

Animating Archive and Artifact: An (Anti)Suffrage Caricature in Its Visual Media Ecology

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In her primer on “Finding and Researching Photographs,” Helena Zinkham offers a two-part visual archival “tutorial,” first demonstrating how to find archives of desirable visual materials, then demonstrating how to work with those materials. While Zinkham initiates the novice into the joys of locating available physical or digital visual repositories and into the challenges of analyzing materials uncovered there (120), she also implicitly configures the archive as a discrete and inert storehouse, and the artifact as equally discrete and inert—two intertwined assumptions that circulate throughout her article. Zinkham’s intentionally pragmatic account of photographic archival research does not acknowledge the dynamic, networked nature of historical visual materials, both digital and material, or of the environments within which they are amassed and organized. Without diminishing the value of Zinkham’s helpful advice for the inexperienced archival researcher, I interrogate this implicit representation of visual archive and artifact as isolated and fixed, arguing instead that each exists as a participant within an *ambient visual media ecology*: a historically specific array of mutually constitutive connections among visual technologies, artifacts, collections, and users that constitute the surrounding “vision-scape” of a culture. Such a perspective animates—brings to life—archive, artifact, and researcher.

The elements comprising *ambient visual media ecology* emphasize the dynamism intrinsic to archival research, especially research involving the visual. Coined by Neil Postman in 1968 and defined as “the study of media environments,” *media ecology* highlights the active reciprocity among media, cultures, and communication (qtd. in Lum 10). As Postman explains, putting *media* in front of *ecology* underscores “the ways in which the interaction between media and human beings gives a culture its character” (62), pointing as well to the interplay between the materiality of a particular medium and its intersection with users. *Visual media ecology* directs attention to one specific intersection: the vigorous reciprocity among visual technologies, artifacts, and cultural citizens within a particular historical moment. Finally, *ambient visual media ecology* incorporates the multiple intersecting levels of signification forming any visual media ecology. *Ambient* accentuates the way in which a visual media ecology functions, first, as a background or vision-scape shaping participants’ everyday realities. This background forms a pervasive *un-remark-able* setting

against which life is lived on daily basis. That background derives not from any specific visual artifact but from the quality of visuality itself, a quality emerging from the flow of visual artifacts within communication streams at a particular historical moment. Second, and conversely, this unremarkable quality of an ambience is coupled with *re-mark-ability*: the eruption of specific visual experiences that command attention. These various elements combine in an ambient visual media ecology to highlight the vibrant nature of a cultural member's existence within that ecology.

Situated within this animating context, archive, artifact, and users—historically positioned viewers and researchers—operate not as obdurate isolates but rather as “a comprehensive participatory event, a universe of action, and a world of knowledge and learning” (Marcum 189). An ambient visual media ecology brings to active life archive and artifact, an insight that holds important implications *both* for the pragmatic act of visual archival research in general *and* for the specific examination of John T. McCutcheon's suffrage-related cartoons that we undertake in this special issue of *Peitho*. More than simply highlighting re-contextualization, or a process of reading one archival image against another or one medium against another, an ambient visual media ecology stresses the extent to which McCutcheon's archive and artifact are actions encompassing myriad planes of signification. An ambient visual media ecology directs our attention not just to a method of understanding suffrage-related cartoons but also to a larger meta-methodology that illuminates the presuppositions underlying the positionality and the contingent meanings of those cartoons. Sensitivity to the vitalizing influence of an archive's, artifact's, or user's ambient visual media ecology uncovers how McCutcheon, his readers, and his researchers are likewise actors and agents. “In an ecological system, as distinguished from an environment,” James Marcum contends, “the subject [archive, artifact, archivist-scholar] interacts with and participates in the creation and evolution of the system” (192), producing not visual information but “an action-perception cycle” (191). This intricate array of transactions with other media, images, and users—both past and present—transforms archive, artifact, and varied participants into lively *happenings* or animations, rather than static *happened* or inert traces frozen in a repository. Finally, within the parameters of the McCutcheon project explored throughout this issue, the ambient visual media ecology animates gender, highlighting the notion that any gender construction effected by images likewise operates as an *event*—a product of the action-perception cycle. Bringing the visual archive and artifact to life thus opens up new vistas for feminist historical research, underscoring the importance of auditing men's and women's experiences within a visual media ecology, especially as they turn to that ecology for *topoi* to guide rhetorical performances and responses.

