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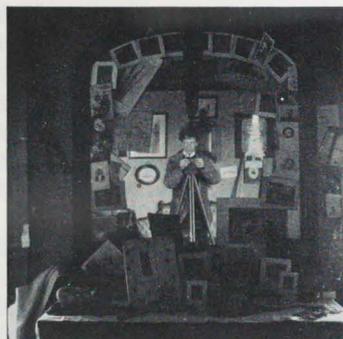
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Visual Communication



"Francis L. Cooper"



"Man with the Movie Camera"



"Imitation White Man"

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Life vs. Art: The Interpretation of Visual Narratives

Larry Gross

In 1974 Sol Worth and I published a paper, "Symbolic Strategies," which presented the outline of a theory of interpretation—the assignment of meaning to objects and events. The questions we focused on in developing that theory centered on the peculiar properties of visual images. Although our paper addressed the general issue of how humans assign meaning, in retrospect it is clear that we were primarily concerned with visual images in general, and film or photographic images in particular. The basic question that we were asking might be put this way: What can we know from these images, and how can we know it? (Worth and Gross 1974).

Interpretive Strategies

We felt that the first step toward an answer was to draw two basic distinctions in describing interpretive processes. We began by making a distinction between those objects and events that do, and those that do not, evoke the use of any strategy to determine their meaning. Most of the objects and events that we encounter in life are interpreted "transparently," in the sense that we "know what they mean" without conscious awareness of any interpretive activity. We generally respond to their presence (or absence) in a way that indicates (analytically) that a process of tacit interpretation has occurred: our behavior has been affected in some fashion by the presence (or absence) of some object/event; we simply have not needed to "think about it." Such tacit interpretations range from our "unthinkingly" extending our hand to open a closed door to our ability to drive a car along a familiar route while absorbed in conversation or reverie.

Worth and I used the term *nonsign-events* to identify the events that we ignore, or code "transparently." The objects and events that do evoke an interpretive process, we called *sign-events*. However, we continued, these are not predetermined or fixed classes. Any event, depending on its context and the context of the observer, may be assigned sign value. By the same token, any event may be disregarded and not treated as a sign.

Larry Gross, Professor of Communications, University of Pennsylvania, is Co-Editor of Studies in Visual Communication and Associate Editor of the forthcoming International Encyclopedia of Communications.

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The purpose of this first distinction, therefore, was not to isolate two kinds of objects and events in the world, but to distinguish two ways in which we respond to objects/events (or their absence). Having made this distinction, we turned to the ways in which sign-events are interpreted. Our second distinction was between those sign-events we called *natural* and those we called *symbolic*.

Natural events, as we used the term, are those that we interpret in terms of our knowledge (or belief) about the conditions that caused their occurrence (or nonoccurrence). The meaning of these events for us can be said to derive precisely from those existential conditions. The events are informative about the stable or transient conditions of the physical, biological, or social forces that determined their existence and configuration. The important point here is that, while we assign meanings to such events on the basis of our knowledge (or belief) about the forces that caused them to exist, we do not see them as having been caused (to any important degree) *in order* to convey those meanings to *us*. Therefore, while they inform us about those factors that we assume have caused their occurrence, we do not sense a communicative intent behind them—at least, not an intent to communicate to us as observers.

Natural events may be produced by either human or nonhuman agency. However, the signness of a natural event exists only and solely because, within some context, human beings treat the event as a sign. If I observe a tree bending in the wind, my knowledge of meteorology may lead me to interpret it as a sign of a coming storm; my interpretation would be based on my knowledge of the forces that caused the event to occur.

Similarly, I may decide that a person I observe on the street is a former member of the armed forces because I notice that he has very short hair, very erect posture, and walks with a slight limp. In this case I would be basing my interpretation on stereotypic knowledge of the factors that might result in this configuration. Of course, I could be mistaken. The point is that I would be treating the features I attended to as signs that were informative about stable and/or transient attributes of the person I observe and of their interactions with the situation in which I observe that person.

In contrast, symbolic events are those we assume were *intended* to communicate something to *us*. Further, we assume that these events are articulated by their "author" in accordance with a shared system of rules of implication and inference. That is, they are determined not by physical or psychological "laws" but by semiotic conventions. To assess a sign-event as symbolic is to see it as a "message" intended by its "author" to imply meaning(s) that can be inferred by those who share the appropriate code.

If I were to observe, for example, that the man I saw on the street, in addition to having a crew cut, erect posture, and a slight limp, wore a lapel pin that read "V.F.W." (Veterans of Foreign Wars), I could then draw the inference that he was, in fact, a veteran and, moreover, that he was communicating rather than merely manifesting this attribute (I leave aside the obvious possibility of deception).

Worth and I called the interpretation of natural events *attribution* and the interpretation of symbolic events *inference*. The former term was adapted from the area of attribution theory within the field of social psychology. Originally developed by Fritz Heider in the 1940s and revived in the 1960s by Harold Kelley (1967) and others, attribution theory focuses on the process by which individuals interpret events "as being caused by particular parts of the environment" (Heider 1958:297). However, our use of the term attribution as a label for the interpretation of natural events is narrower than that used in social psychology because we limited it to those interpretations that do not assume authorial intention.

Although I have been speaking as though natural and symbolic events could easily be distinguished from one another, we were aware that this is not always the case and were particularly interested in those events not obviously and easily defined as natural or as symbolic. We were interested, that is, in what we termed ambiguous-meaning situations.

Most of the time there is little difficulty in deciding whether an object or event that we notice is natural or symbolic. Most people who observe the wind bending a tree outside their window and decide to take an umbrella when they go out would not think that the wind or the tree was "telling" them that it might rain. Similarly, if we meet someone who speaks our native language with a distinct accent, we may attribute foreign origin to the person but are unlikely to decide that the accent was intended to communicate the speaker's origin; however, if we find out that the speaker migrated to our country many years before, as a young child, we may wonder about that assessment.

When we encounter a symbolic event, on the other hand, we are likely to see it as intentionally communicative. We usually have little difficulty recognizing such events as communications addressed to us as individuals or as members of a group, provided that we know the code.

One further, important clarification. We were focusing on the perspective of the person who observes the sign-event and interprets it. A sign-event is communicative (in this sense) *only* if it is taken as having been formed (to an important degree) with the intention of telling something to the *observer*. That is, if the observer is watching two people converse and knows that they are unaware that they are being observed,

their conversation, while a communicative event for *them*, is a natural event for the observer. It was not intended to tell the observer anything, so it can only be seen as informative about the speakers' stable and/or transient characteristics as revealed in that situation. It is also very important to note that no behavior occurring in public can be taken as totally noncommunicative. For example, certain aspects of the observed event, such as the participants' clothing or hairstyle, might be assessed as being "messages" addressed not just to the other participant but to the "public" at large; these aspects might then be assessed as symbolic vis à vis our observer as a member of that public. All public behavior, in this sense, no matter how noncommunicative in intent (as felt by the actor or assumed by an observer), can be seen as taking place within a framework of symbolic codes governing potentially observable behavior (many of which have been elucidated at length by Erving Goffman).

Visual Mediation

With all of these concepts in mind, we turn to the events we encounter, not through observation, but through photographs or film. Here we find the situation to be more complex, and more interesting. The point of the exercise Sol Worth and I were engaged in, really, was to develop a way of dealing with the interpretation of visually mediated narratives (although mediation also occurs through words and paintings, and so forth, film mediation is the most ambiguously "transparent," therefore the most interesting case).

In our 1974 paper, we made the suggestion (supported by empirical studies) that there is a learning process by which we come to know how to interpret symbolic events such as films. At the simplest level, we merely recognize the existence of persons, objects, and events in the film and make attributions about them based on our stereotypic knowledge of such things in real life. With somewhat more sophistication, we can see relationships between objects and events that are contiguous in time or space: they go together. The crucial step, next, is to see this contiguity as the result of an intention to tell us something—to see it as a sequence or pattern that is ordered for the purpose of implying meaning rather than contiguity to more than one sign-event and having the property of conveying meaning through the order itself as well as through elements in that order.

The final stage of this hierarchical process occurs when we recognize the structure of a sign-event; that is, we become aware of the relations between non-contiguous elements and their implicative possibilities: the beginning and end of a story, variations on a theme, prosodic patterns, and so forth.

When we witness events through the mediation of film, then, the interpretive strategy we adopt will depend upon whether we think the events occurred "naturally" in front of the camera or were made to happen by an "author" who wanted to tell us a story. Between these two "extremes" there are numerous possible assumptions we might make about the origins of the mediated events we encounter. Our knowledge of the mechanics, conventions, and genres of filmmaking will set the limits within which our assessment of a particular set of events will occur, and upon which our interpretation and response will depend.

Table 1 will help us distinguish among the most prominent types of filmic mediation. The upper part of the table summarizes the distinction between directly observed events that in our judgment are not intended to communicate to us, as observers, and those cases in which we do believe that the actor/author(s) did intend to "tell" us something, through the articulation of conventional means of signification. The lower part of the table offers a parallel model of the assessment and interpretation of mediated events, but in these instances it becomes necessary to include as a conditioner of our assessment and subsequent interpretation our knowledge (belief) about the mechanics and circumstances of the mediation itself.

Before proceeding to discuss the levels of mediation outlined in Table 1, it might be useful to note that we are accustomed to taking into account other forms of mediation than the mechanical ones involved in

film, photography, television, and so on. In the simplest sense, any account of events we did not observe ourselves involves the mediation of a witness. Our dependence upon the verbal mediation of events we did not observe is a foundation of human culture, and we are all accustomed to "seeing through" verbal (and gestural) accounts to the extent of feeling that we know about the form and meaning of much that we will never know directly. Our legal system provides one of the most formal manifestations of our faith in the veracity of verbal mediation: we are willing as a culture to decide the fate of accused persons by depending upon the ability of eyewitnesses to convey through words to others who were not present "the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth" about events they observed.

Similarly, the institution of journalism derives much of its legitimacy from our willingness to grant to the written or spoken account a degree of transparency that, while easily exposed as a genre of narrative verisimilitude no less conventional than fiction, nonetheless gives us the illusion of knowing "the way it is."

In literature the dominant Western narrative conventions are those of realism and psychologically grounded naturalism. By the end of the nineteenth century readers were accustomed to stories that "informed" them about the ways of the world, and the constancies and vagaries of human nature, by giving them, in Zola's phrase, a "slice of life" as it is really lived.

Table 1
The Interpretation of Sign Events from the Perspective of an Observer

	Observer's Assessment	Status of Event	Interpretive Strategy
Directly observed	Not intentionally communicative	Natural—informative	Attributions about "actors"
	Intentionally communicative	Symbolic—communicative	Inferences about intended meanings
Mediated	"Invisible mediation" Not intentionally communicative	Natural—informative	Attributions about "actors" Inferences about mediator's intentions in recording, editing, exhibiting
	"Unobtrusive mediation" Mostly not intentionally communicative	Natural/symbolic Informative/communicative	Attributions + inferences about "actors" Inferences about mediator's intentions in recording, editing, exhibiting
	"Media events" quasi-intentionally communicative	Natural/symbolic Informative/communicative	Attributions + inferences about "actors" Inferences about mediator's intentions in recording, editing, exhibiting
	Scripted, staged fictional	Symbolic/natural Communicative/informative	Inferences about intended meanings Attributions about author/actors' intentions and abilities (try/can)

Film and television are placed, almost entirely, squarely within this realistic tradition. However contrived their plots may be, their stories appear to take place against a backdrop of the real world. These visual narratives seem to enjoy a privileged status as "objective" representations, often supported by editing and other structural conventions, which give them a persuasive power beyond that of written narrative or live theater. To a marked degree the inherent verisimilitude of film derives from our beliefs about the nature of the technology of photography and film and our generally limited understanding of the mechanisms of filmmaking.

Film Forms

The levels of mediation in Table 1 reflect some of the most familiar genres of filmmaking and can thus be used as a means of illustrating the interpretive strategies with which we assign meanings to filmed events. When we are shown events recorded on film, we need to decide whether they were (among other possibilities) (1) "captured candidly" as they unfolded naturally in front of the camera, with the "actors"—those whose actions we observe—seeming not to know they were being filmed; (2) photographed unobtrusively, so that, although the "actors" knew about it, the filming was done in such a way that they "almost forgot" they were being filmed; (3) filmed "live" as they unfolded in front of, and to a large degree for the sake of, the camera; or (4) scripted, staged, and directed by an "author" working with actors.

If we settle on the first alternative, we are most likely to feel justified in making attributions about the persons in the film (their characteristics, their feelings, their relationships, etc.). We may feel that we are essentially in the position of an unobtrusive, possibly invisible observer of the actual facts, and possessed of most of the information that would be available to such an observer (this feeling would be greatest when viewing sound/color film), watching people "caught in the act of being themselves."

There are of course relatively few occasions on which "invisible" cameras record the behavior of "actors" who are aware that they are being filmed. Among the most typical examples of such recordings are the films taken by ceiling-mounted cameras in banks, department stores, and gambling casinos. Although many of those who enter these establishments presumably are aware that they are being filmed, it is probably safe to say that almost no one who does not have a "professional" interest in the practice (from either side of the law) would take the presence of the cameras into account and modify his or her behavior accordingly. In other words, the camera—and the viewer of the film—is in the position of

an observer of events that can be assumed not to have been shaped by any intention of communicating to the observer; that is, natural events that can be informative about the attributes of the "actors."

But the viewer of such a film is not in exactly the same position as the camera that recorded the events; there are other factors in the interpretive equation. If we are shown a length of film taken with an "invisible" camera, while we might reasonably view the behavior of the "actors" as unintentionally informative, we can have no such confidence about the behavior of the mediator. That is, we have reasons to wonder why (1) the film was shot, (2) these particular segments were selected, and (3) they are being shown to us. Even taking an example such as the camera in a bank, where we readily understand why the film was shot, and do not assume that anyone intended to "tell" us anything through the film (other than the identity of a bank robber, should one appear), we are still likely to wonder why *this* particular segment was edited out and why it is being shown to us. In other words, while we may believe that people may act completely "naturally" in front of an "invisible" camera, we also know that intentional choices govern the making, editing, and exhibiting of *any* film.

Documentary Styles

We do not often encounter films that fit the exacting criteria of "invisible" mediation and "actors" who are unaware of being filmed. Much more common are films made by visible but unobtrusive filmmakers (camera operators often accompanied by sound recorders), who attempt to fade into the background and thus minimize the impact of their presence. In such situations we will be less confident in making attributions about the "actors" than in the case of "invisible" mediation, since we will feel that the behavior we observe was somewhat constrained by the subjects' knowledge that they were being filmed; that is, their behavior may be less informative because we know it is at least in part "messageful." The "actors" must be presumed to be controlling their "presentation" to the filmmakers (and thus to the viewer of the film) through choices of commission and omission that reflect communicative intent.

The typical practice of documentary filmmakers, particularly in the "direct cinema"/*cinéma vérité* tradition (see Barnouw 1983, for a discussion of these related schools of filmmaking), rests on the belief that "actors" who have become accustomed to the presence of the camera will revert to a state of relatively natural behavior and simply "be themselves." In fact, it has even been suggested that "the presence of the camera [makes] people act in ways truer to their nature than might otherwise be the case" (ibid.: 253).

A pioneer of direct cinema, Robert Drew, described the arrangements for his 1960 film, *Primary*:

I settled on a young senator, John F. Kennedy, running for President in a Wisconsin primary against another senator, Hubert Humphrey. I told both Senators that for this new form of reporting to work we would have to live with them from morning to night, shooting anything we wanted to shoot, day after day.

They could not know or care when we were shooting, and that was the only way we could capture a true picture of the story. When Kennedy raised an eyebrow I said, "Trust us or it cannot be done." Kennedy agreed. Humphrey agreed. [Drew 1982:19]

This account illuminates several important components of documentary film practice, which are described as follows by video documentarian Julie Gustafson:

... (W)e spend as much time as possible with our subjects so that they will feel as comfortable as possible with us during the taping period. Although we recognize the influence of our presence, we never interfere in the natural flow of events by, for example, asking the subjects to do things over again for the camera. ...

Finally, to create a powerful and attractive story, we use conventional dramatic techniques of filmmakers and playwrights to finally structure our program to draw our audience in. We structure our shooting around strong individuals and clear action. We also, in editing, use the classic methods of dramatic introduction, exposition of the problem, and denouement. [Gustafson 1982:63ff.]

Gustafson's approach to documentary demonstrates the mixture of presumably natural behavior on the part of "actors" and the obviously communicative intentions of the filmmakers in choosing what to film and how to edit and structure the resulting narrative. Clearly, it will be appropriate to regard the final product as a story we are being told by the filmmakers, based to an indeterminate degree upon the "reality" of the participants' dispositions, motivations, and circumstances. However unobtrusive and sincere the filmmakers may be in their attempt to capture the way things were, we are faced with a narrative constructed within the conventions of dramatic realism.

Some documentary filmmakers respond to the inevitability of participants' "reactance" and their own use of narrative conventions by including "reflexive" devices in order to alert the audience to the fact that they are watching events that are to some degree "unnatural." Gustafson again:

A... distancing device is to include glimpses of the mechanics of the shooting process in the final work, a practice derived from the techniques of both *cinéma vérité* and American direct cinema. We may tape ourselves setting up the lights and thereby see the effects of our presence on the subject's life. We also include shots of the microphone or other equipment so that the viewer occasionally sees the complete reality of the scene. [ibid.: 64]

Other styles of documentary filmmaking avoid the inclusion of explicit reflexive signals and even encourage the participants to collude in maintaining the illusion of invisible mediation. The film *Salesman* by the Maysles brothers can serve as an illustration. Barnouw describes the making of the film:

The main characters of *Salesman* were four door-to-door Bible salesmen. The principle focus came to center on one—Paul. With approval of the company they represented, the Maysles brothers accompanied them on their selling efforts. The salesmen obtained names of potential customers at community churches. At the time of the home calls, the Maysles sometimes started filming as the salesman knocked. They would shoot and record the opening talk at the front door. Then the salesman would introduce the Maysles, and one of them would explain: "We're doing a human interest story about this gentleman and his three colleagues. And we'd like to film his presentation." (The word "sell" was not used.) Usually the reply would be: "Oh, a human interest story. OK, come in." Very few people declined to be filmed.

Once the Maysles were inside, there was seldom an obstacle to continued filming. Since the salesman was really performing, it was easy for the Maysles to become relatively invisible. Afterwards they would ask the customer to sign a release. Only one refused. [Barnouw 1983: 241]

The film does not, however, include any scenes in which potential customers seem to be aware of the presence of the filmmakers—even when they first answer the door and are confronted with a salesman accompanied by a cameraman and a soundman—and several scenes suggest that the Maysles induced the customers to "reenact" their behavior, as the invitation to the salesman to enter the customer's home is sometimes shot over the customer's shoulder from inside the house. In other words, participants who have not had the opportunity to become accustomed to the presence of the film crew (as stipulated by practitioners of direct cinema) are nonetheless encouraged to "role-play" their "natural" behavior in front of the camera. The basic rule of such filmmaking is to discourage the participants from looking at the camera or speaking to the filmmakers, and to edit out any instances in which they do so.

An interesting exception to this "rule" of documentary filmmaking is the genre of "personal" documentary (often autobiographical, usually family-centered), in which the filmmaker is a major participant in the

real-life events being depicted. A good example is Ira Wohl's *Best Boy*, a film about the filmmaker's retarded cousin in which Wohl's relationship to the participants is a major concern of the film, and in which the "actors" frequently are shown to be interacting with the director and the film crew. Such films might be seen as "professional home movies," in which private lives are presented to public audiences.

Conversely, "amateur home movies" might be categorized as a special genre of documentary filmmaking aimed at private audiences; in them participants are often encouraged to role-play "naturally" in front of the camera. However, as Chalfen (1975) has shown, home movie "actors" rarely obey the injunction not to look into the camera. Instructive manuals on home-movie-making often prescribe strategies much like those adopted by direct cinema documentarians:

To capture them un-self-conscious and relatively uninhibited, your best bet is to plan your shooting for occasions when your intended subjects are engrossed in some sort of activity. [Quoted in Chalfen 1975: 92]

But Chalfen's analysis of actual home movies revealed a different pattern:

(1) There is a lot of waving at the camera . . . (2) Very frequently one sees people, especially children, walking directly toward the camera, sometimes directly into the lens . . . (3) There is an extraordinarily large amount of staring into the lens of the camera . . . (4) People will strike a pose or present a "camera-face" for an operating movie camera. [ibid.: 98]

Media Events

While documentary filmmakers tend to focus on dramatic moments in the lives of their subjects, and home-movie-makers are drawn to "special" occasions (holidays, birthday parties, vacations), none of these is properly seen as having occurred *in order to be filmed*. Media events can be described, conversely, as "natural performances" that occur in the real world in large part, if not entirely, in order to be seen (simultaneously or subsequently) by viewers who are not present at the event.

The most frequently seen examples of media events are those produced by individuals and groups engaged in political activities. Those who are in established positions that confer on them the power to command media attention will use conventional forms such as ceremonial events, press conferences, and speeches to reach audiences far beyond those assembled in front of them. Often they will engage in

public activities—touring factories, talking on street corners—primarily to attract media attention and gain audience exposure. Those not blessed with "official" status are usually required to engage in "unofficial" but equally conventional means of obtaining such attention: marches, demonstrations, civil disobedience, and so forth. In all of these acts the "actors" are primarily motivated to convey messages to audiences that will only observe the event *if* it is transmitted, and will only know it as it is shown to them.

Political ads on American television represent a highly evolved genre of seemingly naturalistic media events in which candidates are filmed on location, in live interaction with "real" people. Many hours of film may yield just the right thirty or sixty seconds of image-enhancing "character revelation."

Fictional Film

It may be only a short step, in many respects, from media events to staged, scripted, truly fictional narratives, but the distance between these levels is significant. For when we are dealing with the interpretation of events that have been "authored" as well as mediated, we have to recognize a different set of opportunities, constraints, and conventions from those we take into account in the case of more or less natural events.

The interpretation of fictional narratives calls upon our knowledge of dramatic conventions. These conventions may be nearly the same as those we use in interpreting documentary narratives (and consequently might lead us to similar interpretations), and this is not surprising. We have seen that documentary filmmakers utilize dramatic conventions drawn from fictional genres. It is equally true that naturalistic conventions in fiction aim precisely at evoking attributional stereotypes in order to convey "lifelikeness" to characters and situations. Culler describes the operation of naturalistic fiction, which grounds its conventions in such attributional stereotypes (although he speaks of novels, the point applies at least as well to film):

Citing this general social discourse is a way of grounding a work in reality, of establishing a relationship between words and world which serves as a guarantee of intelligibility; but more important are the interpretive operations which it permits. When a character in a novel performs an action, the reader can give it a meaning by drawing upon this fund of human knowledge which establishes connections between action and motive, behavior and personality. Naturalization proceeds on the assumption that action is intelligible, and cultural codes specify the forms of intelligibility. [Culler 1975: 142ff.]

However, the interpretations need not be the same; fiction is not invariably faithful to the naturalism of "general social discourse." We may "know" that the cowboy in the black hat is the villain without also believing that anyone we see in real life wearing a black hat is a bad guy.

The function of genre conventions is essentially to establish a contract between writer and reader so as to make certain relevant expectations operative and thus to permit both compliance with and deviation from accepted modes of intelligibility. [ibid.: 147]

The parallel between written and visual narratives should not be extended too far; there are significant ways in which film and video must be distinguished from stories we read in books and even from those we see acted onstage. Although there are many important differences among these media, I am here concerned with the fact that films invariably present us with a wealth of potential sign events that we are more likely to see as natural than as symbolic. Image/sound recording presents us with "segments of reality" that include many elements which are not reasonably taken as having been created or articulated by the author(s) for the purpose of conveying meanings to us, but which are taken to be, simply, real. Although there are striking examples of films that utilize unmistakably artificial sets—I am thinking particularly of early, stagey films like *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* and *Metropolis*—the vast majority of fiction films anchor their verisimilitude in the appearance of real-world settings.

This apparently inescapable aspect of film—the camera throws a net which indiscriminately gathers whatever is before it (or so many viewers believe)—can be discerned in a filmic form of the "general social discourse" Culler describes. In a revealingly naive example of inappropriately attributional interpretation, film critic Roger Angell congratulates the makers of *Kramer vs. Kramer* for their attention to naturalistic detail:

There are a great many New York vistas and street corners and storefronts in "Kramer vs. Kramer," but instead of our getting that intrusive little thrill of participation we usually feel when we spot something familiar in a movie, we are more subtly and deeply satisfied here, because the places help us know the people in the movie—people we have come to care about. When Billy Kramer cuts himself badly in an accident in a Central Park playground, I instantly thought, What's the nearest hospital—Lenox Hill? Take him to Lenox Hill! And Ted Kramer sweeps the boy into his arms and runs to Lenox Hill Hospital. [Angell 1979: 81]

Although I presume Angell is sophisticated enough about film not to have called out advice to characters on the screen, neither he, nor presumably his editor at *The New Yorker*, realized that the filmmakers would hardly have been directing their work at an audience of upper East Side Manhattan residents who could properly appreciate their skill at "Getting Things Right," as Angell's review is titled.

It is quite possible, of course, that the authors of *Kramer vs. Kramer* were attempting to achieve the sort of detailed verisimilitude Angell so admired. But whether or not they consciously intended to do this, the response to their film evokes the echoes of debates over the nature and scope of realism and naturalism that raged throughout much of the nineteenth century. Although the authors of realistic and naturalistic novels were frequently accused of attempting to mirror the world unselectively, the accusations were bitterly denied.

A contemptible reproach which they heap upon us naturalistic writers is the desire to be simply photographic. We have in vain declared that we admit the necessity of an artist's possessing an individual temperament and a personal expression; they continue to reply to us with these imbecile arguments about the impossibility of being strictly true, about the necessity of arranging facts to produce a work of art of any kind. . . . We start, indeed, from the true facts, which are our indestructible basis; but to show the mechanism of these facts it is necessary for us to produce and direct the phenomena; this is our share of invention, here is the genius in the book. [Zola 1880]

In his book *What Is Art?*, Tolstoy criticizes the sort of imitation Angell admires:

The essence of this method consists in rendering the details which accompany that which is described or represented. In the literary art this method consists in describing, down to the minutest details, the appearance, faces, garments, gestures, sounds, apartments of the acting persons, with all those incidents which occur in life. . . . It is just as strange to value the production of art by the degree of its realism and truthfulness of details communicated, as it is to judge the nutritive value of food by its appearance. [Tolstoy 1897]

In defending themselves against the charge of indiscriminate imitation Zola and other novelists were concerned to distinguish the craft of realistic writing from the "mechanical" naturalism of photography. The writer, de Maupassant argues, recognizes the necessity of selection and composition; thus,

(T)he realist, if he is an artist, will seek to give us not a banal photographic representation of life, but a vision of it that is more vivid and more compellingly truthful than even reality itself. [de Maupassant 1888]

Photography itself, however, was less easily exonerated from the accusation of excessively exhaustive realism. In his famous review of the Salon in 1859, in which photographs were first admitted to the exalted company of officially sanctioned art, Baudelaire denounced the public for its acceptance of photography:

... (T)he current credo of the sophisticated public, ... is this: "I believe in nature and I believe only in nature. ... I believe that art is and cannot be other than the exact reproduction of nature. ... Thus the industry that could give us a result identical with nature would be the absolute form of art." A vengeful God has granted the wishes of this multitude. Daguerre was his messiah. And now the public says to itself: "Since photography gives us all the guarantee of exactitude that we could wish (they believe that, the idiots!), then photography and art are the same thing." [Baudelaire 1859]

Interpretation and Aesthetic Evaluation

As this discussion begins to indicate, the "mechanical naturalism" of film not only influences our interpretation of the narrative but also has consequences for aesthetic appreciation and evaluation. Aesthetic evaluation is greatly influenced by the audience's assessment of the skill and control exerted by the creator(s) over the medium. That is, we appreciate those elements of a work that manifest the artist's successful realization of intentions (see Gross 1973 for a fuller discussion of the relation between competence and aesthetic appreciation). When we encounter elements of a work that deviate from the conventional, we often try to determine whether the deviation results from a successful intention to do something unconventional (and we then will ask whether the innovation is aesthetically pleasing) or whether it reflects the artist's failure to achieve the conventional (in which case we are unlikely to be favorably disposed toward the artist and/or the particular element).

