

## **11-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 11-B: History of the Camera Obscura, pre-photography illustrations by Turpin, the credibility of the photographic image, readings from popular 19th century journals on the reception and response to the photograph, 19th century regional photographers EA Scholfield and George Tingley.**

...The basic plane upon which things are stacked, collated, filed, organized, and made evidence of what the world is about...Nathan, do you know what this instrument would have been invented in terms of what type of view, or what subject matter? I just wondered whether anybody had a notion...

Nathan Lyons: I'll show you some diagrams.

Ok good I'd like to see it... this view, obviously, goes from here.

Student: The lens could be tilted.

There doesn't seem to be evidence in the diagram but you are quite right, you could point it up and down. I would suspect that, one might sit at a table and record, it is at a very low level. I thought it had to do with surreptitious observation, like a very early example, but I doubt it. What I know very well is the issue of the table as a point to confirm knowledge as distinctly...it is in literature, it is in other instrumentation of the period...what would you record with it?

Student: {Inaudible response}.

Ok that is interesting. Nathan said architecture of the period...or typical domestic furniture...eighteenth century, it is typical of the period furniture format...It is portable. It is the idea of now bringing the room, the interior of the room, and still having things take place in the laboratory area of the room...this is the one...in the catalog, nineteenth century, these little girls, a young man...an environmental turret...to view the world. This revolves...you know in Edinburgh, there is a great tower that has a camera obscura turret. Did you get there? I've never been, but it is there, and I've read about it and I

know a friend of mine who visited there just very recently...it was in their time they could witness this thing that had already been there long before the discovery of photography...It is a big tower wherein you can view the whole countryside. A group of lenses go up in here, and you trace upon the table the drawing of the landscape is... then they point in wonder, that is an early example of when mothers go away and the children will play...discover what happens when... before the mother returns {laughs}... This drawing is lost...of the fact that we could say there are examples...here is an example of a drawing by Andriessen, in Amsterdam, of an artist...Here is the artist looking out the doorway of his...studio, the front hall area or what have you, he is in the domestic interior. He looks out into the street, and what does he hold, the view out of his doorway, a camera obscura, with basically a ground glass. He is not taking a picture, this has nothing to do with photography. That has been fully documented that Andriessen showing the use...here we have Andriessen, born in Amsterdam in 1742, so he emerged deep in the identity of the eighteenth century, he died in 1819. He founded an academy in his own house, where students specialized in studies of the female body in the nude...and his students were required to use the camera obscura as a way of encountering and understanding the structure of things...At this point on...Newhall... nineteenth century devices...Wollaston's camera lucida...with the prism projects the image onto the table...and carried about for portability, it is the same thing as Daguerre in Paris and Fox Talbot...in Lake Como, you just can't miss. The same principle recorded in Talbot's drawing books...leather, tripod chair, tripod stand extending, the tube with the prism on it. I want to show you an example of what, in Sicily...the Temple of Juno looks like. Now this was made about seven years ago. I just want to show you that even now there are still evidences that some of these foliage forms are still around. Here is the Sir John Herschel image in the Newhall text...a camera lucida drawing of this same temple. It is the exact same form...It is evident that Herschel had the typical proper education in drawing. The lucida required no ability for one to draw the outlines. All of the sense of detail, down to the sense of affirmation of unit structure in the drawing itself, are *his* contributions to suggest planality using techniques that were learned. All of this was done with cross hatching and...identifications that we have been talking about are typical of his education as a draftsman. Again I refer you to the... material and certainly John Ruskin talks about the proper education in terms of drawing. What I would like to point out just as a point of comparison you can see this looks as though, even if its perspective and identifications aren't quite as accurate as in the slide that I have just shown you. In other words, even the idea of the types of foliage, the structure of rocks...being recorded...the branches of the tree even in terms of scale...In images of the eighteenth century of...prints, very much like the same things like a photograph of a bracelet or a medallion ring...the stylist is connected to a tracing unit and the stylist is connected to it and traces and engraves it on the metal plate. And that same kind of definition that can later be embellished by etching or mezzotint or other

processes...a form that does have that extraordinary suggestion of infinitesimal exactitude, not just the syntax of the rendered...and contourism. And the same thing occurs in the transition...and finally...an interest in...recording... the architect in his laboratory room, that...window, you see in the circle identified...the person who has worked with his brother, who has tried to develop the use of light sensitive substances... asphaltum or use of minerals such as Bitumen of Judea, and developed with lavender oil, not developed, but washed over. Bleaching processes. A man preeminently concerned with science and combustion engines, and with a wide variety of...tried to show a coalescence between Heliography, sun-writing, in the service of the possibilities of science. And again he too still behaves by introducing the issue of the camera obscura that could have been taken out of doors, but rescued...a true scientist...aims the early camera out of the window, and behaves like a typical seventeenth century... Everyone has seen this as well, when Arago makes the announcement for Daguerre who was embarrassed and complained of a sore throat, and some people seem to suggest that he wasn't really quite that sure whether this should be...you might think about Bayard...Now at this point, I want to show you something, and I can clear this table, because I don't want anything to happen to it...to me it is a kind of evidence. These botanical and zoological illustrations are not among the most unique and interesting, and I am sure down in the Resource Center you have something...wonder at the type of images that can be...but what we are interested in, this is an illustrational series, Bob Fichter and I bought it: he has half and I have half, and Eileen Cowin got a quarter...Oh, it's a Bonnie Gordon {laughter} In this dictionary of natural sciences... These are the frontispiece pages, a lot of the original text material is lost, and as I said we've xeroxed each half so that...I want you to see something because there are two contributors in here that may interest you: they go back as far as 1817, they have gotten out of order they have been over at Special Collections. And they are quite unusual according to the people at Yale and also at our university only from the standpoint that many of them were available but this seems to be an edition in which they are like, some of the plates are trial plates, that is they are efforts to train people how to develop them. The contributors to these things include a number of people that are of the past, and those that are very definitely like this eighteenth century fellow, and then as you get into, say this portrait of Chevreul, you will notice that it says...this portrait was made after nature in 1825. Remember it was Chevreul who was engaged in chemical as well as optical experiments and we have Arago as a contributor to this little manual, and we have a number of other figures...and then we have figures from the past, like Pascal, and we have Rene Descartes...now I want you to look at these things. It is not...these are incredible...this is on the eve of photography. And from this point on I am going to use a metaphor, I am not saying this had anything to do with photography, what I am saying is, this typifies that final moment in which we will say the medium is trying to carry such obsessive detail, such fidelity to the form, and even internal and external

diagrammatic structures defined, droplets of water. And the thing that is going to amaze you is not so much what happens...I want to show you what happens particularly to fish...I carry some of these things out into my backyard and hold them up next to weeds, they are obsessive, they are just so inclusive. Look at these shell structures, these are hand painted. They are not printed, they are hand-tinted, hand-painted. And I want you to see what happens, in the fish for example that is reflective, they are silver-leafed. Hold it up to the light. Go ahead, I don't mind. Do you see what I mean by silver-leafed, gold-leafed, every conceivable kind of, look at the jelly fish, isn't that gorgeous?

Student: That is incredible.

