing to be less transparent through self-evaluation. I call up Haraway's Cyborg Subject Position as a "healing" mechanism and as an act of interdisciplinarity and make a call to R&W scholars who themselves invoke Haraway's construct, to avoid linguistic reductionism.

Chapter Four: Rhetorical Reconstruction: The Black and White Truth of True (White) Womanhood

Drawing upon de Certeau, Spivak, and Haraway, in this chapter I engage a rhetorical analysis of one photograph in order to make the absent present. That is, I attempt to ethically conjure up the body of Melinda, an African American woman who was critical to my mother's subject formation, but who was erased in our family mythologizing, both linguistically and visually. As I make Melinda visible, I also inculcate the intellectual in his/her attempt at transparency when "representing" the other, finally ending the chapter by reminding the reader that this Affinity Project is about the power of rhetoric and writing, in particular Cyborg writing, where I seize the tools in order to rehabilitate.

CHAPTER ONE: Visual Rhetoric(s) and Visual Culture: Lacan (and Haraway) as (Visual) Rhetorician(s)

Overview

In this chapter I frame my use of Lacan (and Haraway) as (visual) rhetoricians, and I discuss how their work is useful for scholars conducting visual analyses. After repeating Powell's definition of rhetoric from the Preface, and noting how rhetoric has always been connected to culture, psychology, and technology, I note that visual rhetoric, as an emerging field, should work towards interdisciplinarity, and should include visual culture studies/critical theory, and any other field's work (film study) that might prove helpful. I end the chapter by calling for visual rhetoric to be an inclusive Visual Rhetorics, and I note how useful this kind of approach might have to scholarship in R&W because it allows us as scholars not just to engage in rhetorical analyses of discursive productions, but it also allows us to reflect upon our own subjectivities as writers/scholars/researchers.

Visual Rhetoric versus Visual Culture

Visual rhetoric is an interdisciplinary field, and is as yet emerging (Handa 2). Handa acknowledges that visual rhetoric owes much to the study of the visual in other fields. While acknowledging the importance of interdisciplinarity, though, Handa backsteps when she argues that visual rhetoric and visual culture studies are two distinctly separate fields. She posits:

> Visual culture as a subfield of cultural studies focuses on vision as a starting point for tracing the ways cultural meanings form . . .

> Visual rhetoric, on the other hand, might be defined as a discipline that focuses on the visual elements that persuade, taking culture as just one element among many: culture, along with images, sounds, and space, work together rhetorically to convince an audience. (377)

Marita Sturken and Lisa Cartwright define culture as an ongoing fluid and interactive process. They quote Stuart Hall: "Culture is the production and exchange of meanings, the giving and taking of meaning, between members of a society or group" (4). Handa, while perhaps justifying the separate and distinct chapter on "Visual Rhetoric and Culture" in the 2004 anthology, *Visual Rhetoric in a Digital World,* blurs her definitions. Visual rhetoric, based on the scholarship in that field, cannot solely focus on "visual elements" that persuade. Roland Barthes, Gunther Kress, Donna Haraway, Jay David Bolter (among others) and basic semiotics make clear that "visual elements" (signs) do not exist in a vacuum, but are inextricably influenced (framed) by texts, other material elements(other signs), and Subject interpellation. In other words, as I discuss in chapter two by invoking the Cyborg Subject Position, visual rhetoric is interdisciplinary because the visual cannot be analyzed without looking at context; that's what rhetoric tells us. For example, academics working in digital rhetoric "have tried to associate this new form of writing with the various critical theories. It would seem to be a natural alliance" (Bolter 161). The art of rhetoric insists that we look at situatedness in order to understand how meaning is made. In order to look at situatedness we need to look at culture/critical theory. "No text

should be 'outside the bounds of humanistic study'" (Robert Scholes qtd. in Bolter 167).

Handa is further incorrect when she argues that visual rhetoric studies can separate culture from the images, sounds, and spaces that the culture produces. If culture is a production and exchange of meaning (signs and things), then nothing is outside the domain of culture, including images, space, and sounds. Therefore, to study the rhetoric of the image, is to study the rhetoric of a "thing" that is produced by culture, and is therefore to study, in effect, culture. Carolyn Handa should be given credit though because she does say that visual rhetoric *might* be defined in the way she defines it. An interesting place for scholarship might take place in research that explores what visual rhetoric means (gather all the meanings; I've seen many, some conflicting), from what field it arises, and with what fields it intersects. Thus far I see a very strong connection with visual rhetoric and technical writing, but I also see clear and exciting intersections with visual rhetoric and cultural studies/critical theory (where my work sits). I have completed only a small start to that research here.

The Historical Connections of Rhetoric to Psychology, Culture, Technology

Before going on to the detailed discussion of how Lacan (and Haraway) fits in all of this, remember that rhetoric has, *since its inception*, been tied to psychology, cultural studies, and technology. While Powell's definition of rhetoric is partially derived from Aristotle (as mentioned in the preface), Jim Porter makes clear that "Aristotle's rhetoric, or a truncated version of it, came to be Rhetoric, or

conventional rhetoric, as we know it today" (*Audience* 15). Like Lacan, Aristotle links *psychology* to the art-of-interpretation, or . . . rhetoric. Porter writes:

> . . . Aristotle explicitly considers the various emotional states of listeners and formulates a psychology of types that the rhetor should be familiar with . . . in effect linking psychology and rhetoric. (*Audience* 16-17)

Note that Powell, Porter, and Johnson have no problem as they approach "rhetoric studies unabashedly" as rhetoricians "who take seriously the historical breadth of the discipline" (Johnson xiv). So while Johnson, Porter, and Powell either directly or indirectly link rhetoric to psychology, Johnson specifically points out the discipline's longstanding connection to psychoanalysis:

> I perceive as a discipline that, for over twenty-five hundred years, [rhetoric] has had a central investment in revealing the unconscious and uncovering the mysterious . . . (Johnson xiv-xv)

Not only do Johnson, Powell, Porter, and Aristotle, the "founding father" of current rhetoric, link psychology to the discipline, but Aristotle also links culture. While Porter doesn't explicitly say it this way, he does point out that in framing the psychology of the audience and its import, Aristotle says: "Young men . . . have strong passions, are idealistic, and are overly trustful. Elderly men are by and large cynical . . . one's birth or family background and station in life affect one's outlook: for example, the well-born man looks down upon others; the wealthy man is more arrogant; and the man with power is more ambitious" (*Audience* 17). The human interaction that Aristotle describes as quoted by

Porter, aligns with Sturken and Cartwright's definition of culture as the production and exchange of meaning. The production and exchange of meaning between "elderly men," "young men," and those "well-born," is "culture." Aristotle describes cultural considerations when he describes the importance of psychology. As for rhetoric's link to technology, Johnson points out, as Powell does, that in "the Aristotelian definition of productive knowledge, the concept of art is referred to as *techne*" (Johnson 23). Johnson goes on to map the word/concept *techne* onto our word/concept *technology*, noting that both are concerned with the creation of knowledge, but at the same time, both can accept uncertainty, mutability, and contingency (24). (Haraway plays with this notion of uncertainly and mutability in her construct of Cyborg Myth).

Therefore, visual *rhetoric,* as a trajectory mapping onto *rhetoric* must not just include technology considerations, but must also include considerations of psychology (the unconscious) and considerations of culture. Visual rhetoric and visual culture, if they are as Handa argues two distinct fields, should overlap significantly. My work is an effort at adding to the possibility that visual rhetoric can embrace considerations of technology, culture, and psychology (human emotion, desire, pain, fantasy, the theoretical construct of the unconscious), in the tradition of Rhetoric and a capital R.

Lacan as (Visual) Rhetorician

Again, a pared down, paraphrased version of Powell's definition of rhetoric might read like this:

- an art of seeing how things come into being among things that are capable of being and not being,
- an art that looks at how meaning is made and action produced across a variety of human situations, linking theory and practice,
- an art that creates connections through space and time by looking at how bodies are situated,
- an art that sees users of rhetoric engaged in discursive productions containing common threads: human interaction, manipulation, and negotiation. (43)

Lacan, through his theory of psychoanalysis and the unconscious, is a rhetorician, that is, one who *uses* the art to engage in discursive productions. In very simple terms:

- Lacan-as-artist-rhetorician sets forth a theory that sees how things come into being among things that are capable of being or not being. His theory that the Subject is defined in the field of the Other, tells us that whether or not the Subject (a "thing") comes into being, and how the being comes about, is defined by "things," i.e., the "Other," who in turn is defined in the same way (by other "things"). Subjects exist as reflections/diffractions of Others.
- Lacan developed a theory that makes meaning and travels across human situations. His theory can be applied to photographs taken in 1865, or photographs taken in 1975, and we can use his theory to find meaning in the situatedness of the photos by analyzing the situatedness of the photo

taker, the photographed Subject, the viewer, and the "screen" or the mediating technology, whatever that may be. Lacan himself expected his theory to be applied broadly to human situations.

- Lacan as artist-rhetorician takes his theory and applies it to concrete examples, linking the two.
- Through his theories of the Law-of-the-Father, the phallus, and the family-matrix, to name a few, Lacan engages in the art of rhetoric as it connects space and time through situated bodies.
- Lacan as artist-rhetorician sees users (Subjects) as engaged in discursive productions (through semiotics) across which human interaction (the Subject is defined in the field of the Other), manipulation (think of Lacan's "mask" or "paper tiger"), and negotiation (he looks at how agency is exercised under the gaze) are the common threads.

Lacan's theory and his positionality as a rhetorician are also especially appealing for use in a visual rhetoric analysis because he himself skillfully employed visual rhetoric, and because he developed a rich theory drawing upon semiotics (the study of signs), and in his theory, he privileges the visual.

While it might be unusual, even shocking, to consider Lacan a visual rhetorician, it cannot be anymore so than to consider Florence Nightingale one. However, In "Florence Nightingale's Visual Rhetoric in the Rose Diagrams," Lee Brasseur does just that. While I don't have space in this thesis to go into the kind of depth Brasseur did regarding Nightengale's life and use of visual images as rhetorical device, like Nightingale, Lacan used diagrams and drawings, showing

his rhetorical sophistication and his sensitivity to the communication needs of his audience. He took his theory and linked it to practice by using visuals. He used diagrams often in *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis* and occasionally in *Ecrits* (remembering most Lacanian texts are translated and transcribed by others from his lectures). Most memorable are his drawings of the Ladies and Gentleman's restrooms and his famous drawing of the tree (a drawing that alludes to and inverts Saussure).

When Lacan explores the relationship between "tree" and the picture of same, it reminds us of the discussion in *Practices of Looking an Introduction to Visual Culture*, where Sturken and Cartwright define the field's notion of representation. They say that representation is a learned process through which we construct our understanding of the world (14). They argue that representation is based on the rules and conventions within "systems of representation within a given culture, " pointing to the classic pipe painting by Rene Magritte, "Treachery of Images" (1928-29). In this painting, Magritte paints a pipe but below it paints the words (translated from French) "This is not a pipe" (15). Magritte tries to break the conventions of the culture through art, a strategy (breaking conventions) also engaged in by scholars in visual rhetoric. Like Lacan, visual rhetoric works to

deconstruct and examine how discursive (visual) productions emanate from cultural conventions and rules.

In addition to finding Lacan appealing to *use* as a theorist in a visual rhetoric analysis because he *used* visual rhetoric (how can scholars write about visual rhetoric if they themselves don't employ it?), he is also appealing because of his use of semiotics, and his work has thus been richly drawn upon by scholars in film studies. Film studies' scholars analyze an inherently *visual* production.

Both Kaja Silverman and Slavoj Zizek use Lacanian theory in their analysis of films and screen shots. In analyzing the visual, Silverman uses Lacan to define the gaze, the field of the Other, and repetition. Silverman's books *World Spectators*, *The Threshold of the Visible*, and *Male Subjectivity at the Margins* analyzes the visual by relying heavily on psychoanalysis. Zizek's *Enjoy Your Symptom!* interposes Lacanian theory with the visual again. One small example (of many) is found in his chapter "Why is Every Act a Repetition?" where he explains the emergence of the Subject in the field of the Other – using the film *Sophie's Choice* as a backdrop.

One reason that students of film latched strongly onto Lacan's theory of psychoanalysis/semiotics, is because of the common assumption held by most semoticians and traced through Saussure: "language constitutes the signifying system *par excellence*, and . . . it is only by means of linguistic signs that other signs become meaningful" (Silverman 5). Barthes' theory supports this because he argues that photographic signs have no meaning without linguistic copies

surrounding them (Silverman 5). As a refutation of the privileging of text-language, some students of film studies adopted Lacan so the image could be privileged. This is why film scholars usually analyze screen shots rather than dialogue.

The point is, scholars in film studies have been using Lacan as a theorist for years because of Lacan's privileging of the visual, and it could be quite generative for other visual rhetoric scholars to cross over to film studies as I have done in order to deeply engage the art of rhetoric component of visual rhetoric.

Psychoanalysis, Lacan's Critics, and Haraway's Remediation

In order to provide a framework for the rest of this thesis, in this section I will discuss my use of Lacan, Haraway, Spillers, and Wexler. Notably, the reason that I spend so much time justifying my use of Lacan is because of the context in which I'm using him, and particular criticism of his theory. Spillers and Haraway critique Lacan, and yet in this thesis I use Haraway and Spillers alongside Lacan. In this thesis I use Lacan and I talk about psychoanalysis and race, and psychoanalysis and gender, but gender from a feminist perspective. I use Lacan alongside two of his critics, critics I feel embody the main criticisms of his work. The questions are, how can I use Lacan's theory of psychoanalysis in a discussion of race, since Lacan never theorized "race," and how can I use Lacan's theory of psychoanalysis in a discussion of gender-from-a-feminist-perspective when Lacan, supposedly, proposed a theory where the "phallus" was central, and where human Subjects operate under the "Law-of-the-Father"? Haraway, in the following discussion, serves as a representative of Lacan's

"feminist" critics, and Spillers serves as a representative of Lacan's "critical race theory" critics (although both Spillers and Haraway are concerned with Lacan's theory as it intersects critical race theory and feminisms).

But before I venture into the details of the Spillers-Lacan-Haraway-Wexler discussion, I want to remind my readers that in the study of the visual, psychoanalysis in general has proved useful. Earlier in this chapter, I made the points that Lacan's theory of psychoanalysis is particularly valuable to the study of the visual because:

- Lacan privileged the visual
- Lacan himself used visual rhetoric
- Lacan has been used for years by scholars in film studies in order to study the visual

More generally, psychoanalysis gives the study of the visual certain valuable theoretical tools. Sturken and Cartwright draw upon the strengths of psychoanalysis as a theoretical tool used to engage visual analysis in their text book.[1] In chapter three, "Spectatorship, Power, and Knowledge." Sturken and Cartwright credit film scholars for showing us how a theory of the unconscious is crucial to theories such as spectatorship, interpellation, and semiotics (73):

- Spectatorship emphasizes the role of the unconscious, fantasy, and desire in practices of looking. The spectator is simply the ideal subject position offered by an image.
- Interpellation (Althusser) tells us that ideologies possess us and define us as subjects. Ideology is shaped through the unconscious.

- Semiotics, or the study of signification, says that signs are generated by culture and define subjects. Images can be understood as language within the realm of signification.

Psychoanalysis, while tied to psychology, is not a theory used for therapy, but is instead used to analyze systems of representation. That's why psychoanalysis is so lovely for conducting image analysis. Images are representations; they are signs. Psychoanalysis, cemented with semiotics by Lacan, *at the very least gives scholars another way of thinking about the everyday*. It inverts our thinking and leads to new discoveries. But there has been criticism of Lacan's "phallus centered" Law-of-the-Father.

This brings us back to the question I posed earlier in this subsection: how can I use Lacan's theory of psychoanalysis in a discussion of gender-from-a-feminist-perspective when Lacan, supposedly, proposed a theory where the "phallus" was central, and where human Subjects operate under the "Law-of-the-Father"? Donna Haraway, a scholar adopted in the cultural rhetorics/critical theory/digital rhetoric strand of R&W and by R&W folks writing about computers and cyberfeminism (Porter, "Why Technology Matters," DeVoss and Selfe, "This Page," DeVoss "Women's Porn Sites"), wishes for a new theory of psychoanalysis that doesn't work from the family matrix: "phallocentrics." Specifically, in "A Manifesto for Cyborgs" she argues in favor of "pleasure" in the "confusion of boundaries and for *responsibility* in their construction" (*Reader* 8).[2] But Haraway very specifically alludes to Lacan's theory in a section of Cyborg Manifesto, in a chunk of text where she actually names Lacan: "As Zoe Sofoulis

argues in her unpublished manuscript on Jacques Lacan . . ." (Reader 8-9). Here, Haraway invokes the Cyborg in order to imagine:

- a world without gender
- a world without genesis
- a world without end
- a Subject that no longer attempts to "heal the terrible cleavages of gender"
- a different unconscious

In this particular section of Cyborg Manifesto, Haraway invents the Cyborg as a being that no longer depends on "the plot of original unity out of which difference must be produced" (*Reader* 9). Her allusions to and criticisms of Lacan's theory of "lack," the split, and original unity tell us that she wishes for a different theory. In "Promises of Monsters," this criticism continues as she argues (alluding to Lacan) that Lacan's theory of psychoanalysis is "the story line of phallogocentrism" (*Reader* 67):

> He [man] gains access to this wondrous technology with a subject-constituting, self-deferring, and self-splitting entry into language, light, and law. Blinded by the sun, in thrall to the father, reproduced in the scared image of the same, his reward is that he is self-born, an autotelic copy. *(Reader* 67)

Haraway "remediates'"[3] Lacan because she invents a theory that is in part a refutation of Lacan's theory, but at the same time, embraces part of Lacan's theory. She embraces Lacan in part because she embraces a theory of the

unconscious. Plus, her Cyborg Myth purposely plays upon and tries to undo Lacan's three registers. She agrees that there is an unconscious, but Haraway simply wants a different theory than one wherein our subjectivity is determined by the split where we are sexed. For example, thinking through her Cyborg Myth and how this purposely makes Lacan's three registers (the Imaginary, the Real, and the Symbolic) blow up, if the Cyborg emerges where the split never occurs, then it would have to emerge in the Real (and the Real, according to Lacan is the register where we exist before the split – pre-emergence). Yes, in Lacan's theory in the Real we might be "whole," but we cannot also emerge. You have to choose being or meaning; there cannot be both, at least not fully. To have meaning, there must be an emergence into the Symbolic. Therefore, Haraway takes part of Lacan's theory and leaves part of it behind (remediation). She makes two things true at the same time which under Lacan's theory cannot both be true. A paradox. Under Lacan's theory, in the register of the Real, there is no emergence, that happens as the Subject passes through the Imaginary register into the Symbolic. On the other hand, according to Haraway's theory, if the Cyborg exists post-gender, then under the Lacanian triangulation, it has to both have emerged and been sexed at some time in the past. Therefore the Subject would have to exist in the Symbolic. So the paradox of Haraway's theory is that it is not possible to be post-gender and pre-split at the same time. The Cyborg, the way she's mythologized it, would have to emerge both in the Real and the Symbolic, and that can't happen under Lacan's theory. Haraway's Cyborg theory does not completely reject Lacan, she just tires to find a new way to think about

subjectivity: "It's not that Oedipal stories aren't very interesting and don't do important work but that too much work has been done there" (*How Like* 125).

And so, what I do in this thesis is remediate both Lacan and Haraway and make something partially new, and partially old. I need to use Haraway for a number of reasons. The reason that I use Donna Haraway's theory in this piece is because she gives me the theory of the Cyborg Subject Position, a Subject Position that allows me to make connections between Subjects without being racist, essentializing, or practicing imperialism. The Cyborg Myth also gives me a way to make alliances with others who wish to work towards anti-racist, anti-sexist pedagogies, scholarship, theorizing, and ways of living. She gives me a way into one of my audiences for this thesis, those scholars in digital rhetoric/visual rhetoric who have adopted her. She's been adopted because there just aren't a lot of scholars writing about gender and technology in such a healing way. There are not many scholars, like Haraway and Powell, who come right out and ask us *to do* something– who go beyond pointing to problems and actually offer solutions. The reason I use Haraway is because she is a scholar using visual rhetoric but who is not afraid to come out from behind her practices of looking and reveal herself in stories. In *How Like a Leaf* she is very clear that when she theorized the Cyborg, she was in heterosexual, monogamous love with a gay man who was dying of AIDS. Obviously, a "post-gender" world would be lovely to her. She says, "Certainly my own life has been hugely shaped by couple dynamics. But it hasn't been the whole story and it's been mixed up. I am my friends and lovers in fundamental ways" (*How Like* 126). As I say again,

and again, and again in this thesis, we as scholars cannot theorize outside our own subjectivities. Haraway admits this.

And in my following criticism of Haraway, the reality of our existence is that, by looking at the visual markings of all the Presidents of the United States, or the men who sit on the United States Supreme Court, or the men who sit on the United Nations Council, or the men who lead most of the nations on the planet, we are not anywhere near living in a post-gender world. I also can't find much use, presently, for theorizing my family's existence based on how we are like leaves even though Haraway says, "if we extend our relationships to our non-human relations, then there are so many more baroque possibilities" (*How Like* 124).[4] But I will not toss the baby out with the bathwater, because mainly I find Haraway's theory useful, brilliant, and in the future I plan on exploring the non-human relationships she alludes to.[5]

But for all her usefulness and brilliance, Haraway is wrong in saying that Lacanian theory is the story line of phallogocentrism . Lacan never said that the Law-of-the-Father, a clear biblical allusion, was anything more than human/language invented. In fact, the "Agency of the letter" Lacan points out that the "spirit" couldn't live without the letter, but the letter could live without the spirit (158). In that piece, Lacan writes that the spirit cannot be unassailable because the letter (language) has "shown us that it produces all the effects of truth in man without involving the spirit at all" (158). Also, Lacan spent much time arguing against a representation of the phallus as male organ – instead the phallus was that object of impossibility and plentitude we can never achieve. The

phallus doesn't even exist – is unobtainable. On the other hand, *the unconscious* is all-powerful – "the gap, the split" a place that we have evidence of (that we witness remainders of – like the birth of live children that come out of some invisible process) but that we can never "see." For Lacan, the power wasn't in the phallus (thus no phallogocentrism), it was in the unconscious, and the words he used to describe the unconscious are words that signify to female genitals and internal organs (vaginal tract, uterus, fallopian tubes, ovaries – symbols/organs we know are there but that we never see), not male. So, the "center"-as-phallus isn't the center at all for Lacan; it's the margins. The center is the unconscious, and that is a female sexuality/subjectivity signifier. This is why I disagree with Haraway, She misses the point. She falls into the lure of "The Phallus" by buying the notion that the phallus is central, when what is really central, Lacan tells us again and again, is the unconscious. This why I think of Lacan as a feminist theoretician and why I feel no internal contradiction in using him when theorizing from a perspective of feminisms.