This process of assessment and evaluation parallels the attributional analysis Heider ascribed to the "naive psychology of action":

... (C)an and try are the conditions of action. Thus, our reactions will be different according to whether we think a person failed primarily because he lacked adequate ability or primarily because he did not want to carry out the action. [Heider 1958: 123]

The interpretation and aesthetic evaluation of film narratives thus involve attributions about the authors that consist of our assessment of their intentions and their ability to realize those intentions. But, as I have suggested, the nature of the medium creates particular complexities and ambiguities for such assessments. Because the "raw material" of film includes real people and, often, segments of the real world captured on film, we are less able to determine the boundaries of the artists' control and thus the degree of their aesthetic accountability. This point can be illustrated in the case of actors as well as "authors." Again, a somewhat naive film critic gives us an example; this time it concerns Peter Bogdanovich's film version of *Daisy Miller*:

I knew that I'd been moved by the film, disarmed by its surprising wit and, particularly, that I'd admired Cybill Shepherd's Daisy. But for all that, I could not honestly tell whether or not Cybill Shepherd could *act*. What she had done in the film to embody Daisy's ingenuousness and enthusiasm had seemed so unconscious, even accidental, that I could with no confidence decide whether I had been responding to Cybill Shepherd's characterization of Daisy's gaucheness or simply to Cybill Shepherd's own gaucheness as an actress.

Was Miss Shepherd a thoughtful performer or merely a shrewdly-selected actress caught, held and defined by a director's camera-eye? ... We are left not knowing whether she is in control of her performance, whether she knows what she is doing. [Kareda 1974]

When viewing documentaries, we often are worried that the participants' "naturalness" has been contaminated by their desire to present a particular *persona* to the camera. In fictional films, the opposite dilemma faces the viewer who fears that the *persona* depicted may reflect the actor's "real" self rather than a crafted characterization. This dilemma is confounded by the commercial practice of "type casting," in which actors are repeatedly cast in roles that call for similar attributes, thus depriving audiences of the benefit of "control comparisons" across films.

The evaluation of film directors' skill also involves our notions of which elements in the work are attributable to the filmmaker and of the extent of the filmmaker's accountability for all the elements in the film. As we have seen, Peter Bogdanovich may receive credit for choosing an actress who "naturally" embodies the personality required for the character of Daisy Miller, but only, presumably, if we do not give Cybill Shepherd credit for skillful acting. Because films are so often shot on location they tend to include parts of the real world as background. Does the director deserve credit for the scenery? Does John Ford deserve congratulations for the beauty of Monument Valley, the backdrop for many of his westerns, or merely for having chosen the location and photographed it so

dramatically? Reality, in other words, may become an aesthetic component of film art beyond the conventional level of "general social discourse."

The issue of authorial accountability can be briefly illustrated by the example of color. As color came to replace black-and-white as the standard for films, audiences learned to expect and accept it as "truer to life" and thus as part of the "natural background." In this sense color is rarely a "sign element" of film, and directors are not given credit for the successful achievement of transparently realistic color. There are instances, however, in which color has been used as a semiotic component in film. One of the earliest, and still best, examples is the *Wizard of Oz* (directed by Victor Fleming, 1939), in which the opening and closing scenes in Kansas are in drab black-and-white and the central portions of the film—the Land of Oz, with its Yellow Brick Road and Emerald City—are in Glorious Color. The dramatic impact of this symbolic device must have been particularly impressive for audiences as yet unfamiliar with color in films. Although the manipulation of film color has become more common as a framing device (e.g., an opening in sepia under the titles turning to color as the film begins, which tells us we are going from past to present), few directors have attempted to use color as a semiotic component throughout a film. A rare exception is Antonioni, who attempted, unsuccessfully I feel, to use color as a sign vehicle in *Red Desert* and *Blow-up*. In *Blow-up*, Antonioni let it be known, he had the grass painted a brighter shade of green for a crucial scene in a park, thus taking credit, but also becoming accountable for, aspects of the real world not normally included within the scope of authorial control.

Conversely, a filmmaker may be given credit inappropriately when the viewer mistakes the author's skill at invention for one at finding appropriate elements (for a discussion of "making" vs. "finding" as aesthetic criteria, see Shiff 1982). For the last time, a naive film critic will provide us with an example of attributional error; in this instance the critic is praising Fellini's *Amarcord*:

I can not resist describing the scene that has stayed with me longest: when the insane son climbs to the top of a tree in the early afternoon and starts screaming at the top of his lungs, "I want a woman!" After an entire day of this, the family sends to the asylum for help, and who arrives? A midget nun (where does Fellini find these people?) whose face we never see, who briskly climbs the ladder to the tree and returns with the maniac in tow. [Ledeen 1975: 102]

Ledeen's mistaken belief that Fellini "found" something he undoubtedly "made" (perhaps it should be noted that we have no evidence that the person we see is a nun or even a midget; it could easily have been a young boy wearing a nun's habit) illustrates the point that, although events encountered in "life" and in "art" may look the same, we need to make different assumptions about the forces determining their occurrence and configuration. Because the conventions of art may be drawn from the "general social discourse" of cultural stereotypes, the conclusions reached may be the same. In order to decide whether an interpretation is attributional (the observer is assessing the event as "life"—a natural event) or inferential (the observer is assessing the event as "art"—a symbolic event), one needs to know the grounds on which the conclusions would be justified. If asked *how* we know something we have concluded about an event we have observed, we might say that we have based our conclusions on what we know about the way such things happen (attributional interpretation); or we might say that we know it because we are assuming the event was made to happen that way in order to tell us something (communicational inference).

The tendency to see documentary films, and often fictional films, as objective records of events rather than as a filmmaker's statement about events derives from a confusion of interpretive strategies: the unsophisticated assumption that filmed events can be critically interpreted as "natural." What such viewers fail to understand is that *all* mediated events are to some degree symbolic. The mediating agent always makes decisions—about what to shoot (and, consequently, what not to shoot), and how; and, having shot, about how to edit the footage; and, finally, about when, where, and how to exhibit the edited film. Moreover, the participants in a film are rarely, if ever, just "caught in the act of being themselves."

A sophisticated viewer will recognize that the persons, objects, and events in a film are there, at least in part, because the filmmaker included them intentionally; that the sequence of events in the film has been ordered by the filmmaker's intention to say something by putting them in that order (which may not be the order they actually occurred in); and that the overall structure of the film reflects the filmmaker's intention, and ability, to use implicational conventions in order to communicate to viewers competent to draw the appropriate inferences.

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Francis L. Cooper, Spruce Hill Photographer

Jay Ruby

Introduction

American photography experienced rapid and intense change between 1890 and 1910. Dry glass-plate negatives, flexible roll film, hand-held cameras with simplified operating mechanisms, prepackaged chemicals, and platinum printing papers became readily available. Two major shifts in photographic practice occurred during this period: the public recognition of fine-art photography and the emergence of snapshotting.

In some ways, both were a reaction against the domination of the field by professionals. As technology was simplified, people became interested in taking pictures for themselves. Some wanted family portraits and a record of life around them; they became snapshotters. Others desired an aesthetic recreation and became avocational artistic photographers.

Some amateur artists formed photographic societies and camera clubs. Popular magazines of the day extolled the virtues of the amateur and at the same time decried the restrictions placed upon the art of photography by commercial demands (Black 1887:152).

The Photographic Salons at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts (1898–1901) played a central role in the public acknowledgment of photography as a respectable art form (Panzer 1982; Homer 1984). "Amateurs" such as Alfred Stieglitz used the first salon to demonstrate the importance of the medium. By the final salon, a split had occurred between conservative members of the sponsoring organization, the Photographic Society of Philadelphia, and a group that called itself the Photo-Secessionists.

The amateur photographer, popularly portrayed as a symbol of aesthetic freedom, was now the enemy of the Photo-Secessionists. The "old school" photographers in Philadelphia, their "dilettante" followers, and the hobbyist snapshotter, were regarded as impediments to the development of artistic photography.

Jay Ruby is Co-Editor of Studies in Visual Communication and a member of the faculty at Temple University. His research interests include the ethnographic study of visual communication and the communication of complex thought through visual means.

Recent scholarship suggests that the conflict between the "new" school of Photo-Secessionists and the "old" school of Philadelphia naturalistic photographers centered around power and control of the salons (Panzer 1982; Aronson 1984:21). Ironically, the naturalistic style of the old school photographers came back into vogue almost as rapidly as it fell out of fashion: "... the work of these unfashionable photographers now provides an essential link between the representational photographs of the 1870's and the sharp-edged, purely photographic style which arose after the Armory Show" (Panzer 1982:22).

During this period, many photographers apparently unknown to later scholars produced artistic photographs that were seen by people who never attended a salon or participated in any other way in the art world of the famous photographers. These amateurs, if discussed at all in the literature, are portrayed as "naive" or folk artists who unwittingly produced "masterpieces"—the Grandma Moses of the Brownie!¹ Their work for the most part has been regarded as unworthy of serious study.²

This paper is not a polemic against the dominant art paradigm in the history of photography. Rather, it is an examination from the perspective of cultural history of the life and work of an amateur Pennsylvania photographer, Francis L. Cooper.³

Cooper practiced photography in the 1890s and early 1900s in Philadelphia and rural Pennsylvania. He was a witness to and participant in one of the important revolutions in photography. His life demonstrates the ways in which shifts in photographic practice affect society.

A Biographical Sketch

Francis L. Cooper, son of a career naval officer, was born in Philadelphia in 1874. His family had been in the import-export and railroad businesses prior to the Civil War. He spent his childhood in a middle-class rowhouse near a trolley line that took his father to work at League Island naval base. Cooper's immediate family all died before he was fourteen years old. He lived with his father's relatives in various parts of the city and in suburban Narberth until he moved in 1901 to Spruce Hill Township, Juniata County, Pa., where he spent the next forty-three years.

Cooper entered the University of Pennsylvania Medical School in 1892, and for the next eight years he studied medicine. In 1896 Cooper began visiting the Charles Milliken farm in Pleasant View, Pa. (approximately 150 miles northwest of Philadelphia) to hunt, fish, photograph, bicycle through the countryside, and enjoy the pleasures of rural life. It was a chance to experience the "good" life—something that

was impossible without leaving the "Ruhr of America," as Philadelphia was called (Burt and Davies 1982:471). Cooper's retreat to the countryside was a commonplace experience for many middle-class urbanites who wished to live out the fantasy of what Schmitt (1969) calls the "Acadian Myth."

Love of the natural world and its related pleasures inspired Cooper to return again and again to the Milliken farm. During his visits, Cooper took photographs of the Millikens (Figure 1), scenes of rural life (Figure 2), and landscapes of the surrounding Tuscarora Valley (Figure 3).

Cooper's attraction to the Milliken farm and its environs was not confined to the scenery. He courted Gertrude Crawford, Mrs. Milliken's cousin, the daughter of a local physician. They took bicycle trips on the backcountry roads where Francis would photograph (see Figure 12). A "wheeling" excursion into the countryside to capture a landscape or a scene from a farmer's life was a dominant reason for many city dwellers' interest in photography.

During the next four years, Cooper divided his time between Philadelphia and the Milliken farm. In the city he took family snapshots, documented the various rooms in which he lived (Figure 4), and produced records of events like a fire at Eighth and Arch Streets (Figure 5). He took pictures of his medical school friends and their work at St. Agnes Hospital (Figure 6). He also made self-portraits (Figure 7) and scenes of city life (Figure 8).

Cooper's involvement in Juniata County became so strong that he eventually left city life forever to live among nature and the rural folk. In 1900 he married Gertrude Crawford. His decision set him apart from the majority of his social class who believed "that the ideal life is that which combines something of the social and intellectual advantages and physical comforts of the city with the inspiration and peaceful joys of the country" (Schmitt 1969:4).

Cooper never finished medical school and consequently did not practice medicine. By 1901, about the time of the birth of his first child, Cooper moved to a farm in Spruce Hill (not far from the Milliken farm). He became a country squire and was employed in a number of part-time jobs: justice of the peace, tax collector, clerk at public auctions, storekeeper, clerk at a nearby steel company, draft registrar during World War I, wallpaper hanger, and occasional professional photographer.

Four interests dominated Cooper's life: the sporting life, reading, photography, and music. The values Cooper acquired growing up in a comfortable middle-class world placed a high priority on these avocational interests, assigning them as much importance as the practical matter of earning a living.

According to his obituary, he was one of the best-read men in Juniata County and maintained an extensive library—the novels of Horatio Alger and Alexander Dumas and nonfiction works about Napoleon. He also had a collection of popular art—prints purchased at the Wanamaker store in Philadelphia (e.g., "Masterpieces of the French Salon of John Wanamaker's") and Sunday Supplement lithographs. Cooper owned the *Victrola Book of Operas* and a collection of Sousa marches and would treat his family to a concert of recorded music after the evening meal.

Cooper was a competitive shooter through his adult life. In fact, guns were the longest lasting of his pastimes. He took many pictures of himself (Figure 9) and others with guns (Figure 10). Most photos of Cooper show him as some sort of sportsman (Figures 11 and 12). His studies of birds and fish (Figure 13) are excellent examples of the way in which he combined his involvement in the sporting life with his interest in photography as artistic expression (a point to be discussed in some detail below). A December 9, 1899, article from the *Narberth Local News* entitled, "GUNNING AND PHOTOGRAPHY. Mr. Francis L. Cooper is successful at both," nicely sums up a point of view that Cooper shared with many people: that competitive shooting and photography were both worthwhile avocational pursuits.

Mr. Francis L. Cooper, one of the crack shots of the University of Pennsylvania Gun Club, is not a stranger to Narberth. He has not only been a resident of the borough, but he still makes weekly trips to visit relatives. Mr. Cooper has just returned from a gunning trip to Juniata County, where several days were spent in the exciting sport. He had considerable success in filling his game bags having individually shot one wild turkey weighing nearly twelve pounds; 19 quail, 1 rough grouse, 8 rabbits and 6 squirrels. One of his pictures took a prize in the recent photographic contest of *The Philadelphia Inquirer*. He also figured as an exhibitor in the Wanamaker display. His fine pictures in the latter exhibition attracted the attention of the United States Commissioners to the coming Paris Exposition, and Howard Rogers, Director of Education and Social Economy, has just addressed a communication to Mr. Cooper, requesting that he send to the Commission [to be exhibited in the special American Photographic Display in the Paris Exposition] two of his best pictures—"Pusher on the Horseshoe" and "The Blacksmith Shop." There [*sic*] two triumphs of the camera had won universal admiration from the visitors to the Wanamaker contest.



Figure 1 *Charlie and Lil (Milliken) in stand in grove. Summer, 1898.*

◀ **Figure 2** *Untitled. Two men sawing lumber.*



Figure 3 *Near the Mouth of Milliken's Run. Tenth prize, 1899 Philadelphia Inquirer Contest. Also Wanamaker Exhibition entry no. 739.*

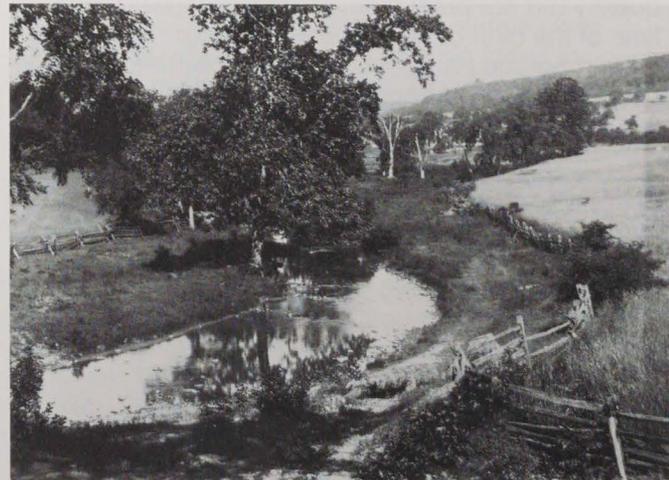




Figure 5 *Spring 1900. Fire at 8th and Arch.*

◀ **Figure 4** Untitled. Interior of Cooper's room in Philadelphia.

Figure 6 Untitled. St. Agnes Hospital.



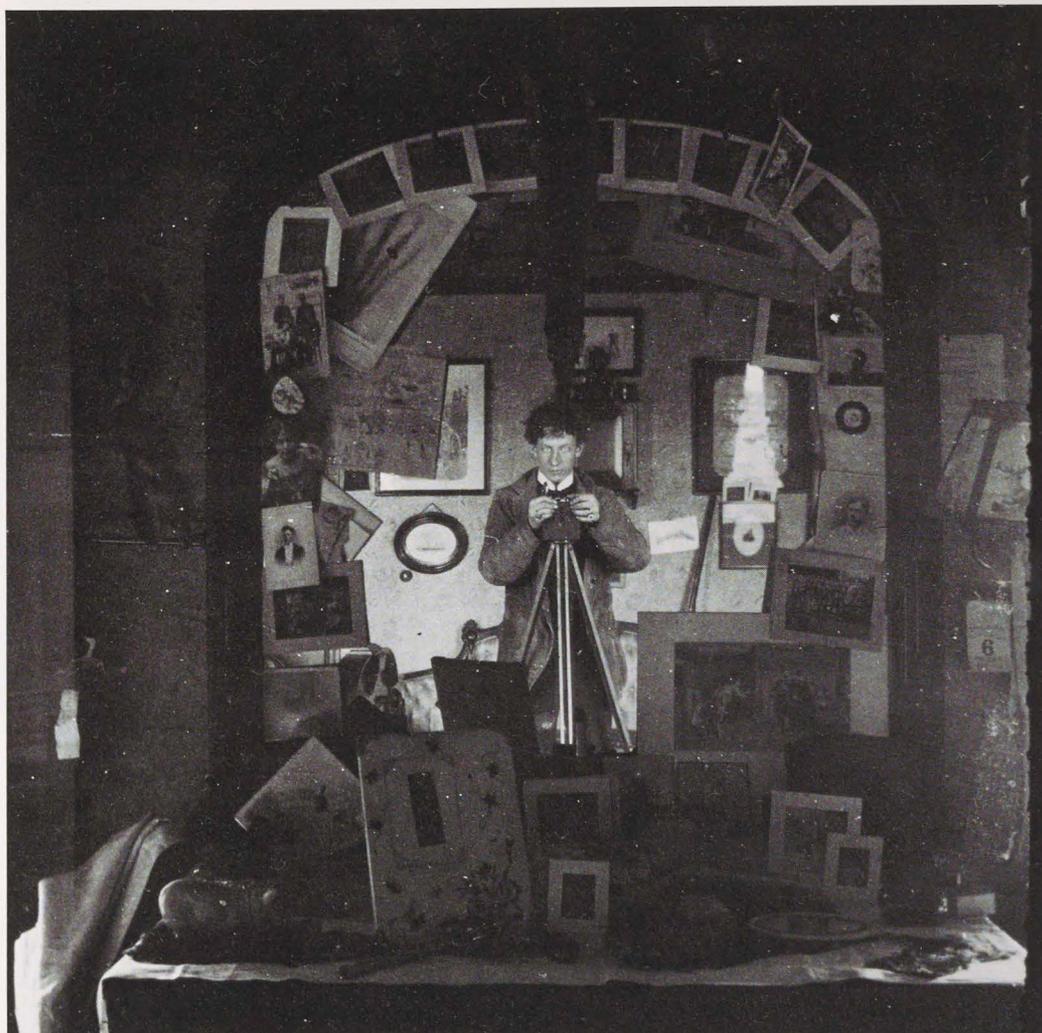


Figure 7 Cooper 1622 (South Broad Street, Philadelphia). Self-portrait.

When and why Cooper took up photography is unclear. He could have learned the rudiments in school since it was common to teach the principles of photography in physics and chemistry courses. Unlike many amateurs, Cooper did not join local organizations such as the Columbia Photographic Society (located in North Philadelphia near where he grew up) or the venerable Photographic Society of Philadelphia, nor did he apparently have much contact with other photographers.

The lack of evidence of Cooper's involvement with the photographic worlds of his time makes it impossible to know where he learned the photographic conventions he utilized. His photographs strongly suggest that he did have a knowledge of artistic photography. His collection of lithographs and prints clearly indicates a general interest in the visual arts.

While there is some evidence of a beginner's technical incompetence and a preference for the informal snapshot, his early photographs display a range of interests remarkably similar to his later work, regardless of the sophistication of his equipment. It is clear that Cooper's upbringing and education created a cultural template that provided him with a sense of appropri-

Figure 8 Untitled. Buggy in snow on Broad Street.





Figure 9 Untitled. Francis Cooper.



Figure 10 Untitled. Gertrude Crawford Cooper in Milliken's stand with gun.

ate subject matter and form. Landscapes, self-portraits, genre, and still lifes are all to be found among his first photographs.

Between 1895 and 1898 Cooper owned or had access to several roll-film cameras: an 1895 Pocket Kodak, a Folding Pocket Kodak, a Kodak Bullet, and a Kodak Bullseye Special No. 2. They are among the first flexible-film box cameras produced for the snapshot. Cooper, like many others, used these simple devices to produce artistic images.

Cooper also owned a Tele Photo Cycle Poco—a 5-by-7-inch glass-plate view camera intended for the serious amateur. "Cycle" in the camera's name refers to the fact that it was promoted as a "wheeling companion"—a camera to be taken along on bicycle trips. Cooper did just that. Francis and Gertrude took the Poco on their outings to the countryside (Figure 12).

Cooper developed his own plates and roll film and printed his own pictures. He used Eastman and Stanley plate negatives, Eastman roll film, Hydrochinon developer, and Eastman Solio, Azo, and platinum papers. He had a darkroom at his farm in Spruce Hill and in his cousin Nell's home in Narberth.

For one year (1899–1900) Cooper entered the world of competitions and exhibitions. His photographs were displayed in three events—the 1899 John Wanamaker Exhibition of Photographs by Amateurs, the 1899 *Philadelphia Inquirer* Photographic Contest, and the 1900 Paris Exposition—events undoubtedly created as a result of the excitement generated by the Philadelphia Photographic Salons.

The Photographic Society of Philadelphia and the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts sponsored the first of four salons in October 1898. They were to be of great importance to the future of photography (Homer 1984:3).

In 1899 the *Philadelphia Inquirer* started a column devoted to photography in its Sunday halftone section where salon photographs by Alfred Stieglitz, F. Holland Day, Clarence White, and Gertrude Käsebier appeared. The newspaper was responsible for thousands of people—perhaps more than ever before in the history of the medium—seeing fine-art photogra-

phy for the first time. It was an exciting time for anyone interested in artistic photography.

The advent of halftone reproductions of photographs enabled popular magazines to publish what their editors called "artistic" photographs. The images tended toward "Girls in Greek robes, sentimental genre scenes, and portraits of beautiful women" (Panzer 1982:13). The publication of photographs like F. Holland Day's *An Ethiopian Chief* must have come as somewhat of a shock to the *Inquirer's* readership.

During the 1899 salon, the *Inquirer* ran a contest for amateur and professional photographers (probably the first for the newspaper). Hundreds of people entered. The paper published the names and samples of the contestants' work in its Sunday photographic column. The contest judges were Harrison Morris, director of the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts; William F. Rau, professional photographer, officer of the Photographic Society of Philadelphia, and organizer of the salons; and Otis F. Wood of the *Inquirer* staff.

The contest attracted a wide variety of talent. Edward Curtis, well-known photographer of the native American, won first prize. Francis Cooper won tenth prize for a landscape of the Tuscarora Valley (Figure 3); he received a letter of congratulations, a check for \$5.00, and his name and winning photograph in the Sunday halftone section. Cooper was able to have the same picture exhibited publicly.

While the *Inquirer* was running its photo contest and the second salon was in progress, twelve photographs by Cooper were selected for the 1899 John Wanamaker Exhibition of Photographs by Amateurs, including the *Inquirer* contest winner. (Figure 15 shows the entry form. Figures 3, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, and 21 were among the images exhibited.) Cooper's photographs constitute the only evidence of the exhibition, which was neither reviewed nor mentioned by Philadelphia newspapers or photographic journals.

It is possible that the purpose of the exhibition was to obtain photographs for a United States exhibit at the 1900 Paris Exposition. At least in Cooper's case, this was the result. On November 24, 1899, Cooper received a form letter from Howard Rodgers, director of education and social economy for the United States Commission, which stated,

I desire to invite you to contribute for use at the Paris Exposition a copy of the following mentioned photographs displayed by you at the Wanamaker Exhibit in Philadelphia:

732 Pusher on Horseshoe
734 Blacksmith

In this department there will be installed a large gallery of photographs showing American scenes, more particularly industrial views. The installation of these views will be very artistic and inasmuch as they will be displayed in a permanent building in the center of the Exposition grounds at Paris it is expected that this gallery will attract attention. . . .

Cooper must have sent the photographs because on December 12, 1899, Rodgers acknowledged receipt of the images and asked if they could be enlarged and whether Cooper had any "other views of an industrial character?" The exhibition was apparently in the section mounted by the Department of Education and Social Economy and not in the hall where "artistic" photography was displayed (Figures 20 and 21).

Cooper took his mounted photographs off the wall of his Philadelphia home around 1901 and never displayed them again. His involvement in artistic photography ended except for an occasional use of certain aesthetic conventions in the photographs he took for other people in Juniata County. From 1901 until 1920, Cooper took family photos and portraits, school pictures, and photographs of family reunions, which were commissioned and purchased. The images often contain poses unlike Cooper's other work and reveal the props of the professional portrait photographer, such as a painted backdrop (Figure 14). By 1920 Cooper stopped taking photographs.

