THROUGH THE LOOKING GLASS: IDEOLOGY AND THE FAMILY IN THE PHOTOGRAPHS OF CLEMENTINA, LADY HAWARDEN, 1859-1865

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The compelling, luminous photographs of Clementina, Lady Hawarden (1822-1865) investigate the family and its representation in profound and paradoxical ways. Between 1859 and her death from pneumonia in 1865, her photographs, shot almost exclusively indoors, are mainly of her children (particularly her three eldest daughters – Isabella, Clementina and Florence) in their family home, posed in rooms sparsely furnished yet rich in texture and depth. These photographs of her adolescent daughters in endless combinations of dresses, fancy-dress, and costumes are elegant, complicated, and suggestive.[1] Depicting a graceful and cultivated domestic existence, their serene opaque surfaces cast a golden light over an idyllic relational world, luminous, airy, and unencumbered. The family appears as the site of desire, sensuality, tranquility, and beauty. In his obituary of Hawarden, O.J. Rejlander, her friend and colleague, states that in her photographs, she aimed at an "elegant and, if possible, idealised truth" ("In Memoriam" *BJP* 1865, 38). While something of the photographs' quality of charm and beauty is captured in Rejlander's comment, the hint of contradiction that is also to be found in them – truth and ideality are not usually considered contiguous – points in the direction of the paradoxes, ambiguities, and contradictions that lie at the heart of Hawarden's family photographs.[2]

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[1] Clementina, Lady Hawarden was born Clementina Fleeming in Scotland in 1822 and married Cornwallis Maude, later Viscount Hawarden, in 1845. Under pressure from her initially cold and rejecting parents-in-law to produce a male heir, she gave birth to ten children, eight girls and two boys, though two – a boy and a girl – died in infancy. Taking up photography in the late 1850s, she began by working outdoors at the family estate, Dundrum, in Ireland. Her early photographs of pastoral landscapes and of workers and servants gave way after the family's move to a house in South Kensington, London in 1859 to photographs of her family shot almost exclusively indoors.

[2] The *OED* defines the "Ideal" as that which usually "pertains to thought or imagination, or the imaginary, and is opposed to what is *real* or *actual*." In this sense, the notion of "ideal" contradicts the idea of "truth" which is associated with "genuineness, reality, actual existence, conformity with fact; agreement with reality; accuracy, correctness, verity" (*OED*). Rejlander's brief statement in which he conflates the notions of "truth" and of "the ideal" actually speaks to the paradox that lies at the heart of Hawarden's photographs as well as the theory of photography itself. The question of photography's relationship to "truth," its "agreement with reality" has been central to the theory of photography since the inception of the medium in the 1830s.

The photographs function as realistic depictions of Victorian domestic life, but, excluding entirely the clutter that one might expect in the Victorian drawing-room, they also manifest an unexpected spaciousness which imbues them with a dreamlike and fantastical quality that tends to shift them out of the world of the drawing room and into a world of reverie, fantasy, and dream. Marina Warner states that Hawarden's studies from life stage a "secret, mutual and loving game of private dreams and unknowable pleasures" (8). These "unknowable pleasures" come also to haunt these photographs in strange and unexpected ways. At the same time that they are light, domestic, idyllic scenes of an exquisite family life, the intimacy and reverie that so characterises them also disrupts the apparent ease and accessibility of the images. Thus although these photographs appear intimately connected with the homely and the familiar, the emptiness of the spaces that are opened up both externally (in the rooms themselves) and internally (in the subjects) renders the notion of the familiar, home or domestic comfort ambiguous.

Through the use of light, space, costumes, masks, mirrors, and windows, Hawarden's photographs interrogate the ideological construct known as the family, asking questions about "idealisation" and its relation to "truth." The photographs explore the invisible or unconscious imperatives that sustain this family structure at levels both personal and political; through their doublings, and repetitions, they investigate notions of reality, of home, of subjectivity, of family relations. They explore the ways in which the family structure comes to both constitute and constrict the individual subject and emphasise the slippery, even dangerous, nature of identity as constructed within the confines of family. They provide access to assumptions, conscious and unconscious, that govern Victorian family life and culture and ask questions about how one might seek emancipation from those narratives and structures.

This paper's investigation of Hawarden's photographs is divided into two parts. The first section explores the notion of ideology, the development of the ideology of the family, and its relationship to representation and the invention of the photograph. Arguing that the workings of ideology are *analogous* to the workings of the photograph, I will demonstrate how Hawarden's photographs can be read as both concealing and exposing the ideological underpinnings of the family romance.

The second section of the paper moves to the unconscious elements of the family romance, investigating the relationship between ideology and the unconscious and the ways in which invisible elements, in fact, structure the life of the family. The family in Hawarden's photographs is the site of desire, but the pleasure, secrecy, and excitement in these family relationships can also dissolve into their less visible negative constituents: love can be claustrophobic, enveloping, even dangerous. Hawarden's photographs investigate and reveal complicated, hidden aspects of family desire.

