

American Iconology

EDITED BY DAVID C. MILLER



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from John Hubert

Frontispiece: Thomas Cole, *View from Mount Holyoke, Northampton, Massachusetts, after a Thunderstorm (The Oxbow)*, 1836 (detail).

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Contributors

BRIGITTE BAILEY
Assistant Professor
Department of English
University of New Hampshire

DAVID BJELAJAC
Associate Professor
Department of Art History
The George Washington University

SARAH BURNS
Associate Professor
Department of Art History
Indiana University

ROBERT H. BYER
Assistant Professor
Department of English
Rhodes College, Memphis

HARRIET SCOTT
CHESSMAN
Independent Scholar

EMILY FOURMY CUTLER
Assistant Professor
Department of English
Arizona State University West

DAVID LUBIN
Associate Professor
Departments of Art History
and American Studies
Colby College

ANGELA MILLER
Assistant Professor
Department of Art History
Washington University, St. Louis

DAVID C. MILLER
Assistant Professor
Department of English
Allegheny College

KENNETH JOHN MYERS
Assistant Professor
Department of American Literature
and Civilization
Middlebury College

LAURA RIGAL
Assistant Professor
Department of English
University of Chicago

ALAN WALLACH
Professor
Departments of Art History
and American Studies
William and Mary College

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Introduction

This book by scholars trained in art history, literature, and American studies places nineteenth-century American art within a variety of interdisciplinary contexts. Reflecting the growing theoretical and methodological sophistication that has transformed the humanities over the past two decades, the perspectives represented here bridge divisions between visual and verbal representation in order to relate literature, painting, sculpture, and monument art to the economic and social forces as well as the cultural needs and aspirations that gave them shape and meaning and that were influenced by them in turn.

Such a project adds to the growing field of iconological studies and both benefits from and contributes to the developing theory of iconology. In the 1930s Erwin Panofsky introduced the concept of iconology, which he opposed to iconography. Actually, he isolated three levels of meaning above the formal basis of any image. The first level consists of “primal” or “natural” meanings, including the recognition of facts and expressions (a level generally mistaken, Panofsky contended, for the formal level). We see something—a collection of sense data—as a manifold, a man or a tree, and we also respond empathetically to a complex of emotions evoked by this manifold. The second level is that of iconography or conventional meaning, involving the connection of motifs with themes and of concepts with images.

The third level of meaning, the iconological or intrinsic, offers “a unifying principle which underlies and explains both the visible event and its intelligible significance, and which determines even the form in which the visible event takes shape.”¹ For Panofsky, iconology is to be “apprehended by ascertaining those underlying principles which reveal the basic attitude of a nation, a period, a class, a religious or philosophical persuasion—qualified by one personality and condensed into one work” (30).

Recently, W. J. T. Mitchell has refashioned the concept of iconology by centering

it in the relation between the visual and the verbal and by closely relating it to ideology. Iconology, for Mitchell, is the study of both “what images say” and “what to say about images”—the rhetoric of images, in other words.² So conceived, iconology offers a touchstone for the chapters in this book, providing a rationale for their focus on imagery as opposed to textuality, which for Mitchell serves primarily as a foil to imagery. Mitchell has led the way in arguing that the visual and the verbal are not in fact distinct ontological categories but distill themselves only in relation to each other. In *Iconology: Image, Text, Ideology* (1986), he argued that this ongoing process of mutual redefinition, subject as it is to changing social and cultural practices, is a sensitive index of ideology, broadly defined as “the structure of values and interests that informs any representation of reality” (4).

I do not claim that all the chapters in this book self-consciously share Mitchell’s concerns and assumptions. The authors represented here take a variety of methodological and theoretical stances. Yet their very attempts to correlate the discourse of art with discourses as diverse as the religious, the political, and the commercial evolve from the premise that the visual and the verbal are deeply implicated in each other. Mitchell’s work offers stimulation and guidance to anyone who would explore this fundamental relation. Moreover, just as he has shown how deeply interrelated they are, Mitchell has challenged the tendency in contemporary theory and practice to ignore or discount any distinction between the visual and the verbal. I shall explore some of the implications of this challenge in the Afterword.