They reflect! They show the use of metallic substances. I want to get one of the fish that will really knock your eyes out. There is one I love because it reappears in the advertisement for *Jaws*, the point of view. Look at these minerals and rocks. See the analysis of fundamental internal and external structures. I said they are refined prints, look at the grasshopper, look at the detail in there, they are hand-painted in every case...Bats, starfish. We were up in Franconia where we found these and I swear to you some of these plants we found on a hike. We brought them back and laid them next to the plates. They are incredible in their definition of detail. Look at these, look at this one. By the way, did you see that one up there? You know those elegant things that I have never eaten, truffles? No, no, that is a puff ball, that is not a truffle. Where is the truffle, it's in here. Look at this one, the way the light changes as you look down into it, it is almost sub-microscopic...look at the light on the berries. And the analysis of the berries themselves. Underwater plants. Here is a truffle. Look at those things, that is the most bizarre thing I have ever seen! {laughter}. And then they show the internal structure as well. I don't know why some of my reflective fish aren't in here, let me find them.

Student: Is this the whole thing?

No, it is half of it. Turkeys, wild turkeys. Skunks. Things from Florida, that is what interests me too...Yes there are shiny elements in that, but there are some of these with gold, silver, copper colors. Look, flatworms, leeches, the entire world categorized and defined in terms of plant life and animal life, and I am telling you it understates one of the most exhausting encyclopedic, here is one...

Student: What are the dates on these?

Between 1817 and 1824...it corresponds where the leafing appears on it, see on the body where it reflects. They are oxidizing so they should be properly protected...Are

these just fine illustrations or as I said, I have been fully informed that this is evidence, it was also to be used for comparative type and to be trustworthy. It is also material that in many cases appears that their coloring drops below the threshold of mark making so it is not syntactical in that sense. Not the engraving.

Student: Could you repeat the sentence about 'the coloring drops below,' I didn't hear it.

Well, the coloring seems to drop below the syntactical mark-making. It is watercolor so it doesn't so it doesn't have marks made, it is continuous. So now what would that be in... We can say it extends beyond Niepce, or pardon me, to the threshold of Niepce, you know, the experiments that are continuous, you might say the last one in 1824...so what does this mean?

Student: On the fundamental level, that is the closest it can approximate until the camera comes, the fact that it goes below the threshold of sight, that it doesn't appear to have a syntax.

That is true, it is on the threshold of what can only occur in camera work, a good hundred years later as it were...not a hundred years, but a good quarter century later. But then you might say today, a hundred years later we will even have micro-photography where we get these internal structures where these little x-ray views of forms, showing sections through the use of the microscope. It is another thing it shows, these are camera-assisted. The obsessive detail of a number of these shows that units were enlarged for camera analysis and the gross form could not have been observed in such detail without magnifiers, things of that nature. So they are all assisted images. When I camera, not necessarily a box camera held in front of a leaf, but lenses and microscopic inspections. So that means something...but what else does it mean, in a very simple way?

Student: But at the same time they are very diagrammatic. They are to reveal aspects that have been determined are the characteristics of...so it is after the fact of observation. It is an educational device.

Right. They are diagrammatic. It is almost like saying the unit is not just to be seen from the standpoint of its appearances, but it also serves as an occasion for breaking down its structure and understanding what its internality is as well as its parts are. So you have another extension of atomism. It is not just to analyze, to see the internal structure, it is also to say, it isn't just the gross appearance in their best views that are being analyzed, but also internal and external structural principles in some cases, or component parts. And that is another thing: the interest in the idea of the threshold

below the obvious. That is a form of atomism, even these diagrams of plants. And notice the entries in Lancelot Law Whyte's essay on atomism that are occurring continuously in the turn of the century through about 1820. Notice what science is doing with the theme of atomism. And that is one where you will have to go downstairs and get that little book out yourself and see what I am talking about. What else does it say? It says another thing. It is the culmination of a tradition. It is not only lens-assisted or magnification-assisted, it shows analysis that out of the knowledge of form and carefully inspected we can also understand, in its mapped, planned diagram form, how something is structured, how we might even look at it in another way. Some of these things on the bottom are the most interesting and persuading images that you wouldn't see that ever, even if you sliced through the form on some occasions in these, you can only see it by assisted vision. And yet at this point we have the strong use of assisting devices, not some clumsy boxlike cubiculum. Or even some room, but there is another thing that is indicated here, and what is it? The use of the medium, remember these are all handmade things.

Student: I was going to suggest something else, that it implied that the world could be contained and cataloged.

It can be contained...it is again like this idea of categorization of the world, even Aristotle talked about the validity of making studies and analyzing things and differentiation. It can be contained, it can be portable, it can be reproducible. They were reproduced, the hand coloring wasn't reproduced, I understand there was a cheaper edition at a later point made of these things, using other reproductive processes. But originally it was like all those women working in the egg factory, (laughs) these assembly line type activities, and they all had jobs, and it just transferred right over to photography. But there is another little simple issue, what is it? I don't know what it is. Would it be possible, I want to ask you the question, to say that this is one example of evidence where the interest and the obsessive interest in providing evidence in a medium that has to be manipulated by a human hand, and may use all sorts of devices to assist the image or even to print or reproduce it, but nonetheless, it is like a stunning example of that *urgency* to try to compete with the possibility of a medium that has been lingering in the air for centuries, that would do the work without the labor. That would do the work and convince us on another level that it has nothing to do, in other words, photographs don't confirm the evidence of things, in fact, I seldom can imagine a photograph until literally about 1950 that can give me that kind of fidelity. And so if people thought photographs were unique, they had a lot of evidence around them, uniquely informative, that was already more informative than photographs. Does this not suggest that this medium wouldn't hold because somewhere lingering behind it, once photography was announced, that now we have *truly* the totally objective insign of the

world. Light does the work, no matter how faithful the image is. And even this wouldn't hold although it is better evidence. And it is interesting how manuals will continue even up to the point of, what is her name at Cooper Union, who still does beautiful botanical specimens, and they are often published in medical journals and things of that nature. I mean botanical journals and so on. But this is as if we have exquisite evidence but it just isn't evidence enough, because it is not enough because it is handmade. And yet the paltry evidence that photography will give us, literally for a good half century, and even into more than a half century, is all we need. Even if the image isn't clear. Can you believe that? Can you? Can you Ruta Silven refers to that first picture taken where ever it is in Kentucky, I haven't seen...or remember it, where the baby is turning, and he makes the big statement about it made no difference whether the baby was turning, it was the record of that child to be sent home to the grandparents, or whatever the illustration is.

Student: ...a need that the photographer fulfills was not being fulfilled through this particular...

And now what was the need?

Student: The democratic nature of the medium, where any person could do it.

That is right, so that is one thing you can say,

And that does not really come through until Kodak...

No it doesn't, but it was already lingering in the air. In other words we say photography had least, in potentia, the possibility that not many people could do that despite the assembly line of specially trained people. And the photograph can be more viable and believable because anybody could do it. So that is one level of it. I would say to you that this {hand colored etching} is better evidence than any photograph until the 20th {century}.

Student: I read just a couple of things about this. Throughout the 19th century, a naturalist would rely on artists and they would hire artists to go with them on their trips and it was not until around the 1940s that photographic reproductions started being used in texts as definitive, botanical or...

That is right. And certainly coloring continues in that way. All of the early expeditionaries required the artist to be a member of the scientific team or what have you.

Student: Do you mean bigger influence or better descriptive information about an object itself?

I would say better information about the object...one thing photography offers us and that is what, no matter how unclear, context. So that is where photography prevails by being able to give us gross context, although not obsessive definition of unit structure.

Student: But evidence...Clearly, no matter how blurry the baby is, having been registered by the unmediated fashion of light.

