



Curriculum Units by Fellows of the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute
1989 Volume V: America as Myth

Phrasing and Framing Famous Men

Curriculum Unit 89.05.10
by Michael A. Vuksta

In the beginning, a photograph is merely an artifact. It is the goal of my class to change that. . .

LIVING CONTEXT: PRESENT TENSE

PREFACE

The most popular use of the photograph is as a memento of the absent. ¹

Denise enters the classroom and pulls out a small, pink, rectangular, walletlike object from her purse. She passes it to Stephen asking, “Do you want to look at pictures of my niece and sister?” As Stephen assents Patricia arrives and reaches for the photo album that is already in Stephen’s hands. A mock tug-of-war ensues; Stephen tightens his grip while asking, “Who is this?” and “Is this your brother?” and “Isn’t this Walter?” Other students have now come closer to investigate the activity and noise. They all appear interested in the tiny album; so Denise, recognizing that there would not be enough time for each of them to view the album on their own and for her to answer each one of their inquiries, takes the album back from Stephen. The children now vie for vantage points next to, around and in front of her. She begins turning the pages, reciting each name and their family relation to her.

As I come closer to this group of students I can see that the album contains photographs of a variety of people; some appear singly, most appear in pairs or in trios, and only a few appear in larger groups. The pictures exhibit an equal diversity of size, printing technique, and quality. Some of these have been cropped from larger compositions to isolate a certain person for inclusion in Denise’s collection (one wonders which people have been excluded because she could find no picture conforming to the album’s dimensions). Although there are a few pictures of friends, this is primarily a family album.

Many of the pictures include some evidence of the location and occasion of the photographic event. Some photographs show signs of family gatherings on birthdays; others seem to indicate that the occasion is a national holiday. However, Denise’s remarks do not bring attention to any of this. Her commentary is simply a litany of names. They give no sense of the nature or quality of the relationship she or the photographer or the photographic subject have to each other. Her thoughts and feelings about these people remain concealed; her hands continue to turn the plastic pages rapidly. Denise’s observations allow us to identify these people, but we are less capable of deriving—or she is less willing to derive—any greater meaning from these images.

The question “What does a photograph mean?” is a difficult one. Answering it involves skills and methods of

visual and verbal literacy that are categorically absent from today's classrooms. We live in an imagesaturated culture in which we are presented with many photographs in the normal course of our lives. It is inevitable that we accept this, but this acceptance need not be restricted to a quick and superficial glance that understands a photograph simply as an object or a product manufactured for our inexhaustible consumptive needs. In doing so, we unwittingly reject a deeper and lasting understanding of the context (or the experience or the process or the relation) of the people involved in the making of these images. Ultimately, this neglect of the context of the photographic moment (whether the posing, the taking or the viewing) is a diminution of our own knowledge of ourselves.

The inability to derive meaning from a photograph is not peculiar to Denise. It is characteristic of the medium itself. John Berger in his essay "Uses of Photography" argues that:

The camera saves a set of appearances from the otherwise inevitable supercession of further appearances. It holds them unchanging. And before the invention of the camera nothing could do this, except, in the mind's eye, the faculty of memory. . .

Yet, unlike memory, photographs do not in themselves preserve meaning. They offer appearances—with all the credibility and gravity we normally lend to appearances—prised away from their meaning. Meaning is the result of understanding functions. ' . . . Only that which narrates can make us understand'. Photographs in themselves do not narrate. Photographs preserve instant appearances. ²

You may ask, as Berger himself has elsewhere queried: "Why complicate in this way an experience which we have many times a day—the experience of looking at a photograph?" Berger offers one possible answer:

Because the simplicity with which we usually treat the experience is wasteful and confusing. We think of photographs as works of art, as evidence of a particular truth, as likenesses, as news items. Every photograph is in fact a means of testing, confirming and constructing a total view of reality. ³

STILL PHOTOGRAPHSTHE '(OF) COURSE' OF DAILY EXISTENCE

During the years that I have been teaching photography to teenagers and younger people, an event like the one described in the opening paragraphs has repeatedly occurred in my classroom. While my teaching has sought the creation of photographs for public viewing rather than the more private context described above, this inability to provide meaning and context to photographs becomes exaggerated in the creation of these more public images. ⁴ With this in mind, I have sought to create a curriculum unit that will increase and deepen my students knowledge of and relationship to photographs and words (texts, both oral and written) in order to concomitantly enhance and intensify their knowledge of and relationship to each other and themselves.

The photographs and texts which I have selected will increase the students selfexpression by strengthening their vocabulary and communication skills in photography, literature, and history. To do this, I have chosen the photo text *Let US Now Praise Famous Men* by James Agee and Walker Evans. ⁵ Published in 1941 and reissued with an expanded photographic selection in 1960, this photo text represents an unique yet characteristic style of presentation of the 1930's. It both adapts and explodes the documentary expressions

that proliferated during this decade. It conforms to others of its kind only in that it uses both mediums to record and express experience. Yet, it explodes this genre of documentary in the way it combines the image and the word. Agee explains, “The photographs are not illustrative. They, and the text, are coequal, mutually independent, and fully collaborative.”⁶ However, the work of Agee and Evans does accept the then prevalent notion that the camera is the unique and quintessential medium for objectively portraying truth, reality and actuality.

Other photo texts of this period openly employed an illustrative use of photographs, or conversely, an “illustrative” use of words as captions for photographs. *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men* seeks to avoid diminishing either medium by admitting to the uniqueness of each. A greater accomplishment is achieved by both photographing an event and writing about it. The sensitivity of the photographic eye, when achieved by the writer, enables him to see more; and vice versa, the exploration of the writer clarifies the photograph.

Early in the text Agee exposes his acceptance of the efficacy of photography to express actuality most accurately:

For in the immediate world, everything is to be discerned . . . with the whole of consciousness, seeking to perceive it as it stands: so that the aspect of a street in sunlight can roar in the heart of itself as a symphony, perhaps as no symphony can: and all of consciousness is shifted from the imagined, the revisive to the effort to perceive simply the cruel radiance of what is. . . .

This is why the camera seems to me, next to unassisted and weaponless consciousness, the central instrument of our time.⁷

What is also unique about this masterpiece of documentary art is Agee’s spirited subjectivity and sentient self-consciousness. Yet, strangely, Agee says of the text:

If I could do it, I’d do no writing at all here. It would be photographs; the rest would be fragments of cloth, bits of cotton, lumps of earth, records of speech, pieces of wood and iron, phials of odors, plates of food . . . As a matter of fact, nothing I might write could make any difference whatever.⁸

The method by which I would present this curriculum unit echoes the sentiments Agee expresses here. Both the writer and the photographer use their process as a means of discovery. It is the process that is important; the end product of photograph or text is but evidence of their discovery. Thus, I would ask you to discover on your own what I have, by handing you. . .

