

## 10-A 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 10-A: Van Eyck, the camera obscura, Stanley Cavell, painting vs. photography

...Proleptic image, the only figure in the painting which has any historicity is this portrait of this..of 1436, an actual living human being...in the society which Van Eyck is recording, Canon Van Der Paele. He wishes to have himself in the presence of the divine mother and child. He wishes to have his patron saint present. He wishes to have another saint of the church associated with the Donatian hospital, so he has that figure apparent. And Van Eyck includes a polyglot, composite church introducing innumerable elements: even the rug is semiotic, with its design patterns in it. But to ensure the idea that by way of anticipation, things that are *not* are made to appear as though they *are*. Prolepsis, that identity in which both the past, the present, and the future coalesce into an image that is emphatically cast in the present tense. And of course the one controlling motif throughout the entire form is that sense that there is no syntax visible. It is the prelude to what will happen in the same identity of light being the prime defining element in early photography. And it is the same issue that persists in texts like Ivins and even readjusted in Estelle Jussim and still persists in my view in terms of court cases and so on which define the authenticity of the photograph as being made by forces that have nothing to do with human will, plus we know...are distorted as well... Get closer, even the thread, and you get into the drapery, and again, if you are observing this form up close you have to, seeing this you are now at about this distance, and you will notice every single thread of this gold-metallic thread, even the warp and the woof of the thread, even the velvet piled up on the robe is defined. You have to get literally like *this* before you see the syntax. This is because if God's plenitude, in this case it is god, not divine energy, vital flux, elan vital or what have you. If that chain, that indefinable force, in this case God's plenitude, it must spill over, must leak on all orders of existence. It must also justifiably invade the speck of dust, the thread, even to the lowest threshold of microscopic matter, and that is the reason for the implication. This interest in the idea of the great chain defining not only things that are seen in the larger schema of what we might call abstraction and idea performing down even to the curls that line the virgin's border of her vestment. And including the reflection of her sacred ring. Now...she is, as with a nun, a bride of god, not of Joseph now and forever, and

that is her earthly wedding image...Look at the reflection in the eye of the parrot, it also reflects a window. Notice the reflection on the fingertips of the child, the delicate rendering, and the obsessive rendering of the flowers. Quite often in flesh...see the child's syntax becomes more visible. Look at the way the feathers are treated in the division down into smaller subunits within. Nothing is ever permitted to remain a general definition. Things must confirm both those larger definitions of the...here is our one historical figure. You will notice that every figure's gaze goes beyond other figures. No one looks at anyone else. The virgin's glance bypasses St. George's. And St. George says, 'How do you do, Ma'am, this is my earthly patron,' and he indeed looks beyond her. And Canon Van Der Paele, he is staring beyond as if he is having an intrapsychic vision. Unless you notice that, this is where the mimetic artist in the fifteenth century is unwilling to even escape that fact: don't be fooled, this is indeed an illusion, but don't be fooled, it is as if taking place in fact. And what we find, every crease line, the wart on the cheek, the definition of the intensity of his devotion. The crow's feet, look at the way each hair, each little stray hair...on the forehead is defined. This is the prelude to that necessity and this form will begin to be collectively known, it was not by private document. Or even to the point that phenomenological effects: if you keep in mind folks, just think about the idea of simple issues that relate to the, what am I trying to say?... It should be extremely important for us to understand that when certain forms were invented and when, for example, the telescope is invented, and spectacles were invented in 1286, in the thirteenth century. It is interesting to note that the phenomenological effects of magnifying instruments begins to appear in the fifteenth century. As I told you the other day, if you find an earlier example I would love to see it, I am sure they probably exist, at least this is the typical statement that it is in the fifteenth century where the *use* of the magnifying glass...there are examples where magnifications are visible, but not at the service of imagery or even for the intent purposes of trying to reveal a philosophical system concerning vision. Now, these spectacles that are held by Canon Van der Paele, you notice that they magnify a portion of the text, and that portion of the text does indeed have to do with the Book of Saint John. And in this case it also has to do with the idea of the concept of light and flesh, word-like flesh. What I am trying to get across is that this also points out that even the document that uses words to define the holiness of this divine vision. The man, the historical man witnessing divine things, must be confirmed on the natural level by spectacles which magnify even the level in which the great chain of being includes the *writing* about the divine order of things. Even the reflected light on the finger nails. Look at the...even the pores on the hand are defined. And as I said, please don't think of this as an isolated object, this was widely known all of...works and eventually in the marriage of the southern and the northern forms during the Italian period. Well, the definition of another illustration just to show you, of prolepsis. Here is a very, very shrewd politician, the Chancellor of Rolin, and when I say chancellor, that would be like

the chancellor of any kind of political system who has great power. And he was also a very, very nasty man. And yet on the other hand he performs things for the Duke that insist that he has to, in other words, excuse himself of the evils that he inflicts upon people by saying that he is only doing his duty. But at the same, he proleptically wishes to try to anticipate that he too will become one of the elect. So he shows himself again in a polyglot, composite image made up of not only a cloister which absolutely did not exist and can never exist, of this period and in this territory, of this nature. We have friezes of Roman reliefs. We have Gothic and Romanesque features combined in the same architectural order. We might expect this in the nineteenth century but it certainly didn't occur in the fifteenth century. So it is a magical precinct. We even have Gothic windows and Romanesque windows laying side by side above. It is not so much the fact that you didn't have cathedrals that included ancient elements, in Gothic or Romanesque churches. It is their relationships, like you don't have a certain type of Romanesque column with a Gothic capital. This would have been unheard of. You would have Gothic walls, and you might have one wall that was never altered that be Romanesque, but not the admixture of elements. So in the first place it is a magical precinct... It is a visual image that looks believable but at the same time is to be thought of as an illusion. We have Rolin at the... and we have the child making the gesture of benediction and notice what happens as we enter this kind of tri-mode cloister, all these things with full text definitions, the golden ledgers of Vorrain as well as other documents which define what should be in a painting, semiotically to represent the trinity or what have you. Then we look beyond and find again the purported red-turbaned figure of the painter and his assistant, and... we have the image of the town, the actual town topographically, absolutely that we could say, quote, photographic, unquote, with every building at its proper location, and they observe the actual world that extends beyond this more magical, illusional world of the vision. This is the spitting image of this man. Coins bear his image. Certain paper documents bear his image. You can almost sense this idea of the secular face that reveals the character of the man. And the crown. How can we have an event such as in this space it would be in futurity because the crowning of the virgin is indeed a mythology, purportedly after her death she was crowned. She did not ascend and become part of the trinity. As I said, she did not become until the Catholic Church passed the dogma of the quaternity. If you are a Catholic you don't believe in a trinity you believe in a quaternity, at least according to your canonical law. This was established in the 1950s. But it is the town itself. That this is again a *future* event taking place... the woman holding her child which would have to be an *earlier* event, the historicity of the birth of the child and yet the crowning is treated as though it is the case in fact. The sense of the illusionism: the image that has such fidelity to things and yet is indeed an illusion. And one of the most remarkable examples... look at the details of this work done in 1428, *Saint Francis of Assisi Receiving A Stigmata*, by Van Eyck. Absolutely accurate portrayal of an architectural setting. All eyes look beyond the