The high degree of visual-verbal interaction throughout the American literary and artistic tradition makes the application of a theory of iconology to this body of material all the more imperative. It is especially timely in view of the considerable amount of work already being done in this direction on British and European culture. In a recent essay on the historiography of American art, Wanda Corn noted, “There are already signs that some scholars are trying to synthesize the close textual reading of pictures (events, spaces, buildings) with concerns for social and cultural analysis. By the same token, it may also be that the new interpreters are moving toward a more historically-based exegesis of art. Time will tell.”³ Corn cited Bryan Jay Wolf’s article “All the World’s a Code: Art and Ideology in Nineteenth-Century American Painting” (1984) as an example of work that probes this nexus.

Wolf’s article focused on the issue of ideology as the link between a close formal and semiotic reading of American romantic paintings and the social and cultural context. Writing about key works by Asher B. Durand, Richard Caton Woodville, John Quidor, and David Gilmore Blythe, Wolf explored the ways in which these painters relocated their own artistic pursuits within an emerging market economy by participating in the restructuring of ways of seeing and in the recodifying of knowledge. He concluded that “acculturation for these artists had to do less with direct moral uplift than with the structuring of social perceptions. It was a question of representation—who controlled the ways of seeing. The result of this artistic strategy was twofold: it transformed representation into a cognitive structure fraught with enormous ideological weight and it produced a ‘textualized’ version of reality as a series of semiotic codes that we are still living with today.”⁴

Wolf's speculations are readily compatible with a growing corpus of work by British and American scholars on the role of ideology in British neoclassical and romantic painting and literature.⁵ In particular, concern with the sublime and the picturesque as they evolved in England has led these scholars to interrogate the ways in which such aesthetic categories functioned to naturalize conventions of seeing the landscape and the social life related to it. In assuming such perception to be intuitive and spontaneous, romantic modes of landscape depiction and description displaced matters of power and property from the actuality of class, gender, and race hegemony to aesthetic and symbolic realms, thus promoting them as transcendent and universal truths.

The chapters of this book follow the lead of such work on the British tradition by situating American art and literature within its various ideological matrices. To one degree or another, all of them consider the interplay of visual and verbal modes in what is best characterized as the development of an American national subjectivity. The social construction of this national subjectivity can be synchronized with the emergence of middle-class identity, which was propelled by the transformation of capitalism in the early nineteenth century. Artists and writers increasingly responded to and also helped to direct the opportunities opened up by expansion across the continent and into global financial markets. They interacted closely with such processes of the developing market economy as consumerism and commodification.

The complicated relations explored in this book among modes of expression, collective consciousness, and economic and social forces deepen and expand our understanding of nineteenth-century American cultural development on a number of fronts. Several chapters examine the role of gender differentiation in distilling new symbolic values. Others consider the instrumentality of landscape representation in the shift from a prophetic view of American destiny to one increasingly characterized by commercial values. The artist's relation to the national enterprise is a recurrent theme throughout this book. A number of the chapters theorize about the connection between visual and verbal modes. Certain discussions probe the changing role of the beholder as a critical aspect of the formal and even stylistic dimensions of works of art. Others foreground the conception of the visual that interacted with the role of the beholder at certain points in time. Taken together, these essays provide an overview of the changing relation between elite culture and popular or mass culture as the century progressed.

Perhaps the most important issue at stake in all this is the theoretical problem raised by these essays: just how are we to do justice to the intricate associations among art and literature, the changing nature of subjectivity, and the developing cultural context? While iconology provides an umbrella for the various concerns of this book, thinking about ideology over the past two decades has transformed the very concept of iconology. Indeed, if we accept Mitchell's definition of iconology as the imagistic counterpart of ideology, we do well to consider at greater length the role of ideology in contemporary cultural studies. The question of ideology, moreover, brings into play the issues of representation and motivation, hence providing a

fuller understanding of what the chapters in this book offer to the ongoing discussion of iconology and its place in cultural historiography.

