

## 8-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 8-A: Renaissance art, Masaccio, Donatello, issues of linear perspective and perception, debate over subjectivity of perception vs. objectivity of the world.

...Turn to the right. The same area on the opposite wall, the works are by a number of different artists including showing the evidence of Masaccio's work, this work is by Masaccio and of course the *Expulsion of Adam and Eve*...there is a window on the opposite side of that particular scene, it is an upper, clerestory window on the upper reaches, the opposite side where there is no...column, there is a light that comes in and shines on those figures, and he has accommodated the structure of his highlighting and bringing the light to permit the actual world to cooperate with the painting. Now let me show you what happens: Masolino, who was one of the painters who worked on the Brancacci Chapel, here is his *Adam and Eve*. It is very refined and static, and in essence the figures are slightly elongated. But it is in a kind of Fourth century style that we saw in the *Hermes* of Praxiteles, nothing terribly innovative insofar of what we have seen. But it is a conscious effort to try to reanimate what we might call the tradition in which things can be observed and believed in, and at the same time perfected, sufficiently refined and made more excellent because they are in the service of divine events. However, what Masaccio does is not only give us an extraordinary sense of anatomical correctness but he begins to show us human emotion...that light by the way, the way that appears is because he has forced the highlights...so when that sun hits it. I shouldn't say sun. When the light filters down on this form, there is a sparkling of these highlights and they pull up even further. And you get this almost uncanny sense that these figures are alive. Go there and look. The sense of atmospheric perspective, notice the angel, becomes literally a three-dimensional form, there is a certain degree of smoking out of the parts that are not as visible as others, the architecture to the left is the gate of paradise...and the striated lines that represent the theme of the expulsion, the figure with the flaming sword, and those lines represent not like streamlines showing that they have left but basically the idea of a shout of their denial by Yahweh, so in essence they are forced to be expelled from their original paradisaical, ouroboric precinct and now they appear, and look at the articulation of the male figure, notice the way the female figure covers her breasts, very similar to that echo of the *Venus of Modesty*, only this time showing anguish and the slinking back of her head to cry as the man holds his

head in his hands. Now it may interest you to know that even Dr. Diamond commented on the various types of issues that occur when people are showing embarrassment or nervousness or what have you, in his photographs by the way. It is...in the documentary evidence. There are also, in terms of facial expressions, that when men suffer great anguish they bury their heads in their hands. Women tend to throw back their heads and scream or howl. It is such a persistent motif in any number of types of visual evidences...again, a man had to observe human beings with extreme clarity...The mimicry is very subtle in some cases and in other cases there is a refinement of forms that do show that suppression of obvious muscular planality while at the same time the light is absolutely correct according to the way that window allows the light to filter down upon it. So figures again are thought of as being subject to the principle of the phenomenology of light. And...just as they did with Giotto, Masaccio did with Giotto, we will have a homage paid by those later artists. Leonardo and others who will come to pay homage to this man who reengaged not so much that heroic principle, but the principle of the behavior of the natural world in relationship to a theme that has a configuration that is associated with the divine. Then the divine becomes linked to this world. And again, the first example of its appearance in painting with a sense of complete and total coherence of two systems: the scientific and the optical. Now why do I call them the scientific and the optical. Perspective is not a matter in Renaissance painting of what we call, how shall I say it, we saw in Pompeian painting in those architectural forms...to indicate that although they are believable by virtue of scale, the perspective is misunderstood. The idea of the orthogonal, or parallel lines becoming orthogonals and receding to a vanishing point on the horizon line was not truly accomplished. It may well have had less to do with, it wasn't, that it is a simple measure, I could teach you perspective in fifteen minutes, at least one-point I could in five. The problem is, perspective is not difficult to accomplish for artists, it is for architects and engineers...but in terms of a painter's perspective, that is a nothing accomplishment. The point is, it wasn't necessary. So as a result, we don't say, those poor Pompeians, those poor wall painters of Greece, or what have you, we don't say they couldn't accomplish it, maybe Zeuxis and Parrhasius did...and yet we say the two were isolated from the rest. We have to identify the fact that it wasn't necessary. It wasn't *psychically* necessary. The effect was much more the idea of ambience, and flux, change. And therefore stabilized forms in an environment which could contain one. And the rigors of what we call coherence had not applied as a psychological necessity. Here they begin to dawn. And we find that Masaccio introduces an absolute measurable, T-square and caliper-measurable perspective that obeys the exactitude of one point of the recession of this portico. Orthogonals here, here; this orthogonal, these orthogonals, they will *all* come to exactly the same point. And including, I might add, the placement of the tree trunks from here to there and seen along the contour lines side by side, they indeed now obey the principle of perspective. They become subject to the principle of

minorality: every element within here, anything that is in front of us on the vertical or horizontal, anything that is a plane bending in space must become an orthogonal...to your mind it might look like it is diagonal...the way you view it, it is called an orthogonal. It bends into space. It must become foreshortened...the form must become wider at the point closest to our vision cone and recede in scale as it pushes back. As orthogonals gradually diminish and begin to converge toward the vanishing point on the horizon line. The other element, he doesn't want us to just simply think of that kind of geometry, the principle of Ptolemaic geometry, which he was completely aware of, and that coherence of a rationally defined order which he was the first in the ancient world to insist that we need not have a reason, it *is*, we can demonstrate it. Whereas Plato and Aristotle and Euclid and others had attempted to try to give efficient causes or other reasons for the definition of coherence, for example, perspective. Not so, I didn't mean to include Euclid, for Euclid and Ptolemy. And not so for Masaccio. It behaves that way because it is an applied principle. It is not a fault, it is not a perception. This is the basic principle. It is subject to the way that our eye perceives, though he knew the world did not have orthogonal lines, no plane disappears to a vanishing point, that is its parallel lines turning in space. It was best expressed in a cartoon by Shultz's *Peanuts*, in which, what is her name, the little girl? Lucy, is trying to tell Linus... to explain the principles of linear perspective. And in one of the images in his mind, he imagines this idea of riding his wagon down the street and he imagines himself suddenly, he is seen in a series of sequenced-visions, where he has got his little pedal car and suddenly he is compressed. That is the way he conceives of it because he thinks of the orthogonals as virtually being constant as he would move down the sidewalk. What I am trying to declare is that Masaccio knew the difference. He knew there were no perspectival lines in nature, in fact the case of the world in which we inhabit. So therefore he pays homage to really a system of mathematics. He also knew that in the real world, we understand space, I mean another real way we understand space that is not subject to the principles of science, but principles of perception according to the idea of vaporization, pointilization, is aerial perspective, that other major clue to our understanding of distance. That is forms in the foreground have more chromatic brilliance and less so receding to the background. The values in the foreground are heightened by contrast and as we move back...the far circle of figures and then back into the landscape, through successive reductions of value contrast and what we call a graying out of the chromatic identity. It can be a browning out, a bluing out, a greening out, but it is called in the general category of graying out. Suppression of value contrast, loss of contour identity, the suggestion of smoking out, again, is the issue. This is what any individual could plainly encounter as actually *the case* in the world. And you see the difference: aerial perspective is what is in the world, and Masaccio also understood that. That is true, that in the world there is vaporization, particlization which causes a gradual reduction of chromatic integrity from foreground to middle ground to background as well

as value contrast from foreground to middle ground to background. Linear perspective does not exist in the world: now if you wish to presume that you are the measure of all things, it does. But I am sorry, that is a defect of the eye, that you can encompass what the world looks like through this remarkable part of our being, I don't want to demean it, but I am trying to suggest you that perspective is a confirmation of the defamations of our vision, it does not exist in the actual world. That simple idea is so totally and completely misunderstood even by people by the way they see, that they can't even see a representation which is devoid of perspective as often a greater truth than that which uses perspective. Simply because you have the one that depends on ego, and the other one simple obeys the principle of defining the world naturally as to how it appears...In the continuous narration, Peter takes the coin...He reaches for the coin in the mouth of the fish, and indeed he does appear to give it to the tax collector on the right. Now again I stress to your attention the fact that Masaccio refuses to separate this into a series of separated, by dividing the fresco into parts. He is following the same principle that went all the way back, that a figure may appear multiple times, it goes all the way back to Mesopotamia, and need not be justified that it occupies the same territorial environment, milieu. The point is, you are supposed to recognize that if you are following an event and you heard the command, because here he is here, and if you are following the command, it is like saying, this man wants money. He says look at you people, you insurrectionists, you rabble-rousers, coming into our town and making a lot of trouble and have you paid your taxes? I want the money, the tribute money. Pay your homage, he asks. Christ says, he was very upset, very angry...the hell with you, we don't have to pay anything, and Christ says,