To demonstrate the intricacies of an ambient visual media ecology and to trace its implications for understanding the vibrant nature of visual archive and artifact, I examine one editorial cartoon satirizing women's political activism. Penned in 1903 by McCutcheon for the *Chicago Tribune*, the cartoon exists as part of an interlaced system of visual media that Matthew Fuller characterizes as "profoundly political or ethico-aesthetic at all scales" (4). I begin with a brief account of the theory of an ambient visual media ecology and describe one incarnation: the anti-suffrage orientation at the *fin de siècle* ambient visual media ecology. I then examine the transaction of ecology and cartoon in two methodological moves, highlighting the interplay of perception and action in the cartoon as event. Although I address perception and action separately and sequentially, the two exist without clear-cut boundaries, making both artifact and its hosting archive *animate* rather than inanimate. I illustrate that animation by positioning McCutcheon's 1903 cartoon within a system of anti-suffrage visual rhetoric that circulated across and through different media. Finally, I conclude by returning to the visual archive, emphasizing its liveliness for feminist scholars.

Animating Archive and Artifact: An Ambient Visual Media Ecology

Considering archive and artifact as events within an ambient visual media ecology emphasizes the animated nature of each. McCutcheon's 1903 cartoon provides initial ingress into the ecological system and insights into the animation of archive and artifact, especially as that animation intersects with gender construction. The cartoon as event appeared on Thursday, October 22, 1903, three short months after McCutcheon left the *Chicago Record-Herald* for the *Chicago Tribune*, his six-panel cartoon dominated the daily's front page (Figure 1). Bookended on either side with articles on politics, crimes, and finance, the cartoon, as McCutcheon claims he intends it, mildly caricatures the ninth annual meeting of the Illinois Federation of Women's Clubs, an organization less than a decade old that advocated a variety of social causes, including suffrage. Looming above the fold, McCutcheon's illustration offers six humorous scenarios of female interaction (Figure 2). In each scenario, Federation members—individually or in groups— inveigle women to join their cause by disrupting the everyday lives of non-members. Contrasting absurd behavior with domestic order, the cartoon subtly gestures toward divisions within the Federation itself, between those seeking suffrage through conciliatory "velvet-gloved" strategies and those employing more radical "unpopular and unconventional" tactics (Wheeler 114, 103). As he contrasts hyperbolic, even illogical, activism with traditionally female responsibilities—i.e., weddings, dinners, childcare,

Figure 1.

Figure 2.

and family health care—McCutcheon demonstrates his claim that he deliberately “blunts his barb” in any satire of a “woman’s activities” (200). Rather than excoriating the Federation clubwomen as “perversions of a gift of God to the human race,” which former President Grover Cleveland does in a 1905 *Ladies Home Journal* article, the cartoonist called Gentle John claims that he employs a kinder strategy, one designed to tease while “somehow flattering” activist women (199). However, when networked within its ambient visual media ecology and conceived as a happening rather than a static happened, the blunted barb potentially gains a very sharp edge.

The concept of an ambient visual media ecology brings to the foreground the formative and transformative aspects of a culture’s media, especially as those media interact on multiple levels of signification. Neither McCutcheon,