event that is taking place. The Christ figure...the hands recede against the body. Look at the way the hair lays on the head, that stain on the side...Go all the way back to the first prelude to this kind of attention to detail that we found in the Lorenzetti's *Magi*, every one of these pictures...syntactically, once we come in very close, reduce themselves to no more than spots of paint. They represent, just step back a bit and notice the illusion, every type of occupation, every type of activity, the commerce, the definition of the aerial perspective that we talked about over and over again as we go off into the distance. This is a scene in which we see within it, is defined within the constructs of literally, optically obsessive detail and it also enters into the atmosphere of the world itself as we move off into space itself. In these last few minutes I'll introduce the material, and you can all clap and scream and yell and say hooray because we have our first representation of what will become the issue of the camera obscura. And these are taken from Durer's *Elementary Treatise on Drawing*. Now Durer is no longer satisfied by what we would call a system that articulates perspective according to the confirmation of human sense. What he wishes to do is to make that human sense be measurably related to some kind of instrumentation and this is not true of Italian perspective. This is the way one knows the theory, one defines the perspective without the aid of instrumentation. However, in the northern style, we must have a *device* that confirms what we see. And so we have for the first time, a man sits in a chair, the man imposes a transparent plane between the subject and the divide. He has a little view hole, an aperture hole, and very much like the, what do you call those things on cameras, you look through at the top so that you can see?

Student: Eye piece, viewfinder.

Viewfinder, yes. As I often say to my students, what is a camera? {laughter} At any rate, we have a ratchet to permit us to raise and lower to establish a viewpoint for the viewing instrument. We also have basically a unit that will predict the idea of being able to move forward or backward according to the scale or size. These little devices that were at the service of painting also predict the forthcoming image where we will want an instrument to permit us to move close, or to pull something into focus, or out of focus. To elevate our visual viewpoint, to lower it, to also predict that we can find a series of coordinate points upon a plane that will exactly mimic what is before us. Exactly mimic, not idealize. We say a confirmation appears on this plane, with exactitude, the definition of the form where it is located in space. Thus the instrument becomes an intermediary device for confirming the exactitude of position, location, scale, height, and so on, of the figure before us. It also has all the principles that we associate with later developments of the camera...let's just go through a number of these works from the treatise of 1525 by Albrecht Durer. Keep in mind folks, these were popularized and disseminated virtually throughout Germany and into the Italian countries...this was like getting your

basic manual of how to draw horses or hands. Here is another principle: the use of the plumb bob: Here we wish to have an accurate rendition of the lute. Now we not only have an interposing plane, we have elevation of the table, we have ratcheting, we have also the...move that can move to the side. And that points can be, as the man has a dual, he has a mahl stick rod and also another thread line that can be projected to the point where this line intersects the certain point of the lute held by the other figure with the instrument. He keeps this point marked, closes the little panel and on the picture plane marks the point of the exact definition of *that* particular location of that portion of the lute in space, now transferred to a plane. They understood how to deal with the theoretical, as a geometric, as a Platonic idea, as in Italian art. But the German mind, certainly as defined here by Albrecht's work tends to want to insist that we must have an intermediary instrument that not only defines points of location in space, eventually we will talk about points of *light* that reflect from objects in space that relate to the original form, and certainly in camera work that is what it is all about. But we will also insist upon the definition of the plane itself carrying the accurate reduction of scale in terms of the distance of the plumb line and the point line from the unit itself, and equally the importance of ensuring that this form somewhat is not dependent upon someone *willing* the form, that is manufacturing the illusion of things, but it can be in essence, in a rather naive technological sense confirmed by the intermediary objective instrumentation, that which does not permit the interference of the human will, the human imagination, but insists upon fidelity to things in fact. We have hundreds of examples of these forms and manuals. Here the man observes a reclining nude. And I might add...a tradition...that kind of a lady who seems to be rather wonderfully, her bulk is considered to be a sign of exquisite while the Northern...a rather slim type would be represented. Here we have in this case the...often it is the top point with that pyramidal form, we have the grid structure which is cast..here...I am doing this right now, transferring some photographs of nude figures to eight foot canvases, I am working from 16 x 20 photos, draw a grid on the canvas, draw a grid on the photograph, therefore I sit and look at the photograph and draw exactly on the grid of the canvas what I see in each square, it is much easier than having to draw from the photograph, and 1800 hours trying to get a model to hold a position upside down to define it {laughter}. The point is, he looks *through* the grid which then demarcates the various sections of this woman. And then in each section he chooses to draw in the center, which is a rather typical procedure for German Renaissance painting, that is to start in the center and works one's way out to the edge, so it is not...from the point of a casual reference but it is a point of deliberation, the thing must grow toward the edges and spread beyond by implication. So that we have again is another device that allows us to move up and down, in which if you choose to lower the eye level, or a higher eye level, in order to confirm that the intermediary instrument makes possible the evidence of things seen and guarantees that no one can declare them as *not* subject to fidelity. That is, no human interference here folks, because I can

guarantee my plumb line, or my sketch line as in the upper image, or my...or my grid structure as confirming the *exact* degree of where things are in space and how they appear in space in size and scale and from a measurable distance. The reduction in scale can even be confirmed and not just be created by illusion. Again we have the idea of a man looking through a sight, that is supposed to appear to be transparent so that he sees the object impressing itself upon, what, like a ground-glass. And then finally we arrive at the point where we start seeing measuring systems that appear in...and diagram, having to be measured by devices...introduce the exactitude of measurable plans, constructs, types of visual material that be can used for developing monuments as well as graphic forms, and therefore brings us up to that purportedly first published illustration of the camera obscura of 1545. In which we have the solar eclipse taking place. Look at that wonderful little face on the sun. And even the attempt to show the inversion, the lack of the reversal image, it doesn't quite follow the upside down, it just turns on its side. And we have the darkened, we have the camera, the room. We have a wall, a portico, a porch, with basically an aperture, in other words a pinhole camera. And what happens is, in this very simple definition, a continuation of Ptolemaic straight lines, reflected lights, the eclipse takes place in the external world and it also takes place within the interior one. I know we've got to stop but pardon me for a moment I must read you something..."Camera obscura first published illustration 1545 by Reiner Gemma Frisius...a Dutch physician and mathematician," (that is a mathematician equals a scientist, an empiricist) "illustrates the method of observing a solar eclipse on January 24, 1544 in Louvain." And by the way, you might remember that Leonardo DaVinci earlier describes the camera obscura in his notebooks...However you have to keep in mind the descriptions dated from 1490 remained unknown in Leonardo's notebooks for almost three centuries until Venturi decided to publish them in 1797. Now I will continue with this tomorrow morning. I would like to read to you a letter that was written to me by a man who is preeminently aware of art history (laughter)...I have got to read you this letter at this particular moment. "June 11, 1975, Dear Bill," (This is a letter from Harold Spencer who has one of the most recently published books on art history called *The Image Maker*, and since he was interested, he holds a doctorate from Harvard, and I am very honored by the fact that he took my class, *after* the fact when I told him about my thrill of reading this letter after the death of my father) "This afternoon, as the sun was behind a Hartley-like cloud over the Tetons, I noticed an irregular patch of light projected on the wall of the anteroom of our cabin which faces west"...Colter Bay Village... Grand Teton National Park, Wyoming. There was a small slit between the siding in the exterior wall and the vertical boards that line the interior of this anteroom, and the setting sun was shining through it. Something about the irregular patch of light drew my attention— it was so like the jagged rim of the Tetons across Jackson Lake to the west." (Now remember, it was *this* piece of paper that saw the image of it first, you'll see) "I checked the window in our room and there it was! I went back to the anteroom and contemplated

