History of Photography

ISSN: 0308-7298 (Print) 2150-7295 (Online) Journal homepage: http://www.tandfonline.com/loi/thph20

Women's Views: The Narrative Stereograph in Nineteenth-Century America Melody Davis. University of New Hampshire Press, Durham, NH, 2015. 248 pages, with 16 colour and 126 black & white illustrations, and 3D viewer. Softcover £30.00, ISBN 978-1-611-68839-9

Martha Langford

To cite this article: Martha Langford (2017) Women's Views: The Narrative Stereograph in Nineteenth-Century America Melody Davis. University of New Hampshire Press, Durham, NH, 2015. 248 pages, with 16 colour and 126 black & white illustrations, and 3D viewer. Softcover £30.00, ISBN 978-1-611-68839-9 , History of Photography, 41:1, 93-95, DOI: 10.1080/03087298.2017.1287335

To link to this article: http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/03087298.2017.1287335

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The vernacular turn in photographic studies brought all manner of new/old objects to the fore. Material inclusiveness was only the first step. As modernism's prized photographic object – the authored or authorised fine print – made room for less securely pedigreed forms, the door was also opened to different definitions of authorship. The editor, the curator, the archivist, and the compiler lined up to succeed the photographer as producers of meaning. Slowly, but with steady progression, the average consumer also entered the fray. Transitional discourse focused on the intentions of those who had made and manipulated the image within systems of representation, whether public or private. But it was only a matter of time until the full ramifications of the vernacular turn could be felt, and feeling is the key word.

Photographic studies, and specifically its systems of accreditation, is decisively being expanded by the reconceptualisation of the subject in terms of agency and performativity. We might say that meaning is under new management. The photographic image that was once seen to act upon a subjugated subject – the practitioner being only the point in the institutional spear – has been reframed as an instrument of subject formation, confirmation, or experimentation by active participants. In re-readings of studio practices, researchers are increasingly curious about the photographic experience of those who posed, whether paying, paid, or coerced into doing so. The afterlives of such images demand to be traced into different modes of engagement – they function differently under different systems of values. But the process of reinterpretation is further reaching. As photographic theorists consider the varieties of photographic experience, we are realising that we are not the first to take these pleasures – that we have been sold a bill of goods about photography's role in anaesthetising the collective imagination. The power of photography is not in question, but the levers of power most certainly are. Some of the most interesting research being conducted today is reversing the dynamic of mediation, opening photographic discourse to everyday objects and consumer mentalities once deemed below notice of ideological and epistemological investigation.

Enter the stereograph, which in the hands of photographic historian and poet Melody Davis exceeds its brief as a Victorian entertainment. Published in the University of New Hampshire Press series 'Becoming Modern: New Nineteenth-Century Studies', Davis's *Women's Views* is a contribution to the literature of Euro-American societal change, and her particular focus on photographic experience in the domestic sphere places the accent on gender and private life history. The camera is not in the woman's hands, as we have seen in recuperative feminist histories; rather, her power rests in decisional consumption and regulation of activities within her sphere of influence, which is the bourgeois parlour. Davis argues that commercial production of the stereograph for the domestic market – not all types of stereographs, but the sub-genre of 'narratives, also called comics and sentimentals' – were not only comedic treatments of domestic space, but the instruments of its transformation. This position is vigorously and often entertainingly argued. 'The bourgeois wife as the compass needle for narration' is a good example of Davis's colourful phrasing. In this sense, the societal transformation she has traced is triply performed by actors giving it a '*gendered cast*' (original emphasis): the female models who pose for these staged photographs; the female consumers who brought such photographic entertainments into the family circle; and the female author, informed by her readings of Oliver Wendell Holmes, Bishop George Berkeley, Jacques Lacan, and Luce Irigaray, who speaks for the mind/body experiences of nineteenth-century American 'women who held the view'. An echo of American poet William Ross Wallace's paean to maternal power, 'The Hand that Rocks the Cradle is the Hand that Rules the World', can be heard and felt in this phrase, and indeed throughout Davis's study. Ross wrote his most famous line in 1865; Davis's book covers stereography in the United States from 1870 to 1910.

The introduction establishes the significance and popularity of stereo photography ('billions' sold), its place at the junction of science, art, and entertainment, and, most helpfully, a clear description of the object and the way it works in the brain. Davis recapitulates the histories and literature of the form, and provides a lexicon of technical and cultural terms. Along the way, she calls out a few neglecters or disparagers of the form, Beaumont Newhall among the usual suspects, and mounts a lengthy and virulent attack on Jonathan Crary who is ultimately accused of rehearsing Baudelairean misogyny and phobias. The case is perhaps overstated. Davis is more disciplined in the management of her extensive database of two thousand narrative stereoviews. Some of her evidence comes from Victorian England, as do some of her examples. The captions are silent on source collections, which is a shame. Davis compensates somewhat by correlating three stylistic periods – picturesque, narrative, and personal narrative – with national waves of production. Her clear favourite is the American narrative view, a phase that began with emulation and outright thievery of European models, and then flowered into home-grown genre scenes.