Photography, Ideology, and the Representation of the Family

In 1888, George Eastman, the founder of Kodak, put the camera into the hands of consumers. His famous slogan "you press the button, we do the rest" incorporates everything that, nearly a hundred-and-twenty years later, is associated with the notion of the contemporary snapshot – accessibility, simplicity, ease, and affordability. The slogan hints at the idea that taking a photograph is a universal possibility; since the suggestion extends itself not only to the actual taking of photographs but also to the product itself – the images that are produced when "you press the button" – the photograph is invested with a sense of benign all-inclusiveness, of universal applicability.[3]

The photograph's inference of panoptic relevance is ubiquitous and complicated, but it is certainly derived, at least partially, from assumptions about photography's apparently perfect congruence with nature. Photography, unlike most systems of visual representation that preceded it – portraits, drawings, paintings, sculpture – appears to offer a transparent, unmediated relationship between original and representation, to provide a "truthful" re-presentation of reality. Nineteenth-century writings about photography, as Allan Sekula points out, frequently praise the capacity of the new science to function as an "unmediated copy of the real world" (86). Indeed, nineteenth-century commentary frequently appears to eschew the notion of "copy" entirely and to imply that photographic representation and its objects are thoroughly interchangeable. In 1840, for example, Samuel Morse said of the daguerreotype: "they cannot be called copies of nature, but portions of nature herself" (qtd. in Sekula 86). In the same year, Edgar Allen Poe also claims photographic representation to be indistinguishable from its object:

> If we examine a work of ordinary art, by means of a powerful
> microscope, all traces of resemblance to nature will disappear –
> but the closest scrutiny of the photogenic drawing discloses only a
> more absolute truth, a more *perfect identity of aspect with the thing
> represented*. The variations of shade, and the gradations of both
> linear and aerial perspective are those of *truth itself* in the
> supremeness of its perfection (my emphasis, qtd. in Rudisill 55).

The notion that the photograph comprises "nature herself," "perfect identity," "truth itself" has been integral to certain generic expectations that have surrounded photography since its inception in the 1830s.[4]

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[3] That photography is taken out of the hands of the privileged is also clarified by the fact that, as Don Slater points out, the cost of a basic Kodak dropped to one shilling by the end of the century (52).

[4] The question of when photography first began is problematic. Alison Chapman points out that "recent [. . .] commentators on photography have agreed that it does not have a history *per se*, that the origin and narrative of photography cannot be given unity or chronological coherence" (120).

In *Camera Lucida*, Roland Barthes comments extensively on this crucial and defining aspect of photography, namely, its unique capacity to function under the sign of the real, the concrete, or the actual. "[I]n Photography," he states "I can never deny that *the thing has been there*" (76) and since, in contrast to other forms of visual representation, this "constraint exists only for Photography," Barthes considers it to be the very essence of photography: "[w]hat I intentionalize in a photograph [. . .] is neither Art nor Communication, it is Reference, which is the founding order of photography" (77). The photograph, says Barthes, is "literally an emanation of the referent" (80); from "a phenomenological viewpoint, in the photograph, the power of authentication exceeds the power of representation" (89). It is precisely this supposed capacity for authentication that renders the photograph so powerful a medium for carrying the ideological possibilities anticipated and exploited by Eastman in the 1880s. Because of the photographic image's very particular relationship with the referent, it is frequently treated as a "natural" sign or a record of absolute truth; it is this apparent capacity for naturalisation that allows the photograph to claim an objectivity or neutrality for itself, a claim which provides it with its ideological power.

Ideology likewise functions precisely on the basis of its claim to the neutral, the natural, or the universal. Louis Althusser states:

> Ideology is indeed a system of representations [. . .] it is above all as *structures* that [these representations] impose on the vast majority of men. [. . .] They are perceived-accepted-suffered cultural objects and they act functionally on men via a process that escapes them. Men 'live' their ideologies [. . .] *not at all as a form of consciousness, but as an object of their 'world'* – as their *'world'* itself. (*For Marx* 233)

Ideology's fundamental power resides precisely here; it presents itself as the "'*world*' itself." Ideology is always already naturalised; its capacity to operate is entirely dependent on this process. Representing its presuppositions as inevitable or necessary, ideology conflates itself with the "true" and defines itself as "reality." The obverse is also always applicable; having identified itself with what has been declared as real, inevitable, or necessary, ideology then uses the notion of reality in order to define and justify itself, to determine what is "real." John Tagg identifies

Geoffrey Batchen, in *Burning with Desire* argues that it is not possible to assign a moment of "origin" to photography and replaces the notion of origin with the "discursive function of the desire to photograph" (180). Batchen is interested in the beginnings of a "'regular' discursive practice for which photography seems to be the desired object. [. . .] [A]t what moment in history did the desire to photograph emerge and begin insistently to manifest itself?" he asks (36). See particularly his Chapter 2 for an extended investigation of the range of dates and people who are associated with the "beginnings" of photography.

the strangely double movement which typifies ideological discourse. Describing, on the one hand, how the placing of the ideological construct on specific objects or events functions to render the general mythical conceptual framework specific, and historic and particular, he continues:

> At the same time, however, the very conjunction of the objects and events and the mythical schema dehistoricises the same object and events by displacing the ideological connection to the archetypal level of the *natural and universal* in order to conceal its specifically *ideological nature.* (117)

For ideology to maintain its status as "truth," it must suppress or exclude whatever contradicts its view; not only is contradictory *content* excluded, but the very fact of the suppression or exclusion is as well. "Ideology," as Victor Burgin says, "takes an infinite variety of forms; what is essential about it is that it is contingent and that *within it the fact of its contingency is supressed*" ("Photographic Practice," 46).

In its implied claim to the true or the real, the workings of ideology are compellingly similar to the workings of the photograph. Presumed to be authentic or true to nature, the photographic image can acquire the force of moral or spiritual or social truth as well. Indeed, as Roland Barthes comments, "[p]hotography [. . .] photographs the notable; but soon, by a familiar reversal, it decrees notable whatever it photographs" (34). Barthes' comment points in the direction of the notion that is central to this paper: the working of the photograph is strikingly analogous to the workings of ideology. Just as the power of the photograph lies in the fact that it is deemed to possess a neutrality or objectivity that is devoid of cultural investment, so does the power of ideology reside in its claim to exist outside of cultural determination. Althusser discusses the "interpellative" aspects of ideology, namely that *"all ideology hails or interpellates concrete individuals as concrete subjects"* thereby incorporating them into the "eternal" structure of ideology ("Ideology" 173, 175). Since such a subject, for Althusser, comes into existence already incorporated into the system, it is the *"always already* subject" (172). Similarly, bringing together the photographic and the ideological, one might equally speak of the photographic address as being interpellative: the photograph also addresses an already created subject, already functioning inside its sphere of influence. And just as ideology acts to transform individuals into subjects (available for interpellation), so photography, as is implied by Barthes' comment above, creates the subject that, in turn, responds to its system of representation. Indeed, historically, there is a powerful relationship between photographic representation and the workings of ideology; each has been enlisted in the service of the other. John Berger comments that "[e]very photograph is in fact a means of testing, confirming and constructing a total view of reality. Hence the crucial role of photography in ideological struggle. Hence the necessity of

our understanding a weapon which we can use and which can be used against us"
(294).