the upside down projection of the light patch of sky between the dark cloud and the mountains. Then the image began to grow clearer— the sun was coming out from behind the cloud and that reversed-world upon the wall. I ran to the desk in our room and grabbed *this* sheet of paper and held it on the wall. Perfect! Practically standing on my head, I watched the sun float free of the cloud and called one and all of the family to bear witness! Then looking around, I saw multiple projections of the same scene through all the cracks in the wall, nicely focused and stirring in unison as sun and cloud changed their relative positions and as the cloud's shape was subtly altered. It made my day, already full from an early morning horseback ride with breakfast on the trail and a canoe trip with Mark down the lake. Needless to say, the westward trek goes well. This mountain country never ceases to lift my spirits!..." Isn't that remarkable, in 1975. The first published illustration. It seems as though when people witness something magical, it totally transforms his life. An eminent historian, a painter as well, who is now obsessed with camera images. If you had seen the faculty show, he deals with, so to speak, western mythology, he shows certain aspects of Buffalo Bill, he is introducing camera obscuras, Timothy O'Sullivan wet plate images, etc., etc., in his work, and I thought that I'd let you know that even the influence of the camera obscura is active in 1975. So we will continue this tomorrow.

...That will appear in that period we call optical art...walking around confirming the human sense. You will notice these people use complementary colors like Noland, Stella, and Olitsky, and others, but they don't...a belated humanist...now in his recent work he has become a belated Romanticist. Stella, Noland, the three major figures, Stella, Noland, and Morris Louis deal with phenomenalism and they present things that we want to say confirm the internal human sense but in reality they affect us in other ways, like we get bathed by the light surfaces. Photography tends to provide a realism through what? The phenomenalism of its process: autonomism, light doing the work... Arguments about selection and so on, that is not the issue, it has nothing to do with the point, there is no way to even introduce that into the argument. The idea, if it is photography, when we put it in the simple terms of its origins and development, whether the impress of an image, an *idola* occurs by virtue of a television or electronically, or energy systems of any sort, or by light wave energy, you are still dealing with the fact that the essential *imprimatura* on that plane which is also part of a light sensitive material is affected by an imitative, an affective, physical and subject to the "principle of physics" energy system. And it is not, as we said in the simple minded illustration, paint does not leap into its configuration. Whereas we can say a light sensitive material... does leap into its configuration as it were by virtue of the principle of...and it is also autonomous and automatic as long as the lights are on or the sun is in the sky. And this is what {Cavell} is speaking of when he says, "Painting, in Manet was *forced* to forego likeness exactly because of its own obsession with reality, because the illusions he had

learned to create did not provide the conviction in reality, the connection with reality, that it craved. One might even say that in withdrawing from likeness, painting freed photography to be invented. And if what is meant is that photography freed painting from the idea that a painting had to be a picture (that is, *of* or *about* something else, that is also not true. Painting did not free itself, did not force itself to maintain itself apart from *all* objective reference until long after the establishment of photography; and then not because it finally dawned on painters that paintings were not pictures, but because that was the way to maintain connection with (the history of) the art of painting, to maintain conviction in its powers to create paintings, meaningful objects in paint." That was the reason, to follow a tradition that seemed to be necessary to move out... teleologically. It is very difficult to imagine the acorn, seeing it, and suddenly seeing the limb of the tree, if you get that illustration, but follow its in progressional stages, and finally the development of the tree is in a sort of a definition of a form that continues to evolve even beyond the tree itself through the process of degeneration and decay...that certain traditions are necessary. He says that, "Painting and reality no longer *assure* one another." (He is not saying that painting is not now a reality itself, he is saying that painting need not assure us of reality. And in essence, he tends to say that, "what painting wanted, in wanting a connection with reality, was a sense of *presentness*." That is the idea, *that* form, phenomenologically *is* present to you)...He says, "Not exactly a conviction of the world's presence to us, but of our presence to it." If it is present to me and I am the subjective interpreter, I am the center of measurement"... (You and me as well, and we do have intra-psychic connections) "It is present as a thing or an object, but I also," (You see this is interesting... the shift comes to, I am now free to subjectively respond in any way I wish. It is more like, I now have a new mode. I can approach a work of art to which I can be present and not have myself defined with anything I want to do with it in terms of my response to it. I can subjectively interpret it, alter it, it is intrapsychic...a radical rash of feelings...

Student: If that gives you the ability to subjectively interpret, doesn't that take you full cycle back to an art form based on the subjective response?

Oh yes, it does. But it doesn't take us *full* circle back, just for the simple reason that painting is no longer defining how we should behave, you are not supposed to mimic the ideals or the perspectival systems or seeing them in the world. They confirm your senses to a degree, but it also tries to avoid them in the sense that it doesn't leave the impression of an afterimage or the flash in your eye, it leaves the experience of color as it might reflect upon your skin...it also insists that you recognize that which you are now present to it, because it makes no demands on you except by virtue of scale or its formal elements...Then he says, "At some point the unhooking of our consciousness from the world interposed our subjectivity between us and our presentness to the



world.” (He doesn’t care to say it happened in the seventeenth century or whether you trace it back to prehistory. He is saying at some point in time our subjectivity interfered with our relationship with the world, it is just that simple. Because in the first place, it gave...personal conditioning or viewpoints might be, it also hinged on subjectivity tutored by the conventions of your period, so that interfered with what the world is: it is like my question about the wall. Even to the point that our subjectivity tells us about whether it is even important to consider things like whether matter is there or not there or what have you. I am serious, it is like our subjectivity refuses to permit questions about the *objectivity* of the world. And he says that basically our subjectivity is interposed between us and the world. Two things bring the world back. And this is his thesis as later described when he goes through the whole Fried commentary. You don’t have to buy it, but it is a very pervasive theoretical construct that has invaded every issue in theory and criticism, certainly in painting. Even in relation to discussions of Philip Pearlstein, is indeed a phenomenologist even though he uses figures...or is it really the Colorfield painters, and what they are essentially saying is that *that* painting is a *thing*. It makes no demands upon you other than just the phenomenological scale or reduction of color upon your skin...reduced in size and scale...it leaves you free to experience your own subjectivity. But now you have to accept the phenomenism of the thing and you also have to accept your own subjectivity. Now does that make sense to you? Photography would tend to present us with a world having been *removed* from our subjectivity: that click, print, past-tense image, yet appearing very present to you... occurs a phenomenistic procedure called light reflecting off things and pressing itself upon a light-sensitive material, it is just that simple. Does anyone debate that? Or do you want to say it is god, no, no one wants to say that. The point is you can debate it on the issues that aren’t implied in the thesis, like, a man has his finger on the shutter, man selects the lens, man—human beings—has to determine the vantage point: of course! But that is not the thesis. Those are two entirely separate issues. The simple issue is that in the automatism or the essential identity of what *really* defines the image: something external to the human being and the human senses. Unless you really want to go back and start pretending as though you are a Pre-Socratic...sending little idols out...to objects coming in like a...inside your head and presenting them to your consciousness. Because if you argue that, if you don’t advocate these issues, you are arguing like a Pre-Socratic. Except that there is a certain degree of objectivity and phenomenism and in physical processes, so the physics of vision. And even the physics of the autonomous impress, and the light rays...and I’ve got to get both worlds: autonomous, self-governing *impress* {spells out the word} not impression...but impress. Something changing its total structure by virtue of the phenomenological affect {spells out the word}. The effect is the change, the affect is the cause. And light is affective. And light does have the capacity to impress things for the purpose of transformation. Go out in the sun and get sun-burned...So at any rate, Cavell is trying to establish a thesis, let’s