"What do you think, Simon? From whom do kings of the earth take toll or tribute? From their children or from others?" Peter answers, "From others." Jesus responds, "Then the children are free. However, so that we do not give offense to them, go to the sea and cast a hook; take the first fish that comes up; and when you open its mouth, you will find a coin; take that and give it to them for you and me."

Miraculously...And here is Peter getting the money from the mouth of the fish...and as this command is going on and in fact taking place as it were, he is giving the money to *this* man who is standing here demanding it. Now the point is, it is presumed that you also can hold in your consciousness variable events simultaneously. I shall now walk across the room. You do not have nor do you require a motion picture image, in fact I can disappear, drop dead, and you could hold in your mind the sequentiality of my being and that action. You can also remember where I was on that side or where I am now. You see this is a psychic event, not a misunderstanding of physical relationships from part to part to part. The idea of continuous narration presumes that you are really realizing that you will scan the picture: you will see an event taking place in the center,

you need not have a division to justify the second event, that is pictorialism where you have to have things divided into neat little compartments in which you have one serving the other. This requires you to view it as a series of actions and we can call it a very early proto-cinematic approach. Where things happen in a sense of a continuum. There is a continuum involved which permits us to be able to allow multiple figures to occupy the same space because we need not...

Student: But it is not exactly the same space, simply in terms of what you were talking about in terms of aerial perspective. That the most spiritual or psychic event, meaning getting the money from the fish happens in a most undetailed space and the most banal...

Well, I would like to think that is the case, but according to the principles of perspective...according to...the justification of territory...they are all in the same space. If you think in terms of even aerial perspective, it is inevitable that Peter must be far away, and that is not a lesser hierarchical order, he is far away, he just happens to be less chromatically identified...and we can't call this...because this is a lesson in humility and the lesson of, keep in mind that God defineth all things. And the right hand quarter, they occupy the same space. The problem is we no longer have..the plane which is a window upon a series of events that are taking place in the same space but in different levels of time. So that we now have a mimicking of the space that was in essence, the fact, by implication of the illustration of painting. The times are multi-serial, and that is for you to hold the time element as an understanding in your mind, and that relates to the central fact that in the Renaissance we indeed have a confirmation of what we call the contiguity and continuums of spaces, but we also the admission of variability of time within this territory. And the fact that you are supposed to be holding the time in your mind, because in reality, here is Masaccio admitting he knows there is no time in a work of art. He knows there is no sense of sequentiality, so it has to be a psychic event while you witness the confirmation by implication of manipulation of the media of the actuality of the spaces involved, and continuous space, and contiguous space and relational space within the mind. Let's take as an illustration from the element that appears in the *Madonna and Child* of Masaccio. He will show us certain elements that are rather typical: the cathedra, the throne and the mandorla...Certain colors...this painting has been severely damaged and restored...here Madonna and Child are pushing...he has the grapes that he is reaching in her hands and his mouth...a stain that occurs where the juice is dripping down the side of the child's hand, a perfectly natural expression, a child sucking on his finger. I remember last night in the backyard watching a child with radishes and put other things into its mouth...and wandering around the table and drooling out of the side of the mouth and I thought what a marvelous thing to observe. Well in reality...how it was observed at one point by a human being who had an interest

in trying to make something more believable. The way she stares almost catatonically, her attention is directed somewhere beyond the child, she is just sort of holding him, you know, watching the father and talking to a person and holding something for the child...while the child is carrying on its activity. These are things that happen right in our own space and time. But obviously at one point people wanted to mimic because these are confirmations of a world that is present. But a world that is also subject to certain elements, not exact but nonetheless sufficient symmetry, you see right and left. Angels now can be blocked by the coronets of the throne. Or even the gold leaf on the ground which confirms that this is indeed a heavenly precinct as opposed to the idea of the naturalism of the sky...although Masaccio will do several in a series with blue sky and clouds beyond it. And even the multi-colored wings of the angels and the nimbuses which imply that they are representatives of a divine order. And notice the child's nimbus is seen in perspective, the simple idea of the ellipse. I can teach you all how to draw ellipses in one minute. There is no accomplishment there for us, the point is, and it was really no accomplishment for Masaccio. The accomplishment was, he gave forth what was needed and what became necessary if people were going to even engage the thought of interconnected and international commerce. Or the relationship of understanding politics on an international level, one must had to have very rational ways of understanding the world and not deal with the illusions of fate. Now we have to deal with the illusions of even our way of perceiving the world. I'll give you a very grand and flexible statement that can be confirmed: the idea that *this* became a necessity, we have to see the world, even that divine world, of this manifestation, the vision of the Madonna and Child, and by putting into, in this case, in an early Renaissance chair, cathedral chair. We now have, this is a vision again because the furniture belongs to the period. The Madonna and Child had long since transpired or transfigured or ascended...into their respective states. So this is a proleptic image in the sense that the Madonna is seen attended by angels and contemporary furniture. However it is a reflection of the past as if it is taking place now...or a future event in the presence of now. And the sense of the child almost slipping off the lap, the beautiful extension of the drapery, those elements are all reflective of Masaccio's interest in trying to identify what a culture, and indeed what will internationally need to be known, that is, how things can be seen through rational differentiation yet nonetheless reflect certain dimensions of faith. But faith now is struck by a proper illusionism that confirms man and his vision, or humankind and its vision, as opposed to the idea of not admitting the world into the precincts of thinking. The issue of light as again a major concern in Renaissance painting and will persist to this point, coupled with the idea of enriching and refining figures and the issue of light becoming visible in its phenomenological effect, even if it is a rather magical light, reappears in a manifest way in the work of Gozzoli. And in this whole Magi image, I won't go over the continuous narration but you see how in this work now we've so entered the space, this tri...panel....the main event but the idea of a