nor his cartoon, nor his readers existed within a media vacuum, a point that [Jason Barrett-Fox](#) reinforces through his examination of intertextual ecologies and economies (62, this issue). Instead, McCutcheon made artistic choices influenced by his immersion in a visual media ecology (Becker 318). Similarly, *Tribune* subscribers participated in the same visual media ecology, a membership that encouraged them to perceive certain details of a cartoon while ignoring others. Both artist and viewer were caught up in the inherent transactivity of their ambient *fin de siècle* visual media ecology, a transactivity that influenced participants to see the world, and gender identities at play within it, in certain ways. Fuller brings attention to the liveliness of any media ecology, contending that such ecologies demand a “materialist account of the world,” one that acknowledges the way in which media “make the world and take part in it, and at the same time, synthesize, block, or make possible other worlds” (1-2). As Fuller contends, there is “life among media,” a vivacity that links and “cross-fertilizes” across mental, natural, and social planes (5). The liveliness ensued from the existence of a media ecology as an open system in which “parts no longer exist simply as discrete bits that stay separate”; instead, “they set in play a process of mutual stimulation that exceeds what they are as a set” (1). Media thus *constitute* activity, where modes “always demand carrying over into another mode, another universe of reference, and always another” (5). Neither static nor discrete, the material and the transactive elements of a media ecology emphasize the mutual constitutiveness of active pattern-making among material media, artifacts, archives, and users. It is this pattern-making that bears symbolic weight. Fuller elaborates: “complex medial systems cooperate to produce something more than the sum of their parts” (6). As an event within complex medial systems, then, McCutcheon’s cartoon—as well as its depiction of gender—exists not as a pattern but as an *invitation to viewers to create* a pattern, underscoring its identity as a happening to be performed rather merely labeled, categorized, and accessed.

While the term *media ecology* evolved in the wake of the twentieth-century electronic technological revolution, the ambient visual media ecology within which McCutcheon wrote and drew was marked by similar seismic changes. The turn of the century constituted an explosive moment of American mass mediation involving print and visual technologies. The latter decades of the nineteenth century featured the emergence of what Carl Kaestle calls a “‘culture of print’” (24), wherein print, through various technological revolutions, became the privileged medium. McCutcheon experienced that sea-change, explaining that, “when I started work the only way of reaching the mass of people was through the press. . . . The dominating power and responsibility [for “the molding of public opinion”] rest[ed] with the printed column and cartoons of the country’s newspapers” (198). Throughout this “watershed

period," the printed word replaced the oral word as the preferred medium of daily life. In these final decades of the nineteenth century, the decades within which McCutcheon begins his career, Americans became "habituated to the presence of printed materials in their daily lives" (Kaestle and Radway 16). Furthermore, as McCutcheon himself prefigures, this rupture involved more than the printed word; it involved as well the printed image, rendering the culture of print intensely visual.

Advances in visual technologies, from the cheap reproductions of chromolithography to photoengraving and the halftone process, kept pace with changes in print technologies. As a result, the waning decades of the nineteenth-century experienced a visual explosion through the mass-mediation of the graphic image. McCutcheon alludes to just such a tectonic shift in his 1889 commencement oration at Purdue, "Caricature in Art." He asserts the current age of the newspaper, "enhanced by the skill of the illustrator," provided the medium by which "caricature and comic art first come into common application and use" (60). As a visual media ecology underscores, and as McCutcheon's own autobiography reveals, these changes were not just occurring on the *outside* of the cultural member. They were happening in concert with parallel changes *inside* the cultural member. Ambient visual media ecology, thus, underscores the constant morphing of media, artifacts, archives, and users across mental, natural, and social planes. But equally important to McCutcheon and to the *Tribune's* subscribers was their necessary negotiation with available visuals, particularly suffrage visuals, through which the October 22 caricature acquired meaning. The perception-action dynamic intrinsic to a visual media ecology illuminates how a cartoon can operate simultaneously as both a mild caricature and a damning indictment of the Federation clubwoman.

Animating Perception: Cartoon as Invitation

The two-part movement of the perception-action cycle provides an important way of framing an (anti)suffrage cartoon and the gender identity it constructs as *events*, offering a portable methodology for animating feminist visual archival research across oeuvres and sites. An opening move in in such an event involves exploring the act of perception itself. McCutcheon implicitly points to the importance of perception in his creative aims, for he wanted his readers to see his cartoons in a specific way. Writing as a well-established and successful cartoonist, he notes that he has "always enjoyed drawing a type of cartoon which might be considered a sort of pictorial breakfast food" that had the "cardinal asset of making the beginning of the day sunnier" (199). To secure this mode of perception, McCutcheon featured elements in his cartoons that, in his view, seemed "to reach out a friendly pictorial hand to the

delinquent rather than to assail him [or her] with criticism and denunciation" (199). But what McCutcheon failed to point out was the degree to which an artifact's message and impact emerge from the *pas de deux* between its intrinsic visual qualities and viewer's perception, a vision schooled through participation in an ambient visual media ecology.