And so, for scholars invoking Haraway, as a number of digital rhetoric/technology scholars do, I offer these words of advice. You can't understand Haraway unless you get your head around Lacan. Her writing is ripe with Lacanian allusion. Her theory is a remediation of Lacan. And although she criticizes Lacan's "phallocentricity," Haraway points out bluntly the reason psychoanalysis is so valuable: "I think the notion of this theoretical entity called the unconscious is a useful theoretical object. We need to understand how we are blindsided from somewhere; notions of rationality and intentionality are way

too thin to get us very far in cultural analysis" (*How Like* 124). Haraway extensively uses and analyzes images to unfold her theory, and to show how her theory unfolds in the world ("Promises of Monsters" "Manifesto of Cyborgs," "Modest Witness"). Haraway is open about how our subjectivities are interpellated with the visual, telling how she includes as many visual images in her books as she can, and that the artwork of Lynn Randolph (whose art appears in Haraway's texts) has "really" influenced Haraway. In turn, Haraway influences the artwork of Randolph (*How Like* 12-121).[6] The interconnectedness of the visual and the textual is critical to any theory building that takes place both in visual culture studies, and in visual rhetoric. And, Haraway, like Lacan, is a visual rhetorician who uses psychoanalysis as a thinking tool to break out of old minds sets.

Another criticism of Lacan's theory is that it has no theory of race. This brings us to the question I posed earlier in this subsection: how can I use Lacan's theory of psychoanalysis in a discussion of race, since Lacan never theorized "race"? Since he doesn't speak of race per se, Lacan has received criticism from scholars[7], including Hortense Spillers who posits a fourth register to his Symbolic order (Rife). Traditional psychoanalytic theory offers a tool to think about issues of race and gender, but Spillers points to the problems with this theory as one examines "race." Freud and Lacan built their theory on the traditional family, theory dependent on genderedness (Rife). How does race and can race fit within these theories?

Spillers suggests that psychoanalytic and race matters theories ("All the Things" 135) can both be used if classical psychoanalytic theory is amended. Her text "Mama's Baby; Papa's Maybe" is illustrative on this point. She writes of the Law-of-the-Mother. How does Lacan's Law-of-the-Father work for black civil society? Neither the father nor the mother had property rights in the child (matriarch is therefore a "fatal" misnomer because the black mother couldn't claim her child, plus in the dominate culture matriarchy is not legitimate) (Spillers, "Mama's" 80). The African American father was removed. This removal, coupled with the named "matriarchy," signifies that the African American male is "touched" by the mother in a way that a white male is not. Only the mother stands in the flesh before the duality of an "African father's banished name . . . and the captor father's mocking presence . . . the black American male embodies the only American community of males which has had the specific occasion to learn who the female is within itself" (Spillers, "Mama's" 80).

Instead of a father signifier, at the time the child enters into the Symbolic, is a mother signifier. She is the phallus, that symbol of impossibility and plentitude.

Spillers describes this Mother Right culture within the dominant culture, pointing to a discussion that aligns "matriarchal" culture with that of brute animality ("Mama's" 80). This historical analysis of black civil society is important because no one doubts that the slavery of African Americans in the U.S. continues to reverberate today (Spillers discusses the Moynihan report in "Mama's"). How can Lacan's theory be further amended to account for "race"?

That's part of what Spillers offers up in her text "All the Things You Could Be by Now."

In her discussion, Spillers points out that the "African American community is more precisely ambivalent than any American case, in light of its incomplete 'Americanization' even at this late date" (139). She expounds on this "precise ambivalence" by using a metaphor of space traversed by media and urban byways, and says "that it is not always easy to designate what is 'black' and 'white' here" (139). That's the problem with the "always already" (duCille 21); it's a definition derived from negating a definition set (blitzed) by the dominate culture. Spillers says that the individual is "traversed by 'race' . . . before language and its differential laws take hold" ("All the Things" 136) This hold takes place before the child enters into the Symbolic; the child is already being defined by and absorbing "race."

Looking at Lacan's scheme of the Imaginary, the Symbolic, and the Real, Spillers poses a correction or addition to Lacan: "What one anticipates, then, is that a fourth register will be called for in establishing 'reality' (of the dominated political positions) as the psychic burden, acquired postmirror stage, that reads back onto the Lacanian triangulation a distended organizational calculus" ("All the Things" 140). She names the process "interior intersubjectivity" (140).

The fourth register is offered as a way to avoid the endless repetition: "the most promising of trails may be false, since it does not necessarily lead to a destination but circles back to the same place (Spillers 142). Her fourth register, a potential emancipatory remedy, is one that acknowledges the political and

erupts from speech in a forum of "the everyday, the dimension of the practical and pragmatic, and the dimension of the contemplative"(146). This remedy might take place in everyday talk that is exercised in the public forum of a black church (footnote 15). Everyday talk comes from and is itself contemplation.

In defining contemplation, Spillers looks to the self-reflexivity that arises from Du Bois posing an "ontological meaning" (143) beyond that "I" found in the field of the Other:

For Du Bois, the African American Subject Position is a psychological space mediated by a 'white supremacist gaze' (hooks 50), and therefore divided by contending images of blackness – those images produced by a racist white American culture, and those images maintained by African American individuals, within African American communities. (Smith, "Looking" 581)

Spillers' discussion of doubleness asks for the Subject's attempt, through contemplation, self-reflexivity, and interior intersubjectivity, to send off its own double. This double is sent off without accepting that definition already in the existing Real. She sees the Real as "always in the same place" and "status quo" (150). For Spillers, the Real is the "most persistent perversity" (130). In her story of the "bone ignorance of curiosity," what Spillers suggests then, is to somehow debunk the Real without the process of negating it – to start from scratch as it were. Instead of overcoming, she suggests building from the ground up. Please note here the similarities between what Haraway does with her Cyborg Myth, how she blows apart Lacan's three registers, and what Spillers does. Haraway

and Spillers are doing the same thing with Lacan's theory – they are keeping part of it and rejecting part.

To this end, Laura Wexler's approach fits better within classical psychoanalysis. She posits a rupture in the Real, rather than a whole other register or a whole new subjectivity. This is where I sit, theoretically. I agree with Wexler that a fourth register is not necessary. However, Wexler relies on Barthes and I don't because in Kaja Silverman's discussion she points to some problems with Barthes. Barthes' early discussion of "myth" and "ideology" suggests that "ideology is a condition of false consciousness promoted through fictions sponsored by the dominant class" (Silverman, *The Subject* 30). However, Althusser says that we "cannot step outside of ideology since it is only inside of it that we find our subjectivity and our social reality" (Silverman 31). Silverman herself then states: "While it may not be possible to step outside of ideology altogether, it is possible to effect a rupture with one, and a rapprochement with another" (31). I see this as the issue between Spillers, Haraway, and Wexler: can we step outside ideology? Is there another register? Is there another matrix that isn't of "the family"? Well, for my purposes, I *am looking at family* and *I am looking at ideology*, therefore I do not need to look beyond those constructs as they already exist. I do not need a fourth register.

Instead of positing a fourth register, Wexler gets around Lacan's lack of attention to race by literalizing "the Freudian picture of the sentimental family" to find that rupture, see it, touch it, and thereby effect healing ("Seeing" 160). Wexler points out that "[t]he comparative neglect of critical attention to the raced,

classed, and gendered production of the photographic image is a form of cultural resistance" (163).

Like Wexler, I keep Lacan's three registers, and I theorize that race fits with gender and sexual orientation in the Lacanian triangulation. That is, Subjects emerge having to learn in the Symbolic how to be raced, just as they learn how to be gendered and how to be heterosexual.[8] This learning takes place through a variety of means, including interpellations supported through visual rhetoric. I understand this may be quite shocking to some audiences, but this is my argument and I am aware of no proof that race, gender, or sexual orientation are pre-determined biologically, pre-birth. In fact, all evidence points the other way. And so, I look at my family's images in order to rhetorically deconstruct how they shaped and were shaped in their subjectivities as raced subjects; how they used rhetoric and were interpellated by it to cement a "whole" (as in full, without lack) subjectivity as white, middleclass, gendered.

As I stated earlier in this subsection, there is no scholar who can theorize outside his own subjectivity. And like the rest of us, Lacan was human. He had shortcomings. One of the reasons his texts are so difficult to understand is because he tried to write in a way that could span space and time. But some think he failed, because he did not speak outright about "race." Perhaps he was writing from a place of blindsightedness on this particular issue. In the end though, this doesn't matter because race can still fit within his triangulation. He left room for that. Raced Subjects emerge in the Symbolic where they are continually taught how to be raced, in large part through the visual.

"Lacanian psychoanalytic theory is simply heavenly, insofar as it has no eyes for the grammar and politics of power" (Spillers, "All the Things" 140)

In this chapter I've argued how important cultural analysis/critical theory is when analyzing images. Plus, the usefulness of psychoanalysis for Visual Rhetorics (I have purposely inserted an s here to include visual culture/critical theory in visual rhetoric) is that it can help us in our scholarship not just in analyzing images, but because it gives us a "different" story of how the world works; it helps us to analyze *our own* subjectivity as we analyze images. This opens up exciting possibilities and at the same time, lessens our chances of working from positions of blindsightedness. But no matter, none of us can rise up completely out of our own subjectivities, but that does not mean we shouldn't try to work towards theorizing in ways that are anti-racist and anti-sexist. In this chapter, I have tried to explain why I selected the theorists that I have, how they fit together, and how I have remediated their theories in order to invent something partially "new." And so I believe that I have offered enough proofs here to ask my readers to kindly suspend their disbelief and let me make my arguments:

> We don't have to believe one another's beliefs, but we do have to acknowledge their importance, understand them as real, and respect/honor them in our dealings with one another. (Powell 42)

And I have something important to say in the following chapters, something that sure feels "real" to me, and so my readers, I ask you to go with me, alongside me.

CHAPTER TWO: Vertical and Horizontal Trajectories: The Gaze, The Masquerade, and My Grandmother's Legs

> **Rhetoric:** an art . . . that looks at how meaning is made and action produced across a variety of human situations, linking theory and practice, creating connections through space and time by looking at how bodies are situated in particular configurations of history, culture, economics, genders, and geographies, and an art that sees users of rhetoric engaged in discursive productions across which human interaction, manipulation, and negotiation are common threads. . . what my gramma calls "talk fancy" . . . Malea Powell. (partially paraphrased) 43

> I must, to begin with, insist on the following: in the scopic field, the gaze is outside, I am looked at, that is to say, **I am a picture**. Jacques Lacan. *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis*. 106

Overview

In the previous chapter I pointed out the necessity that visual rhetoric and visual culture studies have scholarly overlap. I called for an area of visual studies in R&W that is deeply interdisciplinary, and that welcomes scholarship from critical theory/cultural rhetorics. I looked at the historical connections of rhetoric to psychology, culture, and technology, and I argued in favor of using Lacan as a theorist for studying the visual because he himself was a visual rhetorician, plus his theory specifically privileges the visual. I argued in favor of using Haraway as well, because she tropes on Lacan but offers a remediation of Lacan with her Cyborg Subject Position. I ended the chapter with a call for interdisciplinarity in the field of visual rhetoric, such that it becomes the inclusive Visual Rhetorics.

Attempting to construct a text that is interdisciplinary, in this chapter I engage a visual-rhetorical analysis that horizontally connects cultural rhetorics and critical theory with Visual Rhetorics, and vertically connects historical scripts and how subjectivities were visually articulated through technologically mediated bodies that travel through space and time (Cyborg Subject Positions). This chapter serves to lay a theoretical and textually specific foundation, with my use of Lacan, Haraway, Powell, DeVoss, and select family photographs, a foundation that I can build upon in my next chapter where I look at the rhetorical functionality of family photographs through the multiple lenses of psychoanalysis.

Lacan and Visual Analysis: The Split, Lack, and the Gaze

While as I mentioned in chapter one, Lacan's theory is frequently used in film studies and "has [had] an enormous influence over the direction recently taken by semiotic theory" (Silverman, *The Subject* 149), I find his theory useful as a lens, in the (young) traditional of Visual Rhetorics, to examine the family photographs I'm working with. So, how might Lacan's theory travel from film studies and semiotic theory to the analysis and examination of images, i.e. family photographs? Lacan's theory speaks directly to this issue. His lectures compiled in *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis*, particularly "Of the Gaze as Object Petit a," are especially relevant because they tell us how to analyze the visual.

The "gaze" of the photographer is unavoidably represented in a photograph (Sontag), and the cinematic apparatus of the camera itself (the giant eye) as well fixes its gaze upon the Subject; the picture exists as a material

artifact representing the subject-now-object's image whose fate "appears" to be sealed forever on the flat surface. How can we break out and define the "look" and the "gaze" in the common family photograph? How can we gather semiotic meaning from the photograph utilizing Lacan's psychoanalytic theory? By pursuing these inquires, we can engage rhetoric as a techne that allows us to understand how some meanings arise, while others are silenced. It is helpful here to go *directly* to Lacan's theory because it can be difficult and abstract, and is sometimes incorrectly summarized. For example, in chapter three of Sturken and Cartwright's textbook, they define the "gaze" for Visual Rhetorics students, connecting it to advertisement analysis, Foucault's notion of panopticism, and the "Othering" done through photographic images taken by anthropologists and ethnographers. While these connections are helpful and the chapter does a wonderful job blending together discussions of the gaze and spectatorship with insertions of image analysis and examples, it does not adequately unpack Lacan's notion of the gaze, merely stating that the gaze is "a viewing relationship characteristic of a particular set of social circumstances" (76). To their credit, Sturken and Cartwright later say in passing, "The split self of the viewer is always connected to the idea that the gaze is omnipresent" (81). Further, while at one point in the chapter they say, "the gaze is not the act of looking itself" (76), the authors otherwise textually blend together and confuse the "practice of looking" and the gaze, failing to be exact in their words choices and potentially causing student confusion. Clearly, the look, the gaze, and the eye of the cinematic apparatus are distinct constructs. Lacan distinguishes between the look and the

gaze, between the eye and the gaze. There is vision and representation (the look), there is the "eye" (a technology), and there is the gaze, that thing which "slips forever from our grasp – " (Glowinski, Marks, and Murphy 79).

According to Lacan, the gaze is *connected* to the look but is *distinguished* from the look because the look is a conscious act. "The gaze, however, surrounds us from . . . all sides even before we are born" (Glowinski, Marks, and Murphy 79). Lacan says, "I see only from one point, but in my existence I am looked at from all sides" (*The Four* 72). Sturken and Cartwright attempt to explain the Lacanian Subject's interpellation of the gaze: "One of the primary elements of the concept of the gaze is a kind of split that viewers experience in looking at images" (81). But to say that viewers experience a "split" when they look at images is an understatement and an unfortunate attempt at decontexualization. Viewers *always* experience a split; the split is the core of Subject formation; it is what causes "lack."

Lacan's theory of "lack" derives out of this split, explained in the story of Plato's *Symposium* about the birth of desire (Silverman 151 – 57). The story of the split is central to Lacanian theory because the Subject is almost entirely defined by it (151). Aristophanes tells the story. At the beginning of time humans were divided into three categories of sex: male, female, and a sex that was both male and female simultaneously. The three categories of beings were "globular"; each had four arms, four legs, and two heads. They existed this way until they disturbed Zeus by attempting to "scale the heights of heaven and set upon the gods" (151). To solve this problem, Zeus had them cut in two, but each

being yearned for its other half, so much so that the beings started dying. Zeus had their privates moved to the front of their bodies so they could "propagate among themselves" (151). The act of propagation is evidence of "our innate love for one another, and how this love is always trying to reintegrate our former nature" (151).

Aristophanes' story is a metaphor for Lacan's theory that the human subject endures a split even before birth when the organism is sexed: "the division suffered by the subject was sexual in nature – that when it was 'sliced' in half, it lost the sexual androgyny it once had and was reduced to the biological dimension of either a man or a woman" (Silverman 152). The Subject gradually (moving through the Imaginary register past the mirror stage) becomes aware of the split after birth – the split produces "lack." Lacan shares with Aristophanes the belief that the only resolution to the loss suffered by the Subject as the consequence of sexual division is "heterosexual union and procreation . . . [t]he notion of an original androgynous whole, similar to that projected by Aristophanes, is absolutely central to Lacan's argument" (Silverman 152-53).[9] Heterosexual union and procreation though will never satisfy the urge to be whole; they are poor compensation for the Subject's lack:

> Lacan's aphorism "there is no sexual relation" turns on the asymmetry and nonreciprocity of the sexes. Sexual difference is marked by the impasse of signification, and the impossibility of gratifying desire, of love as *jouissance*. (Seshadri-Crooks 6)

Sexual difference defies language and exists in the Real;[10] how that difference plays out is determined in the Symbolic.[11] In his lecture "Alienation," Lacan describes the androgynous Subject who has nothing in the Real that defines "gender" or sexual orientation. He says, "In the psyche, there is nothing by which the Subject may situate himself as a male or female being . . . the human being has always to learn from scratch from the Other what he has to do, as man or as woman" (*The Four* 204). Part of what the Subject learns under the gaze, it seems to me, is what he or she is not. The Subject learns in the Symbolic what the Subject lacks.

It is in the Symbolic where "images" are situated. Lacan's theory tells us plainly, gender and sexual orientation are constructed for us; we have to be taught. This is where the rhetoric of the image is important. Images are teaching tools, embodiments of gender performances that tell us how "to be." Our personal and collective identities are in part constructed through the influence of images, powerful, even aggressive signifiers that are infinitely repeated, sit in our unconscious, and do their work, helping to interpellate our subjectivity. The awareness of this, the habit of mind, is what gives us as scholars, and can also give our students, tools for understanding our existence. The lure of photographs is their "realness," but "all possibility of understanding is rooted in the ability to say no" (Sontag 23).

This is why Lacanian theory is so powerful as a tool for image analysis, and why images themselves are powerful: they play upon our lack by offering wholeness, but Lacan gives us a story about how the world works that helps us

say no to the lure of the photograph. We are not whole except at that moment when we are (impossibly) united with another human. Family photographs offer a "legacy," a connection to other Subjects, a linear seamless story that says, "here is our family," a little narrative that defines us as part of a group identity. "Through photographs, each family constructs a portrait chronicle of itself – a portable kit of images that bears witness to its connectedness" (Sontag 8). We are vulnerable in our lack, and photographs give us "imaginary possession of a past that is unreal" (Sontag 9), a satisfaction to our nostalgic longing for lost origins (Lyotard).

Though these longings can never be satisfied, they continue because it is lack that defines our subjectivity. We are continually reminded of our lack as we are interpellated by the gaze, emanating from a privileged object. "I propose that the interest the subject takes in his own split is bound up with that which determines it – namely, a privileged object, which has emerged from some primal separation" (Lacan, *The Four* 83). Without the privileged object, the gaze, the Subject ceases to exist, as the gaze of the Other defines the Subject.

The Subject is defined in the field of the Other.

What this means is that if we are not gazed upon, if we are not acknowledged, we become invisible and we are erased. Our subjectivity depends first on us seeing a reflection of ourselves, a screen image from which we are forever alienated, and it depends on us seeing our reflection in others with whom we can never be fully united. Our subjectivity is thus *fundamentally* technologically mediated, whether that be through the technology of the retina,

the technology of the camera, or the technology of the computer screen. Our existence is technologically mediated, and through that mediation we are forever separated from ourselves.[12] Lacan tells us how we are visually mediated. The Subject is seen by the Other as a "picture" on a screen, mediated by the screen. So, for Lacan, our access to subjectivity is rooted in the visual and in the rhetoric playing out in the Symbolic order which arises from this "seeing" – a seeing mediated by the technology of the screen.

However, while Subjects are captured on the screen, they may "move" while under the gaze. In "What is a Picture," Lacan tells us that in this mediation, the Subject might deflect the omnipresent gaze of the Other by use of the mask. The mask is a product of "a fracture, a bi-partition, a splitting of the being to which the being accommodates itself" (*The Four* 106). The mask is "that paper tiger it shows the other" or its "display" (107). Gender (class and racial) performances play out in the Symbolic by way of the mask: "It is no doubt through the mediation of masks that the masculine and the feminine meet in the most acute, most intense way" (Lacan, *The Four* 107). In other words, it is the "pictures" on the "screen" that play out sexual difference in gender performance. It is this sense of visual rhetoric and the technology of the screen that Lacan helps me bring to my family photos.

Horizontal Connections: DeVoss, Powell, and Haraway

While Lacan gives us a theory that is built upon our subjectivities being constructed visually and mediated by technology, DeVoss, Powell, and Haraway tell us where our scholarly work in R&W should be located as we complete the

kinds of analyses Lacan's theory begs for. In a piece where she studies the subjectivities visually manifested in WWW women's porn sites,[13] DeVoss tells us it is important to recognize "the everyday public acts of postmodern life," and to do so, we "must pay close attention to how individuals establish identity and assert agency" (79-80).[14] She urges us to pay scholarly attention to the World Wide Web in this venture, but reminds us:

> If we forget the history of the cultural script in which these women are actors, we are in danger of . . . removing "the traces of belonging to a network." (quoting de Certeau 81)

To DeVoss's words, I imbricate Powell's insight from a recent piece about the rhetoric of Susan La Fleshe Picotte (Powell quotes Royster and Robert A. Williams):

> History is important, not just in terms of who writes it and what gets included or excluded, but also because history, by the very nature of its inscription as history, has social, political, and cultural consequences. (49)

Powell and DeVoss tell us not to forget the cultural script, and remember history because history helps to write that script.

DeVoss calls for more work on the subjectivities represented on the web; Powell urges alliance; And Haraway reminds us that we need interdisciplinarity, "both vertical deep studies and lateral, cross-connecting ones" in order to nurture new theories (*How Like* 46). In order to do this nurturing, to form the alliances Powell calls for, we need to connect the technologically mediated past, to the present, to the future. This chapter works towards that goal. It acknowledges

the history of women's technologically mediated subjectivities as performances in an historical/cultural script informing the current representations constructed by white women on the WWW. This chapter also shows how "family" photographs have import not just because they knit together, constructing history, but simply by their power to be inscribed as "history" (Powell). DeVoss and Powell's work connects, and this chapter tries to make that connection visible in answer to Powell and Haraway's call for interdisciplinarity and scholarly connections.