whole progression and development of the succession of the forms coming from the city, beyond, and others coming from other precincts or quarters of the earth as it were...winding their way...in gradually successive stages...to bow before the new king. And that is a direct Giotto pastiche, just in a richer and more decorative form. This little panel we want to look at. I know of no art historian who has not referred to this as that moment in Renaissance painting in which now instead of the genius of Masaccio letting the light that comes through a window, we find the *implied* light of the structure of the painting, now we have artists introducing light sources *into* their paintings, that is it is within the work. So now that light, whether sun, or moon, or candle, or fire, will reappear with increasing...now the artist is now encompassing that divine energy called light. I said Gozzoli, I meant to say Gentile da Fabriano... Here is a little detail of the Fabriano. I want you to notice one thing: the issue of the way the skins are slipping away from these fruit forms. Now that is keenly observed detail. Look at that pomegranate ripening to such a point that it splits and spills forth those wonderful seeds, a wonderful symbol of fertility in Greek mythology...The same thing happens here with these limes, they are so abundant, they split and their skins are separated, you see in the shapes, the juices are almost apparent, in sort of translucent sacs around the seeds. And even though the halo...to the Virgin on the left are quite decorative. It is in that lower little predella panel that we have the reintroduction, not the reintroduction, but the introduction of the light source within the construct of the painting itself, the picture plane itself. Now this light happens to be rather a divine light. But you will note one thing interesting, it is the prime source, and there has never been discovered and I doubt that we ever will discover, this man's entire contribution is based upon that one little predella panel, because it is considered to be one of the most monumental moments in the history of visual consciousness and awareness. That all the rest of the painting is subject to a kind of international Gothic style, which includes elements from the early Renaissance and from eastern countries, and they all use a grand and almost obsessive patterning. But what happens here is, it is the little baby who lies on the ground which is typical of the Nativity...because the child must be literally born out of the earth so there is no cradle or what have you to support him. It is a rude birth. We even see a little...nimbus coming out of his head. But the child is the source of the light. I just want to stop with that. Suddenly...as he illumines all the lumens, or the luminescence of the glowing divine child, where does it move, it doesn't just spread in general but it actually...closer, and then highlighting the points on the ox in terms of...and you can see the way the Madonna is lighted... a spotlight down below and shining up on her, and we have the phenomenological effect of light...and the same thing is true that purportedly a sense that the illumination that occurs here transfers to the Madonna and we have the idea of light being *shared* by other forms such as the spot lighting on the architecture and the maidservant who appears on our left. We have a more typical medieval light by the star-studded field above and the light on the burst of the angel who appears to the three

shepherds...even that small little fragment of that little panel painting, the sheep and the shepherds showing their wonder are bathed in the light appropriately. It is not a question of the general light. Notice the way this depression in the mountain scape is defined by the illuminous light that emits from the child and transferred also by aspects of the halo structure of the Virgin and the other forms behind her where normally they would be blocked.

Student: Is the light source in the upper right doesn't go past that first plane that is up there, it doesn't penetrate down to the bottom, it remains up there...is the source of light coming from the upper right or are you saying...

Oh yes I am.

Student: But you are saying it is contained within the child.

I am saying that the light and the stars and this series of striated ray-like forms, they are very medieval. What I am saying is that nonetheless their luminosity causes the effect on the sheep and the shepherds as if you have a full moon. You can see the light behaving that way. What is troubling you?

Student: I am trying to understand the distinction. First I see the child being the source of the sharing light, emulating from that source.

That is right.

Student: What I am thinking about is that a contained light source up there and is that responsible for the other layers of light that are coming through? Are there two separate sources of light, are they working together?

Yes, there are two separate sources but they are also linked for the simple reason that that is the predetermining link for this event. There shall be a birth. Do you see what I mean? And it also shows a sense of time, because the star-studded field and the more or less schematized sense of the announcing angel and light seen as lineal rays, that is a testament to a kind of past, a predictive past. I am saying the effect of it in either case, this is not naturalism...these little rays, don't you see them descending, that is like the *Twilight Zone*. Like little porcupine rays coming off the child. But it isn't that, it is the effect of the light that is...and becoming atmospheric in the way it behaves on these forms. Just the same way up here, that light defines the sheep and the shepherds, very naturalistic in the way it would occur under a full moon...or a kind of centralizing pool of light from a fire or a spotlight...This entire image, I'll just show you another one, it is just



in black and white, now you can see the shepherds, you saw the sheep but...I don't have a color one that includes the whole thing. You see even the figure of Joseph on the right, or notice how the angel and the shepherds, you see how they are being bathed by that light...it is very stylized, patterned. The effect of the light as it falls upon the natural world is indeed very emphatically believable, phenomenologically. Well this continues to occur, this kind of attitude, for example in the work of, I'll cite just a few examples of sculpture and relief forms, in Donatello's *Baptismal Font* in Siena. The gilt bronze piece of Herod on one panel of 1425 is the first example in relief in which a coherent spatial system using perspective, overlapping, diminution of size and scale, and the introduction of cropping, bleeding, and random spatial order will appear. He also knows the scientific aspect but he wants the naturalistic aspect to be confirmed as well in his form of mimesis. Not only do forms closer to us project further out in relief, but he also follows the same principles of aerial perspective, those figures further away become lower in relief. Not only do the various...things and architectural forms have exact relationship to recessional perspective orthogonals falling to multiple vanishing points in this case, including even the table, they are all coherent, they all obey the laws, keep in mind, that are because of *our* vision, not because they exist in the world. While the sense of greater detail and obliteration of detail as things move off, greater definition of tactility, less tactility of things farther away. Diminution of even the way the light falls on the baptismal font and causes greater value contrast and the lower relief represses it. So it is the same principle of aerial perspective, the coherence of...because of the problematic inability of the eye to encompass what was actually in the world and then the admission of the natural phenomenology of the world combined as one. So this is a mimetic portrayal that not only deals with an idea but also deals with fact at the same time. And when I say idea I mean perception of forms through an apparatus that cannot deliver to us the world as it is, but must be perceived as an idea. The world depicted as the world is, there *is* aerial perspective in our environment: that is fact. Perspective is fiction. If you have thought otherwise let me correct you on that subject right away. There is no (linear) perspective in the world, I hope you understand that. I'd love you to have to debate it with me someday (laughter) It does not exist. So when you see a highway receding toward the vanishing point as you are driving you know very well that you don't anticipate being pinched like Linus was in your cart. But you know another thing as well, that you believe that that is a reasonable depiction of what never will be, never shall be, never has been. That *that* is an absurdity. It is an absolute artificiality. It is a defect that exists in you. Here is where we have a definition of relief that confirms...the identity of the whole advent of the concern with aerial perspective being more dominant than linear perspective. For example in the arcaded units...This is from the *Gates of Paradise*, the first work by Donatello and this one by Lorenzo Ghiberti, the story of Jacob and Esau, and it is...on the Gates of Paradise on the Baptistry of Florence...about 1435. Now what...Donatello has defined is not only a measure of both

aspects: both the scientific principle subject to an understanding that exists only in the perceiving mind...to the eye, and also the justification of the *fact* of space in the world with aerial perspective. Ghiberti tends to repress the scientific principle, for example in the barrel-vaulted architecture, because it is the point of most relief and he tends to testify to the principle of aerial perspective through his sculpture by causing these figures to virtually appear as though they are projecting out, almost floating free and independent of the plane. And many of these forms do have figures that have... separation from here, projecting out...And as we gradually move back, there is a melting into the patina of the gold-gilt doors so that I end up entering into a state of reflective light or atmosphere. Here is a comment, which I think is rather remarkable. "While empirical methods can also yield striking results," (as in searching out perspective according to the principle of I'll try it this way and I'll try it that way) "mathematical perspective made it possible now to represent three-dimensional space on a flat surface in such a way that all the distances remain measurable. And this then in turn, that by reversing the procedure the plan could be derived for the prospective picture of a building. On the other hand, the scientific implications of the new perspective demanded that we consistently apply, a requirement that artists could not always live up to for practical as well as aesthetic reasons. Since the method presupposes that the beholder's eye occupies a fixed point in space, a perspective picture automatically tells us where we must squarely stand in order to see it properly." I shall read no further...if you would like, from 300 to 301. What did you all notice about that comment? That perspective predetermines that we occupy a fixed point in space that is for the observation to be seen to be made. And you do not witness views in your world by standing in one place. Seldom have I ever seen anyone even admiring the grandeur of the Grand Canyon or the Atlantic or the Pacific sitting there leisurely holding their head at eye level, which is required. That perpendicularity to the earth and eye level vision and suddenly encompassing that view. Again, confirming the fact that perspective does not exist even in the realm of human behavior in relationship to grand vistas or views or architectural forms or what have you.