For McCutcheon and his *Tribune* readers, their increasingly anti-suffrage *fin de siècle* visual media ecology issued an invitation to read McCutcheon's "sunny" cartoon as an indictment of women's activism. As the concept of ambient visual media ecology illuminates, rather than approaching McCutcheon's cartoon with "immaculate perception" (Edelman 4) in which vision unfolds as an unmediated imprint of external stimuli, *Tribune* subscribers actively participated in perceiving some elements of the cartoon rather than others. Lawrence J. Prelli refers to this active and constructive perceptual process as the "contingent" nature of vision, emphasizing that individuals choose what to notice among the countless options offered by a visual-material artifact (12), while art historian E. H. Gombrich explains that the eye, trained to select and deflect the "the welter of dancing light points stimulating the sensitive rods and cones that fire their messages into the brain," learns to perceive some things and not others (50). Concerned with the intersection of image and political behavior, Murray Edelman notes that images individually and collectively, "construct and periodically reconstruct perceptions and beliefs that underlie political action" (9), that "people perceive and conceive in light of narratives, pictures, and images" (7). Since visual forms "govern seeing and believing" by fostering expectations (7), what viewers select to see in any image is "based on expectation more than on observation" (16).

For *Tribune* subscribers, viewing McCutcheon's cartoons was not a process of passive reception but "an effort of imagination and a fairly complex apparatus" (Gombrich 60) consisting of various conventions and contents—the everyday archive—afforded by a particular ambient visual media ecology within which McCutcheon and his viewers were immersed or schooled. Important to schooling perception are the contents forming a community member's image repertoire: *how* one sees is inextricably and reciprocally linked to *what* one sees. The movement of multiple intersecting images across media forward one narrative arc over another, one account of reality over another, inviting community members to see these intersecting images train them to see.

An ambient visual media ecology conspires to influence how an individual perceives by building expectations through the flow of artifacts, and the newspaper cartoons dominating the early twentieth-century vision-scape consisted of images created almost exclusively by men, resulting in a set of expectations "created and consolidated around male sensibilities" (Sheppard 29). Women rarely ventured into this professional arena, as Stephen Becker's dedication

in the 1959 *History of Comics* underscores. Honoring the National Cartoonists Society at mid-century, Becker praises the “over four hundred creative *gentlemen* who are both the heirs and the perpetuators of the great tradition of comic art” (np, emphasis added). While woman suffrage constituted a hugely popular topic—one of “the two most satire-provoking, gag-producing issues that had ever come along to rescue a harried artist from an impending deadline” (Hess and Kaplan 144)—little of that male-produced visual rhetoric cast either suffrage or its proponents in a positive light. Instead, the visual media ecology was flooded with anti-suffrage imagery both in the American and British media. In addition, these anti-suffrage cartoons circulated with little visual riposte in the United States.

Although American women from the inception of the suffrage movement did incorporate visuals into their suffrage campaigns (Florey 6), in the early 1900s few of them were cartoonists, so few pro-suffrage visual forms countered negative gender representations seen in newspapers. Compounding the difficulty of launching an effective visual refutation, the rare pro-suffrage cartoons created at the *fin de siècle* appeared in narrowly circumscribed venues, such as the pages of suffrage organization publications. Without access to the mainstream press, the pro-suffrage image producers had little chance of disseminating their point of view beyond their own adherents (Hess and Northrop 17). Equally troubling, many pro-suffrage journals exercised their own censorship of women’s cartoons, in some cases refusing to publish any visual rhetoric that they assessed as too radical in tone and content (Sheppard 23). The upshot was that pro-suffrage forces on the cusp of the century made little impact on the anti-suffrage visual rhetoric promulgated by male artists through mass-media outlets. Concomitantly, those pro-suffrage forces made little impact on the expectations—the predispositions—of cultural citizens. Suffrage historians note the toll imposed by the shaping of perception through expectation. Elisabeth Israels Perry claims that “pictorial rhetoric helped subject the [suffrage] campaign to costly and disheartening delays” (3) because, to a large degree, community members schooled by anti-suffrage images saw what they expected to see.

