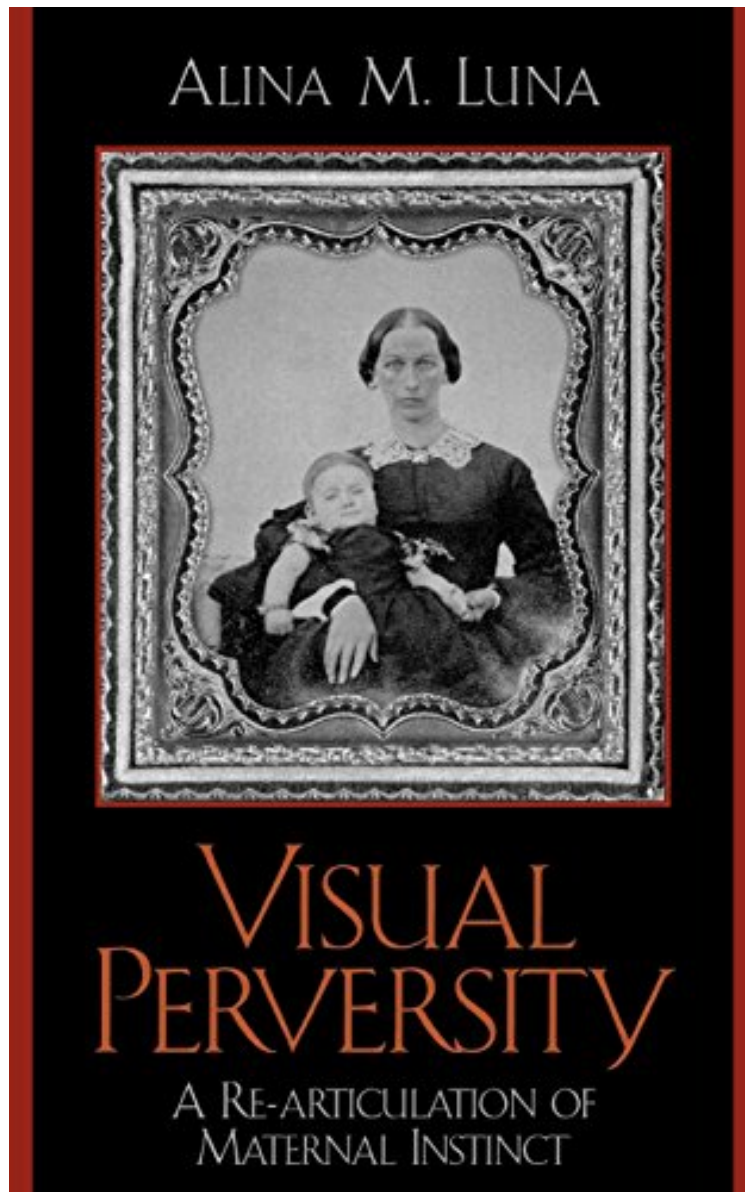


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Visual Perversity: A Re-articulation of Maternal Instinct

Alina M. Luna

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Alina M. Luna : Visual Perversity: A Re-articulation of Maternal Instinct before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Visual Perversity: A Re-articulation of Maternal Instinct:

Euripides' *Bacchae*, Colridge's "Christabel," de Sade's *Philosophy in the Bedroom*, and Hitchcock's *Psycho* share a common thread. In *Visual Perversity: A Re-Articulation of Maternal Instinct* Alina M. Luna links each of these texts through the problematic relationships that play out between mother and child. She locates these disturbing tensions in the visual register; the place where the mother attempts to maintain her primal connection to her child, even at catastrophic costs. In each of the four works under consideration by the author, the logic of perversion masked beneath this gaze unfolds disturbingly. Luna's careful exposition takes place in four chapters, over four expertly constructed theoretical vignettes. Scholars working in cultural studies, literary criticism, continental philosophy and especially gender studies will find Luna's approach novel and inventive.

Visual Perversity is a compelling narrative of the violence cascading from a mother's love. Luna's account targets the look between mother and child in its most extreme (and lethal) instances, capturing in the elusive movement between the visual and the textual a disturbing double image (of love and destruction) that cuts across centuries and genres. From *The Bacchae* to de Sade, from the absent mother in *Christabel* to the all-too-present one in Hitchcock's *Psycho*, Luna addresses, in commanding and elegant arguments, the power of a relationship that in these texts undermines life, liberty, and most certainly the pursuit of happiness. What is original in this outstanding contribution to cultural studies is Luna's focus on the mother's gaze as the instrument of murder—a gaze that dis-acknowledges the child and thus its origin, that dismembers (literally) the child and (figuratively) the most intense, fundamental relationship on which the familial and social fabric is built. (Helen Regueiro Elam, Professor of English, SUNY-Albany)

Alina Luna's Visual Perversity: A Re-articulation of Maternal Instinct is a fine piece of hermeneutic detective work that traverses epistemological, social, and psychoanalytic borders. By putting into question two key modernist tropes—the maternal and the eye—Luna finds a secret in the family crypt of modernity: that behind her role as origin or source, the figure of mother exercises destroying powers. Luna embarks on challenging readings of Euripides, Coleridge, Hitchcock and Sade, that compel us to reconsider how terms like gaze and maternity function... (Tom Cohen, Professor and Chair of English at the SUNY--Albany)

Alina Luna's Visual Perversity: A Re-articulation of Maternal Instinct is a fine piece of hermeneutic detective work that traverses epistemological, social, and psychoanalytic borders. By putting into question two key modernist tropes—the "maternal" and the eye—Luna finds a secret in the family crypt of modernity: that behind her role as origin or source, the figure of "mother" exercises destroying powers. Luna embarks on challenging readings of Euripides, Coleridge, Hitchcock and Sade, that compel us to reconsider how terms like "gaze" and maternity function. (Tom Cohen, Professor and Chair of English at the SUNY--Albany)

About the Author
Alina M. Luna is Lecturer in English at the State University of New York, Albany.