

10-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 10-B: Les Krims, Ontological issues in photography, Parker's first experience with a camera obscura, influence of camera obscura on painting, John Locke's closet simile, Talbot and the camera lucida.

...He reads things that link him to his photographs, particularly he loves cartes-des-visite, there is a lot of information in carte-des-visite images. Artificial snow, painted backgrounds. Listen folks, I remember that business all the way back to Pratt when he worked under that preeminent photographer, Walter Chavardy {?}...it was the best thing for Les because Les did everything to drive Walter mad. {laughter}. The point is, he said to the group when I asked him that question about posed photographs, of the black face images, he said no it just occurred to me that Rochester was a central point for traveling minstrels, and he said he was imagining a person being involved in the minstrel show coming home tired and wanting to stretch out and relax a little bit without having taken off their makeup. Well, you know, I believe that. That his intent, he shocks us by giving us what is in fact the case from the past. He shows it in a contemporary motel room, but then again was he going to try to create a nineteenth century environment to put the people in? He doesn't have to carry fidelity that far. But what he does do is take the original event, even the person who is playing the role of "Massa" or "Mammy"...or the minstrel player. He gets the provoking theme from what is actually the extended case. Of what I would call the extended case, that is, a minstrel player coming to Rochester, so now you have this big conference in Rochester, that kind of thing...all going out dancing the night before, traveling around, most of us drunk, you know, that kind of thing. And what he does is introduce that theme of the resting participant in the minstrel show. And to show that it is summer time, and the person wants to cool off, he puts little strips of crepe paper and turns it {the air conditioner} on so you get wind blowing across the person like that night breeze that replenishes my soul after having the sun...for me that would be impossible, but for minstrel purposes, you know what I mean. So all the metaphors of the historical event are there. And the issue of the absurdity of a white woman with a black face, which you wouldn't expect, and I doubt anyone has ever had a photograph of someone cooling off after the performance, lying on the bed nude, still in black face. You see he presents us something that is impossible, but anticipating like a possible action in a past event, brings it into the present and tries to make it look

credible. So it is a proleptic picture, it synthesizes the past, present, future. The futurity of it might though be the issue of making us believe that from that point on, other photographers and how commonplace they are and can't shock us anymore and they can do all sorts of things. The ultimate extension of that is, either in charade or fact, snuff art, where actual people are killed...there are films where people are unwittingly killed on camera, slaughtered, disemboweled, beheaded and so on, of a real person really being killed and then being recorded. Oh god I wish I brought my little collection of snuff photographs, I'd show them to you. You haven't seen them?

Student: {inaudible}.

There are several...but I did a thing called *Snuff Photo*. You saw that. I started doing...I would take masterpieces from the past and I called it, "getting rid of," and I would take reproductions with no idea one cut two cuts and they add up to fourteen cuts, but I don't alter anything, I just slip them against one another. Like Minor White's view of St. Louis, the wonderful cityscape and sky. I cut in half and drop one portion down over the other so it makes this little cramped environment. It is the same stuff, just slipped against, or like William Henry Jackson's grand panoramic view, or Timothy O'Sullivan: what I'll do is...two abutments, I just cut down the middle of one, get rid of the space (laughs) getting rid of the panoramic scene, getting rid of spirit. Getting rid of Picasso's remark, that is obviously relevant to *The Steerage*, that we were both doing the same thing, you know, of Cubism...And I manipulated by shifting and tilting certain things until I ended up with a perfectly logical orientation in space. {laughs}. Or I would take the same extension, the idea of prolepsis anticipating what *could* have been in the world, wasn't recorded, in other words I know the fact of the original, but the reproduction I alter it so it tends to show another possibility or reflect what could have also occurred...My favorite one was 'getting rid of the Imperialists.' It's the one of...by...where he's in the chair... And I just cut it...it is just the arm and the hand below the table...falling behind the table. The other one was getting rid of Breton, and that is Man Ray, you know the photograph of...the one with the hair that is flying off.

Student: You mean behind her back?

No, it is a man and he has got the hair wisping off his face. He is a Surrealist. Is it Tanguy? Yes, Man Ray's portrait of Yves Tanguy, I guess it is...and all I did was cut little holes along the top of the head and slipped it on top, I had to cut off the edges ...so that it just looks like a typical conventional little man with a bald head. Getting rid of Breton. That means the application of saying things have to be altered and transformed in such a way that they look like they are involved in the dream world of the oneiric...Anyway it is the same idea. Why am I talking about that?... Have we at least got the two principles

in mind? And I think Dave has...because it really doesn't have a thing to do with your practice and your belief in the world. Although it does have to do with what *is*. {laughs}

Student: {inaudible}...the idea that if you take away the lens work. And then you began to speak about the photogram. A photogram is usually created by a physical contact between an object and the paper, or close to contact with the paper. I wonder though if you take away the lens...any sort of definition is obliterated...extreme overexposure...even the foggiest of differentiation, whether the automatic process still really impresses upon us...or whether we require to be someplace within the parameters of legibility or recognition or whether those parameters are fairly wide.

Sally I'll tell you this, the way I prove that when my students ask me that question inevitably, I already have it prepared, I quickly reach over to my desk, I have my developer, my stop bath, and my fixer. And I also have a white piece of drawing paper, Arches or a very expensive piece of paper. And I take one, and I hold it up to the light like this, the Arches, you know, exquisite paper, and I keep holding it there, and they look at it and say what is that fool doing. And I pass it around and say notice anything? And they say, 'yeah, we see the paper' {laughter}. And then I say, now watch, and I take out from a closed container, a piece of photographic enlarging paper, I hold it up to the light, you see, I take it like this, and I say, 'see it?' And then I drop it into the developer, into the stop bath, into the fix, and then I say, 'do you notice anything different?' And I pass it around...now what does that mean? They sure don't argue about the fact that something happened that I didn't do. And I don't have to worry about taking away the lens or anything else, the phenomenology of light has been operative and has a self-reflexive identity.

Student: (inaudible)

Oh, absolutely. And even Cavell would not deny that. That the advent of photography and its almost extraordinary, the sense of credibility...when people know it can be possible. That demonstration, on what was it, on the nineteenth of what was it, October or September, is not without necessity. It didn't really have to be done, you follow me? But it was necessary, people had to see. But after all, you know the cartoon of the daguerreotype-mania? It is only in a matter of a couple of months where we have the world aware that light does the work. And you are right, before it would not have been possible to just come up to somebody and say, 'hey,' I think that is what Bayard did...to trying to convince them of a more poetic level. Let someone talk him out of it. You do have to know the process, you are right, but you can demonstrate the process very simply, you don't even have to hold it in the developer, just get a print-out paper and put it out in the sun. And get a piece of Arches buff, you know, the two-fifty a sheet, or