There you go, that is exactly right. There is the camera's glass eye, no matter how clear, how obscure, how fuzzy, it *is* the model. *This* is the evidence of the shell, but it has to be mediated by human hand and eye. The light is the evidence of the original baby on mother's lap. Be damned if the baby moved its head, it made no difference, it can be excused. The evidence is of light reflecting from that original form, and whatever way it impressed itself upon the plate, what the confirmation is, is not the credibility of the photograph, because photographs aren't credible. It is the light that is credible, that seems to be ensnared, entrapped, or ultimately as we should appropriately say, impressed. And so we fall through the plane of the photograph into the realm of the original subject, and that is the principle. That is why this {hand-colored etching} won't hold, no matter if it is better. It is not better contextual evidence, photographs even do that, but it is better evidence of unit structure or detail. Photographs are better evidence of original subjects, because they seem, as everyone in ontological concerns has said, *this* {hand-colored etching} tends to be a miraculous cooperation of hand and eye, assisted eye. Photographs aren't miraculous in their early development, in the sense that they are *beyond* the miraculous. They appear so magical because we have to relearn again that matter does have its own capacity to in essence reflect upon itself. This {hand-colored etching} can't be reflected, it can't be itself-reflexive. Even that aqua media, or even that etcher's ink, or engraver's ink, is not. It has to be willed. Whereas whatever that light sensitive substance was, it occurred. And what really is occurring is the confirmation of the, when the road is made by light, it is there. When it is in darkness, in essence it is not there. And those are the keys to the related issue between Positivism and Metaphysical Idealism. And there is another issue that you have to bring in and tie into this: and that is the, almost immediately, the *absenteeism* of things like figures. We had that as a very brief moment, just like I said, often there are very brief moments where something will appear and we don't know the effect of it until centuries later. We also find the necessity to subject the plate to destruction through the engraving process, or etching process, and then also the introduction of figures by reproduction, and so on, to repopulate the world, simply because of what, for what reason? Is it to make the scene look more natural or does it also suggest another level?



To make, like in the Moscow scene in Newhall, you know, the etching made of the daguerrian plate into which were added little figures that looked ridiculous. When I do this I show as many as I can as examples of this. Why is that? What makes that impulse? Why do people want to see figures in the scene?

Student: ...To be a part of history.

A part of history. To give it a sense of bringing it from time past to time present...In other words, to couple the idea of the willing act in the present tense as it were upon the image of the past tense. Now if you don't believe I am talking about things people talked about, in the marginalia, I have selected, five or six little images only, I have often used because they are my favorites, but I have a whole folder full, and I will have to bring them up here if you want to look at them tomorrow, these kinds of comments made in the early journals. Most of these I will admit, well why don't you read me something from an early journal, because most of them are from the 50s forward, but I have them from earlier periods, at least in this one. Ok? Talk about light and its objectivity? Its lack of being interfered with by, or not to be interfered with on human terms. This is from *The Photographic News*, published in London, January 8, 1856 {dated 1886 by Aperture article, Winter 2000}: *Light as a Recording Agent of the Past*, by W. Jerome Harrison, FGS...A fellow of the Geographic Society. Now here is a scientist speaking, ok? Watch this coo-coo man. But you will notice what he was...it was perfectly logical that he should think this way, he is not being humorous. This story passed through Europe into America and even reappears in later...and he has a later explication of it. And also earlier entries that confirm the same issue, almost on the immediate announcement of photography you start finding speculations on this objective force called light and how it can cause us to be able to witness things without ever even having to imagine them. "It is a wonderful thought that every action which has ever occurred on this sunlit Earth of ours— or indeed, for that matter, anywhere within the illuminated universe" (even notice the choices of words) "is recorded by the action of light, and is at this moment visible somewhere in space, if any eye could be there placed to receive the waves of light." (The infinitude and the continuity of this magical radiational vibrations, as a scientist would speak of it, you know, energy systems, even by this point) "Light, proceeding from the sun, falls upon objects on the earth, and is in part reflected by them to other objects" (people begin to talk about things that people knew for centuries. And look at the early researches and just the things that were selected for the Arno reprint series, were you really getting the hunt, did you really get into these...notice the way they write about things that they even knew were obvious, but you see they are almost recapitulating them because they think of it as the supreme objective recording device) "Light, proceeding from the sun, falls upon objects on the earth, and is in part reflected by them onto other objects, in part reflecting outwards, passing through our atmosphere, and

thence still onwards, we know not whither, in ever widening waves through the ether.” (This is a related issue of the Great Chain of Being, after all, that object, how is linked now to that ether, to that plenitudinous, indefinable realm, in ever continuous waves of energy. The scientists knew how to refer to it, but it is the magic they are concerned with and also the idea that it is totally objective so therefore they can speak of unusual things without embarrassment) “The velocity with which these light waves travel is almost inconceivable—one hundred eighty six thousand miles per second” (they can even tell you the physics of the issue) “but if we could travel away from the Earth” (now notice this speculation) “with a speed exceeding this, then we should clearly catch up or overtake wave after wave of light. And as we received their impact upon the retinae of our eyes, the facts with which those rays record would become visible, one by one in their proper order, in chronological sequence.” (Get the idea? If you can get out your arm, they are going to start hitting us, now what do you know is going to hit first, the past event, right? And only the most recent will occur last, you see? Now, notice how they mention the recording plate or the recording medium) “Strange, indeed, would be the results of such a voyage” (I left out...light is the recording agent in the past, and speaking of the plate, there is a whole passage that deals with the, if we had the light-sensitive plate) “Strange indeed would be the results of such a voyage. Old men would see themselves as if they were in middle age, in youth; while withered crones might view with regret their former lithe and lovely forms.” (Think of later, we have to get to little Nemo until we get the idea of predictive prolepsis, you know, tell me *Father Time* what will I look like when I am 99? And *Father Time* shows him and he quickly wants to go back to his original period) “Still speeding away from our orb, which would be visible only as a star, we should pass and review the lives of our parents and ancestors. History would unfold itself to us. We should only have to continue the journey long enough to see Waterloo and Trafalgar fought for before our eyes; we should learn the truth as to the vaunted beauty of the Queen of Scots: and the exact landing place of Julius Caesar on the shores of Britain would no longer be a mystery.” (Do you realize what this is saying? That light is so objective it would give us every detail. It also led to, and I didn’t bring all my other vernacular documents, things like, did anyone see you do that naughty act when you were little? And there are religious texts...most recently, remember that woman who sold me all that Christian Science trash I told you about, I love them!...The thing that makes me worry, it shows, in this little booklet, a motion picture screen upon which a projector is showing images of this evil man’s hidden secrets: lusting after another woman if you are married, they have it projected. It shows...slides, photographic evidence. It is all wrong, and purportedly that is what will be revealed. Those ideas don’t persist unless people believe in the credibility of the photographic image, even to 1976) “If we had the curiosity to ascertain, by ocular demonstration, the truth of the Darwinian theory, a still more extended flight would disclose the missing links—if such existed”(You notice, this is still in obedience to the...I