An Analysis of the Photographs

A description of Cooper's photographs and a contextualization of the work within a larger historical tradition follow. It is impossible to determine quantitatively whether the surviving photographs are representative of Cooper's total output as a photographer.⁴ However, there is sufficient consistency of style to warrant generalization. Moreover, comparison with images produced by some well-known artistic photographers suggests that he was aware of the photographic conventions of his time.

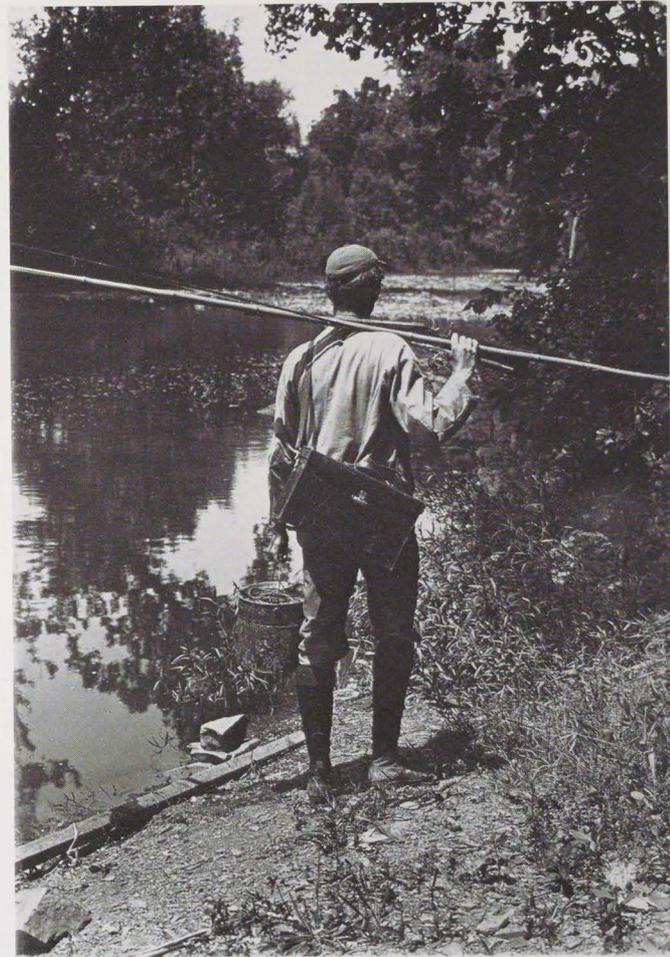


Figure 11 Untitled. Fisherman with camera case—probably Francis Cooper.

I. Snapshots

Cooper's snapshots are as unremarkable as any image of this type (Figures 1 and 6). The people either are posed casually or have assumed the stiff formality of a studio portrait. There is no evidence that much attention was paid to the lighting or the background. The subject is usually in the center of the frame. The image is uniformly a medium shot taken at eye level.

Some images are sufficiently well composed to confound the label "snapshot." For example, Cooper photographed the interiors of the houses in which he lived in Philadelphia (Figure 4). Are they simply records of his life or serious attempts to explore the problems of light and shadow or both? I have chosen to err on the side of caution and assume that Cooper's snapshots sometimes contain elements similar to those found in his more deliberately composed photographs.

It is possible and useful to distinguish the snapshots from the artistic photographs. However much they may resemble each other on formal grounds, they can be separated on the basis of intended use.



Figure 12 Untitled. Francis Cooper with gun, fishing rod, and camera.

None of Cooper's snapshots is signed. Most are unmounted. None was entered in photographic competitions. The images that can be called artistic do have these attributes. The problem of making an organized description of materials produced with an eclectic template is never readily solved. The consistency often seen in studies of other photographers may be nothing more than an artifact of researchers' needs to "create" an order.

In looking at Cooper's snaps, one is struck by the fact that an agenda was quickly established among these first snapshotters for the types of people, places, objects, and events to be photographed and how to photograph them. The "look" of the photograph has varied little since the form was invented. Professionals did not take photographs like these, nor did amateurs prior to the invention of the simple box camera. It is difficult, therefore, to explain the immediate and widespread "look" of the snapshot that appears to have transcended time, place, and culture.

II. Artistic Images

Labeling a photograph a snapshot is often an uncomplicated task, in spite of the confusion caused when snapshot conventions are used deliberately by art photographers such as Diane Arbus or Lee Friedlander. Describing a particular photograph as "art" is more difficult. People have been arguing about the status of photography as art since its invention. Discussions of whether it is folk, vernacular, naive, popular, or fine art plague the literature.

It is not germane to this study to determine whether or not Cooper's photographs are "good art" or "important images." The art paradigm is not one given much credence or support in this study. Moreover, those determinations or perhaps pronouncements are often artifacts of the currently popular aesthetic or art revisionist history and have little value in increasing our understanding of the cultural history of photography.

Cooper intended some photographs to be regarded as art because (1) they were printed on platinum paper, mounted, and signed; (2) they resemble the compositional rules employed by artistic photog-



Figure 13 Untitled still life.

raphers; (3) they were titled by Cooper; and (4) they were entered in contests and competitions. In short, the photographs contain a set of formal characteristics regarded at the turn of the century as belonging to artistic photographs.

Cooper produced sharply focused, unretouched photographs, usually unenlarged. The 5-by-7-inch images, made with the Poco camera, were printed full frame and slightly trimmed on the edges. The Bullseye prints were sometimes cropped from their square format of 3½ by 3½ inches into a rectangular shape with the height to width ratio resembling that of the Poco prints. Cooper also used precut mats for some unsigned prints, which provided limited opportunities to "recompose."

Pusher on Horseshoe (Figure 20)—a picture exhibited in the Wanamaker show and in Paris—is an exception, as it was both cropped and enlarged. There is a piece of tape on the original negative, probably placed there by Cooper to indicate where the image was to be cropped when the darkroom technician made the enlargement. It is possible that Cooper made the enlargement for the Paris Exhibition (see above).

Cooper made "straight" photographs. He used

none of the techniques to make the image look "painterly," e.g., gum-bichromate printing. The underlying premise in straight photography is that the observable world contains enough beauty and order for the photographer to transform nature into art by observing the correct compositional rules. The photographer's task is to strive to understand the varying qualities of light and their effect upon nature and upon the negative and to become sensitive to forms in nature.

Cooper did not invent this point of view. It is found in the work of a number of nineteenth-century photographers. The most widely known pronouncement is Peter Henry Emerson's 1886 speech entitled, "Photography—A Pictorial Art." As Panzer (1982:10) points out, "Emerson asserted that a 'straight' photographic print could express emotion, and thus deserved the status of fine art. . . . He celebrated the artistic value of naturalistic landscapes and commonplace scenes, bringing an elaborate reading of the entire history of Western Art to his argument for the artistic value of plain, unretouched photographs." Emerson's view was at odds with the one that regarded photographic art as photographs that looked like composite, painterly images, such as H. P. Robinson's *Fading Away*.

This naturalistic aesthetic had been practiced in Philadelphia prior to Emerson's speech and continued long after Emerson modified his original position. Cooper's landscapes and scenes of rural life resemble "a distinctive regional style—especially in landscape" found in the works of Philadelphia photographers like Robert Redfield, Henry Troth, and Charles Mitchell (Homer 1984; Panzer 1982).

These photographers believed that art should be produced in nature with a view camera on a tripod. While one could easily argue, from a modern point of view, that the technology and the site of one's work are not important elements, it should be remembered that these photographers were trying to separate themselves from the "hack" studio professionals on the one hand and the hobbyist snapshotters with their newly invented "detective" cameras on the other.

The need to use a particular kind of camera in order to make photographic art and the more fundamental proscriptions about subject matter and form were challenged by a number of people in the 1890s. Stieglitz's use of a hand-held camera in 1893 is regarded by some historians as being a revolutionary act (Newhall 1964:103). *Winter, Fifth Avenue* and *The Terminal* were considered by Stieglitz, immodestly, as ". . . the beginning of a new era. Call it a new vision, if you wish" (quoted in Welling 1978:354). Whether or not Stieglitz was the first to make art with a hand-held camera is not important. What is important is that by 1896, when Cooper became involved with photography, a range of possibilities was available. Cooper took advantage of many of them.

Ila. Scenes from Nature

Cooper's images taken from nature and rural life are concentrated around Charles Milliken's farm and the nearby Tuscarora Creek. His interest in the photographic possibilities offered by this relatively small geographic area seems limitless. While they portray actual places—"views" with titles like *Near the Mouth of Milliken's Run* (Figure 3)—it would be a mistake to assume that the photographs were produced solely to record the natural beauties of the locale.

Cooper's interest in the rural life of Juniata County as a place to recreate himself was derived from the "back to nature movement," which Schmitt (1969) suggests was a response to the industrialization of cities like Philadelphia. The appreciation and rendering of the landscape was an important manifestation of that attitude.

Cooper's landscape photographs posed certain aesthetic problems. Two forms of evidence support this contention: (1) the Philadelphia suburban countryside in the landscape photograph *Mill Creek Near*

Narberth (Figure 18) is indistinguishable from *Pleasant View* (compare Figure 18 with Figure 16); and (2) several landscapes were taken at the same place, but based upon the foliage, amount of water in the creek, and other physical evidence, they were produced at different times of the year. For example, Figure 16—*Tuscarora Creek*—is a Wanamaker entry taken with the Bullseye camera. Two views taken with the 5-by-7-inch Poco camera that are virtually identical to Figure 16 except for the amount of water in the creek also exist. In other words, Cooper produced variations of the same theme because he was interested in trying to solve certain compositional problems. He was not acting like a tourist interested in local scenery; he was behaving like an artist using nature to create a landscape.

Three elements dominate Cooper's landscapes: the Tuscarora Creek with its ability to reflect light and shapes, forms created by the trees, and the Tuscarora Mountains. Cooper explored ways in which these elements could be combined and organized. One photograph—*Near the Mouth of Milliken's Run* (Figure 3)—a Wanamaker entry and the *Inquirer* contest prize winner, contains all three elements. It is a typification of Cooper's approach to landscape.

The creek, bordered by a split-rail fence, dominates the foreground with reflections of light and the shapes of the trees. Its sinuous path, broken by the textured verticals of the trees, leads to the midground and eventually to a vanishing point. The trees bordering the no-longer-visible creek disappear into the foothills of the mountains, barely visible in the background. The sky is without cloud or other feature (an artifact of the kind of film available to Cooper rather than some conscious decision on his part to eliminate the clouds).

There are similarities between this photograph and landscapes produced by Philadelphia "naturalistic" photographers (Panzer 1982). Charles L. Mitchell's untitled landscape of a stream and woods (Homer 1984:18) is the clearest example. Mitchell, a member of the Photographic Society of Philadelphia, was one of the chief proponents of the old school of artistic photography and a severe critic of the "fuzzography" of the pictorialists. In addition, Robert Redfield's *Brook in Springtime* (1897), Frank Streeper's *Quiétude*, 1897, and Henry Troth's *Morning Mists* (ca. 1900) all share the same aesthetic principles as Cooper's images (see Homer 1984 for illustrations of these examples).

Cooper's landscapes can be understood as variations of the composition displayed in Figure 3. For example, in Figure 16, the creek is wider, the trees less prominent, and the mountains that form the background less distinct. Sometimes mountains are replaced by a forest, causing the perspective to

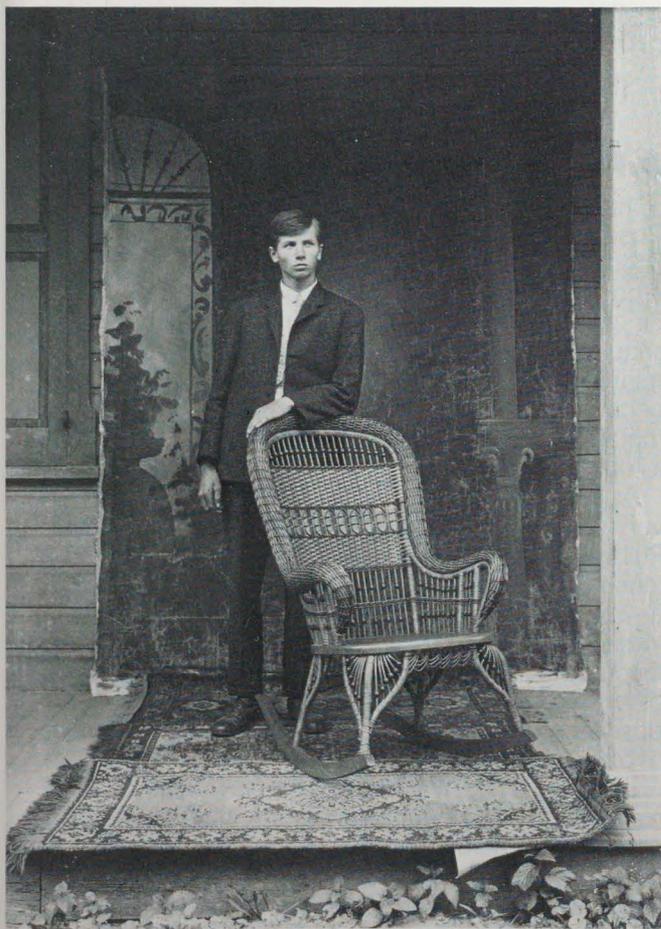


Figure 14 Portrait of Albert Moyer.

(Label for Back of Pictures for Exhibition)

*The John Wanamaker Exhibition
of Photographs by Amateurs*

NOVEMBER, 1909

Title of Picture Clovet

Location Pleasant-View Pa

Camera used Zeiss Ikon Cycle Poco 5X7

Lens used Rochester Symmetrical

Plate used Stanley

Exposure 1/25

Developed with Hydrochine 77

Paper used Bradley

Are clouds natural?

Was color screen used? No

Exhibitor's Name Francis Herbert

Address 1810 S. Spradlet Phila

No. VII 3365 Group A

Figure 15 Wanamaker Exhibition entry form.

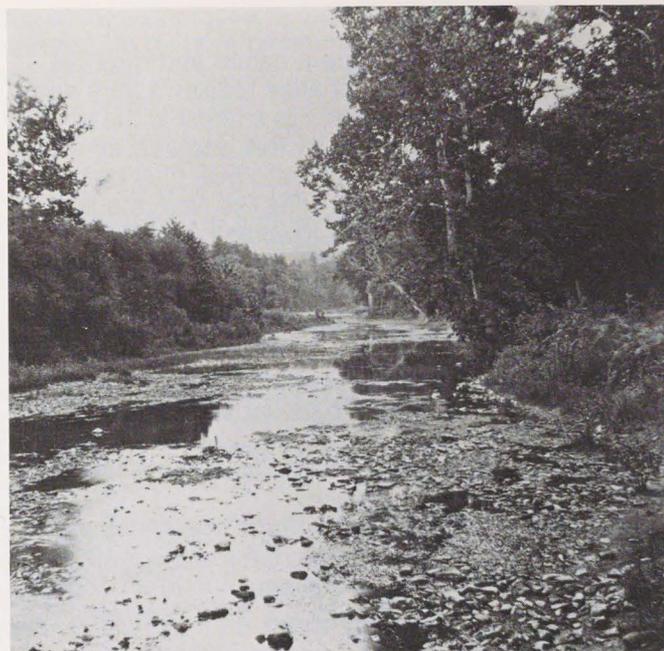


Figure 16 Tuscarora Creek. Wanamaker Exhibition entry no. 730.

become foreshortened. The emphasis in these images is upon the creek and its capacity to reflect light in different ways (Figures 16 and 18) and to reflect shapes (Figure 22)—a subject that dominates these landscapes. In other instances, the verticals created by the trees serve as framing devices, sometimes balanced and in other cases asymmetrical (Figure 23). The trees emphasize fore- and midground.

The landscapes were made in spring or summer and usually show no animal or human life. The winter scenes reveal similar compositional concerns: snow replaces water as a source of reflected light, and barren trees offer some additional possibilities (Figure 24).

Cooper transformed the Juniata County countryside into an idyllic, restful place of beauty. It was his escape from the city. Once Cooper moved to Spruce Hill, he stopped producing landscapes. He became a part of the world he admired as an outsider and was no longer interested in transforming it into an aesthetic object.

IIb. Scenes from Everyday Life in the Country

In addition to photographing the countryside, Cooper produced genre scenes of Juniata County. Scenes from everyday life of the "common folk" was a popular form among artistic photographers. Emerson regarded it as equal in importance to landscapes. At the time Cooper took these pictures, genre was at the height of its popularity. However, because the form can easily become an anecdotal, romantic cliché, some photographers were beginning to disavow it.

At Pleasant View, Cooper experienced a life-style very different from the one he knew growing up in Philadelphia. His photographs of rural life show an intense interest in this world. He recorded the Millikens at work (Figure 2) and the rural life around Pleasant View (Figures 17, 21, and 24). Some images look like the snaps city tourists might take in the country, others like *The Blacksmith* (Figure 21) were composed as a genre photograph. The original intention of others is unclear.

In Figure 17, a Wanamaker entry, *Calves Snow of Nov. '98*, the title particularizes the images into a record of an actual event and therefore takes it out of the category of anonymous events—one of the traditional attributes of genre. On the other hand, the animals in this photograph as well as the one in Figure 24 dominate the frame and appear to be more signifi-



Figure 17 *Sheep Snow Storm, Nov. 27.98.* Wanamaker Exhibition entry no. 733.



Figure 18 *Mill Creek Near Narberth.* Wanamaker Exhibition entry no. 737.

cant than other elements. Similarities can be found between Cooper's pastoral images and those of Philadelphia photographer Mary Vaux (see *Sheep Pasture* [Homer 1984]).

Cooper also composed scenes of the sporting life. His *Squirrel Hunters* (Figure 19), a Wanamaker entry, demonstrates the way Cooper combined his interest in the art of photography with hunting. The title *Squirrel Hunters* fulfills one of the requirements of a genre picture, that it be an anonymous depiction (Washburn 1962, 6:82). However, at the bottom of the entry form, Cooper wrote "38 killed first day of season 1897," thus making the image more a record of an actual event than a genre photograph.

Cooper liked to have his own picture taken as the sportsman (Figure 12). Most of these images are attempts to portray Cooper as an actual person. However, he did use himself as a model for a genre picture of a fisherman (Figure 11).

IIc. Cityscapes and Street Scenes

While rural life was Cooper's primary subject, he did take some pictures of Philadelphia. The examples described and discussed here show that Cooper was aware of the new school of artistic photography that turned its hand-held cameras on the life of the city and the industrial world. However, these images apparently were not held in the same esteem as his country pictures. Only one—*Pusher on Horseshoe* (Figure 20)—was submitted to a competition.

It is not germane to the focus of this paper to argue whether or not Stieglitz was the originator of this school of photography. A comparison of images by Stieglitz and Cooper will be made here simply because the Stieglitz pictures are commonly used to illustrate this period in photographic history and are therefore well known.

Between 1898 and 1900, Cooper took a number of Bullseye photographs of life in the Philadelphia streets. A man shoveling snow, probably on Broad Street near Cooper's home (Figure 25), is reminiscent of Stieglitz's *The Ragpicker, 1893*. A buggy in the snow on Broad Street (Figure 8) and a fire at Eighth and Arch Streets (Figure 5) follow the same aesthetic as Stieglitz's famous *Winter, Fifth Avenue, 1893* and *The Terminal, 1893* and the less well-known *Snow* by William G. Ayres (a photograph that appeared in the 1901 Philadelphia Salon) (Homer 1984). Finally,

there is an obvious similarity between *Pusher on Horseshoe*, 1898 (Figure 20) and Stieglitz's *The Hand of Man*, 1902.

There is no evidence that Cooper ever saw the particular photographs mentioned above or, for that matter, any Stieglitz photographs. Rather than labor over the impossible and not particularly interesting question of direct influence, it is sufficient to say that in five years (from 1893 to 1898), Stieglitz's "revolutionary act" of making art with a hand-held camera in a snowstorm on the city streets had become widely diffused and probably common practice among photographers concerned with artistic photographs.

IId. Still Life

Cooper also photographed the results of his hunting and fishing trips. Some were informal records of a kill—casually taken snapshots of fish or squirrels lined up in a row (Figure 26). The negative envelope lists the kind of weapon used, the date, and the variety of fish or animal. In other words, the image is a record of the shoot—the sportsman recording his success.

Other pictures are still lifes of fish or birds he or his friends killed. These pictures follow the conventions of this pictorial form. One has only to compare Figure 13 to F. C. Curry's 1885 photograph *The Heron* (Newhall 1964:64) or to Jan Baptist Wennix's *The Dead Partridge* (Anon. 1984:125) to realize that Cooper was aware of the pictorial tradition and sought to emulate it.



Figure 19 *Squirrel Hunters*. Wanamaker Exhibition entry no. 738.



Figure 20 *Pusher on Horseshoe*. Wanamaker Exhibition entry no. 732.

Ile. Self-portraits and Portraits

Self-portraits have been undertaken by virtually every painter in the Western world in the last two hundred years. The problems facing a painter doing a self-portrait are parallel to those a painter doing a portrait encounters as well. A similar argument is difficult to make for photographic self-portraiture. To succeed, the artist has to be able to transform him- or herself into an aesthetic object that can then be manipulated. The technology of photography virtually prevents the photographer from having total control over all variables when attempting to photograph the self. Moreover, a basic difference exists between the media of painting and photography that at times makes the designation of self-portrait problematic. Unless one sees the shutter release in the hand of the photographer, it is reasonable to assume that someone else actually released the shutter, thereby at best making the designate "self-portrait" questionable.

There are a number of extant portraits of Cooper (Figures 7, 9, and 12 represent only a handful of the total) but only one in which you see the camera in his hand (Figure 7). Sometimes Cooper described a negative as "Cooper by Cooper" or simply "Self." It could be argued that if he took one self-portrait, chances are he took others, and, therefore, those images marked *Self* or *Cooper* should be considered self-portraits. In Cooper's case, the puzzle cannot be solved, and in the long run it is not important. The only point to be made here is that in their attempts to be regarded as artists, Cooper, like other amateurs, assumed the behavior of the painter.



Figure 21 *Blacksmith.*
Wanamaker Exhibition
entry no. 734.

Cooper did not take many artistic portraits. His portrait of an unknown young woman (Figure 27) demonstrates some interest in the problem of portraying the human form with a single light source and neutral background (two characteristics that separate these pictures from those Cooper later took as a professional).

Photographers interested in demonstrating that their work was fine art had to overcome the association of photographic art with the clichéd work of studio photographers. Hence, portraiture was discredited in the 1860s and 1870s among serious amateurs as something to be avoided in order to have one's work taken seriously. While the portrait was more acceptable in the 1890s, it was still suspect. Cooper's attitude might have been influenced by the antipathy of other photographers.

III. Professional Work

Cooper started taking photographs for money when he moved to Spruce Hill in 1901 about the time Joseph Replogle, a professional photographer from Walnut (a few miles from Cooper's farm), moved into a vacant studio in the county seat, Mifflintown. The area around Spruce Hill was left without the services of a local photographer. Cooper filled in with his 5-by-7-inch view camera.

When taking photographs for other people, Cooper fulfilled their expectations by following the conventions of the professional. He obtained painted and plain backdrops and a chair for the subject either to sit in or stand beside. Several small oriental rugs completed the illusion that the picture was being taken in a studio. Cooper took portraits of children, adults, families, groups—schools, family reunions, church groups—and houses. The majority are indistinguishable from the thousands of images produced at this time by itinerant and studio professionals (Figure 14).



Figure 22 Untitled landscape.



Figure 23 Untitled landscape.



Figure 24 Untitled landscape.

Cooper's artistic sense of composition sometimes "intruded" and he produced pictures that employed the conventions of the artist. It is interesting to speculate about two images. In Figure 28, the people on the front porch appear to be a family, perhaps on the occasion of a reunion or anniversary. Since group photographs of school or church or family reunions were very much a part of the lives of these people, they knew how such pictures were supposed to look and how they should pose: in a row tightly packed together, expressionless, and all facing the same direction. Since they are not in the expected pose, one wonders just what the occasion was and what the people thought when they saw the photograph.

The three schoolgirls in Figure 29 are even more problematic. School photos at that time showed a class or entire school neatly lined up in rows with the teacher and someone holding a blackboard with the name of the school and the date. Individual portraits in the school yard were uncommon. The most striking aspect of this photograph is the pose. It exudes a sexuality uncharacteristic of both Cooper's other work

and other photographs taken at that time in Juniata County. It does not fit into any conventional category of photography known to these people. Knowledge of photographic as well as social conventions makes us wonder why Cooper posed them in such a provocative manner in the middle of the school yard. Most likely, we are seeing a pose constructed by the young ladies. While Cooper's other professional work often has a certain flair, none is as "out-of-place" as the schoolgirls.

Those people still alive in Juniata County who knew Francis Cooper's work as a photographer remember him taking school or church pictures or going to someone's farm to make a portrait. His interest and involvement in artistic photography was unknown, an activity confined to the time when he was a visitor from the city.



Figure 25 Untitled. Man shoveling snow, probably in Philadelphia on Broad Street.

Conclusions

This paper illuminates aspects of the social history of American photography by examining the work of one avocational photographer. The photographs have not been judged as aesthetic objects nor has their place in an "art" history of photography been evaluated. Francis Cooper's pictures are worth examining because they were produced when modern photographic practice was being created. Living in Philadelphia, Cooper was able to observe and to incorporate these changes into his photography.

Cooper was educated at a time when people from his social class were expected to know something about literature, music, and art—to cultivate good taste. It was assumed also that they would acquire a morally redeeming avocation. Writing, scientific experiments, field trips for botanical or zoological collecting, painting, or sketching had been considered for some time worthwhile pursuits for the soul and mind. In the 1890s, photography had just joined the ranks of socially acceptable aesthetic pleasures.

The using of the camera teaches the value of light and shade, discloses deep-hidden beauties of nature, as they are disclosed to none other than the poet and the painter, teaches new truths concerning the matchless beauties and intricacies of nature, aids to make gentler lives, germinates and develops and fosters and fixes stably a sensitive love for esthetics. (Harwood 1896:250)

Conditions were ripe for the flowering of avocational artistic photography. The industrialization of American cities produced a large number of affluent, educated people who needed meaningful recreational activities. They saw the camera as a way of exploring pictorial form. The development of photography as an aesthetic recreation for the middle classes and casual picture taking or "snapshotting" occurred at the same time. Both were possible because the industry provided the public with the means to produce its own images. Until the 1890s, anyone wishing to make a photograph had to invest a fair amount of money in the equipment and take the time to become familiar with enough chemistry and other arcane knowledge to produce an image. The costliness and complexity of the technology discouraged most people. Photography, therefore, was left to the professional and the occasional hardy amateur.

Cooper used some of the first roll-film cartridge box cameras, designed to be easy to use and relatively inexpensive. The Kodaks—like the Pocket and Folding Pocket and the various models of the Bullseye—became so popular between 1895 and 1900 that Eastman brought out the first Brownie in 1900, thus permanently altering our society's capacity to make and use images.