German etching paper and put it out in the sun {laughs}. I'll tell you what, I want to make one for the next demonstration, and when I am lecturing for a three hour class, I'll just have them sitting out there {laughs} look at the watermark on the one paper...nothing happens to it. But look at the other and it obviously shows a transformation. So that whatever the process is they at least see the phenomenological principle that light does the work of darkening everything. Or I can tell them about my collagen disease. That there are two reasons...that I am interested in photography. One of them was when I was a young kid...and my sisters and mother had gone to Jacksonville, Florida, and at that time the roads were pretty bad so it took them at least two hours to get there and two hours to get back and they were usually there about three hours to do shopping once every three or four months, to get clothes and stock up on food. So my brother and I, my father was seldom there, so we always took advantage of this to do what we wanted to do with the environment...and we would go down and get these cow horns and hollow them out and {makes a loud sound} and we would call all the kids in the neighborhood to the Parker's house, and I had made murals, and I know this is repetitive for some of you, but some of you didn't hear it. It really has a lot to do with my interest. I was in the second grade at this time, I was *terrible*. I failed the first grade as god is my witness. You know why? I am skipping stories...I failed because we had little books, now this was in Charlotte, North Carolina, I'll never forget, and I hated them, and everything was rigidly structured. First grade, I went to school a year early...I was about four and a half to get me out of the house and so I didn't go at the usual age of five and half or whatever it was, and I just despised the restrictions because everything was overly disciplined... and then we had art. And art class was a little book, a drawing manual that was always a blank page on the left which annoyed the hell out of me because I had to reach across the image you were supposed to copy. It never occurred to me, wouldn't it seem more logical...for someone who was even right-handed. But the image appeared, as I said, on the right. Like if I was to copy this image, it would appear on the manual on the right, there was a blank page on the left, and we were to exactly replicate...now keep in mind that even in late thirties little people had to be coerced into certain types of discipline. It was a pretty much standard curriculum. And I used to be, oh I got commendations...I was that little fellow with glasses before I started wearing... and I would sit there...{laughs} "yes teacher, may I draw the candle on the birthday cake? I just saw Mary go into the cloakroom with Jimmy." {laughs}. A tattletale, a teacher's pet, until even I began to act like other human beings, particularly when I came to page, and I'll never forget it, nineteen...Oh I had the teacher's complete, oh she thought I was wonderful, I've got in on my report cards, I've saved them, and my wife has been threatening...she says now this is Bill. Now you can see it, like 'S+' and what they call 'E' in my day, for excellent. And then they had to write commentaries. And then you see this total...U, U, U, meaning unsatisfactory...the three monkeys: see no evil, hear no evil, speak no evil. And I became fascinated by those creatures. They

never told me why they were sitting there like {holds hands over three areas of face} and I just became absolutely fascinated, and didn't have much of a broad environmental richness, and couldn't seem to get anyone to answer the question. I showed it to my father and he said I can't mess around with that, I had no complaint against my father, that's not it...I showed them to my sisters, and they would say oh it's just a picture Billy. But *why* are they doing this? I just entered the second grade, I couldn't figure it out. So anyway...I didn't want to mess with that thing and repeat it, it was just too beautiful by itself, it really was, that was honestly the way I felt. So on the next page, I drew it exactly the way it was, and I was very dissatisfied, because that was my treasure...So what I did was I took their tails and I drew them through every page {laughter} of the entire book and on the last page the tail terminated {laughter}...and when it came time to turn in our books, we all lined up, and again I didn't see the results of that response until the next day I realized that...my mother was taking me by the hand to school and I was sitting there with the principal and the supervisor of the elementary periods, and the teacher, and they were saying what is the meaning of this? And I was afraid, but I laughed...and I said, isn't it nice? {laughter}. And they said, "Mrs. Parker, your son is obviously too immature, he can't follow the directions in the book." And I was thrilled. I wanted to get out of there like anything. Besides, I graduated like everyone else...so I went home and played...didn't have to sit there and draw pictures that were exactly the same as the others...from that point on I was impossible. And then in the second grade again, this is where photography became my interest. I was painting murals...banana boats...I would do the whole thing. I told my brother one day, let's call all the neighborhood kids and we'll charge them a nickel or a dime to get in to see. And he didn't know how to draw or paint anything...and I'd say you do whatever you think. He always had the environmental instinct, he went down and got the wash buckets and put dry ice in them so it made a smoking volcano, and I'd wrap brown paper around it, you know laundry paper, and painted tempera to make it look like a volcano...Hawaii and the volcano...and then we had another scene I made that had to do with the ocean, like on the window, instead of letting the ocean remain there, the kids next door wouldn't have been at all impressed...I had pictures of the ocean with birds flying, against the window that showed the ocean, showed the view of the ocean. But then I noticed he was going haywire...he got the dry ice volcano, he was so thrilled he begins to stack up wood in a big washtub. I noticed the matches were sitting there, he was going to light a fire, you know, none of this smoke bit, we've gotta have flames...Dan you can't do that... you're gonna set the whole house on fire. "Well I'll work it out. OK, it can be a volcano, we're going to have a fire, and I'm going to be the animal." And he runs in and gets my mother's old ratty fur coat, which she treasured, and he gets the deer horn antlers...and it was just incredible the amount of stuff. And I always had...oh my god... and I went into the kitchen...and got the wind up clock, and I said, Dan, we've only got about five hours before they're going to be back. And I went down into the basement,

and I decided there should be something of a sliding board...the front steps, they went down to the door, and then the shower door, like everyplace had a shower for when you came in from the ocean...so I could get this EZ curved board, a very flexible kind of homasote, they don't use it much anymore, but it is for insulation. My father had it to do something with it down in the garage, and I took that...and put it down the stairs and I made a slide, and I sort of twisted it like this so that when we wanted to get rid of the next customer, now what you do this slide, it would send them into the shower, and we would lock the door and the only way they could get back in was to go around and pay another nickel...We called the neighborhood, and I am telling you the first fifteen minutes, I had to get out of there, it was so horrible. The house was just filled with smoke and it was billowing out the windows...I don't know why no one didn't call the fire department, Dan is fanning and it is going out the windows. And the kids were running around the house, tearing up the volcano, and the thing is I totally forgot because there I am at the bottom of the slide, just like Harold Spencer writing me that letter, looking at the utter mystery of the universe: through the keyhole, there was a front door, remember they are being diverted to the shower door. Through the front door on this sort of parabolic curve of an EZ curve board is the image of the Croy house, which is interposed between us and the ocean, although we can see that way. And I am watching Varnetta Croy go up and down the stairs and out to the clothesline to hang up clothes, and she is *upside down*. And I no longer cared, I wasn't even collecting money in the front yard anymore, and my brother was calling, "where are you Billy?" And I was just there looking, that is *magic*. {laughter} And I thought I could make a fast buck...I always was an opportunist, so I would cover up the peephole as the next kid would come flying down, and I would stop them with my foot and say, "a dime to see the vision of the world." {laughter} And they give me a dime and I'd say, 'look'...and this extraordinary upside down image. Really somewhat advanced in scale simply because of the curvature effect. And then I heard it. I heard the car, the old Packard drive up, and for some reason they came back early, and my older sister was a terror, she never did have much of a sense of humor, she's gotten better in her older age. She came tearing into that house with a broom, "There go those little boys, these little brats." And my mother was saying, "oh my god, my fur coat," because it was singed from the fire...my brother was not satisfied simply going around the fire he had to jump in it (laughter) With all these things happening, there was this magical image of the world being automatically and naturally manifesting itself, even though inverted, and we were all like this, witnessing the magic of Varnetta on the stairs...and watching this extraordinary miracle take place. Because you see one of the things that convinced us was that we were present to Varnetta, and the stairs and the...background, and even the waves of the ocean. In the sense that we saw it, but in reality we had to recognize we knew we weren't there, we had turned our backs to it and our heads were upside down. It looks present to us, does that make sense to you? It is just that simple. And in reality we knew

that it was a world that we could observe and become entranced by but never touch or interfere unless we went out, left the camera view, and went out and said, 'Hi Varnetta, want another mustard sandwich?' {laughter} Or help her hang the clothes...the other way, the world was present to us, but we were not present to it, except through the intermediary illusion of the camera obscura.