* *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men*

And given Agee’s suggestion we would read it aloud as a group in the course of our daily existence.

I would also issue:

¥ Laurence Bergreen’s *James Agee: A Life*

¥ Walker Evans’s *American Photographs* and *First and Last*

¥ James Agee’s *A Death in the Family*

Along with an annotated list of selections and notes from the other sources from my bibliography, I would simply present you with the documentary evidence which is the part and process by which this unit came together. I might also include in this list:

- ¥ the scraps of crumpled paper
- ¥ empty ink cartridges
- ¥ crumpled napkins
- ¥ half soiled salad plates and drinking glasses, complete with:
- ¥ a flotilla of insects in melting ice

I might also present you with:

- ¥ photographs of the view outside my study window

or

- ¥ the samplings of graffiti from the halls and stalls of the library.

What would remain hidden or unexpressed are the magical wildflower walks of early June (taken together with a loved one); the quiet dinners on my front porch with friends sharing ideas about photography and writing. If the circle of inclusion were to grow narrower, you might catch the glint in my eye as an insight flickered through my mind and escaped from my mouth in the conversations on my front porch. And if this circle were to grow wider, I might reveal the image of a dream in which my entire consciousness became as ubiquitous, as commonplace and as tenuous as light reflecting on the surface of a lake, not so much when this water is placid with the image of what is around its banks invertedly reflected in it; but rather like the light as it instantaneously splatters across this surface when it is disturbed.

It is this which I would offer to my students: an inquiry into the process of photography and writing that will open them to themselves. All I can do for them is hope to inspire a process of selfdiscovery.

You may now be questioning: “Why?” “Why should I go on with this?” “Why this selfdisclosure?” “ Why this self-indulgence?” I offer not my own words but those of William S. Condon:

[I]t seems essential that we share a common order, that we *are* aspects of natural structure; otherwise it would not be possible for us to eat, drink, breathe, perceive, and know. . . . Human communication . . . is a multistructural realm within which we exist and of which we are composed. . . . There is a traditional view that human beings are separate individuals and that communication occurring between them is ‘outside of’ them Yet it seems to be ordered in all its manifestations. The distinction between human *and* nature is difficult to maintain. It is similar to saying the sun *and* nature, or the sky *and* nature. When one person communicates with another person, it is also simultaneously an interaction with and within nature. ⁹

LIGHT:WRITING A THOUSAND WORDS

Standing on some deserted city street on Sunday to catch the sunrise (or having found a comfortable sitting rock in the forest at sunset), I wait to see which tenement window or which aluminum street lamp (or which spot in the forest's elevation of green petals and black poles) will initially (or finally) be licked by the day's sunlight. As if to anticipate or suggest that this spot were made more sacred by its blessing. . .

I have at times been successful viewing photographs with students in my classes. During one of my classes this past year we discussed a single photograph for an entire onehour class period. We began by listing the objects in the photograph and then described them in more detail. Finally, we began to make subjective associations based on the elements in the photograph. We had begun to accept photographs as a medium that allows us to think and to feel. The students returned the next day cheerfully anticipating a repetition of the previous days visual reading.

We began to experience the photograph, not just see its preserved representations. Language, too, can create experience. Yet it is difficult for students to grasp the potential of either medium to do this, and doing so constitutes the first real lesson of this unit. Only when students see feeling in a photograph or language, and thus in turn use these media to express their own feelings, can they begin the process of creation and discovery.

In order to get to the experience of seeing creatively, the students need to be able to see and describe physical characteristics with clarity. Initially, it may seem paradoxical to try to improve the students' descriptive abilities of the apparent in order to prepare them to be sensitive to the intuitive. But, in photography as well as in writing, it is necessary that one knows what the point of reference for a metaphor is in order to understand the allusions and associations which that metaphor is intended to convey.

In the *ACTIVITIES* section of this unit, I have included a description of the photograph which my class discussed for the class session. I include it to illustrate the skills which I hope that this unit will educe: the skills of detailed and accurate written accounts of description.

Everyone is aware of the adage that a picture is worth a thousand words. It is my interpretation that this phrase is an equation and the relationship of word and image is reciprocal. It is not to be understood simply as a photograph being a substitute for words. A photograph can evoke many words. The description of the photograph which is in the *ACTIVITIES* section of this unit and Agee's and Evans's photo text are examples of this interpretation. Like Agee, I have described objects and their location and physical relation to each other. And yet, I have not finished with my engagement with the photograph. I have yet to express its possible meaning: what it makes me think and feel. This aspect of understanding is approachable only in words. Photography, while capable of revealing appearances, cannot provide the context necessary for meaning.

So far, I have been writing like I photograph. I have been touched by a pair of incidents with my students: Denise's exposure of her private collection of family photographs and a successful engagement with a more public photograph. I have seen a sudden flash of light and then an array of light and the patterns and textures it creates. Agee and Evans have provided this flash—an opportunity to use a document from the past to begin to stir the mind and memory of children to get them to understand the expressive potential of words and pictures; more specifically, the need for words to provide a context for public as well as private images.

Photographs are relics of the past, traces of what has happened. If the living take that past upon themselves, if

the past becomes an integral part of the process of people making their own history, then all photographs would reacquire a living context, they would continue to exist in time, instead of being arrested moments. . . . Such a memory would encompass any image of the past, however tragic, however guilty, within its own continuity. The distinction between the private and public uses of photography would be transcended. ¹⁰

The transcendence from a descriptive (see Heading I. “Description” in the *ACTIVITIES* section of this paper) to a conceptual level is the next major lesson of this course. The third section of the *ACTIVITIES* section of this paper illustrates the conceptual content of *VISUAL READING* in this case the subject is the same photograph which I used to illustrate the detailed description.

Before explaining in detail the activities that I will use as a part of this curriculum unit, I am providing a brief summary and critical review of the photographs and words that compose the primary source for these activities.

ABOUT FACING AMERICAN GRAIN

The photographer’s selectivity is of a kind which is closer to empathy than to disengaged spontaneity. He resembles most of all the imaginative reader, intent on studying and deciphering an elusive text. . . . Like a reader, the photographer is steeped in the book of nature.

[H]owever selective photographs are, they cannot deny the tendency toward the unorganized and diffuse which marks them as records. It is therefore inevitable that they should be surrounded with a fringe of indistinct multiple meanings. . . . it makes sense to speak of multiple meanings, vague meaningfulness, and the like only in connection with camera work. ¹¹

Are photographs repositories of mute facts or personal visions? I will attempt to answer this question by examining Book I of *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men* .