While he was a member of the first generation of snapshotters, Cooper's upbringing allowed him to see these simple box cameras as more than devices to preserve family events or displace professional portraitists. From the beginning, Cooper regarded photography as a means of artistic expression and as a fine art, and he therefore used it to produce landscapes, still lifes, and other compositions.

Artistic photography had only a brief history prior to 1900. It was, therefore, only logical to turn to the older and more-established pictorial tradition of painting as a model to emulate. Within a few years art photography changed. The Photo-Secessionists and those who followed Stieglitz's direction allied themselves with the avant-garde and modernist movements. They searched for their form and style within photography, dissociating themselves from the painterly tradition of the pictorialists. The avocational photographer and camera club member continued to espouse a pictorialist aesthetic but without understanding its historical origins. Genre photographs were produced but reduced to quaint and cute scenes of kittens and puppies in a barnyard. Landscapes became travel pictures. Eventually, avocational photographers be-



Figure 26 *Two Fox, Two Grey, Two Pine Squirrels.*
Sept. 6th '96.

Figure 27 Untitled portrait of a young woman.



came dissociated from a fine art tradition and became hobbyist gadgeteers whose knowledge of the medium was confined to *Popular Photography*.

Cooper did not take sides in arguments between the old school and the new school photographers about which equipment was proper, nor was he concerned with controversies over the "proper" subject for photographic art or the "correct" assumptions about composition. He took pictures with box and view cameras, on and off a tripod. He was interested in the pastoralism of the naturalists who made landscapes and scenes from everyday life in the country. He also took images of city life—railroads, fire engines, workers shoveling snow on the city streets—that borrowed from pictorialist ideas. He took family snapshots and professional portraits with no apparent conflicts. He ignored the proscriptions various leaders attempted to place on the uses of technology, the types of subject, and the "correct" approach. He used cameras regardless of their assumed suitability and borrowed and mixed conventions. Cooper was not experimental or avant-garde; he merely lacked any real interest in being aesthetically consistent or ideologically correct. I suggest that photography is practiced in this pragmatic manner by most people, including those seriously interested in it as an art form. Photography as represented in standard art histories describes only a handful of practitioners.

Acknowledgments

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Notes

- 1 For example, Andy Grundberg's review of Robert Bracklow's photographs in the January 8, 1984, issue of the *New York Times* was entitled, "Was This Unheralded Amateur New York's Atget?"
- 2 I have discussed this approach to the study of photography elsewhere (Ruby 1981).
- 3 The material for my study of Cooper came out of a larger study of the visual communication systems of Juniata County, Pennsylvania. (Ruby 1982). Eventually, I would like to produce a book-length study of Cooper and organize an exhibition of his photographs.
- 4 The collection contains hundreds of glass-plate and nitrate negatives, hundreds of mounted and unmounted photos, a negative catalog, and ten albums.



Figure 28 Untitled portrait of a family.

Figure 29 Untitled portrait of three schoolgirls.



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An Interpretation of "Man with the Movie Camera"

Bertrand Sauzier

I attempt here an interpretation of *Man with the Movie Camera* based on an analysis of Dziga Vertov's historical coordinates and of his poetic system (both of which are elaborated in Sauzier 1982).¹ Essentially my interpretation contends that there are two discourses in *Man with the Movie Camera*. The narrative discourse portrays the activities of a cameraman during a working day in a Soviet city.² The metaphorical discourse amounts to a poem about the achievements of Man, equipped with a movie camera, from 1917 to the Cultural Revolution of 1928. In particular, it traces the theoretical and social achievements of the kind of films Vertov stood for, the Cine-Eye film (unacted cinema), and attacks what Vertov called cine-dramas (acted cinema).

The title of the film *Chelovek s kino apparatom* should be read, I suggest, at least two ways: *The Man with the Movie Camera*, referring to a certain cameraman and his shooting activities, and *Man with the Movie Camera*, referring to the ability of man, in the generic sense, to reveal the political and emotional behavior of people thanks to a movie camera. In the following interpretive outline I have tried to convey both the narrative and metaphorical connotations of the title.

I do not claim that my interpretation coincides exactly with the views expressed by Vertov about his film. However, it helps explain what Vertov meant when he said that his film was "a dissertation on the theme: One hundred percent cinema language" (Vertov 1929). In the process, my reading also reveals two sides of Vertov, the storyteller and the poet, which he often repressed or subordinated to his politics.

Looking back on *Man with the Movie Camera* in 1940, Vertov felt that it was not only an experiment about film language, but also a documentary about man (Vertov 1972:207). His statements at the time of the German premiere of the film in 1929 also show that, while he considered it to be much more than a city symphony, he felt it belonged to a tradition of documentary films, often structured around the day in a life of a city, which the Cine-Eye group had pioneered (Vertov 1929; 1972:144–145).

The film displays both the Cine-Eye practice of shooting "life caught unawares" and a more traditional newsreel style of shooting; it is equally clear that many of its images subscribe to Vertov's lifelong program "to show 'living man,' his behavior and emotions." Yet, I argue, the style of Vertov's editing neither encourages nor allows us to read the film at a documentary level.

Vertov's idiosyncratic editing is largely influenced by the metaphorical structure of poetry, but it also borrows from the narrative style of fiction films. For example, Vertov's tendency to use different documentary shots taken at different times and places to create the illusion of one action reflects his natural bent for storytelling, for turning documentary images into a narrative. Thus, fake continuity effects can be observed in the football and basketball games; and geographical editing techniques are used in describing the athletes' relationship to the crowd (see Sauzier 1982:408–417). It is this style of editing as well as the overall construction of the film that forces us to read it, at one level, as a narrative.

Bertrand Sauzier, who received his Ph.D. from Harvard University, is currently working on a feature film with Shyam Benegal in India. His latest film, *A Good Example*, is a dramatization of Bertolt Brecht before the House Un-American Activities Committee. He is also the author of a feature film script, *Vertov*, which dramatizes the relationship between Vertov and the Cine-Eye group.

Editor's Note

Dziga Vertov (1896–1954) was a Russian filmmaker, futurist poet, and political activist. Born Denis Kaufman, Vertov along with his brothers, Boris and Mikhail, and other Soviet filmmakers worked to make "Cinema . . . a tool to expand the Soviet people's knowledge of the world and each other and to unite working people the world over. . . ." They believed "that, after the October revolution, the cinema should make it possible for workers to convince themselves that what they saw on the screen was created by them and therefore belonged to them" (Sauzier 1982: 2). Vertov formed a group of dedicated film workers who called themselves Kinoks. They wrote manifestos about the "Kino-Eye" (Cine-Eye) and how it could be used to generate "Kino-Pravda" (Cine-Truth).

Vertov completed *Man with a Movie Camera* in 1928. It was a cinematic exposition of his ideas on revolutionary cinema. Vertov's "Kino-Pravda" became Jean Rouch's "*Cinéma Vérité*." The film as well as its author has had a major impact upon the history of world cinema.

We can talk about *Man with the Movie Camera* being a narrative film in at least two senses. First, it is the story of a character and what happens to him as we follow him during a day in his life; this kind of narrative belongs to the picaresque tradition.³ Second, the film's narrative—in the sense of events relating causally—describes a series of changes taking place each time the Cine-Eye cameraman appears on the scene: objects become animated, people have their eyes opened, the enemy is denounced. The resolution of the conflict between the "hero" and those who stand for the old cinema and society is that, in the end, his enemies are overcome, and life pulsates with a new rhythm as the Communist city of the future is described to us. This second kind of narrative owes something to both the fairy tale and the science-fiction traditions, traditions that were dear to Vertov. Thus, between 1920 and 1923 alone, Vertov wrote no fewer than eight fictional treatments; while in the 1930s, he wrote several fantastic tales that were not shot either (Vertov 1972:38–44, 369–374, 391–421).

In order to unravel the meaning of *Man with the Movie Camera*, we need to understand clearly this paradox: It is a film made by a poet, a musician, and a storyteller who wanted to do away with poetry, music and storytelling in the cinema. Vertov's 1922 goal—"to free film from all elements that intrude: Music, Literature and Theatre"—is reiterated in the introductory titles of *Man with the Movie Camera*. After the film was made, however, Vertov came to recognize that those three elements—poetry, music, and the fantastic—formed the cornerstone of his creative system: "What seems to us fantastic on this earth will appear as perfectly real on some other planet. . . . We wish to devote a series of films to this association of poetic, musical, and didactic-fantastic world" (ibid.:397–410). These ideas were already at work, I suggest, when he made *Man with the Movie Camera*. Whereas Vertov considered the film to be a documentary and a dissertation, an analysis of its editing reveals it to be, also, a story and a poem. And although the film purports to be the antithesis of the "land of make-believe" (ibid.:380–381), it ends up being a fantastic poem rooted in Vertov's childhood aspirations to educate people by taking them on a journey across time and space. For it was Vertov's genius, sometimes in spite of himself, to document "life as it is" with his camera and then to turn the "pieces of truth" into fiction and poetry on the editing bench.

In arguing that *Man with the Movie Camera* is structured metaphorically, I use the term metaphor in its most general sense: a comparison between two elements. At the level of the overall film, one discourse (manifest) is compared to another (latent). At the level of the structuring of images, one image (known) is compared to another (sometimes known, sometimes

latent). Such a general use of the term metaphor covers some other specific rhetorical terms such as simile or allegory.

In strict terms, the film is structured not only around metaphors, but also around similes and sometimes symbols. Thus the comparison of a woman washing her face and the street being washed in the morning (see illustrations for section 10 of the Narrative Discourse below)⁴ might be considered a simile, since the term of comparison is more or less explicit: the new woman is like the new city—clean. And it could be argued that the Bolshoi Theater (see illustrations for sections 14 and 55 of the Narrative Discourse below) stands for bourgeois art and society and should be considered a symbol, since this connotation of the Bolshoi was accepted by many in the Soviet culture of the late 1920s (Fitzpatrick 1978:25), rather than a metaphor, which is more ambiguous and allusive than a symbol and not fixed within a culture. But in the two cases, a comparison is being made, and in each case, two terms are connected by a ground of comparison. The washing of the street and of the woman's face refer to the Revolution bringing about a rebirth; the image of the Bolshoi, in metaphorical rather than in symbolic terms, is associated with the theatrical tradition in film that Vertov abhors. Both present a threat and become the object of attack (see units 6, 18, 59, 74 of the Metaphorical Discourse below).

According to my use of the term, the metaphor, or ground of comparison, can be provided by two images of the film being juxtaposed or by a film image referring to another image outside the film's narrative (to be found in Vertov's history and writings or in Soviet culture of the period). For example, the frames of film strip speeding across the light box and the windows of the train rushing past the camera (see illustrations for section 58 of the Narrative Discourse below, and shots 1615, 1616, 1617) suggest a metaphorical relationship insofar as both the film and the train are forms of communication (see unit 79 below). But this primary metaphor demands further conceptualization, for those images are simultaneously compared to something else. Given what we know of Vertov's writings, and the context of the film's argument, the speeding film strip connotes a certain kind of film, the newsreel or Cine-Eye film; and given what we know of Vertov's history, the image of the train rushing across country refers back to the Agit period of the Civil War, when Vertov discovered cinema. This kind of second-order comparison could be termed epicyclic metaphor in relation to the primary metaphor.⁵

In yet another sense, I use the term metaphor when the appropriate rhetorical term might be allegory, as in the case of the overall interpretation of the film as a metaphor for the evolution of Soviet cinema and society. If we take such an interpretation to its logical conclusion, it contends that a description of a subject (the evolution of Soviet cinema) is made under the guise of another suggestively similar (a day in the life of a cameraman); if this is so, we are dealing with an allegorical film. And we would have to consider the cameraman and the woman asleep as allegorical figures, one representing the revolutionary newsreel cinema, the other the bourgeois fiction cinema (see units 5–10 of the Metaphorical Discourse below).

However, on closer examination, this comparison between the film's manifest narrative and the evolution of Soviet cinema and society is only alluded to; it is not systematically worked out in the film. The threads of an allegorical narrative exist in *Man with the Movie Camera*, but they are loose. The metaphorical discourse does unfold within a rough time framework; and the terminal points of this framework, the Revolution of 1917 (segment 2) and the Cultural Revolution of 1928 (segment 8), can be inferred with some precision. But the period between is alluded to at different points of segments 3 to 7 only imprecisely, as will be gathered from the Metaphorical Discourse in my outline below.

By referring to the narrative discourse as manifest, I imply that the general meaning of that discourse can be arrived at on a first viewing of the film. Since we have been trained to read photographs as documents of the external world, it is likely that, at a viewing, we will probably not follow the images as part of a poetic argument, but as portraying a day in the life of a cameraman or of a city.

However, an analysis of the images in Vertov's body of work shows that they recur from film to film and suggests that the external world comes into play in his encoding system primarily insofar as it acts as material for his poetic intention. For example, the images of the shop window mannequins in section 6 (shots 94, 95, 102, 104) provide an equivalent for Vertov's idea that the dramatic cinema is "a cinema of puppets" (Vertov 1972:76).

From the Civil War (1918–1920) on, when he started to edit incoming newsreel footage, Vertov developed a considerable store of images, which he could have at his fingertips in structuring his poetic arguments. By the time of *Man with the Movie Camera*, most of the documentary images he used had a specific poetic correspondence. Thus, shots of tramways, trains, railway tracks, airplanes, electric pylons, metallic bridges, clouds passing by, trees bristling in the wind, or lamp posts look to most of us like

documents of the external world; but Vertov uses them with a specific metaphorical connotation in mind (see Sauzier 1982:318–336).

I have based my segmentation along the lines of Vertov's underlying poetic argument, dividing the film into a prologue, eight segments, and an epilogue. Although such a segmentation does coincide approximately with the narrative sections, a systematic segmentation of the film considered essentially as a picaresque or fairy-tale narrative has not been attempted here.⁶

The present segmentation requires some explanation of the terminology used. I have divided the film into "segments" and have subdivided the narrative discourse into "sections" and the metaphorical discourse into "units." These terms serve the purpose primarily of enabling us, in discussing the interpretation, to refer with some precision to various parts of the different discourses. In addition, the metaphorical units and the film segments, as I will argue later on, also correspond, at least approximately, to Vertov's own division of the film into reels.

Feature narrative films are normally segmented into sequences, which are subdivided into scenes⁷—terms that are not very precise but generally useful. This nomenclature would have been adequate had I segmented the film primarily with a narrative discourse in mind, but my segmentation was based on a metaphorical structure. Therefore, the corresponding groups of shots under which the narrative was broken down amounted sometimes to a scene, sometimes to several scenes, sometimes to what might otherwise be referred to as a sequence. Accordingly, I have chosen the term section to refer to these narrative blocks in order to avoid confusion.

The term unit, referring to the metaphors, also lacks precision. Essentially, it provides a way of breaking down and grouping ideas that are all related to the central metaphor of the segment. For example, segment 1, itself a metaphor for the prerevolutionary cinema, contains three main ideas: what the images of the movie house stand for (unit 2), what the images of the audience stand for (unit 3), and what the images of the musicians stand for (unit 4). However, in some cases, a unit refers to a single idea, as in unit 6: the prerevolutionary cinema is like a bourgeois woman asleep. In other cases, a unit can refer to several interrelated ideas, as in unit 7: the old films are like tramps, the newsreel cinema is like a newborn child, and the influence of the theater on the old films leads to a cinema of puppets.

It should also be noted that while my shot-by-shot list is an attempt to describe the images without interpreting them (see Sauzier 1982: Appendix One), my formulation of the two discourses amounts in each case to an interpretation of the shot-by-shot description. The following recapitulation of the terminology might be useful:

Descriptive	}	<i>Image track</i> —	divided into numbered <i>shots</i> (refers to the shot-by-shot list)	}	Manifest
}	<i>Metaphorical discourse</i> —	divided into numbered <i>units</i> (containing one or more ideas)	}		

Given that I want to remain as close as possible to Vertov's poetic conception of the film, another problem raised by my segmentation is the extent to which it corresponds to Vertov's division of the film into reels. The 35mm print distributed by Gosfilmofond (Soviet State Film Archives), which I used,⁸ is divided into six reels. Except for possible slight discrepancies, this division probably conforms to the original breakdown of reels, for which, we assume, Vertov was responsible (see Table 1).

Soviet movie houses and traveling film units in the 1920s were rarely equipped with more than one projector. As a result, filmmakers planned each reel as an independent unit so that there would be no break in the action while the reels were being changed. Sometimes each reel had a title—as in Eisenstein's *Strike* or *Potemkin*—and was considered an independent act (Leyda 1973:198; Oxford Companion to Film 1976:583). Judging from the reel breakdown we have of *Man with the Movie Camera* in the modern prints, Vertov seems to have followed this practice.

According to Seth Feldman, an unpublished shot-by-shot list of the film was made in 1935 by A. A. Fedorov and G. Averbukh, which indicates that the film included animated numbers marking the beginning or ending of reels 3, 4, and 5 (Feldman 1979:109–110). This information confirms the practice of considering the reel as an independent unit. However, the only such animated number remaining in the prints in circulation today, number "1," appears a third of the way into the first reel. Moreover, reels 2 and 5 (both in today's prints and in the 1935 breakdown) end at a point that, according to any kind of segmentation, amounts to an uncompleted sequence (shot 354 of the editor's section in reel 2; shot 1180 of the carousel section in reel 5 [see Table 1]).

Table 1 compares my segmentation of the film with the divisions marked by the reels and the animated numbers. Discrepancies among the three kinds of divisions are slight. My segments 3, 4, 5, and 6 coincide with reels 2, 3, 4, and 5 and with the animated numbers 2, 3, and 4, respectively (except for a slight discrepancy between the end of segment 3 and reel 2). The real differences occur in the subdivisions. Thus I subdivide reel 1 into segments 1 and 2 (and a prologue), a subdivision that does, however, correspond to the animated "1" marking a pause within the reel; and I subdivide reel 6 into segments 7 and 8 (and an epilogue). The purpose of my subdivisions is to make the reformulation of Vertov's vision clearer by breaking it down into as many distinctive elements as possible; but they do not depart substantially from the reel division. Thus segments 1, 2, and the prologue could be considered a single theme: the photo-history of the Cine-Eye (reel 1); and segments 7, 8, and the epilogue could be dealt with as a single unit: the present situation of the Cine-Eye and its prospects (reel 6).

Even though the animated numbers 2, 3, and 4 have disappeared from the prints in circulation today, these in fact correspond to structural nodes that were revealed by my analysis of the images and editing. These structural nodes that guided me in my segmentation are of two kinds: prominent images connected with the camera and rapid cutting climaxes (i.e., an increasing tempo in the pace of the cutting of the images). Thus the opening of each segment is always marked by a prominent camera image (except in segment 2, where it is replaced by the animated "1"); this image is often followed by a long panning or tracking shot (of buildings in particular); and, with one exception, all segments close on a rapid cutting climax (see Table 2).

Ultimately, the question of whether or not the segmentation adopted here makes sense cannot be decided by arguing that it corresponds to Vertov's original segmentation, since we cannot be certain of the latter and since the surviving prints all appear to be truncated slightly.¹⁰ But the segmentation will justify itself insofar as the principles behind it and the interpretation it leads to correspond to what we otherwise know of Vertov's poetic vision through his writings and films.

A final note is necessary about my formulation of the narrative and metaphorical discourses below. Whenever possible, I have tried to keep to Vertov's own writing style, the idea being to recapture his own vision. In the case of the narrative discourse, I have borrowed from the telegraphic style Vertov used for his film treatments, as well as his habit of describing the action as if we (the audience) were on the spot (cf. his description of *Kino Pravda no. 5* and his treatments for *Man with the Movie Camera* and *The Eleventh* in Vertov 1972:22, 375–384).

In formulating the metaphorical discourses, I have used as much as possible the metaphors Vertov himself used in his writings and, on the whole, have kept to the rhetorical style of his manifestos. Although the metaphorical discourse goes back and forth in time, I have used the present tense throughout in keeping with Vertov's habit of writing inter-titles in the present tense even when dealing with past historical events (cf. *Sixth Part of the Earth*, *The Eleventh*). I have also not eliminated the repetitions, recapitulations, and cross-references in the discourse, since these too are part of Vertov's writings and films.

For the convenience of the reader, I have indicated in brackets at the end of the relevant sections or units the page numbers in Sauzier 1982 where my interpretation is elaborated.

Table 1: Segmentation of *Man with the Movie Camera*^a

Shots	Segmentation	Themes	Corresponding Reels	Animated Numbers
1–4	Prologue	Going back in time and space: how the Cine-Eye transformed the bourgeois cinema	Reel 1: 1–225 (1935) 1–202 (1972)	
5–66	Segment 1	The cinema experience before the Revolution		
67–225	Segment 2	The revolution brought about by socialism and the newsreel cinema		"1": 67
226–397	Segment 3	The Cine-Eye cameraman	Reel 2: 226–354 (1935) 203–354 (1972)	End of "2" (after 354)
398–583	Segment 4	The Cine-Eye camera	Reel 3: 355–583 (1935 and 1972)	End of "3" (after 583)
584–957	Segment 5	The Cine-Eye editor	Reel 4: 584–957 (1935 and 1972)	End of "4" (after 957)
958–1200	Segment 6	The historical debate between the Cine-Eye film and the Cine-Drama	Reel 5: 958–1197 (1935) 958–1180 (1972)	
1201–1400	Segment 7	The Cine-Eye debate today in the context of Socialist Construction	Reel 6: 1198–1712 (1935) 1181–1712 (1972)	
1401–1514	Segment 8	The cinema today as a revolutionary experience for the audience		
1515–1712	Epilogue	The cinema of the future: the potential of man with a movie camera		

Table 2: Structural Modes in *Man with the Movie Camera*

Segment	Opening Camera Image	Opening Tracking Shot	Closing Section: Rapid Cutting Climax
Prologue 1	1: close up of camera, above which long shot of cameraman setting up	[2: clouds in speeded-up motion, traveling across sky]	53–66: musicians playing in orchestra pit
2	67: animated number "1" tilting up	68: tracking shot on house window at night	214–224: window shutter and woman's eye blink alternately
3	225: extreme close up of iris opening and closing (node ending segment 2 or opening segment 3)	226: traveling shot of tree leaves, building façade	
4	398: close up of camera tilting down against street background		561–583: ambulance and fire truck rush through streets (other important rapid cutting section: 468–544: eye blinking and street)
5	584: close up of lens barrel tilting up	585: traveling shots of buildings	793–929: cameraman and machine parts revolving, followed by 932–956: car horn and cameraman in traffic*
6	957: close up of lens barrel tilting down (node ending segment 5 or opening segment 6)		1174–1199: motorcyclists and carousel riders both go round
7	1200: close up of camera mounted on motorcycle driven by camera (node ending segment 6 or beginning segment 7)	1201: traveling shot of sea by moonlight	1290–1400: people enjoying a concert of spoons and washboard music
8 Epilogue	1402: close up of animated tripod (opening shot, 1401: audience in movie house)		1515–1712: the city pulsates with manic energy

*In addition to this ending being unusual insofar as it provides a double climax, one should note that they are separated from each other by what I have identified as structural nodes characteristic of a segment's opening: close up of lens, followed by tracking shot of traffic policeman (930–931).

Outline for an Interpretation of *Man with the Movie Camera*

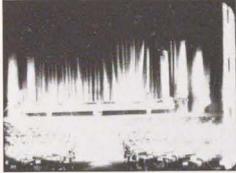
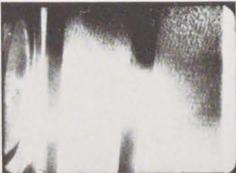
	Image Track (shots)	Narrative Discourse (sections)	Metaphorical Discourse (units)	
Prologue: Going Back in Time and Space: How the Cine-Eye Transformed the Bourgeois Cinema				
		1-4	1. Standing on a mound in the image of a giant camera, a cameraman films a building and clouds going past it. A lamppost indicates that it's getting late. The cameraman leaves.	1. The Cine-Eye cameraman appropriates the bourgeois cinema and transforms it by putting it to a new use. Exploring space and time metaphorically, he traces back the evolution of socialist cinema and society (324-325, 339-346).
Segment One: The Cinema Experience before the Revolution				
		5-21	2. At the end of his day's work, the cameraman goes into the movie house where everything is being readied for the evening screening: the projectionist threads the film, the entrance curtains are opened, seats open on their own.	2. The cameraman goes back in time to the movie house as it is used before the Revolution. It is an ornate movie house where everything happens by magic—as mysteriously as a cinema seat opening on its own (424-426).
		22-31	3. The members of the audience take their seats, already opened for them.	3. The prerevolutionary audience fits in this magical surrounding in an uncritical fashion (424-426).
		32-66	4. The musicians and their classical instruments are ready in the orchestra pit. The film starts. The orchestra plays with energy (437-438).	4. The audience has to watch films drowned under heavy musical accompaniment, for the cinema is not yet 100 percent cinema and is therefore not free of intruding elements such as music (23-24).
Segment Two: The Revolution Brought About by Socialism and the Newsreel Cinema				
		67-77	5. Day breaks in the city. We see a woman with an ornate ring asleep, intercut with images including a movie poster advertising a dramatic film.	5. The prerevolutionary cinema is like a bourgeois woman asleep (228, 351-353, 383).