Student: A mustard sandwich?

Well, that is what we served as refreshments. So that answers the first question, I don't know... {laughter}

Student: Ok, second question. Maybe a different alternative on question one.

If it is, it is probably a good question...

Student: The idea of being able to dive into a photographic illusion...do you feel that also happens with a photogram, or doesn't that require the illusion of perspective and those sign systems of a place in which one can continue to enter even though... the sign...it indicates something about what we can expect to see in the world.

That is a very good question. You see in other words, what is being stated, Sally is implying, could it well be the systems that we have been conditioned by over centuries such as orthogonals receding to the vanishing point that is really wanting to make us, using the diver's syndrome, go through the plane to enter the world. Yes, that has a great deal to do with it. In other words, pictorial representation had already confirmed that our senses as we experience...that is a fact, so sure that contributes to it. But, however, the diver metaphor also deals with the issue that we tend to, I've got to find a way to put the edge of this: it isn't that we can, in the diver metaphor, we dismiss those conventions to which we are attentive because we also find our sensory responses even without pictorial forms confirming that, like floors, or hallways, or what have you. So you can sort of trace it backwards to be sensitized to experience that world and then having the pictorial forms *mimic* it. Because after all, prior centuries, let's say prior to the development of perspective in painting we don't find that even necessary. It isn't because people didn't know how to draw. Remember the Egyptian figure that is shown, if you talk about figure perspective, we said, uh-oh, a slip was made because... one of the musician girls is full front and remember the harpist with the foot, we saw the pad on the foot instead of having...they knew exactly what they were doing by disturbing the conventions of normal vision. They were establishing a convention that confirmed a world beyond this world. So what I am trying to say is even though we were sensitized in time to accept our sense as that which is most valid like...it doesn't mean that this

cancels the fact that, it is as if the light factor, the light associated with atmosphere, and the plenitude of continuum which we might anticipate to occur in the world of a photograph. You see it entices us to think that that is really, even though no matter how graphic the parts...are, it is more like the original environmental milieu which we can enter. You see it is like some paintings, and there are many trompe l'oeil paintings, in which one looks...like you could really walk into them. And we know we are not going to get anywhere there or even in the photograph, walking into *it*. But at least insofar as the metaphor, if I want a *world*, subject matter, that precedes that, I am more likely going to find the world that the photograph obeys more viable to enter than I would one that requires a person to construct it out of dumb substances that don't want to become an image. So in that sense the linear perspective certainly does enable us to sense that idea of diving into it, but I don't think you can say that it is the prime issue. It is the idea of where the traces in terms of the way it was made: the linear perspective by virtue of a recording by an instrument and by an automatic process, convinces us that the original source subject *does* indeed exist. And that way we dive into it. Whereas paintings, we bump our head, unless we can have the illusionism and even I would say if the artist there to construct the continuum or the space, we'd still bump our heads because we know very well that he is not dealing in the metaphor with the real world. We somewhat get caught up in the *goo* of the paint as it were, in the photograph we tend to go back to the world. Now photograms do have a tendency to use both, and I like to use the illustration that more often than not they *touch* the plane, and they either transmit light through their surfaces by transparency, translucency, or they block it by their opacity. So that we can have shaped configurations that might look flat and have no space as it were. And other times they will diffuse or they might create areolas or what have you, of light. You see they come closer even than the perspectival to me, to be suited to the diver syndrome. Because even though we might not be able to enter a spatial world, we tend to enter an atmospheric world implied by light...that would be like when I made the distinction between aerial perspective and linear perspective. With linear perspective we really dive into our mind, in many ways. With aerial perspective we dive into the world. And photograms come closer to the principle, and as Dave said and I quite agree with him, they are really more truthful, according to the principle of reflected light than perspectival identities...Do you want to carry that a step further and tell why you say that? I agree with you.

Student: I was just building on the idea that we were talking about, the relationship of light and the form itself. And that form is one to one...

Good, do you see what he is saying?... He is talking about these photograms. You see like he is saying: the foot of...I presume that these are photograms...that is the direct contact of the physical form onto the light-sensitive paper, and then the light itself

appears to either show that touch...or its translucency or transparency. Whereas he says these are one step removed...I'd almost like to have here a very, very straight photograph: one step removed in the first place by detachment, nothing really touches the plane as it were. So that the photogram really is a more honest appraisal, and so Bazin, Cavell, Panofsky...just what I call, just what is perfectly obvious. It is not even an ontological issue, it is just a physical, chemical fact.

Student: ..an issue of cave painting...and the two versions: the one, there is paint applied...and impressed upon the surface and then the other...the pigment is blown around so that the negative of the hand does not make the impress...

That is right, that is very good.

Student: Here it is simpler in principle, except the mediating agency now is different...

Isn't that beautiful?

Student:...and light. Something physical and something that is physical on a different level.

In other words we can say in reality, that the confirmation of the phenomenological principle of light...is not there. In other words we have the proof in the pudding of the form is given its identity, the foot as a shape, not by virtue of the effect of light but by the *absence* of the effect of light. It is the light around it that gives us its shaped-configuration.

Student: And which also confirms the idea of the substantiality of the thing which it also masks...

Say that again, I couldn't hear you.

Student: It also confirms the idea of the physical substantiality as opposed to transparency of the thing which involves masking.

That is right. It makes it more atmospheric. What I am trying to say is that remember even when you talk about a phenomenological effect you say it either affects or it doesn't. So the flip emerges out of no effect except by the environment that is affected surrounding it, so both are *still* subject to the phenomenology of light, either its absence or its presence. Do you see the issue? But neither one is handmade. No one is going around drawing a line around the foot. No one has had to make a white shape, cut a

shape of a foot and paste it onto the plane. So it all gets back to that question, by the way, if you start thinking about it a little bit, how do we know the wall is there even if...? {laughs} There is an answer. We all have answers, and every one of you already *have* answers, because we are here, and we'll find that out. There is no clever game here. Now, I went through all of that to say that, we want to look at these slides. I think what we ought to do is break for our thirty minute lunch period and then come right back here and then I'll finally deal with the documentary material on some of the issues. We won't cover it all but I'll give you the sort of directions to take. I just can't do everything. {laughs}

Student: Are we going to be here tomorrow to continue, what is the schedule?

I could have a session in the morning if everyone could be here. How many of you will be here?...Anything I say or do you can forget: but anything I give you, you have to deal with. {laughs} But look, there are a lot of documents on the camera obscura and I would assume you would read what Newhall said, or what Gernsheim said or what have you. Everything I present tomorrow will be no more than just extra material...but this little London science museum of photography...it has got a wonderful section on early cameras and certain examples of the camera obscura that are not usually available. And there is a nice section in here on processes and things of that nature, and a lot of this stuff has been linked directly to recent exhibitions...very basic, but on the other hand, I think it is very good for some of the entries concerning graphics, there aren't that many, but even read the comments made about the camera obscura and certain effects. And the Gernsheim material...why don't we do that, we'll break for thirty minutes and then come back here and look at...