The function of ideology, as it has come to be conceived more recently, is not to mask or mystify the exercise of power or the consolidation of property. Such words refer to a far less sophisticated notion of the Marxist relation between base (political economy) and superstructure (culture) than the one currently being refined under the influence of postmodernist theory. Far from suggesting that cultural products reflect the conditions of economic production and that ideology therefore operates as a kind of false consciousness, the emerging synthesis of Marxism, poststructuralism, semiotics, and feminism has issued in a conception of ideology that involves a much more dynamic interaction between the two. Departing from the earlier reification of the economic sector as a structure in some way mirrored by the superstructure of culture, one influential perspective on this relation reformulates both the economic realm and the expressive aspects of culture as processes of production continuously engaged in a dialectical exchange of values which often undercut each other. According to Raymond Williams, “We have to revalue ‘the base’ away from the notion of a fixed economic or technological abstraction, and towards the specific activities of men in real social and economic relationships, containing fundamental contradictions and varieties and therefore always in a state of dynamic process.”⁶ Simultaneously, the symbolic productivity that constitutes the superstructure achieves equivalence with the practical and material processes of production that generate the base by being removed from the transcendent realm of creativity and placed in the world of changing market forces and technological developments that always mediate creativity.

The equivalence of the symbolic with the material and practical informs Laura Rigal’s analysis of Peale’s *Mammoth* in the opening chapter. In considering representations of the mastodon in the rhetoric surrounding Charles Willson Peale’s natural history museum as well as in two of the artist’s most famous paintings—*Exhuming the Mastodon* (1806–08) and *The Artist in His Museum* (1822)—Rigal explores the ambivalence at stake in the Jeffersonian identification of private productivity with national good. Taking as her starting point the problem of labor at the heart of the Jeffersonian political economy (as opposed to the elite and commercial ideology of the Federalists), she traces the various conflicts evolving from the inevitable association of agricultural and artisanal labor with expansion across the continent. Peale’s work of cultural production registered profound anxiety about “labor’s potential for revolutionary change,” a power that threatened to undo the very possibility for self-making. Within this context, Peale’s *Museum* and its mastodon emerge as symbolic expressions of the “ethic of self-production” at the heart of the Jeffersonian-Republican political economy which helped to transform the profound contradictions inherent in it.

In order to avoid the hierarchical implications of the base–superstructure model that underlie the tendency to turn economics and culture into separate entities rather than interacting processes, it is perhaps more accurate to talk, as Williams does, of the “totality of social practices.” But as he goes on to point out, while such a dynamic notion comports with the premise that social being determines conscious-

ness, it inevitably threatens to do away with the very basis for that determination. If we can speak meaningfully of the social construction of the subject or self along with its various forms of expression, we also risk losing sight of any priority in the connection of subjects to the system of social practices. With it disappears any notion of causality as well as of human freedom. Williams therefore prefers the concept of hegemony to that of the totality of social practices because it reinstates priority without bringing back the conceptual hierarchy that marred the older reflective model of culture. It does so by pointing to the exercise of power from above, of one class over another.⁷ For Williams, hegemony nevertheless “supposes the existence of something which is truly total . . . which is lived at such a depth, which saturates the society to such an extent, and which, as Gramsci put it, even constitutes the substance and limit of common sense for most people under its sway, that it corresponds to the reality of social experience very much more clearly than any notions derived from the formula of base and superstructure” (37).