Book I is a folio of sixtytwo photographs by Walker Evans. Our first encounter with the three tenant farmers’ families who are the subject of the photo text is a visual one. The subjects and their environment remain anonymous to the viewer. No captions or numbers referring to sections of the text identify the people and places before one’s eyes. The subjects of the photographs are revealed to us in precise visual detail and description. Facing us, they have appeared. William Stott in his book, *Documentary Expression and Thirties America* , compares this primarily visual encounter with an actual face-to-face encounter:

The people in these pictures stand before us vivid with ambiguity and secret meaning; coolly eye us as people do at first acquaintance; and are plainly difficult to get to know. As with real people, we have to *work* at knowing them, commit ourselves to a kind of relationship over time. ¹²

Evans was an advocate of “straight” photography. He claimed to photograph the world as it is. Nothing in his photographs are invented or manipulated. Stott calls Evans’s art an “art of common place reality”, his vision, “timeless, a cool and unqualified staring.” ¹³ Jefferson Hunter in his *Image and Word* further emphasizes this quality.

[I]t is significant that their [the readers] first exposure to the pictures must be purely visual. They must study anonymous human countenances, interpreting them without the aid of caption . . . Evans's pictures do not invite language. He insists on an austere, nonverbal purity. ¹⁴

What is also apparent in these pictures is that we confront economic poverty and the effects of human toil and suffering. Yet what strikes us is the beauty of these photographs and ultimately the beauty of the people themselves. Evans's craftsmanship and orderly compositions have functioned most adequately as an image of introduction. This formal aspect of Evans's art of "transcendent documentary photography" masks the hardship which otherwise might repulse the viewer. ¹⁵ What is further attractive to us is that these photographs are somehow familiar to us. They seem to be "as people take (or used to take) snapshots: from the front and center, from eye level, from the middle distance, and in full flat light." ¹⁶ Carol Shloss remarks that:

[T]he evidence of Evans's pictures suggests . . . that the families felt pleasure, embarrassment, pride.—emotions characteristic of many trusting photographic sessions. ¹⁷

While this familiarity is certainly true, Stott also recognizes the more deeper significance of these images. In citing the Museum of Modern Art's John Szarkowski, Stott admits that Evans has "created 'the accepted myth of our recent past' ". ¹⁸ As seen through Evans's eyes the tenant farmers appear:

complex, strong, and pervasive. He [Evans] uses their poverty to demonstrate how much they possess. Evans suggests that all they touch, and all that touches them, is permeated with their being. . . . The poor condense theirs [their possessions] in a few. Their world and everything in it bespeaks them. It is entirely a work of art. ¹⁹

Stott hypothesizes that by making these people aesthetically respectable, Evans "has inevitably made hardship and poverty respectable." The photographer (and summarily, the viewer) must also "respect, [and] not pity them." ²⁰ Although we may at first feel a discomfort at seeing these photographs (a discomfort not much unlike that which we experience when we are caught staring at others), we are relieved to discover by the power of the camera (which is immune to this discomfort) something that may be common to us. Stott concludes that Evans's photographic vision:

takes us, our lives, the things we use and are used by, our civilization, our humanity, with ultimate seriousness. It stares at our customary locales . . . as though they were of eternal significance. And how terrible it is to realize that though they are not, they are we. ²¹

FROM SIGHT TO INSIGHT AGAINST THE GRAIN

In its traditional observation mode, photography reduces truth to fact and implicitly suppresses 'the social function of subjectivity.'

—Carol Shloss

No picture can simultaneously record a face and dramatize the photographer's personal relations with the owner of the face.

—Jefferson Hunter

The medium of photography has an affinity for the indeterminate . . . it simply fails to tell us anything about his [read one's] behavior in general or his typical attitude. It so radically isolates a momentary pose. . . that the function of this pose within the personality remains everybody's guess. The pose relates to a context which itself is not given. Photographs . . . transmit raw material without refining it.

—Siegfried Kracauer ²²

In all of Book I there are sixtytwo photographs. In seven of them we come facetoface with seven members of the tenant families. Four others provide a frontal view of three-quarters of their bodies. In still two others we confront the full bodies, once again facing directly into our eyes. When Evans turns his camera toward the buildings on the farms and in the nearby roadsides and cities, he focuses on their facades. It is in the remaining photographs—taken in the interiors of these families' homes or ones taken of the backs of people at work in the fields or driving their carts to the cotton gin—that we begin to glimpse the potential deeper meaning that the title of this work seems to indicate. ²³

It is from two other photographs that I think we begin to receive some suggestion that we are to look and read beyond and into the faces and lives presented to our view. In one of the photographs that I am referring to, we see an infant lying on a white cloth on the cabin floor. The infant is completely covered with another white, somewhat coarse cloth that hides all but the two legs below the knees and a single arm below the elbow. The child's left foot and ankle is wrapped in gauze. The child's face and the remainder of its entire body is invisible to us. The other photograph which holds a rather cryptic significance is the final one of this series. In it we see a clear sky with billowing clouds as the background to a mysterious construction. This foregrounded construct is composed of a slender vertical stick transversed by another horizontal member from which four gourds are suspended. The detail is once again precise (as one has grown accustomed to expect from Evans). It is this strange cipher which introduces us to the four hundred and twenty eight pages of text which follows. I believe that these two photographs could provide us with some insight into the title of this work and into the purpose of the emerging text.

The title of this photo text is taken from a piece of Wisdom Literature selected from one of the Apocryphal texts of the Old Testament, specifically Ecclesiasticus. (This selection appears in its entirety on pages 405 and 406 of Book II). There are many meanings which have accrued to the word 'apocryphal'. The meaning which I will choose to emphasize for understanding Agee's text is that of sacred wisdom thought to be too mysterious or esoteric to be disclosed to any but the initiated. The word is made up of the prefix *apo*, meaning away from, off, detached or separate and the Greek word *kryptein*, meaning to hide. It is related to the word cryptic which means, hidden, covered, invisible, latent, occult, secret and private. And if one were to extend one's investigation into other word combinations of the root crypt, such as in the word cryptographer, we discover traces of a code, a cipher, or the art of deciphering. In many ways Agee's text has provided not only a context for but a deciphering of the photographs and people we met in Book I.

Upon reading Book II in its entirety, one may be perplexed by the variety of observations, physical descriptions and conceptual discourses on writing which Agee presents. In my own discourse which follows, I will focus on a single particular aspect of these investigations. What may have become obvious to the reader is that the subject of this book is not only the sharecroppers of Alabama, but a book about the author himself. As I stated earlier, this is a very selfconscious text. It is not only an examination of the lives of these southern farmers, but a commentary on the nature of the writer and his relationship to the camera, writing and the

people whose lives he is disrupting.

One might, perhaps, think of the text of *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men* as an enormously expanding caption, but it is a caption working against Evans's photographs. Agee's prose . . . is . . . strongly metaphorical, repetitive, rhythmically assertive, and above all self-conscious. It draws attention to itself. Selfconsciousness is for Agee . . . what cotton farming is for the tenant families. ²⁴

In contrast to his confidence about photography and the camera's ability to present the truth, language and writing are suspect in their ability to convey actuality. Agee cautions us that we are to be suspicious of 'description'.