The profound ideological, social, and cultural impact of photography may be
dated from its inception; the introduction of photography changed the way that
people and things were seen and categorised. Nancy Armstrong, considering the
impact of the circulation of hundreds of millions of *cartes de visite* (between 300
million and 400 million sold between 1861 and 1867 alone), comments that
photographic images were

> presumed to offer such an accurate reading of the human body that
> just on the basis of that reading, one could assign any body to its
> proper category. People came to visualize themselves and others
> not only in terms of gender, class, race and nation, but in terms of
> intelligence, morality, and emotional stability as well.
> [. . .]
> Generic images marking various positions within the visual order
> acquired the rhetorical force of nature and common sense at once.
> (17, 19)

The photograph came to be used legally, to be used for identification purposes, to be
used to catalogue criminals, and to be admitted as evidence in courts of law.[5] In its
implicit claim to provide a perfect image of nature, the photograph created a whole
new taxonomy of seeing.

While almost any photographic image (of landscapes, gardens, buildings)
might be said to be interpellative, that is, function to implicate the viewing subject in
an unrestricted sense of universal relevance, possibility, and applicability, the most
ubiquitous of all is, of course, the family snapshot. Don Slater points to the "very
important historical connections between the development of domestic photography
and the structuring of the domestic" (49);[6] certainly, the photograph as a system of
representation has had a powerful effect on the ideological structures that we define
as home and family. In his discussion of the ways in which individuals are
incorporated into systems even before birth, Althusser speaks of the particular ways

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[5] Sander L. Gilman, exploring how the development of photography fundamentally shifted the ways
in which the insane were seen, states that "the photograph became the key to the new scientific
physiognomy during the latter half of the nineteenth century" (164). For further discussion of this see
Sander L. Gilman, *Seeing the Insane*, particularly 164-178.

[6] Slater dates the development of current forms of domestic photography to around the turn of the
century, seeing this development as part of the transformation of photography from a "specialist craft
into the selling of mass-produced and mass-marketed commodities." He relegates earlier domestic
photography to the realm of the "the committed amateur within the upper-middle-class family" or
"the petit-bourgeois professional portraitist providing those domestic photographs which encoded
private family faces in terms of conventional public Victorian genres" (50).

in which an unborn child is "always-already a subject, appointed as a subject in and by the specific familial ideological configuration in which it is 'expected' once it has been conceived" ("Ideology" 176); these "expectations" that define individuals, domesticity and family life have, in turn, been profoundly influenced by the development of photography which has created particular images for the structuring of the private and the familial, for the ways in which the notion of family is constructed and inscribed. Nancy Armstrong comments that by the time photography was less than two decades old "photographs depicting the gratification of private life were everywhere and seemed to offer that gratification to everyone" (116). The pictures of happy families that dominate, control and construct every aspect of contemporary psychological, social and commercial existence find their beginnings in the genesis of photography in the mid-nineteenth century.

Hawarden's family photographs address the complexities of ideology and representation in subtle and fascinating ways. As I have commented above, ideology derives its power and its efficacy from what is not said; its capacity to function successfully is thoroughly dependent upon various forms of negation: suppression, concealment, denial, repression. "Ideology," says Althusser, has "very little to do with 'consciousness' [. . .]. It is profoundly *unconscious* [. . .]. [It is a relation] that only appears as *conscious* on condition that it is *unconscious*" (*For Marx* 233). The efficacy of the photograph is also powerfully dependent upon absence and invisibility. Indeed, every photograph might be said to be the portrait of an absence. Berger, discussing the way in which a photograph isolates a single moment of time out of a continuum, states that a "photograph, whilst recording what has been seen, always and by its nature refers to what is not seen" (293); Marianne Hirsch comments that photographs are "fragments of stories, never stories in themselves (83); Susan Sontag views a photograph as "both a pseudo-presence and a token of absence" (16). Hawarden's photographs insistently invoke this powerful tension – between presence and absence, the visible and the invisible. While on the one hand, they construct the romance, the cohesion, the ideality of the nuclear family, they also expose the paradoxes, contradictions, and absences attendant upon that world, exposing the complex, slippery, even dangerous nature of such constructions. They speak to the absent, the invisible, the unsaid that is at the heart of ideological representation, at the heart of the family, and at the heart of every photograph.