The anti-suffrage orientation of the visual media ecology within which McCutcheon’s playful “breakfast food” circulated thus highlights the way in which such breakfast food could become anything but playful for suffragists and pro-suffrage activism. The cross-fertilization of anti-suffrage cartooning in periodicals, postcards, stereographs, book illustrations, and cover art created what Barbara A. Biesecker calls a “visual ecology of repetition” (152) where “stunningly similar—if not identical—moving and still images” of the same phenomenon circulate (162). The ensuing “imagistic repetition” (163), she says, promotes a “collective and politically paralyzing fixation” (164), a fixation that

treats the repeated images as reality. Edelman concurs. “Perception springs from prognosis,” he aphoristically argues, and that prognosis for McCutcheon’s readers was firmly anti-suffrage within a single medium and across multiple media (16). The circulation across the ambient visual media ecology of one particular gender construction—the suffragist as harridan, or the masculinized female—illustrates the creation of expectation and its influence on perception. This stock character constitutes a visual ecology of repetition, flowing through virulently anti-suffrage cartoons published in periodicals and newspapers in the early 1900s, predisposing *Tribune* subscribers to see these traits even in supposedly harmless cartoons such as McCutcheon’s October 22 panel. A representative cartoon penned by William A. Walker, appearing in the April 1896 issue of *Life*, an immensely influential weekly humor magazine, exemplifies the repetition of the harridan (Hess and Northrup 65).

The formal elements of the cartoon evoke not only the stock figure of the aggressive masculinized woman who challenges male authority and stature but also the cultural anxiety attendant on that figure. Captioned “The New Navy,” the two-page cartoon features a ship of the line “manned” by a crew of women dressed in bloomers, uniform jackets, and bicornes, all of which mimic traditional naval apparel (Figure 3). As part of the military, the female sailors challenge a traditional male-only preserve, usurping male privilege and power. The arrangement of the women reinforce this usurpation and their

Figure 3.

Figure 4.

identity as harridans. Walker positions this startling mass of uniformed women in a V-formation, mimicking the configuration of an invading force. A short, extremely heavy-set female admiral spearheads the assault. Dressed in a military jacket with gold buttons, gold facing, and epaulettes, she stands with legs spread, arms akimbo, chest outthrust, and facial expression fierce. Backed up by her contingent of women officers and crew members, the admiral signals readiness to mete out violence in the service of their collective goals, all male-coded traits in the early twentieth century. The martial vestments, the arrangement of the figures in a phalanx, as well as the hostile body language and physiognomy all configure a powerful woman as an unnatural woman, implicitly categorizing the activist woman, including the activist clubwoman, as perversions. As one of many similar visual forms, this cartoon contributes to the creation of an everyday archive operating across media, shaping expectations that individuals then drew on to interpret McCutcheon's six-panel satire.

McCutcheon observes that "a most unwholesome type of cartoon is that which strives to arouse the ignorant passions of one element of society against another" (199); however, a visual media ecology replete with anti-suffrage images encourages a most "unwholesome" cycle of expectation and perception (199). Even with six panels featuring at least some women with traditional visual markers—soft, feminine outlines, clothing, and props, and

