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Uncanny Resemblances
Sally Mann's *Immediate Family* (Phaidon 1991)

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Already, there is something tiresomely familiar about Sally Mann's *Immediate Family* and the controversy it provoked. It is as if the criticism that closed in on her photographs exhausted their potential in a hopeless attempt to establish a black and white argument concerning pornography, photography and representations of children. The result is that few people look at Mann's images anymore. However, I believe that Mann's photographs of her children remain the key to more curious and less reductive debates about childhood (and motherhood) than many reactions to date have provided. There is a potency that resides in the contradictions that characterise Mann's images. *Immediate Family* situates traditionally opposing 'states' and attitudes side by side in an, albeit turbulent, relationship which challenges the usual logic of binary opposites. Likewise, by considering Mann's images in terms of Hélène Cixous' interpretation of the Uncanny, a more fluid, if necessarily unstable, reading of *Immediate Family* can be produced. Cixous is a philosopher, novelist and critic who champions a form of 'feminine writing' which undermines the logic of patriarchal thought. Her analysis of Sigmund Freud's 'The Uncanny' opens up possibilities for a 'feminist' [1] re-evaluation of Mann's photographs by refusing to submit to the 'laws' of 'patriarchal binary thought'.[2] Significantly, such an interpretation also corresponds to the 'duality of perception' that Mann considers best describes her own work.

Sally Mann lives in Virginia, USA. She has exhibited and taught all over the States. Her work can be found in various collections, including the Museum of Modem Art, New York. Likewise, Immediate Family needs to be considered within the cultural and social climate that produced it; an America which was busy legislating to prevent

Federal Funds being used to "promote, disseminate or produce" material depicting "sadomasochism, homo-eroticism, the exploitation of children or individuals engaged in sex acts".[3] In *Pictures of Innocence: The History and Crisis of Ideal Childhood* Anne Higonnet gives a fascinating history of the invention of 'Romantic Childhood' in the 18th Century and its current crisis as we move towards the millennium.[4] Towards the end of the book Higonnet presents a detailed account of the various bills and key legal cases in the States[5] that focused on the issue of child pornography, and describes their implications in relation to child nudity, photography and the fears and reality of paedophilia. Carefully differentiating between crimes against children and interpretations of photographs, Higonnet states, 'The Child Pornography Act ... was passed in October 1996, tucked into an ominous spending bill. Punishable by penalties ranging from five to thirty years, child pornography had come to mean any image of any child's body.'[6] The primary concern feeding this legislation is whether the availability of child pornography results in direct child abuse. Legislating against photographs of children is problematic, however, and depends amongst other things on the contentious definition of what constitutes pornography. Photographs of children engaged in sexual acts are one thing. Photographs of naked children are another. In the former case, the crime has been committed. The photograph is evidence. In the latter, it is left the judgement of another to determine whether a crime will occur as a direct result of visual stimulation, and what provides that stimulation.

The child pornography debate is not exclusively American. In 1996 the king of Belgium called for a 'moral revival' after the 'child murderer, rapist and pornographer' Marc Dutoux had be ineptly prosecuted.[7] The same year, delegates from 122 countries gathered in Stockholm for the first World Congress on the Commercial Exploitation of Children. As California considered chemical castration for child molesters and fears of a paedophile ring in Scotland escalated, an advert in the British Press read "Channel 4 Television seeks parents (including fathers) ... for a documentary about the dilemmas of dealing with intimacy in the family. Are you uncomfortable about bathing or sleeping with your children? Have you stopped taking photos of them naked ?[8] (my emphasis). Photographs of children and child pornography were quickly becoming synonymous.[9]

The depicted nudity and Lolita-like sexuality of Sally Mann's children in certain photographs has concerned critics, as has the transferral of 'private' family imagery into the public domain. (Interestingly, Mann sought the advice of a lawyer prior to publication.) The reception of her work reflects the contemporary concerns about child abuse and the nature of childhood. More often than not, criticism of her photographs has occupied two diametrically opposed positions regarding censorship of images in relationship to the exploitation and abuse of children. Such criticism has tended to negate the

subtlety of Mann's work. Sally Mann's representations of childhood depict child sexuality and innocence. This duality is important and representative of a series of dualities present in the making of and content of her photographs.