The reason I have selected Powell and DeVoss in order to make the horizontal connections I ask for in R&W, the connections between "Culture" and "Visual Rhetorics," is because, for purposes of this thesis, Powell and DeVoss represent those two "master" trajectories in our discipline.[15] Malea Powell's work focuses on Native American Intellectual survivance rhetorics. For purposes of this thesis, I define her work as soundly situated in "cultural rhetorics" and/or "cultural studies." Danielle DeVoss, on the other hand, consistently generates research and writing emanating from the "visual rhetoric" or even "technical writing" strand of R&W. Yes, Powell's scholarship focuses on Native American survivance rhetorics and her recent *College English* piece, "Down by the River," looks at the complex textual production and rhetorical turns engaged in by Susan La Fleshe Picotte in the late 1880's and turn of the century. And yes, Danielle DeVoss's *Sexuality & Culture* piece, "Women's Porn Sites," focuses on textual productions and rhetorical turns taken by "white" women in 2002 on the WWW. Nonetheless, there is a connection between their work. And it is in that place where DeVoss's work and Powell's work intersects, that this thesis exists.

Powell and DeVoss's work connects through mine because we are all looking at how "bodies situated in particular configurations of history, culture, economics, genders, and geographies," use rhetoric.[16] The technology used to produce the family photographs of my grandmother, connects to the networks and computer screens that discursively produce the images of DeVoss's research subjects. And so, along with the framework of technologically mediated subjectivity that Lacan gives me, I also insert this study of family photographs into the conversation in R&W between and among Powell, DeVoss, and Haraway, and in doing so, I try to make vertical as well as horizontal connections in the rhetorical analysis of my family pictures.

My Family Pictures

My mother Jacky tells me that my (maternal) grandfather Edgar was the picture taker in the family. Edgar was born in 1904 in Hainesport, New Jersey, and my (maternal) grandmother Martine was born in 1908 in Bucks County, Pennsylvania. My grandfather was the only son of William and Lena Walther. William died when Edgar was in eighth grade. At that time, Lena required Edgar leave school and go to work holding lanterns to guide trains at the local railroad company because she said, his two older sisters Florence and Margaret needed further education. My maternal family knew that education for the women was crucial to create a vision of middleclassness. The ideology of the time held that working class (white) women were "evil, stupid animals" and only educated women were ladies or "women of the world" (Solomon-Godeau 84) This explains why Florence and Margaret went on to receive post secondary education by way

of business school. Both became clerical workers, stayed in the same jobs for over thirty years, and never had children.[17] On the other hand, my grandfather, with only an eighth grade education was able to move into a higher status employment situation. After working as a steam railroad clerk for many years, he went on to become a Vice President of a chapter of the D,T & I (Detroit, Toledo, Ohio) railroad. This vertical, upward movement by Edgar was culturally sanctioned even though he had only an eighth grade education. He did not need the education required by Florence and Margaret because he was a white male, a Subject supported by the larger culture to be the "breadwinner." Gender and race both were important factors as far as economic survival in mid-1900's US. Because gender and race were important, it makes sense that my family enhanced its "whiteness" in our family photo history. At the same time, gender defined what roles one was permitted to take. In order to maintain the status quo, it makes sense that my family also supported existing gender roles through visualizations of gender performances

Remembering that according to Lacan, Subjects are surrounded by the defining gaze, and the construct of gender, while always-already present, must be *learned* by Subjects. The picture on the screen, a technologically mediated representation, as evidenced in the two photographs I have of my child-grandfather, can be read to show his rhetorical sophistication as he plays out gender performance (See FIGURES 2 and 3). For example, in Figure 2 my grandfather Edgar relaxes in the grass with his aunts, sister, and mother. Figure 3, taken the same day features the young Edgar with his father William and his

grandfather Peter. Looking broadly at these images, rhetorically these family photographs reproduce the following linear narrative(s):

- They repeat the stories of my family, our mythologizing, that we are German, if only because there is nothing to disrupt that narrative, and Peter looks a bit like Freud (Barthes' connotation).
- They repeat my family's "whiteness" narrative. The Subjects pictured are visually marked "white" and this identity sits comfortably with "German."
- They repeat my family's mythologizing that a female kin of Edgar's family was a member of the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR). The white dresses and bow ties signify privilege and good citizenship.
- They repeat the master narrative that men are not women and women are not men (sexual difference), but children are afforded some flexibility in these matters. In other words, the images are signs playing out gender difference in the Symbolic.

Applying Lacan's theory of the gaze, and how that gaze constructs gender for us, I can point to visual cues of gender performance and the ability of my child-grandfather to employ the art of rhetoric. He used rhetoric, under the eye of the camera and the gaze, to move between the women and men. In Figure 2, the four year old adopts a mimetic feminine position, relaxed, lying in the grass with his aunts; Edgar does not return our gaze; with rhetorical skill he dons the mask. While in Figure 3, the photograph of male subjects, he stands stiffly facing forward, confronting the camera straight on.

Sexual (and racial) difference is performed for us in these images by Edgar and the other Subjects pictured, and by the photographer who did the framing. Who took these images I do not know. But the person, I argue, was interpellated such that he visually separated men and women, and separated peoples based on how their bodies were visually marked. These photographs are not "multi-cultural" (they present a unified vision of whiteness) and therefore repeat the cultural values of that historical period that supported segregation. The photographer chose to separate the men and women in two separate photographs, thus rhetorically supporting the master narrative that separated men and women politically and economically (in 1908 women did not have the right to vote). While this separate political existence isn't written in *text* on these photographs, it is written here visually for us, and it sits now on my desk, functioning rhetorically to repeat these stories that are all so familiar to us. Family photographs such as these are lures because they offer a wholeness that can never be, a "full identity," a pure "identity," a continuation of "whole" and well-defined gender and pure-blood (the photographs are passed down generation to generation).

These pictures have survived somehow in my family as silent but powerful story tellers and identity makers. My family mythologizing cements these images, producing the discourse of our seamless little narrative. The photographs function rhetorically as embodiments of cultural practice that connect the past to the present and future through *bodies*. In my family, we are repeatedly reminded by the legacy of the photographs of our supposed

connectedness and "our identity" (Sontag). It is difficult to rupture these kinds of compelling, seamless stories. However, as Sturken and Cartwright note, while I am drawn to these images because they connect me to "my relatives," I am *alienated* from them also because they *aren't* me, and frankly, they lie.

For example, though the images provide a unified front, we have no family records that are in one piece and tell us we are "German"; on my father's side of the family, our story is that my great paternal grandfather, a swarthy, dark fellow was illegitimate (note the family myth cementing darkness and sexual deviance), and that when he arrived on the shores of the United States in 1906, he *burned* all the family records in his possession and changed his name (we have *no* pictures of this man). There is no documentation that says my mother's family is "pure," as has been my family's story, and in fact in conducting this research I have found not just visual, but textual ruptures in this linear mythologizing.

My grandmother Martine and her brother Lamar (born 1904) were the children of Rachel and Robert Hartman.[18] Both Rachel and Robert *constructed* their identity as "white" not just in the visual, but also in "official" state sanctioned documentation. This is evidenced by an odd find in my family records. While both Rachel (born 1884) and Robert (born 1878) assert on their "Delayed Birth Certificates" they were born at home (by leaving the hospital inquiry blank), and that they are both "white," it is curious why they had a need to procure birth certificates apparently for the first time so late in life. Rachel's birth certificate was signed in 1948 and Robert's signed in 1943. The scope of this paper does not allow me to research the social context that might describe the need for birth

certificates at age 65, but I intuitively feel this documentation was perhaps necessary in the face of World War II and the post World War II era combined with the increased importance of citizenship, especially for those of German decent. I have been told that my grandmother's family was Pennsylvania Dutch, and that older generational members of her family spoke a mixed dialect of German-English.[19] But my family, through the technologically mediated visual rhetoric of photographs, along with "stories," has worked very hard to smooth out "our history."

In hoping to imbricate Malea Powell's call for alliances, Lacan's theory helps me rupture the discursive productions my family has worked so hard to make, and not ignore my history (as other scholars and teachers most certainly do), but acknowledge it with this text, and try in a respectful fashion to redress that history's wrongs. There is no way, I believe, to be the rhetorician-as-agent-of-social-change that Ellen Cushman tells us we can be, without acknowledgement and redress. What happens instead, is that like the photographic images that repeat themselves insidiously at every look, we end up circling back to the same place.

The images are supported in this repetition by stories and language. In "The Rhetoric of the Image," Barthes argues that text and images work together to make meaning. This is also how our family photographs are imbricated with our family stories, and how family "identities" come into being. But in heeding Powell's call to acknowledge our histories, it has been beneficial to me in my research on family photographs and how they might make space for affinity, to

read across cultural studies scholars. For example, it has always been celebrated in my family that one of my Grandfather's sisters or aunts (maybe pictured in Figure 2), was a member of the DAR. But after reading Shawn Michelle Smith's chapter in *American Archives*, "America Coursing through Her Veins," I have come to see a female kin's membership in the DAR not something I celebrate. The DAR came about because of the separate political, cultural, and social existence of white men and white women in the late nineteenth century, separate lives that are visually performed for us in Figures 2 and 3. This separate existence, according to Smith, is what prompted the formation of the DAR. On April 30, 1980 when the Sons of the American Revolution voted to bar (white) women from their society, those women voted to establish the DAR (136) DAR was a group that cemented the importance of "pure" white patriarchal bloodlines in the national metanarrative of pure "American" (Smith). The DAR excluded all women of color and even those of mixed racial heritage, even those women of color who had relatives that "rendered material aid" to the cause of independence were excluded. A white body was the origin point from which the Daughters began to trace American bloodline images to be both Anglo-Saxon and "pure" (138).

Whether a woman of my grandfather's female kin was *in fact* a DAR member or not, it still remains a part of my history since it was emphasized on more than one occasion; it is not refuted visually in any of our photographs – this links logically to my family's mythologizing that all of our family members link

neatly back to a white body as our point of origin, even if to do that we need to obtain birth certificates at age 65.

Because the DAR purposely excluded women of color, I define it as a racist organization. I therefore choose not to celebrate my family's connection to the Daughters of the American Revolution, but instead tell this story, acknowledging that the events contained herein occurred, and inviting other Visual Rhetorics scholars writing on cultural issues to self-examine their own histories before engaging in "practices of looking." This now ruptured family mythologizing also serves to rupture the linearity of my older family photographs, as it contextualizes them as something less than innocent and "real." Just the *existence* of the 1908 images functions rhetorically to both erase the violence taking place in the rest of the US (eugenics, the fall-out of the Dawes act, racial segregation, oppression, etc.), and signify the place of privilege of my family, that they could *have* such affordances and that their bodies were culturally sanctioned to be objects of such attention, that *their* bodies were inscribed in *this particular fashion* (lying on the grass, dressed in fine clothes, engaging in leisure) in "history."

Since my grandmother always held herself out to be "white," and the early 1900's textual production of "woman" by way of US photographs appears to have been limited almost exclusively to images of white women, my grandmother's subjectivity must have attempted visual alignment with those same widely circulated images (mainly advertisements and family photos). My grandmother went to great lengths to assure herself and the world that she was white. In the

mid-1900's of course, whether one was white or not might be the difference between being interred, or forced to live a separate cultural existence (think Indian Territory, "inner-city," Manzannar). Therefore, the use of rhetoric by my grandmother was a techne of adaptation (Powell).

While Edgar was the only son, my grandmother Martine Hartman (Walther) was the only daughter, the younger of two children. Her younger brother Lamar never left the family home or had children and died in his late fifties. My grandmother attended nursing school at Lankenau Hospital School of Nursing, near Philadelphia, graduating in 1928. She died in 1991. Census information that I've located indicates that her father Robert worked as a shipping clerk for a pottery company (United States). Rachel was a "housewife." According to their delayed birth certificates, Rachel's father was a butcher and Robert's father was a farmer. The farmer and butcher identities, newly discovered, were erased in my family's mythologizing in order to construct a middleclass identity. The last thing my grandmother wanted was to be associated with "farmers." She did not like farms and found the smell of farm animals repulsive[20], and while she enjoyed purchasing meats at her own specialty butcher shop in Dearborn, Michigan, she was not one to speak of the "work" of butchers. Middleclass people don't work on farms, don't engage in physical labor, and certainly don't do their own butchering. What did not fit within the white middleclass family visual matrix was erased in the photo narrative as well as any oral history. We have no images surviving of life on the farm, or the slicing of meat. From a rhetorical perspective, my family's "identity" was allowed

to come to be, by erasing the butcher and farmer occupations: those could have been emphasized, but weren't. So the family photographs I have, function rhetorically to reinforce the meanings that my family purposely (and simultaneously unconsciously) worked towards.

This grasping for a family vision of raced, classed, gendered subjectivities is further evidenced by a photograph my mother favored and repeated by publically displaying in my childhood home (See FIGURE 4). In it my grandmother, age seventeen, poses in a studio setting. Thinking of each component of this image as a sign, making meaning with other signs, as I contextualize the historical period (1923), and the stories that have been told in my family, I explore the visual rhetoric of this image. Before I do, I want to make clear that to "know" my grandmother in this way, to "see" this image, to "look" at a technologically mediated subjectivity, visual representation, and its story, history, economics, and text, is to place my "grandmother" in the "Cyborg Subject Position," a place that illustrates "the absurdity of separating the technical, organic, mythic, textual, and political threads in semiotic fabric of the [photo] and of the world in which this [photo] makes sense" (Haraway, *Reader* 71).

I cannot simple "look" at the visual.

The "visual" only makes sense with the un-visual. Because my grandmother's subjectivity emerged "visually" not just out of the "white family Lacanian triangulation," but also out of a specific history of WWII "militarization" and specific historical theories of information and information processing (eugenics, animal-brain implants, technologically mediated "identities," human-

machine "bodies") she occupies the Cyborg Subject Position (Haraway, *How Like* 128-129); perhaps she's of the first regenerations to do so. It was thus necessary for me to contextualize her subjectivity first (above), in order to "see" her, before looking at these photos of her.

The beaded and embroidered satin dress and the polished, rather ornate chair, signify to middleclass. Her hair, neatly and modestly pulled back, and the pleasant but not openly gregarious expression on her face appear proper, again connecting to middleclass identity. The photograph is the earliest photograph I have that evidences my grandmother's increasing rhetorical sophistication as she poses, adopting a mask, for the camera's lens. That this 1923 studio photograph, an affordance of race and class, was publically displayed and treasured by my mother, and the image features my grandmother alone, her face and neck surrounded by elaborate embroidery, accentuates her importance as an "individual," a treasure within the culture. "To photograph is to confer importance . . . there is no way to suppress the tendency inherent in all photographs to accord value to their subjects" (Sontag 28). This photograph serves as a reminder of what was valued ideologically by the larger culture, and how that ideology interpellated "my white family." Additionally, it reminds us that Lacan said the Subject is a picture looked at by Others: this image is offered up for the Other's gaze, and composes a raced, classed vision, made "real" through the technology of the camera.

Shortly after the 1923 studio photograph was taken, my grandmother attended nursing school and after a short courtship, Edgar and Martine were

married in 1929. In my collection of photographs is a series of images of my grandmother taken by my grandfather between 1930 and 1953. In the series, my grandmother poses in a clean white nurses uniform (1930), stands in her yard modeling a new beaver skin coat (1943), poses near her house in a leopard skin coat (1943), sits on the bumper of a Studebaker in a skirt suit, wearing a corsage, nyloned legs, knees pressed tightly together (1943), poses on a picnic table top, arms back and chest out, starlet fashion (1946), sits on a white ledge with a feathered hat, tailored blazer-skirt set, high heels, crossed legs, and black gloves on vacation in Florida (1948), and sits again on the edge of a car seat in a plaid dress and heels, showing her stocking-ed legs (1953). In all images, my grandmother *poses* for the camera. I have selected two images in the series taken by my grandfather, the earliest (1930) and the latest (1953) to illustrate the argument I will make regarding my grandmother's subjectivity and her use of rhetoric to subvert the gaze.

In the first image (See FIGURE 5) my grandmother poses: her feet are symmetrically aligned, her left toe points neatly as her calf muscle appears to be purposely flexed. Her arms are gently pressed in her lap; hands, the signifiers of "work" and "working class" are hidden as they invisibly hold down the skirt. Her hands are hidden to negate what the clean white outfit also erases: nurses work; nurses work with their hands; they often tend to the most basic functions of the human body; the hands touch bodies; hands touch sickness; hands touch ruptures in the human body.

The image isn't just one of a middleclass white nurse. That is its mere denotative meaning. Instead it is a sign playing out in the Symbolic as a vision of a raced, classed, gendered Subject. I see traces of my grandmother's subjectivity that exist in a space outside "white nurse." Below the hidden hands, the wind teasingly lifts up the skirt's edge; this element, along with the pointed toe and flexed leg work against the white purity of the outfit, and against the persona of white nurse as selfless, self-sacrificing cultural edifice. Her shoulders curve inward, suggesting submissiveness or acquiescence, and the upper portion of her body inclines slightly forward suggesting vulnerability. "To take a photograph is to participate in another person's mortality, vulnerability, mutability" (Sontag 15). She smiles openly – her eyes also caught up in the smile. While the body position, especially the legs, are "posed," my grandmother with an uncanny willingness exposes a fragment of her subjectivity. She appears open, willing, in line with the wind opening her skirt to the viewer. This trace of subjectivity is covered over, like every inch of her body is covered in fabric or hidden. The photograph attempts to seize her subjectivity, by appropriating and turning her into an object (white nurse) "that can be symbolically possessed" (Sontag 14).

My grandmother learned to resist this symbolic possession, negotiating representations of her body while working within the cultural script and technological framework available at the time. While she was aware of her duty to serve as an object of male pleasure, she also learned to resist that gaze, ironically by playing into it.

In Figure 6 we see increased control over her representation as she offers a teasing show of legs in the 1953 car photo. Notice again her "working" hands are gloved or completely hidden. To offer up a distinct body part, one that was fetishized by the dominant culture, is to redirect the gaze. When my grandmother offers up her legs, she removes the rest of her "self" from the gaze. Understandably, it might be argued that her show of legs and only legs in Figure 6 are evidence of her subjectivity that agreed with visions of objectified and fragmented female bodies: "[O]bjectification of women's faces, bodies, and subjectivities has historically formed a cornerstone of women's oppression and a constraint of their agency" (DeVoss 76). I select this photo to look at because it is the last in the series, although in each photo I have, my grandmother makes an effort to show her legs.

Why Legs? The Erotic Mapping of the Body through the Visual

My question is, why legs? The emphasis on legs, as women's skirt lines rose, was part of the dominant culture that increasingly fragmented female bodies and provided fodder for spectatorship. It wasn't until after the mid-nineteenth century that European women wore underpants, therefore the leg was a direct route to the female genitals (Solomon-Godeau 87). Women's legs were mapped as erotic, and the cultural norm in the West was to cover the eroticized leg until well after the World War I. "The legs of Betty Grable or Marlene Dietrich, or the prominence of legs in modern advertising, are evidence of the enduring potency of this particular mapping of the erotic" (Solomon-Godeau 87-88, Yellin).

During the 1940's visual rhetoric supported the fascination with women's legs. In addition to images of Betty Grable and Marlene Dietrich that circulated widely, magazines such as Vogue featured cover shots of women in bathing suits, their legs the main focus of the representation (Vogue, Yellin). In 1938, Kurt Seligmann produced a post-modern table that featured mock-ups of real women's legs in nylons and pumps as the table legs. These representations of *white* women's body parts mark the visually supported ideologies that controlled who was allowed to be represented and who wasn't, and how those representations played out in the Symbolic. "[S]exuality and how we choose to define, present, and represent it . . . [is[very much culturally constructed and maintained" (DeVoss 80). It is easy to find visual rhetoric from the 1940's that *controlled* representations of white women as "sexual." How much leg could be shown was culturally constructed and maintained.

In the mid-1900's as hemlines rose and nylons were demanded by consumers (Haskell, Grass), advertisers produced multiple images of (white) women's legs that functioned rhetorically to discursively produce certain female subjectivities and supported that particular mapping of the erotic. The visual rhetoric of the mid-1900's selects and repeats which body part is erotized defining what and who we are, and which parts of us are sexually or otherwise important. Psychoanalysis points this out by describing how the erotic zones of the infant are mapped out and territorialized by the attention lavished on them.

White women's legs were historically sexualized and visually repeated (valued) as objects-erotica. And so, it is not surprising that my grandmother

inserted her body, by way of her legs, into the conversation of her day. She inserted her legs in a Latourian network, a conversation between "legs," legs acting both as "human" objects because they are connected to a "body," and legs acting as "non-human" objects because they are disconnected from a body. (See FIGURE 7. Network of 1940/50's legs). When my grandmother offered up her legs, she inserted her subjectivity into a vertical and horizontal network, a signifying chain of representation, by and across the visual. The question arises then, in my consideration of subjectivity and rhetorical skill: was my grandmother's posing for the camera, (her imitation of the circulating images that mapped out legs as erotica) her show of legs, an act repeating the "cornerstone of women's oppression and a constraint of their agency"? In other words, was my grandmother's show of legs that of scribe or author?

Vertical Connections

Heeding Powell and DeVoss's call for acknowledgement of historical scripts, and Haraway's insight that vertical and horizontal cultural analysis are needed, can I make visible scholarly connections in R&W by vertically connecting in analysis, images that circulated of an 1865 white woman, the Countess de Castiglione, my grandmother's image, and the visual subjectivities of DeVoss's WWW women? Can all Subjects thus be rehabilitated, through rhetorical visual analysis, away from stereotypical notions of female subjectivity and sexuality? (See FIGURE 8). This is my project, just as Powell rehabilitates the stereotypical image of Native peoples from "helpless" objects to sophisticated, strategic, discursive producers well-aware of the expectations of the "gaze" and just as

DeVoss rehabilitates the subjectivities of the women articulating multiple identities on the WWW.

A 1986 essay from *October* engages the same kinds of inquires as do Powell, DeVoss, and myself, only Solomon-Godeau's object of inquiry is the French Countess de Castiglione photographs (later 1800's).[21] Solomon-Godeau poses the questions (67): "What are we to make of the countess's having herself photographed in her chemise? Or exposing her legs?" Solomon-Godeau tells us that Castiglione herself arranged for the portraits, and that while the photographs were taken by a professional photographer they *could be* perceived as being authored by Castiglione (70). According to Solomon-Godeau the Countess, "far from passively following the directives of the photographer, substantially determined her own presentation to the camera, dictating the pose, costume, props, and accessories, and occasionally decided upon the coloring and/or retouching of the photographs" (70). Nonetheless, Solomon-Godeau concludes that the portraits are "testimonials of the power of the patriarchy to register its desire within the designated space of the feminine" (67). The Countess's portraits are "underwritten by conventions that make her less an author than a scribe" (67). Solomon-Godeau's thesis is a hopeless one, as she sees the photographs as "somber reminders that the psychic determinations of patriarchy and the material ones of capitalism are as inescapable for us as they were for the countess" (69).