Working with objects that have been undervalued, Davis has learned a great deal at the knee of the dedicated amateur: she acknowledges her debt to members of the National

Stereoscopic Association (the other NSA). Her first substantial chapter, however, derives from book-learning, drawing together nineteenth-century concepts of somatic knowledge, developmental stages of consciousness and self-encounter through the Lacanian gaze, and the foiling of this mastery by Irigaray's mirrored speculum – an ambitious stitching together of nineteenth-century observation and speculation with twentieth-century psychoanalytic and feminist theory. Davis has partners in this consortium, notably Nancy West for her exploration of Holmes's haptic cognition and Beth Rayfield for her correlation of Irigaray's rebellious image of penetration with the 'disquieting spatiality' of the stereograph. As Davis develops these ideas, she is entangling them in descriptions of stereoviews that stage both desire and intrusion as female experience that occurs in the private sphere; that is, in the translation space of the mind/body that makes two prints into one three-dimensional image of envelopment. One wonders what queer theory will make of such dualism, or indeed how the dedicated amateur will receive this localisation of 3D experience. There is no sloughing it off, however, as notional. The somatic analogy is fundamental to Davis's argument, as she pursues its literalisation to the parlour.

Neither public nor private, the parlour is a space of complex embodiment. Davis places the stereoscope at its very core. Developing her analogy, she is careful to anchor it in Victorian mentalities, which are always revelatory in their classifications of the sexes. The woman she discovers in both the literature and the stereograph is a stereotype: 'Women were thought to naturally emanate their settings, as oysters do a pearly shell, raising the value and lustre of all within their sphere'. This phenomenon is expressed in the décor of the parlour and deployed for both verisimilitude and symbolisation in popular literature and stereoscopic narratives, both forms heavily laden with social values. Whether these messages were consciousness-raising or more comfortably calcifying has been taken up by other theorists, such as Amy Kaplan and Laura Wexler. Davis's position is that they were 'operational', a non-judgemental position that allows her to describe the dynamics of the personal narrative style that particularly interests her: its creation of characters through the melodramatic enactment of reading novels and letters. A telling example illustrates the fevered imagination of the character – a jilted husband in Melander and Brother's *Gone with a Handsomer Man* (1875) – with a rather flat double exposure portraying the runaways. Davis also compares 'the read-view-read-view rhythm of stereography' with the punctuation of the silent film with title cards. The cleverness of these constructions confirmed women's competence to read the signs of domestic culture.

Who were these visual literates? In a chapter on manufacturing and marketing, Davis demonstrates that advertising targeted women. Determining the sex of the purchaser is much harder, although inscriptions offer compelling evidence of women sharing stereographic jokes. As for labour, it was more clearly gendered: men were the photographers and door-to-door salesmen; women made the things. Davis reviews the rich literature of marketing strategies, including early twentieth-century manuals that trained salesmen in how to implant desire for stereoscopic experience by pushing themselves into the home and physically running the show for their female 'prospects'. She must have searched high and low for a narrative view staging the sexual dynamics of such point-of-purchase foreplay. What she finds is the opposite – the woman kissing the salesman while her husband is absorbed by the view. In rural areas, the salesman's target was 'egg money' – the income produced by the farm wife and the basis of her economic agency. Homespun comedy sold well into this market and Davis proffers an apposite example in the two-part narrative of 1901: *Stealing My Eggs Are You?* and *Pa Don't You Know Your Own Daughter?* Attired in breeches and reaching her chores by bicycle, she is a New Woman, which is the source of the misrecognition.

Part one ends with declining sales and methods, notably chromolithography, which weakened the stereo effect and turned the stereograph into a commercial give-away. Other forms of material culture were beginning to crowd in. What to do with stereoviews gathering dust? Any student of the album has encountered stereo halves, mere pictures. Davis's portrait of the collector helps us to imagine this practical soul, preserving the essence of the souvenir or sharing the view with her sister or daughter. 'Waste not, want not' is another enduring proverb.