My intention is to present an interpretation of three of Mann's photographs informed by Cixous' reading of the Uncanny in her paper 'Fictions and its Phantoms' (1976) and, in particular, the significance she attaches to a key motif in E T A Hoffmann's *The Sandman*.[10] My purpose is not to attach Cixous' theory to Mann's imagery but rather to demonstrate how through a textual knot of references and associations Mann's images can be accessed in a manner which prevents closure precisely through the blurring of boundaries that Cixous advocates. Cixous states that Western philosophical and literary thought is tied to binary oppositions (man/woman, Activity/Passivity, Culture/Nature, Head/Emotions) which, in turn, prop up value-systems within patriarchal society. In contrast, to allow the co-existence of what is traditionally considered diametrically opposed, is to offer an alternative and useful paradigm of thought. Mann's photographs exhibit blatant and difficult contradictions. I believe Cixous' analysis of the Uncanny allows for these contradictions to co-exist while subverting the unifying logic of Freudian analysis and patriarchal thought.

I will begin with a summary of Sigmund Freud's description of the Uncanny, followed by Cixous' critique. I will then present an analysis of three of Mann's photographs, *The Wet Bed*, *Fallen Child* and *Virginia in the Sun*, using the 'doll motif' derived from Cixous' interpretation of *The Sandman.* I will conclude by considering Mann's role as mother and photographer, and photography's relation to the 'real'.

In the introduction to *Immediate Family*, Mann writes, 'we are spinning a story of what it is to grow up. It is a complicated story and sometimes we try to take on the grand themes: anger, love, death, sensuality, and beauty.' Such lyricism characterises Mann's foreword, a text that incorporates ludicrous anecdote, elaborate myth-making as well as some reproductions of 'sculptures' made by her father. (This body of 'whimsical art' includes a petrified dog turd and a headless mannequin with a skeleton hand scratching at its sealed plastic crutch.) However, Mann's description of Beckett's madman (who sees ashes where there is ripening corn) and her translation of the Japanese term for dual perception: beauty tinged with sadness, corresponds with aspects of Cixous' interpretation of the Uncanny through which some of the most haunting of Mann's images can accessed. That Mann's introduction somehow mirrors her photographs, and that her photographs are metonymically constructed out of the psychic debris of personal histories, visual remnants, 'individual' fantasies and cultural memories, further situates her imagery within the psycho-analytical paradigm which stresses association and misrecognition and where the familiar becomes unfamiliar and potentially disturbing. That is, the Uncanny.

Sigmund Freud begins his description of the Uncanny with an extended dictionary definition of heimlich and unheimlich (literally (un)homelike). Its purpose

is to demonstrate that 'among its different shades of meaning the word heimlich exhibits one which is identical to its opposite, unheimlich..."[11] While denying the possibility that fairy tales might provoke the Uncanny, it is through a psycho-analytical reading of E T A Hoffmann's tale *The Sandman* that Freud chooses to locate and demonstrate the nature and cause of uncanniness.

To summarise *The Sandman* requires a selectivity that invariably privileges the significance of any one motif in a complex story. Freud's own summary has been ruthlessly criticised. He locates the Uncanny, in Hoffmann's narrative, in the fear of losing one's eyes which, he states, is a metaphorical substitute for the fear of castration. According to Hélène Cixous, Freud's 're-writing' of Hoffmann's tale transforms the story into "a linear, logical account of Nathaniel (the protagonist),...strongly articulated as a kind of case-history, going from childhood remembrances to the delirium and the ultimate tragic end.'[12] She claims Freud brings the 'fantastic' back to the 'rational' and 'minimises the uncertainty revolving around Olympia', Hoffmann's automaton or doll.