call it a theory, that has really been discussed for centuries prior to rational thought, is now finding its new emergence in the sense that it tries to say that the photograph presents us with a world, the world that appears very present to *us* but it is in the past tense thus TOTALLY removed from us. We continue in our spatio-temporal life. We move along living and dying, as we progress, and the photograph, insofar as it is archivally retained...and subjected to various types of procedural, non-acid papers and proper toning...whether we can guarantee that they can survive for fifteen minutes or two hundred years or a thousand really makes no difference. The idea is insofar as the observer looks at something that is still substantially and physically there, even if it's on a piece of paper, it is as though he or she sees something that has that sense of being present but also has that definite confrontation with something that no longer is. Now that is a kind of peculiar conundrum: it says the world is there, and also the world is not there...I shall now go back to the Grand Canyon and photograph... and say look you fool, like Berkeley they told to kick the rock because it isn't all in the mind. You know your foot hurts. (laughter)...Ken Josephson took one of the most stunning and telling images...holding the photograph next to...the image *in* the photograph, and then finally arrives at the point where the new image is developed and now it is held...the image of the actual feather next to the photograph of the feather. And it is the idea of showing us the confirmation of subject matter and also the presentation of the past tense image of the subject matter and making a very telling commentary: as I hold the photograph of the Grand Canyon next to the Grand Canyon, if you want to prove that... then go out there and let your eyes kick the pan. And I am saying that I am sorry but that photograph is unique, because here I can extend the thesis down to the most infinitesimal particle that has eroded away within five minutes after I took the original picture. Alterations in the wind, changes in the position of a stick or leaf: the world continues to be in a state of flux, just like the feather in Light Gallery was undergoing decay while at the same time the photograph in the frame was an extant record of a previous moment in time and space that appears to be *exactly* the same as the feather hanging beside it, insofar as atomistic detail, value, definition, fidelity and attention to all the unit structures within the feather including the glints of light and so on. I did notice... that most of the objects he chose the use of parallelism, where those that would have the inevitability of height in the same light and generalized light of an exhibition gallery as opposed to having a photograph of let's say a metallic object, a highly reflective metallic object...and then putting that next to the photograph. He chose subjects that were definitely coequal in the experiencing of them...At any rate, Cavell ends up saying that painting gives us back ourselves, but it says the self is yours because in this kind of...you can't mess around because there ain't nothing to do to it. You can go and destroy it, the point is, it doesn't tell you or force you or coerce you to deal with visual terms...or any of the ways like in that essay in the *Psychology of Perception* book. It doesn't necessarily structure metaphorical or symbolic or empirical or rational ways of

knowing, it is just phenomenal presence which gives you back yourself. Whereas photography *implies* phenomenological presence but also has a way of releasing the world from your subjectivity...if I stand before this and I am moved by, for whatever reason, by the light, by the relationship of the structure, the design, configuration... the expressive aspects of the man or even by the process aspects that are involved in making this image, some of which may be mechanical, other than light, somewhat manufactured, not hand-made but facilitated by autonomism. It is as though Cavell would say, nonetheless, you see, you get this back. And here I am out here feeling the urgency of time or of love or of thinking oh boy I can't go home again (laughs) or to think that that stays in the same time/space system, even with multiple levels of generation of new imagery upon new imagery, you still think that it is photography through the central unit paradigm that confirms that it is an autonomous moment in time in relation to cause and effect. Or even with generation upon generation you might have to become conscious of...modes that alter or attempt to force back into the old paradigms something that comforts us, like slashing it, marking it, painting it, polychroming it. Adding materials to it, shooting it: anything that shows our will in the presence of the world. There is no more *desperate* issue, in my mind, and I love them, I think it is terrific. There is another reason for doing that too and that is the idea of saying that we want matter and not the illusion of things. Spitting on photographs, or Vito Acconci who had documentations occur...well there are hundreds of parallelisms that relate to the idea of trying to get corporeality, bodily substance. It is like everyone mentions the objectness in a photograph and there is a whole history of that kind of concept of the object-ness. Dennis Hall in that little Hudson River Museum...Bob Heinecken...early on working with Nathan at the workshop made marvelous references to the object. Jim Warburton {?}... *The Real Thing*, what was that called, *The Photographic Object*, did an exhibition on this whole subject. The sense of people making photographs that are pneumatically defined, thermal plastic stretching...or images that show the influence of materiality, in other words it may not be just atmospheric...it may be the idea as I said of thermal-plastic, heat changes...some temperature aspect, something subject with the same kind of physics or phenomenalism that we experience as we exist. But the issue is that, and I love the way he {Cavell} sums this up, he says, "One can purportedly say photography overcame such activity in a way undreamed of by painting. A way that could not be satisfied by painting, one that does so much defeat the act of painting as escape from it altogether by autonomism, by removing the human agent from the task of reproduction"...no human being, he didn't say that, he says by removing the human agent from the task of reproduction...not removed from more finer tasks than a painter could ever hope for. Of selection, of intention, of being able to be acutely aware of the moment in time which painters seldom think about: they build hours, where photographers have to see moments...of having to find a particular vantage point from which to even make the world appear to be peculiarly ingratiating, or even to let us see

things that we have never even *possibly* thought were worthwhile to look at. And so if you think this removes the photographer from his more refined status, it practically elevates him, or her, to Olympian dimensions, because it requires an *intently* peculiar personality. It really does...and so it says, by autonomism, by removing the human agent from the task of reproduction, or the task of creation. You can say creation, it still implies a human agency. "One could say purportedly that photography was never in competition with painting," and I think you could absolutely say that...What happened was that at some point... the quest for visual reality, or the memory of the present, as Baudelaire puts it...What happened is that at some point the quest for visual reality, now that doesn't mean for a picture, that means to be able to sense that which is seen as real, not just subjected to my subjectivity. You see again from that little illustration, *that* now impresses itself upon me. You see I know it is no longer present, but it appears to be present to me. And one of the most unnerving things is that I have to experience... because in reality I cannot alter a thing. And I can sit here and read into things like intention, or evil, or busy urban traffic, or the principles of confluent motifs as far as ... points of attention that might have to do with reflected lights, either graphically or photographically made more evident: I can deal with all sorts of different meanings. In other words, I am experiencing...that is how we try to project upon that something that is not going to bear my projections, so I am going to shatter it, rip it in half and destroy it. It remains in essence. I am affected by my subjectivity. Just as with paintings, really permitting our...generally I am not given enough to wax on about, a lot of people arrive at a Stella and say oh yes, a protractor and geometry, therefore I understand. And they totally miss the point, you know, that idea is that there ain't nothing to understand. Those painters leave you with your subjectivity. Photographs tend to leave us with our subjectivity but we still try to interpret, declare. And yet that dumb substance, and that original source, and that light receiving source, that which impressed, hangs before our eye as a kind of new testament to our *own* frailty and to *its* permanence. A testament to *our* temporality and *its* permanence, in that sense.