These complex and contradictory elements coalesce in Figure 1, a photograph of two young women seated in a drawing-room. It seems "natural" to identify the two women as sisters.[7] Their mutually private absorption, their air of relaxation, their lack of social obligation to interact with each other all imply a sense of ease and connection commonly associated with relatedness, particularly familial

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[7] John Tagg, commenting on the process by which viewers come to assume what might be considered "natural" in a photograph, points out that the "very word 'natural' should alert us to a conception that is precisely ideological" (115, 118). For a further discussion of the relationship between naturalisation, ideology and photography, see Tagg 115-120.

relatedness. Indeed, almost every feature of this photograph appears designed to create the sense of a charmed family existence: the beauty of the two young women, the air of reverie, the quiet intimacy, the lack of interruption, the sense of calm, the material comfort all come together to depict the family as the source of tranquility, the locus of love and beauty. We also, in turn, identify the interior as a home; indeed, the relatedness we have identified is thoroughly related to this specific, material context. We know that they are sisters because the activities in which they are engaged declare them to be at home; conversely, we know that they are at home because they are so clearly sisters.
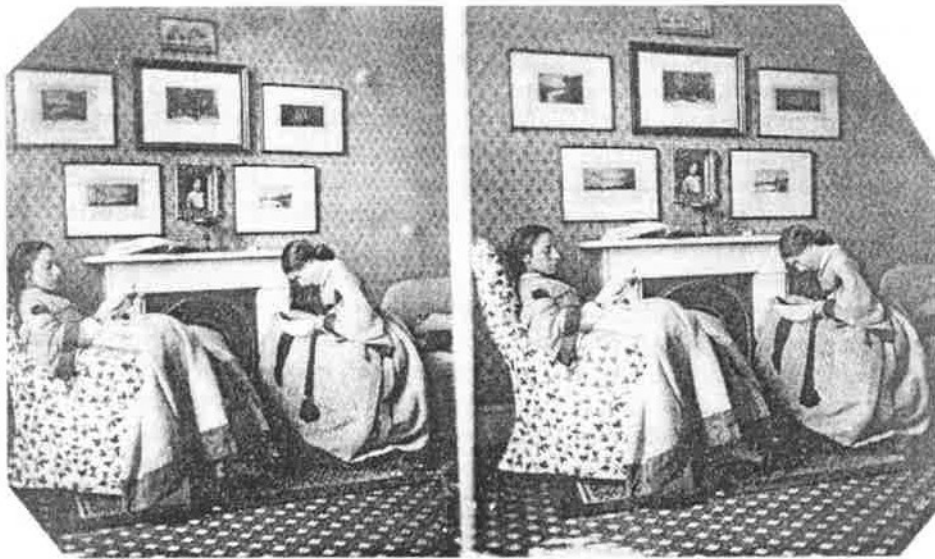

Figure 1: Isabella Grace and Clementina Maude, 5 Princess Gardens, ca 1861-62

But at the same time that the photograph demonstrates its commitment to a timeless family romance, it also subtly reveals the essentially contradictory nature of such a position. On the one hand, the photograph appears to provide an image of the family and home in its ideal form, an image which would remove the family and the setting from time, place, and circumstance, from history itself (thereby enhancing its ideological commitment to a timeless notion of family); on the other hand, the photograph also subtly reveals the historical specificity and particularity of its subject matter and undermines the notion of a timeless, ideal, or objective representation of reality. One of the ways in which the photograph does this is by constantly reminding the viewer of its own materiality as a photograph. While this effect is achieved in several ways, the most conspicuous is the doubled image

created by the use of a stereoscopic camera. We are reminded of the essentially pictorial nature of the image by virtue of its repetition, while the very slight differences between the two images, produced by a minute shift in angle, foreground the constructed nature of the image and subvert the notion of its objectivity or reality.

We are also reminded of the materiality of the photograph by the presence of the seven framed prints and photographs on the walls of the drawing-room; these prints introduce the theme of photography and remind us of the representational nature, not only of this photograph, but of all photographs. Burgin comments that the "structure of representation – point of view and frame – is intimately implicated in the reproduction of the ideology (the 'frame of mind' of our 'points-of-view')" ("Looking" 146). In this photograph, the large number of frames – not only the seven on the wall, but also the frame of the mantel and the small rug in front of the fireplace, and the chair which frames the reading sister – accentuates the notion of point of view, the idea of how things are framed and how we view them. The very concept of a "point of view" undermines the assumption of objective reality that is crucial to the functioning of ideology and to the idea of universal or timeless relevance.

The pictures on the wall effect a temporal displacement as well as a representational one. The realm of the temporal is presupposed by any photograph since a photograph always refers us to some *other* moment in time; these pictures on the wall remind us of the time-bound nature of all photographs and they function here to place the scene back in history, to remind us of time and historical change. Virginia Dodier identifies the prints and photographs on the wall as a copy of Rejlander's *After Raphael's Sistine Madonna* displayed above an arrangement of Francis Seymour Haden's etchings (93). That these pictures have a particular and personal relevance reminds us of the historical specificity of this particular family; they highlight the way in which a family's history and memory is formed.[8] Finally, formally speaking, the framed pictures on the wall function in the same way as the patterned surfaces all over the photograph. The pattern on the carpet, the patterned wall-paper, the flowery fabric of the easy chair, the textured stripes of the dresses worn by the two girls all return the eye of the viewer to the picture surface and serve to break the pictorial illusion of a three-dimensional real world, an effect that is

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[8] Both Rejlander and Haden were important colleagues to Hawarden. Virginia Dodier suggests that Hawarden and Rejlander were acquainted and that they may have known each other through the Photographic Society to which Rejlander was elected in 1856. She finds photographic evidence which leads her to believe they may have worked together at least once (93). Dodier also points out that Hawarden had a personal and important relationship with the etcher and surgeon, Francis Seymour Haden. Hawarden probably met Haden as his patient in 1859 when she was expecting her eighth child. Dodier comments that the importance of "their association is evident in the work of each [. . .] the two apparently worked with Hawarden's daughter, as models and shared figures, motifs, and subjects in their separate mediums" (100).

enhanced by the presence of the framed pictures on the wall, which also function to emphasise the surface of the photograph. While all of this achieves the formal effect of emphasising the materiality of the photograph and undermining the illusion of "reality," it also has emotional and ideological implications. The crowding of the images of the two sisters towards the front of the picture suggests claustrophobia and hints mildly at the possible constrictions, confinements, and dangers of family relationships and the homes in which they occur.