The event that triggers Nathaniel's first bout of insanity in *The Sandman* is the barometer man calling at his house. Nathaniel believes that "he has recognised the phantom of horror from his childhood in the itinerant optician, Coppola."[13] He believes Coppola is Coppelius, alchemist and lawyer and the man he blames for his father's mysterious death many years previously.

Nathaniel's fear of the sandman.[14] of Coppola, Coppelius and of the dark holes which signify Olympia's lifeless eyes-sockets, converge in a hallucinatory nightmare so that Nathaniel, raging and deranged, is taken to the madhouse. For Freud, this demonstrates that 'the feeling of the Uncanny is directly attached to the figure of the sandman', that is, to the idea of losing one's eyes. Cixous argues that this account ignores the complexity of *The Sandman*, and that the many themes running through Hoffmann's tale are lost in Freud's search for a unifying solution to the problem of the Uncanny.

The Uncanny is characterised by a Strangeness that elides resolution and which shifts between the traditionally fixed boundaries of what is considered to be 'real' and what is thought to be 'imaginary'. The Uncanny "uncovers what is hidden (anxiety) and by doing so, effects a disturbing transformation of the familiar into the unfamiliar." [15] Nathaniel almost personifies 'uncanniness' in his inability to determine what 'is' and what 'seems'. He cannot distinguish fact from fiction. Such is the significance of his love for Olympia in Hoffmann's fantastic tale. The lovely Olympia is a monstrous creation of a certain Prof. Spalanzani (aided and abetted, probably, by Coppelius/Coppola). Nathaniel's love for Olympia is dependent on, and demonstrates, his inability to recognise that she is an automaton (or 'doll'). Olympia inhabits a strange space somewhere between the boundary of (in)animate.

According to Jentsch, whom Freud quotes before dismissing, the most successful device for creating uncanny effects is the ability to leave the reader in an "uncertainty

as to whether a particular figure in [a] story is a human being or an automaton." [16] Jentsch adds that "Hoffmann has repeatedly employed this psychological artifice with success in his fantastic narratives". He also states that waxes and ingeniously constructed dolls provoke intellectual uncertainty in the viewer because they engender doubts as to whether they are 'living or inanimate'.[17] It is this uncertainty that Cixous focuses on in contradistinction to Freud's emphasis on the (male-orientated) fear of castration.

The episode with Olympia is actually very funny to read, although evidently confusing and threatening for the silly and vain Nathaniel. (Olympia tends to resemble Aunt Sally in the mind's eye rather than some sinister demon-toy more characteristic of contemporary horror.) Nevertheless, as Freud's definition of heimlich reveals, the Uncanny belongs to the 'class' of frightening things; repressed fears that resurface. It 'arouses dread and horror' even if the repressed emotional impulse was not originally anxiety-provoking. The Uncanny can also be defined as residing in 'primitive thought' or superstition. It triggers emotional disturbances returning us to repressed phases in our evolution. Thus, I would argue that Olympia, apparently undaunting in herself, triggers in the reader a chain of associations which return him/her to a repressed and pre-logical mode of thought. The effect of Olympia is to unleash a chain of associations or irrational fears that disturb the equilibrium of our apparently rational thought. Although superficially not especially frightening, Olympia remains the perpetrator who traverses the border between the animate and the inanimate. While the reader is aware that Olympia is an automaton, she courts 'the old, discarded beliefs' that the dead can return. In doing so she allows further hidden anxieties - repressed infantile complexes to surface. Like Victor Burgin's description of photography and dream, Olympia is a detail in a literary composition, an 'element' in a 'rebus', who becomes the manifestation of latent fears.[18]

Hélène Cixous refutes Freud's 'finding' that Olympia is "nothing else than a personification of Nathaniel's feminine attitude to his father in his infancy" [19] in order to stress the significance of Olympia as one who subverts the border dividing life and death. For Cixous, the doll's animation signifies a blurring of boundaries and encapsulates the notion of metamorphosis where divisions cease to be absolute. This idea parallels the shifting meaning of heimlich, which transforms itself into its opposite. Olympia's animation defies the binary opposites of 'rational' thought, and in doing so, introduces the Uncanny into Hoffmann's tale.