I want to read you a few things to set the stage for these last few slides. None of it is particularly meaty material, but I think the way it has to be structured, we have to make a few comments about the stages of theories of vision, and also the way the human behave according to these theories, we'd have to start thinking about the history of the camera obscura insofar as we know, there is no book as far as I know, of the history of the camera obscura as it exclusively relates to photography. There are a number of commentaries on it, but we looked at the...camera obscura Frisius image of the portico and the solar eclipse that occurred on January 24, 1544, and I read a few things to you, but I want to mention to you, as is often mentioned, it is perfectly obvious that the first published written account of the camera obscura is contained in the first Italian edition of 1521 on Vitruvius' treatise on architecture. And it is the form of a translator's annotation. And a gentleman by the name of Cesari Cesariando, a pupil of Leonardo daVinci. He was working on the whole problem of Vitruvius's use of the word called "spectaculum." And the whole issue of the spectacle as it is revealed through

relationships of light. And he discovered the use of the camera obscura to attain them, as it were, and he gives an up to date meaning of the camera obscura, even describes a device used by a Benedictine monk and architect, Don Finuccio...now to read that whole description go to page 19 of Gernsheim's recent edition and discover the comment on the Benedictine monk's commentary about the camera obscura. All you will do is get a description, that is what it is, he is referring to an even later document of the 16th century, commented upon by the Benedictine monk in an earlier century. Now a man named Gerolamo Cardano, who was a physician and a professor of mathematics at Milan, and one of the great intellectuals of the Renaissance...Also described the camera obscura before della Porta in his famous scientific encyclopedia on the subtle measure of things. It is called *The Subtilitate*. It is written in 1550, and he is also the first, this Cardano, to mention a bi-convex lens in conjunction with it. In that case, go to Gernsheim page 20...so it means the pages you should read are page 19 and page 20 and conclude on page 21, which is exactly what I told you to read yesterday. (laughs) OK, then the camera obscura was a familiar phenomena before the sixteenth century. For example, Alhazen refers to the camera obscura in order to confirm certain theories that he introduced in trying to bring a synthesis to certain theories of vision that occurred in Greece and to establish new issues of concern for understanding how the eye behaves, how light behaves, how we respond to light, and so on. He extended what was called the extramission theory, and Alhazen's was the intermission theory, that is there is something out there that comes to our eye and impresses itself upon us. Whereas earlier theories were intermission, that is something comes from the object and impresses itself upon our optical receptor, or the extramission theory is that something leaves our eye and in essence defines the object. That theory was from an earlier argument, and that is what I will try to...So that we know the setting, and then I will read you some unit passages of the changes in the earlier theories and arguments, and then of course I am assuming that you know little things like this, *Early Concepts of the Senses and the Mind*, and the Marjorie Hope Nicolson book, I don't need to tell you, I have already told you which pages to read...It is on the bibliography. But at any rate, I can say to you with full trust, that you would recognize...even in the most popular statements about the history of the camera obscura, but also period statements, like the Nicholson {*Newton Demands a Muse*} is a rather *stunning* survey of not only how the camera obscura influences poetry, philosophy during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. It is there and very readable and I don't need to dwell on it. At any rate, we are always reminded by Newhall and Gernsheim, and we have to keep reminding ourselves that the common misattribution of its invention, of the camera obscura as a darkened room as a way to perceive the world, is often misattributed to Giovanni Battista della Porta. It just simply isn't the case...but it is due to the fact that he was the first to suggest its use in drawing. So I think we should credit where credit is due there because it made a very emphatic change in developing what we might call the inventing

eye and hand. That is where artists begin, as in Durer's perspective, intermediary devices, and Vermeer's use of the camera obscura, we have increasingly the artist needing to use devices to confirm the reality of what they are observing. And we find increasingly, artists doing two things: they will move towards an interest in greater objectivity even in relation to dumb substances that are not itself-reflexive, or two, they will begin to get interested in the medium of paint itself, the materiality of it. So by the time of Fragonard or Watteau, fractionation occurs, atomistic particlization. The works often have reflections of idealization, unnatural light sources, *but*, materiality, physicality, unit structures become very important in the eighteenth century...even if you think of Rococo as a beautiful example of *atomic* interest of earlier periods. Now let me give you an illustration of this as an idea: we call periods by name, Gothic is a very negative term, it means something is associated with barbarism. Certain terms that are applied have nothing to do with the structures that are apparent. The term also has a kind of commentary on the fact that Gothic did not obey in all cases Classic principles...and therefore were considered barbaric. Baroque means what? One of two things. It either refers to common stock. How many of you know what Baroque means, from *barroque*. Or when you took a class and they talked about Baroque, what did you think that meant? Did it mean diagonality, active forces within the structures of the plane...

Student: Elaboration.

Elaboration. But where does it come from?

Student: The etymology of the word?

Well that isn't like saying guess what, it is really sort of important. Baroque means an irregular pearl. It refers to an irregular pearl like an oyster pearl. And you know the irregularity doesn't apply to it, but you can make a mistake and thought that that was all it relates to, because it also relates to a form of musical structure. And *barroque*, in terms of music, had to do with point/counterpoint, repetitions, and alterations in rhythm, and things of that nature. So it both had a relationship to an object in the world...that is irregular and not subject to a schema that has everything contained. So the Baroque is obviously Counter-Reformational in that sense in that it is against the Classic and much more toward the emotive. And it also relates to a form of structure that does not follow regular patterns, canonic patterns. Also like Rococo...what does that mean? Rococo? How do you say it in French? *Rocaille*, now what does that mean?

Student: Rocaille? A kind of rock?

Rocks, pebbles, exactly. And rococo refers to rocaille, of rocks and pebbles.

Student: {speaking with a French accent} Did you want me to say rococo in French?

Yes.

Student: Because the way you say it is funny. No, that is OK, it is just funny.

{Laughs} You see folks I anglicize it, and give it my Southern accent. But anyway, you know what I mean. But rocaille and the idea of rocks and pebbles is exactly the meaning, and it refers to the type of painting. It refers to the ruin which is a part of a one time total, so it is a fragment. It is referred to in science and physics...they didn't think of themselves as rococo scientists, they didn't think of themselves as working with rocks and pebbles, but they did think of themselves as working with unit structures. And vision is concerning itself with differentiating detail. And now, again, a medium is inevitable that will end up trying to find a matrix which has a unit structure that can confirm the world, in which points of light define each unit. And that stage is set so emphatically in the eighteenth century. And even the term, go through Jansen, he really sort of avoids the term...

Student: Can you say that again, a unit structure with points of light that defines the world?