'Human beings and their creations (other than art) and the entire state of nature,' he wrote, 'merely are the truth.' This truth, he said, 'words cannot embody; they can only describe.' Consequently, it was the business of the serious writer—the poet as Agee called him—to 'continually bring . . . words as near as he can to the illusion of embodiment.' . . . to bring words more closely into correspondence with the truth, Nature, the world.

He realized that final correspondence was impossible: the dissociation of word and object meant that reality, the truth, couldn't be told . . . The world is finally incommunicable. ²⁵

Yet, in reading Book II, one notices that Agee's powers of description are impeccable, equaling, if not surpassing Evans's photographs in breadth and depth, if not in appearance. His eyes are capable of going where no camera is capable of intruding, in drawers and even underneath the house. His pen is capable of describing these repositories of hidden artifactual texts with verbal, visual and conceptual power. It will also be potent enough to speculate upon the consciousness of the writer, the photographer and the observed. (In the *ACTIVITIES* section at the end of this essay I will list some passages of Agee's pure precise description that I will use for my students' investigations into the language of description. Some of these selections are intended as commentaries on or expansions of particular photographs from Book I, others describe subtleties and nuances which escape photographic exploration.)

Carol Shloss in her analysis of writers and photographers emphasizes Agee's curiosity about the camera and suggests that his "struggle with the camera forms a coherent, powerful subtext, an underground commentary". ²⁶ Her interpretation of this book focuses on how Evans's photographic process offered a model for Agee's own creative efforts. She states that

the photographs were the commanding text. . . they provided the light by which Agee understood his own creativity, his own humanity, and his lack of it. . . . he saw [in Evans] a visible tableau of his own position in the world, the hidden and secretive probing of the writer made tangible, its effects on others exposed.

For Evans, standing openly with his camera, provided a visible tableau of a more hidden dynamic; he showed Agee as graphically as possible that art could be built on face-to-face encounters, that in these matters, personal influence, however profound or dangerous, could be reciprocal. ²⁷

Therefore, in his writing about the tenants he concentrates on what they have and not on what they lack. And these things are valuable because they are used. In contrast to the actuality and beauty of the tenants lives, Agee employs what he considers an inadequate imitation, language. In doing so,

He exposed himself infinitely more than he did the tenants. . . . He presented himself as he was: an actual man of

complex personality in real relation with other actual inaccessible people. ²⁸

And to him this “selfexposure justified the exposure of others.” ²⁹

What he [Agee] was trying to do in recording ‘the cruel radiance of what is’ was ultimately beyond anybody’s ability to achieve . . . To him the unseen animal represented the mystery of everything that lay outside the lens or language: it had a beauty and sadness he could only suggest. ³⁰

Perhaps it is appropriate that *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men* is two books. One of photographs and one of writing. The two arts are fundamentally different: the photographer is presented with a world of objects and people; the writer encounters the poverty of an empty page. Through grappling with the mediums of writing and photography as they convey the history of others, I believe that the students will come to a greater understanding of their own history (as heard in their own words and seen through their own eyes) while recognizing that,

in poverty and suffering (and in failure, too) there was virtue. For him [Agee], the poor *were* blessed; they were the ‘famous men’ [and ‘women’] whose children are within the covenant and whose seed shall remain forever. ³¹

It is my hope that the presentation of this unit will challenge and strengthen a student’s skills of seeing and those which communicate that perception. I hope that they will find that Agee’s writing

[R]eveals that he balanced the tension between participating and recording first by writing passages of ‘pure’ perception, as if he were a lens or the sensitive plate of the camera, and then by extricating himself from that imaginative role and dramatizing himself in the act of perceiving and interacting. On the one hand, Agee was the camera itself, registering impressions, making direct and unmediated contact with the world; on the other hand, he was Walker Evans, the holder of the camera, a cameraman who inevitably had to act as a man in relation to others. ³²

CONCLUSIONHISTORY:MEMORY

[H]istory is concerned not with ‘events’, but with ‘processes’; that ‘processes’ are things which do not begin and end but turn into one another; . . . There are in history no beginnings and no endings. History books begin and end, but the events they describe do not.

—R.G. Collingwood

The historian wants to know how the public man fit in with the broad movements of his (or her) time and people. But after the smoke of battle has cleared and the grand design has been (more or less) understood, we still long to know the inner man, the self that is not all that different from us, that offers an opening for human resonance and identification.

—Charles Kligerman

A people without history
Is not redeemed from time, for history is a pattern

Of timeless moments.

—T. S. Eliot

*Little Gidding*33

You may be wondering how this discourse has arrived at the topic of history. I am tempted to string together a number of quotes without any commentary to allow you to come to your own conclusions, although I am sure you have done so by now. I find it striking to have ended the final paragraph of the preceding section with the phrase relation to others. I am even more surprised that by examining an overtly self-conscious text that I am seeking to teach my students the history of others. In order to explain this to you, I am going to have to inform you of an underlying concept that permeates the title of this essay. I have from the beginning thought that it was my intention not so much to phrase or frame the subjects of Evans's and Agee's books. I am convinced that upon reading *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men*, you and my students will find that Agee and Evans have most adequately accomplished this. Rather, it has been my purpose to bring to the readers' and my students' attention the achievements of these two men. It is Agee and Evans that I choose to frame and phrase and ultimately to praise.

In an introductory essay to a selection on autobiography in his book *The Historian as Detective*, Robin Winks speculates:

The one thing the historian cannot afford to have missing is himself. . . . One cannot totally separate personality from history as it is written, and probably one should not try. ³⁴

Other historians and other thinkers have expressed a similar thesis. Earlier in this century R. G. Collingwood wrote,

If what the historian knows is past thoughts, and if he knows them by rethinking them himself, it follows that the knowledge he achieves by historical inquiry is not knowledge of his situation as opposed to knowledge of himself, it is a knowledge of his situation which is at the same time knowledge of himself. ³⁵

One cannot fail to recognize the dependence of history and photography on memory. Once again I turn to John Berger for an explanation. He states that "memory implies a certain act of redemption. What is remembered has been saved from nothingness. What is forgotten has been abandoned." ³⁶ Berger goes on to emphasize that photographs (and one may read here, other documents which are considered to be repositories of truth) should not be used in an "unilinear way", since the process of

memory is not unilinear at all. Memory works radically, that is to say with an enormous number of associations all leading to the same event.