Crucial to Cixous' analysis is her belief that it is through Olympia that death is signified, while not being directly represented. Such a statement requires justification. Cixous equates the Uncanny with thoughts of mortality and death. But death has no representation. It "signifies without being signified."[20] Likewise, the Uncanny (and death) must be arrived at metonymically. The doll evokes uncanniness because its artificial life signifies death. If the Uncanny signals a regressive return to 'primitive thought' where impossibility is not restricted by

rationality, the primitive fear of the living dead surfaces in the face of the automaton because, by transgressing the border between life and death, the animated doll "asserts a gap where one would like to be assured of unity."[21]

Sally Mann's photographs contain a dual perception of 'beauty and sadness', as she states "of innocence and sexuality, youth (life) and death, as I claim". Their meanings shift continually across the prescribed boundaries of what 'is' and what 'seems', often entering proscribed territory. Like the madman in Beckett's endgame, her photographs lead us from a visual confirmation of (young) life and youthful bodies, to a deep-seated fear of death.

Virginia is Mann's youngest child. *The Wet Bed*, *Virginia in the Sun* and *Fallen Child* all depict her motionless. Though everyday events, which according to Mann, every mother has seen, the photographs provoke a feeling of strangeness, a 'dread and horror' which is elusive but insistent. At a glance, despite the beautiful arrangement of the child and her hair, the cut grass that zigzags across Virginia's back in *Fallen Child* resembles razor cuts that puncture the aestheticism of the photograph and call up images of violence incised into the body.

The Wet Bed depicts Virginia asleep on a stained mattress, a stain which is explained away by the picture's title and the youth of the child, as an ordinary accident. She is naked and asleep. In some respects this is a touching image, but it is also a taboo image, something only the family should see. It is disconcerting because of the contradictory states of childish innocence and adult sexuality that it simultaneously points to. Virginia is painfully vulnerable, but she lies with her 'legs apart' in a grotesque visual parody of that which the phrase connotes. Further associations register in the mind; involuntary urination is often a part of the process of dying. Likewise, Virginia's smallness and her deep sleep recall the post-mortem photography of dead babies and children, suspended for ever in the euphemism that describes 'death' as ' sleep'. *The Wet Bed* evokes death, and holds it in an unstable and troubling relationship with sexuality. It is tender and terrible simultaneously. The familiar becomes unnervingly unfamiliar.

In *Virginia in the Sun*, Virginia is probably awake; her fist is clenched. Despite the title, there is little indication that she is Virginia nor that the picture was made in sunlight. It is dark and eerie. The folds in the thin veil of cloth that covers the unidentifiable, faceless body resemble a fine network of blood vessels. For this reason, the image is reminiscent of Lennart Nilsson's photographs of the child in the womb. In contrast, it also evokes death through the rigidity of the pose that resembles rigor mortis, a still- born rather than an unborn child.

Resemblances are integral to the Uncanny. Sarah Kofman states that what causes Nathaniel so much distress is the tendency of figures to 'merge into one another'. [22] Olympia resembles a beautiful woman; Coppelius is Coppola is the sandman. Confusion does not only arise from mistaken identities, but also from misinterpreted states of being. Everything and everyone resembles something or someone else.

Everything and everyone reminds us of something other. Nothing is certain. Everything is ambiguous. The photographs of Virginia resemble, at times, an unborn child and a dead one.