If this photograph places itself in history by foregrounding its own temporality and materiality, it also does so by referring the viewer to its sense of place. Every detail in the photograph speaks to a world of leisure and material comfort, highlighting the ideological substructure of the domestic life of an upper-class Victorian family. The furniture, the decor, the clothes, the accessories, the positioning of the subjects all refer the viewer to a specific social grouping. The two subjects in the photograph are deeply connected to their material surroundings; this connection manifests itself not only in the physical activities of reading and sewing in which they are respectively engaged, but also in the way in which the reading sister in the foreground reclines into her easy chair conveying a sense of ownership, habit and comfort and the way in which the sewing sister leans towards the fireplace for light. Their relationship to their physical surroundings is seamless; the value of the bodies is related to the objects in the picture and each is part of and created by the other.

Hirsch states that family pictures in general "offer conventional surfaces resistant to deeper scrutiny and that they "say more about family romances than about actual details of familial life" (119). In the case of this photograph, it is precisely its profound ambiguity, its complex, sophisticated ability to declare itself as a family romance that provides the photograph with its capacity to ask powerful questions about family relationships, and about photographic representation and its complicated relationship to reality. This image of a calm, sensual, domestic interior is structured by obscured and repressed invisible elements; the photograph speaks to these repressions.

Desire and the Uncanny

The power of the photograph discussed above lies in Hawarden's subtle exposition of the tension between its latent and manifest content; her photograph partially unveils the invisible ideological imperatives that structure the scene of the photograph. The tension between absence and presence, the visible and the invisible underpins, as I commented earlier, both photography and ideology; it also significantly points to a powerful resemblance between both of these and the workings of the unconscious. Althusser directly links the workings of ideology to that of the unconscious, likening the essential timelessness of ideology to that of the unconscious. He states:

> If eternal means [. . .] omnipresent, trans-historical and therefore
> immutable in form throughout the extent of history, I shall adapt
> Freud's expression word for word and write *ideology is eternal,*
> exactly like the unconscious. ("Ideology" 161)

Althusser goes on to say that he finds his comparison to be theoretically justified since "the eternity of the unconscious is not unrelated to the eternity of ideology in general" (161). Althusser's subtle exposition of the relationship between ideology and the unconscious is anticipated by Walter Benjamin who intricately links both of these notions to the workings of the camera. Benjamin's astute recognition of these complex and fascinating connections is elaborated upon by the use of his compelling term: "the optical unconscious." In 1935 in "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction," Benjamin comments that the "camera introduces us to unconscious optics as does psychoanalysis to unconscious impulses" (239). Earlier (1931) in "A Short History of Photography," he states:

> It is a different nature which speaks to the camera than speaks to
> the eye: so different that in place of a space consciously woven
> together by a man on the spot there enters a space held together
> unconsciously [. . .].
> 　　Photography [. . .] with its time lapses, enlargements, etc.
> makes such knowledge possible. Through these methods one first
> learns of this optical unconscious, just as one learns of the drives
> of the unconscious through psychoanalysis. (202-3)

While Benjamin is actually concerned here, as Hirsch points out, with physiological processes unavailable to the naked eye, his comparison of the workings of the camera to that of the unconscious is profoundly significant. Discussing Benjamin's theory of "unconscious optics," Hirsch states:

> [t]he camera can reveal what we see without realizing that we do,
> just as psychoanalysis can uncover what we know without
> knowing that we do: what is stored in the unconscious. The camera
> can expose hidden dimensions of our actions and movements
> through its artificial techniques of making strange [. . .].
> 　　"Unconscious optics," like the repressed content of the
> unconscious, disturb and disrupt our conscious acts of looking.
> (118)

The comparison of the workings of the camera to the workings of the unconscious sheds an interesting light on the nature of Hawarden's intricate,

complicated pictures of her family. Hirsch states that "[t]he family as social construct depends on the invisibility of its structuring elements. [. . .] [I]ts workings must to some degree remain unconscious if family ideology is to be perpetuated and imposed" (117). Hawarden's photographs both unveil and obscure these invisible structuring elements; her photographs expose the family as the site of desire in all its ambiguity and complexity. On the one hand, desire, as it initially emerges in these photographs, seems to offer the perfection of consummation; the photographs are replete with fulfillment, satiation, satisfaction. The relationships between the sisters and their individual relationships with the implied (but necessarily absent) mother/photographer are exciting and secretive; the secrets that hover around this family appear to be "good secrets," secrets of shared knowledge, mutuality, inclusiveness, belonging. On the other hand, desire in this family can be soporific, overwhelming, engulfing; in many of the photographs, the subjects are enclosed, framed, even trapped by windows, doors, balustrades, mirrors, and the bodies of the other subjects in the photographs. The space suddenly constricts; the family becomes, in Hirsch's words, "the space of a love so strong that one can die from it" (76).

Figure 2: Isabella Grace and Clementina Maude, 5 Princess Gardens, ca 1862-63

In Figure 2, another portrait of Hawarden's daughters, the "unconscious optics" of the photograph reveal the complexities underlying the ostensibly comfortable world of sisterly love. The two daughters hold each other in a loving and familial embrace, but as we look, the familiar dissolves into the strange. The photograph appears initially to speak to the absolutely reciprocal relationship of love and desire between the two women; the gaze, the loving embrace of hands on shoulders and neck invite the viewer to dwell on an intense and yet easy moment of fulfilment. At the same time, however, the two daughters are placed so as in fact to become one. While many of Hawarden's photographs situate a woman seated at a mirror (so that the image of one becomes two), this photograph renders the daughter whose face we see, nothing but the empty and receding mirror image of the daughter whose back is turned towards us. She acts as an uncanny reflection, returning to her sister the potential void or lack which resides within the familiar. The mirror-like flatness of the image of the woman facing us thus repeats the photograph's own effacement of three-dimensional flesh by two-dimensional image. The depth we see is only the illusion of depth; the familiar intimacy dissolves into emptiness and loss. The photograph powerfully suggests the tension between the imaged and the real, the emotionally visible and the hidden and repressed; it hovers between intimacy and hollow narcissism, between inclusion and exclusion – of self, of other, of something between the two.