Student: Unless you are a painter.

Well if you are a painter, or even a sculptor.

Student: Or a photographer.

Or a photographer?

Student: Yes, because in order to perceive and make relationships you have to stand in a fixed position. At least your eyes scan, but your head doesn't move. Once your head starts moving, it destroys your ability to pick up and scan detailed relationships.

I want to debate that with you, I can't believe that. For the simple reason that your eye scans and it doesn't matter if the head is still or active.

Student: Beg pardon?

Your eye scans whether you are still or active.

Student: Yes, but there is a difference, if your head is moving and you are scanning, you lose certain sets of relationships that you gain when you keep your head still and *only* allow your eyes to scan. It is the only way you can find a parameter and find relationships within that parameter which relates to the fixed frame.

That is not true. There is simply no evidence for such a statement. That cannot be proved. The scanning principle...

Student: I am just speaking about my own experience then.

Then in your experience, you just don't know what is happening in your own eye.

Student: No, no. And also, if you think back to Antonioni's film, *Blowup*, when the photographer enters his apartment and he realizes that somebody has been there, if you observe what Antonioni did in the framing and directing of the actor, that he holds his head in a rigid position and his eyes scan. And that to me was a very telling effect because Antonioni was a painter to begin with, he is a filmmaker, and he is talking about a photographer.

Let me just say this to you. Here is what I want to debate: In terms of the idea of where attentions might be given, and I think it would be appropriate if I decided that I wanted to paint a painting, or if Bill...does at Yale, or if Philip Pearlstein does in New York...and they want to give us, no matter how radically altered the space may be, or compressed or extended or what have you, obviously I determine what my eye-level is if I want to be coherent about my perspective. And it is as I would teach my students perspective you cannot shift your head when you are preparing to develop an eye-level line. You have got to determine that exact measure...rigid, your neck like this looking straight out. No one wants to spend time drawing here looking straight out, you have to find the line on the page simply by imagining an interposing plane between *this* picture plane that I hold

vertically this way and the subject. And all I do is hold the two up, I mark the line, then I can put it down. Now I know all things must be obedient to what I now observe in the subject above and below. You will see this tomorrow morning in the Durer camera obscura and the lessons in perspective and drawing, they are absolutely connected to the camera obscura approach and the prelude to photography. The point is, that is true insofar as I can then force into a rigidly unnatural construct for viewing a view that I wish to transfer into the realm of an artificial series of orthogonals that don't exist in reality. Our eyes scan. I can look at you like this and I am scanning the hell out of you with my eyes but don't show a single bit of movement like this. That is why I put those things in there, so that you read that and you will know that there is constant movement, contraction, and shifting of your whole optical apparatus. We don't scan by looking around. We are scanning as we look directly. My point is that Jansen carries this discussion on to say that if you are going to obey the rigid, canonical science: the fiction, that because the defect of our vision, and I hope you understand that defect of our vision is not demeaning of vision. It means *that* is in us, our problem. OK? Just like bees have other problems. Or fleas have other visual problems. And so do octopi. At any rate, the idea is that we might have to even adjust the principle to find eye level when I am looking at the *Gates of Paradise*. Here is a real problem, because he should be showing me, this is the viewer's eye level, then these forms should be adjusted to that eye level, so everything...if I can make this parallel, then we would be looking at the tops of every head and wouldn't see...the barrel vaults. We would have to show the top of the building as it were. What we are expected to do now, he forces the observer to mimic the states that he has defined. So therefore, as anticipated in the manual, we get down like this, and you will see people on their knees getting to the eye level of that particular event. You have to adjust to the eye level of the fiction that has been forced upon the form by virtue of the necessary science. But what you are saying, and I admire the idea, that attention given to things requires often some stabilizing of the receiving, and of the person who wishes to select, and even re-affect the event for someone else's vision. But it doesn't have a thing to do with the eyes scanning or...the fixed position to be able to give more attention to things. The eyes scan whether you hold your head in a brace like in a typical Daguerrian studio neck brace or what have you.

Student: A camera lens is fixed. A camera lens is taking it from one position.

That is exactly right. And where is its eye level, its lens level? It's at the point wherever you place it, if it is on a tripod, you either bring it up, or you bring it down, and if it's not tilted, tilting front, rising, falling. If it is fixed, and it is projecting out, the eye level of that picture you take will always be exactly at the center point of wherever it is aimed. If you aim it up, you follow me? That doesn't mean now the eye level is up there, the eye level is still where *you* were doing the aiming, so the scene appears above your eye level,

you get the idea? Are you all tired? What is the problem with what I am saying? Where are you having the problem? I know what the problem is, you just want to believe in perspective as fact, and it doesn't exist.

Student: I don't know if it exists. If you are subject to the very defects that you are proclaiming, how do you know?

I know for the simple reason that I can measure independent of my vision, even a blind man can walk along both sides of a city block, and instrumentation can be introduced to ensure that he would never does start receding as an orthogonal into space. I can do it with dogs, cats, hopping frogs, stretched pencil lines...

Student: I thought we were talking about perception in terms of...

That is right, we sure are: perception as opposed to fact. That is why it is so very important...

Student: No, we were talking about operational experience over time.

Oh no, you make it more complex. I am talking about perception as differing from fact. And it is very important that we understand people here, if you want to talk about the old Renaissance, rebirth, and the man-centered universe, give it the attention it deserves. Remember when I mentioned a moment ago that Whitehead said, better that you realize the scent of the rose is in yourself, your olfactory sense, not in the rose. The rose offers just a bunch of vapors and gasses and chemical components, that is fact. The smell is in your olfactory sense. It is the point in time where the perceiving human senses, the senses that would prompt perception, will be given precedence over fact, and therefore we force the world to obey the principles of *our* problematic inability to witness what is there. Camera work will permit us to regain a world, watch this, which is so similar to the way you and I behave that we *further* think that the fictions we perceive are also confirmed in photographic evidence. We know no street ever receded in a photograph, that is why you can sack this idea of credibility. Credibility, it is the lie compounded... Only in those photographs which tend to prompt the issue of denial of perspective really become closer to the truth. Think about aerial photographs. They are true. Did you ever think that? That is when you say, only an aerial photograph, particularly of flat terrain, which shows that parallelism can ever be considered to be credible. Any other photograph that shows diminution of size...you know those things they used to have in trick photography? Stand on the beach like this and have people walk away and do that? It is a wonderful thing, you get your little snapshot, look, there is Betty Jean holding Bob and Bill (laughter). The truth is, diminution of scale is a lie: *this*

man sitting back there, if I hold my thumb I can encompass, I can touch the top of his head and the bottom of his foot. Now I am hard put to go over there and test the reality of his figuration fit into that measure, that is as far as I can get. A photograph confirms *nothing* that is credible, so don't think I'll ever say that again. It just simply confirms the lie and gives a great deal of credit not to the world but to ourselves.

Student: But we are of the world. Our perceptions are of the world. And if there is an evolutionary process, there must be some kind of physical logic to the fact that we have binocular vision which is where that defect stems from, right?