That Cixous places so much emphasis on Olympia is particularly interesting when considering these three images by Sally Mann's in relation to the uncanniness they provoke. In *The Wet Bed* there is a doll lying face down in the shadow of the bed. It is a detail that may be easily overlooked, and yet I consider it to be essential to the analysis so far. By attributing to the doll in *The Wet Bed* the characteristics attributed to Olympia in Cixous' discussion of the Uncanny, the discarded toy acts as a pivot on which these three images hinge. The doll signifies, through a process of displacement, that which cannot be signified: death. She/it is also a visual synecdoche whose ambiguous status (in\animate) functions as a detail which represents the ambiguity that the photographs display en masse.

Fallen Child initiates a confusion in the spectator provoked by the uncertainty as to what the lines on Virginia's back represent. In *The Wet Bed* death confronts the viewer through a chain of associations that manifest themselves in the sleeping child's body. In *Virginia in the Sun* death is 'encountered' through the irrational fear of that which is literally and metaphorically veiled, and which cannot be mastered by sight or represented except through a process of mental displacement. Death permeates Mann's pictures, yet can only be arrived at metonymically, an idea made manifest by the inclusion of the doll in *The Wet Bed.*

Cixous' analysis of the Uncanny (unlike Freud's) provides a space to explore contradictions and dichotomies which critics often seek to minimalise. It is part of her larger theoretical project which aims to undermine the "binary schemes where logocentricism colludes with phallocentrism in an effort to oppress and silence women"[23] By allowing us to think beyond binary oppositions, Cixous enables us to accommodate the contradictions that Mann and her images exhibit: sexuality/ innocence, mortality immortality sophistication/naiveté. Confronted with the explosive subjects of child nudity, sexuality and 'death-by-proxy' there is the tendency to over-rationalise *Immediate Family*, to deny the (irrational?) fears they provoke in the twentieth century viewer. As Mavor points out, however, "a rational discourse [..] blocks our way to confronting the contradictions that [the] pictures play out."[24] The particular contradictions that are peculiar to our period need to be acknowledged rather than disavowed and displaced onto related, but not equivalent, debates. Mann expresses the contradictions that are inherited from a romantic myth that positions children as sexless and childhood as eternal. In doing so, she reveals and perpetuates simultaneously a crisis in how we depict and consume pictures of children.

For Cixous and other French feminists, women speak differently from men[25] and this potentially fertile 'difference' should be exploited and championed. It is in this context that I want to turn to the issue of Mann as mother and photographer. It is no coincidence that Mann, as one who moves across a set of prescribed opposites herself

artist/creator v. mother/procreator - should engage with the contradictions of childhood that her children exhibit. Nor, unfortunately, is it a surprise that critics accused her of bad-mothering in a final attempt to discredit her troubling images. Traditional psychoanalysis has tended to endorse the (already established) idea that a "motherly woman can give up her other interests in favour of the reproduction function."[26] The Victorians firmly believed that "mothers must not dream of activity beyond the domestic sphere until their families are grown."[27] Art and motherhood are traditionally considered naturally and diametrically opposed.[28]

That Mann's position as mother of her photographed subjects altered the manner in which her photographs were viewed is evident in her complaint lodged with Anna Douglas in 1994 during an interview.[29] (It also points to the blurring of another boundary, the boundary between reality and representation which is inherent in the photographic medium.) Mann is quoted as saying, 'I am so grateful to Val Williams who never assumed I was a bad mother. She understands that all photography is fiction.' Mann's statement is curious, and I feel, misleading. It implies that Williams dismisses the charges of bad mothering because all photography is fiction. If photographs are fictions, then Mann's 'real-life' role as a mother is not implicated by her images. The roles of mother and photographer (read 'artist') remain distinct and maternal duty is not compromised. However, if we acknowledge that the distinction made between photographer and mother is not in actuality clear cut but belongs, instead, to a specific system of binary thought, *Immediate Family* once again subverts an ideal; the ideal of motherhood.