In *Camera Lucida*, Roland Barthes discusses the notion of landscapes which he reads as "chosen by desire." The "longing to inhabit [them]," he states, is "fantasmatic"; they function as a place of which we "*were certain* of having been there or of going there" (40). As he details his sense of such places for his reader, Barthes claims that such photographs succeed in compounding the feeling of longing with the sense of having, of simultaneously inhabiting the spaces of desire and of satiation. Indeed, Barthes invokes Freud's notion of the *heimlich* (the homely) as maternal body as he elaborates this feeling: "there is no other place of which one can say with so much certainty that one has already been there," he says (40). Hawarden's photographs of domestic interiors exude an atmosphere analogous to Barthes' "landscapes of desire." They evoke a sense of inclusion, a sense that we know this family and this place. Yet however idyllic these landscapes of the familiar and the desired, they are for us, for the viewer, forbidden. This home is not our home; this familiar ease is not ours. Distances open up as we gaze at these photographs; indeed, the very openness of these photographs – the light, the sensual and erotic interactions, the profound sense of phenomenological plenitude, of the idea that they display for us *all that there is to see* – conveys simultaneously the notion that we can never know more than this – this brief instant of time and space. In fact, the very condition of the photograph means that no matter how much we wish to be included, we always gaze from a distance through a barrier which is necessarily impassible; the photographs emphasise the impenetrability of these long-

dead, always already distant worlds. The familiar, the *heimlich*, topples over into the *unheimlich*, that uneasy, mysterious, and uncomfortable space of the uncanny.
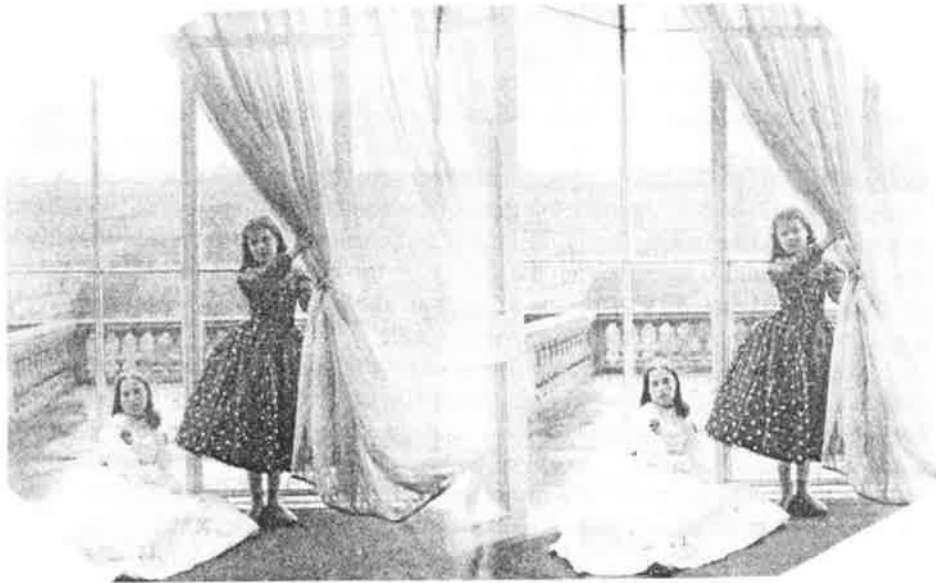

Figure 3: Clementina and Florence Elizabeth Maude, 5 Princess Gardens, ca 1861

    The uncanny sense of simultaneous exclusion and inclusion occurs in the many photographs featuring a figure seated or standing by a window, photographs which are at once evocative of both the confining interior and the immensity of the exterior, whether seen or only hinted at by the gaze of the figure and the flood of light entering the room. In Figure 3, Hawarden uses a stereoscopic camera to investigate the complex nature of inclusion and exclusion, exploring the boundaries and thresholds between the outside and the inside (and inner) world of the family. The window frames the seated figure of Hawarden's daughter, Clementina. It functions here as an image of both access and obstruction; at the very moment that the fragility and transparency of the window glass apparently invites us in, it also shuts us out. It both contains and encloses the figures in the photograph and also serves as a barrier between the subjects, and between ourselves and those subjects; belonging and exclusion, confinement and escape are subtly interwoven with each other. The door which stands invitingly open in the image on the right also functions to trap the seated figure in the image on the left. The open and transparent curtains, with the light flooding through, as well as the glass of the window itself, announce simultaneously the flimsiness yet absolute impenetrability of the boundary for the subjects inside the photograph, as well as for the viewer. The longing of these

photographed figures is the mirror image of our own; they cannot get out and we cannot get in.[9]

Our sense of exclusion, of gazing into an inaccessible and other world is exacerbated by the way in which the standing figure (Florence Elisabeth) holds the curtain back, framing her seated sister and presenting her as though on a stage, to us, the viewer. Clementina, who appears to have withdrawn almost entirely into her own world, stares away from the window keeping her back to it, seemingly trapped in a spectacle not of her own making. It is not only we, the viewers, who are excluded; the two sisters appear utterly shut off from each other as the straightforward, beckoning, enticing gaze of the one is set off against the withdrawn, trapped look of the other. The inclusions and exclusions that are created literally by the windows and doors and by the frame of the photograph itself, are echoed psychically and emotionally by the subjects of the photograph whose inner worlds also appear strangely inaccessible and impassable.