It is not difficult to see the relevance of this formulation of the diffusion of power for the role of art in an expanding nation in which authority was decentralized to an unprecedented degree yet where social and economic elites (Charles Willson Peale is a good example) still strove to maintain control. Within this context, works of art functioned to internalize power relations among members of their audience at a profoundly unconscious level. Rigal, accordingly, is interested in the way Peale’s Museum as well as the bones of the mastodon housed within it frames the visitor as both subject and object of his own self-production, suggesting not only the project of self-making related to Republican virtue and middle-class aspiration but also self-mastery and self-containment. In her view, the Jeffersonian political economy advocated by Peale “aimed to produce a self-regulating social order by lifting all external, coercive force from the human body, while widening and deepening (or democratizing and elevating) the social field, wherein all persons were free not only to appear but to become the independent objects of their own production.”

This concern with what Michel Foucault termed the “panoptic” displacement and diffusion of power is shared by Alan Wallach in “Making a Picture of the View from Mount Holyoke.” In examining two preparatory drawings for Thomas Cole’s *The Oxbow*, Wallach probes the historical processes leading up to the crystallization of the panoptic or panoramic mode that characterizes the painting. He considers these drawings “in terms of the dynamics of a complex set of interrelated, and mutually reinforcing, cultural practices,” showing how the apparatus of the panorama, as a structure for representing the landscape, conditioned Cole’s own composition: “The panorama might thus be thought of as a machine or engine of sight in which the visible world was reproduced in a way that hid or disguised the fact that vision required an apparatus of production.” As with the experience of visiting Peale’s Museum in Rigal’s account, “what was being produced was not only a spectacle but a spectator with a particular relation to reality.” The grafting of this convention onto the landscape issued in the “panoptic sublime,” a moment in which vision and power converged in the “sovereign gaze” (the phrase is Foucault’s). In appropriating and naturalizing this convention for seeing the landscape, Cole not only solved the problem of composition facing him in the view from Mount Holyoke but encoded

"new forms of middle-class hegemony." Wallach thus sees the ascent of Mount Holyoke as "a stunning metaphor for social aspiration and social dominance."

In "On the Cultural Construction of Landscape Experience: Contact to 1830," Kenneth John Myers takes a genealogical view in illuminating the emergence of aesthetic perception as a mode of internalizing authority. Myers argues that American romantic landscapes like those of Cole and Cooper set the stage for the popularization of the mental skills needed for appreciating landscape by representing them as if they were innate or natural. In considering *The Pioneers* (1823), Myers shows how Cooper contrasted Natty's natural ability to appreciate and interpret the landscape with the learning of Elizabeth Temple, which depends on the history of landscape appreciation. Cooper's portrait of Natty "obscures that history by promoting the culturally powerful fiction that landscape appreciation is a natural ability available to all uncorrupted men and women." Similarly, Cole's paintings of the Catskills in the 1820s superseded visual representations of that region that had treated it as a tourist resort, reflecting a self-consciousness about the cultivation necessary to respond to their beauty. In erasing the telltale traces of civilization, these images constructed the wilderness and the artist-prophet's relation to it in mythic terms.

Before the 1820s many well-to-do Americans knew "how to objectify natural environments as picturesque landscapes and to interpret them as illustrative of moral truths, but the cultural significance of the meanings they read into natural scenery was limited by the self-consciousness with which they approached the act of interpretation." Landscape could therefore "not be invoked as a higher kind of evidence as to the nature of the world or of God's purposes in it." Myers stresses the act of forgetting which characterized the new middle-class ethos. Aesthetic response was imagined to be spontaneous and intuitive: "Economically privileged Americans first learned to objectify natural environments as landscapes and then learned to forget the mental labor involved in this objectification." The "labour of admiring" referred to by the early nineteenth-century British traveler Basil Hall became so habitual as to seem instinctual. Much of Myers's argument is taken up with an effort to recover the long historical process behind this naturalization of the landscape which transformed both its representation and its meaning and which culminated in the invention of the picturesque, "a self-consciously disinterested mode of pictorial objectification."