While the *October* text is comprehensive and insightful, there is a rupture in the logic used to arrive at the thesis. It is in that break in logic between

Solomon-Godeau's insistence that the Countess orchestrated these photographs, and her insistence that the Countess was merely an empty reflection of the patriarchy that Shawn Michelle Smith inserts her own theory of the Countess's subjectivity as author and agent in the textual production of her own images (Smith 97). I am reminded here, moving forward in time, that DeVoss writes:

> Historically, the "public" is associated with individuals with action and agency, with subjects who can assert themselves in the public world . . . Women, not seen as political or public agents, are seen as creatures through or to whom things simply happen . . . or as "beings without reasons" . . . without entry into the collective social and political space of the larger public realm, women face isolation and the continued seizure of their contributions by those who can easily travel back and forth between the public and the private. (78)

DeVoss notes that this seizure of women's contributions especially includes women's "participation with and contributions to certain technologies, "further commenting that the more cultural capital a technology has, the more likely the woman's contribution will be excluded or written out of history.

DeVoss reminds us that white men and women have been technologically segregated from each other, women of course the "oppressed" – this proves true in the historical script because it was Edgar and the Countess's professional male studio photographers who held the camera. DeVoss's research subjects (WWW women) though are able to rupture the omnipresent male gaze by

articulating multiple subjectivities. Like La Flesche, they use the tools available to them, in their case, multiple copies and multiple screens. My grandmother did not have those technologies to work with, and the Countess, while not having multiple screens, did have access to multiple copies (she had over 400 photographs made). Solomon-Godeau's argument that the Countess was without reason, allowed things to happen through her, and that the Countess made no contributions to her photographs (technologically mediated representations) merely repeats the historic violence DeVoss describes that effectuated itself to disenfranchise women and to exclude them from authorship.

Smith's analysis, like DeVoss's, works against Solomon-Godeau's conclusions. Smith argues that the body is not merely a space where representations are mapped, but, Smith argues while gender maps the body, the body does not necessarily pre-date this mapping (101). As Lacan tells us, the Subject's origins are in the Real where there are no signifiers of gender or sexual orientation. Once the Subject emerges in the Symbolic order, Lacan says the Subject must learn what to do. What is defined as "body," and where that mapping occurs, is constructed for us in the Symbolic through the interplay of signs.

"Organisms are not born, but they are made . . . as objects of knowledge . . . 'Objects' like bodies do not pre-exist as such" (Haraway, *Reader* 68). The body "is an object of knowledge produced at the locus of gender performances" (Smith 101). As Judith Butler describes it, the body is "a signifying practice within

a cultural field of gender hierarchy and compulsory heterosexuality" (qtd. in Smith 101). What I am saying here is that at "birth," the human has no body; the *body and gender* are mapped onto the Subject through discursive acts. The body emerges from a discursive process. A huge component of the discursive process is visual rhetoric which produces "texts" that hold themselves out as reality, and repeat themselves through a variety of technological mediums, such as pages of the WWW and family photographs. Both the *body* and *sexual difference* are mapped onto all bodies and it is the mapping that creates the "body" as object of knowledge. Sexual difference and "the body" are reinforced in the Symbolic, and are interpellated as objects of knowledge by Subjects in part through visual rhetoric. So, it can never be that the Countess possessed a female body that was then mapped upon by the patriarchy. To subscribe to Solomon-Godeau's argument is to believe no human subject is capable of agency. According to her, even mimicry cannot be an act of agency.

The ideological forces that work to continually erase (white) women's agency and their contributions to technology must be unseen. In virtually every representation of the Countess, she challenges the viewer's gaze by throwing the gaze back upon us, and making the viewer self-conscious about his position as voyeur. The poses, the "masks," the multiple subjectivities configured by the Countess in the 400 photographs, visually intersect with other historically similar "authors" (translate "white male"). Paintings by French artist "author" Gustave Courbet shows female subjects in poses similar to the ones the Countess chose in the portraits she commissioned for herself.

The Countess as a prominent figure among the French aristocracy had access to the "arts" as a viewer, but as a female in France in 1850, she would have had little opportunity to exercise any culturally sanctioned artistic agency. Considering DeVoss's point that women's authorship has been seized as have their contributions to technology, how can we know whether the Countess mimicked Courbet, or whether he mimicked her? Either way, the Countess, not the photographer, is the author of her photographs. Instead of a male "artist," in the Countess's case we have a female artist, like the women in DeVoss's study, taking into her own hands the representation of "female," and in the Countess's poses, she, like the women on DeVoss's WWW, rupture mainstream notions of "female," and creates what DeVoss calls an Identity Project. Like the women on the WWW, the Countess articulates multiple subjectivities in her multiple costumed poses, poses that often included props. The Countess ruptured dominant notions of "female" by articulating multiple subjectivities as a technologically mediated vision.

The ability of women in the 1800's and 1900's to act as authors of their own identities is *especially* manifested in photographs. Even women who did not have means to make multiple copies of "themselves" found ways to exercise agency. They may not have been permitted to contribute by handling and manipulating the technology, but they surely could have resisted with their bodies. While an "artist," a male painter like Courbet Gustave or Edoudard Manet (Gilman) paints his own nuisances of pose and facial expression on his representations of female body, in the photograph, some nuisances can never be

erased by the male hand. One need only think of the eyes of the African-Americans in Zealy's daguerreotypes captured in the photographic lens to prove their places as "species," or the eyes of the models in some of Du Bois's 1900 collection, or the faces of the Native children sent off to the Hamptons for civilizing, or the poses of the Countess de Castiglione, or the poses of my grandmother, to know that some elements of subjectivity can never be erased. The photograph then holds a special place in my mind as an artifact that might rupture the narrative of white male hegemony, where women could potentially author their own identities regardless of who held the camera.[22]

Like DeVoss's WWW women, the Countess's portraits go a long way in representing her as one who sees herself being seen, and questions the seeing. Lacan describes this phenomenon as "[t]hat in which the consciousness may turn back upon itself . . . as seeing oneself seeing oneself . . . [a]n avoidance of the function of the gaze is at work there" (74). The Countess turns back the patriarchal gaze upon itself. She derides the male gaze, and as Lacan says, ". . . man defies his very destiny when he derides the signifier" ("The Agency" 158).

Connecting the Countess's photographs to my grandmother's images, she who chose to offer herself up to the lens, the eye, who chose to offer up her legs, I wonder then, looking at the object-image of my grandmother and imagining behind the screen at one time long ago a human "body" lived and breathed, do my grandmother's poses evidence a reflection of gender hopelessly and inevitably mapped onto the body by the patriarchy, or something else? At first glance I might believe that these seemingly superficial poses by my grandmother

are evidence of her loss of agency to the demands of patriarchy. The images might be seen as images of her mindlessly mimicking the poses of current models, nylon hose advertisements, bathing beauties, and contemporary female pageantry. And yes, she does mimic. But mimicry does not signal a loss of agency; it represents increased agency. Lacan says, "The effect of mimicry is camouflage, in the strictly technical sense" (*The Four* 99). And the theory of writers like Judith Butler and Mary Ann Doane construct the posing and the masquerade, as in Lacan's mask, not as acquiescence to the claims of patriarchy, "but subversions of their claims to truth" (Doane qtd. in Smith, *American* 104). My grandfather was never one to lay out my grandmother's outfits, choose her hat, jewelry, shoes, or shade of lipstick. He did not decide how she would wear her hair. My grandmother worked; she is said by both my mother and aunt to have ruled the house. Therefore it is virtually impossible to imagine my grandfather orchestrating Martine's poses, her pulling back oh-so-slightly her shoulders on the picnic table, the show of leg peaking forcefully from inside the automobile's interior, the clever squeeze of the knees on the car's bumper. These decisions alone were my grandmother's. I see her many poses in this narrative of family history and "identity" as evidence not of my grandmother's submission under the will of white hegemonic patriarchy, but instead as a "masquerade and double mimesis deflect[ing] the masculine viewer's presumption to see, to know, to penetrate an essentialized feminine interiority" (Smith, *American* 105).

If, as Lacan says, it is the "mediation of masks" that produces a "most acute, most intense" meeting of the masculine and feminine, what better evidence of agency through rhetorical skill but a photograph taken by a male subject of "his" female subject, a trace embodying the mediation of masks. As the white middleclass male subject in a mid 1900's American household, Edgar's role was well defined. It was culturally sanctioned for him to attempt to appropriate his propertied wife by snapping the photograph. What better way for my grandmother to avert that appropriation than by exercising agency and donning the mask, by posing, by dressing in furs and wearing silk (or nylon) stockings. She was accustomed to being the object of male pleasure and the gaze. Traces in her facial expression, her increasingly controlled body positioning, her less-open smile, are traces of her increasing rhetorical skill as she matured. Remarkably, in the photograph of my grandmother's legs, her face hides in the shadows while she offers up only her legs, as did the Countess de Castiglione. If the eyes are the windows to the soul, offering only the legs surely gives the viewer less opportunity to see subjectivity.

The legs are there as a lure, like the cuttlebone in Holbein's picture *The Ambassadors.* Lacan says: "This picture is simply what any picture is, a trap for the gaze" (*The Four* 89). It is not my grandmother who is caught in the gaze, but us the viewers. The painter, or in the present case the photographer, my grandfather, "gives something for the eye to feed on, but he invites the person to whom this picture is presented to lay down his gaze there as one lays down one's weapons. This is the pacifying . . . effect" (Lacan, *The Four* 101). We

could sum up the message of such family photographs as Lacan does – the photo taker says: "*You want to see? Well, take a look at this!*" (Lacan, *The Four* 101). I can say then that when my grandfather snapped the shot, my grandmother put upon herself the mask and said, metaphorically to him, "You want to see? Well, take a look at this!"

As DeVoss notes in her 2002 research, images on the WWW constructed by white women rupture mainstream representations of women's bodies and sexualities just as my grandmother ruptured mainstream 1940's notions by offering up her married, white, middleclass legs. When DeVoss's research subjects saw themselves being seen, and failed to conform to stereotypical notions of women's sexuality, they exercised agency. When my grandmother showed her legs, she pushed on the culturally constructed norm that said she shouldn't. She, like DeVoss's research subjects, took control of her sexuality, leaving a trace of her subjectivity on the photographic "screen."

We can further attribute authorship by way of rhetorical skill to my grandmother because while she did not have available to her the WWW, she sensed the linearity of the narrative being constructed by each snapshot. Imagine representations on the WWW as esplanades, cat's cradles, and networks. However, family photographs were traditionally displayed linearly in albums. Therefore, I argue that my grandmother took the appropriate rhetorical turns by not presenting multiple subjectivities as did DeVoss's research subjects, but instead presented one "whole" unified Subject. She was always dressed middleclass, always had her hair neatly arranged, always wore dresses,

stockings, and heals, often hid her "working" hands either visually or with gloves, and always "posed." She attempts to cover over the Lacanian lack by offering us the viewer, a fantasy of oneness. Like Powell says, we must give credit where credit is due (40).

In Figure 9, (See FIGURE 9) I am the photographer. It was 1982 and women were permitted to engage the technology of the camera (its feminization having diminished its value as cultural capital). I was visiting her in her new home in Florida, and my grandmother and I had "dressed up" to go out to dinner. After we adorned ourselves in dresses (i.e. gender performances in the Symbolic), we took pictures of each other. Still, my grandmother presents her legs, as I unwittingly snap the picture. When I see this picture, it's difficult to unsee it, because it makes me think my grandmother was smarter than me in her awareness of how representations of her would travel. She is incredibly consistent in her visual rhetoric; almost 80 years old, still in a dress and heels, with earrings, hands posed, gaze averted (no need to hide her hands; she was "retired"). This representation functions rhetorically as a connector to the other existing photographs of my grandmother. We have to admire her skill that from the age of seventeen, and even before that, until her death, she systematically, through space and time, controlled the textual productions that embody her materially. I read photos of my grandmother as evidence of how with the passage of time, my grandmother became rhetorically sophisticated, carefully selecting the "signs" that would be passed down as "our family story." Unlike DeVoss's WWW women, my grandmother presents a unified "whole." We need more

deeply vertical theorizing that looks at visual rhetoric and how gendered subjectivities such as "white" women and women of color were (are) able to navigate and manipulate subjectivity through technological interfaces as those interfaces transform through configurations of space and time.

CHAPTER THREE: Rhetorical Animation: A Semiotic View of Family Photographs

> Derrida's conceptualization of *differance* takes the form of a critique of the binary logic in which every element of meaning constitution is locked into signification in relation to the other (a legacy of Saussurian linguistics' insistence on language as a system of negative differentiation). Irit Rogoff "Studying Visual Culture"

Overview

In chapter one I called for a Visual Rhetorics that is deeply interdisciplinary.

"You see, I was less and less happy as I tried to develop a dissertation" (Haraway, How Like 18).

Calling on this need for interdisciplinarity, I justified my use of Lacanian theory by reminding the reader that Lacan himself was a visual rhetorician, that his writings very specifically address how subjectivity is formed through the visual (we are all pictures on screens), and how his theory of the unconscious has been germane to folks in film studies (folks who intensely study the visual). I also discussed the void I see in the intersection of visual rhetoric/visual culture, and made a call for an inextricably intertwined Visual Rhetorics that includes visual culture/critical theory. I just want to reiterate that point and ask for reciprocity.

In order for Visual Rhetorics to produce scholarship that is intellectually rigorous, and in order for that field to flourish, it needs to see culture as an integral part of every visual product, and it needs to understand that any product is a product of culture and must be contextualized as such, geographically, historically, economically, etc.

"So I spent the summer depressed and in tears, working in the lab and getting nowhere and not like what I was doing." (Haraway, How Like 19).

At the same time, folks in cultural rhetorics/studies need to acknowledge the power and impact of the visual in subject formation, interpellation, and even colonization. This requires Visual Rhetorics as a field to imagine an open-ended and cross-disciplinary study of images, and for cultural rhetorics folks to occasionally focus on "texts" other than purely linguistic discursive productions (Rogoff 381):

> Much of the practice of intellectual work within the framework of cultural problematics has to do with being able to ask new and alternative questions, rather than reproducing old knowledge by asking the old questions. (Rogoff 382)

Rogoff's "new" questions are *not* necessarily questions such as: "How much white space do we need? How can I construct a power point that will engage my audience? "[23] but instead align more closely with the questions I am asking in this Affinity Project. It is helpful, as a writing teacher and conference presenter, to learn how to engage my audience with power point. But a more interesting question is, why do we like power point? (Think of Lacan's theory of the gaze, voyeurism, and spectatorship and imagine how those play out during a power point presentation). And as I discuss in the next chapter, while it is beneficial to know how much white space to use, the more interesting question is, what is in "white" space? What does the "blank" space mean?

". . . and so I moved over to his lab and did a dissertation that was a hybrid between history of science, philosophy, and biology" (Haraway, How Like 19).

Like these "new" questions, Rogoff's questions are questions such as:

- Whose fantasies are fed by which visual images?
- Which aspects of the historical past have images that circulate and which don't?
- In what political discourse can we understand looking and returning [or averting] the gaze as an act of political resistance?
- Who do we get to see and who is erased?

To further recap, in chapter two I illustrated how family photographs are used to seamlessly construct family stories, i.e. little narratives that tell "happy" stories of wholeness and how we can simultaneously read these photographs resistantly, unseeing their intended meaning, and instead seeing traces of subjectivity and agency in the Subjects photographed. Noting how white women have historically had their authorship and their contributions to technology seized, we can see how family photographs consciously and unconsciously do work in order to support this seizure. Heeding Powell's call for alliances through acknowledgement of history (of seizures) and redress, I framed this thesis as an attempt to answer Powell's call. The issues of oppression/resistance, seizures of authorship, agency, unconscious discursive (visual) productions, and the rhetorical function of family photographs are important nodes in my discussion here, and in this chapter I thread these nodes together in another way as I lay the foundation for the last chapter. Chapter four tries to "see" the white space. It

tries to acknowledge multifarious components of history, take responsibility for that history, and effect redress. In order to call for responsibility, there has to be a component of intentionality (however ignorance *is not* bliss). Therefore whether a discursive product is conscious or unconscious matters. But our need to know whether an act is conscious or unconscious doesn't just assist in assigning responsibility. In the knowing, we can break the network of violence that only lets certain subjectivities come to light as valid visualizations. Such validity is powerful because it allows only certain visualizations to repeat and strengthen in cultural circulation. We "see" what's happened along the visual cultural/historical script in the US, so that we can "unsee" and rebuild.

In order to "unsee," in this chapter, I first explain Lacan's theory of the unconscious as it relates to semiotics and signs having meaning based on displacement: the free play of signifiers. The work completed by free play of signifiers in the unconscious must be factored into visual analyses because to do so removes us from the realm of intentionality and give us the "freedom to understand meaning in relation to images . . . spaces, not necessarily perceived to operate in a direct, causal, or epistemic relation to either their context or to one another" (Rogoff 382). To look at diffractions of the unconscious, I "unsee" what Barthes calls the denotative meaning, and I see the connotative meaning, contextualizing images, since visual elements do not exist in a vacuum but are influenced by other signs floating in the culture (Barthes, Haraway). Pushing past Barthes with psychoanalysis, I will push these photographs past their "connotative" meaning by using and remediating Barthes' theory of pictures and

"animation." To do such visual "animation" is to displace meaning. Feminist deconstruction writing theory holds that writing itself is an "endless displacement of meaning"; therefore "visual culture provides the visual articulation of the continuous displacement of meaning in the field of vision and the visible" (Rogoff 382).

In this chapter, Freud is used to help displace meanings as I conduct rhetorical analyses of the visual. Lacan is indebted to Freud for his work, and Freud gives us a very sophisticated scheme for "understanding the relationship between visual and linguistic signification, and the equilibrium that the scheme established between the two registers" (Silverman 5). Very simply put (based on Freud's dream work): Dreams are rebuses.[24] This notion strongly connects with Barthes' theory of denotative and connotative meaning, but takes it a bit further. Images have meaning through what we associate with them, but associations have associations themselves, and so meaning is gathered infinitely by the free play of associations.

The larger questions addressed in this chapter (as framed above by Rogoff's first three inquires) and the intellectual work I will complete are as follows:

- What (visual) discursive productions (at the family level) take place through the unconscious (i.e. unintentionally)?
- How do those (visual) discursive productions function rhetorically?

- On a rhetoric as art performance level, can I (a Master's student) link together theory (psychoanalysis) with practice (family production of photographs)?

Rogoff's last question regarding who do we get to see and who is erased is the focus of the final chapter.

In addition to looking at discursive (visual) productions in order to acknowledge history and my family's role in that, this Affinity Project's autobiographical, self-reflexivity should, I hope, produce an object, a body of knowledge for Visual Rhetorics such that the scholars writing in the field are inspired to work at becoming less transparent through self-evaluation. Finally, in this chapter I make a small move to imagine rebuilding (a crazy asymmetrically designed structure) by calling up Haraway's Cyborg Subject Position. The small reference I make in this chapter to Haraway's Cyborg Subject Position shall serve as a way in to a deeper discussion of that concept in chapter four's subsection, "Cyborg Writing and Rhetorical Rehabilitation." As an act of interdisciplinarity, in conjuring up the Cyborg Myth through rhetorical analysis of historical family photographs, in this chapter I make a call to R&W scholars who themselves invoke Haraway's construct, to avoid reductionism. I urge them to let the Cyborg transform, always transform.

Lacan's Unconscious in (Visual) Stories

The associations of symbols are what make language.

"T*he unconscious is structured like a language" (Lacan, The Four 20).*

Lacan describes the unconscious as a place between cause and effect, a

gap, a cut, a slit: the unborn (22-23). Lacan is skeptical about our ability to access the language or code within the unconscious; while the unconscious manifests itself, the unconscious itself is held in limbo and suspense – not to say that the unconscious is unreal, but rather is unrealized (23). The unconsciousness' unborn nature is something forgotten, something that surprises us. We are surprised, Lacan argues, when we see some kind of previously unrealized connections between behaviors.

"*The left hand must not know what the right hand is doing*" *(Lacan, The Four* 42).

The element of surprise (of pleasure), that Lacan gives to us in his theory of the unconscious, is lovely to me as a scholar because I am a curious person, and I should like to think my colleagues are as well. Curiosity often leads to surprise. It also often leads to unsettling finds and lets us have "a notion of things outside the realm of the known, of things not yet quite understood or articulated; the pleasures of the forbidden or the hidden or the unthought; the optimism of finding out something one had not known or been able to conceive of before" (Rogoff 386). Rogoff calls upon the field of visual culture to embrace a spirit of the "curious eye" rather than "the mean eye, the jaundiced, skeptical eye" (385), and through Lacan's theory, we can be delightfully curious (and surprised).

But the unconscious as a construct that produces discursive effects that surprise us, produces effects that are disconnected from their origins. Between "cause" and "effect" is a gap, and in that gap is the unconscious.

"We find here once again the rhythmic structure of this pulsation of the slit, whose function I referred to last time" (Lacan, The Four 32).

In a series of seminars, Lacan uses Edgar Allen Poe's tale of "The Purloined Letter" in order to illustrate his conception of the unconscious. Applying rhetoric as a techne that connects theory to practice, I in turn use my family photographs to illustrate Lacan's theory of the unconscious, a theory important to visual analysis because as I mentioned in chapter one, the theory of the unconscious is a powerful tool for visual analysis since it supports theories such as spectatorship, interpellation, and semiotics (Sturken and Cartwright 73). Plus, a theory of the unconscious has always been historically tied to "rhetoric" (Johnson).

Edgar Allen Poe's 1844 tale,[25] "The Purloined Letter," involves a letter stolen (by the Minister) from the Queen (the purloined letter). The Queen sees the theft but cannot address it because she is entertaining a visitor. During the theft, the letter, in plain view, is replaced by another letter (i.e. the displacement of signifiers). While the police search the Minister's home and person they fail to find the letter. Dupin, the investigator finally solves the crime by searching out the Minister's apartment and spotting a crumpled old letter in a basket (in plain view). Dupin then replaces the purloined letter with his own facsimile (displacement of signifiers, again). During Poe's story, the reader never learns the contents of the letter, but is instead entertained by the actions of the characters with respect to the letter (i.e. the effects of the unconscious). Lacan perceives the unconscious as an envelope (a gap, a slit) causing certain

behaviors, an envelope with contents we might fleetingly glimpse, but whose interiority we never fully comprehend.

Lacan sees the letter as a metaphor for the Subject and the Signifier which gather their meanings through displacement. None of us escape this closed system of signification and as I mentioned in chapter two, it is the Subject's emergence into the Symbolic field, that closed system defined by language, that forever cuts the Subject off from the unconscious.