Hawarden's photographs are obsessed with composing scenes of reverie, tableaux which insist on a seemingly inviolable interior world. The subjects in her photographs constantly shut their eyes against each other and the world outside, escaping into a dreamy inner world of fantasy and dream. The sense of a domestic world both visible yet peculiarly insubstantial is enhanced in these photographs by Hawarden's use of her adolescent daughters as subjects. Adolescence possesses its own fluidity and liminality; it is a period quite overwhelmed by a sense of reverie, of dreamy contemplation, of private fantasy. Hawarden's photographs represent adolescent preoccupation in hundreds of poses; in so many of the photographs, the subject is lost in thought in her own private dreaming world. The subjects here are also the daughters of the photographer; the sensuality, sexuality, and pleasure that emanates from the photographs is enhanced by the intimacy that exists between photographer and subject. Nevertheless, the photographs also evoke the dark, hidden underside of this intimacy. The very presence of adolescent eroticism, sexuality, familial pleasure also introduces something threatening, dark, and overwhelming into the photographs, brought only fleetingly and momentarily into view by the camera: while adolescence embodies some acute point of intensity around eroticism, desire, a sense of promise and excitement, it also points in the direction of loss, of shifting family relations, of change, of the inevitable decay implicit in the moment of ripeness. All of these aspects of the relationship between mother (photographer)

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[9] Alison Chapman also comments on the uncanny liminality of Hawarden' subjects. However, while Chapman, who views photography as a "technology of the uncanny" (120), discusses the uncanny in Hawarden's photographs in the context of her focus on the relationship of early photography to magic and awe, my discussion is contextualised by the relationship of the uncanny to the unconscious, to ideology and to the social and psychological imperatives of the family.

and daughter (subject) are also implicit in the photographs.[10] The subjects themselves appear utterly dazed by both sensuality and loss.

Figures 4 and 5 both feature sleeping figures. In Figure 4, a figure is asleep on a couch but the woman who seems to stare tenderly down at her in apparent attendance also appears to be asleep; her closed eyes stand in shocking juxtaposition

Figure 4: Isabella Grace and Clementina Maude, 5 Princess Gardens, ca 1863-64

with the watchful curve of her body over the sleeping figure. In the next photograph (Figure 5), the effect is even more curious than in the first. The two figures are

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[10] The relational complexities and ambiguities of mother/photographers are extensively discussed by Marian Hirsch in *Family Frames*. Her fascinating investigation of mothers who photograph their children is comprehensive and wide-ranging; she discusses the implications of the maternal gaze, the eroticisation of children, and the cultural suspicion of the mother photographer, a product of the intimate relationships fostered by photography. See particularly the chapter "Maternal Exposures" 151-187. For an extended discussion of mother-daughter relationships, intimacy, and particularly eroticism and homo-eroticism in Hawarden's photographs, see Carol Mavor's book-length study, *Becoming*. For further discussion of the relationship between artist/ mothers and their adolescent daughters, see also Mary Jacobus's investigation of Berthe Morisot's paintings of her daughter, Julie Manet (*First Things* 269-90).

standing up and yet face each other seemingly asleep; the relational world implied by their confrontational position is undone by the solipsism of the internal world in which each seems caught up. In both photographs, the drapery, the textures, the patterns, the fabrics create the sense of another world, both rich and strange, and break the illusion of a safe domestic world, of a "real" three dimensional, containing space. The textured surfaces, and rich costumes function to "flatten" the picture, reminding us of its two-dimensionality, of its materiality as a photograph and of the complicated, illusory nature of all relationships. The sleeping or entranced figures avoid the complexities of the family by escaping into a safe space of dream and fantasy, apparently ignoring the rich garments they wear and the elaborate hangings and curtains which frame them. Sleep or the state of trance is their form of flight, of resistance to the demands and imperatives of the family, of reality, of time itself. The subjects in these photographs appear utterly determined to maintain their state of drugged or inebriated privacy; to open their eyes to the world around them might be to invite disaster – the plenitude will be exposed as absence. In Hawarden's photographs, all the life there is, is to be found inside the room, but it is a life against which these figures close their eyes, absenting themselves from the very space they inhabit.

Figure 5: Clementina and Isabella Grace Maude, 5 Princess Gardens, ca 1863-64

In Figures 6 and 7, the girls seem so intensely involved in their private worlds that they appear hardly alive. The rich textures, the closed eyes, the clinging hands, the exposed bodies overwhelm not only the viewer, but the subjects who appear excluded, not only from each other, but also from their own selves. In his definition of the uncanny as something once familiar and known from which we have become alienated through the process of repression, Freud also elucidates the part played (in the experience of the uncanny) by doublings, repetitions, and recurrences where "the subject identifies himself with someone else, so that he is in doubt as to which his self is, or substitutes the extraneous self for his own" (356). In these strange photographs which appear to expose hidden dimensions of familial existence, selves appear unrecognisable, dissolve into each other or are entirely disconnected; boundaries blur and dissolve. The uncanny here is an inhuman and estranging experience both of possession and of emptiness in the midst of the familiar.

Figure 6: Isabella Grace and Clementina Maude, 5 Princess Gardens, ca 1863-64

Figure 7: Isabella Grace and Clementina Maude, 5 Princess Gardens, ca 1863-64

It is precisely the mimesis of the photograph that points in the direction of traumatic loss, of absence, of the uncanny. Because the photograph is so profoundly connected to the real or the true (what already happened), it also inevitably announces the limitations of that connection; it reminds us that reality can never be held, contained or depicted. Indeed, the insistent present of and presence in the photograph always infers the absence that shadows it. Our looking at these photographs is generally constituted by our knowledge that *all* the subjects, as well as the photographer herself, are long dead. Barthes, who sees all photographs as being intimately associated with loss states that the "photograph tells me death in the future" (96). Thus, while these idyllic photographs exude sexuality, sensuality and vitality, their obsessive repetitions, doublings, and reflections also remind us of inevitable death, a death that occurs with each click of the camera. Barthes quotes Kafka, saying that "we photograph things in order to drive them out of our minds"

(53). But equally, one could argue that we photograph things because they are already driven from our minds; the photograph testifies to the instant already lost. The very realism of the photograph therefore points in the direction of its own unreality; realism, in its very efforts to represent the "real," can itself become spectral. Hawarden's photographs constantly draw attention to their own unreality, their own ghostliness.