Binocular vision, it does extend from that, but also I think we need to have a...to witness the possibility of body...identity as well, binocular vision does not just confirm, one eye will give you perspective as well as two. It tends to reduce the effect, it compresses the idea of spatiality. So there is monocular and binocular vision. Binocular vision allows you to in essence scan slightly displaced views, like if I am looking here and here...That is where fact is no longer a fiction of perception. Now you see...{laughs}...prove to you that, I don't have to worry about turning to the scientists. You talk about empirical evidence...That has been one of the primary issues in the whole history of how we see, as to whether we are going to let the world be what we, how we have to see it. Or is it going to be what *it is*. Is it a dualism? You bet your life we are a part of the world. The point is we presume ourselves to be the measure of the world. You or I or even as we commonly agree upon things. I often say we ought to start becoming suspicious of evidence presented in courts, in which where was the body placed? Unless we have the evidence of the body originally there and we go...and find the identity because as we all know, and I don't mean to stress this anymore, things can be altered so subtly by clipping off a millimeter of the foreground in a photograph. You can get a totally different record of where things are and so on. And what I am trying to stress is that this is a moment in time, like for example those Pompeians were really telling a greater truth than these supreme accomplishments of Renaissance sculptures and paintings. In fact I would say to you that those tecta-forms that we saw at Lascaux tell a greater truth about the structure of things, because even though the wall may curve and thus we read them with their alteration and perspective. If we really know what they are as flat rectilinear units, they are confirming generally what we would observe in our world. And the only way we can observe is from below you up like I can read the truth of those struts in the ceiling, I can rise, levitate...and read that truth. Because it obeys what *is*. The only thing that isn't true is diminishment of scale. Now I know you are all worried about this because you don't like yourself being eliminated from this idea of truth. (laughs) You just feel put down by the fact that I suddenly removed you as the measurer, or myself as the measurer, and one says, why not recognize that you are indeed a component and directly and interchangeably involved with all systems of the

world, interchangeably involved, but that our measure is not the truth of perception, it is another mode, another permutation of the way things appear to be. The world of tables or chairs or boxes or floor planes or what have you, watch as I sit here and I trace my hand and follow this wall, it shouldn't go in as I follow the trace of that, it should go up.

Student: One question. Finally therefore you would argue that the falling tree in the forest makes a sound even when no one is there.

Yes. I put it this way. I am not going back to that eighteenth century argument. Let me put it this way. I would say this. The tree falls. Whether it is heard or not is absolutely beside the point. I could say the tree falls and it still makes a sound insofar as there is some auditory response. And that could be the auditory response of a flea. Why does it have to be human? That philosophical debate is based upon the idea of the way *our* senses become the measure of things, not other creatures...it could be the auditory response of a set of vibrations, for example having a...sitting up there to experience the vibrations from the falling tree. Or it could be seismographic vibrations of some sort...that when something falls it sets up a series of vibratory interchanges with the structure of matter without any auditory responses. You see you are postulating a human respondent. It makes you mad, doesn't it.

Student: The obvious thing is that we experience convergence from a fixed point, why isn't that a perception that we've seen even though we know the experience is saying that if we walk down the block we are not going to be crushed, we do perceive converging lines with our eyes, don't we perceive that through our vision?

Of course, I've already said that.

Student: Why can't we relate to an order of existence that has this type of perspective...

Do you notice what you have just said? I am going to take you down to the hospital and have you locked up {laughter} ...you are obeying yourself which sees that as a fiction, the world doesn't have it, you find it the only way you can perceive it...you have got to reckon with the fact that when humankind rises to the point to justify illusionism, and what does it do, it is making the world mimic *its* necessities. Other times, what we call primitive, child-like and so on, children even have the ability to witness the world with its exactitude more directly than us prior to the advent of perspective. In other words it is necessary to have perspective to behave rationally in a world where reason is postulated in the positions you make. Not what the world makes. But if you follow this through, what does this mean? What is the meaning of all this? You'll find it in the literature. What is the meaning of all this? What was the meaning of Cubism delivering

itself from perspective? Why did Barnett Newman say, 'as any fool can plainly see my work is phenomenological' and thus realistic. And what did I mean when I said that Kenneth Noland and Morris Louis and Frank Stella state to you, 'Look, people, don't ask us to be something, it is what it is.' They deliver themselves from the fiction of perspective and dealt again with rectilinear constructs. Triangles do not represent perspectival systems or shifts of planes in space. Even spewing geyser-like forms still fall flatly on a plane and show no principle of...overlapping. So we have the phenomenological effect of what we would call, the truth, the real, the fact, the case. Whereas there are others that would confirm and stress the idea of illusional fictions. And insist upon the fact that our confirmations, our reality, is in truth, reality. And all we are really doing is confirming our fictions, our perceptual fictions.

Student: Then why should the larger mass of western civilization choose to confirm this fiction. I mean most of us are not painters, most of us are photographers.

Why would they choose to do this? To affirm it? Simply because of the fact, primarily, you can't say it happens all the time, in fact we can only say that beginning in the Renaissance it was a device through which human beings could share a kind of collective experience, my fiction is your fiction and therefore we can have a communal relationship and also there is a dialogue with one another that was not possible before. If I was to talk to you about religion, and you have enough of a religion different from mine and we find that we don't believe in the same god, I believe in mice, you believe in Buddha...the point is we have a conflict. We might have to find a link for our relationship by displacing our differences between mice as deity and Buddha as deity and find relationships through something we know we both experience, the fictions of our perceptions. We might find a way of saying that we do indeed hear sound when someone rings a bell in our ear: Hello, did you hear that? Yes. And we have a union. And we can communicate similarly. Even though you have heard, and someone has told you...that certain primitive tribes don't see perspectively, and those anthropological reports that subjects in certain regions of the Amazon have to adjust to the idea of reading values before they can see the photographic image, you are right, they do have to adjust, but what are they adjusting to. Because they have always experienced facts, and when they are suddenly confronted with a *substitute* of the fact that they witness directly, they see a kind of interchangeability with their perception and the world's perception of themselves. You put the value structure of a photograph before them and they have got to adjust to the lie that is one place removed before they can get back to the acceptance of what they automatically experience. They didn't question whether they had orthogonals or diminution of scale, or atmospheric, smoking out or sfumato effects of aerial perspective. Those are systems that we gradually had to build, layer upon layer, in order to communicate with one another through some rationality that we



all could share. But it begins really in the seventeenth century. And you are all, as I am, children of Descartes. Cartesian philosophy still persists to this day. He himself has to have a *dream* to confirm his reality. And he has to establish that matter doesn't count and that is exactly what he said. Mathematics does, but that is the idea, matter is not important. That is when the world, just as quickly... was swept away. Through thought. Cutters, that wall, even the vine over there is just stuff extended out into space, hopelessly uneventful and unimportant, is our perception of it. That is why we hear when the tree falls. And then that question comes up, that saw, is it the human sense that defines the world or is it indeed the world is manifestly there. I am going to xerox a few things for you, if you know anything about philosophy I can show you how this argument is becoming resolved in our time. You see what we have to deal with now is not an order in which I perceive therefore *it is*, we have to say, I perceive: it is. There is absolutely no justifying or qualifying any difference between the two. We have now come to the point where we can accept the variability of differing positions in space, different perceptual, is my perception of light any more important than that cephalopod that might be inhabiting some moist environment? For the cephalopod, he thinks: *he* {laughs} it thinks it sees better than you do. If you can accept *it* thinks. And you might say, well so what. Well I think it is a big so what. Because what it is, to my mind, that dependence upon the mimicking of a system which really becomes preeminently mathematical and of idea-orientation, and when I use the word, I'll put it in quotes so I don't seem so crude, the *fiction* of our perception: that is getting rid of the world and dealing with our own inabilities to encompass what the world is. Those who present me with a plan, a diagram: I say to you, holding this up, this little book up frontally in front of your eyes with a fixed viewpoint, no matter where we move, don't just move up and down...try to follow me around, as long as it stays in front of me and I don't look at it this way and you don't get too far over and seeing this in 3-d, as long as I keep it in front of you frontally, that is the floor of this room. But if I do this, and say that represents the floor of this room as you look back...and you say hey buddy that is better than the other one, then I can say sorry, this is truer than that, and it is. Because that is what this room is mainly identifiable as. And what I am trying to suggest to you is that we have presumed that our own optical perceptual functions are a measure of the world. And it simply just isn't the case. In fact you might say it has nothing to do with a measure of the world. You can plot out...How it even became possible on the basis of being able to understand the great...mathematical recessions...to construct, like Masaccio's *Christ and the Cross*, we can measure exactly what the depth of that space is. We can reconstruct a planar diagram in perspective, whole structures, what their floor plans would look like. But that is because it has nothing to do with seeing...The blind who can read braille with a sense of touch can take a certain floor-plan of a building and never have to see perspective, and explain the mathematical principles, and never having experienced the fiction of the way we see, and they could still construct a form