Student: ...Subjectivity, isn't the criticism absurd in terms of trying to, I couldn't understand where the cultural criticism was coming from.

...Criticisms of post-Greenbergian...first started to articulate, and Michael Fried, Max Kozloff in terms of the purest criticism is that which deals with the process of what we are not supposed to know and experience...they don't...one bit. The only thing you can say is they criticize on the theory of phenomenism. They present us a thesis that...get on with other theories that use mathematics...but then again they use the idea of issues of subjectivity and objectivity. That's why criticism is essentially...on occasion, very disappointing. Because you wish you had a few more arguments that are phenomenological. I...read, endlessly, Michael Fried's book on Morris Louis...and we

can talk about grand issues in terms of scale...but I don't ever need a measurement until I turn to the pictures. I am never told about the particular nature of a color, like phthalo...blue or cadmium red light or something. If it is phenomenalism we ought to be discussing really even the measure of the threads...the manufacturer...services the painter can afford. Do you understand what I mean? They are disappointing because they talk about the ideas of response, and yet they don't deal ultimately with the phenomena that they claim is so objectively there...{back to Cavell} "To maintain conviction in our connection to reality, to maintain our presence, painting accepts the recession of the world" (do you get the idea, of what that means) "To maintain conviction in *our* connection with reality" (Here I am as a little painting, it says, no...around me, that's the painting, I talk as if I know what the painting says. {laughter} Actually the painting sits there and I walk up and it says, in essence...push a little button or one of those pull out things. You pull out a thing and it says, I am nothing except myself, itself. It is nothing except itself that you see before you, OK, that kind of idea. (laughter) It is called Parker plays the speaking painting...but the issue is there is nothing to refer to, so what does that mean? It means I either accept it or not, like some people love gardenias and some people like petunias. I make choices about...the phenomena. Or like some people like long hair, it is that simple. Some people want to touch surfaces that are indicative of internal texture and grain, but they are disappointed by the varnish on the surface. Others don't want to get splinters in their fingers, that's a metaphor you know. {laughter} However you wish to put it, what he is saying is...I'll read it again, "To maintain conviction in our connection with reality" (Do you see that...with simple pronouns...he says a very simple thing: to maintain and be convinced that we still are in the world and that we have our reality, and keep our subjectivity) "To maintain our presentness:" He didn't say present...our presence, I am here by golly, by the...touch. The main thing of my conviction of *my being* in reality and my sense of presentness, he says, "painting accepts the recession of the world," he means the world by allusion and invention. I skipped over that. That is, there is no reference by allusion or metaphor or by simile or by iconographic connotation or what have you. So therefore it hangs before you just like you were performing...and yet you could speak back. The painting can't. You can affect it by what you say, if you ever get a chance. All those factors, and that you are like me, you follow me? And there are very few people who can stand before a Louis, or a Noland, or a Stella, and talk about the relationships to similar {?} themselves to the painting. In reality, what generally happens is we start mimicking that object's behavior...clothing...it's like Martha's dress the other night, in the backyard, it is like a living gnome...we start miming other things that we wear and incorporate and start reflecting the object...but they still retain what we might call a utilitarian... and you have nothing, they have no function, except in the choices like, yes/no, look/not look. That is the thesis. And what does that do? The minute you say, I enjoy this experience of Morris Louis...

Student: How about Elitsky?

You see he is after the fact. Elitsky begins primarily as a late Abstract Expressionist...a purist...nesting principles, incorporation principles...later, in the field paintings where the blurbs from the spray gun and the little...on the edge of the plane...those are very distinctive...read what he says. Plenitude and all the issues associated with it...and they also have... phenomenism...I should put it in this order: Stella, Louis, then Elitsky... you really can see what is there in fact. He (Cavell) says this: "What happened was that at some point the quest for visual reality, or the 'memory of the present,' (as Baudelaire put it) split apart. To maintain conviction in our connection with reality, to maintain our presentness, painting accepts the recession of the world." (There is no entry, and then we are doing that to ourselves, our own subjective experience) "Photography maintains the presentness of the world by accepting our absence from it." Now what does that mean to you? It should be perfectly clear from everything I've said.

Student: Past tense.

Past tense, what else?

Student: Well I am still having problems with something you said earlier.

...Tell us.

Student: It seems to be that what you were getting into was the responses to a work of art, and I don't understand why at that level responding to a photograph is any different from responding to a painting.

Well let me clarify that, there is a big difference. There really is...if I say that photograph does have several human beings, and a bus, and architecture, and a roadway...and implications of light and so on. See in that sense I would say that photograph does cue me, as it were, about imagery. And if we take a Colorfield painting...it has no distinct referent.

Student: Well in talking, are we only talking about Colorfield painting and not other kinds of painting?

No, only Colorfield painting. Exclusively.

Student: Ok.

But you see the past tense identity of the photograph, the original...and the automatic nature of...the task of representation, is what gives photography the sense of accepting our absence from it. And he ends up by saying, "The reality in a photograph is present to me while I am not present to it; (and that is really very true, it is a simple issue... it is like no metaphor, it is just a fact. The reality is present to me although I am not present to it. Now what reality is he talking about? The man, the bus? He is talking about the original phenomenological effect of light emanating from source subject matter and impressing itself upon a light sensitive plane. That is the reality. It is still present to me because the impression of that synchronicital effect, that we say one-fiftieth or one two-hundred fiftieth of a second, or one second or thirty minutes, it doesn't make any difference. The idea is that the impression of the light upon a light sensitive subject tends to be removed as the task of reproduction out of the hands of not only the person who did the selecting, and chose the vantage point, and film, and camera, and so on, and also out of my hands. And so it is as if I have a tendency here, there is a metaphor here, I tend to want to view that illusion of the world as being the world, simply because I have here the phenomenology of autonomism and autonomy. The conviction is not so much as what I see and how clearly it is defined, or how altered. It is much more in the sense of how I know it was done independent of human will, in the past, a reproduction. Does that make sense to you?

Student: The reality of a photograph...in terms of it being present to us but we are not present to it, that is independent of the representational image.

Yes, absolutely. First of all, that is part A.

Student: It is just tones, isn't it.

