

8-B William Parker at Visual Studies Workshop, July 1977

Notes on the transcription: Comments made by Parker during the reading of texts are set in (). Additional information set in { }. Inaudible or gaps in tape indicated by ... Parker laughing indicated by {laughs} Students laughing indicated by {laughter}

Transcription by Bob Martin

Reel 8-B: Continuation of subjective/objective discussion from 8-A.

...Of saying, it doesn't really make a difference whether it is there or not, it is all in the mind...but you sort of see the validity of the importance of hoping that it is still there...well then how do you know it's there? And you all are going right back, and I do too, to the principle I see it, I touch it, I smell it, I hear it. How is it there at the same time that you perceive it and you are sure of that? That comes back to you. How does it, independent of your assurity, be existent? Be in fact the case. Or occur in fact.

Student: Because others perceive it.

Student: Because it reflects more.

Well if others can perceive it that is just the comfort of knowing that I say we can have rationalist discourse where we know we share similar processes. That is why Masaccio will deal with the nimbus.

Student: I am perceiving the analogy, it doesn't get me any closer but I am trying to understand the analogy of the rose again. That is the way I think your question is being asked. If I tell you a rose has fragrance, you are telling me I am full of shit. Is that what you are telling me?

That is right. {laughter}

Student: Yes, that is what you say, you are saying that I am, this is something else that is happening when I project something from myself onto phenomenology or whatever the physiology...

Whitehead says give yourself credit for the fragrance, give the rose the credit for its chemical vapors that could, for one's sensory response, smell sweet or sour. The rose by any other name would smell as sweet, that is sort of kinda true. But the rose is

smelled. This is lapsing into the absurd. It manifests a series of component gasses, you then sense it as a fragrant...that will give you a hint to something but it won't give you...

Student: That is the difference between science and poetry. The fragrance is poetry. The gasses are science.

There is no split between the two, let's heal that wound. That is what Descartes is saying...

Student: Through your analogy you made the split. You are saying that the rose itself has its own terms...

You see what Whitehead is saying... or what Descartes is saying is that the rose doesn't count, your smelling does. Therefore you are because you smell, the rose doesn't count. It doesn't matter.

Student: You couldn't smell the rose if it didn't exist.

Yes, Dave, I gather that. But I might smell other things like cooked bread or, the rose is not the issue. By the same token, Whitehead would say give credit to yourself for what you perceive through your senses. Give credit to the rose for being existent...it is like the thing as such has corporeality, you don't need for existence to be pulsating blood or breathing or other aspects...but how do we enter into a level of perception in which you might say both are recognized as co-equally valid? Because we *don't* recognize them as co-equal in value. You don't and I don't.

Student: Can't we train ourselves to?

How could we? That is the answer to your question. I mean how could we train ourselves? Remember that day I said what happens if a person says, I am really not with it, I am just not with it. Well look, I've got this remarkable... bioenergetics. They put you through a whole series of exercises, make you breathe, scream, inhale, exhale. You also bring to maximum activity, the corpuscular and whatever other activities occur in the body. That is a heightening of your senses. Now if someone says to you, let's heighten the apparent existent identity of things so that they can be valued as such, while we also perceive them as a credible image. It is like saying, to illustrate the situation. If I took this note, and this is on a piece of paper...and I tear it up, and I throw it into the trash can, or somewhere else. Obviously I have a tremendous sense of power over things that I think can necessarily become rubbish dismissed from my life. The principle is, how can I value, not the note, what it says, the piece of paper: how can I

value that materiality to such a point that I can perceive it is not necessary to me but I can perceive something that it is evidence of as extremely necessary if I am going to live a sane life, have a futurity in an ecological system and of a universe that can support me until whatever time my day comes...in the next fifteen minutes {laughs} You see I am not after something mystic, heavy, unusual, bizarre: it is right in front of your view. And you don't have to be here to know it is right there in front of you. You think about that. And then you will also know, if you think about that, no, you shouldn't think about it, you should just find a way of knowing it other than through thinking...and you don't speculate...or feel that or sense it. How can you know, and particularly tie it back to the idea of pictorialization and then *you* make some connections for a moment or two about the possibilities of how certain pictorial forms may well be excuses for continuing the fiction of our own perceptual responses. Other forms may be emerging which do not require what we might call sensory sensitivity but they do require some degree of sensibility to possibilities that may not deal with a system of sensory response or cognition but some other level of confirmation...I have asked you to tell me how *you* would know that something exists even if you are not around to know it. How could you be sure, even if you die...? Well, {laughter} I know what most of you are thinking, that sounds like sophistry, counting angels on the head of a pin, and you know there are far more important things than to be sitting around in a room worrying about that. Although there is nothing more important than...because it is a culminating point of century upon century upon century...and I might add, if you come up with the answer, you will come close, you are not going to solve it. I am obviously not going to give you an answer, it is so simple it is just sitting right there in front of you. If you do...I guarantee you people are going to worship you {laughter}. You will become the new god. But the point is you can get so close to it you'll say of course I see it now how can we work toward that. And maybe not a system in which you are so vitally important and *it* is so vitally important that the Cartesian split is healed and suddenly it isn't some mystical, unitarian reality, things come right back into focus again and we have another few centuries left. And we have the need for pictorialization even that can deal with any kind of picture system it doesn't make a difference what, you can go make bone scratches in the moist clay and it will be just as valid a confirmation as if you were dealing with photographs or with the most skilled manipulator of oil paint or acrylics. Or whether or not you use electric scanning devices and get beeps or electrical imaging fields, or diagrams, the pictorial system won't make any difference because you won't fall into the trap of the once removed definition of the world or entering into the state of the illusion that replaces the fact. And a lot of you I know are saying, you fool, I don't need to replace anything. Nobody ever gave me a picture of a pretty lady and convinced me that *that* was what I really wanted. You know, that kind of thing... Whole issues of our world are motivated by illusion that appear in pictorial form, whether paintings, drawings, photographs and so on. Ok, what time are we coming back here? End tape 8B