according to the mathematics. The rest of us would look and say, yes that is certainly the way I see space. I am sure the blind man would be sitting over there wondering what is going on. Because no blind person, oh this is a problem in the eighteenth century: the blind man illustration. Were you to be born blind, would you suspect me sitting here looking at the recessional orthogonals of this room? Would you? Do you have any friends who are blind? Talk with them. I have talked to seventeen blind people and they understand the mathematics of perspective but they *cannot* comprehend the issue of what I see.

Student: No, but if you relate it to sound you can make the link. You would have recession in sound, that is our audial perspective.

That is our own spectrum in terms of hearing. Don't confuse that with space, Dave. I can... aural recession if I...when I had my little eardrum problem the doctor used a tuning fork and he holds it, is it better on this side or on this side...he can detect...from the same position...I can have aural recession and think it is held from the same point in space...throw the ball against the wall...the wall is here, bop, but that is a different point from the impact to create the aural effect. I can have auditory recession, as it were, or sound recession, with the sound instrument held in exactly the same...

Student: Yes but we are not talking about that, you are creating an artificial situation with the doctor and the tuning fork. You are trying to establish a relationship between a blind person and a seeing person in relation to the real world. In time and space. And my point is that when you throw that ball against the wall, the sound of it *there*, for the blind person, tells them how far that wall is. And you can bounce the ball right here and the sound will be different because that sound will tell them the ball is right there.

Dave, you miss the point. You didn't get my illustration.

Student: No, I got your illustration. I think this is a fallacious argument.

It is not, I am telling you, you are still saying, the ball *there*, I can have the sound even artificially produced. For a person...I can play a record or a tape and I can make that sound implying there, or close by...You see you are talking about positions in space that become measures of how distance works. But to me you are intermixing the visual sense with the auditory. I can have the effect of the same point, location in space and still have auditory advancement or auditory recession...I am waiting for a blind man, the ball, he can be walking forward, guess what, the wall is right here, and I have a record player sitting right beside the blind man and it is at a fixed point in space. First the ball at a distance. Second, the ball close by. Which does he choose?

Student: Do you think that if you are playing that record player the blind person can't distinguish that that is an artificial point of sound? He can hear the recession of the sound but can't he also distinguish that it *is* a recording, from the fixed point?

Some could, some couldn't. It takes a considerable amount of advanced education. It doesn't just happen empirically because you have lost one sense and the other compensates. What I am trying to say to you is that I would not trust the phenomenological effects of the auditory sound, as assuming this extraordinary acuity that I would even know that there is a record player in the room or what have you, I grant you the sensitivity would be greater than even our auditory system. But the point is, is that it would be hard for them to measure space unless the person had thrown the stone or thrown the ball himself against the wall...that is all I am trying to say. And so the person might get up and say I choose one or the other, and the object wasn't that close and...on the wall right before them...that isn't the illustration that we constantly refer to, what we are talking about is a dilemma that appears constant throughout the eighteenth century. Look at...and look at the problem that the blind man and the deaf person presented in the eighteenth century. And I tell you right now, in terms of recent exploration of what happens for blind people and deaf people, or deaf and blind, there is too much evidence to suggest that different senses then become the substitute, but a blind person doesn't understand space just through auditory response, but through tactile response, and through measurement, an intrapsychic measurement, and indeed, otherwise if they want to deal with sound they can build radar machines at the University of Connecticut, a wonderful community of blind students, I often see them either with a dog or a cane or something, and then I'd go shout and see how far things are like a bat {makes a series of recessive sounds}, {laughter} that would be ridiculous. You can't trust the auditory sense to the exclusion of touch or the exclusion of measure...You see we might give better credit to the principle in the early development of photography in which credibility really is more akin to the idea of the phenomenological effect of light in the world than we would to the idea that it confirms a world that we see. Also that people then knew that that street...with that one man getting his shoes shined...that wasn't a problem...not the perspective, but the phenomenological effect was impressed by light. The human in essence was excused. So the world...in terms of the light effect as opposed to the idea of a reconfirmation of perspective. Because literally, ever since, certainly from the fifteenth century forward, perspective and perspectival systems had to virtually imbrand into human consciousness, so that couldn't have been the big surprise. Do you understand my little illustration? That couldn't have been a reason for credibility. And I doubt you could say it would be, it could certainly be relevant to the idea of infinitesimal detail, unit structure identity. That's why Ivins really thought non-syntactical...thus not self-willed mark

making through which we see the image. Delivered from human interpretation, delivered from detail that is handmade. Thus the idea of atomistic structure that falls below the threshold of vision itself. That only an energy system like light could have affected it, and that's where the credibility is. That is why evidently people who are evidently involved with land development aren't going to trust...on the ground views, they have to have aerial views. That's what will get the proper measurement. And that is why people shouldn't buy property as advertised in newspapers and magazines out west, because you can make some very nifty fictions that look absolutely wonderful and they can bet on...getting exactly what you see, and you do...if you got an aerial view you could measure exactly what was there. I don't have to go far for illustrations. Fact is one thing, perceptual fictions are another. The measure of the integrity of what is seen is based upon the receiving apparatus or organ. Even to the point where those little fishes who have lost their capacity for sight, that live at great depths, suddenly they lose, evolutionary, the necessity for eyes. It seems perfectly sensible: they don't need fictions. By the same token, some creatures have organs of response that are no more than, do you remember reading in your little, *Eye and Camera*...{laughs} if you haven't read it, see, if you had read that {laughs} ...let me show you something, where is that *Eye and Camera*? Now I am certain, it would be remarkable if you know the import of this little illustration, I wish I could be a catfish on occasion. So that if I wanted to adjust to dim light, the rods could project forward and the cones could relax and recede. Your eye can't do that. And I wish on occasion that also the cones could come forward because I would have a much better vision in both very reduced light and very intense light. Catfish see better than you insofar as color differentiation and value differentiation is concerned. So I am going to take the catfish's vision if you are going to do the eye transplant on me, so I'll have better vision than I have now. I'll take *its* fiction rather than my own. From *Eye and Camera*: "...the compound eye is found in insects. Each element contributes only a small patch of light or shade to make up the whole mosaic image. This double compound eye is found in the mayfly Chloeon. The segment at the top provides detailed vision; the segment of the right, coarse, wide-angled vision." {laughs} The problem is, it is all divided into parts and units, I don't want that...one wonders, do I want that fiction, or what about this little, "Scanning eye of the arthropod, Copilia. It possesses a large lens with only one receptor element. Attached to the receptor are the optic nerve and a strand of muscle, the latter is reported to move the receptor back and forth so that it scans the image formed by the lens"... (or having to move forward to inspect something, or to get the whole view to step back, this thing can everything it sees and the little receptor goes, zzzz. The idea I am saying is that, or a pinhole camera eye. This is, folks, you don't have to debate this evidence, it wouldn't appear in *Scientific American*. This is really Kindergarten fact. And it is sublated in the most exquisite systems that even now would require things that you nor I would ever experience. Machines and chemicals that can see, and far beyond what we will ever

imagine. There are unit systems that can measure things that deliberately measure the fictions of the human eyes and turn them into fact. And the readout reads the gross perspective identities of any environment and then suddenly gives you a readout of exactly what measure they are and everything we see in obvious parallel structures, particularly when we are dealing with a planal environment. And even if we are dealing with spherical environments they give us the cross section so we know the exact size of the shape in space. So those readouts, even maps, diagrams, as long as it deals with parallel structures, is more credible... than any photograph that shows us a perspective system. Now if you don't want to agree with that, stay in your own *egocentrality*, I didn't say egocentrism. Deny! Become the second doubting Thomas of fact. {laughs}

Student: I don't think that is the question. I don't think that is what is bothering us with this situation.