Its framework thus established, now comes the unadulterated fun of this book, which is its presentation of four genres of narrative stereoviews: children and courtship; brides and marriage; the erotic narrative; and 'the gender bungler – a troika comprised of the New Woman, the Old Man, and the bachelor'. As Davis introduces this joy ride, she establishes a repertoire that values both sentimentality and ribald comedy. She sets up a carnivalesque atmosphere of experimental emancipation – safe in its confinement to the view, but also memorable as change already envisioned. These and other dualities encourage what Davis calls 'plastic thinking', a fusion of form and ideation developed in the first part of her book.

Women's agency continues to be stressed throughout. A stereograph of a child blowing bubbles is the image of a mother's role correctly performed, allowing her child both protection and independence. The wedding series idealises the event, while the marriage series satirises its realities: too many children, a hen-pecked husband, dissolution from drink,

and wifely intemperance as she turns with righteous anger on her husband. Erotic views, set within the home, involve all manner of transgressions: master acting upon servant or wife dallying with her cross-dressing tutor. Sadomasochism and voyeurism 'lite' cross the gender divide: 'Women, while specularised, are specularising themselves, and men, by the all-for-one logic of the home, seem to be doing the same'. Their conventional roles are reinforced by minor outrages. The same gendered repertoire of 'imaginative possibilities and covert critiques' is canvassed in the last chapter's parade of anti-heroes and action heroines, interpreted as throughout the book, with recourse to contemporaneous literature and popular culture.

Davis ends *Women's Views* with a reflection on exclusions, beginning with race and racism, which is effectively invisible in her case studies. She has operated within the walls of the American domestic sphere and, as she bluntly states, 'what the narrative view did not show is what it did not wish to invite inside'. The reinforcement of those walls by market capitalism is fully acknowledged, as is the transnational circulation of images and themes. Davis recognises the social, political, and economic delimitations of women's lives throughout this book. The author never fails to draw the lines, and even as she develops a sense of women's expanding horizons, she never exaggerates the outcomes. Her subjects in formation are not the actors in their pictures and they are rarely the creators. They are the consumers: willing participants in an economy of entertainment. As domestic impresarios, women are given their due, including the occasional scolding. Informed and inspired by both contemporaneous and contemporary perspectives, Davis offers a close reading of imaginative possibilities, the space of the stereoview internalised and shared.

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http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/03087298.2017.1287335

The Miracle of Analogy, or, The History of Photography, Part I
Kaja Silverman. Stanford University Press, Palo Alto, CA, 2015. 240 pages, with 96 black & white illustrations. Softcover $21.95, ISBN 978-0-804-79399-5

'The photographic image does not belong to the natural world' – so wrote Hubert Damisch in *Five Notes for a Phenomenology of the Photographic Image* (1978). The photograph, he claimed, is 'a product of human labour, a cultural object whose being – in the phenomenological sense of the term – cannot be dissociated precisely from its historical meaning and from the necessarily datable project in which it originates'. The indexicality of the photographic image, the spatial conventions on which the camera obscura and the photographic camera are based, and the industrial character of photographic activity itself: the essence of photography is constituted, Damisch writes, by historical circumstances such as these, which have marked photography's emergence and its use.

But what if photography was not a human invention? Rather than an index or a trace of an absent referent, what if the photograph was part of the world – the world's way of announcing its presence? These are among the claims that Kaja Silverman makes in *The Miracle of Analogy*. Photography, Silverman suggests, is not a medium invented by certain individuals at a specific point in history. In fact, she argues, it is 'the world's primary way of revealing itself to us – of demonstrating that it exists', and the means by which it does so is not representation, but analogy. Silverman understands the latter term in a very specific sense: rather than 'sameness, symbolic equivalence, logical adequation, or even a rhetorical relationship – like a metaphor or a simile – in which one term functions as a placeholder for another', the photograph's analogical character lies in the way that it acts as a vehicle for revealing 'the authorless and untranscendable similarities that structure Being, […] and that give everything the same ontological weight'. In its short history, as Silverman shows, can be found analogies for some of the most urgent questions shaping the past five centuries of western metaphysics.

Silverman's argument is built around a meticulous re-reading of accounts of photography's early years, looking not just at the images that were created, but at the language in which these discoveries were set out. Alongside this, she sets a parallel investigation into the history of western philosophy – a history in which the camera obscura features prominently as an analogy for both the human eye and human consciousness – and the ongoing debates around the ontology of the subject. The notion of the photograph as a representation – a means of mastering the visible world – is aligned, Silverman argues, with the Cartesian notion of the modern subject as the centre of the world and the agent of this mastery. By demonstrating that the world existed beyond the boundaries of sensory perception, the camera seemed to solve the problem of objectivity that Descartes had only been able to overcome by substituting mental representations for duplicitous and unreliable retinal