There is never a single approach to something remembered. The remembered is not like the terminus at the end of a line. Numerous approaches or stimuli converge upon it and lead to it. Words, comparisons, signs need to create a

context for a printed photograph in a comparative way;

The true context of a photograph [and I might add the past,] is [at first] invisible, for it derives from a play, not with form [or in history's case methodology], but time. . . . a photograph bears witness to a human choice being exercised. This choice is not between photographing *x* and *y* : but between photography at *x* moment or *y* moment. ³⁷

The historian also makes choices of which events and which documents he will study as well as when and in what order they occurred. The choice of Agee and Evans was to praise and remember what Miguel de Unamuno once referred to as 'infrahistory', "the silent continuity of unspectacular lives, the bedrock over which the cataclysms of history are played out." ³⁸

What I have sought to achieve in this inquiry was to redeem from the not to distant past two "spies" ³⁹ and their subjects in order to invigorate an approximate present. I have sought this in the sense in which Ralph Waldo Emerson once described history as

The desire to do away with the wild savage, and preposterous There or Then, and introduce in its place the Here and the Now. ⁴⁰

Finally , it is my belief that Evans employed his "transcendental" vision and Agee used "antiauthoritative human consciousness" to perform a task not much unlike a historian whose "business is to reveal the less obvious features hidden from a careless eye in the present situation." ⁴¹ They approximate this attitude because their work did not rely simply on a "click of the moment" but rather they evoked a process that moved "from objective facts to subjective long looks and growing contemplation, to 'insight'." Even Evans's deliberate viewcamera technique demanded a relation to the subject that allowed for a photograph (and its subjects) to compose itself (themselves) "in its [their] own time and more slowly and [coming] from nowhere but within"—the photographer, the writer, the subject, and ourselves. ⁴²

ACTIVITIES & LESSONS

Preliminaries

Description

The following is a description of the photograph mentioned in the text which I had used in my classroom:

The photograph by Sara Silver appeared on the cover of *Black+White* , The Yale Undergraduate Photography Review. In the foreground are two people. One of them is a bulky woman probably in her late thirties. She is facing away from the viewer. She is wearing a vertically striped, onepiece bathing suit slung deep to her lower back and suspended by two thin straps from her shoulders. Her dark hair is parted in the middle. Braids hang from either side of her head and meet at the center of her upper back just below the neck. They are joined there and contained in a thin elastic band. Below this band her hair remains hanging loosely in a doublecurl to a point on her back at about midshoulder blade. On her left hand she is wearing a ring. Her right wrist is wrapped in some sort of band. This hand is loosely laced between the fingers of the other person occupying the foreground of the picture. The frame ends just below the back of her knees. On the right scapular area of

her back (and in the center of the picture frame) is a tattoo of a wingedhorse in flight. Whether it is a true Pegasus is of some question since the horse appears not to be a horse at all but a winged-unicorn.

The second person is standing about a halfstep further back from the person just described. The frame ends at midshin on him. He is a thin male of about the same age as the woman. He is facing the camera and his eyes appear to be aimed directly at the viewer. The crown of his head is bald and he has a full beard. His head is slightly tilted to his right (the viewer's left) with a look of amused curiosity. A clay or wood pendant hangs from a leather strap around his neck. The central area of his torso is dappled with body hair. He is clad in a dark briefstyle bathing suit. His left hand hangs loosely at his side, fingers slightly curled, as the pad of the thumb rests on his outer thigh. The tension in his collarbones suggests that he has rolled back his shoulders to pose in response to the photographer's presence.

The lowerright hand portion of the frame reveals that they stand on a concrete floor with a large and regular grid of expansion joints through it. The two people are inside a woodframed structure that begins to blur as we look into the receding (illusory) space of the photograph. In this area of the background, a portion of a blurred image of a carousel appears with a dotted array of lights, poles, horses, carriages and people. The strong light from the windows at the side of the building and the open wall of the back is overexposed and appears as bright paperwhite causing the metal poles of the carousel and the wooden frame of the windows to disappear. Separating this blurred background from the crisply focused foreground is a white picket fence. It is approximately waisthigh ascending left to right in an acute angle from the lower left-hand corner of the frame.

Viewing the Public Photograph

Students will begin their exploration by viewing slides of Evans's photographs taken from the photo text *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men*. This activity will take an entire onehour class period, allowing for each of the photographs to be observed for approximately one minute. Emphasis can be placed on observing the details rather than being overly concerned about what they mean. *Students can record any details impressions in a notebook or journal which will be maintained throughout all the activities of this curriculum unit.*

Ten Family Photos—Viewing the Private Photograph

As a follow up to this activity, children will be asked to bring in at least ten photographs of their families and friends. In order to emphasize the potential of photography to inform us about the past, the children should be asked to search for photographs of their grandparents or someone of a similar age. (Prearranged commercial portraits are acceptable but are not the greatest source for observing other details. They may be more useful when one introduces the reading into photographs.)

Writing Physical Descriptions from a Photograph

During the next class session we will select one of these photographs and write approximately 150 to 200 words describing the person(s) in the photograph. This description should attempt to limit itself to recording only physical appearances: clothing, background, other objects in the photograph and descriptions of any activity that the photographic subject is engaged in. Children must be directed to try not to speculate about an activity but only describe ones that are obvious by elements in the photograph itself.

Describing the Event of Photographing

If time permits or during the course of another class students can also describe the event taking place when

this photograph was taken. Were they present at this event? Do they know who took the photograph? If not can they find out the answers to either of these questions? (This can be used as an assignment to be completed at home if these answers are unknown.)

Describing an Unknown Person from Another Students Photograph

As a final exercise in description the children will select a photograph from another student in the class and write a description of an unknown person. It is in this exercise that the students will begin to rely on their seeing and not on other previous knowledge and associations about the person or event.

The Greater Unknown or First Impressions

Describing the Public Photograph

Once again students will view the slides of Evans with the purpose of selecting one or two which they feel they can write an 100 to 200 word description of the person(s) or the environment in these photographs. Students can then view these pictures for longer periods of time to record the details of objects and elements of the background.

The teacher may ask the students to imagine what happened just prior to the taking of this picture or immediately after it was taken. Students must be encouraged to make this speculation based upon the elements in the picture not on pure conjecture. Students can also begin to write down how these photographs make them feel and why or what it is in the photograph which makes them feel this way. They can be asked to compare this feeling to an event from their own experience. Other questions which may be asked to elicit further responses are: What will the person in the picture say or do after this picture is taken? Why do you think the photographer took this picture?

The above description and these later observations may be combined in a larger written composition of approximately 500 words. An ultimate goal of this curriculum is to get students to be able to write a thousand words about a photograph!

AT THIS TIME STUDENTS WILL BEGIN READING SELECTIONS FROM AGEE'S LUNPFM ESPECIALLY SECTIONS ABOUT THE DIFFICULTY OF WRITING AND PRIVACY!!!