This spectral aspect of reality imprints itself on the photograph of Isabella Grace and Clementina, an image which reminds us of the illusory nature of the real (Figure 8). The sense of unreality is created first by the use of the stereoscopic camera. The reiterated images function to underline the illusory nature of the scene and also to convey the idea that the young women live in two worlds. The viewer is thereby reminded that the two worlds are, at once, the real world that they once inhabited and the artificial, the material photograph we hold in our hand. The real intrudes in the shape of the headrest – a photographer's prop – protruding into the picture to remind us of the theatricality of the scene and of the presence of the photographer herself. Given the angle, Hawarden's image itself might be expected to be reflected in the photograph, but here she has deliberately manipulated the French doors so that her image is erased. The absence of the reflection once again reminds us of illusory nature of the photograph. The viewer thus experiences a sense of double discontinuity: the doubled image, the absent reflection, the ghostly reflections of the two sisters in the window glass image the withdrawal of reality for the viewer. The very materiality of Hawarden's photographs, indeed the very intensity of their realism, pushes them in the direction of unreality, of the ghostly, the uncanny, the spectral.
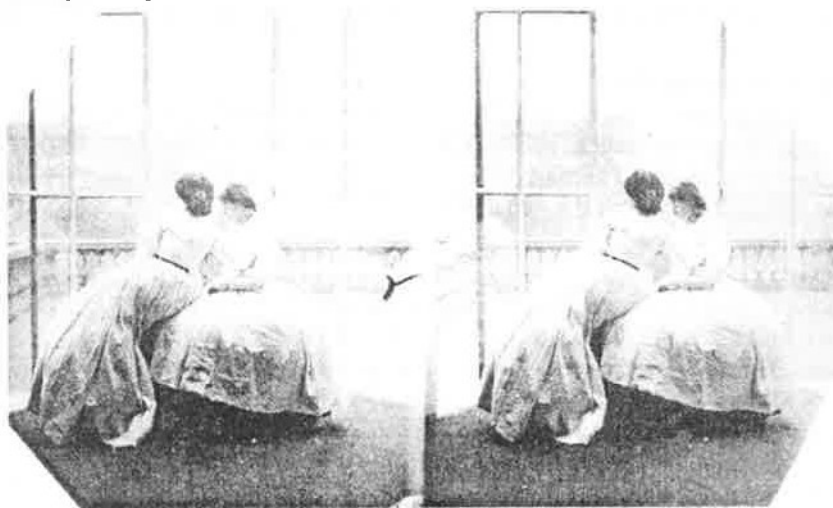

Figure 8: Isabella Grace and Clementina Maude, 5 Princess Gardens, ca 1861

Both Roland Barthes and Susan Sontag comment on the strange underside of photography. Towards the end of *Camera Lucida*, Barthes says that the photograph is a bizarre form of "hallucination" which passes beyond unreality into spectacle absorbing "what is dead" and "going to die" (115-17). In *On Photography*, Susan Sontag notes:

> Photographs, which themselves cannot explain anything, are inexhaustible invitations to deduction, speculation and fantasy. [. .
> .] [The photograph thus] confers on each moment the character of
> a mystery. [. . .] The ultimate wisdom of the photographic image is
> to say: 'There is the surface. Now think – or rather feel, intuit –
> what is beyond it, what the reality must be like if it looks this way.
> (23)

The "reality" of the photographs of Clementina, Lady Hawarden entices our glance with the surface gloss of a richly textured world, but then ineluctably holds our gaze, forces us to look beyond that smooth surface, pushes us to discern or intuit the mystery that resides there. Hawarden subtly investigates the material conditions and the delicate and complicated relationships that lie at the heart of family life. Her powerful photographs can be read as both unveiling and obscuring the ways in which the family is driven by its unconscious and the ways in which invisible ideological elements determine its existence and ensure its continuation. The apparent realism of her photographs interpellates and creates the other that announces its presence through a subliminal absence and haunting of the image.

Acknowledgements

Illustrations
Figure 1: Isabella Grace and Clementina Maude, 5 Princess Gardens, ca 1861-62;
    96x164 mm (stereoscopic); V&A PH 457-1968:499/D356
Figure 2: Isabella Grace and Clementina Maude, 5 Princess Gardens, ca 1862-63;
    112x80 mm; V&A PH 457-1968:555/D579
Figure 3: Clementina and Florence Elizabeth Maude, 5 Princess Gardens, ca 1861;
    94X148 mm (stereoscopic); V&A PH 457-1968:608/D332
Figure 4: Isabella Grace and Clementina Maude, 5 Princess Gardens, ca 1863-64;
    233x272 mm; V&A PH 373-1947/D664

Figure 5: Clementina and Isabella Grace Maude, 5 Princess Gardens, ca 1863-64; 238x262 mm; V&A PH 257-1947/D729

Figure 6: Isabella Grace and Clementina Maude, 5 Princess Gardens, ca 1863-64; 238x270 mm; V&A PH 255-1947/D662

Figure 7: Isabella Grace and Clementina Maude, 5 Princess Gardens, ca 1863-64; 231x252mm; V&A PH 278-1947/D663

Figure 8: Isabella Grace and Clementina Maude, 5 Princess Gardens, ca1861; 95x160mm; V&A PH 457-1968:248/D333

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