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Reflection #4: Rhetorical Analysis of “Heirlooms, Redefined”

Tiya Miles and Michelle May-Curry, “Heirlooms, Redefined” argues that black family heirlooms may be untraditional but still carry generational significance. This argument opposes the idea that traditional family heirlooms are “practical tools” instead of everyday items that are passed down. This perspective also draws to the idea that black families often come from an enslaved background making the traditional family idea of what a family heirloom is less significant or nonexistent. To provide evidence to this argument Miles and May-Curry gathered and interviewed ten black photographers to capture the stories of their family’s heirloom through photographs. Miles and May-Curry's article of journalism was published by the *New York Times* and the projects audience is not only the readers of the *New York Times* but more specifically black families and families both with and without heirlooms to grasp the significance of kinship bonds. Miles and May-Curry are writing in the present and reflecting on the past events of each of the photographer's heirloom.

Their project was structured with three assorted contextual paragraphs, below the paragraphs are the ten rows of images with subtexts that tell the stories of each of the photographers’ heirlooms. Miles and May-Curry used the photographer’s images to create visual context and storytelling of each of the photographer’s different family heirlooms they had and how significant they were to them and their families. To emphasize their argument Miles and May-Curry had one-word phrases in between in the subtext of the images after story telling about their family heirloom, these phrases emphasized what kind of value of importance this heirloom held to that photographer and their family. Miles and May-Curry tell a short story about

the photographer's and their relationship to the heirloom to provide evidence for their argument and context for the photos. A stylistic trait used by Miles and May-Curry is displayed in sharing other individual experiences, to explain the different heirlooms that carried generational significance. The authors praise the kinship bonds of black families because of their families' heirlooms.

The authors use emotional appeal through sharing photographers' heirlooms with visualizations to appeal the black community and shed light on the non-traditional heirlooms that still carry generational significance. For example, in the project Miles and May-Curry interview Chanelle Stone and share about her family heirloom of a white church dress that was passed down from her great grandmother Zelma Murphy who wore this dress on special occasions and to church often. In this collage of images, the one-word phrase that is enlarged and emphasized by the authors was ceremony. This dress was perceived by Stone as a ceremonial gift passed through the generations, and she was honored to receive a gift that bonded her with her great grandmother. Overall, throughout this project the storytelling of families' heirlooms acted as an emotional appeal that was relatable and highlighted the perception of black families' heirlooms.