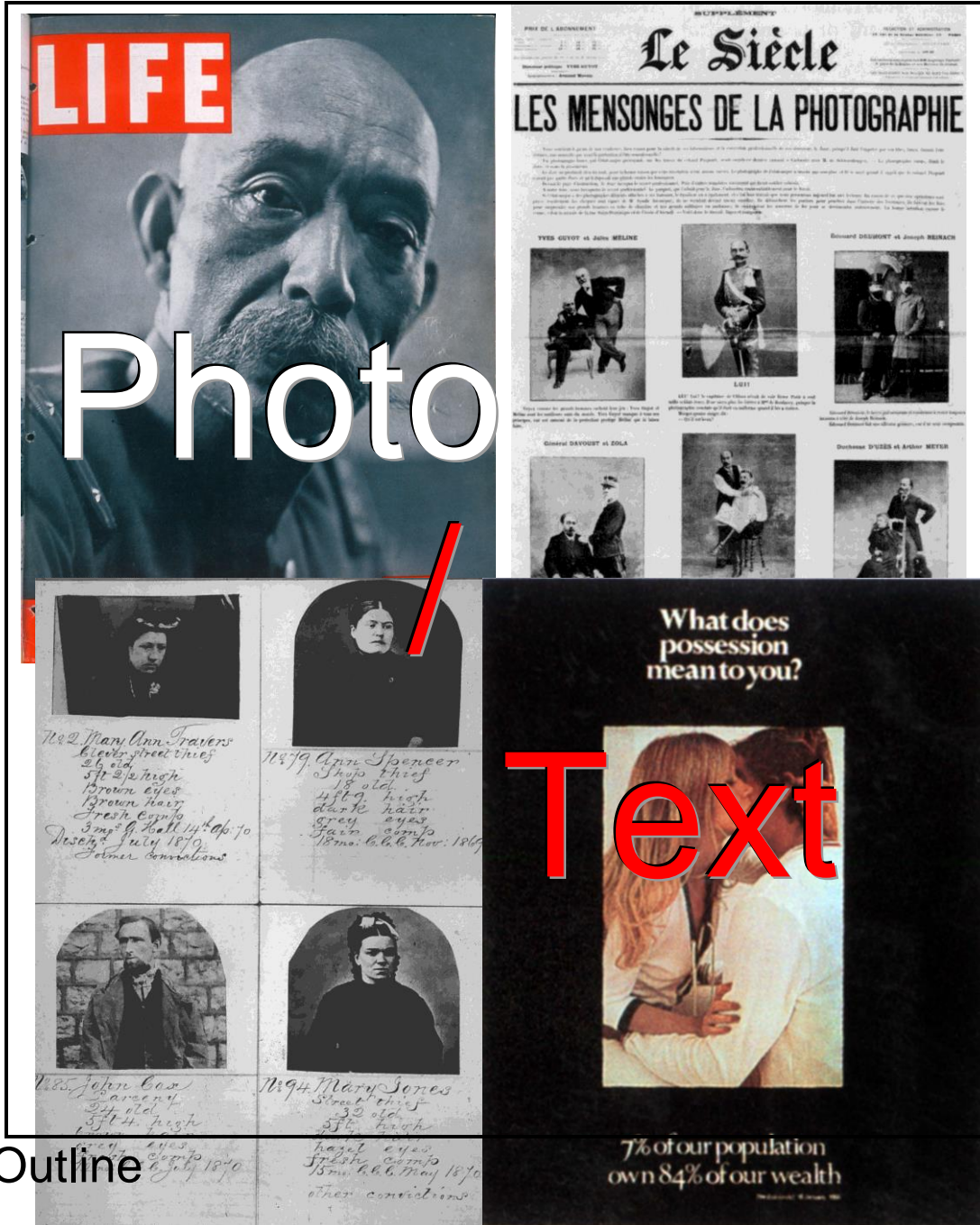


SUMMER 2015

Photo/Text



Since the publication in 2004 of the first volume of Martin Parr and Gerry Badger's *The Photobook: A History*, intense interest among both scholars and collectors has focused on photography in print, creating a minor bubble in the market for photographic books. In this seminar, I want to take a somewhat broader look not just at the photobook but also at the

Instructor: Professor John Tagg

Time: Sunday, Monday, Wednesday, Thursday, 4:00–8:00 p.m.