Spies—Observing Someone in the Neighborhood—The Difficulty of Writing/Intruding

As a homework assignment children will be asked to observe someone from their family or neighborhood and begin recording approximately 50 words a day for two weeks. The student should try to describe their physical features, their clothing, what they are doing, where they are and what is present in the area around their chosen subject. Students should allow their subjects to know that they are doing this but are not to record in their prescience but should do this writing just prior to going to sleep or immediately upon waking up or during the first few minutes of their schoolday. It must be emphasized that this is a notebook they are keeping and not a finished product. If they are having any difficulty writing during the time they are doing this recording they should write about that difficulty. They can even write the same things repeatedly until their is something more to say. During this two week period the students are to write something everyday whether they see the person or not. They should plan to do at least two or three things with this person during these weeks. On a day when they have not seen or done anything with that person they should write about them from memory. They should be encouraged to read their writing the morning after or later on in that day but not immediately

after recording it. Another thing that they may do when they do not see this person is write about a favorite piece of clothing or object that this person owns. They should include in this notebook at least one description of a special event that they have done together. The person selected should not be someone who they have a photograph of.

Complement/Supplement

An additional activity could be to have the students write about an experience they had with the person who they originally wrote about earlier in this curriculum of this section. Have they seen this person or told them that they had written about them? How did it make them feel when they saw them? What did that person say when the student told them that they had written about them? They could take the photograph which they used as a source of their writing and ask that person to describe it or the events surrounding its being taken.

Faces and Facades: Masks

Students will take photographs of a family or friends in their neighborhood. They should be instructed to seek photographic environments and situations which will provide the best description about who that person(s) is and what they do. Family members should be photographed together but not necessarily for a "family portrait." These photographs should best describe each member of the family as a member of that family, focusing on what they do in, around and for the family. Each person should be photographed with a favorite object or a special piece of clothing as well as doing their favorite activity. They should be photographed doing something for or with a family member. Photographs should be taken of the front of the person's house, their front door, anything at all like a porch or *stoop* or a place where the family informally gathers.

As a final activity the student should choose one of these family members and spend a six hour period observing them. During that time they are to take twentyfour photographs of them and spend ten minutes of each hour writing something about doing this.

A similar activity will be performed by the students while they attend someone's birthday party or during a family celebration of someone who they are not related to. Students will do this photographing and ten minute writing knowing that they are going to combine some of these visual and verbal notes to compose a kind of photo album/daybook which will eventually be given to that person as their birthday gift. It will not be given to them for at least three months following this event.

Bringing it All Back Home

Combining the Visual and the Verbal

At this point students will create a slide show presentation that combines the display of a selection of Evan's photographs and a taped audio recording of selections from Agee's text.

Students will later modify this presentation by adding their own written descriptions and impressions of Evans's photographs.

Students will then create a combined slide-audio presentation with their own photographs and writings.

Visual Reading

Returning to the photograph described in the *DESCRIPTION* section of these activities I suggest the following

interpretation:

The frame is carefully divided into two areas, an area that is a precise and accurate rendering of appearances. And one that is illusory, unreal, unperceivable by the naked eye, fantastical and imagined or perceivable only to the naked eye of the camera. The people occupy the real space. One faces out into the even more real beingspace of the photographer and viewer, the other looks deeper into the unreal and imaginative world inside the frame and these two worlds are strangely divided by the fence. Yet the two viewers (on view) are also joined by the simple affectionate gesture of integrally divided by the fence. Yet the two-viewers (on view) are also joined by the simple affectionate gesture of intertwined hands. And lying on the surface of this real world (of the woman) and the surface of the photograph is a confused mythical image of Pegasus/Unicorn.

The number of associations can proliferate, reaching many layers of meaning. There is the dichotomy of male and female and their respective views. The fecundity of the imaginative world. The limitedness and sparseness of the real.

Behind the Mask of Mystery and Meaning

Agee thought the form of his compositor should best approximate music, because of the recurrence and the variation of themes. Others have thought that photography is more like music than it is like painting, primarily because photography, like music has to deal with time.

As a final activity students will add a musical score to the slide presentation that has already been produced. The slideaudio presentation will also be expanded to include writings no photographs could ever approximate. The photographic section will be expanded to include a series of indescribable places and objects.

BACK INTO THE LIGHTWRITING

If I were to reintroduce the analogy of writing like I photograph, I have now taken measure of the light reflecting from various objects, primarily words and photographs. Having done this I would now select appropriate shutter-speeds—to the writer this may be analogous to choosing a chapter title—to arrest motion if I were to express the reality of objects in the frame or to allow the motion to become blurred and admit uncertainty to some of the objects of observation) and lens opening size—to the writer this is similar to the choice of voice or point of view—to also allow for this possible expression of certainty/uncertainty in relation to distance into the frame). Now, before releasing the shutter and exposing the film, I would peek out from behind the camera and just be with the subject for one brief second, to experience it again in actuality before preserving it. To be present with it before it becomes a document of memory. To enjoy it in its living context without the deflection of memory.

READING SUGGESTIONS FOR CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

NOTE TO THE TEACHER: I would caution the teacher not to assign the entire text of *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men* to certain classes due to the fact that some sections pose problems of racial and/or sexual suitability to the students' development and maturity.

Without a doubt you will want to examine Agee's text yourself for selections which may be relevant to your own pedagogical needs. I list here a few selections with an all too brief annotation:

"(On the Porch: 1" : pages 19, 20 & 21—this is the earliest entry of the book that does not engage in a discussion of the book's purpose. The text begins in silence as all are asleep. Perhaps, under this cloak of darkness it is the writer's wish that he be allowed to observe and record while he remains "invisible" to the waking consciousness of others;

"Near A Church" : pages 37 & 38—here lies Agee's first act of describing and inventorytaking. This passage is not without metaphor and imagination as he refers to the church as "God's mask and wooden skull." There is also an account of his assisting Evans in preparing to photograph the church;

"All Over Alabama" : pages 42 & 43—As night descends not only on the porch but all around him, Agee continues to place his readers and himself and the tenant farmers in the larger picture.