It is just really tones, and it also an accurate recording insofar as whatever the light sensitive receptor was...the light receptors, or that which can be impressed can vary by tone. It's like we tell people you have a bad print because you don't have enough value contrast and people today realize well what is wrong with that...light... and they are gorgeous, you understand what I mean...some say you must use the zone system, and someone else saying it doesn't make any difference if you use the zone system, in that sense, unless you want control. But that control still does not exert the task of reproduction. It exerts itself upon the path of reproduction. It exerts itself upon the task of selection and the control of the material properties and mechanical properties and phenomenological properties that are really independent of your reach insofar as the task of reproduction, the light emitting source and impressing itself upon the film: that is part A. However, since there is that secondary factor, you see part B says this: you see

this is the part where we still have to deal with a certain degree of metaphorism. Since photographs tend to, in their most standard identity, tend to be atomistic in their detail, and that syntax that we were talking about, I mentioned getting this close to Van Eyck before you start to see the brushwork. Photographs you can get this close (laughter) and you cannot, don't think of it just as grain, I am talking about you tend to lose the syntactical mark, and I think of no better confirmation...do you remember that diagram of the silver halide crystal when you saw that little portion of the eye, and that was the grain enlarged, that was a perfect confirmation of the thesis, because what I see is not the syntax of the human hand, a mark, I see the syntax of oxidized silver. Do you see what I am talking about? Light and chemistry made that silver unit become a metallic deposit. And I know...had to go through all these little processes...a very simple issue...with the ions and the nuclear movement and the point of contact that expands. All these processes are taking place in a way that is autonomous, self-governing, and independent of me. And then when I get to part B, that repression of human syntax, or even dismissal of it, save for selection and so on, that tendency to find that values whether they are continuous or abrupt, still dependent upon the phenomenology of light...that sense that the figure, no matter how fuzzy or distorted, altered, or what have you: it *is* the model...by virtue of its task of reproduction. It seems to me a very credible insign of natural confirmations, blockages, continuums: you know all these people talk about, as Cavell does, the world *does* continue, we don't ask of paintings: in the de Hooch painting in the seventeenth century, I don't suspect that it is a stage like a RKO studios. I really suspect that that was the subject he defined. He wasn't building tableaux in the painting. I don't tend to want to ask in the painting of architecture, of any period of time, painting I said, about what lies outside the plane. Because in the first place, the thing about the continuum...Andrew Wyeth, or anyone else. A barn of Andrew Wyeth or a church interior...I tend to think that it can only be constructed if I have the artist making the paint, manipulating it to become the reference of the painting. So in the first place, automatically we have a continuum. In painting, I have to have a human willing agent and a medium that was not itself-reflexive in order to continue. I would also note that I don't need to think of buildings behind buildings, or humans behind humans. Because I know that paintings lie as a series of marks on a surface next to each other and they do that in a progressive order. It is not generally a process of covering up... In photography, because the...insign, that we fall through, the camera's glass eye, Greenberg was absolutely correct. It is a glass eye, and he is correct by stating when he talks about the window. In this case it is not that window which selects exclusively. It does that, but it is a window also in which it enables us to virtually...what I call the myth of the diver: we dive through the window, then we fall back to the original source subject. Simply because of the fact that the first thing, the cue to the reality of it is that it had to be light coming from a subject and impressed itself upon a light-sensitive film...and don't have another human intermediary as long as I can get back to that



world, that reference. And then secondly, I have the other issue: the sense of phenomenalism of its task of reproduction enables me to think of, for example, I don't really suspect...at the back of that bus. It would have to be continued by the acts of manipulation. If I am going to stick with the medium, painting or lithography. I don't suspect that in paintings things continue because I really do have to have the artist there to continue to paint for me, to conceptualize or to visualize a dumb substance that does not want to become "bus" in order for me to expect that you can see it continue. But with a photograph, I can say it does continue. It *did* continue is a more appropriate way to say it. For what reason can I say that is true? That I know a building is behind a building, and that people are behind people. Why do I know that? Why do I perceive that? And I can't in a painting.

Student: inaudible.

Exactly. And because the phenomenology that created that was also affecting the perceptions of every other...

Student: But this is independent of the illusionism of the lens.

Tell me what you mean by 'the illusionism.'

Student: You can get different types of lenses to give you different images...

Wide angle, go ahead.

Student: Or you can in fact do photograms where you just take a piece of paper and expose it to light and process it and what you'll have is just the effects of light on the paper...of the action of the light on the surface.

Chuck, you are right...on the issue...because you see it says again, you can abort the essential identity of what was there by the exchange of different types of lenses, and you can abort by chemistry...and you can abort by...certain aspects of vantage point. By abort I mean altering things. Abort how they might appear in their gross identity to your eye. You can change what you would see by virtue of your lenses, type of film, size and scale of camera, vantage point, like Orson Welles in *Citizen Kane* literally tearing up floorboards to get down below, so he could abort the vantage point as it were against the grain of what would be natural. But you see that is not the issue. Those are selections, and those are alterations that occur by virtue of...but still, even the wide angle photograph, or choosing high contrast film...there is still the task of representation, is dependent upon light reflecting from something. And then it may be

filtered in a certain way, it is still the light that has been filtered or aborted as it impresses itself upon the light-sensitive matrix. That is indicative of autonomy, of the principle of impress. It is not a humanly-willed thing. The human selects the aborting lens, but the human doesn't, that also preconditions the phenomenological effect of that work is going to be mediated by a series of systems that would match up with what you would see or what I would see. But it sure matches up with how that light behaves in relationship to being fractured, altered, or what have you. There is a big difference there. One is a distortion by virtue of nature: like even as light passes through certain... configurations, or translucent planes...what happened to the air-conditioning?

{Air-conditioner turns on, followed by inaudible discussion}

...We are subject to the heat death of the universe. I feel like I am experiencing the second law of thermodynamics. (laughter)...Those are good questions. You are asking the right questions, but what I am saying is that we have to, go ahead.

Student: (inaudible) I was just going to say that...is the reality of the image that we experience, that we are not a part of is not about the lens...provides metaphorically or symbolically to us...

That is right. But you could also argue...

Student: But that could be the lens.

No, no, no, you can't make that extension. You see those are choices, Dave...look, if I want to eat with my fingers instead of a fork, does the food behave any differently as it enters my mouth? I would imagine if I picked up my fried egg it is going to behave differently in the sense that its structure has been, but it doesn't change the albumen or the yolk. And if I eat with a fork and divide it, it still doesn't alter the substance, the phenomenological substance that is serving as nourishment...He {Cavell} says, yes, that is where the photographer makes extraordinary and exquisite choices, but you can do anything to the film, the lens, or whatever, but you are still not altering the essential task of reproduction.

Student: {inaudible}...the lens does not have to be there...the photogram is even more accurate.

It is! Photograms are more accurate than any other form of typical photography.

Student: All I am trying to clarify is the reality of the image is...

Yes, that is all part A. Part B has to do with the fact that the compression of time... we tend to drop below the threshold of vision if you want to get to that light sensitive unit, to see the mark. So you can almost believe in any kind of illusion because it is held by a constant. We don't have people referring to...I don't know of any cases where people might take, well there are hundreds of cases in literature where it happens. What I am saying is that there aren't many cases where I would think any of us behave like, to destroy a person by having them presented to us imagistically. I am less inclined to rip a painting apart, or like the madman who takes a chisel to a sculpture, than I am to tear a photograph in half. Do you see what I mean? It is like object-transfer...the sculpture is more about a sculpture of someone that I got mad at, like in fetishism and voodooism and so on. I might have a more credible insign of their presence. Like the Duane Hanson sculptures. You follow me? In fact I'll never forget, I just thought of this to prove my point. I'll never forget years ago at his first major show and I sat next to one of his very early construction workers, and he was leaning over like this looking at one of the John Casseri paintings on the wall, and I turned to him and said, "What do you think of that stuff?" {laughter} And the other people walked up and asked the policeman or the guard for directions...they are convincing, even down to the hair...but what I am saying is that is a more credible representation, in a sense, but we also know very quickly that it is an invention. It may be body-cast, but it is still a construction and it had to occur through a grand series of times, whereas a Richard Avedon photograph of...Andy Warhol's scars, or of Oscar Levant's big smile...no matter how distorted, how fuzzy, how altered by the lens or what have you, you still have that credible sense of phenomenological presence. But by what? By virtue of the light or by virtue of the fact that even no matter how distorted...how fuzzy, how altered, that we are still left with the original source. We tend to fall through even the lens work, and the manipulations and come back to the sense of, I call it, we tend to forgive the deformations. Just like in a circus mirror. You go to the carnival and you can see yourself big, you can see yourself tall, and you know that you are not *that*, but you *believe* you are. And paintings, when they present us with those distortions, they seem to be detached from us. I think that is more or less the issue that you are trying to make.