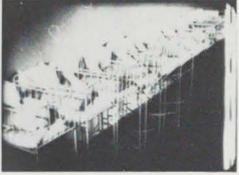
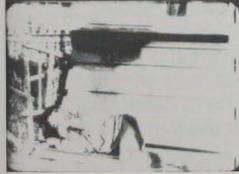
Image Track (shots)	Narrative Discourse (sections)	Metaphorical Discourse (units)
		<p>78–105</p> <p>6. Buildings are still closed. The streets are deserted, except for tramps asleep. Babies sleep in a maternity ward. Shots of mannequins in shop windows alternate with shots of buildings (412–413).</p> <p>6. The old films, the artistic dramas, are infectious, like tramps in rags, and lifeless, like a dead city. Amidst this dead society is a newborn hope, the newsreel cinema. This new cinema, built as solidly as buildings are built with bricks, is the opposite of the window-dressing cinema—a cinema of puppets influenced by the theater (319, 326, 374, 378, 421–422).</p>
	<p>106–126</p> <p>7. Machines in factories and offices are still waiting to be used. Shots of inanimate objects such as an abacus, a stuffed dog (327–328).</p>	<p>7. The prerevolutionary society and cinema are as primitive as an abacus, as inert as a stuffed dog, as inefficient as dead machines. But there are already signs that life, and not the theater, could become the subject of film (327).</p>
		<p>127–187</p> <p>8. The woman with the ornate ring is still asleep. Shots of a movie poster advertising a dramatic film. The cameraman goes to work. He travels by car to a railway line outside the city and films an early train coming in. Meanwhile, the woman wakes up and gets dressed to go to work (429, 445).</p> <p>8. 1917: a new kind of filmmaking, the newsreel cinema, bursts in on the scene and wakes up the cinema out of its sleep. Movement is brought to a static world (353–355, 383, 399–400, 427).</p> <p>9. This upheaval accomplished by film in the early days of the Revolution is paralleled by the Agit trains reestablishing communications during the Civil War throughout the Soviet Republics (227, 325–326).</p> <p>10. The new cinema transforms the old one just as the new society transforms the status of women (367–369).</p>
	<p>188–201</p> <p>9. The cameraman films tramps in the street as they now wake up, dazzled by the early morning sun and disturbed by the presence of the camera.</p>	<p>11. In the early days of the new society, the Cine-Eye confronts the old tramplike cinema with the truth, piercing through it like a ray of sun (383–428).</p>

Image Track (shots)	Narrative Discourse (sections)	Metaphorical Discourse (units)
 	<p>202–225</p> <p>10. The woman now washes herself while the city streets and buildings are also being cleaned. She opens the venetian blinds, which let in the light from the street.</p>	<p>12. Thanks to the Revolution and to the Cine-Eye, cinema and society emerge from the past purified. People start to see the world with new eyes and to concentrate their attention on everyday life (56, 337, 383, 401).</p>

Segment Three: The Cine-Eye Cameraman

	<p>226–243</p> <p>11. The cameraman films the life of the city as it awakens: buses, trolleys, airplanes coming out of their sheds. He walks by a movie poster advertising a dramatic film. An unemployed woman is still asleep on a bench in the street. Exterior of a department store. Increasing traffic in the street.</p>	<p>13. The Cine-Eye cameraman brings out cinema from the closed world of movie studios to the arena of everyday life, forcing the cine-drama to give way to the newsreel cinema (355–356).</p>
 	<p>244–281</p> <p>12. The cameraman climbs up a factory smokestack to obtain a panoramic view while the factory machines are set in motion by the first shift of workers. He films a mining complex (199, 412).</p>	<p>14. After the Civil War, the Cine-Eye cameraman acts as a catalyst in the reconstruction process and as a witness to the reactivation of factories and mining industries (365, 423).</p>
	<p>282–289</p> <p>13. The cameraman films an early market scene: peasants from the countryside come to the city to sell their produce and wares.</p>	<p>15. The Cine-Eye cameraman helps to promote the alliance between town and country, workers and peasants (276–277).</p>
<p>226–289</p>	<p>(See sections 11, 12, 13.)</p>	<p>16. The Cine-Eye cameraman is like an omnipresent eye in everyday life, using all his agility to keep up with the speed of life, observing and capturing all the facts of life relevant to the workers (289–290, 384).</p> <p>17. The Cine-Eye cameraman is part of the masses, a worker among others. As he films them in order to connect them with each other, he is careful not to disturb them in their work (334).</p>

Image Track
(shots)Narrative Discourse
(sections)Metaphorical Discourse
(units)

290–303

14. Increasing traffic on the streets: traffic policeman, storefront windows open up, window shutters open up, a demonstration of workers, the Bolshoi fountain. Inside, those not yet at work brush their teeth.

18. The old life, epitomized by the Bolshoi theater, is so stifling that one needs to open all the shutters to freshen up things.

The Cine-Eye cameraman and the Socialist workers bring a breath of fresh air (20–21).

304–319

15. The cameraman films the reflection of a poster advertising a dramatic film on a glass door. The postman rides a bicycle on his rounds. The traffic policeman operates a signal. Animated mannequins in shop windows: riding a bicycle, working at a sewing machine. Trolley cars (320, 367).

19. The cinema too is being aired as it moves outdoors. Thanks to the Cine-Eye, the static cinema of puppets has given way to the cinema of movement that is 100 percent cinema (356–357, 431).

320–387

16. The cameraman films a train on its way to the city. At the railway station, well-dressed passengers hire horse cabs to take them home. The cameraman, from a car, films these passengers on their ride home across the city (293, 412).

20. Carrying the spirit of the Revolution forward, the Cine-Eye cameraman denounces those who, like the NEP people, live by prerevolutionary standards: using old-fashioned, private means of transport, relying on others to drive them around and carry their suitcases (290–293, 430).

345–384

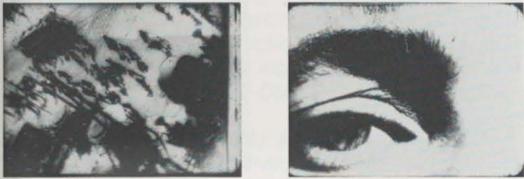
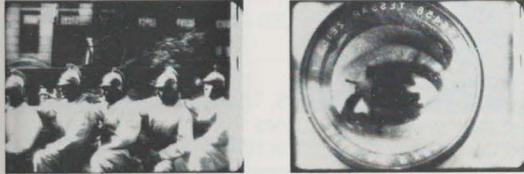
17. A woman editor at work. She classifies footage made up of shots that include some from a market scene (cf. section 12) and images of children from the magician scene (section 40) (282–283, 367–368).

21. The cameraman works closely with the Cine-Eye editor to tell the truth. Together they have demiurgic powers: freezing images from real life and then breathing life into them by juxtaposing and projecting them. They use this power not to play with emotions and illusions as the cine-drama does, but to inform, denounce, educate (113–114, 329, 359–360, 412, 430–431).

	Image Track (shots)	Narrative Discourse (sections)	Metaphorical Discourse (units)	
		387–397	18. After he has left the passengers at their home, the cameraman walks down the street, his camera on his shoulder. People enter a building. The traffic policeman operates a signal. A woman picks up the phone (293).	22. The Cine-Eye cameraman and editor, a man and a woman, working together, guide the audience inside the movie house, just as the traffic policeman guides the movement of the crowd on the street (287–289).
	226–397	(See sections 11 to 18.)	23. In the early days of its work, the Cine-Eye shoots and classifies pieces of film truth before moving on, at a later stage, to organize those pieces in a way that in itself tells the truth about Soviet life (331–335).	

Segment Four: The Cine-Eye Camera

		398–443	19. The cameraman films couples being married and divorced at a registry office and others being married in a church. He also films funeral processions and women weeping on graves.	24. The camera can document social transformations taking place in different times and places as easily as it juxtaposes in one moment birth, marriage, divorce, and death (406).
				25. Thanks to the camera, the Cine-Eye can record historical processes on film, such as progress achieved in Civil Law (the new marriage and divorce laws as opposed to the old church weddings) (233, 405–406).
		437–449	20. At the same time that the funeral processions are taking place, a woman gives birth to a baby in a maternity ward, and the cameraman films high-rise buildings (413).	26. The task of the Cine-Eye is to document the death of the old society and the birth and growth of the newborn Soviet organism (274, 412–413, 421–422).
		450–467	21. The cameraman films various activities in the entrance hall of a hotel: the elevator goes up and down, people go in and out of the hallway, people use the telephone box. We also see activities in the street: trolleys cross each other.	27. The camera is a "communication box" carrying (images of) people, connecting people with each other. Similarly, the elevator, the trolley car, and the telephone are "communication boxes" carrying people (or their voices) and establishing connections between them (322–323).

Image Track (shots)	Narrative Discourse (sections)	Metaphorical Discourse (units)	
	468–544	22. Traffic increases on the street. The cameraman's eye can hardly keep up with the chaos of movement on the street (383).	28. The camera extends our field of perception in a way the human eye—dependent on the limitations of the human body—cannot do. The camera makes us see the world anew and explores phenomena unknown to us until now (168–170, 384–385, 401).
	545–584	23. The chaos in the street leads to a traffic accident. An ambulance is called, and the cameraman follows it closely in his car. The victim is brought on a stretcher in the ambulance (410).	29. The Cine-Eye camera and cameraman can report on life as rapidly as an ambulance or fire brigade reaches the place of an accident (364–411).
		24. In the meantime, a fire station is alerted. A fire truck rushes out to the spot of the fire, accompanied by the cameraman. Meanwhile, the ambulance rushes the victim to the hospital (410).	30. The camera and cameraman play as responsible and vital a role in modern society as the ambulance, the fire truck, and their crews (384).
468–584	(See sections 22, 23, 24.)	31. The true function of cinema is to capture life on the spot as quickly as possible. Speed brings out truth: it catches people unaware and penetrates their thoughts (384).	

Segment Five: The Cine-Eye Editor

	585, 642 931–938	25A/31A. The cameraman films the traffic policeman operating the traffic signal amid a crowd in the street.	32. The role of the Cine-Eye editor is to guide the spectators just as the traffic policeman guides the crowd in the street.
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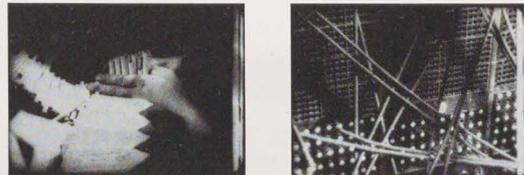
Image Track (shots)	Narrative Discourse (sections)	Metaphorical Discourse (units)
	<p>585–620</p> <p>25. Various forms of everyday manual activities, such as construction work, washing, haircutting, camera cranking, manicuring, film splicing (29).</p>	<p>33. Like manual workers, and unlike the bourgeois, the editor and the cameraman work with their naked hands (380–382).</p> <p>34. Unlike beauty-parlor activities, editing fulfills a socially useful public service and not a purely aesthetic purpose (380–382).</p> <p>35. In the Soviet society of the 1920s, there are still class differences between those who live off the manual labor of others (the new NEP bourgeoisie) and those who earn their wages by working with their hands (the proletariat). The Cine-Eye is on the latter's side (380–382).</p>
	<p>621–641</p> <p>26. Women workers are busy making cloth and garments in the factory, while the editor works at the editing table (367).</p>	<p>36. The process the editor goes through in organizing the filmed material from life is comparable to that of the workers manufacturing a garment, from the initial manufacturing of the cloth at the textile factory to putting the final stitches to a dress (371–374).</p>
	<p>642–696</p> <p>27. Women workers package cigarettes in the tobacco factory, while telephone operators work at the switchboard in the telephone exchange (368–369).</p>	<p>37. Editing is building with pieces of film in the same way a factory worker makes cigarette packages out of pieces of paper (374).</p> <p>38. Editing is making connections and leading people to make connections, an activity that can be compared to that of the telephone operator plugging in and out different lines of communication (146, 374–375).</p> <p>39. In editing, manual and mechanized labor complement each other.</p>

Image Track
(shots)Narrative Discourse
(sections)Metaphorical Discourse
(units)

697-734

28. Various forms of connecting gestures, such as typing, lifting a telephone, registering cash, playing a piano, and cocking a pistol. Meanwhile, the editor classifies film rolls.

40. Editing is both establishing communication and creating a visual and rhythmic whole. Editing is the continuous transposition of film pieces until these fit with each other both on a semantic and visual level, until the film becomes an organic and semantic structure (375-377, 407-408).

735-793

29. While the editor goes on classifying and numbering shots, the cameraman films miners inside coal and iron mines and workers inside steel plants. He then goes on to film a hydroelectric power dam (401).

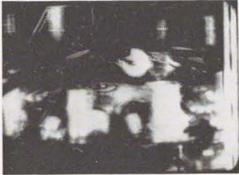
41. Editing, like filmmaking, is a process of comparison of two different realities. The cinematic reality of an event lies in the interaction between that event and how the camera filmed it. Film is not an imitation of life, nor is it life itself; but it is a parallel activity, as vital as life but with its own pulse (420).

42. The editor depends on the cameraman as the iron and steel works depend on the hydroelectric dam for energy.

43. The cameraman acquires his material as the miner digs the ore from the mine. And the editor weaves this material together as the spinning machine in the textile factory weaves the cloth (364, 407).

44. Editing, as a process of observation, classification, analysis, and synthesis, goes on at every stage of the filmmaking process. Editing and recording life are part of a continuous process, which, like the water of the hydroelectric dam, must be kept in constant flow to produce energy (407-408).

45. The Cine-Eye is coming of age in 1928. So is Soviet society, which is now being industrialized on a large scale, as is shown by the Dnieper Dam hydroelectric project (424).

	Image Track (shots)	Narrative Discourse (sections)	Metaphorical Discourse (units)
	794–929	30. The cameraman films pieces of machinery rotating at an increasingly faster pace (437–438).	46. The Cine-Eye editor educates the New Man through an understanding of the rhythm and speed of the machine (332, 510).
	930–957	31. The cameraman films the traffic policeman, trolleys, heavy street traffic, and car horns (416).	47. The editor turns the apparent visual chaos of everyday life into an ordered world, just as a horn makes way for the car amid the chaotic traffic of the street. 48. Just as the Cine-Eye cameraman is omnipresent, and the Cine-Eye camera ubiquitous, so the Cine-Eye editor is always at work in everyday life.

Segment Six: The Historical Debate Between the Cine-Eye and the Cine-Drama

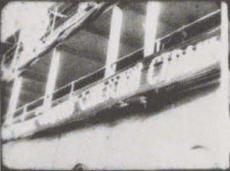
		958–976	32. End of working day. Machines stop in factory. Workers wash. A steamship arrives at a seaside resort. Shots of clouds and tree leaves.	49. Having almost reached the term of its retrospective about the evolution of Soviet cinema since 1917, it now remains for the Cine-Eye to recapitulate one further aspect of that development, namely, the recent debate opposing unacted and acted cinema, that is, the Cine-Eye films to the cine-dramas (385–386).
		977–991	33. Activities at the end of a summer's day. Some people lie about lazily on the beach, play with each other in the sun.	50. NEP people watching dramatic films behave like the actors they see on the screen: flirting, telling each other secrets, exhibiting their bodies, and giggling (293–294, 360–363).
		992–996	34. Suddenly, a swimming class goes through swimming movements, a magician prepares tricks to entertain children, the tarpaulin of the fair's merry-go-round comes down.	51. In that kind of film, everything appears by magic. The montage of images depends on the whim of the editor-magician. We are not told how things come about, how swimmers can swim (362).

Image Track (shots)	Narrative Discourse (sections)	Metaphorical Discourse (units)		
		997–1004	35. Details of the sports wall journal refer to the ongoing debate over the question of youth participation and records in sports (289, 369, 412).	52. Just as there is a rift between the Trade Union and the Youth Communist League over the sports question—the former encouraging individual record breaking, the latter collective participation—so there is a division between acted and unacted films, the former encouraging the star system, the latter turning the masses into actors in their own film. This debate points out the different class interests existing in the Soviet Union between those who want to educate and inform the masses and those who want to mystify them (369–370).
	1005–1032	36. Individual athletes gracefully perform high jumps and pole vaults while the crowd watches, dazzled (168, 328, 415).	53. Actors in the dramatic cinema, the kings and queens of the screen, are like sports stars performing individually in slow motion under the gaping eyes of the audience (369–370, 430).	
		1033–1042	37. A fashionable woman under a parasol laughs as she watches racing horses and carriages. The movement of the horses running is arrested and frozen on the screen.	54. Cine-dramas lead their audiences to gape like a fashionable woman admiring horse races. Cine-Eye films educate the audience by stopping the images so that the latter can be explored.
	1043–1055	38. A man dives from the high board. The class of swimmers is now taught the crawl stroke in a systematic way (177, 230).	55. The Cine-Eye film teaches the audience to understand the process behind what they see, just as the swimming instructor teaches the swimmers how to swim correctly (362).	

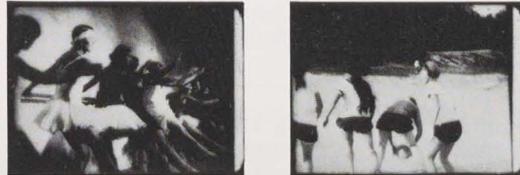
Image Track (shots)	Narrative Discourse (sections)	Metaphorical Discourse (units)	
	1053–1079	<p>39. The cameraman comes down from the steamship, adorned with a banner in the style of the Civil War agit ships, and goes ashore to the seaside resort. There some are still basking in the sun and playing on the beach, while others are having sulphur and mineral baths. The cameraman joins the latter, taking his camera with him even while he is in the water (361, 431).</p>	<p>56. The difference between the Cine-Eye films and the dramatic artistic cinema is the same as that between the workers who use the beach as a health resort, as a repair shop, and those who use it to laze about (293–294, 360–363).</p> <p>57. The Cine-Eye—which has its origins in the Civil War newsreel cinema—enlightens the people about the divisions underlying society's structure and takes sides with the masses, not the elite (293–294).</p>
	1080–1096	<p>40. Little boys and girls, amazed and delighted, watch a magician performing tricks: hooking and unhooking two slitless metal circles, making a mouse appear and disappear (282–283).</p>	<p>58. The invisible editing used in the dramatic cinema mystifies its audience like a magician galvanizes children by performing tricks for them (328–329, 359–360).</p>
	1097–1160	<p>41. Obese women undergo therapy to lose weight, while ballerinas practice at the barre, and athletes throw the javelin and put the shot. Women play a game of basketball and men play a game of football, both as recreational activities, without spectators (199, 385, 416).</p>	<p>59. The construction of dramatic films is as heavy, predictable, and cumbersome as overfed people, and as grandiose and theatrical as Bolshoi ballerinas. In contrast, the unfolding of Cine-Eye films is spontaneous, alert, unpredictable, like a lively game of basketball or football. Instead of being static and decorative, Cine-Eye editing opens up new spaces, new possibilities, and expands our horizons (117, 370–371).</p>

Image Track
(shots)

Narrative Discourse
(sections)

Metaphorical Discourse
(units)

1161–1189

42. The cameraman films a motorcycle race from a motorcycle on the track, while people enjoy themselves on the wooden horses of a merry-go-round.

60. Life inspires the script of the Cine-Eye film, whereas the cine-drama imposes its preestablished script on life. The Cine-Eye tracks down live images from nature itself, and so the cameraman follows a motorcycle on the racetrack itself. In contrast, the cine-drama creates an artificial world preordained by a scriptwriter, just as the fun-fair carousel goes round under the mechanical music of a puppet conductor (160–161, 390).

1190–1200

43. Now the motorcycles and the wooden horses travel in opposite directions on their respective circular tracks, clockwise and counterclockwise. The cameraman rides his motorcycle—on which the camera is mounted—toward us, the audience.

61. The cine-drama and the Cine-Eye are moving in two radically different directions. The audience must choose which one to follow. The former is a reactionary form of entertainment, as slow and primitive as wooden horses on a merry-go-round; the latter is a revolutionary means of communication, as fast and progressive as the racing motorcycle.

Segment Seven: The Cine-Eye Debate Today in the Context of Socialist Construction

1201–1204

44. The sea by moonlight, interrupted by a torn film image of that same shot. Leaves of trees blowing in the wind.

62. Today, the cine-drama is like a film image of moonlight reflection on water, which the Cine-Eye film (and the Cultural Revolution) tears apart (378, 385–386).

1205–1222

45. The cameraman films a cine-drama poster showing cowboys, a gypsy dancer, and a love scene; he then shoots men and women drinking excessively in a beer hall, and a church outside the hall (288, 296, 496).

63. Yet the Cine-Eye debate still goes on, and cine-dramas still exert their bad influence. They keep the audience in an unconscious state, just as alcohol has a demoralizing influence on workers: both take away the workers' capacity to think and act clearly. Cine-dramas are a kind of cine-vodka, also comparable to the influence of religion, which excites and intoxicates workers (378–379).

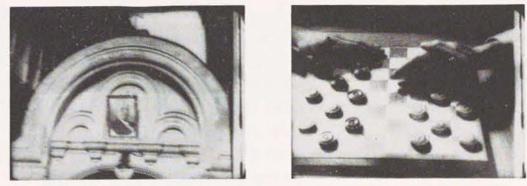
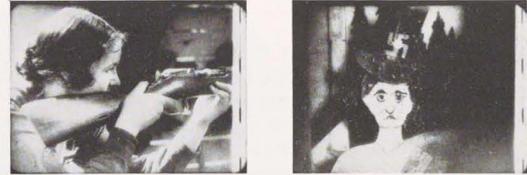
Image Track (shots)	Narrative Discourse (sections)	Metaphorical Discourse (units)
	1223–1226 46. Workers' recreational activities in a Lenin Club. Games of chess and checkers. A man and a woman read the newspaper (276).	64. In contrast, the influence of the Cine-Eye films today can be compared to that of the workers' clubs, where healthful and invigorating activities take place. Cine-Eye films address themselves above all to the audience's conscious faculties; they are led to interact with film through a process of reflection comparable to that involved in playing chess and reading (378–379).
	1227–1267 47. A fun-fair shooting gallery. A woman shoots down beer bottles and targets depicting a fairy-tale scene and a puppet with a swastika on its hat (236–237, 296).	65. The greatest source of danger for the Cine-Eye films are the cine-dramas imported from abroad, especially from capitalist Germany; the latter is responsible for much of the intoxication of the Soviet people through its fairy-tale movies, its beer, and its fascist propaganda. This nauseating influence of cine-dramas must be wiped out, just as targets are shot down in a fun-fair gallery (103–105).
	1268–1289 48. The cameraman leaves the beer hall for another Lenin Club. There he films a bust of Marx, men playing chess, women playing checkers, radio control knobs, sound lamps, loudspeakers playing music.	66. Film has marked a revolutionary step in organizing and communicating the visible world to workers. Now the Cine-Ear will work toward organizing the audible world for workers. Sound must be organized along the same principle as image. Sound is comparable to the image in the same way that a game of checkers is to a game of chess and a woman to a man (424–426). 67. The Cine-Eye film is a socialist means of communication. Ever since Marx, communication among proletarians has grown more extensive. The advent of socialism and the progress of communication in the U.S.S.R. went hand in hand. Both led to a new kind of analytical perception, based on reflection and in keeping with the analytical principles of Marxism.

Image Track
(shots)Narrative Discourse
(sections)Metaphorical Discourse
(units)

1290–1400

49. Workers are shown outside laughing and enjoying a concert improvised with homemade rhythmical instruments, including spoons, bottles, saucepans.

68. Sound and image in the Cine-Eye films address themselves not only to the audience's political consciousness, but also to its subliminal consciousness. Their rhythmical organization has a liberating effect (165–166, 439–441).

Segment Eight: The Cinema Today as a Revolutionary Experience for the Audience



1401–1421

50. In the evening, at the end of their day's work and recreation, the Soviet people now watch the films made of them. They watch with amazement and joy a scene where, through animated motion, the tripod walks on its own and the camera head swivels as if taking a bow (177, 235, 411).

69. Today, Soviet audiences can experience 100 percent cinema—that is, the kind of film like the Cine-Eye, which has no need for theatrical, literary, or histrionic elements, but has a cinematic life of its own (23–24, 119).

1422–1425

51. We, as an audience, are made to watch what the Soviet audience sees on the screen, in particular, a shiny strip or cable winding around a spool.

70. Film is an illusion: a process of winding and unwinding a strip of plastic that creates the illusion of unwinding time and space. But film is also a reality: thanks to the Cine-Eye film, a new revolutionary cinema room is created in which the audience can understand the process behind film and society (420).



1426–1442

52. The audience reacts strongly to what it sees on the screen: to the jazz dancers and the ballerinas moving in rhythm to music and to a gunman shooting down enemy planes.

71. Instead of swallowing everything they are shown, as if under the spell of an illusion, today's audience can experience film both as a rhythmical structure and a political act. It is by empathizing with the rhythm of images that the audience finds the appropriate reaction to the excesses of the NEP dancers and to the heroism of the Socialist gunman defending his country (309, 439–441).

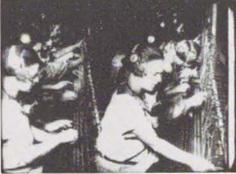
Image Track (shots)	Narrative Discourse (sections)	Metaphorical Discourse (units)	
	1443-1454	53. The audience now watches various activities of the day gone by: working at the telephone exchange, typing, traveling by trolley.	72. Working-class audiences watch a film by connecting images as fast as a telephone operator connects lines, or a typist types, and as comprehensively as trolley cars link different locations (427).
	1455-1506	54. The audience sees the Cine-Eye cameraman on the screen filming from a motorcycle on a racetrack, and then again various other activities of the day: people like them traveling by carriage, trolley, bicycle, car, and bus.	73. Cine-Eye, by making films about everyday people, enables the audience to become its own hero on the screen. People thus come to realize that what they see on the screen was made by them and therefore belongs to them. And so the Cine-Eye establishes a cine-link between the people of the Soviet Union, just as all the progressive means of communication act as a catalyst for social organization (234-235).
	1507-1514	55. More excerpts from what the audience sees on the screen: trains rushing by at top speed, the cameraman becoming one with the crowd, a clock pendulum ticking increasingly faster, and the Bolshoi Theater collapsing on itself.	74. After the Revolution of 1917, which saw the agit cinema and the agit trains working hand in hand, and which was made by the very people in this audience, a Cultural Revolution is in progress. Once again, the bastions of the ruling class such as the Bolshoi Theater, are being stormed (20-21, 323-324, 358, 427).
			

Image Track
(shots)Narrative Discourse
(sections)Metaphorical Discourse
(units)**Epilogue: The Cinema of the Future: The Potential of Man with the Movie Camera**

1515–1584

56. Inside the movie house, the screen curtain opens up for a penultimate recapitulation of the events of the day. The cameraman is seen filming fashionable passengers in a horse and carriage from a car (which moves in the opposite direction from the carriage). He also films clouds passing behind a railroad bridge and an airplane taking off (451–452).

75. As we look ahead, we realize that the cine-drama, like the NEP people, is fated to disappear. Meanwhile, the Cine-Eye, like the airplane, has an unlimited future.



1585–1610

57. People are shown going around town at an increasingly faster pace: in the hallways, along the street, via trolleys and trains. The cameraman films them from an equally fast-moving car. And the audience is shown flashing at them at an ever quickening tempo.

76. The future of the Cine-Eye film and Soviet society lies in increasingly extensive communication, greater speed, faster perception, and growing subliminal awareness both among cinema audiences and among people in the street (169–170, 383–384).



1611–1712

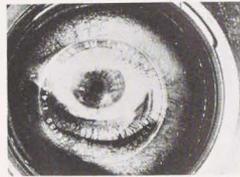
58. The editor's face and eyes (juxtaposed with the traffic signal and projector's beam) scan every bit of information on the film strip (juxtaposed with trains rushing across the country, with street crowds and trolleys) (369, 424).

77. Thanks to the vision of the Cine-Eye filmmaker—epitomized here by the piercing and vigilant eyes of the Cine-Eye editor—the chaos of life can now be conceptualized and mastered, and a synthesis of the Communist city of the future—pulsating with life—can now be conveyed (236, 431).



78. The filmmaker's power to scan the world, to penetrate nature, and to synthesize observations can be compared to the projector's light beaming through the dark movie house, to the trolley finding a path through the crowd, and to the signal guiding traffic (383).

79. The film strip, like the train rushing across Soviet land, heightens people's perception by rushing through the landscape created within the space of the movie house (57, 227, 353–354).

Image Track
(shots)Narrative Discourse
(sections)Metaphorical Discourse
(units)

1697–1712

59. As the clock's pendulum ticks at a maddening tempo, the film's rhythm reaches a climax, until finally the cameraman's eye is revealed behind the camera's shutter. The camera's iris closes down, but behind it the cameraman's eye remains opened, ready to film another day's work (449).