Lacan's definition of the signifier requires that it be totally disconnected from the Real and "take up residence within a closed field of meaning" (164). The following are paraphrased main points from Lacan's celebrated "Function and Field of Speech and Language":

- Symbols envelop the life of man in a network so total they join together, before he comes into the world, those who are going to engender him "by flesh and blood";
- Symbols are so total they bring to his birth the share of his destiny;
- Symbols are so total they give the words that will make him faithful or renegade, the law of the acts that will follow him right to the very place where he *is* not yet and even beyond his death; and
- Symbols are so total that through them his end finds its meaning in the last judgment, where the Word absolves his being or condemns it. (Silverman 165)

For my purposes, Lacan's theory is helpful because I simply insert "visual images," or in this case, "family photographs," in the place of "Symbols." Family

photographs function rhetorically to create the always-already we are born into, the "joined together" chain of signifiers that define our destiny. Lacan mentions the "Word," but Visual Rhetorics tells us that words and images function together, and that like words, images are powerful meaning makers. Lacan integrates images with words to make meaning with his use of diagrams, as I do in this Master's Thesis with my use of photographs. As I mentioned in chapter two, my family photographs function rhetorically to reinforce a vision of my family as raced, classed, and gendered. In that chapter I focused on a series of photographs of my grandmother, Cyborg Subject; in this chapter I look first at one picture (See FIGURE 10. "Kids On Car"), and then a series of other pictures. These photos are image-symbols playing out in the Symbolic, a closed system of signs, separating forever the Subject from the Real.

"*The real is that which always comes back to the same place*" (Lacan, *The Four* 42).

The Real contains both the "subject's own 'being' (its libidinal resources or needs) and the phenomenal world . . .[m]oreover, since language speaks no more to the reality of objects than it does to that of subjects, it effects a complete rupture with the phenomenal world" (Silverman 166). It is through this rupture I view my family photographs.

The narrative constructed through the photographs is rhythmic. After being initially surprised by one photograph (and then not surprised) and subsequently searching for further explanation (curiosity), I found a melodious rhythm that I argue is a remainder (effect) of the unconscious at work. This

pulsating rhythm, a beat, is not a discourse of the unconscious, but is subtler evidence of its existence. The photograph is a discursive product not of the unconscious, but of an effect of the unconscious: a diffraction, the play of light, the gap, the pulsation within the slit. The unborn.

My Family's (Visual) Unconscious in Stories

The unsettling photograph I located, was one found during a routine sifting of my collection (it was not purposeful). I was looking for connections and tropes, explanations that might surround the photograph of my grandmother, aunt, and mother (My Family, Figure 11) I discuss in the next chapter. Figure 10 rather caused me to pause and take a breath because of its rhetorical motion.

The image seemed to lift itself out of the box to my attention. On this phenomenon of *movement*, Barthes writes:

> In this glum desert, suddenly a specific photograph reaches me; it animates me, and I animate it. So that is how I must name the attraction which makes it exist: an *animation*. The photograph itself is in no way animated (I do not believe in 'lifelike' photographs), but it animates me: this is what creates every adventure. (*Camera Lucida* 20)

A photograph that appears in the Lacanian rupture, a rupture of the Real, is one then that is *animated.*. By animation I mean that this image moves – it shifts meaning, it displaces signifiers. Like Barthes, "I wanted to explore it not as a question (a theme) but as a wound: I see, I feel, hence I notice, I observe, and I think" (21).

Looking simply at the denotative meaning, the "Kids On Car" image shows my mother on the left, and her sister Marti on the right. According to the back of the photo, it was developed on January 3, 1939 by the Photo Art Co., Inc., Trenton, New Jersey (note how text informs the meaning of this image, as Barthes tells us). The license plate is clearly visible, and under magnification gives the state and the year 1938. We can conclude from linguistic signifiers then that this image was taken in 1938-39. In the background is the family's home in Palmyra, New Jersey, new bikes (the second bike is barely visible), and the undeveloped, rural area across the road. The two girls are four and five years old, and wear crisp clean matching snowsuits. Neither child looks at the picture taker, but instead Marti looks at Jacky, while Jacky looks off to her left. Marti seems somewhat relaxed and smiling at Jacky, while Jacky's expression is a bit more uncertain as she tries to balance solidly on the car's fender. Both girls appear to be grasping the back of the headlight to keep from sliding off the car. Since their poses are so symmetrical, one assumes that they were placed on the car by adult hands and asked to hang on until the photograph was taken. The overall denotative meaning of this image is: Happy well-to-do American 1930's middleclass white family – happy family.

Now that I've looked at the sentimental-plain denotative value of the photograph, I will animate it. I will begin by disengaging the denotative meaning and gradually animating the photo *past* the point of "seeing" connotative meaning. That is, I contextualize the photograph and connect it through networks, symbols, associations, and displacements of meaning, and I transform

its meaning. I move, shift the rhetorical function of this image using psychoanalysis to show it, animated in the rupture, or wound. My ability to do this with a psychoanalytic tool is why psychoanalysis is so useful for visual analysis. The psychoanalytic notion of displacement I mentioned earlier is a concept that inherently contains "movement." Remember the purloined letter *moved* as did the human players in Poe's story. Psychoanalysis lends itself to rhetorical movement.

Featured prominently and centrally in the image is a car. But what is the meaning of car?

"But the tropic quality of any word can erupt to enliven things for even the most literal minded." (Haraway, Readier 201).

Foucault tells us that to understand a meaning we must look at birth (qtd. in Porter, *Audience* 89), therefore I look at the birth of "automobile" in the US, both linguistically and symbolically. In doing so, I displace the intended forthright "denotative" meaning of the image. It isn't simply "a car."

Knowing that I cannot possibly unpack every nuanced meaning of the *automobile* as signifier, I simply start somewhere.

"Words trip us, make us swerve, turn us around; we have no other options." (Haraway, Reader 201).

The car is a Studebaker, a car they had "during the war."[26] Generally, however, what did the automobile signify in 1938 American culture? I have chosen the word *automobile* purposely in order to illustrate the linguistic associations of this symbol.

Historically, both the horseless carriage and the word for same were born in France.[27] From the very beginning of U.S. receptivity to the new contraption, the automobile was tied to French aristocracy; it was 1899 New York society that settled the debate about naming the vehicle "with the adoption of the French name *automobile*" (Lipski 176). New York society was "the American godparents" of the automobile and was the final decision maker of the name (176). French influence was so strong in the artifact's invention, the influence was able to span the language barrier and the Atlantic Ocean. The automobile's success in France was tied directly to the rapid success of the French Automobile Club., and the club's success in France was in turn tied to "undisputed agreement concerning its financial and social status," and the fact that the club was populated by an abundance of "the most prominent men" (176). Those original French entrepreneurs who were involved with the automobile were "the cream of French Society" (178).

This connection to rich, privileged white men carried over to the U.S.; the first American owners of the vehicle were prominent high-society white men such as "William Rockefeller, George Gould, Edwin Gould, John Jacob Astor, William Waldorf Astor, Jacob Ruppert, C.P. Huntington, and Claus Spreckels . . . New York society fostered the automobile just as the aristocracy had in other nations" (178). This American "aristocracy" expanded upon and experimented with the automobile as a signifier of prominence and a toy of the well-to-do.

So, linguistically we have associating signifiers that connect the car to French aristocracy, cream (whiteness), clubs (community), France (exoticness),

New York high society, and rich prominent white men. This chain of signifiers, tied now visually to "the car," was picked up by the US advertising industry, who used visual rhetoric to copy, repeat, commodify, and fetishize. From the earliest days of advertising, the discursive place of the automobile can be read as a fetish. Beginning in the early 1900's, the automobile was visually coupled with the already fetishized white female body (Bowers). Why were white female bodies visually coupled with car bodies? Lacan specifically stressed that in Poe's story, the Queen (who was stolen from) was a *female* subject (a female body) and connected that to his theory of "fear of castration." Fear of castration (a female association) is in turn connected to the fetish: ". . .with regard to the correlation of women and fetish: 'The fetish, as replacement for the missing maternal phallus, at once masks and reveals the scandal of sexual difference. As such it is the analytic object *par excellence*" (Lacan qtd. in Muller and Richardson 65). The use of fetish (the visual image of the automobile and the female body) both masks and reveals sexual difference. It masks it by coupling the female body (no maternal phallus) with a "phallus." It reveals it by cementing together a "female" body and a body that is "male-like" (the car-as-phallus).

Re-seeing the "Kids On Car" image, looking next at its connotative meaning, it's not simply a picture of happy white kids. Instead, it functions rhetorically and semiotically as a sign, networked with other associative signs. It is a teaching tool. Recall the Subject is born with no knowledge of how to be a man or a woman, those gender performances are played out in the Symbolic through the free play of signifiers, in this case visual images of girls and cars. In

the Symbolic, the children learn at a young age that their subjectivities are equivalent to cars. Since they are visually associated, child-bodies and car-body, the children's value as human is thus equivalent to the value of the Studebaker. Human = Machine. The picture embodies a visualization of a hybrid "Subject," a human-machine "thing." One picture. A human-machine "body."

"The soul of machines constitutes the social element. The body of the social element is constituted by machines" (Latour 213).

The picture not only manifests an image of a hybrid organism-machine, it also functions to cement a family narrative that says, "We can afford this car, and we have two healthy kids. We are successful middleclass Americans." The photograph of white middleclass children upon an individually owned automobile in 1930's United States further connects a middleclass identity to the upper echelons of "society" – thus functions rhetorically not just to say "we are middleclass," but also, given the historical and geographical configuration, says "we are [or wish we were] above middleclass."

The white children's bodies are in turn coupled (associated with in the Symbolic) to the white female body because the female body is one place the viewer "knows" they have been (they were "inside" her). Visually, the signifiers of white children, females, and cars in this technologically mediated image represents raced, classed, gendered Subjects, but Subjects who've been hybridized with "machine," and a machine that's been mixed with human "blood."

Animating this image now past connotation, beyond the linguistic-visual associations, pushing it into a more deeply psychoanalytic space, past the

denotative *and* connotative meaning, it is generally understood that the automobile in American culture has always served as a phallic symbol.[28] Does the image serve thus in the family picture, and if so, why? It is clear to see why auto-as-phallus arose as a signifier when one remembers *the automobile* and its original significations in the U.S., i.e. power, wealth, prominent men. However, "phallic symbol" is a bit of an elusive term, worthy of further unpacking. Lacan[29] explained the "phallus" as that signifier of both fullness and impossibility that is always strived for by human subjects, but which is never attained (remember how I described "lack" in the first chapter). Freud's definition of phallus connected it more directly to the actual male organ. Male organs, in the signifying chain and free play of signs, visually associate with things that "resemble it in shape":

- Things, accordingly, that are long and up-standing, such as *sticks*, *umbrellas*, *posts*, *trees;*
- Objects which share with the thing they represent the characteristic of penetrating into the body and injuring – thus, sharp weapons of every kind, *knives*, *daggers*, *spears*, *sabers* ;
- Things which share the "remarkable" characteristic of the male organ which enables it to rise up in defiance of the laws of gravity;
- Dreams can symbolize erection in yet another, far more expressive manner. They can treat the sexual organ as the essence of the dreamer's whole person and make him himself *fly*.

  (Freud, *Introductory Lectures on Psycho-analysis* 190-91)

Remember that Freud gave us a very sophisticated scheme for analyzing visual images as they play out in the Symbolic, and that's why his theory is so useful for visual rhetoric analyses. The automobile has a strong connection to phallic symbol under Freud's view because of its shape, its ability to penetrate or injure, and its ability to metaphorically fly.

In this photograph, the automobile appears to have penetrated the children's bodies as it rises up from the centers of the girls' open positions. It is the image of the child bodies, my mother and aunt, mounted upon the phallic-symbol-Studebaker that is the *wound*. I find this image striking in fact because of the signification of the automobile as phallic symbol combined with the positioning of the female children's bodies. It is important to note as well that my grandfather Edgar was the picture taker (i.e. the male gaze). Thinking then upon this image of female children's bodies, automobile, and white male photographer, how does the photograph represent a remainder of the unconscious? How might its rhetorical meaning be further shifted? To answer this question, it is beneficial to use a 1994 film analysis written for *Cinema Journal*.

The essay psychoanalyzes an image of one automobile along with its accompanying "body." Under examination is a 1965 film fragment from Kenneth Anger's *Kustom Kar Kommandos*. Anger's image manipulation of *the car* is useful in understanding my rhetorical animation of the Studebaker and children. Anger's film fragment, only a few minutes long, features a teenage boy in tight blue jeans lovingly and sensually polishing his customized car. The film begins with the opening of the car door, a survey of the interior; the camera then moves

to view the exterior of the car where the teenage boy stands up from behind the engine and the camera focuses momentarily on his crotch. With "Dream Lover" playing in the background, the boy sensually polishes his car with an oversized pink powder puff . The entire episode occurs in a place that remains "unidentified and basically undefined" (Cagle 24). Cagle's main points are as follows (paraphrased):

- The work has the visual quality of a sexual fantasy;
- The teenager's movements suggest a kind of masturbatory – or *auto-erotic*—fantasy with the auto playing both the idealized phallus as well as object of desire;
- The image links the "body" and the car in an economy of narcissistic/homoerotic interaction. (24-25)

As I argue along the lines of Cagle's points with respect to Figure 10, I wish to state one caveat. In no way do I believe that my grandfather, the picture taker, purposely set forth to create an image – *auto-erotic*.[30] I don't believe my grandfather to be extraordinary in any sense, not particularly normal nor perverted. In fact, from all descriptions, oral histories, and family artifacts, (my family's mythologizing) my grandfather was a "responsible" productive member of the American macro-culture: a good-citizen. But that is my whole point of course, that this photograph is just one in a series, in a rhythm, that represents the *unrepresentable*. The image cannot only be used to argue in favor of a theory of the unconscious, but it can be used to argue that through that theory, the meanings of images can be shifted with *rhetorical animation*.

The family image *and* Anger's film clip contain movement. The image because I rhetorically animate it, and the film clip because it is animated with technology. Both image and film clip are technologically mediated representations that feed fantasies, in this case the fantasies of the photo taker. The family photo is a visualization of the Lacanian fantasy, a fantasy that answers the Subject's fear of castration, and functions discursively as evidence of the remainder and dispensation of the unconscious' effects (it was unintended). Remember the unconscious is inaccessible and unborn, unregulated and untamed (although orderly and not chaotic: it is structured like a language).[31]

The unconscious can be revealed by what it repeats. (Lacan)

And in my Introduction I specifically said that this Affinity Project is an attempt to stop the circling back.

"What cannot be remembered is repeated in behavior ." (Lacan, The Four 129).

My purpose here is to animate, to move, to rhetorically shift the meaning of this image and remember in order to disrupt the repetition.

The "Kids On Car" image couples the automobile's body, signifier of aristocracy and wealth, with children's bodies, commodifying the human bodies (Sturken and Cartwright 200). The car as phallic symbol reveals the subjectivity of the photographer, the male gaze, reflecting back his narcissism: "Look at this. This is what I have." Like the sexual fantasy in Anger's film fragment, the location here is "unidentified and basically undefined." It's only context is what I

have given it with my own interpretation, i.e., taken in Palmyra, New Jersey, 1930's, etc. And photographs have notoriously been coupled with sexual fantasy:

- Photographs can abet desire . . . as an aid to masturbation. (Sontag 16)
- . . . [P]rofessional photographers often have sexual fantasies when they are behind the camera . . . fantasies [that] are both plausible and so inappropriate. (Sontag 13)
- Porn was an immediate product of the daguerreotype, and the "beaver shot" is an invention of the camera. (Solomon-Godeau)

Like Anger's sexual fantasy, this photograph plays upon the "filmic symbol of death: an image-based orgasm (the 'little death')" (27). Death is played upon by the precarious positioning of the children; falling from their place could at least cause small injury. Remember that Lacan said the only (insufficient) method Subjects have of being "whole" is through heterosexual union (there is no sexual relation). Since Subjects are defined in the field of the Other, death is a moment when the Subject is not alienated from the Other but is "one": the sexual union equals a little death.

The photo plays with the mandatory subjugation of movement by trying to resist rhetorical animation. *This car is still*; not the known way and function of automobiles. If this car moved, these children, posed precariously, gripping for balance, mounted directly above the front tires, would surely suffer fatal injury. That image of "little death" animates this photograph, which is especially, most certainly in the literal sense, unanimated (and must be to avoid injury to the

Subjects pictured). Surely death is as present here as is the distorted skull, the death-head in Holbien's *The Ambassadors*. Death floats before our eyes.

And not only does the car's exterior function as a visualization of the phallus merged with the female children's bodies, but the visual signs equated with femaleness are covered over. "The female genitals are symbolically represented by all such objects as share their characteristic of enclosing a hollow space which can take something into itself: by *pits*, *cavities*, *hollows*" (Freud, *Introductory Lectures* 192). While the automobile's exterior serves as a visualization of the phallus, its interior serves as a visualization of its femaleness.

Rhetorically animating this image, unlike the car interior the viewer is able to fully inspect in Anger's film (thus Anger emphasized the femaleness of the car and it made sense for him to use a human-male-body for balance), the interior of the Studebaker is a dark, empty hollow; details are only hinted at. This dramatizes by contrast the hard, flat headlight "eyes" of the car, eyes which penetrate with light (eyes that signify both the cinematic apparatus and the male gaze), and its bulbous protruding metal fenders. In the place where female organs *should* reside on the children, the fenders permeate and overtake. Not only is the female symbol within the automobile (its interior) deemphasized, but the femaleness of the children's bodies is covered over. This covering over signifies the male photographer's need to cover over his own lack. He manipulates the shot, unconsciously deemphasizing the female interiority of the automobile, visually merging "lacking" female children's bodies with the

automobile-as-phallus, thus reflecting back his own "auto-erotic" desire, the little death, covering over his own lack at the same time.

As the children "ride" the automobile, the girls and the automobile *together* become the fetish. "The fetish object allows the subject to recreate illusorily a scenario of (castration) anxiety and then to 'master' it through disavowal, facilitating the necessary 'relocation' of the object from an economy of difference to an economy of sameness based upon narcissistic . . . desire" (Freud qtd. in Cagle 25). The female children create an illusory scenario of castration anxiety; they cannot "have" the phallus. This scenario is mastered by disavowing the castration: the automobile through its fenders provides relief. The difference of the children and the car to the male picture taker is thus relocated to "an economy of sameness" based upon narcissistic desire.

A Series of (Family) Diffractions

In chapter two I analyzed family photographs, looking for traces of my grandmother's resistance, through rhetorical skill, to the dominant culture. I concluded that through visual rhetoric, my grandmother covered over her subjectivity by wearing the "mask," i.e. mimicry and posing. Earlier in this chapter I mentioned that after finding the "Kids On Car" image, curiosity spurred me to look for more family images of "girls and cars." What I found was a series of photographs taken across three generations: "girls on cars," images of my grandmother, my mother and aunt, and myself (1938 to 1978).

The question is, as "we" were pinned down and objectified as "bodies" and nothing more, did we (they) resist? And will it help if we do? Be clear that I have

no utopian feminist dream of a common language or a common method of victimization and survival to offer (according to Donna Haraway, to do so is "totalizing and imperialist" [31]).

"There is nothing about being 'female' that naturally binds all women" (Haraway, Reader 14).

The question concerns "us." I said above, what did "we" do? I am troping in stumbles and swerves and trying to find a friendly relationship with these "white" women whose DNA I share (considering the discourse of genetics we interpellate, the discourse that replaces in like-kind "eugenics").

The series of women-on-cars images in my family shows this same kind of resistance by my grandmother and my aunt, my aunt manipulating discursive (visual) production by wearing the "mask," by actually laying on a car's hood in an intentional pose for the photographer. I find that in images of myself, I also engage purposefully in this kind of gender performance. My mother though embodies a different kind of resistance, but it is important to acknowledge her resistance as well, in order to acknowledge white women's contribution to technology and authorship in whatever form. Like DeVoss's WWW women, my mother used the rhetorical tools available to her.

My mother never posed on or in a car, other than that time when she was politely coerced by her father to sit upon the Studebaker at age four. My mother was never one to embrace in any fashion, the sentimental white family matrix. Well, she tried for awhile, but after she and my bio-father divorced in 1966, she partially came out as a lesbian and lived a double life, in and out of queer culture

(simultaneously in-and-out, depending on the time of day), life behind and in front of the veil, a double-life I experienced along with her. I want to state another caveat here – I do not mean to essentialize the "lesbian" experience; I just want to explain and point out that my mother consciously and unconsciously refused to fit into the Lacanian matrix. To illustrate her refusal visually, I have examined the photographs I have of my mother *in the vicinity* of an automobile. My mother did not resist by posing, she systematically resisted by avoiding and averting, not returning the gaze. In the photographs of my mother she either does not meet the camera's gaze at all, or looks from behind the mask of dark sunglasses. Like my grandmother "posed" for the camera with rhetorical skill, my mother refused to pose by averting her gaze, and by this refusal she slips from the discursive hold (she refuses to be defined in the field of the Other) and reminds me that tactics will be employed by those less powerful (de Certeau).

As further evidence of resistance, in the "Kids On Car" image, the child-girls, my mother and aunt, exercise an adult level of "agency" by refusing to look back at the camera. "In Lacanian psychoanalysis, the child works in this [psychoanalytic] experience as a subject in his/her own right and in the full sense of the term" (Glowinski, Marks, and Murphy 19). By averting their gazes, the female child-subjects leave their trace on the photograph, the trace that *maybe things are not as they seem.* Maybe, they refuse, if even at the unconscious level, to be victims of another Other's "auto-erotic" desire. By averting their gazes, the unconscious attempt at auto-eroticism by the white male, their father, is disrupted by this trace. This series of human-car, human-machine images

function rhetorically to visually support status quo gender performances playing out in the Symbolic, how we as Subjects learn "to be." But they also leave traces of the subjectivities, acts of resistance, of the human components pictured.

"In human destiny, the remainder is always fruitful. The slag is the extinguished remainder" (Lacan, The Four 134).

Answering Earlier Questions

By rhetorically animating my family photographs in this Affinity Project, I can make meaning travel through space and time; I can deconstruct and rehabilitate. I make esplanades, networks, and cat's cradles from simple linearity. To answer the questions I posed in the first paragraphs of this chapter, the visual/textual productions created by the white American family can be unconsciously configured by members of the family (those with access to technology) as ways to maintain the status quo and suppress by providing visual illustrations (teaching tools) of appropriate gender performance, and by providing visualizations for Subject absorption of mainstream ideology. Such productions function rhetorically to copy, repeat, and strengthen the master narratives that emphasize the importance of whiteness, appropriate gender roles, and the value of middleclassness (Smith, Wexler, Hill). Photographs' rhetorical functionality is further strengthened since image collections are a historical past that survive generations and are permitted to unquestionably (and infinitely) circulate (move, shift meaning through time and space) through a variety of public displays (Smith, Wexler, Hill).