What is bothering you?

Student: It is not that when you talk about the fiction of the catfish eye that we choose to deny the catfish's fiction, I think it is the terminology of calling it a fiction for one thing, that is disturbing, because it is a fact to the catfish that the world exists that way and it functions accordingly. It is a fact to our perception that there is some kind of perspective to our perception and we act accordingly in relation to that and in relation to what we know about the road not really coming to a point. And you talk about our egocentrism.

Or your perceptive-centricism.

Student: But the point is, yes, that is important to us, for some reason, whatever reason, and you seem to want to deny it, and you are pulling the rug out from under us, and we are suspended. You see, you are not really giving us something else. You deny what we have.

Student: The phenomenology of light.

What did I give you, what did you say, Lee?

Student: I said the phenomenology of light.

That is one thing that we can say was given to us to the point that we would have to believe in it more so than what was delivered by virtue of impressed light upon light-sensitive material. The second thing I'd give you is the fact that you might as well start

getting around to the business of...this is what science is saying...we can't expect the world to be obedient to our perceptions. It is going to function independent of us.

Student: But how do we function?

We have to function independent of it.

Student: No, we have to function in relation to our perceptions.

You function in relationship, if you want to do that, I can keep your perceptions functioning. Give me your eyes, ok? Do you understand what I mean, I can keep you functioning, I can keep your brain activity for a reasonable length of time functioning without you being able to suffer or take another photograph, an SX-70 or what have you. Dave, look, I am not denying that we, look, I have the same fictions that you do. And I like my fictions. I respect the defect of my eye. I *love* the fact that I know I can live in a world and have rational discourse with people because of perspective.

Student: All right, then what is your point?

At no moment in time will I state that my visual perceptual measure of the world has anything to do with the world. To confirm it, or to psychically value it. That is what I am trying to say. Because it has value independently. You know there was once a Dada play: this is true, and the Dadaists thought, we are all so koo-koo that they had to confirm for us our insanity...I love that it is wonderful, {laughs} wait a minute, I am not escaping the issue, I'm glad that you are burning it away, and I like the whole idea of...and if you read the material and it is on that...the Marjorie Nicholson, or the Scientific American, you will find that everything we have commented on today is an issue in there. Because it really leaves one with a dilemma. I think I got an edge on that dilemma and how I perceive it. I'd rather not just deliver it to you because it would sound like, I am going to deliver to you something very commonplace, which I can't think you could possibly disagree with...that little thing about I am part of the world and I perceive the world and that is the way we measure...value and so on...the world has got to have a chance. But the illustration I want to give is the, what was it?

Student: The Dada play.

Yes...this is the play, I can almost do it verbatim. There is a lamp post, this will be the lamp post, ok? And a man comes across the stage...and he leans against the lamp post, and he walks on across that stage...woman: What the hell is going on!...Next act, a woman comes out, leans against the lamp post, looks around, walks off. Third scene:

the playwright, again as the rational, sentient man comes out, stands next to the lamp post, looks out at the audience and blows his brains out. It is the same thing we are talking about... I am saying to you that it is of no consequence whether you or I see the world in either highly individual ways, insofar as the world is concerned, or whether we agree because we can communicate through certain distinctly measurable systems...I don't know about you, are you nearsighted or farsighted?

Student? In the middle.

Well I am virtually blind on this side, and I still have to wear these specs, so we may have differences there, but we know we can pretty much agree that we do see similarly, at least with our corrected vision. But that is of no consequence, in terms of when we start determining what *it* is and what I am. We might say the new mode of perception states, *res extensa* does not exist. It is not lying there like dead matter just to be used whenever we can deal with it. It doesn't state, I think therefore I am...the entirety of cognition including sensory response, perception..and thinking, feeling, intuition, and sensation...it means that where we start trying to declare where pictorial representations are valid, that which is the better measure of what actually is in fact measurable, might have to dispense with the idea of what we might call the proof of seeing: the proof of being on the spot and looking at it. Because often to be on the same plane as the thing observed...if anything is tilted and not directly parallel to our field of vision to force it into a perspectival system. Perspective is in essence a constellation of what I said before, of our need to have pictorial forms obey the way we see the world. It is less like the world than it is the way we see. The new science says let us have a new way of even looking, and I will predict for you, go see Star Wars...I am told there are people working on systems for seeing that suggest at some point in time, who knows within the next fifteen minutes or hundreds of years from now, that people will even want to look at things that we can identify, we will simply want plots and structures that to us become, through touch, or even sight...that can tell us about an environment without our ever having to enter it, and we'll know it better through the positions and points and how its spatial, physical parameters without us having to see a gross view of it. Now I don't know whether you agree with that or not but you know what that is saying, it gives a very, very strong testament to the necessity of the world being what it is and for us recognizing that we belong to that world, we see that world, but that really our sight is basically a fiction.

Student: But I think that all these things you talk about which are in evidence today, we don't have to wait for the future, all we have to do is deal with the space ships, the spacecraft sending back not photographic images as we know them, but images, right? Then the debate between the Russians and the Americans about landing...or

paraphernalia. It is the same issue, it is already being brought to bear. But it seems to me, logically, that they're as fictional, the data they send back by the Russian spacecraft and paraphernalia is as fictional as whoever it was who picked up the rock and brought it back, in terms of his perception.

Now you've just changed our whole argument. You should be finding it one way... now watch, because you should be challenging me not so much whether it is our eye...you keep saying to me that diagrammatic map or whatever can be the measure, the exact measure of this. And of course the truer measure would be an exact length, that is the length of that wall, right? But then I still have to use my perceiving senses in order to understand the principle of measure...to walk or pace and say six feet or four feet, or whatever measuring system you want to use, there is a problem there because again, it is subject to my perception. So now what will be the next level beyond that to prove and confirm the world and also admit my own perceptual necessities? How would I know the world is there?

Student: By touching it.

Touching, {pauses, laughs} yes.

Student: Tactility is really the confirmation, not the sense of sight. And the problem with all the data coming back from the spacecraft is that it is *just* dealing with sight, and therefore abstract reasoning.

But Dave, listen to me, that wall doesn't depend upon my...for its existence does not depend upon my tactile sense, or my visual sense.

Student: It doesn't depend, it is separate from you, it doesn't depend on you whatsoever. It only depended upon the original carpenter who put up the wall. That is its only link with any human dependency.

Now wait a minute, I don't think the rest of the people sitting around here are going to accept that as an extension of this argument...the carpenter. So I am asking, how do we get to the next level of what the new science be saying about how I know that wall is and I know that I am. It is a very important issue. It has very important implications for the future of photography...What would you suspect?

Student: The way that they interact?...Hitting at the building and tearing it down.