80. The decoding and encoding of the world is an activity which, like the ticking of a clock, is in perpetual motion. The phenomenal era of transformation and progress begun by the first decade of socialist construction in the Soviet Union is not over. Like a perpetual revolution, like the Cine-Eye which never goes to sleep, the work of socialism goes on, and there is an unlimited potential for Man, equipped with a movie camera (323–324).

Notes

1 This excerpt from my dissertation, "Dziga Vertov and *Man with the Movie Camera*," was not meant to be published separately. It was meant to provide an outline summing up my interpretation of the film to be read in conjunction with the rest of the thesis. The reader will not find in the present article any elaboration on this outline.

Nor will the reader find here a discussion of the method I used to decode the film. The thrust of my dissertation is to show that there is a key to decoding each of the 1,712 images in *Man with the Movie Camera*. This key is to be found, I argue, in an analysis of Vertov's poetic system, elaborated before he came to the cinema, and fully developed in conjunction with his filmmaking practice and his work as a political activist.

According to my analysis, the images of *Man with the Movie Camera* are linked in four different ways: (1) through a metaphoric process (inspired by poetry and elaborated in Vertov's use of montage and special-effect photography); (2) through an analytical process (inspired by Marxist philosophy and elaborated in Vertov's inductive mode of editing); (3) through a narrative process (inspired by fantastic literature and elaborated in Vertov's continuity editing borrowed from fiction film); and (4) through a rhythmical process (inspired by music and elaborated in Vertov's sound experiments). At the same time, the film is a political tract, and the images need elucidation at that level too. A large part of the thesis is devoted to the political situation that grew out of the October Revolution and to its shaping of Vertov's arguments in *Man with the Movie Camera*.

The images accompanying the interpretation outline here were chosen especially for this article and are not a part of the thesis. They are meant to serve as visual references and do not represent a systematic illustration of the narrative and metaphorical discourses. For example, there are few illustrations of the special-effect photography that plays such a large part in the film and in helping us decode it.

The translation of Vertov's writings was made for the French and German editions, since at the time my thesis was written, the English translation, edited by Annette Michelson, had not yet been published. I wish to thank the editors of *Studies in Visual Communication* for their patience and care in publishing this excerpt and its many illustrations. My thanks also go to Alfred Guzzetti of Harvard University for his guidance and support throughout my

years of research on *Man with the Movie Camera*, and to Vlada Petric, of the Harvard Film Archives, whose appetite for Vertov proved infectious.

- 2 The film was shot in Moscow, Odessa, and Kiev, but edited in such a way as to create the illusion of one city. On this kind of editing, see Sauzier 1982:415–417. For an account of the film that attempts to describe it neither as a systematic narrative nor as a metaphorical discourse, see Feldman 1979:98–109.
- 3 See Tuch 1975:36–38:

Man with the Movie Camera, in the tradition of the picaresque, details the "adventures" of a travelling cameraman, who encounters and coordinates his diverse impressions of everyday life . . . while simultaneously exposing differences between social classes. . . . The cameraman "hero" travels through this world of material economic activities and social classes with the critical spirit of the *picaresque* hero, observing with self-conscious detachment and affection the events of daily existence.

- 4 Mention of shot numbers in what follows refers to my shot-by-shot description of the film in Appendix One of Sauzier 1982.
- 5 See Luke 1967:110–128. I am indebted to Luke's essay on Rilke's *Duino Elegies* both for the terminology and for providing a model of systematic reading of a poem in metaphorical terms.
- 6 The only published segmentation of the film I know of is that of Crofts and Rose (1977:15–16), which is based on the themes of "A Day in the Life of a Soviet City" coupled with that of "The Film Construction Process." Following is their breakdown of the film (the shots refer to their own unpublished shot list):
1. A Credo, or, in Barthes's analysis of classical rhetoric, an Eggressio, designed to show off the orator's, or in this case the film's, capacities (shots 1–4).
 2. Induction: The Audience for the Film (shots 5–67).
 3. Section One: Waking. This comprises the whole series beginning and ending with the Waking Woman (shots 68–207).
 4. Section Two: The Day and Work Begin. This concludes with the introduction of the first editing segment (shots 208–341).
 5. Section Three: The Day's Work (shots 342–955).
 6. Section Four: Work Stops, Leisure Begins (shots 956–1399).
 7. Coda: The Audience for the Film (shots 1400–1716).
- 7 Even these terms are interchangeable, and some would argue that it is the scene that is subdivided into sequences. For the conventional terms, I have followed the nomenclature adopted by Monaco (1977) and by Bordwell and Thompson (1979).

8 The prints I used for my analysis are (1) the 35mm print of the Cinémathèque Québécoise, Montreal (acquired in 1972 from Gosfilmofond); (2) the 16mm print of the Museum of Modern Art; and (3) the 16mm print of the Harvard Film Archives. These three prints are identical, except for minor differences such as one white frame that appears one third of the way in segment 3 (shot 288B in my list); this appears to be the overexposed end of a reel and does not appear in the Harvard Film Archive print.

9 All shots in this table refer to my own list. Under the column "Corresponding Reels," "1935" refers to the 1935 shot-by-shot list by A. A. Fedorov and G. Averbukh, as reported by Feldman (1979:100–104, 109–110). "1972" refers to the Gosfilmofond print acquired in 1972 by the Cinémathèque Québécoise. The prints in distribution in the United States started to circulate, it seems, in 1966. Steven Hill (1967:28) notes: "This fascinating and controversial film was restored a year ago for 16 mm distribution in the United States by Brandon films."

Under the column "Animated Numbers," it should be noted that whereas the surviving number "1" tilts upward (implying the beginning of a segment), the numbers "2," "3," and "4," as described by Feldman, "fall away from the camera"—implying the end of a sequence (Feldman 1979:102, 103, 104).

10 The standard length of the prints in circulation in the United States, Canada, and Great Britain is approximately 1806m. According to M. Makhlina (1936), the original film was 1889m long (as reported in Feldman 1979:109).

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"Imitation White Man": Images of Transformation at the Carlisle Indian School

Lonna M. Malmshaimer

Historians, even cultural historians, have been reluctant to use photographs for the purposes of historical research. Only within the last twenty-five years has research in photographic history itself begun to reach a sophisticated state; with some exceptions, to other historians it remains an interesting but relatively unimportant subfield of the larger discipline (Borchert 1980:269–275). Materials usually reserved for photographic or art history, however, often appear when historians emerge from their own subfields to write textbooks whose publishers insist on or themselves develop elaborate illustrative apparatuses because they know that their audiences will not tolerate long, unrelieved bodies of print. That in itself is an indication of the social and cultural transformation that has occurred since the introduction of reproduced photographs into public discourse. Nevertheless, the use of photographs in textbooks remains largely decorative. Even when accompanied by identifying captions, photographs, unlike quotations, are seldom commented on in a substantially interpretive way or integrated within the flow of other historical description and analysis.

However, recent general interest in material culture may serve to correct this verbal bias. Such a correction could have considerable consequence, for, at least since the late nineteenth century, photographs have been an integral part of the cultural discourses that historians analyze and explain. At the most basic level, photographs are visual artifacts of a single historical event—a photographer “takes” a photograph of an object, his subject. In other words, the making of a photograph, at least of another person, is itself a social interaction that, however motivated, has consequences both large and small (Byers 1966:27–31). At a second level, photographs, like verbal documents, are expressive forms constructed by actors for various purposes and used by those actors in a conversation concerning themselves and others to record, illustrate, interpret, understand, persuade—indeed, in a semiotic sense, to take possession of—their social and cultural worlds. Moreover, the photographer both takes and later makes a photograph within the context of variously understood codes, both visual and verbal, without which the photograph has no meaning whatsoever for others. As Allan Sekula has argued:

Photography . . . is not an independent or autonomous language system, but depends on larger discursive conditions, invariably including those established by the system of verbal-written language. Photographic meaning is always a hybrid construction, the outcome of an interplay of iconic, graphic and narrative conventions. The photograph is invariably accompanied by and situated within an overt or covert text. [Sekula 1981:16]

Many photographs were made precisely because they were usable within a given communications situation, and others were used for purposes quite beyond those conceived by their makers. Because this is so, a genuinely historical interpretation of photographs requires that full attention be given to the communications contexts in which they were taken, made, and actually used. Moreover, where photographs have been important to a given historical discourse, they must be seen, in turn, as providing the context for the verbal documents that are more often the center of analytic attention. Not only, then, do words provide the necessary context for the interpretation of photographs, but photographs provide an essential and hitherto neglected visual context for the complete historical understanding of words. From this point of view, photographs are not so much reflections of a past material actuality as they are, like words, examples of a past symbolic reality.

The photographs that document the Carlisle Indian Industrial Training School number perhaps as many as 2,500, but only about 600 of them, taken by three different photographers, can be seen as integral to an understanding of the school in the sense outlined above; most of the others are head shots or small group portraits of students, and while they are of interest to those seeking knowledge of certain individuals, they contribute little to the social history of the school as an institution. Among the most relevant 600, a smaller number take on heightened symbolic importance by virtue of their repeated use, over time, for persuasive purposes. These particular photographs, taken by the local photographer J. N. Choate and used as before-and-after pairs, are iconic representations of the cultural transformation that was the central aim of the school. Their historical meanings can be determined only by reference to the larger persuasive discourse in which they were embedded; more important, understood within the context of the photographs, the full import of the verbal discourse becomes clearer. The aim of this article, therefore, is to include these photographs in formulating a historical understanding of a particular institution over a particular time and, by example, to suggest that such inclusion has methodological and substantive implications for the conclusions historians have reached about this particular institution.

Lonna M. Malmshaimer is Associate Professor and Director of American Studies at Dickinson College. She is currently working on a book on the photographic record of the Carlisle Indian Industrial School.

Richard Henry Pratt and Carlisle

The Indian Industrial Training School, known to tribal people simply as "Carlisle," was founded in 1879 in Carlisle, Pennsylvania, by Richard Henry Pratt, a career military officer and zealous reformer. As a young army officer in Indian territory, where he had worked with Plains Indians, Pratt had become convinced that tribal peoples could and should be assimilated into the territorially advancing white civilization. For him, assimilation was a matter of moral rectitude, social justice, and civil rights as well as a practical solution to a situation of conflict. He believed further that the destruction of the reservation system that materially supported tribal society was essential to the effort, and, as early as 1880, he argued for the immediate establishment of 500 schools, similar to Carlisle, which he believed would be needed for only one generation. Central to his thinking about assimilation was his insistence that such schools be located at a considerable distance from the reservations. As Pratt often stated: "To civilize the Indian, get him into civilization. To keep him civilized, keep him there." Likewise, he summarized his program for acculturation in his own blunt, unsentimental way: "The Indian must die as an Indian and live as a man."

For Pratt, then, to "live as a man" was to move "from barbarism into civilization," a phrase that became one of the school's often-repeated mottos. Like many of his time—though none were more energetic or more certain—Pratt had a very clear idea of the character of "barbarism." In spite of contrary, if conflicting, opinion among both contemporary missionaries and ethnologists (for whom he often expressed considerable contempt), he typically used the following adjectives in describing all tribal societies: "savagery," "communistic," "nomadic," "crude," "indolent," "disorderly," "dirty," "peace destroying," "ignorant," "imprudent," and "wild." Although his portrait of barbarism exhibits most of the assumptions of contemporary negative stereotypes of "the Indian" (he regarded the positive stereotype of the noble savage as "sentimental"), Pratt was equivocal when discussing the sources of those characteristics. At times, especially when called upon to explain and defend his own methods of assimilation, he spoke of barbarism as totally the product of environment. At other times, when a "retrogression" was noted in his ex-students who had returned to the reservation, he spoke of a combination of "heredity and environment." While Pratt never permitted an argument of race in the strictest biological sense to inform his thinking about the potential for "civilization" of tribal peoples, his use of the term "heredity" is problematic. Like other hereditarian thinking of the period and lacking an explicit theory of culture, Pratt's ideas exhibit an irresolvable ambiguity. His ultimate aim may well have been a

complete amalgamation of races, for at times he pointed out that, if tribal populations were dispersed throughout the country, each county would have very few Indians. Yet it would have been imprudent at best to press such an argument publicly, raising as it did the spectre of miscegenation. Whatever his projections of the eventual integration of tribal and white societies, his ultimate faith in his program of education for "civilization" never wavered, even though the difficulties and uncertainties of such education had to have become clearer to him as he gained experience at the school.

For Pratt, the entire civilizing process needed to be carried out in a way that brought his Indian students into daily and relatively intimate contact with whites. Because it tended to segregate the students, he saw even the school as a compromise in this respect and developed a program called the Outing System to facilitate acculturation processes. In this program, students who had acquired adequate English language training (generally requiring about three years) lived for varying lengths of time with white (mostly Quaker) families, attending local public schools and otherwise participating in community activities. While Pratt did not espouse an explicit cultural theory, then, his program exhibited commitment to what would now be a commonplace of cross-cultural education: that cultural immersion, though difficult, especially for the unwilling student, is the best route to cultural knowledge.

If Pratt was certain about the barbaric qualities of tribal life, he was equally certain about the character of civilization: "competitive," "virile," "gentlemanly," "peaceable," "serviceable," "industrious," "productive," "thrifty," "prudent," "self-supporting," "Christian," "individualistic," and, as he paradoxically put it, "obedient," "marching in line with America" (Pratt 1964 and 1979). Like many others of his time, he never doubted that such qualities were wholly desirable in all human beings; he differed from many of his contemporaries in his belief that tribal peoples were fully capable of both appreciating the superiority of those qualities and acquiring them. From the beginning, then, the Carlisle Indian School and its founder were highly controversial, and Pratt's efforts at acculturation were constantly challenged from various and conflicting points of view. Simply to establish and maintain Carlisle required continued persuasive activity directed at various agencies outside the school. In many of these activities Pratt made use of accompanying sets of photographs, for even before the founding of Carlisle he had learned that photographs could provide an important demonstration of the efficacy of his "final solution" to the "Indian problem."



Figure 1 Plains Indian Prisoners, Fort Marion (before). U.S. Army Military History Institute/Carlisle Barracks, Pa.

Early Photographs

Pratt's first use of before-and-after photographs as visual documentation of cultural transformation was made at Fort Marion, Florida, where he had experimented with the teaching of English to the Plains Indian prisoners that the army had placed in his charge (see Figures 1, 2). These stereographs were circulated not only among the reformers already concerned with the condition of tribal groups, but also in the more general commercial networks of the period. For at least one contemporary observer, Helen W. Ludlow of the Indian Rights Association, the meanings of this pair were very clear:

Before me, as I write, are two photographs. The Indians as they went into, and the same Indians as they came out of Fort Marion. Looking at these pictures, I am disposed to agree with the warriors that the old fort was their tomb. These half-naked, crouching forms with blankets dropping from their gauntness; with savage locks streaming over their eyes, and down to their knees; with barbaric ornaments of huge brass hoops in their ears and on their thin arms; with fierce and sullen faces; these are not even the bodies "that should be" when God should recreate the abject souls and give them bodies as it pleased Him—straight, erect, manly, with smiling, earnest faces, and hopeful, on-looking eyes, as here they stand on resurrection day, with their prison gates behind them. [Ludlow 1886:3]

Ludlow's commentary on the photographs reiterates the code of Pratt's own descriptions of barbarism and civilization and establishes the interpretive context of these visual documents. Transformation of the body stands for transformation of the soul; transformation of dress and demeanor, for transformation of identity. Christian resurrection provides the underlying metaphor: released from their prison (tomb) by God and civilization, the Indians, no longer half-naked, crouching, gaunt, savage, barbaric, fierce, and sullen, stand straight, erect, manly, smiling, earnest, hopeful, and on-looking. Given the power of the photograph as a

medium in 1880s America, before the flood of imagery characteristic of twentieth-century American culture, these photographs must have been quite arresting as persuasive devices.

Certainly Pratt thought them useful, for between 1878 and 1885 he saw to it that potential "before" photographs were made at the beginning of some student careers. In November 1878, when he brought a group of Plains Indians to Hampton Institute where they were to become trial students, he and General Samuel Chapman Armstrong, Hampton's supervisor, commissioned "before" portraits. Fourteen months later, after Pratt had moved on to establish his own school, the "after" versions followed. That the central and preconceived aim of these photographs was the eventual documentation of transformation is clear from the fact that only those who arrived in "reservation dress" were photographed.

Initiation

By the time Pratt brought the first group of (mostly Sioux) students to an unused army barracks at Carlisle, the making of potential "before" portraits had become a primary order of business: J. N. Choate, eventually to become the "official Indian School photographer," took a number of group portraits on October 5, 1879, the very day of the new students' arrival (see Figures 3, 4). These particular students were greeted earlier that day by a large group of townspeople who had been led by the local newspaper to expect that the new students would arrive in "reservation attire" (*Valley Sentinel*, Sept. 19, 1879:5).

Reaction to the group was reported in the *Valley Sentinel*: About twelve o'clock on Sunday night Captain Pratt arrived at the junction with eighty-six Sioux children . . . varying in age from ten to seventeen. Their dress was curious, made of different cheap material and representing all the shades and colors. Cheap jewelry was worn by the girls. Their moccasins are covered with fancy bead work.



Figure 2 Plains Indian Prisoners, Fort Marion (after). U.S. Army Military History Institute/Carlisle Barracks, Pa.

They carry heavy blankets and shawls with them and their appearance would not suggest that their toilet was a matter of care. Some of them were very pretty while others are extremely homely. All possessing the large black eye, beautiful pearl white teeth, the high cheek bone, straight-cut mouth and peculiar nose. The school is made up of 63 boys and 23 girls. The reason that there were more boys than girls is that the girls command a ready sale in their tribes at all times, while no value is attached to the boys. About 3000 savages assembled at the agency the night previous to the departure of the party and kept up a constant howling throughout the night. On the cars and here they have been very orderly and quiet. . . . The majority of the party are made up of the sons and daughters of chiefs. . . . The boys will be uniformed in gray material similar to that worn by the two Indians and instructors who have been here for some time. The girls will wear soft woolen dresses. [*Valley Sentinel*, Oct. 10, 1879:5]

The events at the railroad junction, like the preceding long boat and railroad trip and the following photographic session, were part of the student's initiation into civilization. So, too, the school required change in both dress and demeanor, since for eastern whites native dress was an essential symbol of the "wild tribes." Indeed, the phrase "blanket Indian" became an epithet, and a return to tribal ways was referred to as "going back to the blanket." A *Valley Sentinel* editorialist later commented on the transformation to come:

The work in which Capt. Pratt and his assistants are engaged would seem to an outside observer as both difficult and tedious, not to say unpleasant, but the experiment seems to have been successful at Hampton College, as we now have several of the students of that institution at the [Carlisle] Barracks, who seem to be clothed and in their right mind. [*Valley Sentinel*, Oct. 17, 1879:5]

"Citizen's clothes" and "right mind" are regarded as corollaries, and both are seen as indexical to the long-term goal of cultural assimilation. But the immediate interest of eastern whites, many of whom were more than a little skeptical of Pratt's plans, was to see a "real live Indian" in "native garb." A week later, a large number of people who assembled to greet them "were disappointed" when a second group of students (see Figure 5), who seem not to have been photographed by Choate, arrived "already dressed in citizens dress" (*Valley Sentinel*, Oct. 31, 1879:5). By mid-November, the newspaper commented positively on the "quite changed appearance" (*Valley Sentinel*, Nov. 14, 1879:5) of the earlier students in their new clothes.

Student reactions to these typical first stages of initiation into a total institution were not so uniformly positive. Luther Standing Bear, among the first and eventually (by Pratt's standards) one of the most successful of Carlisle's students, has described the reactions of the young male Sioux to the process of transformation. He reports that the school was ill prepared for its first students and, when they arrived, they spent the first few days without sufficient food (at least once eating only bread and water) and sleeping on cold floors. Nonetheless, classroom instruction in English was begun. As part of this early instruction, sometime during the first few weeks, each student selected a white man's name for himself by "pointing with a stick" to one written on a blackboard. Standing Bear notes that "none of the names were read or explained to us, so of course we did not know the sound or meaning of any of them." The boys were uncertain about whether it was "right" to choose a white man's name; Standing Bear himself chose "Luther" in the same way that he might have counted coups, acting "as if I were about to touch an enemy" (Standing Bear 1975:137). Some of the names chosen later caused considerable "merriment" when called out at



Figure 3 First Student Group, Boys (before). U.S. Army Military History Institute/Carlisle Barracks, Pa.



Figure 4 First Student Group, Girls (before). Anthropological Archives, Smithsonian Institution.

a public meeting attended by townspeople. The *Valley Sentinel* reported that "General Grant was there, as was also Abe Lincoln and Dan Tucker" (Jan. 2, 1880:5).

Choosing a new name and learning it was less traumatic for Standing Bear, who wanted to please his nice teacher, than the next initiation rite—the cutting of the young men's hair. An interpreter's announcement that all students would have their hair cut precipitated a spontaneous evening council of the Sioux in which the boys generally assented to the position taken by Kakpa Kesela (Robert American Horse): "If I am to learn the ways of the white people, I can do it just as well with my hair on." However, resistance was easily overcome when the boys were taken one by one from the classroom by the barber, each returning with short hair. Standing Bear, as he saw an increasing number of his peers shorn, "began to feel anxious to be 'in style,' . . . but when [his] hair was cut short, it hurt [his] feelings to such an extent that the tears came to [his] eyes." Years later Standing Bear explained at length:

Right here I must explain how this hair-cutting affected me in various ways. I have recounted that I always wanted to please my father in every way possible. All his instructions to me had been along this line: "Son, be brave and get killed." This expression had been molded into my brain to such an extent that I knew nothing else. But my father had made a big mistake. He should have told me, upon leaving home, to go and learn all I could of the white man's ways, and be like them. That would have given a new idea from a different slant; but Father did not

advise me along that line. I had come away from home with the intention of never returning alive unless I had done something very brave. Now, after having my hair cut, a new thought came into my head. I felt that I was no more Indian, but would be an imitation of a white man. And we are still imitations of white men, and the white men are imitations of the Americans. [Standing Bear 1975:141]

At least two of the older Sioux boys resisted hair cutting. Pratt reports that, in his absence from the school later in the evening, one then cut his own hair (among the traditional Sioux, done in grief or self-abnegation) and began what Pratt called a "discordant wailing" (a traditional expression of grief) on the parade ground of the school. Other students then joined in, alarming Mrs. Pratt. She quieted them, stating that if they did not stop the townspeople might come and "something dreadful might happen." Under the circumstances, it is not surprising that "soon all was quiet again" (Pratt 1964:232).

Hair cutting seems to have represented the nadir of group resistance and expressed emotion during these early stages of transformation. Standing Bear found the change from native dress to the military-style uniforms worn during class hours, and especially the citizen's clothing worn otherwise, an adventure, even buying additional items of clothing not provided by the school. Ernest White Thunder, on the other hand, wrote bitterly to his father, for whom a portrait photograph was then made (see Figure 6), that "we all look like soldiers now" (*Eadle Keatah Toh*, April 1880:2). When discovered by a group of visiting



Figure 5 First Student Group, Boys, Lower Ranks (after). Anthropological Archives, Smithsonian Institution.

Sioux leaders later that year, the military uniform, as well as the drill that became a part of Pratt's disciplinary regimen, caused considerable controversy. The training of his sons "as soldiers," along with their Christianizing, led prominent Sioux leader Spotted Tail to withdraw his children from the school.¹ Although some students, like Standing Bear, eventually judged the transformation, on balance, as positive, others continued to resist. White Thunder died at the school in the spring of 1880, refusing to accept both food and medical treatment that he did not trust. For students and their tribal parents, as for Eastern whites, then, transformation of appearance and demeanor both stood for and were part of transformation of identity and culture.

Within two months of the founding of the school, appearance cues to the tribal status of its students were apparent only when parents and tribal officials visited the school, in Mrs. Pratt's growing collection of tribal artifacts, and in the downtown studio of J.N. Choate, who put an increasing number of photographs on sale. Progress in compiling his Indian School series, which totaled more than a hundred photographs by August 19, 1881, was reported in newspapers and various school publications. In addition to large group photographs, often made on the school grounds, Choate made before-and-after studio portraits of individuals and small tribal groups (see Figures 7, 8). Whether full length or head shot (often both were made from the same negative), the photographs conform fully to the white portrait conventions of the time. Some tendency toward less formal pos-

ing, indeed probably for the photographer to have given less instruction in appropriate portrait demeanor, is evident in some of the "before" versions, especially those done outdoors rather than in the studio. Still, most of these portraits, especially the "after" versions, conform to patterns of self-presentation in the period portraits of middle-class whites. The subject, in most instances, faces the camera directly; the posture is taut and controlled; variation in gaze or position in the group photographs is controlled by the photographer; facial expression is serene and impassive, self-contained rather than interactive (see Figures 9, 10). Any interaction between the subjects clearly is engineered by the photographer, and the props are routine for the studios of the period. The portraits express an ideology of propriety and complete bodily control. The teaching of such matters was quite explicit at the school, as is often the case in an institution primarily aimed at socialization, and Pratt noted the changes that new students, especially males, underwent:

When dressed and in line for marching the new pupils are generally easily distinguished from the older ones, at least among the boys, for their shuffling gate [sic], the way the hat is worn and the hang of the hands But it is remarkable how soon these peculiarities disappear and they learn the martial tread and to tip the hat as they meet their friends. [*Eadle Keatah Toh*, 1882:2]



Figure 6 Ernest White Thunder. U.S. Army Military History Institute/Carlisle Barracks, Pa.



Figure 7 Navajo Group (before). Anthropological Archives, Smithsonian Institution.



Figure 8 Navajo Group (after). Anthropological Archives, Smithsonian Institution.



Figure 9 Mary Perry, John Chaves, Ben Thomas, and Pueblo (before). U.S. Army Military History Institute/Carlisle Barracks, Pa.

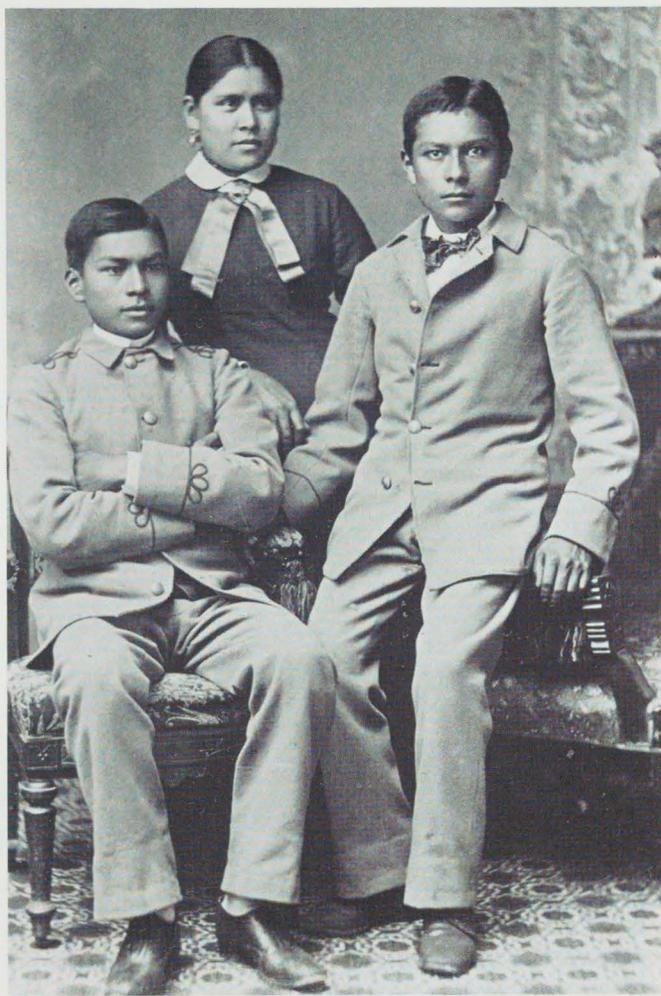


Figure 10 Mary Perry, John Chaves, and Ben Thomas (after). U.S. Army Military History Institute/Carlisle Barracks, Pa.