For example, it is significant that while plenty of historic family photographs of white people circulate in the culture (posting on the networks of the web is a common practice), Powell points out that after the US Army Seventh Cavalry's South Dakota "Ghost Dance" massacre of 1890, the burial of the "bodies of dead Lakotas . . . piled into wagons and shoveled into mass graves" were photographed by George Trager, and the eleven images "are widely distributed and reproduced even today" (54). It is difficult to see a way out of this closed system of signification when what constitutes an "event," such as the Ghost Dance massacre and everyday "white family life" are determined *to be* events and cemented technologically as images for public display and cultural circulation (Sontag 19). It is difficult to see a way out when certain communities of people were historically permitted access to technology like the camera in order to construct their own identities (like my family was), while others were disenfranchised from the same technologies (Wexler). It means something when the images circulating of one group of people are by-and-large "live" people, and the other images circulating of a different group of people are "dead" people. Photographs are a way of at least "tacitly, often explicitly, encouraging whatever is going on to keep on happening. To take a picture is to have an interest in things as they are, in the status quo remaining unchanged" (Sontag 12). What I'm offering in this chapter is a way out of the status quo. The way out of the endless repetition, the coming back to the same place, is through applying rhetoric. If we rhetorically animate we can change meaning – so of course we move together in alliance, shifting meaning to make the world better.

So to answer Rogoff's earlier question: Whose fantasies are fed by which visual images?, using psychoanalysis I argue that in this case the image functioned to fulfill the fantasies of a white American middleclass male. It allowed him to unconsciously engage in behavior *prohibited* by the larger culture by negotiating a discursive production specifically *sanctioned* within the existing culture. It also serves as proof of how the male gaze is a by-product of subjectivity that interpellated the culturally sanctioned mixing-and-matching of white-female-bodies-and-cars in order to produce meanings that supported hegemony: white females have equivalent meaning as cars, but women of color are not even worth "seeing." The fantasy has been fed, and since this image has survived for almost seventy years, and is now posted on my professional website, in addition to appearing (again) in this thesis, it is an aspect of the historical past that is culturally sanctioned to circulate. It denotatively appears to reproduce middleclass whiteness, a happy family, but past connotation to rhetorical animation, I "see" it first as reproducing violence and oppression, but finally I "see" traces of resistance. The women in my family then, are tied together through the systematic marginalization we have endured under the unconscious (maybe conscious) refractive behavior of one or another white male each time we are "shot" sitting on a car: my grandfather, perhaps a boyfriend, perhaps a "male fiancé." But at the same time, we leave traces of survivance.

In answer to Rogoff's question asking what political discourses can be read for resistance, the discourse of the family photograph, its power, certainly forms a political discourse in what it tries to do, that is, cement a smooth linear

narrative of gendered, raced, classed Subjects. The discourse of "our family" is a *political* discourse that maintains hegemony, but can also be read for traces of resistance (Wexler).

Finally, using psychoanalysis as a tool for rhetorical animation can work towards some small step on a path in the other direction, ending the repetition that plays out between and across visual images as they interact in the Symbolic, and can work towards an end to the always-already beginning where we already began. I have hope that the future is not already-written (and that even the always-already can be re-written, as Powell does in her scholarship). I hope that in the endless displacement of signifiers in the Symbolic, displacements constructing networks that define Subjects even beyond death, like the purloined letter, we won't always end up in the same place.

Rebuilding with the Cyborg Subject Position

In this chapter I have looked at pictures of female Subjects in my family. However, I have carefully tried not to essentialize the category "female." To this end, in the earlier subsection of this chapter, "A Series of (Family) Diffractions," while I acknowledge that I look at pictures of female Subjects across generations, Haraway reminds us that there is nothing about being "female" that binds all women (*Reader*). To say all women experience the same existence, according to Haraway is "imperialistic." And so, as a "feminist"[32] through what lens can I find some connection to the women in my family, without essentializing? The category "feminist" has undergone much painful splitting, and as a partial answer to that, Haraway offers up the Cyborg Myth, a hybrid organism -machine. She is

very particular about how the Cyborg should be defined, and while I don't think any scholar should try to colonize a term, even one she invented, I see why she's concerned. I haven't focused on the emerging field in R&W of "Digital Rhetoric," but in that field (and in other areas of R&W where scholars write about technology), the term Cyborg is (reductively) coming to mean "*all* kinds of artifactual, mechanic relationships with human beings" (Haraway, *How Like* 128).[33] It's beneficial for writers to take a term and stretch it's meaning, make cat's cradles and esplanades, but what needs to be guarded against is taking a rich term like Cyborg and sealing off its meaning, i.e., being linguistically reductive, or doing what Haraway names "cognitive fetishism," or creating what Whitehead calls "simplified editions of immediate matters of fact" (Haraway, *How Like* 92).

In order to lay an initial foundation for further development of this concept in chapter four's subsection "Cyborg Writing and Rhetorical Rehabilitation," I am going to briefly unpack the term "Cyborg" as Haraway defines it. I pointed out earlier that according to Haraway, the Cyborg emerged from the specific histories of WW II, and the theories of information and information processing that came out of that time. My grandmother's coming of age time. The time my mother was "born." 1938, of or near the year the "Kids On Car" image was cemented, is the same year C.R. Carpenter had his first ideas for "behavioral experiments using primates with brain ablations" (Haraway, *How Like* 205). [34]

The Cyborg image, "Kids on Car," cements the signs of child-bodies and car-bodies through the technology of the camera, and is now again mediated in

this chapter through the technology of the computer. The Cyborg, like my grandmother (and mother and aunt) is a Subject skewered by discourse, ideology, culture, machine, and technology whose visualization cannot be understood without contextualization. The contextualization of the Cyborg Subject Positions of my "kin," points to the leaky distinctions between human-machine, and physical-non-physical subjectivities. My relatives now are ghostly traces, but they are "real." They are me, but they are not me. They transform. They move. Cyborgs are animated creatures. And they offer only a partial commonality among Subjects interpellated with gender, race, and class. Cyborgs make a space (in refutation to Lacan but built on Lacan) "to be" post-gender (like the girl-bodies and car-bodies were cemented in sameness to the "male" photographer's body). The Cyborg Subject Position takes the polluted inheritances we have but still isn't hopeless. My chapter here is only a small beginning to the kind of research and theorizing I'd like to see in R&W, especially in the Digital Rhetoric strand. We need work that complicates, historicizes, and maybe even remediates the notion of Cyborg Subject Position.[35] It may prove useful.

I will end this chapter by emphasizing that there is a connection between the female Subjects in my family, but the only way I can make this connection without essentializing, is to place all of us in the Cyborg Subject Position. This is exactly how Haraway intended the concept be used – in order to avoid imperialism and essentialism. That is why I have taken the time in closing this

chapter to further unpack this term. I will further discuss this issue in chapter four.

CHAPTER FOUR: Rhetorical Reconstruction: The Black and White Truth of True (White) Womanhood

> Many women have been caught – have split themselves – between two mothers: one, usually the biological one, who represents the culture of domesticity, of male-centeredness, of conventional expectations, and another . . . who becomes the countervailing figure. Adrienne Rich. *Of Woman Born*

> The knowledge gained through still photographs will always be some kind of sentimentalism . . . a semblance of knowledge, a semblance of wisdom; as the act of taking pictures is a semblance of appropriation, a semblance of rape. The very muteness of what is, hypothetically, comprehensible in photographs is what constitutes their attraction and provocativeness. Susan Sontag. *On Photography*

Overview

In the first three chapters, I argued that visual rhetoric needs to become Visual Rhetorics and include visual culture by way of including and allying with cultural rhetorics scholarship. I've argued that Lacanian psychoanalysis is helpful in analyzing the visual because Lacan said that subjectivity is mediated by a "screen" wherein we all appear to others as pictures. I have also illustrated how family photographs are used to mythologize family stories of linear, pure "identity," but how we can challenge these stories by reading resistantly and rhetorically animating pictures, unseeing their intended meaning, and instead seeing traces of subjectivity and agency sometimes unconsciously constructed. I have described how photographs functioned rhetorically in my family to make appear a vision of raced, classed, gendered subjectivities. Photographs are a way to encourage and maintain the status quo (Sontag 12). I have conjured up the Cyborg Subject Position as a partial "healing" explanation of my family's

subjectivities: our connectedness. However in chapter three I posed a question that I have left unanswered until now: Who do we get to see and who is erased (Rogoff)? Or my way of putting it: What does the blank space mean?

At this point I am going to engage a rhetorical analysis of one photograph that was prominently and publically displayed on the walls of my childhood home. My rhetorical analysis in this section moves away from focusing on images hidden away in boxes, uncovering what was literally hidden, to uncovering what was hidden in plain view, like the purloined letter.

Everyday Practices

Like most white families in my working class neighborhood, my mother displayed pictures, photographs of family members. Her habit of hanging family photographs on our home's walls was an everyday practice embraced by most neighborhood families, and my mother's purpose in displaying the 1939 photograph, "My Family" (See FIGURE 11) was consciously well-intentioned; the photo gave her pleasure; it was an assurance to herself and "the world" that she was a "loved child," and it was a remembrance of "safe times" and "a time in my life that I had no problems" (Walther). The function of the photograph for my mother was to "actively promote nostalgia" (Sontag 15). Commenting on the function of family photographs in American homes, bell hooks writes that she "was somewhat awed and frightened at times by our extended family's emphasis on picture taking . . . every wall and corner of my grandparents' (and most everybody else's) home was lined with photographs" (49). Hooks's grandmother was the "keeper of the walls," and the display was one that asserted the hooks

family's "collective will to participate in a noninstitutionalized curatorial process"; to hooks the photo covered walls were "essential to the process of decolonization" and a way her community averted the gaze of white supremacy (50). In contrast, the practice of photo display in my "white" family's home served a different rhetorical function. Hooks's family and my family both displayed photographs, but because we are two different subjectivities, *those displays do not mean the same thing*. This cultural and rhetorical awareness is critical to Visual Rhetorics' scholarship as academics complete WWW "identity" research.

The importance of increasing awareness through retelling stories is emphasized by Johnson as he invokes Michael de Certeau's call for us to look more closely at everyday practice. The stories that need retelling, Johnson says, are the stories of "technology." My family pictures, created by the technology of the camera, hide the story of their production, of how they mediate subjectivity for us and then present an artifact by way of "the picture" that seems "real": "The knowledge of everyday practice has become nearly voiceless: a colonized knowledge . . . Yet the voices and the knowledge embedded in the stories are still there – they are just more difficult to hear, more difficult to recognize" (Johnson 5). So technologically mediated subjectivities hold power in what they hide. De Certeau writes: "the skin of the servant is the parchment on which the master's hand writes . . . [e]very power, including the power of law, is written first of all on the backs of its subjects" (140). The family photos in my childhood home were an ideologically constructed "law," a law literally inscribed on the back of one servant, but inscribed as well on the bodies of my "family" Subjects. The

photographs I have serve as visual talisman of how dominant ideologies were inscribed on the *bodies* of my family. Photographs of "my white family" commodify their Subjects, erasing means of production and excluding those who enable, those who labor and build; excluding those Subjects who don't visually, politically, culturally, or economically, fit the definition: "White Middleclass Family." Those laborers are absented. But "absence" signifies presence of meaning; " . . . meaning is to be found precisely where it is no longer in its place " (Lacan, *The Four* 217). Family photographs make meaning through displacement. A decision on what to picture is also a decision on what to exclude.

Making the Transparent Visible: Gayatri Spivak

Conjuring up the absence that's been achieved through displacement, means that in order to act ethically I must acknowledge my position as a researcher from whom emanates the Western Intellectual's gaze (Spivak).[36] In my Preface and Introduction, and in the autobiographical self-reflexive nature of this work, I've made clear that for me to represent myself as transparent not only risks working towards an essentialist agenda, but restricts my intellectual engagement with the images I study. Because I have been open about my positionality as I've laid it out for the reader in this Affinity Project, I hope I am not transparent, because this rhetorical investigation now requires me to conjure up a woman's body, a body erased by "my white family."

I hope that at this point in my text it has become clear that I write from the position of feminisms, but that I also cannot escape my "blood." I wish to heed

Spivak's warning that a failure to question or consider the potential transparency of myself as investigating intellectual, even though investigating something as "mundane" as family photographs, is a failure to engage in the feminist project she suggests: "The female intellectual as intellectual has a circumscribed task which she must not disown with a flourish" (308).

As I mentioned in the Preface, Spivak is not called up much by Visual Rhetorics scholars, but she should be, since she specifically addresses *transparency and visibility*, two major elements of the "visual." She supports Derrida in saying we should read space, blank space as it fits with text (or images). "Thought is . . . the blank part of the text' . . . [t]hat inaccessible blankness circumscribed by an interpretable text is what a postcolonial critic of imperialism would like to see developed within the European enclosure as the place of the production of theory" (294). Haraway says, "Gayatri Spivak's work has been more important to me [than Derrida's] because of the way she incorporates deconstruction into anti-racist feminist theory" (*How Like* 21). I have referenced Powell's (anti-racist) calls on these pages, and here I reiterate her call for R&W to stop its reliance on "Greek, Roman, European, even European American thinkers" (39). And while Spivak is a "thinker," an intellectual, she is nonetheless a "Third World Woman" (and so does not fall within the old reliance's Powell refers to). To unframe the boundaries of canon by using Spivak is to proceed in the spirit of Powell's call. So I shall try on the pages I have left, to *write with* Spivak by translating (not sublating) her theory as it pertains to the

blank space circumscribed by an "interpretable text," i.e. the representation of faces, bodies, objects, in the typical "white" American family photograph.

The Family Picture and "My Black Mother"

When one glances at Figure 11, the interpretable "text" (Barthes' denotative meaning), the images *expressed* are my grandmother, my mother, and my only maternal aunt, female Subjects who bear their father's name.[37] My grandmother Martine wears a fashionable, neatly buttoned white coat; a tasteful scarf nestles symmetrically in her coat's collar, and my mother and aunt sport matching snowsuits that echo the newness of their tricycles. One sees an always already image of seeming happiness, an image that embraces the sentimental white middleclass family that is the basis for Freud and Lacan's theory.

Looking at the space this photograph creates, the blank space circumscribed by the obvious (my female kin, clean clothing, new bikes, and so on) my task is now to read the blank space circumscribed by the obvious, to rupture the Real, as a place where meaning might be produced and to do so in such a way that I as an investigating intellectual, am not transparent. Of course, the reader is free to draw his or her own conclusions and make his or her own insights on my positionality. While I am not present in the interpretable text of the photograph, I am present in this rhetorical reading. We can look at the child body of my mother and know it is the one place I have been; I am not there yet but I have been there now.

The picture was taken by my grandfather Edgar, and it is clear he captured the approving look of all three subjects. In the facial expressions of my female kin and their body positioning I do not read resistance. My mother's face (on the right) appears a bit hesitant, but for the most part, this photograph captures a moment in time where perhaps the photo taker and the Subjects were in complicity towards the story: "Truth" they together produce.

Because the photo was taken on New Year's Day, it is likely these Subjects show off commodities recently received as part of a white protestant middleclass Christmas tradition. In the nineteenth and early twentieth century, American family photographs served not just as spaces for gender and class performances, but also as constructors of racial identity (Smith). My grandmother's racial identity stands appropriately as a centerpiece of white female perfection. This central positioning is a representation of eugenicists' image of the white female body. Albert Edward Wiggam, a "prominent popularizer of eugenics in America," encouraged and posited [white]women at the very center of fantastical white perfection: "It is peculiarly to woman that America looks for the realization of this ideal. She is the natural conservator for the race, the guardian of its blood" (qtd. in Smith, *American Archives* 122). A number of scholars point out the direct connection between eugenics and American family photography as rhetorically constructing, through both textual and visual discursive productions, a national metanarrative of white blood inheritance (Smith, Wexler).

The metanarrative of white blood inheritance with white female at the

center was threatened by my grandmother and others like her working in the public domain. She threatened "the livelihood of her elite white social class by refusing to procreate" (Smith, *American Archives* 122), and in fact it was unusual for a woman to wait five years after marriage before having children as she did.[38] For my grandmother, special pressures were exerted since neither her only sibling, brother Lamar, nor her two sisters-in-law, Margaret and Florence, had children. The family lineage, blood of "whiteness," but for my grandmother could have failed to reproduce itself. Thus this photo has a special exigency.

The white female body, like the family photograph, was looked to as the reproducer of middleclass whiteness: "white woman emerged as the foundation of racialized class and national discourses" (Smith, *American Archives* 122). My grandmother's white female body is an object of repetition, a commodity, as are the two children's bodies. With what Susan Sontag defines as a "semblance of rape" (24), Edgar took this picture of the three female subjects in answer to a perceived moral duty to reproduce a linear legacy of middleclass whiteness. Wexler writes that "[p]hotography was part of the master narrative that created and cemented cultural and political inequalities of race and class [and gender]"(164). This photograph hung on the wall of my family home then, unquestioned until now, functioning not as a resistance to white supremacist hegemony (as did the photos in hooks's life world), but as a reproducer of that dominant ideology, an ideology internalized by the Subjects assigned to reproduce it.

In my attempt to read absence in this photograph, rupture the Real, to speak of something unrepresentable, to look not at connotative or denotative meaning, but something else, I cannot help but note the jutting barren trees or the unsettling scuffed white baby shoes that violently negate, even rupture the photo's otherwise sentimental perfection. These imperfections give me an entry point to reinterpret what this picture denies in the blank space circumscribed by the interpretable text. The bottom of my grandmother's white coat folds uncannily open at the hem, as if held back by an invisible hand. The image asks for a peeling away of the coat, the snowsuits, the gloves, a peeling away the layers.

In peeling away the layers, the middleclass white simulation is abruptly halted. The blank space from which the law of middleclassdom and white heritage spring, the blank space itself becomes a vision of a woman inscribed with "My Family Story" : this photo is written on the invisible but literal physical body – on the back of the absent servant named and thus objectified by Western macroculture as "black nanny," "post-emancipation African-American domestic worker," "mammy"; but indeed this woman had a name, and in saying her human name, which was *never* uttered by my "white" family, I hope to use de Certeau's metaphor of fragmented mirrors, not to reconstruct her but to see her as a mirror reflecting back on my own "white" heritage.[39]

Her name was Melinda.

Based on the dozens of emails I have exchanged with my mother the last few months, Melinda was a complex female subject who literalized W.E.B. Du Bois's notion of double-consciousness. Jacky wrote:

> One other thing I remember is that when our mother would take Melinda home we would go with her and sometimes we would go in her house, which I thought was wonderful. Melinda had a couple of kids much older than us and she talked to us about them all the time, telling us what they did. (Walther)

Melinda lived in two worlds, that of mother in black civil society in Riverton, New Jersey and that of domestic worker in my grandmother's home in neighboring Palmyra; Du Bois describes this double existence as one of "two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings; two warring ideals" (2). She worked for the family from Jacky's birth (1935) until the high school years, only taking time off when my grandmother stayed home to nurse Jacky through polio.[40]

Jacky's email goes on to say:

> One time Melinda talked about the wonderful 16th birthday party she was having for her daughter and I wanted to go. She told me I was too young, but I kept begging and begging; I told her I would stay in the kitchen and just peek around the door, but she still told me I couldn't go to the party. She finally told me my mother wouldn't want me to come because they were black and I was white. I really don't know how my parents would have answered but they certainly weren't prejudiced and at age 8 I wasn't aware

> that black and white was so different and weren't friends with each other (not in the 1940's). That was [the] first I knew of it and it shocked me and I knew that there wasn't any use taking the request any further . . . I sure loved her and felt very safe when she was in the house. (Walther)

Maybe my grandparents weren't "prejudiced" in a crude, in-your-face manner but they were direct participants in maintaining what Patricia Hill Collins calls the "fundamental relationship of injustice" (49). Collins explains that after emancipation, black women workers were confined to either field labor or domestic work (53-54). African-American women who withdrew from the labor force to tend to their own families were highly criticized by whites for aspiring to a womanhood that wasn't theirs (Collins 54). "A common migration pattern was for Black girls to train for domestic work in the South by doing chores and taking care of siblings. Around age 10, they went to Northern cities to assist working relatives . . .They eventually – often after years of search – found employment in day work" (56). Collins writes that domestic work was often exploitive since workers were judged by their personality and ability to act with deference: "those women who were submissive or who successfully played the role of obedient servant were more highly valued by their employers" (56). In puncturing the unwritable, unspeakable Real of Figure 11, it must be stated that in order for my mother to have that "safe time" with "no problems," a sacrifice, a giving up of the "bone ignorance of curiosity" (Spillers, "All the Things" 151) was made by a collective of black female domestic workers who were socialized to be domestic

workers from early childhood on. And the category of white supremacist racism my grandparents practiced is persistently perverse in its hiddeness and self-negation. It's a racism left largely unexamined by "my people," and although I can offer neither an "answer nor a cure" (Spillers, "All the Things" 138) perhaps me speaking on this practice might end a repetition.

To conjure up Melinda, I have my mother's emails. I acknowledge those are only fragmented reflections of my mother's perceptions of Melinda; I understand the debate among scholars on the African-American Subject being Othered and constructed through a lens of white supremacy. However, it is not overreaching to say that Jacky-the-child experienced the Law-of-Melinda.[41] It's clear in Jacky's bountiful writings that Melinda *spoke*, and Melinda made the *law* (at least as to the children). Melinda made the law for my childmother – but in Jacky's writing she remembers: "She finally told me *my mother wouldn't want me to come* [my emphasis] because they were black and I was white." Jacky has remembered Melinda not as making law from Melinda's place of authority, but deferring to white supremacy first, and then speaking. Sometimes in my mother's remembrances though -- Melinda speaks directly from Melinda's place of authority. My mother remembers:

> [A] girlfriend and I went to the movies. I was probably about 8; when we got home Melinda was ironing in the kitchen; she asks us how the movie was, and I don't know what the girl was describing but she uses the word nigger, and Melinda got absolutely outraged;

she told that girl if she used words like that she wasn't welcome in the house and she wanted her to get out of the kitchen. (Walther)

In this part of my mother's discussion, she tells me that she was not afraid of Melinda, but implies that her white girlfriend was. Whoever Melinda was, she had power in the home of my "white" family. She had enough power to exercise territoriality over the domain of the "white family home" – the power to make rules and even to eject "white" Subjects: ". . . she wasn't welcome in the house . . . get out of the kitchen . . ." Melinda had the power to influence "white family" discourse. Power and influence that's been unacknowledged: influence on the subject formation of my mother, my mother the only place that I *know* I have been. However, I am not trying to valorize Melinda or speak for her or even make room for her to speak.