Agee's first entry of pure description is an account of the oil lamp in one of the tenants' houses. The lamp is visible in one of Evans's photographs and the two can be used in combination to compare the powers of each medium—pages 47 & 48;

A meditation on what a tenant family is. This is a very general and subjective evaluation and takes into account what a family and each of its members experience across generations—pages 52—54;

This section is followed by a revelation of Agee's point of view at this time in the narrative. It is one of empathy with their tiredness and their dreams—pages 54—56;

From the perspective of a tenant youth, Agee reflects on the possibility and nature of hope in a tenant's life—page 76;

From this dark and silent slumber there comes a waking—pages 80—84. It is an enthralling imaginative recital of the land and animals arising with an emphasis on the sounds and their movement through time and space;

Page 84 provides the reader with an autobiographical vignette of the rituals of his own wakings and how they compare with those of the tenants:

In "Colon" he claims to make a new beginning of his task of writing. He begins to describe a structure that the book will take. Agee characterizes this structure as spherical and globular. What follows is much like a personal creation myth with each and every creature at the center of his own sphere—pages 93—102;

Agee finds himself alone in the house and this solitude gives him the opportunity to look, to gaze, to stare, to pry; and we are rewarded because of this. There follows a lengthy, elaborate, painstaking inventory and description of one of the tenant houses. It is a must read for experiencing Agee at his descriptive best. I might highlight his account of "The room beneath the house", "Odors" and "The altar." The latter can be used together with one of the photographs as another comparison of the accuracy and efficacy of the two mediums—pages 125-169. Within this section Agee include two "essentials" that reflect upon a building as a mental construction: one is that of the simultaneity of the existence of the house and all its four rooms in the imagination of the observer, very much like that of an architectural plan or model inside our mind; the other one is an account of how the materials give a story or reading of its construction. Finally, on pages 168 & 169, he returns to the theme or image of light and all of its manifestations, at this time it is a signal. Here Agee points to the unique occurrence of light in time and space. I won't ruin it for you read it!

Another section of description that coincides with one of Evans's photographs appears on pages 176—180, describing the Ricketts' fireplace;

"Beauty" is the subject of Agee's attention on pages 181 & 182; and on page 187 he evaluates the habitability and function of tenant houses;

"(On the Porch : 2" : pages 201—229; This is the most self-aware section of the book in which he tackles many conceptual difficulties of writing and the presentation of actuality. In brief, some of the topics are: consciousness, the cosmos and man's natural order, truth, art and imagination, fact and fiction, journalism, naturalism and realism, the nature of language and writing. On page 219 he describes the four "planes of truth which he will utilize throughout the book, they are recall, reception, contemplation, and *in medias res* . Agee expresses a relationship to the land that borders on being a prehistoric or mythic evocation. He writes of reciprocity in the earthly movements and experience;

For the symbolic nature of objects, this time, clothing, see the section on "Overalls", pages 240—244;

I'm sure none of you will want to skip over the section on "Education" on pages 263—286;

Pages 291—294 describe the family and its relationship to work;

Pages 366—369 is a touching and revealing account of Agee's thoughts and feelings upon first encountering the tenants. It comes to a magnificent chronicle of his getting stuck in the mud with his automobile and having to appeal to and warmly receive the family's compassion, hospitality and assistance—pages 373—382;

The final entries include a description of a graveyard in which he remarks about the presence of photographs and other objects on the graves, pages 395—399. There is a photograph of a child's grave in Book I that can be referred to, for others see Evans *Photographs for the Farm Security Administration*. . . . The absolute last images of the book before Agee returns to the porch series to close, are those of two children one cradled in his mother's arms and another asleep on the porch, 401 and 402.

"(On the Porch : 3"—pages 421—428 is a meditation on the nature, purpose and possibility of communication. It is about the limits and the hopes of language, of the human need and attempt to communicate. It is also about multiplicity, ambiguity and incommunicability. Finally, it is about silence, thinking, analyzing, remembering and praying.

For a concise overview and interpretation of the text see Genevieve Moreau's *The Restless Journey of James Agee* , William and Morrow and Company, New York, 1977, pp. 135—144 & pp. 185—199.

Notes

1. Berger, John, "Understanding Photography", in Trachtenberg, Alan, ea., *Classic Essays on Photography* (New Haven: Leete's Island Books, 1980), p. 293.
2. Berger, John, *About Looking*. (New York: Pantheon Books. 1980), p. 51
3. Berger, in Trachtenberg, ea., *Classic Essays*. . . , p. 294.

- Berger, *About Looking* , pp. 51, 52 & 56. Berger defines the private photograph as one which is “appreciated and read in a context *which is continuous with that from which the camera removed it* . . . The contemporary public photograph usually presents an event, a seized set of appearances , which [at first glance] has nothing to do with us its readers, or with the original meaning of the event. It offers information, but information severed from all lived experience.” Later in his essay he adds that “the [private] photograph lives in an ongoing continuity. . . . The public photograph, by contrast, is torn from its context, and . . . lends itself to any arbitrary use.”
4. Hunter, Jefferson, *Image and Word* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1987), p. 1. Hunter is the first literary critic who I have come across who refers to photographerwriter collaborations as ‘photo texts’. Photo texts are “composite publications evoking a landscape or recording a history, celebrating a community or mourning a loss. The words and photographs contribute equally to their meaning; that is how the genre is defined.”
5. Agee, James and Evans, Walker, *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, Co., 1966), p. xv.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 11.
7. *Ibid.*, p. 12.
8. Condon, William S., “Communication and Empathy” in Lichtenberg, Joseph, et al ea., *Empathy II* (Hillsdale, N.J.: The Analytic Press, 1984), pp. 35 & 37.
9. Berger, *About Looking* , p. 57.
10. Kracauer, Siegfried, “Photography” in Trachtenberg, ed. *Classic Essays..* , pp. 260 & 265.
11. Stott, William, *Documentary Expression and Thirties America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1973), p. 278.
12. *Ibid.*, pp. 276 & 288.
13. Hunter, *Image and Word* , pp. 74 & 75.
14. Stott, *Documentary Expression* . . . , p. 269. The words are Evans’s own description of his photography. According to Stott, “ ‘transcendent documentary photography’ is the making of images whose meanings surpass the local circumstances that provided their occasion.” Berger seems to intimate that all public photographs have this possibility. (See Note 4.) However, Stott’s choice of words gives public photographs a more positive connotation.
15. *Ibid.*, p. 270; Janet Malcolm’s article, “Slouching Towards Bethlehem, Pa.”, *New Yorker* , August 6, 1979, provides a discussion of the possible differences of interpretation based on print quality. This article is also useful as an example of a *VISUAL READING* activity.
16. Shloss, Carol, *In Visible Light* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), p. 195. As in Note 16 a difference of interpretation can be found in Stott, *Documentary Expression* . . . pp. 284—287, this time in relation to a photograph taken by Evans but not included in Book I. Stott comments that although it is the picture which presents the tenants “as they really want to be seen, . . . [t]he portrait, . . . has a meaning more ultimate than has been hinted at. . . . It is the ‘nostalgia,’ the ‘terror,’ the ‘infinite sadness,’ the ‘silence,’ much remarked upon in his [Evans’s] art.” [p.287].
17. Stott, *Documentary Expression* . . . , p. 267.
- 18.