It begins much earlier. It starts all the way back to the pre-Socratics, with Galen. But nonetheless it leads to its most apparent identity in the eighteenth century. But you see the term rococo means like pebbles, rocks...And the idea is that pebbles and stones are part of a larger geologic structure. When you fractionate something, like you crush a cookie and you've got crumbs. Now what if you inspect not the cookie but you inspect the crumbs? Particularly if it's a tollhouse cookie you'd inspect all those little chocolate drops that fell into the structure...into the particlization of matter. The interest in the particles of matter rather than the total relationship is *fully* identified in the eighteenth century and obsessively urgent to find a medium that can *act* upon units rather than totals. Does that make some kind of sense?... So the reason I mention that is the fact it is in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries that we had this need for an intermediary device that will do service for the arts, to be able to confirm the world very objectively without us interfering with it. Painting, literally the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and I can say it just that simply, begins to also show an interest in the materiality of paint. In unit structures. It won't reach the full measure of identification in painting until the Impressionist and Post-Impressionist periods where unit structures such as Seurat and the development of Pointillism, and the unit that also affects the eye, mixtures occur in the eye as it were...influenced by optical studies in the nineteenth century

Chevrue?...That is to say the idea of unit structures which cause the effect of pictorial identity...not only an urgency but begins to make devices to enable us to look specifically with great clarity at unit structures apart from totals. Like the look from the camera obscura is to isolate a portion of a continuum for viewing. In a painting, a portion or a total, is to also isolate, but indeed it has to become an invention. The camera allows it to be in unit detail. Now certainly in Rococo art, you have this introduction of the artist beginning to break down multi-planality. To make marks. Look at Boucher... some of them are sappy, Venus with her mirror, and little Puti figures floating around her and all that succulent pink flesh. Even though that is the way it is painted, it is very much broken down into unit structures. The same thing would be true if I were to talk about, it would certainly apply to architecture, virtually you find the unit detail almost *denying* the structural integrity of the member. Whereas the Greeks would have thought of a concreteness of the form because it is going to affect us in one of two ways: either its "arete" {excellence} is going to come into our senses and thus complete us, or we are going to project upon it visually or in some cases through other senses, like touching, and enter into that medium which our vision, for example, defines *it*. A coalescence between the eye and the object. So definite substantiality is important to Greek architecture and in other periods, insubstantiality: details are more important than totality. The fact that in Rococo painting, for example, think of Fragonard and the swing. How many of you know Fragonard's paintings? Sappy but...wonderful. I think of them as the beginning of salon sentiments {?} where the swing, and the suitor, one of them in a wonderful costume climbs the wall...notice how any number of...gigantic trees are potted plants. They are ripped from their context and put into containers, because they are no longer growing *in* nature, they are units *of* nature. Notice the way that, in many of these works of the period, that we find a light that will flicker across surfaces that doesn't seem to be dependent upon the issue of a light source. But it is almost like the sheer joy of defining marks that can be visible for their own integrity. One of the most exquisite examples of this in the eighteenth century is Canaletto, those marvelous Venetian scenes where the water flickers...we see the water defined with detail, but at the same time we look closer and we realize that everything is broken down into the realm of the unit mark. Now I want to illustrate this even further...I want to show you an example of what we would see at a distance and what we would see up close: this began with the Venetian Mannerist, Tintoretto. It also had been applied by the High Renaissance Venetian, Titian. And also appears in a number of examples before but never with such credibility as though what we see in the manifest distance, where things coalesce, the part makes the whole. If you walk up close, it falls completely apart and we are looking at an early kind of Jackson Pollock, who could not have conceived of some of the marks made had anything to do with the...you would see later. These are in the...in the print collection...an illustration of what I am talking about...I am not going to discuss any other factors except this silver-threaded overcloak is extremely convincing

in the way it is not only defined by light, the lace collar, this is all enlaced over the sleeve...is not to be thought of as the lack of ability to define the way a form looked, we have not only this sort of...in the upper sleeve but a silvery scrim, like gauze, that is placed over this, we something metallic that looks like it is being diffused by something that is non reflective like the wall or the scrim...when you come close to that sleeve...when I get close I can even notice...I want you to notice particularly what happens in the marking to create that silver-threaded over cloak. You see things break down. This is not a knotted thread, it is a blob of paint. Not only does it have what we might call the acuity being defined by the sense of where something should be reflective and non-reflective in identity, but...it also uses a principle that emerged much earlier called impasto, that is, built up paint, paste-like paint, projective paint. When paintings in the seventeenth century begin to show the use of skudding, wiping the paint on with a knife or pressing the paint against a surface...and picking up the tactility or the tooth of the canvas. In El Greco and Parmigianino in the earlier Mannerist period, you have this sense of *lifting* of surfaces from the plane. We are dealing there with the first prelude toward what we might call the medium of paint which wishes to escape the bounds of reference. From that point Cavell is absolutely legitimate and no art historian ever doubted that. That painting was not freed from its necessity of subject matter by virtue of photography, it has no relationship, none whatsoever. In fact, I would say to you as I was telling Skip a moment ago, that photography confirms painters' interests in *increasing*, in some cases, the emphasis upon mimetic vision like Degas, who not only photographed, he wasn't going to carry an easel into the upper reaches of the Paris ballet and try to hold things there as he painted. He takes a photograph or at least understands how photographs influence vision so he does drawings from the higher reaches and then proceeds to paint as though a camera would have viewed them from that vantage point. Even notice the scatter or the...all of this as I get closer...and keep the reference, the illusion somewhat there...that none of this is really rendered. There is no what we call confluent or careful transitions to these strokes and marks. You see even in the unit of the sleeve itself where you see that stitch...starts...overlace. You see this is skudded paint, the knife pulling paint across the surface and...it is exquisite. In this case it is very rough. There is no subtlety...materiality becomes an issue. By the same token if I look at the nature of the way this inner portion of the garment occurs where the definition of ceremonial necklaces or gems or metalwork, or other elements, threads here—they are very fluid strokes, marks, units. It is the unit mark...conferring the *matter* of the paint, the materiality of it. The fact that it is skudded, scraped, as fluidly as dry-brush effects, as impasto, as staining. This is the interesting factor, hoping that the materiality of the work itself would convey the image, and indeed you might say, like photography does automatically...these artists were aware that...happening by implication...how these artists are defining the image...what looked like close-up, crude lineal marks, that nevertheless...coalesce when viewed from a distance with

extraordinary clarity...even the light...that appears in this work, when you go closer, certain areas are remarkable...other areas break down...when you move closer you see that they are stained. Fluid units...staining into one another...an image out of dumb substances...manipulated by the painter so that from a distance they will coalesce and form an image... Here maybe this is even more miraculous than those rendering artists of the Italian Renaissance, or even the Van Eycks in the sense that what seems to be impossible from a close view coalesces and becomes a rather remarkable image when viewed from a distance. Photography will tend to do both: it will not only give us a credible image which holds detail in infinitesimal calculus but it also delivers us from the mark. We don't have to sort of excuse things from close up... This is still *matter* close up as it is from far away. Photography tends to introduce the idea of pardoning: we don't see marks, we see light... From the earliest camera obscura introduced in the seventeenth century where certainly the development of devices that, as in this case, can measure sunspots, or earlier, to recreate the phenomenon, as it is happening, of the solar eclipse, and in continuum, there is this interest in the sixteenth and seventeenth century in the development of instrumentations that are not cameras as such but do offer us stopping devices, and recording planes...so there is this emphasis here as well...here is one, measuring sunspots in the 1630s...It is rather typical of the devices that came from...and then they would add the elements of optics...particularly telescopes and spectacles...the introduction of instruments that could virtually call attention to the world, not only to the world of sunspots, or even the world of this plane, the earth: bushes, plants, trees, things, or what have you. What is interesting is that this activity of beginning to witness the world takes place within not only a darkened chamber, or a room, but people began to behave as if the world has to be brought *into* the darkened chamber. They begin to feel that their confirmations of the world have to be developed on the basis of the human mind, which is now able to respond to the image brought into a precinct in which can be studied. I'd like to suggest to you that... there is a sufficient amount of evidence in other areas...like Nicolson's commentary... that the type of paradigm expressed here is that in the first place, sun spots...upon instrumentation. It is very interesting that other evidences indicate, and we'll see a number of them in a few minutes, even as late into the nineteenth century, that one can very well get a better view by going out and looking directly at what's happening, do you remember my illustration of the first moon-walk on television and I could go out and look at the moon? I couldn't get that without the television. That wasn't like I'd rather see the moon than the television transmission...The point I was making was I had to deal with two realms: one thing is that I could not do without the assistance of electronic photography. The other was that I could only get broad data, a silver disc in the sky. So that by the aid of instruments, some things require that aid, no one can argue that point. Some instruments do not require that aid and yet it is as if they must be recorded from the interior of a room and they must use devices that really give us no more clarity in