Student: One of the problems here, as far as I understand it, it is not that we don't know the...we know that fact, but that fact is not the central...in our education as photographers...We are trained to trust our perceptions as the ultimate condition of reality.

That's right.

Student: But we are also trained in our culture that we accept our subjectivity, our uniqueness.

That's right, that's what Cavell says, too.

Student: So the two elements counteract to the true reality that we are talking about, as light...because our head is filled with the notion that...

Dave, you've got it.

Student: That perception and our uniqueness for subjectivity...

Cavell doesn't want to sell you anything, he doesn't want to convince you that this is true. He is just saying one thing is true and the other is true. He has a thesis that says that we tend, though, to respond to photographic images, in their extended sense, all the way to holograms or what have you, as better approximating the world than any other pictorial mode. And he says these forms are changing our view of the world. In the first place, we want the world so we often use photographs for evidence, like in court cases...we seldom have drawings or paintings of bodies in locations as the evidence of a crime. But hundreds of times photographs are used...as a measure of light, whereas paintings don't seem to quite serve that purpose to convince us...part of the evidential quality and integrity of photographs is because in the first place they couldn't possibly lie because light did the work, whereas paintings can be altered. We know that is not true. Look at the hundreds of illustrations we have where photographs are doctored or altered or cropped to change the issue as it were, of what we are really seeing, like in McCarthyism. Often photographs were used to distort evidence by taking a portion out of something, or by use of composite. I don't think I'm illustrating that photographs aren't subject to similar kinds of distortions or alterations...we are taught to believe in the centrality of our own perceptions. We are taught to respect the importance of our own decisions in the process of making something. The better way of stating it is when Stieglitz said, art or photography: photography, art, question mark, is not an issue: photography *is*. Weston does the same thing. He doesn't want to label that question. I think that even they, in a kind of predictive sense for theoretical constructs to become rampant in our own time. So it is not the issue. The issue is, there are certain parameters of experience that are predicated, or premises within photographic images that are not the premises of paintings. Painting tends to require willing, photography tends to require acceptance, if you get the meaning of acceptance. Well, how does acceptance lead distortion, alteration, or transformation, lens work, from being the task of representation? Light doing the work. The subject impressing itself upon a light-sensitive material. If you start thinking, well does that mean...in terms of when

photographs look bizarre, unusual: what happens when someone if they want to do a photograph and in the printing tray and one corner didn't get sucked under so it lifts... but you see even there it is phenomenological, the lifting of the plane, the change in the focal differentiation and so on...alterations that are still dependent upon phenomenological effects that are external to the human...even when one does it deliberately, like Fred {Sommers} folding the...on the cover of the...That is another example, but nonetheless, the phenomenological effect is the folded source and the light that falls upon it.

Student: {inaudible}.

Can I just read this last sentence, to get that out of the air? {back to Cavell} "To maintain conviction in our connection with reality, to maintain our presentness, painting accepts the recession of the world." (I think we can all get that particularly in relation to Colorfield painting, which most critics accept is the latest extension, despite the return to neo-figurative painting, that is, the latest extension of phenomenalism in painting)

"Photography maintains the presentness of the world by accepting our absence from it. The reality in a photograph is present to me while I am not present to it: and a world I know, and see, but to which I am nevertheless not present, through no fault of my subjectivity, is a world past." So he says keep in mind, as people talk about, here, want to see Mary Jane? That is another thing, people tend to talk about *persons* in photographs. *Named* things. Actual, existent, living identities. In paintings, they don't tend to do that. And all you have to do is empirically test it for yourself. People will look at the Cezanne and talk about, that *doesn't* look like an apple. Or they will talk about a painting in which someone like Roger Van Der Weyden or later Van Eyck...look at the way that apple is painted. It tends to be the processes, the construction, or, it doesn't look like. Or that looks like a child could do it. But in photographs...and I collect these things, if I hear one I write it down...but I tend to hear people go directly to the referent: look at that apple. That kind of thing. Or, notice that person's face. Or this typical question, and I do it all the time and maybe you don't, and I'd love to know if you don't. In that little Riss thing that I said the who, what, when, where, why questions: we always fall into that trap with photographs with statements like, where is that? What was that? Did you tie the sling into something in here? We talk about, we fall *through* the plane and we start wanting to know what it was, where it was, how it was made. And even to the point where we start saying, what is that material that you put on top of this? You see we talk about not constructs of the willing aspects of the artist, either their competency or incompetency, we tend to talk about the thing itself and its variations through its mutation or through selection, vantage point or what have you. Or even the idea of the tableau of the world which is then invented, but we still get the feeling that I fall through the photograph back to the decisions that were made by the photographer.

You don't have to buy it, it is not a sales pitch. It doesn't take away your subjectivity, in fact, what he is really saying to you is that photography, also like Colorfield painting, *gives* you your subjectivity, beautifully. But if you think, if you are going to talk about *absent* things as though you can affect them so therefore we reflect {?} the photograph. He is talking about a pictorial mode which permits us to see a world that looks like it remains extant, when in reality it is *dead*. Time passed. It is a world past. So therefore he says, get about your subjective orientation, take more pictures, enter into film-making, keep the illusory sense of kinetic portrayal going, he doesn't want to cancel photography, like Minor {White} above the fourth step where we have to leave matter (laughter). I used to believe that. I used to tell a friend of mine that there are certain things that I don't do, I just *think* them...and they said, 'why cheat yourself you fool.' This idea of substituting mind for matter. Or analytical modes, cognitive activity for sensory activity. Now what were you going to say?

Student: {inaudible}.

I wouldn't want to put in hierarchical order, like when I look at Bonnie's {Gordon} things and I ask how does this go on to this material, how did you do it. Sometimes I might ask what is this or how is this made, but I wouldn't go about it as a hierarchical order...I would be more inclined, more often than not I would talk about things like location or where are those things in space and sometimes mystified where I don't have a clue as to how this occurred...foreign color, or a xerox that says how it was made you fool, where have you been {laughs} In a book? {laughs} But I really know. You know what I am saying. I am just trying to offer the principle that these two issues are extremely important if we are going to deal with the gap {?} in the sense of cognition that occurred even in the camera obscura and the placement of an intermediary. We looked at the Frisius image of the room and the pinhole effect. We looked at, earlier than that, the Durer advisements on perspective. Now here the Italians, as I said, the person in the academic apprenticeship, I mean there really was a Medici garden, and Michelangelo had to sit out there and hack away at those pieces of marble under the advisement of masters. Just like Leonardo *had* to do drawing under the advisement of Verrocchio, because he apprenticed himself to him, and had to do a lot of stuff until the proof in the pudding in that Baptism, when he is finally given his moment to enable *his* work to appear in relation to his master. I don't think Verrocchio looked very carefully. Either he was tired, and he was getting rather old. He didn't realize the angel hadn't a thing to do with the rest of the painting. Only that Leonardo aimed to establish his own identity. To sublate, not sublimate, but sublate the master by using color chromality that made it look perfectly related. And the treatment of contour lines...and what I am trying to say is, what was that part about tracing back, where was I?