Sally Mann's photographs confound idealised notions of children and childhood. Furthermore, they explode myriad myths of mothering. Historically, the ideal of woman has closely mirrored the romance of childhood; [30] 'ladies' were pure and innocent, aligned with nature rather than culture. In addition, the 'mother' has been set up as "selfless guardian of the domestic sanctuary.''[31] *Immediate Family*'violates' sentimentalised images of childhood and also dispels notions of the mother as secondary to the child: secondary and silenced. Mann is an ambitious practitioner and a proud mother. Her desires are ambivalent and ambiguous yet she confidently articulates them simultaneously displaying astonishing technical skill. Like the fictional mother in Rosellen Brown's novella, *Housekeeping*,[32] Mann combines photography and motherhood to produce an alternative discourse of childhood and maternity. To mother and to photograph cease to be two distinct occupations; they sustain one another. In doing so, they upset our cherished ideas about what motherhood and childhood should entail. *Immediate Family* is important because it subverts patriarchal ideals and revels in its contradictions.

Finally, it is fitting that the 'collapse' of boundaries which characterises Mann's images (between children and adults, mothers and artists, life and death) should be played out through the photographic medium. Photography's relation to the real has always been disputed. Linked to its referent like a child is linked to its mother,[33]

the photograph is both truth and not truth, reality and representation. It also always figures death through a metonymic chain of associations.[34] Using photography and depicting an apparently unorthodox vision of childhood, Mann speaks "a surprising mother-tongue that enlarges our vision of the relationship that motherhood, sensuality, sexuality and death share."[35] Significantly, it is a vision that Mann finds most lyrically worded in a foreign language, not her mother-tongue: "The Japanese have a word for this dual perception: mono no aware. It means something like 'beauty tinged with sadness"[36]

Sally Mann's *Immediate Family* is riddled with contradictions about childhood, motherhood and photographic representation. Simultaneously seductive and horrifying, hers are uncanny images that disturb and challenge the viewer at every level. By engaging with Cixous' interpretation of the Uncanny and the implications of her text (which explicitly criticises Freud's analysis) I believe that Mann's images can be 'liberated' from the general criticism that persists in limiting their expression. This is not to advocate an uncritical celebration of what either Mann or Cixous offers us, but to acknowledge the danger of foreclosure through patriarchal discourse and recognise a potential, 'feminine' alternative to it.[37]

This essay was developed from the author's MA dissertation entitled 'Grim Fairy Tales?; The Uncanny Effect of Sally Mann's Immediate Family' MA in Social History of Art, University of Leeds, September 1996 revised July 1998

Notes

1. Cixous adamantly denies being a feminist where she see feminists as being women who want to hold power within a patriarchal order. She is, however, fully supportive of the women's movement. Toril Moi writes in her thorough criticism of Cixous, "Her refusal of the label 'feminism' is first and foremost based on a definition of 'feminism' as a bourgeois, egalitarian demand for women to obtain power in the present patriarchal system" (*Sexual Textual Politics*, 1985, p.103) and "I have therefore no intention of following Cixous' lead on this point: according to accepted English usage, her indubitable commitment to the struggle for women's liberation in France, as well as her strong critique of patriarchal modes of thought, make her a feminist." (ibid. p.104)
2. ibid
3. *Creative Camera* (10/1989) p.5
4. A. Higonnet *Pictures of Innocence: The History and Crisis of Ideal Childhood* (Thames and Hudson,1998)
5. These include New York v. Ferber in 1982 and Massachusetts v. Bakes in 1989, Knox v. the United States 1991
6. ibid p.185
7. This information is derived from Higonnet ibid
8. *The Guardian* 28 8 96
9. For further reading on the controversy sparked by *Immediate Family* in Britain see B. Campbell

and V.Williams 'Immediate Family' *Portfolio* Vol 17 pp 19-14 and pp 15- 16; E. Cooper 'Family Affairs' *Creative Camera* Dec/Jan 1994 pp46; A. Douglas, 'Childhood: A Molotov Cocktail for Our Time and Blood Ties: An Interview with Sally Mann' *Women's Art Magazine* No 59 pp.14-18, 20-1 and 'The Dangers of Masquerade' *Creative Camera* Aug/Sep 1994 p.42 and V.Williams, 'Childish Pursuit' *Creative Camera* Feb/Mar 1993 p50.