just have to say non-Darwinian, they worry a little bit about the disturbance of spiritual concerns) “By which man passed from an arboreal fruit-eating ape-like creature to a reasoning omnivore. One curious fact would be that all these events would be seen or appear to happen backwards, or in the reverse order of their actual occurrence. We should overtake, first, the rays recording the end of any transaction, then those in the middle, and lastly, we should have revealed the cause, the beginning of the fact.” (By what? Reflective light. That is now the efficient cause of the identity of all things, not the object’s substance, but what light hits it and reflects off: *that* is the efficient cause) “Thus, we should see Charles I’s head roll on the scaffold, then the executioner’s axe would fall; while lastly, the dethroned monarch would be seen to mount the scaffold. In battles we should first witness the warrior’s fall and then behold that blow that caused his overthrow. The kiss would precede the struggle for it: and the marriage would come to our knowledge before the wooing. Photographers can imagine the possibility of the presence of some exquisitely sensitive surface on the bounds of space on which such waves of light might be received and the impression permanently retained.” (Locke! Your wish is here, and now can even be another possibility) “There would be no appeal against such a record, which would reveal, photographically, the history of our lives. The very idea should stimulate us to do nothing that will not bear developing and exhibiting to the gaze of mankind.” So you notice the little moral advisement, don’t masterbate, particularly if the light is on. {laughter} Let’s take another one, this is from later, but it shows you, I chose it from later to let you know it persisted. If you don’t believe it starts occurring right from the very beginning, you have got to read the journals. And don’t read the articles, read the marginalia. There ought to be a book of them, it is a better history than what’s in there in terms of photo-chemistry and optics. This is 1887. Notice some of the peculiar things that still take place and are commented upon. This is from *The Photographic News*: ...”As all kinds of rumors have been afloat concerning the progress of the work in connection with the Panama Canal, he (Lesseps) had a series of photographs taken, and distributed copies among the shareholders who were present at the meeting last week. Seeing was believing, as, of course, photography always tells the truth.” (This credibility issue comes right out of the journals, where people heard it enough and said, sure, photographs tell the truth, they are credible. Notice the edge he puts on it.) “The photographs answered the purpose of reassuring the shareholders, but they must have been as convincing a proof of the ultimate success of the scheme as some photographs of gold-mining machinery which we saw the other day were, that gold would be found in the mine in question.” (And it just so happens to be followed up by saying people started taking artificial images of territories...you know, buy the home in Arizona that you have never seen and that sort of thing. That is a comment on the fact that the photograph can lie so beautifully that people can be convinced to invest. Of course they would have to help in the development of the Panama Canal problem, but he says we still shouldn’t doubt them. Here’s one, July 29, 1887, I took this one from the

same issue. "Photographers may be interested in knowing that Zola" (And by the way these things are written in such small print that I had to get a magnifying glass. This is gossip, but it is authentic, reports of the states of mind of response) "Photographers may be interested in knowing that Zola has included photographs in his realistic delineations." (Isn't that interesting, by 1887, realize he had been doing it for some time) "In one of the earliest of his novels he makes the chief character of the book, a young woman, examine some photographs of well known Parisian beauties and express much satisfaction in discovering in their faces by the aid of a magnifying glass some unknown wrinkles, rough skin, and cavities imperfectly filled up with rice powder." (pox cavities) "Can this bit of realism have anything to do with mania for retouching which has of late years been carried to such extremes?" (Now we don't retouch the face, we can now have and the Routlinger and the Rider in American business, now they retouch the photograph, now the thing can be virtually gone, and retouching can provide the head as it were, if you want to say it that way) "Retouching which of late has been carried to such extremes, the consciousness that the lens would reveal defects not ordinarily visible must have made many ladies fight shy of photography;" (you have read your reports and I have read mine) "Hence the fashionable photographer had no alternative but to try and convince his fair clients that he could compete with the artist's flattering brush." Here is another one: December 31, 1886. I call this when photography began to appear as, like you think of Keith Smith, and you think of various parts of blankets, or in food, the photographs, or in objects and so on, there are wonderful early examples, this is my favorite: "Photography has not yet invaded the Christmas cracker, but we do see why it should not. If the small size of the bonbon be any objection, this will soon disappear, for fashion is setting in the direction of monstrosities, and we read of a manufacturer constructing a bonbon two feet and a half long and a half a foot in diameter. Without reaching the absurd, it would be perfectly within the bounds of propriety to manufacture crackers which would carry mounted photographs of small size, while for unmounted ones the ordinary bonbon would amply suffice. If the host be an amateur photographer, what would be easier or more graceful than to have a print from a negative of his own taking enclosed in each bonbon? Manufacturers are always on the lookout for novelties: why do they not advertise that they are ready to enclose in bonbons photographs which may be entrusted to them?" Some of these people think that they are doing something nifty by putting them on eggs, or you know, need I say more? They are just following a very ancient gesture. 1886 again: "Photography has played a part in grim tragedies in Burma other than the affair of the English Provost Marshall." (Do you all know the affair of the English Provost Marshall? That was one of the most brutal, it is pre- My-Lai. I look for paradigms of when did people start behaving a certain way because of the possibility of photographic evidence. Or do things and they didn't want pictures taken, you know that came up in the Calley trial. You only have the post-massacre evidence and we have the evidence of the purported search for a

camera among the men who were there and who did not join the group. And they were coerced. They said you will be killed if we find any images. In other words the idea of worrying about those who defected from the slaying, and then worrying about the photographic evidence. We all know that it is really about the idea of people saying that they would have to stand still and your spirit will be taken, that is a way to get a man to behave rigidly. And indeed I am sure, a primitive looking at this magical instrument and what results of it, would be virtually that his soul *might* be captured, or even his body. Or he might be made impotent. Good heavens, there are certain words that can be said to certain individuals in the Congo, and they will die because you have taken their spirit. Or there is a certain way that you can look, so what do you think if the camera does it independent of a human look, or human will. But the British marshal, the Provost Marshal, is the...and it happens in the 1885 period, and it extends as an argument over the remaining year. This is when a group of, what do you call mercenaries, who were captured by the wrong side...And they weren't given a fair trial, and yet they are subject to being shot. And here they are still protesting their innocence, it is like the Oxbow incident, they were innocent. But the horrible thing is, the Provost Marshall has them lined up, and the rifles are ready, the crowd is standing there, and he removes their masks and has photographs taken of them before they are shot. These poor pathetic people. Think of Manet and the *Execution of Maximillian*, if you don't think he didn't know the English Provost Marshall incident you are out of your mind. And the second thing is, then he has them, before they ready, aim, he says, 'hold,' the cameraman comes out and takes their picture, and they know they are at their last moment, they heard the command, and then of course when the exposure is made, and it is proved that the plate, the wet plate is there, he says fire, and they are just obliterated. Now that is pretty frightening. And it continues in other reports constantly. That is a famous incident and now people are making a great deal out of it and we know the photographs of...and others were used as evidence for Emperor Maximillian, but that is a later development. You see that whole issue of the idea of photographing the victim before they're shot as evidence, it wasn't necessary, better after the fact, and then Manet tries to show the process in the act of taking place, you know, the smoke and the hands outstretched and so on. Read the description in the 1885 *Photographic News*, it is in every journal I might add, not just *The Photographic News*, it even appears in...as the Provost Marshall Incident. "Photography has played a part in grim tragedies other than the affair of the English Provost Marshal, " (the Provost Incident took place in Burma) "One of the maidens of honor was strangled by order of the wife of Theebaw because a photograph of the monarch was found in the possession of the unlucky girl." (Quite likely, a carte-de-visite...they...in the 60s, they did have a major renaissance in the 1880s, not only in Europe but in America. I proved that in the Schofield project, the carte-de-visite was one of the most popular images between 1883 and 1886, certainly in Connecticut. And it is certainly true in more primitive, when things transfer, like when we

say even today people make tintypes in Australia. Well in Burma, the carte-de-visite was catching up, as it were. Like that, or cabinet photographs...this is no reflection on the past, this is in the 1880s, in that grand and enlightened period of extended Colonialism and so on...and we don't know...but the idea is...did she really think that the maidservant had her husband, or was it that she had *evidence* of her husband? We will never know, but you see this speculation was enough because she had a photograph of her consort, it was enough to put that girl to death, and she was indeed put to death)