Room: TBA

E-mail Comments and Questions: jtagg@binghamton.edu

larger history of the photograph's imbrication in text and, indeed, at the rather more vexed question of the relation of vision and reading, image and textuality.

In the 1970s in Britain, on the walls of art galleries and on walls in the street, the addition of text to a photograph came, perhaps oddly, to take on the mantle of a radical act, something capable in itself of politicizing the image—undoing its supposed autonomy by affirming its social character as sign. The largeness of these claims, which may seem odd today, consciously echoed those made earlier, in the 1930s, by Walter Benjamin and others, for the political force of the caption. Paradoxically, however, it was already very clearly the case that, across the entire history of the development of the photographic apparatus, it was only in quite exceptional and rather contrived circumstances that a photographic image would be encountered free from the overdeterminations of writing. From Talbot's first printing of *The Pencil of Nature* to the photographically illustrated press of the 1890s, from the archiving systems of the last quarter of the nineteenth century to the pictorial magazines and photo-documentary books of the 1930s, the photograph had never occupied a pristine space. What does this tell us about radical investments in photography in the 1930s and 1970s and about the hopes that photography would be the key to an effective and transformative cultural politics? More broadly, what does it entail for our view of photographic meaning, for the notion of the purely visual image and for our attempts to define the history of photography as the history of a distinct and integral medium? If the photograph is always part of a hybrid assemblage can it have its own history or, indeed, a single history?

This seminar will come at these questions backwards, as it were, through a series of staged encounters with specific instances of photographic production, from postconceptual art back to those hybrid technological products that prompted such exaggerated predictions but that also exacerbated the deep uncertainties about the status of the photograph that haunted the nineteenth century and perhaps haunt us still—all the more so in the age of the photograph's digital dissemination.

Format

The seminar will function as a structured reading group in which emphasis will fall on the close analysis of specific texts that will, at the same time, be located in an unfolding argument from session to session. As with any seminar, for our meetings to operate as something other than informal lectures or undirected chat groups, a particular kind of effort will be required from all participants. No prior knowledge of the literature or terminology will be assumed but a serious commitment to the program of readings and research will be essential. Out of respect for the group, participants must therefore, without exception, be able to keep up with the regular program of weekly readings and be prepared to complete assigned research tasks on time.

Readings

Since this is a seminar, it will be part of the responsibility of the group to gather the materials required. A bibliography of initial sources is included at the end of this *Syllabus*. The required

weekly readings will be available via electronic reserves, where a copy of the syllabus with readings and bibliography will also be available.



Assessment

Assessment will be based on assigned research tasks, on participation in the seminar sessions, and on individual research papers that will depart from, extend and critique the arguments built up from session to session in the readings and discussions. To enable participants to share their work collectively, final papers will be read under professional conditions at a seminar conference that will be organized for a date following the conclusion of the seminar sessions. Such a context calls for a highly focused, tightly organized paper that will take fifteen to twenty minutes to read—that is, a paper of around 3,500 words, excluding notes and bibliography. Papers in their final form will also be due at the time of the seminar conference. Late papers will not be accepted without prior agreement and the appropriate documentation. Incompletes will not be given except in truly exceptional cases of documented emergency.

Syllabus

June 28

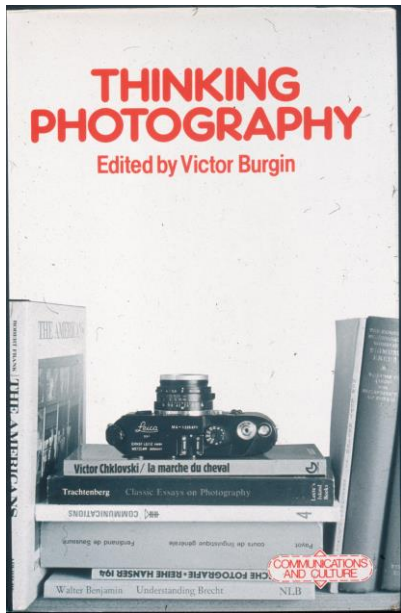
1. Read My Pics: Looking/Reading :: Image/Text

Reading:

- Karen Beckman and Liliane Weissberg, “Introduction” to *On Writing with Photography*, Karen Beckman and Liliane Weissberg [eds] (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2013), pp. ix–xvii.
- Norman Bryson. “Perceptualism,” “The Image from Within and Without,” and “The Gaze and the Glance,” in *Vision and Painting: The Logic of the Gaze* (London: Macmillan, 1983), pp. 37-131.
- Martin Jay, “The Camera as Memento Mori: Barthes, Metz, and the Cahiers du Cinéma,” chapter 8 of *Downcast Eyes: The Denigration of Vision in Twentieth-Century French Thought* (Berkeley; Los Angeles; London: University of California Press, 1993), pp. 435–91.
- Friedrich Kittler, “Perspective and the Book,” trans. Sara Ogger, *The Grey Room*, no. 5 (Fall 2001): pp. 38–53.