For Angela Miller, the internalization of power relations extends to artistic composition and style. In "The Mechanisms of the Market and the Invention of Western Regionalism: The Example of George Caleb Bingham," Miller takes up Rigal's concern for the role of art in furthering nationalism and follows it into the 1850s with the emergence of the mass market. She shows how Bingham's paintings—especially his famous *Fur Traders Descending the Missouri* (1845)—implicitly advanced a political program closely linked to Henry Clay's "American System." Pictorially endowing the fluid society of the frontier with an illusory stability, these paintings reconciled regionalism and nationalism, western variety and social permanence. Miller attributes a similar function to the work of the Southwestern Humorists and to the promotion of the Daniel Boone legend. The assimilation of the West by the nation may have taken place primarily through trade and the emerging national

market, but it was also brought about “through cultural mechanisms, in this case the forms of high art, that normalized and situated the exotic, the marginal, and the unfamiliar” within a metaphoric temporal frame that cast this early period of growth as “the adolescent or primitive phase of national identity.”

In Miller’s view, “Bingham’s classicizing style served as a semantic code through which to negotiate the competing claims of local and universal truth.” But by the 1850s the artist’s critical reputation was beginning to suffer from a confusion of codes that extended beyond his art to its critical reception. While for some “his efforts to translate a dialect into the lexical and semantic conventions of the King’s English” made his vernacular subject matter palatable, others found it unsuitable. This disagreement reflected a basic ambiguity in current definitions of character, as either natural or conventional, which corresponded to divergent attitudes toward the national enterprise. Thus for Miller, a certain ironic complication of meaning evolved from the interaction between the artist and his increasingly pluralistic audience.

Fundamentally in question here are two interrelated issues: the problem of artistic intention and the problem of audience. Both impinge upon the scholarly interpretation of works of art in ways that transform our notion of the role of historical context. The older reflective theory of culture and ideology, whether basically positivist or Marxist, failed to see the intention of an artist or writer as sufficiently problematic. Whether a private act of transcendental intuition or a disguised motive grounded in a system of social and economic privilege, intention was conceived of as being unilateral, and history was thought to unfold along essentially conspiratorial lines. Panofsky’s concept of iconology complicated this relation of artistic or authorial intention to historical context. In his formulation, the meaning of a work of art lies somewhere beyond the subject in the iconographic sense, while the source of artistic intentionality lies somewhere beyond the subject as creator. As he noted, the symbolic values of a work of art “are often unknown to the artist himself and may even emphatically differ from what he intended to express” (31).

Moreover, from our point of view, the meaning of a work of art changes from generation to generation and even from person to person. The word *subject* also conveniently points to the beholder or reader whose individual response takes place within a certain horizon of expectations and possibilities that constitutes an audience at any given time and place. Since Panofsky, the development of reader-response criticism and reception theory, along with the pervasive influence of phenomenology and hermeneutics, has helped both to locate the work of art or literature more precisely (yet necessarily more open-endedly) within this intersubjective realm and to lodge it more profoundly within the historical continuum that constitutes intersubjectivity. Current historicism has gone well beyond Panofsky in its ability, through the powerful tool of ideological analysis, to explore the realm of intrinsic meaning as it continually reconstitutes the different types of subject and their connections to each other.

The conflict between an artist’s intention and his audience’s response occupies David Bjelajac in “The Boston Elite’s Resistance to Washington Allston’s *Elijah* in the

Desert." Bjelajac is interested in showing how Allston's reputed genius was "socially constructed through the criticism and patronage of his Boston audience." Yet while Allston himself sought through the *Elijah's* dynamic and painterly surface to convey the Word of God, the "still small voice" of the Old Testament, "viewers were uneasy in their observation of [his] apparently random play of a heavily loaded brush . . . which seemed only to signify the dangerous, self-reflexive isolation of the romantic imagination." Allston's reliance on color and the evidence of swift execution (including the use of a medium mixed with skimmed milk) in the painting unnerved a Boston patriciate steeped in Common Sense notions of understanding and unable to grasp his effort to transfigure his material medium in a creative act of Coleridgean Imagination. But what viewers like the Unitarian minister William Ware (otherwise a champion of Allston) found most disconcerting was the artist's stark representation of the biblical wilderness—an evocation of the Burkean sublime—and of the massive tree in the foreground. If Allston's handling provoked "an almost Sartrean existential nausea over the cancerous, anarchic growth of this all-too-mortal, all-too-physical tree," it also invited horrifying projections.