"The British astronomical photographers have covered themselves in worry. At the last meeting of the Royal Astronomical Society" (this is 1886 again) "The brothers Henry exhibited some photographs of the planet Saturn enlarged 44 times the original negatives. These pictures show the crepe ring as well as markings on the ball of the planet which are only seen with difficulty through the telescope. Our great authority, Aimsley Common," (anyone heard about the great authority? That's why I said the purported authority, Charles Acres, whenever they wanted to bring evidence they would say, the great authority, or the authority) "Characterized these photographs as 'the most marvelous things we have yet seen in celestial photography as they show there is a great future before us.'" Now again, the idea of extending into space and finding other dimensions to confirm what is credible. And again, through what? Photography, reflected light...now I want to return to another thing: This is very interesting, this is from 1872, I go back very early. I chose the midpoint. Remember you read Kozloff, Cavell, you have heard me talk about issues between painting and photography, and I have showed you almost from the very beginning, the Morris Louis images compared to the Fonteyard image of the sleeping photographer, and the conflict between what does an artist do and what does a photographer do: this argument is persistent, prior to the 19th century, I just want to read a beautiful example of what the artist is involved with, think of Panofsky saying painting begins with the top and then moves to the bottom as well as photography begins at the bottom and moves to the top, that is from earth to the phenomenological principle of light. Bazin and others. "You all know the anecdotes of Gainsborough's answers to the fussy amateur who plagued him so with what he mixed colors. 'Brains,' said the painter." (In our day we all know the answer that Garry Winogrand gave at the University of Connecticut to Beaumont Newhall when he made that snide remark, how long did it take you think of that? One twenty-fifth of a second. Look at his confirmation, not brains, but instrument. That is documented...it is on tape) "And it was one of the wittiest, weightiest truths ever spoken" (now watch this distinction between painting and photography) "It is brains that determines the place and value, not of portraiture only, which I took for illustration only, but all works of art. There is no possibility of producing a great work of any kind, landscape, or figure portrait, or history, not even the still life of a back kitchen, except by first forming an intelligent conception of the thing to be done, and modeling and guiding by that all imitative work that has to be gone through." (Notice, extended time, modeling, all the words that imply the use of

the hand, and also by the fact of the conception of the thing to be done, no work of art can ever be great without brains. Now watch what he says about photography) “Not to be satisfied with slovenly and inaccurate representation,” (meaning you can’t be satisfied with slovenly and inaccurate representation, meaning by that, crude academic drawing and so on) “The influence of photography is wholesome, and its usefulness enormous. As a recorder it is invaluable,” (now look, he is telling you it is useful, it is valuable, it is important) “And not less for the artist than for the traveler, the naturalist, and the archeologist. But one thing it cannot do” (so you see he gives it and then takes it right away. It is important to document in the service of science, and differentiation, and recording place, and telling us what the long ago looks like now, or the place you might visit, it is important for tourism. And we got the establishment to love photography to provide money as evidence, but it cannot do, it cannot make pictures, it cannot {laughs} create works of art) “For that as I have said, a mind is indispensable. Brains are still the only medium for laying colors upon canvas.” This has been debated for a series of issues. I chose this one because it is the one that is extended and it goes hot and heavy for ten years, for a whole decade of every issue, and that is once a week folks {laughter} And in some issues, daily. This is one, and the response, remember that was dated March 15, here is the March 28th response from this gentleman called Albert Dumsday {laughter}. The division of the arts: the marginalia of important material in those journals and not a soul has looked at them with any degree of clarity, only the fellow, what is his name...he did the album and is now in Mexico?

Student: Bill Jay?

Yes, Bill Jay. He has done some work with marginalia but it was more or less centered around specific photographers. If you have never done that. Have any of you looked at the marginalia of all those multiple journals? That’s why I said look at the Gernsheim issue...get over there, it is better than *Mad* Magazine, you won’t put it down. But you better make your appointment and tell them you have to be there 18 hours a day (laughs) They won’t let you, but anyway. “Sir, the division in the arts.” (and they title their responses, it is not like *Time* magazine...they need their little exegesis, or their little debate or little counter, a title, and so on) “Sir, the arts are divided by Doctor Nutall into two classes: one, mental, those requiring the exercise of mind more than that of body. Two: physical, those in which manual labor is chiefly concerned, including various trades and manufactures. Unless the subject is in existence, we cannot so render it. Painting however is quite independent of the existence of things. As the painter produces what is seen by his mind’s eye, while the photographer cannot only render that which is seen by his bodily mind. We may therefore term photography a material art and painting an ideal art.” (Jesus, it takes Panofsky to write an essay as an eminent art historian, people think *that* is the source of the argument. And he calls it by simple terms

like, literally, read it for yourself, painting works from top to bottom—quote, unquote—photography starts from the bottom and works toward the top. Well it now continues on. We are now in April of 1872 {laughs} it goes on for a decade, there are hundreds of them {laughs} I spent a whole summer collecting this stuff. "Fine art, as in contradistinction to mere art" (you see now we have an exception...a couple of months later and find people saying all right, so it is an art, maybe, because there are selection principles, and people say well after all, who cares...what does the work, it is what we observe. So they start making the subjective response the important issue to prove. So now in other words we have fine art and mere art) "Is that particular art which draws its inspiration from the brain, without depending, greatly" (and look, I wish I did have another week (laughs) I may not confirm a damn thing but I have all this reading material but you have to do it yourself, it locks in so beautifully, that one of you is going to write a book on this subject, I'd be bored with by tomorrow and move on to something else {laughs} because I now know it is true, {laughs} That is my problem though, and that is why I teach so I don't have to do the work, I can give it away and somebody else can do it. I don't care, as long as it gets done) "Fine art, as in contradistinction to mere art, is that particular art which draws its inspiration from the brain." (And I don't know, I have to pause here and tell you something, I am getting coo-coo, but listen I love to tell my students these things like the *Twilight Zone*...when these issues when we finally end up and there is nothing but a brain in a little container, you know that kind of stuff?

Student: ...in some soup.

Yes, in some soup. It is the same theme carried to its extension in a vernacular mystery stories. Or like the evidence that is left by heat in the couch...by the instrument called the thermogram, and it proves that the victim was there on that couch by virtue of the heat impressed that was left thirty minutes later and so on. I love things like this. And you can connect it with Teilhard de Chardin, the world is received in spheres, the mind, it is like *Twilight Zone* theology..."Poetry and painting are both fine arts because neither the poet or the painter depend mainly on their mechanical implements." (Now you notice what has happened: here we find this obsessive interest until it is...again, of putting an intermediary between the subject and the painter in order to confirm the objectivity of the world. The minute it is gained, then what do we find? Now they want to take it away! Oh jeez, we outdid ourselves, now where do we count? {laughter} And now suddenly people try to make these distinctions again: let's recall the past. And so all this *constant*, constant nostalgic movements that occur in the nineteenth century: Pre-Raphaelitism, the interest in the antique, and even in arts and crafts, and the interest in other cultures. It is trying to get back to the ideal art where brains were operative. I don't think in Pompeii they had an interest in brains, they were interested in light. And the irony of even in our own time where Neo-Classic painting is not, neo-neo-classic has finally



returned: Paul Georges. And some of the tableau interests returning using the classical mythologins, and people are putting classical mythologies into contemporary dress. Or even I might add, that trying to use the camera as a kind of subject for Photorealism. In a way it is trying to say painting now must even be nostalgic for the world, and now the photograph so replaced...it is the credible image of the world that *it* then becomes, as Plato said, the second reflection of a reflection, but nevertheless gives credibility to the painting.

Student: What about Photorealism? I am not breaking up anything.