That is called dissection, construction, and you are also involved as a perceiving person who exists...I disassembled it, or I reassembled it. Isn't there another way I can know and *it* will be present? What kind of system would permit me to know that, I don't even have to know it...but can I say, "It is, and I know it is." Now would mean that *res extensa* is now brought back into the fact of necessity, and also thinking 'therefore I am' is of necessity: *both* worlds get back together. Now how can we possibly define a perceptual system that will include both, not only me, but what we might call an ontological system that will enable *it* to be in fact, the case, while I am perceiving it to be the case. And yet I don't interfere with it and it does not interfere with me, in essence. In my measurement of the construct. Now what does that have to do with pictorialism? You have got a system and you have to know what might it say about any kind of pictorial image. {laughs} But you gotta know, I'll tell you, but you gotta tell me whether you're going to hit me, it's so simple.

Student: When you see something, when we view it, we know it exists, how basic does it get. If I look toward that direction it doesn't depend on my existence but I do perceive it.

The Ames demonstrations have been going on for thirty years proving that what you see is constantly changing. They can tell you someone is eight feet tall and it's a little miniature doll, just by shifting the planes. You all know the Ames demonstrations...What other way is there? Come on, it is very simple.

Student: Just psychically.

Psychically, you mean we may invest the wall with some kind of psychic response to me and I may... automatically a psychic response. You're getting warm {laughs}...We don't need to invest things with brains for them to exist in fact...It is all so interesting because again, when Cavell talks about that issue of the world appearing present to me even though I am not present to it, that is the way photographs seem. It is as if, here is the image of a moonrise over Hernandez, and I really do get the feeling that I am in the presence of that world, when in reality I know I damn well I'm not, it is in the presence of me while I am not present to it. Or at least insofar as light...the phenomenological effect of the light on the moon and the hills and the huts and all that stuff below, it is as though at least insofar as I know something that belongs to wave, and electrical and chemical systems, recorded. I don't give a damn what Ansel selected or manipulated with the zone system or lenses or developments or whatever, it is beside the point. All of those are again, extended systems...the fact that the image arose out of itself-reflexive material. How could I have both fact and my own perceptions existing simultaneously

with co-equal value? It is like showing the progression of throwing a shirt off of your body {laughs} to lay before a visitor.

Student: {inaudible}

You were not here that day, you didn't hear the end of my talk, how many of you knew what I was referring to, when I said that? The Giotto.

Student: ...The sequential...

You all knew...it is just the simplest...

Student: And that is connected to this, is that what you are saying?

Student: Is it about perception and observation, is that what you are trying to make a distinction between?

What are other ways in which we can proceed in which we can know we have the evidence of what it is...out there, and know that I am part of it, with no doubt about the fact that I am, I'll even go back to that universal overlapping of the whole world, because I have no doubt that I am not really in a matrix that is different from what it is in. I want a system that allows my perceptual functions to admit its value, and I don't mean value like appreciation, admit its corporeality, counting as significant, and I want one that doesn't rely on me to interpret it and to see it according to all the fictions that I wish to project upon, and I like the fiction of perspective personally so don't think I am demeaning it. How can we get both operative with co-equality, with co-equal significance. Because increasingly, you see, the value is being placed on perception, even more so than it ever was in the Renaissance, to the point where the world has become but a mere illusion, and that is a very dangerous signal. We are in a tough period of time. You all remember...some of you may even be atom bomb children, and they talk about how our world will suddenly become fractured matter in a sort of apotheosis of light with atoms floating around. How can we retain the world while also retaining our interpretation of our perceptions, our fictions?

Student: Video?

No, anyone got a clue? Remember I said it's just like throwing a cloak...

Student: Don't we have to interact with it in some way to know it exists?

No.

Student: We don't, Ok. I am all right with that.

In fact I could drop dead right now and you would still be able to witness it, {the wall} and it will still be there having been witnessed whether I am here or not.

Student: Not you, what about me? I have to know if it has to co-exist with me.

...A little hint, you know, something sneaking up on you. You just asked a very important question though, you said do I have to be perceiving it in order for it to exist, and I said no. It doesn't make any difference whether we are in this room, that wall is there. How do we know that? How does it stay there and how are we able to confirm that its value as an existent construct does not depend upon the valuing of our perceptual response?

Student: I understand the question, but I can't figure out what or how to link it.

No, you asked me the question again, you said you mean it doesn't depend upon us.

Student: ...I understand what you are asking, but if you drop dead, you said it yourself, it will exist independently of your existence, and I understand that very readily. But is that any different than the tree out in the forest, it will happen if it happens no matter if I hear it or not. Can it have its own existence independently of me?

Yes. It does as a matter of fact.

Student: Yes but that is not the question.

No, it isn't.

Student: The question is back to us.

No, no, you want a kind of, you want to be *sure* that you are still counted. I want to ensure that you are counted and it is counted.

Student: No, it counts itself.

You are going to tell me that the only important matter is that you perceive it, and I am sorry, I don't accept that. Its import is just as valuable as your perception. Because that is where reality lies. I am not going to sell short that wall for something in my perception

of it. In the first place, I know that my perception has a lot of activity that doesn't have a damn thing to do with that wall. When I call it a fiction, don't think I don't think it has a physiological basis, or don't think that I devalue myself or that it is some sort of dehumanization that we don't count. Or that I set an optical receptor up that is mechanical, or a vibratory receptor up, that is mechanical, and I don't count. I want to count and I want *it* to count. How can we get both of them simultaneously? Both interactive, confirming the value of both without having to have pictorial illusions to stand in place of *it*. Which are reminders of what it was as I, spatiotemporally, continue, toward death. It is not a mystical question...

Student: I don't understand when you deny the visual language. I am still confused. I know the point about its existence and my existence, in reciprocation, right? The value of the presence of both of us, simultaneously, right?

I am asking how can it work where you really believe that it is not necessarily dependent upon you. Are you interested in the question? {laughter}

Student: You are asking for a way of confirming both sides of the relation between ourselves as perceivers and it as perceived.

I never uttered the words, it-as-perceived.

Student: No?

It as is.

Student: Ok.

That was the whole issue, it that is not clear, please let's know that is why you don't understand it. Not I the perceiver, it as perceived: you see that's all back on me. Then I even have to count you and present you with a projection of that, and I could very well present you with a very good projection to convince you that it exists. Or I could even be convinced that that thing on the screen is a decorative panel...space was pretty convincing. No, I want the combination of me the perceiver, I the perceiver, and it, the ding-und-sich, the thing as such, and I want both co-equally held as interpenetrate, important, but knowing the difference between the two and that I will understand it as is, and I as I perceive it.

Student: And as long as we make a photograph of it we deny that: that is what you are saying.

Well no, photographs tend to confirm it. But we just often forget about the fact that it's always *it* in the past-tense. Photographs are one of the best measures of saving our world, but the tragedy of them are is that we begin to believe in the world photographed and obviously the world is already gone, insofar as we perceive it. That is the tragic aspect. One of the ways we can have it confirmed with utter detail. All of these people trying to use Diana cameras are trying to say in reality that they are admitting to the fact that the world doesn't count. I am not prescribing Diana work or out of focus work...I am just simply saying it is interesting how these things emerge. Many people are interested in photography today as a way of insisting that they can affect the world, by slashing, cutting, painting. I mentioned all these things before...but it is, I perceive, it is. How do both become mutually interactive and co-equal in value.

Student: Are you still speaking about by visual evidence or are you speaking about by other...

I would suggest that I really am speaking primarily of the visual evidence, I really am. Although I certainly couldn't exclude other sensory evidence. But I don't think I can depend on the, 'I see therefore it is, I touch therefore it is, I hear therefore it is...it is, I feel it.

Student: No, I am speaking about...

End tape 8A