For the Boston patriciate who sought to consolidate an intersubjective community of beholders during a time when New England was undergoing threatening social and economic transformation, such projections "could only fuel disordered thinking and morally rudderless behavior." *Elijah in the Desert* is thus the exception that proves the rule. For the most part, Allston's art fulfilled the desideratum of his upper-class patrons, who "preferred picturesque paintings of cultivation in which nature is represented under the control of man, socialized by agriculture and the progress of civilization."

Further reflecting the growing concern of contemporary scholarship with the question of subjectivity and the act of beholding, both Brigitte Bailey and Robert H. Byer focus attention on an aspect of the changing association between art and its implied audience. This changing association is not only symptomatic of but instrumental in the emergence of a national subjectivity, as Bailey demonstrates in "The Protected Witness: Cole, Cooper, and the Tourist's View of the Italian Landscape." In an account that in certain ways parallels Myers's view of their American work, Bailey places the representation of the Italian landscape in Cole's paintings and Cooper's travel writings against the backdrop of British and continental aesthetics and the tradition of viewing Italy as "other—apolitical, female, noncommercial, even paradoxically ahistorical." As a representation of the other for American tourists "intent on building a national identity based partially on the English model," Italy stood in contrast to England as heart to head, visual to verbal, female to male, aesthetic self to national self. Americans like Cooper and Cole followed British precedent in perceiving "the ritual of the Italian journey as an exposure to displaced or repressed categories of experience" that contrasted with the public values England directly inspired.

Bailey's focus thus overlaps with Bjelajac's, in whose account a natural typology (extended by Allston to the painting's color) shapes subjectivity. The Italianate landscapes of Cole and Cooper avoided, however, the unsettling implications of Allston's *Elijah*. For them as well as for other early nineteenth-century American

tourists, the trip to Italy “offered the chance to reconsider and visualize power relations between an elite self and the cluster of attributes assigned to the landscape of the feminine other.” Italy was “easier to confront than gender and class differences at home.” Aesthetics thus offered a way of “idealizing the other. . . . The tourist was able both to contemplate the antithetical and to keep it separate from the mundane.” The transfiguration of sensual appeal through the aesthetics of the ideal—embodied in the veil of nostalgia and Claudian conventions for viewing the Italian landscape—offered a nonthreatening way for the rational mind to relax into reverie so that the artistic and the literary mediated each other’s impact. Nevertheless, the dichotomy between England and Italy only reinforced the underlying polarity between literary and visual arts just as it ultimately undergirded the disjunction between public and private realms characteristic of middle-class life. Cultivation of the Italian landscape served the need for self-control; for “men of sentiment and intellect” it was the means “to manage the ‘flow of action’ at home.” It bolstered class distinctions under assault by the same forces that frightened David Bjelajac’s Boston elite.

Bailey’s account of the ongoing social construction of the self in relation to nation making draws on Terry Eagleton’s understanding of the role of the aesthetic in the reconfiguration of power. As she puts it, borrowing her terms from Eagleton, “As power moved from ‘centralized institutions’ to the newly defined ‘independent subject,’ this subject had to be reconstituted to internalize ‘the law’—to act spontaneously in the interests of the political order. To the extent that the aesthetic served to build consensus, it worked as an ‘effective mode of political hegemony.’”