Figure 11 Apache on Arrival. U.S. Army Military History Institute/Carlisle Barracks, Pa.

Figure 12 Apache Four Months Later. U.S. Army Military History Institute/Carlisle Barracks, Pa.

Photographs tend to elicit narrative interpretation whenever two or more are placed together. Considered as pairs, these portraits take advantage of this inherent property. Captions, identifying students by native name in the "before" versions and anglicized name in the "after," reinforced this narrative property. The photographs' basic and obvious theme is change. But the change they suggest within the contemporary context, a period in which assimilation became the policy of the federal government, is far more profound than the actual change that could have occurred during the period of time (between two months and two years) that normally ensued between the making of the two portraits.

Propaganda

Pratt made extensive use of these photographs in his indefatigable efforts at what he called propaganda (Pratt 1964:282).² Especially early in the school's history, repeated references to enclosed photographs pepper his voluminous correspondence. He sent prints to the parents of children in attempts to alleviate their anxieties. He sent them to reservation agents who in turn often helped him in his recruiting efforts, in part because they had noticed that the children's absence to Carlisle had the beneficial secondary effect of making their parents more cooperative than others on the reservation. He sent them to benefactors and potential benefactors of the school and included prints in his lobbying correspondence with local, state, and national political and administrative officials who had the power to either aid or hinder him in his work. He sent full sets of photographs as illustrations of his annual reports to the federal agencies related to the school. Moreover, Pratt undoubtedly carried copies of the photographs, either as cabinet



cards or lantern slides, on his extensive travels to recruit new students and to present his views on the school, Indian education in general, and the political aspects of the "Indian problem." As he explained to others, he was conducting a twofold educational program:

We have two objects in view in starting the Carlisle School—one is to educate the Indians—the other is to educate the people of the country . . . to understand that the Indians can be educated. [*Daily Evening Sentinel*, June 4, 1891:2]

In other forms, these photographs received an even wider distribution. J. N. Choate early recognized the commercial value of his relationship to the school, and the availability of the photographs for public purchase was advertised widely in area newspapers, on broadsides, and on the backs of Choate-made cabinet cards. In the form of stereographs, some were also made available to the larger, developing commercial networks of the period, which catered to a growing popular taste for such items as souvenirs, educational aids, and parlor entertainment. During the

first school year, having acquired a printing press from a private benefactor, Pratt instituted a monthly publication, *Eadle Keatah Toh*, or *The Morning Star*, which was printed by Indian apprentices and circulated at a modest subscription rate.³ Drawings made from the photographs and, later, when technically possible, halftone reproductions were printed here and in the local newspapers as well as in the national magazines of the time.



Figure 13 Tom Torlino, 1882. U.S. Army Military History Institute/Carlisle Barracks, Pa.

Three Pairs

Three particular pairs of photographs were selected repeatedly to represent the theme of transformation. Before 1886, probably the most widely circulated pair were of an Apache group who arrived at the school in 1884 (see Figures 11, 12). These particular photographs were used not only in publications, but also as a complimentary gift to each contributor who donated enough money to "pay for one brick" in a new dormitory at the school. Upon arrival in Carlisle, this group of students was described as being

as dirty a crowd as one would wish to see. They were half-clad, some with only a blanket, dirty, greasy, and all wore a scared look. If all the people who observed them in this condition, could only see them after they go

through the "civilizing process" at the school all prejudice, if any exists, against Indian schools would vanish. It is wonderful the transformation that is made. Take the filthy children and after being . . . scrubbed, hair cut and clad in clean garments, no one would recognize them as the same beings. These children are the sons and daughters of Indians who were a short time ago waging war against the whites. [*Daily Evening Sentinel*, Feb. 2, 1884:4]

Four months later, when these Apache were "on exhibition at the Academy of Music, Philadelphia . . . along with Capt. Pratt's civilized Indians," presumably in the "after" state portrayed in the second photograph (taken at about the same time) a reporter stated that "they are just as they came from the plains, and look and act very wild" (*Daily Evening*

Figure 14 Tom Torlino, 1884. U.S. Army Military History Institute/Carlisle Barracks, Pa.



Sentinel, May 20, 1884:1). In this instance, then, seeing is confirming belief. It is also significant in this context that the reporter failed to note that these Apache arrived not from their tribal environments, but from a government prison at Fort Marion, Florida.

Tom Torlino, the son of an important Navajo head man who came to the school in 1882 at the age of 22, was the subject of the most widely circulated of the three pairs after 1886 (see Figures 13, 14). Recruited from Fort Defiance, he was part of a group of seventeen others, including three sons of Chief Manuelito, two of whom were also photographed as potential "befores." The death of Manuelito Chou shortly after his return to the reservation in 1883, and the subsequent return of Manuelito Choquito to the reservation by order of his father, who demanded the return of all the Navajo boys, prevented completion of

the "after" versions.⁴ Torlino, however, remained at the school, and his "after" portrait, made in 1884, was put to widespread use in a circulation campaign for the *Morning Star*:

Standing Offer

For one new subscriber to the *Morning Star* we will send you a photographic group of our printer boys, size 8 x 5 inches. For TWO new subscribers we give two photographs, one showing a group of Pueblos [see Figures 10 and 11] as they arrived in wild dress, and another of the same pupils three years after; or for TWO names we give two photographs, one showing a Navajoe in his still wilder native dress, and the other after two years in school, and as he looks at present. [*Morning Star*, 1886:3]



Figure 15 Wounded Yellow Robe, Henry Standing Bear, Timber Yellow Robe, Sioux (before). Anthropological Archives, Smithsonian Institution.

Torlino's portraits, then, were seen to present the fullest contrast between the "before" and "after" states symbolized, and, to this day, they are singled out whenever the school is represented iconographically.

The third most prominent before-and after pair, made in 1883 and 1885, were of a Sioux threesome, Chauncey Yellow Robe, Henry Standing Bear (a brother of the memoirist), and Richard Yellow Robe (see Figures 15, 16). Selection of all three of these pairs was probably in part the result of aesthetic considerations: variety is ensured both by type of portrait (larger group, small group, and individual) and by three different styles of native dress. More important, perhaps, were the particular tribes presented. The Sioux, the Navajo, and the Apache were prominent groups, all regarded by contemporary whites as particularly recalcitrant, isolated, or hostile. But these three pairs of photographs have visual commonalities which suggest that selection was also made to exaggerate the contrast between the two states typified, a criterion made somewhat explicit in the earlier cited subscription campaign advertisement for the Torlino pair. In each case, the "before" versions include little

or no indication of prior acculturation; any items of "citizen's dress" that appear, for example, have been modified by standards of individual or tribal taste. Facial expressions in the "after" versions are, as one contemporary observer put it, "more intelligent," or pleasanter by white standards. This is demonstrable in Torlino's case because selection of the "after" version was made from at least two different portraits. Finally, in the prints of all three pairs there is a marked contrast in skin color: in the original prints these particular students appear literally to be getting whiter.⁵

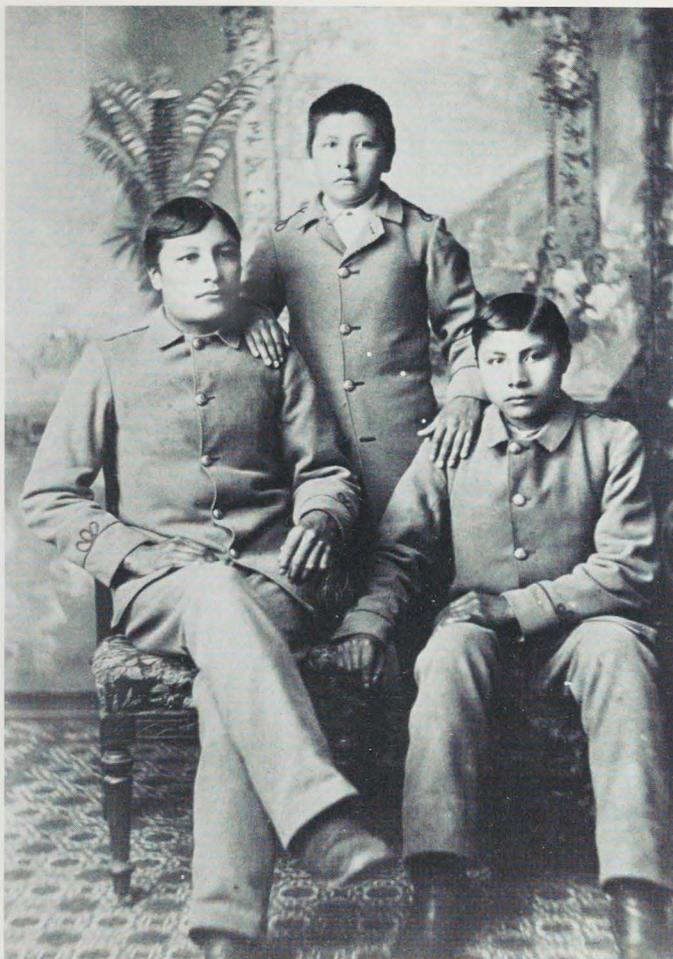


Figure 16 Chauncey Yellow Robe, Henry Standing Bear, Richard Yellow Robe, Sioux (after). Anthropological Archives, Smithsonian Institution.

Exhibitions

As photodocumentation of the school increased and became more sophisticated, these three pairs continued to appear in fully developed photographic catalogues, like the contemporary Hampton Album, and in substantial exhibits sent to various local, county, and state fairs, museums, exhibit halls, and the well-known major expositions of the period. Reaction to one exhibit was reported in the New Orleans *Times-Democrat* in 1885:

The careful inspector will first be struck by a number of photographs showing the Indian pupils on arriving, and again at later periods in their course. The difference is striking not in the mere change of clothing and improved carriage, but the development of intelligence shown by the faces will impress the observer. [Quoted in *Daily Evening Sentinel*, Feb. 17, 1885:1]

After 1886, Chauncey Yellow Robe, one of the relatively few students who remained at Carlisle long enough to graduate in 1895, increasingly became the center of attention as a typification of Carlisle's accomplishments. Photographs of Yellow Robe appeared in publications and exhibits, and he was

featured on the cover of the most elaborate of Carlisle's photographic catalogues to appear before 1902 (see Figure 17). In framing the photographs with drawings, this cover explicitly completes the iconography of cultural transformation. By the time it was printed, in about 1895, Yellow Robe had likely become accustomed to representing the school, for Pratt reports that as "a fine specimen of gentlemanly young manhood, [he] was part of the [World Columbian Exposition] exhibit as a sample and to assist in giving information" (Pratt 1964:307).

Carlisle's Chicago exhibit issued from a bitter controversy between Commissioner of Indian Affairs Thomas J. Morgan and Pratt about the Interior Department's plans for the Exposition. Morgan had approached Pratt to supervise a demonstration school intended as part of a larger exhibit also presenting a variety of tribal groups in their daily lives. Pratt refused to be a part of that exhibit, arguing that "anything like aboriginal or wild west feature" should not be presented to the public. For Pratt, Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show (also part of the Exposition) and the displays of the Bureau of American Ethnology amounted to the same thing, namely "exhausting [*sic*]



Indianisms" and keeping "the nation's attention and the Indian's energies fixed upon his valueless past." In addition, Pratt did not want to give the impression that Carlisle was in any way similar to reservation day and boarding schools, which he believed promoted "tribal cohesion," and he was offended by the fact that supervision of the complete exhibit would be in the hands of the ethnologists and Carlisle would thus be "subordinated" to "the most insidious and active enemies of Carlisle's purposes." Carlisle's exhibit, from Pratt's point of view, "aimed and showed how to make productive citizens out of [the Indian]" and how he could "learn to march in line with America as a very part of it, head up, eyes front, where he could see his glorious future of manly competition in citizenship and be on equality as an individual." Pratt therefore arranged, through "influential and official friends in the exposition management," to present an exhibit of Carlisle's work in the industrial education section of the Exposition (Pratt 1964:303–305; see Figure 18).

Pratt was at least indicating a newfound punctiliousness here, since Carlisle's own exhibits often included tribal artifacts and photographic references to the tribal past of his students. During the first decade of the school, moreover, he had routinely orchestrated dramatic live exhibits of his own students as a strategy for fundraising and the education of eastern whites. Such displays were common experience for a constant stream of visitors to Carlisle, and from time

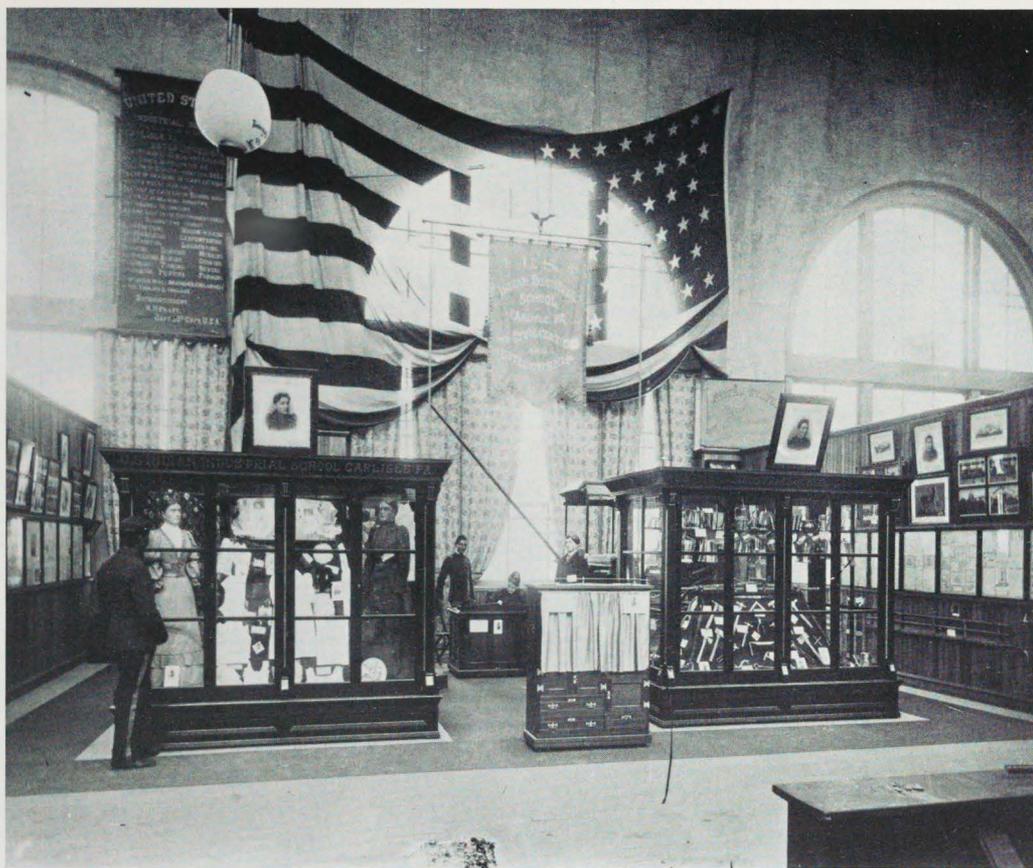
to time virtually the entire student body was taken on road shows to Washington, Baltimore, Philadelphia, New York, and Boston. Among other things, these demonstrations included live before-and-after tableaux and presented the debating society demonstrating its skill at "civilized" argument. On at least one such circuit, in 1887, the resolution considered was "that Indians be exterminated." Clearly sensationalism was not the issue.

Such punctiliousness was short-lived as well, for the 1895 catalog, published by Choate, included both before-and-after pairs and a very peculiar "before" photograph, which was sold with the Choate series both in town and at the school (see Figure 19). This photograph is not a photograph at all, but a photocopy of a George Catlin drawing. The sketch was made from observations of tribal life and portrays a male dancer taking part in a Mandan ritual; in this ritual, the dancer portrays O-kee-pa, the Mandan spirit of evil. As sold by Choate, the photocopy was originally captioned:

The first Indian boy who applied to Captain Pratt—Ft. Berthold, D.T., September 19, 1878—for education at Hampton, Virginia, was called out of the medicine lodge painted and decorated as seen in this picture.

Figure 17 Cover of 1895 School Catalogue. U.S. Army Military History Institute/Carlisle Barracks, Pa.

Figure 18 Carlisle Exhibit, World Columbian Exhibition, 1893. Chauncey Yellow Robe Standing in Rear. Anthropological Archives, Smithsonian Institution.



Later prints and the reproduction that appeared in the catalogue merely captioned it "First Boy Recruited." Even though Pratt recruited among many different tribal groups (only once among the few remaining Mandan), he represented tribal life in general by a white-made image of Mandan ritual. Moreover, the image chosen would have been seen by the Mandan themselves as the personification of evil.

Pratt, then, opposed public reference to aspects of tribal culture only when its purposes differed from his own. When such references served to emphasize, through appeal to ambiguous racial stereotypes, the total transformation that he insisted Carlisle could deliver, he did not hesitate to make use of artifacts or photographic references, nor to display his students as "examples" or objects. As their self-designated "school father," he did so for what he was certain were higher purposes. A somewhat different pair of before-and-afters, judged by Choate as commercially valuable enough to copyright, make this attitude quite clear. Appealing as they do to the "vanishing race" myth of the period with a new solution (Dippie 1982:107–138), Choate's composites explicitly state the underlying paternalistic ideology: "Noted Indian Chiefs" will be replaced generationally by "Our Boys and Girls" (see Figures 20, 21). Paternal possession will result in nihilation by incorporation. But all such before-and-after photographs were deceptive in many

ways, for the transformation typified was, of course, far more complex than any photograph might embrace.

Pratt himself made the process somewhat more explicit in his introduction to one of the later and most elaborate photographic catalogues of the school:

Indians from more than seventy tribes have been brought together and come to live in utmost harmony, although many of them were hereditary enemies. Just as they have become one with each other through association in the School, so by going out to live among them they have become one with the white race, and thus ended the differences and solved their own problems. [Catalogue 1902:4]

Always the optimist in his own terms, Pratt states here that his twenty-three years at Carlisle actually produced the results envisaged—at best a dubious claim. More important, this description of the ideal reveals that education at Carlisle involved more than the single transformation implied by the photographs. It involved first of all an education in white racial consciousness: the children of culturally diverse tribes had to learn that they were Indians, the very same kind of people as their "hereditary enemies." Concurrently they learned that by white standards they were an inferior race, which led in turn to the cultivation of race pride to spur competition with whites.



Figure 19 First Boy Recruited. U.S. Army Military History Institute/ Carlisle Barracks, Pa.



Figure 20 Noted Indian Chiefs. U.S. Army Military History Institute/Carlisle Barracks, Pa.



Figure 21 Our Boys and Girls. Anthropological Archives, Smithsonian Institution.

One of Pratt's most important reasons for the development of Carlisle's famous athletic program was to prove that Indians were not inferior. Finally, they learned that the ideal white man's Indian would "become one with the white race . . . solving their own individual problems." That such problems may have required Indians to become far more individualistic than any of their middle-class white contemporaries never seems to have occurred to Pratt.

Yet Pratt's description of the process is also an oversimplification, for even individualists require a sense of themselves as historical and cultural beings. That such was the case became clear fairly early in the school's history, when advanced students confronted their United States history classes. Apparently, textbooks commonly used in white classrooms presented some problems. Pratt wrote in 1883:

Mr. Joseph W. Leeds of Philadelphia has written . . . a history of our country, as a textbook for schools, in which details of our wars, and particularly our wars with the Indians, are made to occupy a less prominent place than usual in such books. Our advanced pupils who have studied other histories have been keenly active in noting the parts detailing our dealings with the red man, and we have found it injurious to them and to us that such prominence is given these matters. Mr. Leeds has given us a book especially well adapted to Indian Schools. [*Morning Star*, August 1883:3]

Before the printing of the next *Morning Star*, Susan Longstreth of Philadelphia, a long-term benefactor of the school, had donated three dozen copies. By 1890, the bureau of Indian Affairs had developed a general policy: "The Indian heroes of the campfire need not be disparaged, but gradually the heroes of American homes and history may be substituted as models and ideals" (Prucha 1979:198).



Figure 22 Class by Frances Benjamin Johnston. U.S. Army Military History Institute/Carlisle Barracks, Pa.

Imitation White Men

The final stage of transformation is best represented by a classroom photograph done not by Choate, but by documentary photographer Frances Benjamin Johnston (see Figure 22). Well known for her portraits of eminent politicians, her documentary series on the Washington public schools, and her series on Hampton Institute, Johnston had been sent to Carlisle in 1901 by the Bureau of Education to prepare a series of photographs, eventually numbering about 130, for the upcoming Pan American Exposition in Buffalo, New York. She was to "show in part what is being done by the United States Government for the Indians in one of its largest training schools" (*Red Man and Helper*, April 19, 1901:3). Pratt regarded her work as "excelling anything we have ever had before" (*Red Man and Helper*, April 5, 1901) and eventually purchased both a full series of prints and the negatives for use in the most elaborate photographic catalogue of the school, published in 1902, just two years prior to Pratt's retirement. In this pseudo-candid shot (Johnston was working with half-minute exposure times), a group of advanced students, under the watchful eye of the "Father of Our Country," is taught by a white woman whom they were encouraged to call Mother. They are surrounded by artifacts from various tribal cultures, on display as if in a natural history museum. Chalk drawings on the blackboard further suggest that together these artifacts represent "Indian culture," which indeed they do from a white

perspective. Dried and mounted plants for the teaching of natural history border the room, implying a similarity of approach to these two subjects. The class, however, is preoccupied with books, and one student, standing in the center, is either reading aloud or reciting in response to the questions and topics chalked on the blackboard. They read:

Hiawatha's Childhood

Nokomis

Who was she?

Why was she called daughter of the moon?

Gitchee Gumee

Describe the home by the Big Sea Water

Stories told by Nokomis

Legend of the Moon

Rainbow

The photograph is an allegorical presentation of the "vanishing race" in the very act of disappearing. In this visual version of assimilation, the children of tribal parents, now advanced into civilization, repossess their tribal history and culture from a different perspective. They learn to accept the "white man's Indian" as the socially legitimized view of their past (Berkhofer 1978:171). Through the romantic reduction and distortion of the Boston Brahmin poet Henry

Wadsworth Longfellow, the students are led to reduce, stereotype, and objectify their former identities and cultures. It is important to recognize that, as a historical event, the creation of this photograph required that the students portray themselves as typifications of their transformed state. At this first interactional level, they are called upon by the government-sponsored photographer to assume the posture of genteel and polite, even scientific, contemplation of their own cultural nihilation. The underlying message, partly because of the nature of photography as a multisemic form, is that the students are no more individuals in their transformed state than they were in savagery. Instead, they are specimens and samples of "civilized Indians" or, as Luther Standing Bear states, "imitation white men." Carlisle, however, under what can only be seen as well-intentioned but naive leadership, was not preparing students to face this particular cultural double bind.

Double Bind

In the decade following graduation from Carlisle, Chauncey Yellow Robe went on to become a disciplinarian at government Indian schools. Until its closing in 1918, he maintained intermittent contact with Carlisle. Looking back on his school experience in 1910 he wrote:

I entered Carlisle as a student in the fall of 1883—wore long hair, feathers, blanket and painted face [*sic*] and above all not knowing a word of English—You probably have seen one of my photos. It may be there yet on the wall for a curiosity. I do not regret having been transformed from savagery to an independent American citizen. [Letter to Superintendent, Feb. 9, 191?]

More than Luther Standing Bear, Chauncey Yellow Robe saw his own transformation in very much the same terms as Pratt. He remained a lifelong supporter of Carlisle; and when, in 1916, a changed administration developed a liberalized policy in its publications, he wrote to the *Red Man* to object to the "publishing [of] Indian history, tribal customs and traditions." The letter indicates that Yellow Robe is fully aware of the complex relationship between these publications and two very different audiences:

What the new generation of the Indian race today wants to know is twentieth century progress. Publishing and teaching the Indian children their own people's history and customs in this present age means they will always be Indians in mind. We will never forget the history of our forefathers. On the other hand the white man reads the *Red Man* and other similar publications on Indian history, customs, traditions. Also witnesses the Wild West Indian Shows and the moving pictures and firmly fixed his opin-

ion on the red man as a savage and good for nothing but a show Indian. Commercializing the Indian is demoralizing and degrading. [Letter to *Red Man*, Mar. 3, 1916]

The dilemmas of cross-cultural education are made quite clear. There is the dilemma of a commitment to "never forget the history of our forefathers" and at the same time make certain that Indian children cease to be "Indians in mind." There is the dilemma of educating whites who turn all knowledge of tribal custom to their generalized and racist interpretive and commercial ends, which is "demoralizing and degrading." Yellow Robe's education in white racial consciousness is complete, as is the cross-cultural double bind he is trying to break by communicating with the *Red Man* about the interpretive context of cross-cultural communication. Yellow Robe's dilemmas remain because of the persistence of the racial thinking of whites. Race pride and race degradation are culturally linked in assimilation, because race and culture are reduced to equivalents in white thinking. Chauncey Yellow Robe was a sophisticated observer of this context and persisted lifelong in his efforts to counter white stereotypes, yet he seems unaware that his own description of his school before-and-after photographs embraces those stereotypes. For full assimilation required a transformation not only of fundamental cultural identity but also of one's attitude toward one's past. It required that the children of tribal people at one and the same time both value and devalue their culture and history. Because of the multisemic nature of photographs, "before" portraits manage to embrace these double meanings simultaneously, but people who must live with that doubleness have a difficult time, for identity requires more consistency than iconographic propaganda. In his fully transformed state, Chauncey Yellow Robe can view his "before" portrait as a "curiosity" only because he has so fully deracinated. Others, like Luther Standing Bear, who remained closer to their cultural roots, found themselves in various states of vacillation between separate versions of the white man's Indian and their understanding of their tribal past (Dippie 1982:263–264).