detail and sometimes they give us less detail...Even to the point where I would suggest to you that Niepce working in his enclosed camera, meaning his room, still tried to have helios create the impress of that portion of the architectural extension of his home, and he is obviously not interested in fidelity, or the detail that occurred in that eight-hour exposure. In the first place it would be much better to even measure the thing... for the simple reason that the light would behave according to the passage of time. And he understood what I call the, his thesis of light, image and radiation, that would be another story, but that hardened asphaltum is more than the measure of the medium to see the impress of light that does have to do with the idea of what was out there, whether or not it was visible does not make a difference. It is interesting that the observation, and again I stress to you, did not have to take place from an open window, and this sense of obsessive interest in staying indoors, I would suggest to you, had a lot to do with the fact that empirical observation is important to take place in an area of detachment, the laboratory. How many scientists have these million dollar grants. I have a friend, I'll illustrate this for you, you might not like my illustration but it confirms it. There are instrumentations that your tax money is going to that are absolutely unnecessary, they could have been done in a cardboard box. They really could. And I have a friend who virtually suffered, that is often the case in the medical profession, of coercive disregard, that was at that time, he is now winning international awards right and left. Machines and then monies have been spent on the problem of pulmonary embolism, which at one time was considered, people said who cares only about six people ever... but he was interested in where it was occurring and causing deaths in places like India, and other areas of the world...I am talking about millions of dollars to use for testing out and for diagnostic testing of possible patients with pulmonary embolism. This man happened to invent a device...that cost five dollars and twenty-five cents to produce, and he would know exactly what every complex system...you could imagine how...hated...This shows you the point: certain procedural actions take place within interiors and in milieus which are not necessary. And the fact of the use of the instrument first as a part of a witness....like those...out on Boulder Dam, or even in Vermeer's work, he could have even used his own upper interior of the studio, a slit in the shutter that led him to observe the phenomenology of the views of Delft that he wanted to define. Or he could have bored hole in the wall of his house, or he could have been like my keyhole where I saw Varnetta Croy upside down on the stairs. It did not require instrumentation, the point is, the minute we start observing something and we associate the observation with a surrounding precinct, a matrix, like a hole, a room, a laboratory, an area in which empirical observation occurs with detachment. Notice what I said: be scientifically detached when approaching this problem. We use words like, 'be objective, don't let your emotions interfere.' The very nature of these people observing sunspots, and the fact that it is taking place in an interior, which was necessary...there was too much light...It is a somewhat subdued lit room. The light is subdued so that we are still able to

view the spots...But, this well may be prior to...this attitude toward *this* unit, whatever it may become, being the *accurate* measure, the objective measuring instrument, the device which has to be used in a certain precinct, even when it is not necessary to use it in that precinct. And I will also suggest the idea to you and say the world is only important insofar as it can be objectively identified *through* a device. Now I am going to read you that Locke quote from the 18th century to tie into this before I go to the next successive slides...I've mentioned it to you on a number of occasions...It is the often quoted simile...strange how it appears over and over it again until....I've used it...as something I just found by accident...seemed that it should be used in relation to photography and then this book came out and locked it in, that's a pun on John Locke...{laughter}...Here it is: When philosophers began to articulate a theory of mind based upon instruments, you certainly know something has gone...we had theories of mind based upon instrumentation but never in the way that Locke develops it. He states that if we could think of the mind very much like the truth that is delivered by instrument, then we could understand how the mind works. Others had talked about, yes, this is *like this*, supported by instrumentation, this kind of vision, this kind of objectivity, but never excusing what we might call the human senses, and Marjorie Hope Nicolson, on pages 140 to 145 delivers the Locke simile of the mind comparable to a camera obscura with a beautiful definition...and keep in mind too that Locke has written this comment in 1689. In the seventeenth century he said, on the eve of the eighteenth, we have the absolute affirmation, and when we talk about Lockean philosophy we are dealing with a popular philosophy as well, rapidly popular, collectively known. And throughout the 18th century, this idea of the precinct, the laboratory, the box that contains the researcher. That the world is out there and the only thing that is permanent is in here. Reality is no longer to be touched, to be existentially experienced, or even experientially experienced: it must be contained within a mediating instrument in order to be confirmed as fact, alright? And this couples together with the idea of the autonomous nature of light doing the work, as it were. The two ideas coalesce in the 19th. And again, whatever happened in that cabinet, or whatever happened earlier with other materials of Niepce, we really don't know. We can say it doesn't really make any difference, it was inevitable...a delay to the invention of photography not because there was a problem with science or optics. All the materials were available...in the seventeenth century, the materials were right there, ready and available for use...Quote {from Marjorie Hope Nicolson, *Newton Demands the Muse*}: "So darkness strikes the sense no less than light, said Pope. As in its aesthetic theory, so in its metaphysics, the supposed Enlightenment seems in retrospect a curious combination of light which illuminated and darkness which blotted out distinction, making all beauty void." (This whole issue that you are only seeing what is illuminated and darkness is void) "In a period when for many men the Cartesian shears had cut matter 'out there' from mind 'in here,' such problems of vision and perception as we have studied were much more poignant than they seem to the

intelligent layman today.“ (You notice the word she chooses: is much more poignant to the layman then than they do today. You expect things and I expect things, and we don’t even worry about...it just seems to be the case. Because we are told, the Nobel prize winner said they were. At this time, the idea of regaining matter begins to reemerge. It is much more poignant than we recognize. This is a tragedy. Descartes in one case cutting matter off, and others trying to regain matter through some kind of intermediary instrumentation. If it can’t be mind, according to Mr. Descartes, if you tell me in reality that is nothing but *res extensa*, then maybe I can convince myself that matter still has a chance by saying it can only be as valid as it contained in a laboratory or a camera, or a room. Whether it becomes a camera, or a cubiculum, a little box) ”In a period when for many men the Cartesian shears had cut matter out there from mind in here, such problems of vision and perception as have been mentioned seemed more poignant than they seem to the intelligent layman today. Plato’s man, sitting in his cave watching the shadows on his walls, became a symbol of even the greatest thinkers of the Age of Newton. It was not strange that philosophers like Locke and Berkeley, no less than poets, often drew figures and analogies from the camera obscura, the link between the dark room and the world outside. They watched the reflections upon the walls of their chambers, pondering reality. Locke’s famous ‘closet-simile’ takes on added significance when interpreted from this point of view.” Let’s stop here, what did Plato say the problem was with looking at shadows? What did he say was the problem?