- ibid., p. 275. Berger suggests that the simple “minimal message of a photograph” is best understood by the statement: “I have decided that seeing this worth recording.” A more complex decoding of this minimal message would read like this: “the degree to which I believe this is worth looking at, can be judged by all that I am willingly not showing because it is contained within it.” (See Berger, “Understanding Photography”, in Trachtenberg, ea., *Classic Essays . . .*, p. 294.)
19. Evans’s photographs and Agee’s writing evoke impressions which are not visible within the limit of the frame or explicit within the text. Poverty is suggested by what we do not see in the photograph. For example, the tenants do not own a camera; Shloss (In *Visible Light*, p. 194) considers it significant:

That no tenant farmer could buy a camera was a sign of more than poverty—it indicated the full extent of their bondage, the weight of the world restricted for want of a vantage point which might render it explicable and thus subject to control. To take a picture was to have a perspective that no sharecropper could claim.

Stott (*Documentary Expression. . .*, p. 311) rightfully argues that:

The book’s hero is as Agee said, human consciousness, the instrument that tries the many soundings of reality and the source ‘we have to thank for joy’. Because Agee’s consciousness is so forceful and rich, his most persuasive propaganda against the tenant system was exactly that it diminished consciousness, atrophied ‘the use of the intelligence, of the intellect, and the emotions.’ In tenant life a consciousness beyond that of the simplest child would result ‘in a great deal of pain, not to say danger’; hence, the faculty had to be reduced or killed.

20. Stott, *Documentary Expression. . .*, p. 277.

21. Ibid., p. 289.

22. Shloss, *In Visible Light*, p. 264; Hunter, *Image and Word*, p. 151; Kracauer, “Photography”, in Trachtenberg, ea., *Classic Essays . . .*, p. 265.

23. Berger, *About Looking*, pp. 58, 60, & 61. Berger in, “Uses of Photography”, posits the creation of an “alternative photography.”

For the photographer this means thinking of her or himself not so much as a reporter to the rest of the world, but rather as a recorder for those involved in the events photographed.

[This] alternative use of photography which already leads back once more to the phenomenon and faculty of memory. The aim must be to construct a context for a photograph, to construct it with words, to construct it with other photographs, or to construct it by its place in an ongoing text of photographs and images.

24. Hunter, *Image and Word*, p. 76.

25. Stott, *Documentary Expression . . .*, pp. 296 & 297.

26. Shloss, *In Visible Light*, p. 180.

27. Ibid., pp. 15 & 195.

28. Stott, *Documentary Expression . . .*, pp. 298 & 299.

29. Shloss, *In Visible Light* , p. 195.
30. Ibid., p. 197.
31. Stott, *Documentary Expression . . .* , p. 305.
32. Schloss, *In Visible Light* , p. 193.
Collingwood, R. G., *An Autobiography*, (New York: Oxford Paperbacks), p. 97; Kligerman, Charles, "The Empathic Approach to Biography", in Lichtenberg, Joseph et al ea., *Empathy I*, p. 317; Eliot, T.S., *The Complete Poems and Plays of T.S. Eliot* , (London: Faber and Faber, 1969), p. 197.
33. Winks, Robin W., *The Historian as Detective* , (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1968), p. 61.
34. Collingwood, *An Autobiography* , p. 114.
35. Berger, *About Looking* , p. 35.
36. Berger, in Trachtenberg, ea., *Classic Essays* . . . , p. 293.
37. Nozick, Martin, "Introduction" to *Selected Works of Miguel de Unamuno, Vol. 5, Ficciones* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, Bollingen Series LXXXV, 1976), p. xx.
38. Agee, *Let Us Now* . . . , p. 5. He refers to himself and Evans as playing this role in their observations of the tenant farmers.
39. Emerson, Ralph Waldo, "History", Atkinson, Brooks, ed. *The Selected Works of Ralph Waldo Emerson* (New York: The Modern Library, 1950), p. 127.
40. Collingwood, R.G., *An Autobiography* (New York: Oxford Paperbacks), p. 100.
41. The words are Eudora Welty's as they are quoted by Hunter (*Image and Word* , p. 104).
- 42.

BOOK MARKSBIBLIOGRAPHY

- Agee, James. *The Morning Watch* . Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1951.
- Agee, James. *A Death in the Family* . New York: Avon Books, 1957.
- Agee, James, and Evans, Walker. *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men*. Third ed. New York: Ballantine Books, 1966.
- Agee, James. *Letters of James Agee to Father Flye* . Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1971.
- Barthes, Roland. *Mythologies* . Translated by Annette Lavers. New York: Hill and Wang, 1972.
- Barthes, Roland. *Camera Lucida*. Translated by Richard Howard. New York: Hill and Wang, 1980.
- Berger, John. *About Looking* . New York: Pantheon Books, 1980.
- Bergreen, Laurence. *James Agee: A Life* . New York: Penguin Books, 1980.
- Coles, Robert. *Irony in the Mind's Life* . Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1974.
- Collingwood, R.G. *An Autobiography* . New York: Oxford Paperbacks.
- Creative Camera* . Special edition on Walker Evans. London: Coo Press Ltd., September, 1977.

- Doty, Mark A. *Tell Me Who I Am* . Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1981.
- Eliot, T. S. *The Complete Poems and Plays of T. S. Eliot* . London: Faber and Faber, 1969.
- Emerson, Ralph Waldo. *The Selected Writings of Ralph Waldo Emerson* , ed. Brooks Atkinson. New York: The Modern Library, 1950.
- Evans, Walker. *American Photographs* . New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1938.
- Evans, Walker. *Walker Evans: Photographs for the Farm Security Administration, 1935-1938* . New York: Da Capo Press, 1973.
- Evans, Walker. *Walker Evans: First and Last* . New York: Harper and Row, 1978.
- Hunter, Jefferson. *Image and Word* . Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1987.
- Kerrigan, Anthony and Nozick, Martin. *Selected Works of Miguel de Unamuno* . Princeton: Princeton University Press, Bollingen Series LXXXV, Vol. 7, 1976.
- Lichtenberg, Joseph; Bernstein, Melvin; and Silver, Donald. *Empathy I and Empathy II* . Hillsdale, N.J.: The Analytic Press, 1984.
- Malcolm, Janet. "Slouching Towards Bethlehem, Pa.", *New Yorker* , August 6, 1979.
- Moreau, Genevieve. *The Restless Journey of James Agee* . Translated from the French by Miriam Kleiger. New York: William Morrow and Co., 1977.
- Shloss, Carol. *In Visible Light* . New York: Oxford University Press, 1987
- Sontag, Susan. *On Photography* . New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1973.
- Stott, William. *Documentary Expression and Thirties America* . Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1973.
- Trachtenberg, Alan, ed. *Classic Essays on Photography* . New Haven: Leete's Island Books, 1980.
- Winks, Robin, ed. *The Historian as Detective* . New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1968.
- Yale Undergraduate Photography Review Staff, *Black+White* . New Haven, 1987.

<https://teachersinstitute.yale.edu>

©2019 by the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute, Yale University

For terms of use visit <https://teachersinstitute.yale.edu/terms>