You are, I want to continue with this. I have already spoken a lot about that and I will talk to you individually or...tomorrow. I will say this though, I am pointing out an illustration: Photorealism is to define an inanimate world, that doesn't move, according to the people, read *Art in America* and read their interviews and that is what they state, they want an inanimate world. They want one that doesn't have people interfering. They don't want someone yelling at them, they don't want people in the streets, they just want the objects, the things, but they are also accepting illusion as more credible than the actual fact. There is no apparent reason why one could not, see, work from source subject matter directly. They also want something that can be projected quickly..."Because neither the poet nor the painter depend mainly on their mechanical implements. The Poet is not even dependent upon his stylus." {laughs} (I just want to say, that the poet can sing, and the supreme fiction in Stevens would be the conception, not the voice as it were...we have gotten to the point now where even a pencil is like, if you want to prove that you are not depending on the camera instrument you have got to do something that doesn't depend on anything as a support in order to be authentically using your mind) "For he can recite his verses. And the painter is not even dependent upon his brushes and pigments. Shakespeare could have written Hamlet with a skewer and Raphael often employed a mere crayon, yet both produced works of the very highest order." {laughs} "Applying this test to photography, what do we see? (And look, notice how they don't even use words like not what we think about this but they will say, what do we see, and they fall into the trap of the thing that they think has confirmed seeing) "The photographer, whatever may be his talent, depends on his lens, his camera, and his chemicals." (That goes back to what we were saying today) "The art of light drawing is a mechanical application of chemistry upon optics, aided by mathematical appliances. It is the produce of arithmetical thought," (I am not quite sure how at this point in time, because no one is measuring the physics of light and behavioral relationships, in fact we have got things like, in Hunt, what do they call, actons, and there is another word for these little things, these energy packets that are in light that impress themselves upon the plate, like...the actinic power of light...it is *Twilight Zone* stuff, it is brain in the broth stuff. Actinic power. They are understanding

vaguely, radiation wave energy issues) "The art of light drawing is a mechanical application of chemistry upon optics, aided by mathematical appliances. It is the produce of arithmetical thought, rather than imaginative genius and its faculty is to copy, not to create." (And the etymology of the word there is, one is to mimic. But in this case the mimicry, the mimesis, and the source of the mimesis, have become one, by implication. We are no longer dealing with mimetic portrayal, we are dealing with phenomenology, we call it realism, it is the thing itself, the *ding an sich*) "Not to create, to make, to build up, to construct. Fine Art is purely intellectual employing mechanical aid only as Apollo used his bow," {laughs} (oh, thank god I thought I was ruined. I have been using that camera recently to get those figures onto that canvas, thank god I am... like Apollo and I only use the bow to apply the arrow) "Now art of a lower grade," (needless to say, particularly photography) "cannot fashion itself without material assistance." (You see they find it terribly offensive that the world does the work...) "As the steam engine requires boiling water to be of service, photography, therefore, being impossible without its adjuncts is clearly a mechanical art. Or to be more precise, a chemico-mechanical art, but not a fine art in the legitimate sense of that term. Photography should be less an art than nature. It should be reliable to the utmost extreme." (Now what does that mean? Look how he includes that comment: Photography should be less an art than nature. It should be reliable to the uttermost extreme. Those words are italicized in the text, that is why they are underlined. It means that in reality it {photography} is like raw nature, therefore it cannot be art because it is not nature *acted* upon. 'It should be reliable to the uttermost extreme' implies that it has got to also, as a mechanical device, have utter fidelity and include the cooperation of its adjuncts and chemistry, but once the image has fidelity, it can't be art because brains cannot act upon it. It is a world present to us which we cannot interfere with, therefore it can never be art. A world present to us, like nature, which we then record and transform from dumb substances that are elevated, sublated, in their identity as raw materiality and raised to the higher order of mental processes and brains, which make even that miraculous event occur, where its self-UNreflective materials are forced to become reflexive. Finally we have Edwin Cocking (laughs) January 19th of this earlier issue of 1872, it just goes on until endlessly, and by the way I might add, that the conclusion, the thing that really, I mean the editor finally has to step in and say we will have no more of this {laughter} and we cannot solve the question, and who cares whether it is art or not art, and then of course we will have to wait another fifteen years for Steiglitz or Weston or others to start saying that is true. But I think to a certain degree they were affected by this argument very profoundly. And they finally say, they are not saying it gratuitously to let us know, they are letting their community know that they follow these arguments, grand dads, and at least had, and probably mothers and daddys had talked to their sons and daughters who were messing around with this new medium, and they knew the argument. If you wish to paint my boy, you know, there are advisements,

correspondences, like, why go on to photography, why not engage in something worthwhile, like fine arts and idealism. And it is not only until the mid part of the century, the 1870s, that you find that certain gentlemen are very interested in finding a trade that will enable them to picture the world and also seemly escape from very dire responsibilities of having to do hard work... I want to read it to you...{leaves the room to retrieve a book}...Now, the reason I broke in here, there are innumerable evidences, and I found one that relates to an interest I have that I thought best illustrates the point about the, it happened earlier, but the rash of apprenticeships begin to occur in the 1860s where photography reaches a point of measure in which, oh there are a number of examples prior to the 60s, but where it becomes really, from 60 through the 80s, a viable profession to be a photographer. Now one of the interesting parallels is that often, as we know, certain photographers were painters or sculptors prior to becoming photographers. I did a project working with some material of a regional photographer named Everett A. Scholfield. I brought some of these things, you can have them, there are hundreds of them, they are the most grotesquely produced manual that you can imagine. This is typical of a University press, this is what they call their two hundred dollar job, that is all the money we had. This is a handbook for the students and for the people who came to view the exhibition...He is not a master, this is just evidence about how a regional photographer behaved, going through newspapers from literally 1850 to 1930 page by page, I spent three years on just getting a bit of information, now we have a lot more. And *Afterimage* did a nice little article on him which I am indebted to because at least somebody in the world got to see a few of the pictures. At any rate, there is a period where, on regional terms, apprenticeship becomes evident, and Scholfield, by 1876, begins to have not only male and female applicants for apprenticeship, and one man who became internationally recognized as a pictorialist photographer won innumerable awards and in 1922 awarded by Aubrey Emerson, was George Tingley. And also I might add the most recent example of George Tingley's work is the, you know that 'Studio Light' thing that Kodak always puts out, that goes back into the nineteenth century, late nineteenth century, they had two George Tingley's in there and they didn't credit him, so we wrote to them saying it is on the back of the cabinet card, why not reveal the name of the person and so on...by Bill Peterson and myself, and we continue to do this work. I did all of the research exclusively. I have a colleague who found the negatives originally and we worked together for about a month...my interest was trying to prove, at least by the evidence of an individual, the behavior of a photographer, not all photographers, a photographer working regionally, what kind of life, what kind of behavior, what kind of associations, according to whatever evidence I could muster. And it was a lot of fun, and a lot of anguish as well I might add. George Tingley has been a school teacher, it is rather late for an apprenticeship, but he should have been working by 16, but he is now about 19...and his father is getting very upset about his not having declared a life occupation. And as is generally the case in regional