As part of a continuing education for eastern whites, however, the before-and-after portraits were far more than curiosities. Read within the contemporary contexts, both overt and covert, they largely reaffirmed the racial stereotypes of the period. Again, an understanding of the nature of photographs is central to understanding their function as ideological devices. Precisely because photographs have no meaning in their own right, the before-and-after photographs permitted viewers to supply their own interpretations, their own "stories," some of which have been discussed above. They allowed white viewers to draw upon particular aspects of the complex and

contradictory social discourse that informs them but to avoid focusing on those deep contradictions. Floating above that discourse, the photographs become transvaluative structures. They do so, however, in a way quite peculiar to photographs, providing an illusion of simple facticity. As Roland Barthes (1972) observed, they "innocent themselves." The before-and-after photographs, within the overt and covert texts of the period, imply both spectacular transformation and ease and serenity in the change (see especially Figures 14 and 15). In doing so, they helped the white "friends of the Indian" to continue to maintain the fiction that all would be one in the end, and that that end was agreeable to all.

Acknowledgments

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Notes

- 1 Pratt later insisted that Spotted Tail's reason for the withdrawal of his children was that he had refused to increase the pay of Spotted Tail's son-in-law, then acting as an interpreter at the school. Probably Spotted Tail's actions were as overly determined as Pratt's explanation was reductionist. Some credence is given Pratt's explanation, however, by the fact that at least one of Spotted Tail's children, Hugh, later returned to Carlisle.
- 2 The term was probably far less connotatively loaded than it is today. Nonetheless, it emphasizes the ideological nature of the use of these photographs.
- 3 In the earliest years Carlisle published two monthly publications, *Eadle Keatah Toh*, or *The Morning Star*, and *School News*, a publication devoted entirely to student writing. In 1886 *Eadle Keatah Toh* became simply *The Morning Star*; in 1888 *The Morning Star* became *The Red Man*; and in 1900 *The Red Man and Helper* replaced two earlier periodicals. Issues were sent routinely to all members of Congress; Indian agencies, including reservations and military posts; selected Pennsylvania officials; most prominent American newspapers; and all independent subscribers.
- 4 There remains considerable confusion about how many of Manuelito's and Torlino's sons attended the school and about how many died either at the school or shortly after returning to the reservation. However, there is evidence that Tom Torlino was living in New Mexico in 1910.
- 5 Indeed, they may well have been getting whiter, since they arrived at Carlisle in the early fall and thereafter spent few hours in the sun. Other photographs indicate that they began to adopt contemporary white habits of protecting themselves from the sun as well.

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Reviews and Discussion

David Rosand. *Painting in Cinquecento Venice: Titian, Veronese, Tintoretto.* New Haven: Yale University Press, 1982. xvii + 346 pp. 165 ill.

Reviewed by Peter Burke
Emmanuel College, Cambridge

This study—or more exactly this collection of essays, neatly reconstructed into a book—has two main aims, one relatively limited and the other more ambitious. The more limited aim is to re-place the work of three great Venetian painters in “the specific context for which they were intended.” The notoriously imprecise term *context* is here understood in more than one sense. Like many art historians of late, Rosand is well aware of the social context of painting, the position of the artist, and the conditions of patronage. He is also concerned with problems that have attracted less attention, concerning the physical context of particular paintings, their original location, and their architectural frames. The value of this latter approach is demonstrated most clearly in Rosand’s interpretation of Titian’s asymmetrical *Madonna di Ca’Pesaro* as “a response to the challenge of a particular site” (to the left of the high altar in the church of the Frari) rather than “a deliberate assault upon aesthetic and theological tradition.”

Rosand’s second and more ambitious aim is to reveal and trace the history of the “expressive conventions” of painting in sixteenth-century Venice. He rejects the term *iconography* because he is unhappy with the implied distinction between form and content. He does undertake analyses of a type that others would call iconographic, including an interpretation of the old egg-seller in Titian’s *Presentation of the Virgin* as a symbol of the Synagogue, but the thrust of his argument goes in a different direction. The author is at his most interesting when dealing with what he calls the “narrative space” of paintings intended for “lateral scansion” from left to right as if the figures were walking in procession. As he points out, these conventions allow individual artists considerable freedom for manoeuvre. Titian’s *Presentation*, for example, breaks the flow from left to right with figures looking back, while Veronese’s *Family of Darius* confronts the spectator with “a great wave sweeping down from the left frame . . . met by the solid block of figures of the Greek warriors.” In both these cases, the narrative flow is “parallel to and close behind the picture plane,” as was traditional in Venice: “the protagonists act on a narrow foreground stage.” Tintoretto, on the other hand, broke with tradition by adopting a deep perspective that made lateral scan-

sion impossible. To give the spectator the necessary cues, he relied on the gestures of the figures, as in his *Miracle of St. Mark*.

In these spatial analyses, which are generally convincing (and throw into high relief the contrast between Tintoretto and his predecessors), Rosand may be thought to have left “context” far behind. However, his book does contain a middle ground where narrative space and local conditions meet: the theater. Especially in the case of Veronese, the author demonstrates both the artist’s involvement with the stage and his imitation of theatrical backdrops, costumes, and other visual conventions in his pictures. It is too bad that so little is known about the staging of religious plays, in particular, in Renaissance Venice, so that religious paintings have to be interpreted in the light of the conventions of secular drama, but the method remains illuminating.

Painting in Cinquecento Venice betrays its origin in self-contained studies by some of the ends left hanging loose. After the Titian chapters, the imaginative replacement of paintings in their original locations is virtually abandoned (if for lack of evidence in the cases of Veronese and Tintoretto, the author might have told us so). Apart from the case of Tintoretto’s *St. Mark*, curiously little attention is paid to gesture, despite its potential for enriching a dramaturgical approach to painting. All the same, Rosand’s achievement is considerable. Anyone interested in art as part of a cultural system would do well to meditate on this book and how to adapt its approach to read the narrative paintings of other cultures.

Thomas Waugh *Show Us Life: Toward a History and Aesthetics of the Committed Documentary.* Metuchen, N.J.: Scarecrow Press, 1984. 508 pp. \$37.50.

Reviewed by Jeanne Thomas Allen
Temple University

Thomas Waugh’s *Show Us Life* is a distinctive, much-needed text devoted to what he calls the “committed documentary.” Why he does not say political documentaries of the radical left would perhaps be an essay in itself, but the collection serves the extremely valuable function of organizing an often superb body of periodical literature and academic research of the last fifteen years. *Show Us Life* will be of particular use to scholars not specializing in this area and students whose rate of attrition on “closed reserve” arti-

cles grows seemingly annually. I have written to Scarecrow to encourage a paperback edition for Spring 1986, but at \$37.50 in the current hardback incarnation, the book's over 500 pages of concentrated scholarship is a frontrunner without peer in the area of political documentary. Scarecrow should be praised once again for venturing into another progressive area where other publishers fear to tread. Hopefully they can do for this field what they did for women's studies in its early years: prove its marketability to more timid publishing houses.

A text entitled "Toward a History and Aesthetics of the Committed Documentary," which claims to benefit from the new methodologies developed in the seventies (semiotic/structuralist analysis, psychoanalytic approaches, formalist analysis, ideological analysis, oral history, specialized technological, industrial, exhibition and audience history), must deal with the thorny issues of contemporary film theory. Not the least of these of course is "the case against realism" that sometimes posed documentary as the most naive instance of ideologically complicit practice conflating the empirically available with social reality. The result is presented as uniform, homogeneous, and unquestionable. A number of articles Waugh has selected allude to and summarize this debate but do not "re-invent the wheel." Waugh stays with this issue insofar as it concerns the strategies of representation of committed documentary, particularly in the articles of Guy Hennebelle ("French Radical Documentary after 1968"), Claire Johnston and Paul Willemsen ("Brecht in Britain: 'The Nightcleaners' and the Independent Political Film"), and Chuck Kleinhans ("Forms, Politics, Makers and Contexts: Basic Issues for a Theory of Radical Political Documentary").

Definition is another of those issues of theoretical significance. Waugh's introduction approaches it directly as a genre question. "Committed documentary" for Waugh entails the following requisite conditions: (1) an ideological commitment to radical sociopolitical transformation, (2) an activist stance supplying "tools" to make the revolution, and (3) that the films be produced with and by people engaged in struggles of liberation. Although he doesn't say so, each of these conditions specifies a different dimension of filmmaking as a process. The first treats the film as a text, a structure of various messages; the second pertains to a knowledge of the spectator or audience and anticipates an experience that incorporates but is not limited to viewing; and the third considers the experience out of which the film grows, historically and socially, to be as pertinent as the images and sounds on the screen. Clear enough, but this important consideration of genre definition as pre- and posttextual deserves greater elaboration, the kind that Steve Neale begins in his "Notes and Questions and Political Cinema" when he discusses the term *politi-*

cal. Waugh's characteristics certainly avoid a fixed or essentialist definition, a point many of his selections reiterate. Social context and historical position determine radical political postures relative to each other like a semiotic field. No single position or representational style fixes the stance of committed documentary for radical sociopolitical transformation: what is strategic is contextually determined.

Neale's discussion of the political film begins by identifying it topically for its concern for government and the state but moves through the debates about the nature of distinguishing personal and political issues on to the conditions of production, distribution, and exhibition as determinative of its political stance. Unlike Waugh, Neale contends that a film can be made a political act by its context. On the other hand, commodification may preclude or coopt politically topical issue films. Conversely, however, if an audience is constituted not on the basis of cinema entertainment but on political processes and goals, it can transform the film into a political act. Waugh's definition implies but does not highlight the notion of the spectator's reading process or the reading community's ability to define what is political in a film, outlining instead a historical tradition of production in relation to historical events and an evolving aesthetic. Other authors such as Julia Lesage ("Feminist Documentary: Aesthetics and Politics") and Joan Braderman ("Shinsuke Ogawa's 'Peasants of the Second Fortress': Guerrilla documentary in Japan") engage this subject more completely and persuasively.

As a history, Waugh's text bares a rupture between the 1930s and 1960s that he himself notes but does not explain. The gap invites interpretation since he claims that the tradition maintains a continuity his selections do not support. Ceplair and England's account of Hollywood in the so-called quiescent decades of wartime and postwar consensus certainly warrants a parallel history, and one hopes a second volume may be forthcoming. As it stands the structure of the collection invites the comparison of decades but does not make such comparisons explicit or the roots of one decade in another clear. The selection of "Pioneers" for the first section is predictable and classic with the benefit of considerable hindsight: Vertov, Shub, Renoir, and Ivens. Bert Hogenkamp's piece on worker newsreels in Germany, the Netherlands, and Japan and Russell Campbell's on the United States in the 1930s are less a part of the canon established by Jacobs and Barnouw but help alter the auteur orientation of single filmmakers to illuminate the significance of collective political action. The opening section also sets an appropriately international stance that the section on "Contemporaries" maintains while adopting the split between the West and the Third World.

While some connections are teased out or hinted at, the historical gap of this text makes prominent an

absence within individual articles and the state of research in the field generally; despite the effectiveness of the case study of a limited time period and its relation to historical events, we have not ventured into the study of influences, an internal history of associations within the tradition and community of committed documentary: among filmmakers, among political communities, among traditions of social action. We do not reinvent ourselves regardless of the "radical" stance and its claim to invent; the idea of a radical tradition put forward by this book makes that evident. Waugh's own piece is a fine instance of a contextual history, although it is not as broad an intellectual history as one might hope for on *The Spanish Earth*. But a blend of the theoretical and historical might be stimulated by the goal of explaining a film's inheritance. A study of a collective like California Newsreel or Kartemquin in Chicago, whose work and styles of filmic representation has evolved with its financial, production, and political practices, might show us how committed documentary evolves historically. It would also demonstrate the necessary self-consciousness about social practice for this kind of filmmaking—in production, distribution, and exhibition to specific audiences.

Waugh, however, proves his point. We *do* have a tradition of scholarship in this area with a high level of theoretical sophistication. I am inclined to agree with him that feminist circles have made a decisive contribution to this, probably because the speed, pressure, and diversity of the movement have fostered a need for metacommunicative analysis. I would have liked to have seen even more excerpts from current debates in this vein. Barbara Martineau's piece about "talking heads" offered a significant focus but shed little light of a theoretical nature. Similarly, Julianne Burton's catalog promised a theoretical discussion but produced a detailed description with shorthand conclusions rather than closely reasoned arguments about what is and is not "democratizing" and why. While an occasional selection embodied the passion behind the phrase "committed documentary" with its goal of changing the world (Hennebelle, Georgakas, Braderman, and perhaps Kaplan do this), too often the style of writing is "academic," betraying the vitality of the films and their political concerns. One thinks of the contrast of Grierson's writing compared to the infectious energy that the Canadian Film Board's *Grierson* was able to seize from his speaking body. I am not talking about gushing with sophomore zeal but the media journalist's ability to convey with concentrated intensity the *heat and light* of the experience of *Hour of the Furnaces* or *The Battle of Chile*, masterpieces of engaged filmmaking. Authors like James Agee or Adrienne Rich distill their insight with a passion that makes us see. Not only students but scholars need to understand and experience the *pleasure* of this genre, not just analytical rigor, which we also need, but its own *joissance*.

Reflections on the Social Psychologists' Video Camera

Review Essay by Norman K. Denzin
University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign

This article is based on a paper prepared for the session "Media and Social Research," chaired by Dan Miller, at the Midwest Sociology Meetings, St. Louis, Missouri, April 11, 1985. It is a response to a viewing and "reading" of the video tape *Studying Social Processes, Parts 1 and 2* (Carl Couch, Producer; Mari Molseed and Joel Powell, Associate Producers; David Maines, Editorial Consultant). Copyright © University of Iowa, 1984.

Sol Worth (1981:111) reminds us that educational films have been used for instructional purposes in United States grade schools since 1918, in high schools since the 1930s, and in colleges since the 1960s. Anthropologists have been producing such films at least since the 1940s, when Mead and Bateson (1942) produced their famous photographic study of Balinese character (see Worth 1981). Sociologists have more recently entered the field; Becker's essays on photography and sociology (e.g., 1974) and Goffman's (1976) study of gender advertisements are recent instances. Carl Couch and his students have been utilizing video film records of interactions in small-group laboratories since the early 1970s (e.g., Couch and Hintz 1975). A visual sociology, or a sociology that relies upon photographic and video film records of social life, has thus come into existence. The most recent production from the Iowa group is the newly released film *Studying Social Processes, Parts 1 and 2*, produced in 1984 by Couch and his coproducers, Mari Molseed and Joel Powell, with David Maines the editorial consultant. This is an educational film, intended to teach sociologists how to conduct laboratory studies of interpersonal and group negotiations. I offer a review and interpretation of that film. I shall take up in order the following topics: (1) the distinction between visual sociology and a sociology of visual communication; (2) the sociologist as filmmaker; (3) *how* a film "means"; and (4) the place of the video camera in the field of social psychology.

Visual Sociology and a Sociology of Visual Communication

A film is simultaneously a means of communication and an instrument of instruction. A film is a cultural and symbolic form that, when released by the filmmaker, enters the communication process (Worth 1981:119). As such, a film may be used to illustrate patterns of cultural and social life. This was the use that Mead and Bateson (1942) and Goffman (1976)

found for their photographic records. Such uses produce a visual sociology and anthropology. A visual sociologist or anthropologist attempts, with a personal or visual and video record, to present objective patterns of human group life that would not otherwise be produced or be available. Couch (1984) argues that such records yield "pure" specimens of social action that can be repeatedly examined so that the underlying geometric patterns and forms of social interaction can be discovered.

Worth (1981:192–193) notes that the term *visual anthropology* (and sociology) has led many social scientists to believe that they are being scientists when they turn their camera and its lens on a sequence of social action and capture that sequence on tape. Indeed, a hierarchy of "scientific films" has been produced, with uncut, unorganized footage being "more" scientific than edited footage or "reenacted" sequences captured on tape. For the most part, however, sociologists and anthropologists have not been trained as filmmakers. Their films and photos seldom differ from those that a photojournalist or laboratory technician would take. Their films are scientific only when they bring their "scientific jargon" into place and begin to interpret what they have filmed (Becker 1974).

Worth suggests that there is a great deal of value in visually recorded data, "so long as we know what it is that we recorded, so long as we are aware of how and by what rules we chose our subject matter, and so long as we are aware of, and make explicit, how we organized the various units of film from which we will do our analysis" (Worth 1981:193–194).

Couch and his associates are quite explicit on these issues. They tell us that all that is needed to complete a laboratory, video study of social processes is to have (1) two sets of persons, (2) completing the same unit of social action, in (3) two different contexts; (4) a well-lighted room, a wide-lens video camera, and a microphone; and (5) a sociologist with a sociological imagination. Such conditions will produce, they contend, "high fidelity" data, which unaided observations cannot yield.

But while Worth praises the value of visually recorded data, he introduces a problematic that is not considered by the Iowa group. This problematic shifts attention from a visual sociology to a sociology of visual communication. A camera does not record what is out there to be recorded; rather it records "what is *in there*, in the anthropologist's (and sociologist's) mind, as a trained observer puts observations of (what is) out there on record" (ibid.:190). It is not objective reality that is being video-taped, but an image of that reality that the visual sociologist as filmmaker has chosen to record. We must see films, edited or unedited, as footage that reflects the way the maker of the film structures the world that he or she presents to

us (ibid.:195). As Barthes (1981) and Sontag (1977) have argued, the camera yields, not a picture of objective reality, but a trace or a picture of something that has been. The video camera produces a sequence of such images. This sequence, this flow of interaction that the film contains, reassembles lived-experiences in a way that reflects the filmmaker's conception of how those experiences should be presented to the viewer. The film presents the filmmaker's conception of reality, not the reality of those who are or have been filmed. The film always gives, then, an image of an event that has been; it never gives us the "nowness" of action, as that action is and was lived by those who experienced it. Yet the film mystifies us, it tricks us into believing that we are seeing "real" live action, when in fact we are not; we are witnesses to reenacted performances. In the Couch film we are witnesses to events that have been reenacted for the purposes of instruction. We are seeing students and scientists acting out the identities (some more slippery than others) of labor-management negotiators, of strangers, friends, and social psychologists doing experiments that are being video-taped for instructional purposes.

A sociology of the visual is thus required, for we are not viewing natural social events captured by the video camera. We are instead required to become students of a symbolic and cultural text that presents a mediated and edited version of "natural" social processes. Our task as viewers is to determine what Couch means by his film. We understand that he has put together a set of images in a nonrandom fashion in order to tell us something about human group life. We understand, too, that this is a complex process, involving intentional acts of a creative nature. Skill and knowledge in filmmaking are in evidence. Indeed, the film that we view displays the operation of a complex theoretical-aesthetic, to use Becker's (1982) term; that is, we are viewing the result of a complex process of selection, coaching, sequencing, and editing. Now that the film has been released, it is no longer a personal act, but a social and public act (Worth 1981:119). As a social act, *Studying Special Processes* now enters the public arena as a dramatic display of the kind of social psychology the Iowa group performs—a sociology of the visual studies of how the visual, the video tape, is produced. It studies how the film becomes, rather than a copy of the world, a statement about the world that one filmmaker offers. A semiotic of the visual, a study of how people actually make and interpret a variety of visual images and events, is what is called for (Gross 1981:34). Confusing a sociology of the visual with a visual sociology, Couch and his group offer neither a clue to how they assembled and produced what they produced nor a set of instructions concerning how what they filmed can in fact be taken as representative of a

human group in general. That is, while they assume that their laboratory is a stage on which the universal human drama is played out, they offer all too few convincing arguments that would lead us to believe that this is in fact true.

Sociologist as Filmmaker

This is a group film; it does not bear the hand of a single director, although Couch's hovering presence is everywhere, even his voice, when he is offstage. The film contains footage based on student reenactments of performances earlier students in the Iowa studies had produced. Thus the film is one level above the original studies that invoked the theoretical paradigm that structures the filmmaker's interpretation.

The footage is structured by three processes: (1) the eye and ear of the camera, (2) the omnipresence of Couch and his associates, and (3) the instructions given the student performers. The action that is produced is natural only in the contrived sense that these are students doing what they are told to do. The film is about authority in the laboratory—the scientist's authority. It is also about negotiations, bargains, time, temporality, and identities that slip on and off.

As a filmmaker the sociologist has assembled an interactional text that confirms his or her a priori assumptions about human group life. He has sliced, edited, and given us sequences of action that display the generic sociological principles. The film, its images and sounds, are signs of this theory-in-motion, and in a chain of signifying acts and events the sociologist has taken us into a social world that conforms to his understandings of it. As filmmaker, the sociologist constructs reality, and the reality he constructs is the one he had in his head before he began filming. That is, he "sees" strangers, friends, and negotiators projecting distal futures, recognizing mutual differences, offering proposal-response sequences for action, agreeing on future behavior, and closing off negotiations. Another viewer might see young men and women, clothed in the costumes of college students, playing out the scripts for action the scientist-as-filmmaker has given them. The viewer might see actors forgetting their lines and confusing one another's identities. He or she might observe how temporality enters into the construction of action as the players check the clock, noting how much more time they have to come to the decision they have been asked to reach. He might also observe how these student actors bring their past histories and biographies into the situation (e.g., pro-labor, pro-abortion, etc.). More important, he would ask how the taken-for-granted structures of the student life world allow them to act as student actors in the scientist's laboratory. Noting that no individual enters a situation without prior in-

terpretive understandings, regarding self and other, it might be argued that Couch has studied the malleability of social life: his film bears witness to the authority of the camera, the laboratory, and the scientist's presence as forces that can transform one definition of a situation into another. By structuring action as he has, he has constructed an image of social process that is orderly, sequential, and meaningful within his conceptual scheme.

How a Film Means

How does a film mean? Meaning, of course, is in part located in use, and the meanings to which a film can be put are many: as entertainment, as a documentary, as educational or training, as a mirror to reality, as a language of visual communication, as a record of lived-experience, as a test, or as an illustration of a theory. Couch's film is meant, at the level of use, to be an illustration of theory and an educational or training film.

Meaning also emerges out of interaction, and for a film this interaction is three-way; that is, meaning criss-crosses between three intentional categories or processes. First is the filmmaker and his or her intentions, which are meant to call out in the viewer interpretations he or she has intended for us. Second is the film itself, including how it is constructed, presented, sequenced, edited, and so forth. Third is the viewer and his or her interpretive system, which is brought to bear in the viewing-interpreting act. These three meaning systems collide, interact, and negotiate with one another as meaning and interpretation are brought to bear upon how a film means.

Given this situation, what is our job as viewers of Couch's film? Clearly it is to determine what he means and how he means what he means by the film he has shown us. Since he has told us, through his printed text in the film and his verbal intrusions, what it is we are to see and understand, our task is made easier. At one level we read the film in terms of the verbal and visual text Couch has provided. Our first task, then, is to assess this interpretive scheme. Does his film show what he says it does? And, second, we must ask whether his interpretive scheme offers the best interpretation of the film he has presented. I will take up these two problematics in turn.

Couch's Film

What events has this film captured? Gross (1981:28) suggests that a film may take one of three stances toward the reality it captures. First, it may present events, candidly filmed, as they unfold in their natural settings. In the natural context participants seemingly do not know they are being filmed. Second,

Couch's Film Images 7-11 (1974-1985)

participants may be photographed or video-taped unobtrusively so that they act "almost as if" they have forgotten that a camera is turned on them. Third, the scenes recorded on a film may be scripted, staged, and "directed by an 'author' working with actors" (ibid.).

If the filmmaker and the interpreter adopt the first strategy, the natural, candid method, judgments about the persons in the situation—their feelings, attitudes, relationships, and intentions—can be made without serious qualification. If the second mode is adopted, the risk that the participants are acting in a "messageful" fashion, knowing they are being filmed, is increased. This decreases the interpreter's ability to make inferences and attributions concerning their "real" intentions and meanings in the situation. The participants are acting within two frames: the natural frame of the situation they bring in with them and the frame that the filmmaker offers them. How, when, and in what ways they switch back and forth between these two interpretive frames thus become problematic. The third mode further reduces the ability to make inferences about the participants in the situation. In this mode the interpreter is directed to "interpret the scene in light of our knowledge of dramatic conventions" (ibid.:28). Filmed events, then, cannot be uncritically accepted as "natural"; they are natural in varying degrees, and it is how an event is not natural that must concern us when we deal with films in the second and third categories.

Couch's film is presented "as if" it (1) has relevance for natural situations (i.e., the clips from the everyday world), (2) is in fact a depiction of natural, candid conduct, even though it (3) is staged so as to be unobtrusive, and hence (4) is a dramatic production. As a consequence it only has indirect relevance to the world of natural affairs, even though its "author" claims otherwise.

Because Couch chooses not to interpret the film within the restrictions contained in the third mode, as a dramatic production, his film does not mean what he intends it to mean.

Whose Interpretation?

Whose interpretation is best? Ours or Couch's? A full-fledged discussion of Couch's theory is beyond the scope of this comment. Suffice it to say I find it to be one of the most promising contributions to the field of small-group social psychology in the past two decades. In comparison to other schools and other approaches (e.g., Stanford's), the Iowa school aims to ground social psychology in a truly sociological merger of Simmel and Mead. For this the work is to be praised and the film to be applauded, for it shows how this new interpretive scheme has in fact been developed.

However, human group life is perhaps more than shared futures, openings, closings, congruent identities, and distal futures. It is also deep emotionality, taken-for-granted and deep structures of meaning, dramatic actions, violence, hatred, shared experiences, and turning point interactions with others. Ritual, routine, custom, tradition, habit, morality, and the sacred are also at the core of human group life. These matters are not evident in Couch's theory, and there are only traces of them in his film.

To extract these deeper-level meanings, other interpretive schemes—biographical, semiotic, hermeneutic, historical, cultural, critical, feminist—must be brought into play. The film may be and must be read in more ways than Couch has offered. Once those readings are performed, perhaps these other forms and levels of human group life will be revealed; but until they are we are left with Couch's reading. This reading, I have argued, is inherently biased and prejudicial. But then this is the fate of all filmmakers.

Film and Social Psychology

Finally, a brief note on film and social psychology. This film alerts us to the possibilities of video films, as well as other types of films, for the study of central problems in social psychology. It suggests that we need to study carefully how films are made and how films mean. We have a great deal to learn from those scholars who work in cinema studies, for they are making problematic how reality is constructed and presented through the medium of film. In particular, they are revealing how film structures reality along ideological lines and in so doing reproduces reality. Was it an accident, or was it intended, that the two strangers who negotiated a position on abortion were women, and the interactants who negotiated over wages were men? Perhaps this is beside the point. But I think not, for if Couch wishes his social psychology to speak to macro sociological issues, he must see that his film reproduces on the smallest micro scale possible all the macro issues he would ever want his social psychology to address. He has the world in the laboratory, but all that that world is has yet to be revealed to him. This is because he had the world in his head before he started filming it.

Margaret Mead's words to Sol Worth (1981:199) seem appropriate in this context. Worth had returned in 1967 from the field with 12,000 feet, 480,000 single frames of exposed film and seven movies made by Navajo Indians. He was overwhelmed by his data. Mead said: "Sol, you begin with intuition, but you can't rest your case upon it. You must build upon it and make clear to others the patterns that seem clear to you." It is clear that Couch sees what he intuitively perceives, but he must make that pattern more clear to us.

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