Student: The identification of persons or procedures in the image. The idea of construction even within a photographic situation...

Oh yeah, it doesn't take a thing away about decision making or as I said before, the supreme aspects of what you discuss, like what do you think about this, or why do you function in relationship to choosing this type of subject matter, or how did you make this: all those factors. I think they are the supreme questions that should apply, but keep in mind those have nothing to do with the decision we are discussing. They really don't...

Student: You mentioned Van Eyck...it was interesting that you referred to that particular painting as a document, and somehow that seemed very photographic to me in terms of what you are saying...in terms of the differences in the way painting might have been used in terms of its credibility. You would say that no one would make the mistake of thinking of it as credible in the same sense as the photograph would be.

No they wouldn't, but they would have credibility on multiple levels. You have that mirror that makes the event credible. It had little to do with whether the paint or his assistant is witnessing the event. It is the mirror that even includes more than is permitted to appear in the proleptic illusion. They are being married but the painting predicts not only the divine and the earthly, like the little dog/fidelity linkage. The candle. That will confirm... what was presented. And it was presented to confirm the bands. And the legal {script}... It is multi-levels of confirmation. It would be like saying if I went to a trial and I had the written word that...is there some kind of legal script today, or wordage, I am sure there is, coupled with the idea of the original locale or environment to confirm to seem convincing. And then if I can even have both the past and the future of the, because we can't, but we can have that combined within it. That you do have to manipulate material to get across. But you might say, oh no, I've seen photographs that have history, and we applied paint so that implies futurity, just remember you are intermixing the metaphorical identities of one medium and what we might call the autonomous itself-reflexive properties of another... After all, if I believed that he canceled anything, why would I comment on prolepsis in Murray Riss? I don't think the photographs are terribly heady. They don't appeal to the range of what my mind wants to experience or my eye wants to see, but they damn sure deal with the issue of prolepsis according to his intentionalist attitude and in terms of the camera imagery he cultivates. Now Les Krims, we might speak of how we might apply the principle of prolepsis to his tableaux. He makes us believe what is not the case. If you can accept that. He just waxes into bathetic as well as pathetic...You know the old series where he thought he was going to shock us by putting phalluses on the woman's body, and the mushrooms. And thank god he got over that because nobody was shocked. I mean good heavens I've seen better than that in the toilet {laughter} Really, seriously. But that wasn't the shocker. The shocker was

when he started presenting us with the audacity, I think one of the most telling statements came from AD Coleman, that he is just like right out of an Andy Hardy story, he is just like the boy next door...and yet we don't realize it. I know Les from very far back and you are welcome to confirm it...remember I am at Pratt and Les is still an undergraduate student and he is a printmaker. And I always use this illustration: I didn't even know his name, coming in watching him impressed while he drew chickens climbing ladders and entering heaven. *Hundreds* of bizarre images, he was obsessed with them. And then one day he sees a photograph and he is trapped. That first *Aperture* issue with Les Krims? He's still in graduate school when that stuff is published. Woman holds chicken to her breast. You think that would have occurred without ever knowing about Fred Sommer? Or other people? That is part of having been *terribly* influenced by paradigmatic units that, all he did was remove it from the realm of putting the architect's instructions of dividing chicken guts...And Les wants to make you believe that in reality there is some little woman, a nubile young girl sitting on the edge of the bed just like Edvard Munch's *Puberty*, holding a raw chicken in her lap...Now that is no longer position and linkage by virtue decisional association so that once it is photographed it is indeed what was *that* particular influence of points of relationship in time. This is like the recording of some perversity. Or he even makes the camera person look like a voyeur. Often, the unnerving thing to me is, how did those people permit him to see them. I am using a metaphor. I'll never forget for example he uses this illustration one step further for proleptic identity: right here in Rochester, and I was staying in a little place called the Lamplighter Inn...like a motel...it had another name...Treadway...Treadmill...But anyway, there I was at the Treadmill, I even forgot why I was there, some convention, SPE...and I obviously know Les from Pratt...and Eileen Cowen was staying down the hall, and it was very strange, we had been on the train together, and she thought I was some person coming to Rochester like for the Ford company or something, you know, hi there how are you? Oh, I notice you're coloring. I like to sneak up on people, and say, oh, are you a photographer? And they immediately wonder why you ask. But she had, and I've got one, I treasure it...the first ones she did when she started doing multiple generations that affect others, and she had these little photographs which she would then hand color, and then she had all these layers of transparency, I mean tracing paper, and then she would write comments, like mirror: Larry Rivers, Middle Ages...things with stenciling. And I watched her, and I am on this side...and there is Eileen Cowin, and she is very pretty, {laughs} and I was entering middle age...and so there she is working on these little things, and they are very tiny, and she sticks stuff down with masking tape here and cuts there and never show any signs that anyone else was even there. So I watched this for three hours. She would identify things, put color on the tracing paper, and then she would lay some aside and put 'print' on it, like she wanted to make another level of generation...she was certain about areas that she wanted to carry to another stage. And I said, "Oh, are you having



fun coloring?" (laughter) And she looked at me...you freak, get out of here, {laughter}... and I had some cookies my wife had made me, and I said do you want a cookie (laughter)...Lolita, do you want a cookie little girl? And it must have been something about my utter...she must have thought I was retarded...And we began to talk about *nothing* relevant to photography. I didn't ask her another question. And really, that train ride takes seven hours, or eight, I forgot...and we were for four hours having the best time, and I asked her where she was from. She didn't talk about photography...at that time she was not even at Franconia, she had been working for a photo job in New York, she didn't talk about her exhibition at Witkin, or anything else. She just talked about her family in New Jersey, her sister, she has a twin. And I told her about my dog and cat, and we didn't have a single comment on, anyway, we get to Rochester, and well I guess she thought it was nifty, because Minor White was on the program, and she didn't know William Parker, and of course who gets up but the man who said, 'do you want a cookie little girl?' (laughter). And she said she almost flipped out. She said to other people, 'it's that man on the train!' (laughter)...Harold Jones was there, 'oh, you don't know Bill?'... and he is very likable, you know we all got along...and Les was with us. And he said, 'Bill, I know exactly what we are going to do and I've got to use you tomorrow morning.' And he says it, and that is where AD {Coleman} was right, he is just like the boy next door coming over and borrowing your bicycle...and I said oh sure, I've got to get up and get everything ready to leave. It is snowing outside, and we are all trapped, the planes couldn't fly out...drive back, and get on like refugees in Czechoslovakia, fighting for your seat...so the next morning, Les (makes knocking sound at his hotel door) He comes in, and I couldn't help but notice that he had a little kit, he turns on the air conditioner and ties little pieces of crepe paper. Has a makeup kit over here. Eileen comes in the door and says, 'Hi Bill, I've come to pose {laughs}. She had never met Les Krims, she had not a clue about him, he said, 'Eileen, go in there...and give yourself a black face...he said, 'Just do it, and she did.' White lips, black face. And he turns on the air and these streamers are coming out. He has the camera...a whole...tableau...

End reel 10 A

