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## RÉFÉRENCE

New York, Oxford University Press, 2009, 320 p., \$39,95

- 1 *Darwin's Camera* is a fascinating account of the influences, scientific and aesthetic desires, and practices through which Charles Darwin engaged with photography. One of many publications which appeared in 2009, the year of the double Darwin anniversary – two hundred years since his birth (1809) and one hundred fifty years since the publication of his great *The Origin of Species* (1859) – this book's focus is especially on the search for photographic and other forms of visual evidence which could be used in his evolutionary study of emotion and its physiological manifestations. This, of course, resulted in Darwin's last great book of evolutionary theory, *The Expressions of the Emotions in Men and Animals* (1872), one of the first photographically illustrated books of science.
- 2 Phillip Prodger's account ranges far and wide over the territory between art and science, the popular and the specialist, commerce and aesthetics. It explores Darwin's exposure to painting whilst a student at Cambridge, his use of family photographs, Darwin's experience as a photographic subject and celebrity, his expeditions around the photographic dealers of London, looking for images, his correspondence around images with scientists and artists alike, including clear connections to the photographic canon in the persons of Julia Margaret Cameron and Charles Dodgson (Lewis Carroll). It also explores the way Darwin focused on what he saw as key elements of analytical relevance, such as ears, infant expressions, and so forth. All this is fascinating material and rebuffs the idea that Darwin was 'non-visual.'

- 3 The central account of the book is that of the production, engagement with, and impact of the photographs in *The Expression of the Emotions*. This book includes photographs and engraved illustrations from a number of sources. Prodger's careful piecing together of Darwin's connections with distinguished animal painters and sculptors such as Thomas Woolner and Briton Riviere – Darwin consulted the latter on the expressions of dogs – demonstrates the fluid boundaries over which Darwin collected and negotiated his concept of evidence and the role of photography within it.
- 4 The most remarkable series of images, however, remain those made by Adrian Tournachon for the neurologist Duchenne de Boulogne and the 're-enactments' by Oscar Rejlander made specifically for Darwin. The former, now famous in the annals of history of both photography and science, were made by stimulating the subject's facial muscles with electrodes to simulate key expressions – terror, horror, and so forth. This account is entangled with a useful discussion of the intersections between science and aesthetics, in both these photographs and, more broadly, in representational practices of an emergent psychiatry.
- 5 The latter central account is that of Darwin's relationship with the Swedish/British photographer Oscar Rejlander, who 'enacted' photographs of emotion for Darwin, often Rejlander himself or his wife Mary posing for them (Prodger also suggests convincingly that Mary Rejlander might be the photographer for those, such as the famous photographs of disgust and indignation, for which Rejlander poses). Importantly, Prodger demonstrates the degree to which Rejlander's collaboration went beyond the simple production of images. Rather he was integrally and deeply involved with the debate around the scientific values for which the photographs were to stand. While only a few of the photographs were eventually published in *Expressions*, the account of their production, using a stereo camera so as to move the images towards seriality, is a fine piece of photo-historical analysis. In both these sets of photographs, too, we see the gradual refinement of Darwin's concept of emotion demonstrated through the photographs, imagined, made, rejected, or accepted.
- 6 While these accounts are engaging and illuminating, there is a sense, nonetheless, in which the book feels quite 'old' analytically. Despite that the last chapter, rightly, to my mind, takes issue with some of the recent readings of this material, there is much more recent literature which is ignored or referred to in passing but never engaged with. For instance, while Jonathan Smith's excellent book *Visual Culture in the Age of Darwin* is cited, it is not discussed or applied within Prodger's argument. The equally interesting books by Julia Voss (*Darwin's Pictures: Views of Evolutionary Theory, 1837-1874*) and Jane Goodall (*Performance and Evolution in the Age of Darwin*), which demonstrate the intersection of art forms, are not cited at all. Likewise, outside the narrow confines of biological and psychiatry studies, there is little engagement with the mass of work done on photography, the negotiation of evidential 'value,' disciplinary ways of seeing, and concepts of visual economy, in for instance history of science and anthropology, or in the histories of imaging practices in archaeology, geology, and medicine.
- 7 More could have been done too, analytically, around questions of the blurred distinctions between 'art' and 'science.' There is an unease in the argument, never fully resolved, as to whether the categories 'art' and 'science' are useful here. The whole book is full of fascinating accounts of Darwin's engagement with artists, engravers, and photographers in the pursuit of images that would both provide him with evidence for his evolutionary theories on emotion, and constitute a credible demonstration as

illustrations in his book. There is an equally fascinating account, which runs through the volume, of how the negotiations were undertaken, how engravers were employed, the processes of photographic remediation to produce evidence, and the practices of publishers. Yet none of this is pushed analytically.

- 8 What, for instance, are the implications for ideas of evidence of these remediations? This would have enriched the otherwise interesting account of Darwin's entanglement with one of the most famous and popular photographs of the nineteenth century, Oscar Rejlander's 'Ginx's Baby,' which demonstrated 'mental distress' and the boundaries between photography and drawing. Despite nods in more general directions, these wider contexts are drawn, in almost reductionist form, into a debate about Darwin, rather than Darwin being expanded upon in the transactional patterns of nineteenth-century science.
- 9 Perhaps this is for the best; where Prodger is strongest is on Darwin, his connections, his science. Where he weakens noticeably is when he strays outside these confines, for example in his comments on the *Peoples of India* project. Here is another example, which on the surface might seem like a minor error or oversight, until one thinks about questions about how networks made science: figure 5.9 is described as taken by 'Circle of Thomas Henry Huxley,' when in fact the photographs were taken as a somewhat fraught commercial arrangement by a marginal figure on the London photographic scene, Mr Pedroletti, thus changing entirely the social dynamics for the production of such images. This kind of detail matters when one is considering the social conditions of the production of knowledge. I could go on.
- 10 As I have suggested, specialists in history and sociology of science or photography might find *Darwin's Camera* frustrating in its limited analytical range and interdisciplinary lacunae, but on the other hand, with its clear and approachable style, it will be stimulating and informative for a more general readership. Throughout there are numerous and excellent illustrations, which build up a dense sense of Darwin's scientific visual world, giving it an almost tangible quality. And whatever my reservations, this remains an important book of serious scholarship, one which I enjoyed greatly and to which I shall return. It is based on excellent archival research and detailed readings of Darwin's works, and it offers a detailed account of how one scientist negotiated the potential of photographs which will stand for many years.
- 11 Elizabeth Edwards, University of the Arts, London.