areas, particularly those families who weren't sending their children to Yale or what have you, they were expected to find a viable life occupation. And George really knows nothing about photography at that point and Scholfield is very active and the noted photographer of Mystic and New London, Connecticut, and photographing babies and adults of all ages in endless profusion. Ships, and snowbanks and panoramic views of sea scenes and things of that nature. At any rate, he is also a photographer that we have the evidence of an unbroken lineage of every mode and every technique from 1850. He worked as a late Daguerrian artist, he did daguerreotypes, he learned from his father, who we have now confirmed was working as a daguerrian portraitist. So we have the daguerreotypes, the ambrotypes...tintypes, stereo views, colodians, early glass plate processes, he developed gelatin glass plates, and even to the point where we can see the final snapshot taken three days before his death that he had his son, Carl, set up to take the picture, and it is on modern film as a sort of record. I would love to see a movie made of this man's life. At any rate, it is 1884. "E. A. Scholfield continues business in the same location in Mystic, discontinued partnership with brothers Addison and Edwin D., in Westerly. On January 1, George E. Tingley began an apprenticeship of one year" (now remember I read you a lot of things from 1886 about these arguments, one other thing I want to call your attention to: Scholfield drew, and we have a very first letter, I don't want to get into Scholfield, I just want to illustrate the extremes. Now here is a man who is stationed right outside of Washington, DC, he "served during the Civil War as a Private in Company B, 9th Regiment, Rhode Island Volunteers, stationed in Washington, DC for July and August." That took me a year to get. {laughs}...Here he is getting a letter from his girlfriend, Mattie E. Clarke..."Friend Everett, I presume you have some very gay times out where you are stationed. I suppose you will not have many weeks longer to guard the old fort, but you must take good care of it and not let any of those rebels get within gun shot of it" (I always think with a sort of irony that a rebel did the research...they use terms like you-all, and use the old Virginia phrase...) "but you must take good care of it and not let any of those rebels get within gun shot of it. I rather think you will be glad to return home when your three months are up. I guess your father and mother will be pleased to see you home. Mother was up to Westerly last week. She called at your house and also at the shop. Your father had not quite forgotten how to tease anyone for a picture. Mother sat for a picture and was fortunate enough to get a very good one, the best she has ever had ever taken, in my opinion." (Now I might add that all these correspondences all in some way refer to photography...) "Everett I think you are a very good artist, you've done nicely on drawing. If I could do one half as well I would be very much pleased. It gave me a very good idea of your situation out there" (there is also this strange image about people associating the photograph with themselves, notice this line) "Then you really have got Lizzie out there, I don't know what she will say when she finds out that her picture is away down south. I expect my face is out at Manassas, if it has not changed its position recently." (It is also one of the

on the spot records of another one of Brady's bands, who was it, Gardner or O'Sullivan, who was it when his cousin writes him and says) "Dear Cousin, they tell me you have been in the Army. If you have I suppose you know what it is. If you could have seen our company when we came out and could see it now you would not know it. When we came out we had 93 men and now we ain't got but about 23, but where they have gone to is more than I can tell. We have it pretty hard here now for we have to go on picket every other day" (and all the spelling is done in the original...it is charming material) "and we have to go about three miles over the worst road you ever see, but I think we shall have it harder pretty soon for we have had eight days ration dealt out to us and I think old Hooker is going to make a great strike in front of Fredericksburg, for he has got his pontoon bridges laid both above and below there" (and all you have to do is go down to your own Resource Center and look at the two photographs that Nathan retained of the pontoon bridges, and out of the great collection, ten volumes of the Civil War, it is there) "You must give my love to your father and mother, don't forget to keep a good share for yourself and if it is convenient, I would like you to send me your picture."

"Dear Cousin:" (here is the man now writing in the aftermath of battle, and notice his introductory line, talking about conventions and their persistence despite the event of the existential experience) "it is with pleasure that I seat myself to answer your welcome letter" (as he sits under a tree, you know, wounded trees at Gettysburg) "I've got your picture and grandfather and mother was very much pleased with them, I think they look very much like you all, to use the Virginia phrase. We had a pretty tough time of it down in Fredericksburg but they did not either kill me or wound me nor I don't think they will if they let me have my way about it. I tell you Cuz, if you never was in battle you can't form no idea of it, for I tell you it is a bad sight to see your comrades falling all around you and you expecting yourself to go every minute. I would not wonder but Westerly is dull place now but I would really like to come there...I suppose you say you want me to send you my picture, but is it impossible for the gallery" (and remember this at Stafford Court House, Virginia, and *hundreds* of photographs are taken, the gallery, and that was definitely Brady's gallery) "for the gallery that we usually had with us has left us now and there is no chance for me to get it taken. But the drum is beating for roll call and I shall have to close by bidding you good night." (how about that for a Faulknerian image? "I will send you a small piece taken out of a fellow's leg that was wounded down in Fredericksburg." (laughter) I use that, see I didn't want to extend this reading...now keep in mind we are talking about the 1860s, we are talking about a correspondence that talks about a man being an artist, he could draw, and he did draw quite well. Not very dramatic images, but little houses and landscapes and so on. And we found that material. We also know that here is a man who has learned photography from his father and is in essence learning how to behave as a photographer as his life proceeds. And we also have the photographing referred to in charming ways...I guess my face is now down in Manassas. With her brother, that is who it is, I thought maybe, we had the idea

it was his girlfriend, but it is her brother. Or else the idea of the charm which people refer to, I was very much pleased with your picture, your dad hadn't forgotten how to tease anyone for a smile, these marvelous images of the directorial mode and the objective mode and things like that that are struck all through these letters. Well they are the human modes. And then we have George Tingley coming on the scene. As little school teacher in Stafford Springs, Connecticut, at age 19, living a very comfortable life but his father feels that a school teacher, after all, in the 1880s, were not considered very eloquent people...considered rather trifle and worthless, particularly for a young man because they weren't making money in the wave of this Industrial Revolution. So here is George talking about beginning his apprenticeship, luckily this man kept a journal, and I found them: "Selecting My Life's Work:" (that is the title of it, written in neat little pages of yellow-lined paper. And if you don't think it is hard to find something like this, it is not just all in the family. We found stuff, it was like God blesses us...Can you believe during the course of this project, a journal I needed came to me and Bill Pearson said, well, you are right, we are blessed, because a woman just walked in here and she said, I read in the *Mystic Log* that you had some information on Schofield. He had written a thing about dating Schofield, dating photographs, because this is material that I got from my brother who picked it up out of a fire when George Tingley's studio burned in 1936 or something. And she had kept it in her attic all this time and she just remembered she had been up there cleaning, and she had no connection with the place, Schofield's studio which later Tingley occupied, burned. Out of the ashes this man clutched these ledger books, takes them by to his brother, and they were supposed to have been delivered to Tingley and they never got there. She walks in, what, forty years later, they turn up right in the course when they were needed. You see you can even be blessed in research. (laughs) That is not apocryphal, that is true. There were hundreds of things I learned, I was almost frightened) "Selecting my life's work:" (and look at the inflation, look at the difference in attitude, look at the opportunism, and look also at the, well you might call it the sensible nature of a person who should look out for their life and do the things they want to do, even if they want what you would think of not requiring much energy and not much labor but still be able to engage some kind of respectable field. By this point the photographer is respected) "The inevitable recurring topic will bob up as to what line of vocation or trade or business I would prefer to follow as a means of earning enough to enjoy the necessities as well as some of the pleasures of life." (and you know some people say they just want a job) (laughs) "Father was profoundly interested and anxious, so much so that as to now and then question me on the subject. I did not know the answer. Evidently he had investigated many avenues of approaches in search of the right profession, he came home with his first selection out of a clear sky and asked, how would you like to become a boat builder?" (Keep in mind that fathers were subjected to considerable embarrassment by their community if their sons had not found a respectable profession, and trades were respectable in a small