Student: They have been casted.

They are already one step removed, we are dealing with the illusions of things. What did he suggest, how do we have the allegory of the cave here, what happens?

Student: You turn around and see it and you are blinded by the light.

You turn around and see it first. If you did want to think about how that fellow got loose...And then what does he say, in essence? Blinded by the light first, that makes you want to see the illusion, the reflections of let’s say of the human beings that are involved with the story. What does he say? Go one step further...What is authority? What is the real? Have you ever read Plato’s *Allegory of the Cave*?

Student: It is all an illusion.

Yes, you are right, everything you see out there, you see we think first...everything is a shadow...look over their shoulders...blinded by light first...and then they think *that* is reality: the plants, bushes, people, by implication...What is the final stage? At least for Plato, that which *becomes* the ideal and in essence, the real thing: the sun, light...and

that is the indefinable, plenitudinal source of all reality. And this is the allegory of the cave...as you can plainly see shadows are but mere casts. As you can plainly see, corporeal forms are but mere illusions of the mind and the senses having been defined by light. As you can plainly be blinded by the source of all this is the sun. That is not the only expression...it wasn't an Ankh disc or something like that, however it is a major manifestation of the primacy of light as being associated with the ideal realm. Now with Copernicus, you can see what happened...as well as Aristotle saying that things could be differentiated and confirmed...by saying guess what, he does not try to explain away differentiation or is he trying to explain idealization, he says guess what, you are not the center of things. Again, he tells us just what Plato did, that the sun is the center of all things. We revolve around it. You see it in another extension...it ain't the thing you see that is obviously what causes and enables us to see... as simple as I am putting it. It is much more complex, in other words there are levels of subverting one order of metaphor or forms for another over time, forms that have forces, etc. etc.. Here is the closet-simile: You have got to remember, it is 1689. This was written in his *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, the Lockean viewpoint for understanding, certainty, let's say by the end of the seventeenth century, a good old fashioned decade, and certainly by the eighteenth, became so important, such a major issue, and became popularly known...it had a profound effect on education...we start to understand the importance now of certain precincts, closed rooms used for certain kinds of confirmations of the world. And believe it or not, a plant that could be plucked outside and taken into a laboratory to be observed, although the light was better outside. It had to be in a box to prove...where the world can be ripped from its context and we...confirmed that it was already there. But out there didn't count. Cartesian...if you don't like this sort of whitewashing, I could find eight thousand cases who never heard of Descartes and arrive at the conclusions that Locke did. That is not the issue. I am talking about collective and signal areas in which human thinkers begin to radically question issues about human behavior and sensory response and also even how even their thoughts became popularized by the collective as opposed to isolated, like in the case where after all, Leonardo is aware but we don't even know until the late eighteenth or the nineteenth centuries about his writings...notebooks discovered in Spain...just two years ago, it was found that he had very advanced notions and understandings of...visual material...could radically alter the world had those notebooks had been rediscovered...It is amazing what little things, you remember the other day I said, and even you too when you show up and throw a cloak over your head and radically alter human consciousness, it is that simple..."Me thinks the understanding is not much unlike a closet wholly shut from light," (a room, a closet, a camera) "with only some little opening left," (a pinhole, aperture, shutter, a crack in the wall, instrument) "to let in external visible resemblances, or *ideas* of things without (where is the ideal world? Virtually since Plato, the idea isn't here, where is the idea now in the seventeenth century? Certainly not...gathering into the eighteenth, is

absolutely the case: where is it? It is in the instrument. It is not in the eye, yes the eye will be the prime sense, but how do we get...what the eye sees is best confirmed through the use of devices. And that is where the confirmation occurs...the camera obscura. Read your Marjorie Hope Nicolson. Again about the camera obscura. It is not the fact that...of the human sense...the eye to confirm at all, that is like the Great Chain of Being, like the *deified* sense, but it is still in human terms, for it to become confirmed one step further, it must be confirmed only by objective instrumental devices. "Me thinks the understanding is not much unlike a closet wholly shut from light, with only some little opening left, to let in external visible resemblances, or ideas of things without, (It is a radical statement in the history of human consciousness, understands {?} its ideas, suddenly they are not of god, suddenly they are not in here, suddenly they are not in the world. Suddenly they are being brought in by a device that is not infected or affected by human will. Now watch the next piece: look at the quest, look at the urgency: "Would the pictures coming into a dark room but stay there, and lie so orderly as to be found upon occasion, it would very much resemble the understanding of a man in reference to all objects of sight, and the ideas of them." I love that statement. Would they but stay there, could they be printed, impressed, could they but lie there so orderly as they could be inspected again. Could they be made permanent. Folks, this is 1689, and what is it we have Talbot saying in 1826 or whenever it is, 24, I forgot to bring my Newhall up here... compare the two...

Students: The cherubs and the sky is opening up.

Yeah right? {Laughs}...Just listen...Now here we are in 1833. We have Talbot making the gentleman's tour, and someone told me the other day that he could draw... I just can't hardly believe it because he couldn't make the image from a camera lucida look convincing. I am serious, all I have to do is look at evidence...and even if he could draw, it might have been from an assisted drawing device. He himself makes that point, that he could not draw. I think the more important issue is to look at the delay...it is the late seventeenth century to the early nineteenth century before we can arrive at a conclusion just like Locke mentions. Notice the parallels...He is on the grand tour and visiting art galleries, he is interested in Arabic scholarship and other forms of classical scholarship, ruins and so on. And also, I don't mean the earliest grand tour...he is doing what everyone should do, he is also trying to make exhaustive kinds of records of what he sees, observes, witnesses. "One of the first days of the month of October 1833...I was amusing myself on the lovely shores of the lake of Como in Italy, taking sketches with Wollaston's camera lucida, or rather I should say *attempting* to take them," (a draftsman wouldn't say that) "but with the smallest possible amount of success." (any one who is...that I really want to get to, I have got a lot of evidence, to point out another thing: a camera lucida requires no effort, if you don't have the shakes, and you are not