roles—the cartoon as event emerges as an indictment of the Federation club woman and other suffrage activists. Particularly subject to the visual ecology of repetition is the upper left-hand panel (Figure 4). Depicting women in military-style garb marching in regimented lines behind an all-woman band, the panel offers itself as an opportunity to interpret activists as harridans: overbearing, vindictive, and power hungry. Keeping pace with drums, trumpet, flute, and tuba, the women in the ranks wear double breasted coats and top hats, coats that disguise their curves and hats that hide their crowning glory. Summoning forth the image of the naval gear of Walker's *Life* cartoon, the marchers in McCutcheon's front-page satire present a male, even a militaristic, profile. They eschew feminine adornment, restraining bodies and hair with their strict masculine guise. In the process, these rank-and-file soldiers of the cause divert the viewer's eye from their more lusciously drawn sisters who, instruments in play, lead the march with wasp waists and billowing bosoms. Thus, the looping movement of perception through expectation directs attention to elements of aggression and construes those elements as intrinsic to a female activist's identity as harridan. The banners the marching group carries reinforce this interpretation. While the first one raises alarm by celebrating the increasing number of suffrage adherents, the second banner articulates verbally the latent combativeness of the marching figures. Focusing the reader on militant visual elements, the verbal banner counsels "Down With Non-Union Women" and instructs members to "Ostracize Them From the Sex." According to these orders, any woman who is not actively supporting Federation activities should be roundly condemned and soundly disciplined, a double agenda that the grim marchers will execute without a qualm. Despite McCutcheon's avowed efforts to blunt his barb, the female activists in his six panels potentially become harridans because such a response is congruent with the play of expectation and perception characterizing the ambient visual media ecology. This reciprocity between what we see, how we see, and how we devise meaning from that intersection underscores the cartoon's existence as an active happening.

Animating Action: Cartoon as Behavior

While perception underscores the liveliness of visual artifact and archive, so, too, does action emphasize artifact and archive's vibrant nature. Perception forms the foundation for action, where images are "the essential catalysts of support for a course of political action" (Edelman 9). As both *product* and *narrative* of actions, images influence beliefs and actions (Edelman 10), whether motivating individuals to become part of a political movement or providing them with justifications for enacting—or resisting—political initiatives. The male sissy offers one potent example of a character whose actions inspire viewers to

resist rather than support suffrage. Just as cartooning's anti-suffrage symbolic code excoriated women as pseudo-men, or harridans, it also excoriated men as women-in-the-making, or sissies. The sissy served as an expression of male fears ensuing from those female incursions into their sites and activities, its term and stock character emerging in turn-of-the-century American visual media ecology just as women were entering into the traditionally male-marked domains of educational administration, medicine, business, and journalism. Configured as the inevitable consequence of female enfranchisement, the sissy transformed the virile paterfamilias into the helpless turn-of-the-century pantywaist stripped of masculinity and power. Catherine Palczewski, in fact, contends that the iconography of the male effeminate in anti-suffrage post-cards merely expressed in visual form what was unspeakable in verbal form. The sissy thus provided a negative example of what not to do and how not to act. A cartoon from *Life* provides an example of the sissy and elucidates its effect on an audience's "ways of conceiving, seeing, and understanding," to which list I would add acting (Edelman 28).

This phenomenon of spatial feminization—where space dictates a specific set of acts for the sissy—occurs in "The Coming Man." This quarter-page cartoon published in the September 24, 1896, issue of *Life*, features a middle-aged bearded man, hidden in his bedroom, taking stock of his appearance (Figure 5). Arrayed in delicate, short-sleeved, lace trimmed night wear, this aging figure holds a small mirror in one hand and a curling iron in the other, acting in ways appropriate for his feminized space. Within the confines of his boudoir, *Figure 5.*

the bespectacled “Coming Man” frantically works to beautify himself before making his curtsy in the parlor, his muscular bare arms at startling odds with the task at hand. Through his single-minded focus on this action, the figure conveys to readers a set of actions appropriate to the new man: costuming and adornment. Against the everyday archive of *Life’s* sissy, McCutcheon’s own caricature lends itself to a similar feminized scene-act dynamic.