10. Hoffmann, E T A (1982) *Tales of Hoffmann*

11. Freud, S (1985) *Freud: Art and Literature* Penguin p.345

12. Cixous, H (1976) 'Fictions and its Phantoms' *New Literary History* Vol 7 p.533

13. Freud, S op cit. p.350

14. a 'wicked man who comes after children when they won't go to bed and throws sand in their eyes so that they jump out of their heads all bloody...' according to Hoffmann

15. Jackson, R (1981) *Fantasy: The Literature of Subversion* p.65

16. Freud S op. cit. pp.347-8

17. Barthes and Rilke have also written on the 'unnerving' resemblances of dolls and waxes to real figures.

18. (ed) Burgin, V (1982) *Thinking Photography* p.211

19. Cixous, H. op cit p. 538

20. ibid p.543

21. Jackson, R op cit p.68

22. Kotman, S (1990) *Freud and Fiction*

23. Moi T. op cit p.105

24. Mavor, C. op cit p.9

25. For Cixous, 'feminine writing' does not exclude the possibility of male 'authors', however, she believes that "writing is produced and understood in relation to the body" Sarap, M (1988) *An Introductory Guide to Post-Structuralism and Post-Modernism* p.112

26. Hélène Deutsch quoted in Suleiman, S R (1994) *Risking Who One is: Encounters with Contemporary Art and Literature* p.19

27. ibid

28. The dilemma is visible in the practice of Julia Margaret Cameron who, portrayed as an eccentric yet ardent 'amateur' photographer, nevertheless waited until her children were grown up before developing her passion for the medium. In fact, her camera was a gift from one of her daughters, to provide Cameron with an occupation once her days of 'mothenng' were over.

29. Douglas, A (1994) *Women's Art Magazine* No 59 pp14- 18 Accusations of bad mothering ranged from an the general irresponsibility of placing these images in the public domain to specific photographic instances where, for instance, Mann apparently photographed a bloody nose before cleaning it up.

30. Higonnet wntes with regard Thomas Lawrence's Portrait of Mrs. John Angerstein and her son John Julius William (1799), "When we look at John Julius William alongside his mother, Mrs Angerstein, their double portrait makes adult femininity childhood look similar: flimsy white gowns with high waists, short sleeves and sashes."

31. Higonnet, A ibid pl96

32. summarised in Suleiman op cit.
33. This wonderful analogy is made by Mavor, in her usual inimitable style, "Like a photograph, the child is always connected to its referent: its mother. A photograph carries its referent with it, just as a mother carries her child with her body, even after birth." op cit p53
34. For a lyrical discussion of photography and death see Roland Barthes *Camera Lucida* for example.
35. Mavor C op cit. p.57
36. from the introduction to Immediate Family. My interest in Mann's use of a foreign language to describe her practice is greatly influenced by Ulrike Sieglohr's interesting analysis in 'Focus on the Maternal: Female Subjectivity and images of motherhood' *Nexus* (London: Scarlet Press, 1998)
37. As a last word I would like to quote Toril Moi on Cixous, a final twist in the plot. "Her style is often intensely metaphorical, poetic and explicitly anti-theoretical, and her central images create a dense web of signifiers that offers no obvious edge to seize hold of for the analytically minded critic...Cixous believes neither in theory nor analysis (though she does practise both); nor indeed, does she approve of feminist analytical discourses: she is, after all, the woman who first flatly declared that "I am not a feminist" (...) and later went on to say that "I do not have to produce theory" op cit. pp.102-3

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