regional community. And I might add that fathers were also considered to be derelict in their duty if they did not even identify a trade for their sons, it wasn't that, go west young man and find your way, the world is your oyster, how do you wish to deal with it. It was a question that you were supposed to define pretty much by parental edict, but you had to give an opportunity to make choices) "How would you like to become a boat builder? It was a nice, clean trade that paid three dollars per day, the largest sum payable at that time for ten hours labor. Quite true, but not for me, who had nothing mechanical in my makeup. A week later he proposed a vocation of a locomotive engineer as another high salaried position. Again I said no, telling him that it was altogether out of the question due to my inability to shovel seven tons of coal in a sixty-five mile run. This labor was required of a fireman while studying to become an engineer. Again, it was an apprenticeship to learn the trade of a machinist and I said, 'why Dad, I can't even sharpen a jackknife correctly.' Finally he came home bringing a half dozen photographs which had been copied from an old daguerreotype of one of our relatives by the local photographer, E. A. Scholfield. After showing them to me" (and this is where, if you don't know where you trace your interest into photography, watch the way this guy explains his origins) "I can't even sharpen a jackknife correctly. Finally, he came home bringing a half dozen photographs which had been copied from an old daguerreotype of one of our relatives by the local photographer. After showing them to the family he said to me, 'I have had quite a long talk with the man who made these copies. Inquiring if he was willing to take you as an apprentice, and teach you the business, he said yes, but under certain stipulations. What do you say, how do you feel about it?' " (you see Scholfield says yes under certain stipulations and he asks his son) "Slapping my hands together in joyous approval I said that is just what exactly what I wish to be, his probings had finally hit the nail so squarely on the head as to cause me to exclaim, Eureka! SELAH! The first condition of the contract deals with date and duration. My services will begin January 1, 1884 and continue for the term of a year. The reason," (now you know, it interests me to find out what seasons were, did the Christmas season have a higher rush for people to give gifts, yes." (You know, photo images, even a Christmas cracker image {laughs} Oh that is true, Scholfield made images for Christmas cookies) "The reason, January was the dullest month of the year, December was the busiest. The intervening months would give time for me to become more proficient and therefore of more assistance to him during the holiday season, at which time it was most difficult to keep up the Christmas rush. Second and final condition: for our apprenticeship I was to receive no pay for my services. My education must be considered as ample compensation. Did that scare me? Not on your life I said, quote, OK Dad, if you can board and clothe me during that year" (you know he is inter-speaking so he puts in quotes) "It cost him, my board, lodging and thirty dollars worth of clothing to start me on my successful life's work of 55 years at the same location in my home village. This business record of longevity has never been equaled in local history. Beginnings at

studio: the new year found me promptly on hand and anxious to assume such duties as were to be expected of one aspiring to become a photograph-ist. I was shown a bucket of water and a mop; also carefully instructed in their use, in cleaning both the floor and the windows.” (To keep down the chemicals, dust and everything else from those gelatin plates) “Though this menial task did not check up with my pleasant dreams of service, the boss commended my work and said he thought my chances of becoming an artist were excellent.” (Scholfield knew the difference even though he called himself a photographic artist, that was necessary for the period. See that is where you had to pretend you had brains operative in this mechanical art that used all instrumentation as adjuncts to this definition) “A nice pat on the back.” (for my mopping and cleaning) ”I am winking one eye, at you, gentle reader. It soon became apparent that there were many chores that I could perform in addition to the book-keeping. The details of the business were gradually acquired so that when the holiday rush was on, my aid was appreciated. At the end of my first year it required great persuasion on my part to obtain his consent to keep me another year at \$3.00 per week. At the expiration of this second year we entered a partnership that lasted for eight years.” And this man really became internationally renowned through the apprenticeship with Scholfield. Scholfield became less and less renowned because he could not make the transition, which was common, and I remember another influence upon my childhood. Because people who used to drive by my house, in the Depression, in carts and wagons, and often photographers would come by to take your picture. In the post-Depression, I don’t mean in the Depression, in the 30s. And it is in the late, Scholfield dies in 1930, but there was a turn of the century...Lesy mentions a great depression in 1885 in the rural communities of the Midwest, and he talks about the depression at the turn of the century, it may be, you know, the grand epoch...at the same time of Scholfield, as Tingley is in innumerable... exhibitions and international salons and getting correspondence from London, and from Emerson and others, and congratulating him on his awards. And winning prizes in New York, and things of that nature. Scholfield was traveling around with his cart studio, drawn by the old horse ‘Willy,’ and just enough to keep the food on the table. And then things turned well, in almost about three years, and luckily his portrait business is bought in New London. The building was torn down but the last successor in the practice, because there were two women...pardon me, an individual who purchased it first who was a... commercial photographer who worked not so much in portraiture but did work for businesses and so on...and the last two are two women who studied photography working with some of the original equipment in that studio, which I think is interesting...well here is that last statement: “Photographers should study by all means to cultivate latent tendencies to art theory so as to be in a position to judge for themselves the truth of the work done by the hand and the ...of truth done in their chemical production, else, the good which is in photography will stand a chance of being swamped by being overlaid by incompetency. Hand labor, either from good or



bad, requires considerable outlay of time and cannot be reproduced so frequently as the scientific production of the photographer.” (This is like a statement that one need not be ashamed, may I have that back for a second {Scholfield catalog} Here is Scholfield having sent his work to *Wilson’s Photographics*, and I will read you what *Wilson’s Photographics* has to say to him about the problem between brains and mechanical concerns, and it falls on the same date as this argument, in the 1870s) “In November he entered photographs in competition sponsored by the periodical, *The Philadelphia Photographer*, possibly for representation in Philadelphia Centennial Exhibition of 1876...Unfortunately negatives and prints did not arrive in time for consideration.” (although we later found there was a small exhibition available of late received material, this is from Benerman and Wilson, publishers, *The Philadelphia Photographer*, to E.A.S., November 30, 1875) “Dear Sir: Yours of the 24th are at hand, and the pictures also received. We are sorry you were not in time to get your negatives in for competition. They are much better than some we have, and are very creditable indeed. With so slow a light as you mention we are quite surprised that you should have been so successful. A good light, good appliances, and good tools of any kind are a great help in producing good work, but we have long since found” (and I might add, recently found in this sense) “but we have long since found that these are only secondary. The main-spring of all excellence is in the photographer himself: and many do fine work in spite of numerous difficulties which surround them. This is a good school, and often prepares a man to meet and overcome many troubles that may arise when he comes to be more favorably located. You have our best wishes for your success,” – and so on. This argument ended when it can no longer be differentiated, is it art or is it mechanics. What occurs then is the definition of a development that, obviously, where individuated psychic aims will become much more important than collective aims in the use of the photographic medium. And the sense that, I would say even centering upon our own time, where certain types of manipulations, junctures, polychromes, the addition of materials that I mentioned over and over again: all seem to be embellishments that have, to my mind, the interest in *regaining* the world. To push the extended metaphor: brains back upon that absent, past-tense phenomenological simulacrum of light. Whereas others seem to be pushing it toward the admission of using instrumentations that prompt a credible, phenomenological image such as lasers, holograms, Kirlian images, even if they don’t come out with a readable image, in other words, something that deals with the further extension of the validity of the phenomenology of light. There are those that rest in between that say they are satisfied with the issue of camera work. They don’t care about the issues of past tense, or of phenomenology, or of brains, or mechanics. And I would suggest to you though that photography is brought to bear to the most urgent issues that faces us, it is not a mission, like I started by speaking of it as a tragic form, at least insofar as it gathers today. If we think of Kobe Abe’s *Box Man*, if we think of the withdrawal back into the box that confirms the world. We know better

now, but at least if we withdraw into that seventeenth century notion that the world is only credible if we are in isolation in our own laboratory, in our furthest step, in our cubiculum. Or in an even further step, we are now inside the camera again like Athanasius Kirschner's little man, not even drawing anymore, simply existing inside that box, fragile as it may be, destructible as it may be, enabling us to see the world through those little thin scrims that hang from the back...

End reel 11-B.