This is the place where, remembering Spivak's criticism of the Western intellectual, I am powerless to do anything more than invoke an "'appeal' to or 'call' to the 'quiet-other' . . . 'of rendering *delirious* that internal voice that is the voice of the other in us'" (Derrida qtd. in Spivak 294). This is why I have consulted such authors as Patricia Hill Collins, Ann DuCille, Hortense Spillers, Shawn Michelle Smith, Donna Haraway, Malea Powell– in an attempt to disengage any tendency in myself to assimilate the Other as my family did in this picture. In this picture, my family's assimilation of Melinda was so complete, they erased her and all that's left to represent Melinda now, is the techne of rhetoric. What is interesting to me is Spivak's emphasis upon Derrida's notion of "the voice of the other *in us*." The voice, Melinda's voice is rendered delirious, but it is

not the voice of the Other; it is the empathized, passionate voice of the *other in us*. Melinda's voice is inside, has penetrated my mother. My mother is in me.

It's made clear by such feminist writers as Haraway, Spivak and others, that there is no essential female experience, no universal woman language, no place for me to stand as a writer engaging the art of rhetoric as techne and say that it was my grandmother and Melinda together against white male hegemony. Instead, employing the art of rhetoric as an intervention tool, I "unsee" the white-mother-and-her-two-kids, and I "see" a blank space of precise complicity of whites together, male and female, in a conspiratorial, poisonous plan to suppress any story that negates the magical purity of the white sentimental family matrix. The blank space in its passivity and ubiquity, as it constructs a photographic record is "its aggression" (Sontag 7). To unsee the blank space as "empty" of meaning and to see that space as aggressively and poisonously making meaning, is to acknowledge our family story where my grandmother was a superwoman who worked and cooked and cleaned and raised two dutiful white faced daughters, that story is false. Rhetorical intervention tells me that our family story has been partially constructed through visual rhetoric, and that rhetoric has let certain 'truths" come into being, while others have been suppressed. In my story however, instead of saying "Melinda erased herself from this photograph," I say, "My family erased Melinda." Because that is what I think is true based on my subjectivity and my own understanding of history.

All I can offer here is Melinda as mediated by myself, my mother, and so on, and attempt to examine her absence in oral history or family pictures. Even if

Melinda was sitting here next to me, once I interpret her existence, all I can ever offer is my own reading, springing from *my* life world.[42] This is what I want R&W researchers, writers, and scholars to understand. There is no objectivity. Your work is defined by the questions you ask, and the questions you ask are defined by your subjectivity. You define your theses based on what you allow to come to light. It is so simple and so obvious. Therefore, the intellectual must not remain transparent, must not look "outward" without first looking "inward," must not represent without realizing in that representation is a reflection of the intellectual's subjectivity. Now, in my story, Melinda cannot represent herself and I cannot "represent" her either.

My choice then is to remain silent and actively maintain the erasure that's taken place, or speak, articulate. This articulation can never be a speaking for Melinda. But what I can do is try to understand her place in my family as a meaning maker, as a discursive place holder, like the purloined letter in Poe's story. I can also retrieve glimmerings of her presence as a human agent in this world. To do that, I have to create a sort of rhetorical bricolage in order to surface the effect of Melinda's absent presence in the material life of my family and on the story the family "tells" about itself visually. In patchwork, I piece together scholarship, and my family photos with my mother's writings.

My mother's writings represent Melinda as a woman with a life and children of her own that needed tending to and if Melinda hadn't left her own home and children for a low status, near invisible position as "black nanny," it's highly likely my grandmother wouldn't be pictured in her new leopard skin and

beaver coats; she wouldn't be sitting on a sparkling new car (when Melinda apparently did not have one since she needed a ride home); my aunt and mother wouldn't have had new tricycles and life size doll houses and matching snow suits, because if Melinda hadn't been ministering to my aunt and mother, my grandmother couldn't have accumulated the wealth from her own publically statured employment as a nurse.

I spent time in earlier chapters showing that my female relatives were not helpless victims, and were able to use rhetorical skill as strategies to avert dominating ideologies and the male gaze. As far as responsibility for purposes of redress, if my grandmother was not helpless, then it was my grandmother's subjectivity as well as anyone's who erased Melinda. Yes, the taking of responsibility is in order. Now, the question becomes, was Melinda a powerless "victim"? Did my family completely oppress her as it erased her? Here I have to piece together a history. In her double roles as mother and "Othermother," Collins says the black domestic worker was able to develop oppositional knowledges in her unique place as "*outsider-within*" (10-11). On this point Collins writes:

> Black women not only performed domestic duties but frequently formed strong ties with the children they nurtured, and with the employers themselves. On one level this insider relationship was satisfying to all concerned. Accounts of Black domestic workers stress the sense of self-affirmation the women experienced at seeing racist ideology demystified. But on another level Black

women knew that they could never belong to their White "families." (10-11)

Jacky's emails make clear that at some point, at the point where the white child wished to attend something as familiar and intimate as a birthday party, the social reality of Melinda's situation as "black nanny" became real. In Jacky's emails she says she loved Melinda, and she believes Melinda loved her back: "She took care of us and did housework, like washing clothes, ironing, cleaning floors, etc. I remember her (and so does aunt m) as very warm, willing to hug (something we didn't get in our house) and I always knew what to expect; I didn't have to do any second guessing. Think I already mentioned, but can't tell you enough how so very important that was" (Walther).

No matter how she loved Jacky or that love was returned, these two female subjects could never be "family" in the traditional sense, in the space of "natural identification." But the positive that came out of this duality of existence, according to Collins, was both the white family's raised awareness of the black female subject's humanness, and as importantly, Collins attributes the foundations of black feminist thought to the outsider-within status which spurred oppositional knowledges.[43] So in answer to my question, what about Melinda? I have to hope, to dream, to make a story, that like my grandmother, her subjectivity allowed her to rhetorically navigate the path she had to in order to be "black nanny."

I have spent a number of hours researching images of African American women from that time period in a futile attempt to have some kind of visual

representation of Melinda (certainly a longing for lost origins). But the images I find are those made by white women such as Doris Ulmann (1882-1932) and Consuelo Kanaga (1894-1978), both artists known for their desire to find certain African-American women "types" to fulfill their own fantasies (Davidov). And in examining the memories of both my mother and myself, we both saw my white grandmother as pure and distant, and my mother saw Melinda as warm and nurturing. It is difficult to know to what extent the subjectivities of my grandmother and Melinda were performed to meet the larger culture's expectations, and to what extent our memories are clouded by the stereotypes of "pure white lady" and "black mammy." In her comments on this Master's Thesis, Malea Powell says that simply learning that black women equal love and white women equal distance might deeply inculcate a Subject into one of the central logics of white supremacy: that black folks are "emotional" and white folks are "rational." I agree with Powell. This is also very unsettling because it makes one wonder just how deeply the simulacra goes, and one wonders whether Baudrillard is correct in that we are existing in layers of simulacra with nothing at all underneath.

And so, as simulacra, and as a representation of a white family, Figure 11, in order to function as the rhetorical meaning maker it was intended to be, the image *could not* include Melinda even though she was intimately involved with this family.[44] Her physical presence would have splayed the visual rhetoric of white family. No ideological space existed where she could be a picture of "a woman." A visual representation of Melinda would acknowledge what my

grandmother *never* did: a black female Subject contributed – supported on her back -- this white family's "success." Melinda was used to cover over the family's lack, and then my grandmother blinded herself to that contribution. Melinda is absent, unnamed, erased. "She [My Black Mother] was meant to be utterly annihilated" (Rich 255). Ann duCille rightly points out the brutality inflicted on "My Black Mother" by Rich's failure to name her while possessing her. My grandmother never mentioned Melinda's name nor her existence although she frequently, even obsessively spoke of white folks "back east." Here I must release that which was exiled and bring to light the violence of my own ancestral legacy by acknowledging and redressing what I can (Powell). I attempt to "honestly engage . . . [my] own autobiographical implication in a brutal past . . .[in hopes of] provide[ing] nuances such as that of the black feminist critic" (Henderson qtd. in Abel 108). In my discussion here I have taken duCille's words to heart.

I do not wish to create a "silent racial maternalized Other" nor a "black mammy" nor someone who "mothers the ignorant white infant into enlightenment" (duCille 41). I did not know Melinda: no one in my family did. Patricia Hill Collins notes that one technique early 1900's employers of domestic workers used to maintain a power structure was to address them by their first name (56-57). I cannot speak Melinda's last name because it has been erased by years of silence, just as her presence in my mother's life has been erased in our family's photo narrative. However, Melinda's presence reflects back tellingly on how my grandmother constructed her own whiteness through discursive

productions – whiteness as a raced designation that is inextricably intertwined with genderedness and class. De Certeau writes:

> Every particular study is a many-faceted mirror (others reappear everywhere in this space) reflecting the exchanges, reading, and confrontations that form the condition of its possibility, but it is a broken and anamorphic mirror (others are fragmented and altered by it). (44)

Here is where the art of rhetoric is so lovely, because rhetoric is what I use to acknowledge and redress. There is no other redress I have but my ability to use rhetoric. This is what I offer.

Having looked at how Figure 11 came to be, having "unseen" it, I can now "see" that image freshly as Melinda reappears everywhere in the black and white space. Her appearance fragments that linear narration of wholeness, the lost origins of white supremacy and in doing so, alters my own interior intersubjectivity. I think of Hortense Spillers's positing "the blankness of race where something else ought to be, that emptying out . . . the evacuation to be restituted and recalled as the discipline of a self-critical inquiry" ("All the Things" 140). This Affinity Project is an attempt at self-critical inquiry wherein I have rhetorically deconstructed and tried to reassemble in pieces and patchwork; like the women Web authors in DeVoss's study who are "bricoleurs" mixing rituals and makeshifts in order to manipulate space (85). I construct a rhetorical bricolage: My "Identity." It is the discipline of self-critical inquiry that makes clear to me my grandmother's identity, the visual legacy she left behind, as a white and

middleclass "body," was dependant on the body of Melinda. The Du Boisian double consciousness of Melinda's existence appears and disappears (as in the pulsation Lacan writes of), and I see my grandmother's own existence, her life, predicated on that disappearance. "[W]hen the subject appears somewhere as meaning, he is manifested elsewhere as 'fading', as disappearance. There is, then, one might say, a matter of *life and death* [my emphasis] between the unary signifier and the subject" (Lacan, *The Four* 218). My grandmother needed Melinda's presence in order to construct herself as middleclass True (White) Woman. My grandmother could not be white unless another Subject, an Other, was somewhere being "not white." "I wish to stress the operation of the realization of the subject in his signifying dependence in the locus of the Other" (Lacan, *The Four* 206). My grandmother's life, her subjectivity, her ability to be a sign in the chain of signifiers, required her own signifying dependence on the blank space that is the locus of Melinda.

The Cult of True White Womanhood: "My White Grandmother"

Like Melinda, my grandmother's existence was founded on a double consciousness, a split persona: New Woman versus True Woman. The four cardinal virtues of America's True (White) Womanhood were "piety, purity, submissiveness and domesticity" (Welter 21). America's nineteenth century woman held the "pillars of the temple with her frail white hand" (21).

Positioned centrally in a variety of discursive productions including the visual, America's True (White) Woman was the foundational pillar and gatekeeper of civilized "white" American society. She was thought of as naturally

religious, and to this end my grandmother regularly attended church and tithed appropriate amounts to respectable charities. Welter writes that for the true woman purity was so important that one should choose death over status as a "fallen woman" (23). My grandmother posited herself as faithful always to Edgar and celibate for ten years after his death – until her second marriage (of course to a widower, not a divorced man).

It is on the virtues of submissiveness and domesticity that I see my grandmother's double consciousness evolve. She was submissive to Edgar's will when it behooved her, but in her job she had some non-culturally sanctioned power, i.e., she appeared to "have" the phallus. Welter points out nursing was an important *private* skill for the true woman, but the cult of that "frail white hand" condemned working in the public domain.

So my grandmother experienced conflict in working outside the home. This is where she crossed over from True Woman to New Woman. My argument is that my grandmother as well as our family mythologizing by way of its visual rhetoric, worked towards discursive productions that constructed my grandmother's identity against the New Woman of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. "The good bourgeois wife [New Woman] was to limit her fertility, symbolize her husband's affluence, and do good within the world" (Smith-Rosenberg 177, 225).

This order to do good, to care, that was imposed upon the white woman is tied directly to the advent of the nursing profession where my grandmother existed. Her attachment to nursing was lifelong and as I've illustrated in this

work, was reinforced and valued visually in our family story. I have several pictures of her in uniform. What is photographed is valued; this cannot be suppressed.

Maybe in the larger culture it might have been acceptable for a white woman to be a nurse; in small-town Palmyra it was highly irregular for a white mother to work; no other neighborhood families had nannies of any race (Walther): the New Woman was not culturally sanctioned. However, in Figure 11, Martine the nurse who did "good within the world," visually demonstrates for us the material affluence of her husband and "his" two healthy children (but only two). To her chagrin, she fulfilled all the requirements of New Woman. It was in this split consciousness of New Woman versus True Woman that my grandmother needed Melinda in order to construct herself as still one within the cult of true (white) womanhood. My grandmother may have worked with her hands, but she had a "servant" – putting her back into the middleclass. Someone else cooked the family's meals and did the wash. Melinda provided a constructive link to domesticity. By attending to her dutiful responsibilities, Martine (vicariously enjoyed) and secured Melinda as Othermother to fulfill the domestic function of True Woman.

Looking at the virtue of submissiveness through a Lacanian lens where "the man must appear to 'have the phallus' and the woman must appear to 'be the phallus'" (Walton 230), Melinda's implication in the white family matrix complicates. Martine may have submitted to Edgar on issues like who-takes-the-photos and when-do-we-go-on-holiday, but to work outside the home was a

negation of her white female duty to cover over his lack by being the phallus, as in reflecting the power, supplying a site for penetration (Walton 230). Edgar as white male is the one looked to for possession of the phallus, and my grandmother should have merely reflected that by assisting in the construction of our family's visual narrative as she posed with commodities like fur coats, new cars, and children, etc. And my grandmother did pose. She masqueraded.

Melinda's presence was a lifeline to my grandmother's way out from under the posing. After the ungendering experience of the middle passage, the enslaved black woman carried a "patriarchalized female gender" (Spillers, "Mama's" 72-73). Falsely named matriarch,[45] the black female was viewed by dominant culture as the possessor of the phallus within black civil society. Thus, Martine could pose as a visual reflector of the phallus, covering over Edgar's lack and at the same time have the phallus by possessing "my black nanny" who herself was a site of reception and a reflecting back of power. This possession however, is visually erased in the photograph in order to maintain the linearity of our family story. Martine could visually masquerade as True Woman but still contain within her own secret subjectivity, New Woman. In order to deliver this feeling of fullness, I posit that Melinda's race mattered. To employ a white nanny would have further violated cultural norms in that it would be a constructive approval of a white domestic who herself violated the cult of true white womanhood. On the other hand, it was culturally sanctioned to employ the black domestic "matriarch" or "mammy" or masculinized "mule uh de world" (Collins 71).

My grandmother's employment of Melinda is a metaphor for that paradox of hate-love that Lacan writes of. In setting up a racially nuanced "hate" situation of white master – black slave, my grandmother at the same time internalized the Other by loving her to the point that Melinda was in direct everyday intimate black body to white body contact with Martine's children.[46] Melinda's presence in the white family's home, a presence of the *One*, a living, breathing embodiment of black civil society, elucidates the precise ambivalence of this photo and my family's claim to "whiteness." My family's claim is not seated in a universal reality or a mandate that comes from heaven like the ray of light upon the white female nurse's body as that body appears in visual rhetoric of the mid 1900's; my family's claim is a rhetorical construct. This construct has been aggressively recapitulated in the visual, by our display of family photographs on the walls of our homes. This is part of my history.

My grandmother's claim to whiteness then has no "inherent" meaning: "it gains its power from what it signifies by point, in what it allows to come to meaning" (Spillers, "All the Things" 137). I don't need Spillers's fourth register, because I theorize under the Lacanian triangulation, like gender and sexual orientation, race plays out in the Symbolic in racial performance. The photographs on the walls of my home functioned rhetorically as teaching tools, telling me (and my friend and neighbors) who I was and where I was going. The picture's display was itself a racial performance playing out in the Symbolic. This visual racialized construct was waiting for me, always-already, when I was born. Our family "whiteness" gains its meaning by what it allowed to come to meaning

in the interpretable text of visual productions. Melinda as a component in the blank space is pushed out, but she lived, and by exercising the agency that erased her, my grandmother signified by point her own identification with whiteness.

But, like the African-American community's "cocoon of kin and relatedness" that is "always crossed by something else," surely Melinda's presence in my family's home and her life in Jacky's unconscious (as she was a presence in my mother's childhood home; she was an Other defining the Subject [my mother]) is a quintessential embodiment of "conflicting motivations so entangled that it is not always easy to designate what is 'black' and 'white' here" (Spillers, "All the Things" 139).[47]

The photo's visual rhetoric of "black and white" oversimplifies. The impact of everyday symbols, seemingly mundane "white" family photographs playing out racial performances in the Symbolic, by aggressively asserting, copying, and repeating the legacy of white supremacist annihilation is underestimated:

> While the subject doesn't think about it, the symbols continue to mount one another, to copulate, to proliferate, to fertilise each other, to jump onto each other, to tear each other apart. (Lacan qtd. in Seshadri-Crooks 28)

The importance of symbols and images is further elucidated by bell hooks who argues that "[t]he history of black liberation movements in the United States could be characterized as a struggle *over images* [my emphasis]as much as it has also been a struggle for rights, for equal access" (46). In the present case, the master

signifier "whiteness" has so objectified the black female body "that the Other simply disappears" (Collins 71).

Cyborg Writing and Rhetorical Rehabilitation

But did she? Disappear? If it's true, as Adrienne Rich posits, that "women have been caught – have split themselves – between two mothers" a biological one symbolizing conventions, domesticity, and male-centeredness, and an Othermother, a "countervailing figure," I can say with complete certainty that my grandmother, the quintessential symbol of True (White) Womanhood, was utterly rejected by my mother. It is not doubtful that the countervailing Othermother that was Melinda embedded herself in my mother's interior in fertile inextricability. I don't speak for the Other here, instead I render "*delirious* that interior voice that is the voice of the other in us." Because we as rhetoricians have the ability to employ the art of rhetoric restoratively, here on these pages I change meaning. Figure 11 has shifted, has moved, as I moved and shifted meaning in chapter three when I rhetorically animated the image of "Kids On Car." No longer does Figure 11 function as a talisman of white supremacy.

Because I see Melinda.

Melinda's presence in the blank space circumscribed by the interpretable text is the figure of a woman who endured a violent shutting, an *attempted* annihilation. In a voice of "delirium" then I say that the picture is a visual

metaphor for the love-hate symbiosis, the split, existing inside my grandmother, a visual metaphor in the bodies of three white female subjects, my grandmother, my aunt, and my mother, like Lacan's three registers, the Real, the Symbolic, and the Imaginary, a visual metaphor for the duality of mother and Othermother, that symbiosis tied in a knot by invisible working hands that ultimately manifested itself in a remainder, something fruitful, not slag; a material duality, a double entendre: bodies of two "white" female children, one (my aunt) who embraced True (White) Womanhood,[48] and one (my mother) who embraced some other entangled ideology.

So this story is a feminist cyborg story. It "unsees" and "sees" again, it "uncodes" and "recodes" communication and intelligence to give Subjects command and control. This story *uses* rhetoric and writing. This story is about *writing*. Cyborg Writing . "Cyborg writing is about the power to survive . . . on the basis of seizing the tools" (Haraway, *Reader* 33). Yes, I have used the tools of the "Master" – but as one who lives in the house the Master built, I know better than Lacan how to invert his theory for restorative ends. And, it's not just Lacan who is the "Master," but so are Haraway, Spivak, Powell, Bolter, and DeVoss, "Masters" of their "trade." They've built the scholarly "house" I live in, and its by seizing their tools that I build something a little asymmetrical, and a little precarious. Something post-modern. I also need to acknowledge the "private" Masters, my family members who strung together photographs, as bricoleurs, to seal up "our history." I take those same mini-master narratives and disassemble to reassemble. I do it with writing. Cyborg writing seizes the Master's tools. It's

by writing that we survive. That's how we make the absent present. We engage in the techne of rhetoric through the technology of writing, and rehabilitate.

> That's what I mean to tell you. On the other side of the place you live stands a dark woman. She has been trying to talk to you for years. You have called the same name in the middle of a nightmare, from the center of miracles. She is beautiful. This is your hatred back. She loves you.
>
> Joy Harjo "Transformations" *In Mad Love and War*

Conclusion

> "And if the assumption of responsibility for one's discourse leads to the conclusion that all conclusions are genuinely provisional and therefore inconclusive, that all origins are similarly unoriginal, that responsibility itself must cohabit with frivolity, this need not be cause for gloom" (Spivak qtd. in Derrida xiii).
>
> "And we must be prepared for the difficult work of reconciling responsibility for the meaner events within those histories, not with guilt, but with a larger, more honest sense of who and what 'we' are" (Powell 57).

Some of the writers I've merged together on these pages in scholarly matrimony, as I stood, a writer, in there writing *with them*, performing what felt to me, at times, like a shotgun wedding between "cultural rhetorics/critical theory" and "visual rhetoric," made me feel pretty uneasy. But without the union and the formality of the wedding, this Master's Thesis, a genetically mutated child, a machine-organism mixed-blood, a monster, could not have emerged.

"So here's a real monster" (Latour 174).

In examining the visual-rhetorical history "on this continent," we have to start somewhere, and as Spivak (Goodburn and Powell) suggests, looking at our own "selves" and our "stories" is a fine place to start. And, simply put, to engage in self-reflexivity and self-critical inquiry and open up narratives in order to form alliance and connections, is really an *act of love.*

"[A]ll things must begin with an act of love" (Haraway, Reader 220).

We are all products of our childhood, and engaging in the art of rhetoric through "love" is surely an outcome of what I learned in my in-front-of-the veil protestant upbringing, an upbringing that still echoes in my actions now when I

say, as I did in the Introduction, do unto others . . . Remember that in the Lacanian triangulation, the Subject is defined by the split, and it's through the split, and our "innate love" for each other, that all of our behaviors are defined. It's no mystery, that the rhetoric of Powell, Lacan, and Haraway is a loved-based rhetoric. When you go looking for alliances and connections, you're looking for "love."

"That is, I learned I was a cyborg, in cultural-natural fact . . . I too, in the fabric of my flesh and soul, was a hybrid of information-based organic and machinic system" (Haraway, Reader 204).