The changing role of subjectivity in art’s encounter with nature that in turn points to the genesis of middle-class identity in which private experience plays an increasingly prominent role is taken up by Robert H. Byer in “Words, Monuments, Beholders: The Visual Arts in Hawthorne’s *The Marble Faun*.” Byer sees Hawthorne’s romance as aspiring to the status of “monumental beholding” while at the same time presenting a critical view of it, “directed at its fictions of the visible and of personification.” He places it in the context of two other roughly contemporaneous modes of beholding: the monumental oration and the stereoscope. Daniel Webster’s Bunker Hill speech of 1843 stands paradigmatically for the former. Analyzing the orator’s ekphrastic enunciation of the monument, Byer views the speech in terms of the contrast between the verbal and the visual: “This visual sign, which proclaimed and evoked an undoubted, universally accessible, transgenerational object of reverence—a sort of natural sign language of historical truth and national unity—was paradoxically valorized, in the rhetoric of the orator’s performance, in contrast to words, whose written forms and malleable, unstable, merely rhetorical uses made them the medium of conflict and uncertainty between and within generations.” Accordingly, the oration “sought to contain the anxiety that uncontrolled social change had opened up a fateful gap or abyss between the present and the past.”

This unproblematic act of monumental beholding, in which the visual was cast as the natural, was the object of Hawthorne’s skepticism: “In contrast to the orator’s supreme fiction of the presence and recurrence of the heroic past, the numerous

scenes of beholding in Hawthorne's romance offer a different lesson or guide to beholding monuments." Scenes of beholding in *The Marble Faun* "acknowledge the elusive, uncertain play of distance and intimacy, of otherness and specularity between the monument and its beholder." Indeed, the very structure of the romance, in reflecting a "network of resemblances" between the various characters, produces "a sense of fluid, if partly unconscious, interchange of identity" that "calls into question the idea of individual autonomy at least insofar as this is conceived in terms of the metaphor of statuelike monumentality." The novel therefore suggests "a new sculptural aesthetic, one based on gesture, on the shifts and transitoriness of character." Critical here is the movement away from the natural pole of the visual and toward the "model of language's metamorphic flux or revisionary troping."

If Myers establishes the commercialization of the aesthetic and Bailey traces its feminization, Byer extends these modifications to the terror-inspiring Burkean sublime—so threatening to Bjelajac's social elite—as he documents its virtual disappearance in the 1850s as the result of a developing process of middle-class privatization. Another gauge of this transition in modes of expression and subjectivity (so responsive to economic and social change) is the shift from the close parallel between the visual and the verbal evident both in the appropriation of Italy that Bailey discusses and in Byer's monumental beholding, to the divergence between the two enacted by Hawthorne's romance.

Echoing this shift, for Byer, is the defamiliarization wrought by the stereoscope, which gained popularity in the 1850s. Contrary to the monumental beholding exploited by Webster, with its investments in corporate and even universal identity, both stereoscope and romance provoke the ambiguities of individual response, though in very different ways. If *The Marble Faun* suggests a dissolution of the sublime aspects of monumental vision, the stereoscope "reaffirms in the face of its uncanny views and passivities the honorific perspective of the sublime." Nonetheless, romance and stereoscope both participate in the unleashing of "erotic energies of vision [which] continually place the conventionally domestic in a perspective of instability, of skepticism about value." In both "the safe distances containing 'magical' images are time and again abrogated by the disjunctive shiftings of perceptual scale and focus." This is because the stereoscope, unlike the photograph, addresses (Byer quotes Jonathan Crary) "a fully embodied viewer" who is "binocular and situated in the space of pasteboard cards." Still, one is left to wonder to just what extent such examples of embodiment as stereoscope and romance acted as sources of resistance to the regime of middle-class socialization betokened by objective modes of representation like photography or the older monumental vision.

Byer's interest in the stereoscopic as "a mode of vision depending on the resolution of divergent optical perspectives" suggests an intriguing connection with my own observation about the defamiliarization that characterizes the most radical versions of so-called luminist painting as I see it in "The Iconology of Wrecked or Stranded Boats in Mid to Late Nineteenth-Century American Culture." Byer quotes Oliver Wendell Holmes, who imagined a new kind of experience made possible by the stereoscope: "There is . . . some half-magnetic effect in the fixing of the eyes on the