palsy, you just look through the prism and you can virtually follow the lines, it is no accomplishment to do that. And all I'd like to show you, take you down to the Gernsheim collection and show you another reason for looking at how British gentlemen wanted to excuse their inabilities in drawing: Henry Peach Robinson was absolutely one of the most exquisite draftsman in the history of art, his work needs to be reappraised on that basis, only insofar as he is drawing rocks and trees. When he tries to draw a human figure, he fails miserably. And look through that evidence with your own eye, I've looked through every shard of it, every scrap, and I couldn't believe that we should be putting his work into the book, his drawings. One of them reminds us of Ansel Adams' *Mount Williamson* as he gets these rocks and the boulders close up and vistas and it is just extraordinary. And then he sticks the figure in it and it is truly like a paper doll that someone cut out of notebook paper and put two dots for eyes and a line for a mouth. But he does, and that leads to composite printing, and that is my thesis since he could not accomplish what he should have been able to do and is tantamount to being uncivilized. What leads him to start making composites is not to compete with painting. The evidence of that is later. The combination printing and all the other documents come after the fact. You have got to go back to those early stages where you see the inchoate trying to stick a figure fishing in a pond. It was absurd. You will love the lake and the water. Seeing through the water, the trees, with beautiful definition. The figure, you say what is wrong with this man, if he can draw a tree why can't he draw a figure, and there is no doubt about it, he drew both. Then you suddenly start seeing the place and the...photography interests, suddenly he starts photographing the figure, laying the figure into the matrix of the landscape and then he said well I can't get these two to go together. So he says I have parts of the landscape and the figure. And the other thing he does is confirm...his evidence of misproportion and scale, ridiculous contourism because he is proving to you that he is concerned with a more ideal form of art. He doesn't have to deliver you a fiction, he delivers to you *despite* the absurdities, bringing home the...or the little people coming up...the person closest to you is smaller than the one off in the distance. As far as he is concerned, it is like he can excuse that, simply because of the fact that he has taken the best features of nature into that studio with rolling trees and devices, costume racks and so on, he was able to accomplish this....I would say to you, there is a case where instrumentation enabled a man to be able to coalesce, not only his instincts of what he could see and draw the landscape, he couldn't draw the figures, so instrumentation enables him to accomplish the figure. And I think that is very much the case with Talbot. "After various fruitless attempts, I laid aside the instrument and came to the conclusion that its use required a previous knowledge of drawing which unfortunately I did not possess. I then thought again of trying again a method which I tried many years before. This method was to take a camera obscura and to throw the image of the objects on a piece of paper in its focus, dash, dash, fairy pictures. Creations of the moment, and destined as rapidly to fade away." It is the same

quest: could they but lie there so orderly as to be inspected. But they are temporal, those images, and when the light is off, they disappear. Here is a man saying fairy pictures, just there for a moment, as rapidly to fade away as they are apparent. But the thing is, just as he says, could we have a light-sensitive plate upon which a camera obscura image could be impressed and then fixed. I think it is the same thing that Wedgewood, you know, farting around with all that leather, and bottles and acid and so: *could* we just have retained it. And I love the image of hoping he can retain it by peeking into that darkened closet...or going to the Philadelphia Museum and seeing the Niepce, even the print of the Cardinal D'Amboise...the idea of that kind of relationship that light can even continue to affect the plate, so they had that...velvet curtain..."Fairy pictures, creations of the moment, and destined as rapidly to fade away. It was during these thoughts that the idea occurred to me, how charming it would be if it were possible to cause these natural images to imprint themselves durably and remain fixed upon the paper." Look how much time we have to wait to get back to this issue. Well, do we get back to it, or does it not become necessary until this point? And it is through one man who speaks for the necessities of mankind, we put it that way, to slowly, gradually, develop it. Indeed, what's happening in the quarters of science, what's happening in the quarters of philosophy, what's happening in theories of perception, what is happening in art: it is materiality as it begins to show indifference to the visual world. There is a necessity to say, we cannot believe this because it hasn't been done in a laboratory. Those are not silly and ridiculous issues. The necessity for having something being placed in a room, a special precinct for observation, and to make sure above all, that that world is brought into a precinct that is not just even the laboratory but into a box, or a structure, that can be observed with objective identity. It is the same thing that Whitehead wants, is the objective identity, but to get back, go backwards, remember in my little illustration?...he says, let us give credit to yourself for the fragrance of the rose. What he is saying is let's have the subjective relationship and let's also have a rose be there emitting gas particles and so on. Let's not have beauty come into the form. Beauty *is* in you, in what you perceive. The rose is a structure, it is made up of material components: matter. It emits gasses or vapors. But it ain't emitting beauty. And there is no innate beauty in anything. That is an objectivist principle that you can never prove, and I want proof of things...so Whitehead says, therefore we can still have an intellect and we can still have matter. And the two don't even have to be linked. That is the second answer to that question...the second approach. Yes?

Student: For some reason I want to reconcile this question of the inverted image. Was there any problem to reconcile in the Renaissance the fact that they were looking through the camera obscura and seeing an inverted image on the wall, did that disturb them in terms of...?

No, that was quickly solved...complex devices, started wearing eye glass spectacles... and optical prisms and things of that nature would re-invert. They didn't think of that as a problem, not at all.

Student: I didn't mean the inverted form...I meant the initial act of seeing...

Alhazen had already confirmed about the inverted image. No one had any doubt about the issue of, even in the Renaissance, about the fact that we don't see things upside down...we found about, you know and I know...the reality of an optical instrument, the other defect...is that our eyes receive things upside down...the optical sensor...sees upside down. And what turns it right side up? Oh the brain does...it is much more complex than that...so...we really do engage in processes that you have to have a set of preconditioning determinants that aren't cognitive before you can even put the optically received material, and then you have...Now if you read this stuff...you will see exactly the point I am trying to make, again I prefer to read the science on it. And all I can say is this, when I read this final paragraph I can say one other thing: "Like Descartes and other predecessors, Locke in his dim closet, observing the reflections of external nature through his convex glass, rendered unto Nature those primary qualities whose existence he could not deny, rendered unto the mind of man other qualities which had once been Nature's." (That is the smell is in the rose, not in the human's response) "Into Newton his generation and ours have read the same general symbolism, with some justification, to be sure." (Because as long as I'm around, I think I am the prime measure of what is happening around me, and you are too, and we are too. You can't give that up. That will still confirm what is out there) "For Newton, who gave color back to the poets and who flooded the world with light, 'Newton with his prism and silent face,' his 'mind forever voyaging on strange seas of thought alone, he too had darkened his Cambridge room in order that he might see light, quote, 'In a very dark Chamber, at a round Hole, about one third Part of an Inch broad, made in the shut of a Window, I placed a Glass Prism, whereby the Beam of the Sun's Light, which came in at that Hole, might be refracted upwards toward the opposite Wall of the Chamber, and there form a colour'd Image of the Sun.' unquote. God said," (this is another poet) " 'Let Newton be,' and all was Light.' He is talking about the photograph...because he said that light defines all things, even color and prismatic/chromatic separation. And even though they rendered unto the mind of man certain things that had once been nature's, so that nature was justified only because it could now be reflected upon...here is the act of a person who performs the act of focusing: camera work. Here is the man who now knows, the constancy of the world and being able to plot it out so it can be incorporated, and he knows it is not valid unless some device mediates it to him without judgment, objectively. And I want to stress one thing before we go on, otherwise if you tell people things, like Holis Frampton has a beautiful essay... on incisions in history.

That is a romantic and poetic way of dealing with the idea of wanting to stop time, as if it could be viewed with constancy...he deals with images of temporality and change, the girl shattering in the light...the incision in history is that past tense presence of the world that remains present to us while we are not present to it. The temporality and spatiality is *us*, and the idea, as romantic as it might be, it is quite accurate in terms of an idea that extends from the seventeenth century...For example, this is 1642...Here we have a definition of let's say the world outside being brought into the, to answer your question now Skip, even as early as the late sixteenth century in the Renaissance...There had already been independent instrumentation. That certain things were being re-focused... Here is an example of...this is the camera obscura, the darkened room, and this means not a cubiculum, not a box, not a camera, as we would associate with a box, but is a room. And notice that in the definition, A and B: I might add also, you notice in these early diagrams, they are so absurd, you don't need to see A and B, you don't need to see also the definition of the various forms...that are re-inverted or properly formed in an image...

End of reel 10-B