I am not ashamed to say that this Master's Thesis was an incestuous act of self-love.

"So, my act of love with primatology is more like sisterly incest than alien surveillance of another family's doings" (Haraway, Reader 200).

But "I" am not I as in singular. I am a communication system, a technology, like my computer. I'm networked in. Deeply networked.

"Yes, it's definitely a strange monster, a strange physics" (Latour 174).

I began by making visible the network of this Affinity Project; and now I choose to end. I'll write this conclusion to ease disciplinary contractions, hoping that this will be my conclusion that is not a conclusion at all. To write a conclusion will defeat the purpose of my excursion.

"The purpose of this excursion is to write theory; i.e., to produce a patterned vision of how to move and what to fear in the topography of an impossible but all-

too-real present, in order to find an absent, but perhaps possible other present" (Haraway, Reader 63).

I hope these pages (mine) suggest a way to move among one's own family artifacts, how to move not by going back to the beginning, but from and in a place Donna Haraway might call elsewhere. I have tried to embody the disembodied, connect the unconnected, and take responsibility, knowing that I cannot address nor invoke a full presence, knowing that to speak, to articulate at all I cannot be invisible, knowing that I cannot rhetorically read the story of "my family" without rewriting it. And it needs to be rewritten. How can I as a scholar think of responsibly and ethically rewriting larger stories if I haven't looked at "Myself" and "My Family" first? And so, I really haven't just looked at "My Family"; that linearity I turned into cat's cradles, esplanades, and networks. But more connections need to made, vertical, horizontal, and even diagonal, not just in my family, but in the R&W Family. And so, it's really a culmination of this project, and my "love" for R&W as a discipline, for Visual Rhetorics, my "hope" that it will survive and flourish and be a place where other disciplines will look for guidance, that I end with a list of suggestions for my colleagues.

- We need more historicizing along the different trajectories of R&W, including the trajectory of Visual Rhetorics. An interesting place for scholarship might take place in research that explores what visual rhetoric means, from what field it arises, and with what fields it intersects.

- As I see Digital Rhetoric scholars increasingly invoking the Cyborg Myth, we need to keep that myth complicated to avoid cognitive fetishism. The Cyborg, by nature, must be defined and redefined as times change. It needs to be complicated and remediated.
- Do not guard the canon too closely. Welcome interdisciplinarity even if it threatens the master narrative of Rhetoric & Writing. I am specifically thinking of further connections that need to be made between Visual Rhetorics and Critical Theory/Cultural Studies, but the possibility of going outside of R&W and making connections may also prove fruitful (as Lacan and Haraway did).
- R&W specifically needs more scholarship that vertically connects current happenings and manifestations of subjectivity on the WWW and in electronic writing, with the technological interfaces they are remediating. For example, we need studies that historicize subjectivities as those are manifested on the WWW with pre-WWW manifestations.
- Be self-reflexive and self-critical. Know why you ask the questions you do not just on a disciplinary level, but on a personal, family level. This allows for deeper intellectual engagement and helps avoid working towards an essentialist agenda. Tell your reader, out of honest respect, who you are.

- Embrace uncertainty and partiality. Avoid deep reliances on crisp, neat, sterile taxonomizing. Take scholarly risks. This is what leads to new discoveries.
- Do scholarship that you can bring in the classroom and share with your students. Do what you ask them to do so you'll know the kind of scholarly and personal investment you're asking for. Also, it gives students a way to connect with you personally and as you represent the "institution." It gives students an entry point.
- Make space for connections and alliances, not just for other "scholars," but across and between organisms and machines. Make visible how our scholarship and our subjectivities are technologically mediated. Specifically, R&W needs research and writing that focuses on how technology mediates subjectivity, and how technology shapes us, not just as writers, but as people.
- Yes, do scholarship because you need to be published, because you want to make the world a better place, but remember, the "blessing" is always goes to the giver, not the receiver. Therefore, always begin a project as an act of love doing something you love to do (and be open about admitting your motivations -- because you love The Word – *there is no scholarship* that is not in part masturbatory, or if that's too perverse for your taste buds, not in part "self-love").
- Remember that our engagement with the techne of rhetoric has ends; have a vision of the networks you are making, and leave scholarly

traces that others can play upon, always rehabilitating. Make space for rhetorical "bodies" and the work they do, especially in Visual Rhetorics.

And as for answering the big question I posed in the Introduction: What can rhetoric do for the world? Well, it's only by applying the techne of rhetoric that we contest the meanings of "texts." Obviously, lots of texts need to have their meaning contested (such as the script of American history, or the script of My Family). And it's only by applying the art of rhetoric that we can change the meaning of texts. It isn't just a matter of "communication" for rhetoricians. Rhetoricians can animate and actually change meaning. Therefore, to be in scholarly alliance with a rhetorician, is to have the power to change meanings, and also to be able to seek advisement so that you might foresee and guard against others changing your meaning. This is the one thing that rhetoric offers. It's kind of like the linguistic practice of medicine, or the linguistic healing arts. Rhetoric, not with literal scalpels, pills, or anesthesia, but with nothing more than language[49], can change the world, can cure, and can also rehabilitate.

APPENDIX OF FIGURES

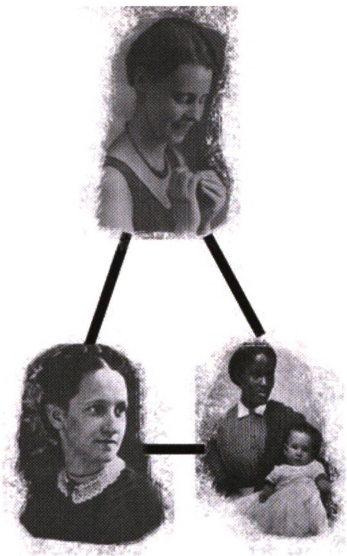

FIGURE 1.

Martine's Initial Visual Triangulation.
Pictured from top, clockwise, Martine Walther, Nursemaid and Heustis, Cook's Wife.

FIGURE 2 above, FIGURE 3 below.

FIGURE 2. Edgar Walther with his mother, sister, and aunts-in-law. Photographer unknown. 1908. New Jersey.

FIGURE 3. Edgar with William and Peter. Photographer unknown. 1908. New Jersey.

FIGURE 4.

Martine Hartman.
Photographer Unknown. 1923.

FIGURE 5.

Martine (Hartman) Walther.
Edgar Walther Photographer
Mt. Holly Hospital where she worked.
1930. Mt. Holly, New Jersey.

FIGURE 6.

Martine (Hartman) Walther.
Legs in car. Edgar Walther Photographer.
1943. Vacation in Pennsylvania.

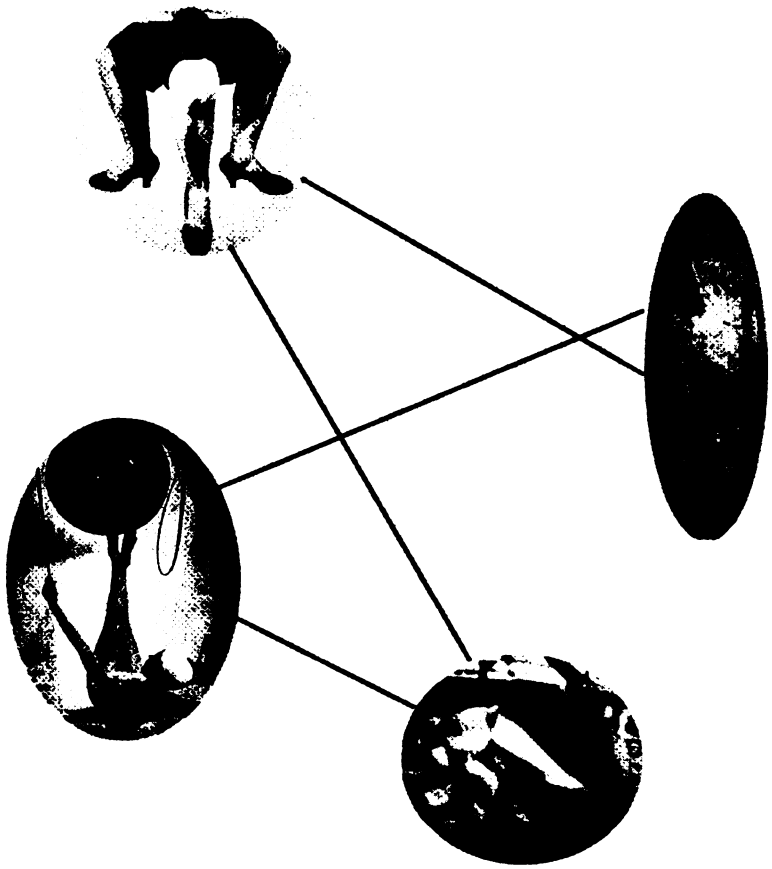

FIGURE 7.

Network of 1940/50's legs. From top, clockwise. Seligmann's table 1938, Betty Grable 1940, My Gramma's legs 1953, Vogue cover 1941.

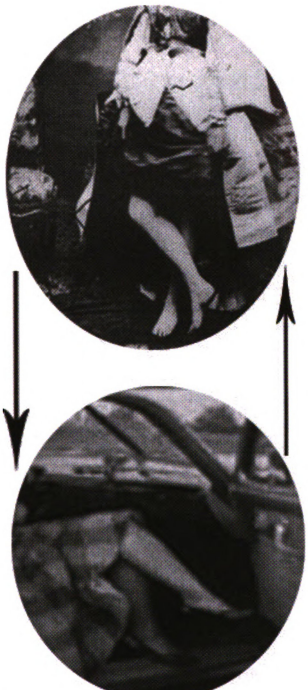

FIGURE 8.

My Gramma's legs, 1953 United States bottom
Countess's legs, 1860's, France top

FIGURE 9.

Martine (Hartman) Walther. Martine Rife Photographer. Northport, Florida. 1982.

FIGURE 10.

Kids on Car. From left Jacky Walther and Marty Walther. Edgar Walther Photographer. Palmyra, New Jersey, 1938/39

FIGURE 11.

My Family. From left, Marti Walther, Martine (Hartman) Walther, Jacky Walther. Edgar Walther, Photographer. Palmyra, New Jersey. 1939

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[1] Used by Danielle DeVoss at Michigan State University in 2004 and 2005 to teach Visual Rhetoric.

[2] This is almost exactly what Powell asks for – acknowledgment and redress.

[3] Throughout this thesis, I use the term "remediation" the way that Jay David Bolter defines it. Remediation is a process whereby something "new" builds upon something already in existence, taking parts and leaving parts behind, and at the same time, inventing new parts. The process of remediation also includes the changing of the "something already in existence." For example, texts on the WWW draw from elements of traditional print texts, but also have a newness to them (the hyperlink, for example). At the same time, we see that "traditional" print texts now reflect the existence of the WWW (for example, in several places in this thesis I use a techne wherein I insert italicized quotes that relate to the larger text, but are in part largely ignored by the larger text – I do this because it is my way of invoking a "hyperlink" in a "traditional" print text).

[4] And yet I do acknowledge that our subjectivity is mediated by technology – a non-human entity. So I have no problem with the importance that Haraway places on this factor. I just think it's the family matrix AND the other matrix that isn't human. It's everything.

[5] I touch on those issues when I discuss how technology mediates our subjectivity.

[6] The Haraway-Randolph influences are another example of "remediation."

[7] For a collection of texts, an anthology wherein psychoanalysis and critical race theory is discussed by numerous authors, see Abel, Christian, and Moglen's *female subjects in black and white race, psychoanalysis, feminism.* It is cited in the Works Cited.

[8] And how to be "disabled": All of the big "to be's" play out in the Symbolic.

[9] It is interesting to note here that Donna Haraway's view on this, since I use her theory later and because she is often cited by visual rhetoric scholars, is that she wants a new theory of psychoanalysis wherein this split never occurs. In her recent interview (*How Like A Leaf*), she suggests a theory that would place humans in a matrix with nature rather than in the family matrix. This is something I've yet to envision.

[10] Lacan's three registers are the Real, the Imaginary, and the Symbolic. My own definitions are as follows:

Real: This is the register where the Subject is born, from which the Subject emerges. The Subject is in the Real before the Subject goes through the Imaginary register, and before the Subject emerges in the Symbolic. In the Real, the Subject doesn't yet have its body mapped out. In the Real, the Subject experiences phenomena and "being" but does not experience meaning. The Subject isn't aware that it is a separate "being."

Imaginary: This is the order between the Real and the Symbolic, where the Subject sees its own reflection and realizes it is a separate being (the mirror stage). Once the Subject sees its reflection, it is always alienated from its "self" and from "others." During the Subject's stay in this register, the body is territorialized and mapped out.
Symbolic: This is the register where gender, race, and class are performed through semiotics (Lacan focused on sexual difference). In the Symbolic, the Subject learns what and how "to be."
[11] This is why I find it confusing that Sturken and Cartwright spend so much time talking about the mirror stage. Maybe this is one thing they thought students could relate to. Mirrors are more familiar than the "Symbolic."
[12] Folks familiar with Vygotsky's students' Activity Theory Triangle can imagine the top point of the triangle representing the technology, while the right bottom point of the triangle is "identity," and the left bottom side is the "Subject" as a container. Except in this triangle, a thick (but dashed), black, straight line must be drawn vertically and extending down from point B, the technology, and it must separate the Subject from its "identity." We need the technology to see ourselves, but in seeing ourselves we are forever separated from ourselves.
[13] I have no problem comparing subjectivities manifesting themselves on women's porn sites to any manifested "female" subjectivity. The reason is that "women" are, in the dominant ideology, deemed *recipients* of sexual activities. That is what they are for, to be bred and to bear offspring. Therefore any visualization of a "woman" is a visualization of "sexuality." These two "signs" cannot be separated.
[14] I understand DeVoss was looking at public and private displays. However, family photographs in my opinion, were meant for public display, were taken in public, and were meant to be passed down to the generations. Therefore, taking a picture, a ritual in itself, and displaying the picture is a public act. Also, I don't hold much stake in any difference between public and private – I don't think there's a valid distinction that matters much. What matters is how we think about these spaces, these taxonomies. It is the project of feminism, as well, to erase the distinction between public and private (as far as import). Therefore, in this thesis I'm operating under the premise that the private is the public. They are the same thing.
[15] And DeVoss and Powell are "masters" of their trade in the R&W discipline, not just because they have been widely published and have presented at a multitude of professional conferences, but also because as of July 2005, both are Directors of major programs at a top ten university in the United States of America; Powell directs the Rhetoric & Writing program and DeVoss directs the Professional Writing program. Both women are at Michigan State University.
[16] The Subject of Powell's study, however, might be deemed as having made the most important contribution to humanity, depending on your point of view.
[17] The importance of the role of white women as reproducers of the "white race" and the importance of their duty to reproduce will be discussed later in the essay.
[18] How could we re-write history if the goal of genealogy was to find fractures in family history rather than seamlessness? What if the goal of creating a family tree was specifically to find missing pieces, rather than fill-in-the-blanks?
[19] The back of the photograph reads in blue in, "Martine Hartman 13 years olds LaMar Hartman 16 years old." In black ink it says, "Brother and Sister." This is interesting because it suggests the linguistic layers, different people, different times, that stitch together, along with the visual, our subjectivity.
[20] One time in 1986 my grandmother visited me in Colorado Springs and we went to the White House Ranch at Garden of the Gods and she made clear to me she didn't care for the smell of the various farm animals. She made quite a fuss about this.
[21] The photographic collection of the Countess was created in France mainly between 1856 and 1860 (although taken as late as 1896-97) by the Second Empire photographic firm of Mayer & Pierson. Over four hundred photographs of the Countess remain, having been purchased in 1899 (after her death) by "the epicure and dandy Comte Robert de Montesquiou" (Solomon-Godeau 70).
[22] For a woman to be able to do this, maybe she would have had to be worthy of being a photographic subject. On the other hand, by refusing to be photographed, women also author their own identities. But, looking back historically on the United States, it might be said that white

women have had more opportunity to access this kind of authorship – although many pictures were created in the 1800's and 1900's of women of color as they, according to ideology of the time, represented "types."

[23] These questions are important questions that we need to answer. However, we also need new questions. New questions should be allowed.

[24] A rebus is a symbol or picture that represents a word or syllable. Sometimes riddles are made in rebus form. If a dream is a rebus, then what that means is that dreams are filled with visualizations that are representative. For example, in a child's rebus, the word "be" might be represented by a bumble bee. The connections between words, pictures, and things are slippery and available for interpretation because of such connotations.

[25] My decision to, yes, go into any detail at all on Poe's story was a political decision. I am a former English major of University of Michigan (with high distinction, 1982, A.B. English). In R&W I've heard numerous criticism of "English Departments" and although I've been told that literary criticism and English Departments are two separate things, I don't buy that – because of the free play of signifiers. And so, to criticize English departments is to criticize literary criticism, which is nothing less than generative intellectual work. It is not helpful to criticize intellectual work that has served as the foundation for many of my colleagues here in R&W. I have no truck with intellectual work of any kind even if it's pure play. Therefore, I put in Poe's story to keep "literature" alive as well as literary criticism.

[26] I cannot read the emblem on the car's hood even with a blown up version of the photo in Adobe Photoshop. I can make out the outline of the emblem however. My mother told me this in a telephone interview September 25, 2004.

[27] Of course, I wouldn't be at all surprised if the pre-France beginnings of automobile nest somewhere in the cultures of indigenous peoples.

[28] As for the term "symbol" in phallic symbol, for this text I mean "sign" or "signifier," acknowledging that "sign" seems a overly simple term. Kaja Silverman argues that "[t]he Lacanian signifier is . . . an elusive blend of idea and form" (164). For this discussion then, symbol as sign is not a flat term, but is a term that holds both idea and form, and which as I noted above, can never be totally unpacked.

[29] Lacan went to great lengths to distinguish the term phallus as a discursive place holder, rather than a referent to anatomical status.

[30] Of course if he made the meaning I find here purposefully, than he was evil, and I don't think that he was. He was just a normal white guy.

[31] Remember for a moment Haraway's transforming, untamed Cyborg Subject Position.

[32] Malea Powell, among others, argues there can be no "feminist" experience – exactly because of the arguments Haraway makes about imperialism.

[33] My critique here is particularly of the scholars I mentioned earlier who freely conjure up Haraway's Cyborg Subject whenever they talk about humans and "technology." I don't believe that just because a Subject evidences multiple subjectivities through the use of technology, that Subject is a "Cyborg."

[34] Ideas that developed into a theory of psychiatry of primate "anti-social behavior . . . alienation . . . war, aggression . . . and territoriality" that carried over to human psychiatry. Carpenter believed primates could teach "modern man."

[35] Historicizing a myth would work just like any other historicizing.

[36] As I understand it, Spivak's text speaks to the issue of the Western intellectual's positioning as she or he engages in the creation of theory and commentary on power structures functioning in and through ideology, meaning, subjectivity, politics, the state, and the law, etc. Particularly, Spivak's text is a criticism of the method of Michel Foucault and Gilles Deleuze, wherein both theorists write from the position of invisibility. They make themselves transparent; they write from a place of seeming total objectivity holding up in paradigm "an unquestionable valorization of the oppressed as subject, the 'object being'" (274). Spivak sees the failure to question such positioning as "an unacknowledged political gesture that has a long history and collaborates with a masculine radicalism that renders the place of the investigator transparent" (295). She says that Foucault and Deleuze theorize from a place of contradiction: "The unrecognized

contradiction within a position that valorizes the concrete experience of the oppressed while being so uncritical about the historical role of the intellectual, is maintained by a verbal slippage" (275).

[37] My grandmother is Martine, my aunt is Marti – her full name is Martine. My grandmother, my aunt and I all share the same first name. I suggest the female namers of children in this family used what tactics they could to avoid the name-of-the-father.

[38] Edgar and Martine married in 1929. Marty was born in 1934, and Jacky in 1935.

[39] During my childhood my mother perhaps once or twice mentioned that she had a "black nanny." My feeling is that this was an issue I was not to press upon. Looking back reflectively, I believe I was afraid to deal with the implications of this racially charged situation. I know I always thought the "black nanny" was a symbol of my mother's privileged childhood from which I was excluded.

[40] Not only did my grandmother never discuss Melinda, but she completely blotted out of conversation the troubling year my mother had polio.

[41] "In Lacanian psychoanalysis, the child works in this experience as a subject in his/her own right and in the full sense of the term" ("A Compendium" 19).

[42] And I was (wrongly) raised to believe I was in a privileged place of whiteness that needed no examination.

[43] I also understand that some may argue Melinda received the benefit of an income and employment in a stable situation. However, that alone does not negate the points Collins make. Melinda's employment certainly was "at will," and without benefits or retirement.

[44] My mother was a secretary in the Social Science department at Henry Ford Community College in Dearborn, Michigan for 35 years. She worked. I had countless caretakers – the three most loved were Eva O'Brien, David O'Brien, and Cecilia O'Neil. I have pictures of all of them in my massive (unorganized) photo collection. Where is Melinda's picture? She had a more intimate, long standing relationship with my mother than any of my caretakers had with me. My mother says that people did not take that many pictures back then, and I know this is true. She reminds me that my caretakers were also close neighbors. But Melinda had no chance of being a neighbor to my grandmother because blacks and whites lived in different neighborhoods, so that closeness was never allowed to develop. Patricia Hill Collins reports that in the early 1900's "racial segregation in housing separated African-Americans from White Americans"(55). And my mother has a point about the amount of pictures taken in the 1940's and 50's; but when I look at the family photos I have, amount is not the issue. The issue is what the family photos were attempting to do: mother with daughters, daughters with father, daughters with grandmother, father with sisters, father with aunt, and so on. The family photos attempt to validate the family's blood right to whiteness – to make an irrefutable visual argument about white heritage.

[45] Because, according to Spillers, she could not claim her child and matriarchy is not perceived as legitimate.

[46] In the Freudian matrix where children are "penis" replacements for the castrated female, Martine gave over her "phallus" to Melinda.

[47] Melinda-the-One signified upon my mother and my aunt and as Henry Louis Gates Jr. says, no matter how far we get from the signified, it's always there: "It would be erroneous even to suggest that a concept can be erased from its relation to a signifier. A signifier is never, ultimately, able to escape its received meanings, or concepts, no matter how dramatically such concepts might change through time"(48). If Melinda signified upon Jacky and Jacky in turn signified upon me (while holding Melinda in her unconscious), then Melinda signifies upon me as well (as does the white supremacist legacy of my "blood" relations).

[48] My aunt graduated from the same nursing school as my grandmother, stayed married to the same man for 46 years, and had four children (stopped working to raise them).

[49] Since language is everything of course, I'm being really sarcastic here.