In McCutcheon’s various panels, when men do act, they also perform only the duties traditionally assigned to women, and they perform them in female-marked spaces. For example, in panel four of *The Tribune’s* “Federation of Women in Session ...,” a meek male, positioned in the panel’s background, clutches two squirming babies with a dog cowering at his feet (Figure 6). His primary task, this panel suggests, consists of nurse-maiding his children rather than overseeing his home or his business. In addition, the figure lacks the ability to act authoritatively in his domestic sphere, a restriction underscored by the women in the panel. As the sissy pleads for dinner, wife and cook in the foreground conspire to deprive him of his meal until he obeys their edicts. Feminized by the scene, the hapless male wields no political or economic power, engages in no behavior praiseworthy for its stalwart spirit or mental discipline. Rather, the cartoon positions this “coming man” in the most private of domestic spaces and stipulates a set of actions congruent with that space.

However, even as scene influences act—feminizing male behavior by situating weakened men in feminized spaces—act also influences scene, a reciprocity that upends the gender status quo by empowering women and disempowering men in public. As Kenneth Burke points out, the *scene*—the background of and situation for the act—is an essential part of any rhetorical performance. Burke’s scene-act ratio functions reciprocally in that scene can

Figure 6.

Figure 7.

shape act, such as a church eliciting reverent behavior, at the same time that an act can shape scene, such as prayer transforming a secular space into a sacred site. Both dynamics feature in the depiction of sissified behavior in turn-of-the-century ambient visual media ecology, revealing where suffragists seize control of public spaces in anti-suffrage cartoons, suppressing male actions in those same spaces. For example, the second panel of McCutcheon's caricature illuminates the devolution of men into sissies through their displacement from the public sphere (Figure 7). Set within a church, the panel depicts a Federation clubwoman in masculine-flavored garb, disrupting a wedding ceremony. With right hand pushing the dewy bride away from minister and bridegroom, she takes command of the traditionally male-dominated venue, abrogating the minister's authority in that sacred space, and circumscribing his actions. Rendered nonplus, the male minister is unable to rescue either sacrament or celebrants from the clubwoman's machinations. He is stripped of influence and re-cast as sissy along with the inept groom. Even more extreme, by successfully invading the house of God, the activist implicitly denudes God of spiritual authority and thereby restricts the deity's ability to act.

In the act-scene ratio of early twentieth-century ambient visual media ecology, then, anti-suffrage gender politics is a zero-sum game. As female activists act within public spaces, men are unable to act within those same spaces. Re-barbing McCutcheon's October 22 caricature, the act-scene ratio casts emasculated man as the new century's new woman, inviting the reader to resist any political or economic movements that might contribute to the emergence of the sissy. Within this calculus, action intertwines with perception to animate artifact and archive, highlighting a similar animation of gender identity.

Conclusion

In his 1950 autobiography published posthumously, McCutcheon explains, "I tried to be optimistic and constructive rather than iconoclastic and discouraging" (200). But the circulation of the female harridan and the male sissy throughout the visual media ecology jeopardizes his avowed intent. That visual ecology of repetition provides *Tribune* subscribers with visual forms and models by which to perceive and act on his cartoons. These stock characters infiltrated users' cultural imagination and shaped perceptions that, in turn, guided their participatory actions. The action-perception cycle, then, highlights how an ambient visual media ecology can animate artifact and archive. Marcum makes exactly this point, contending that "humans live within their ecology, not separated from and perceiving it from outside" (195). By extension, humans live within the artifacts and archives they shape from their ambient visual media ecology, participating in the constitution of both, while

also remaining subject to that constitution. An exploration of McCutcheon's 1903 cartoon offers insight into artifact and archive as event, exposing the intricacies of the vast, complex network within which any act of perception-action takes place. That exploration animates artifact and archive, changing how we perform and conceptualize archival research, especially when it intersects with gender.

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Kristie S. Fleckenstein, Professor of English at Florida State University, teaches graduate and undergraduate courses in rhetoric and composition. Her research interests include feminism and race, especially as both intersect with material and visual rhetorics. She is the recipient of the 2005 CCCC Outstanding Book of the Year Award for *Embodied Literacies: Imageword and a Poetics of Teaching* (SIUP, 2003), and the 2009 W. Ross Winterowd Award for Best Book in Composition Theory for *Vision, Rhetoric, and Social Action in the Composition Classroom* (SIUP, 2009). Her current project explores the role of photography in nineteenth-century debates about racial identities.