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- Martin Parr and Gerry Badger, *The Photobook: A History*, Volume 1 (London; New York: Phaidon, 2004).
- Martin Parr and Gerry Badger, *The Photobook: A History*, Volume 2 (London; New York: Phaidon, 2006).
- Andrew Roth [ed.]. *The Book of 101 Books: Seminal Photographic Books of the Twentieth Century*. New York: PPP Editions in association with Roth Horowitz, 2001.
- Andrew Roth [ed.]. *The Open Book: A History of the Photographic Book from 1878 to the Present*. Göteborg, Sweden: Hasselblad Center, 2004.



June 29

2. Photo-Text to Photo-Theory: From Conceptual Art to Photographic Theory

Reading:

- Victor Burgin, “Socialist Formalism,” *Studio International* (May–June 1976).
- Victor Burgin, “Photographic Practice and Art Theory,” in Victor Burgin [ed.], *Thinking Photography* (London: Macmillan, 1982), pp. 39–83.
- Victor Burgin, “Art, Common Sense and Photography,” in Jessica Evans [ed.], *The Camerawork Essays: Context and Meaning in Photography* (London: Rivers Oram Press, 1997), pp. 74–85.
- Victor Burgin, “The Absence of Presence: Conceptualism and Postmodernisms,” in *The End of Art Theory: Criticism and Postmodernity* (London: Macmillan,

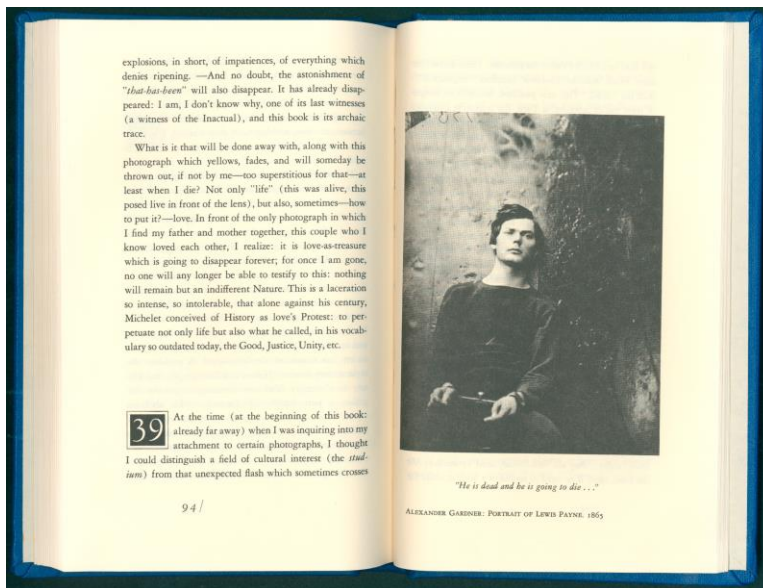
1986), pp. 29–50.

Additional Reading:

- Victor Burgin, *Between* (Oxford and New York: Basil Blackwell, 1986).
- Richard Cork and Anne Seymour, *The New Art* (London: Arts Council of Great Britain, 1972).
- Tony Godfrey, "Sex, Text, Politics: An Interview with Victor Burgin," *Block*, No. 7 (1982).
- Paul Hill, Angela Kelly and John Tagg, *Three Perspectives on Photography* (London: Arts Council of Great Britain, 1979).
- Griselda Pollock, "Screening the Seventies: Sexuality and Representation in Feminist Practice—A Brechtian Perspective," in *Vision and Difference: Femininity, Feminism and Histories of Art* (London: Routledge, 1988).

July 1

3. The Textuality of the Image: Semiology, Studium and Photograph

*Reading:*

- Roland Barthes, "The Photographic Message," in *Image-Music-Text*, S. Heath [ed.] (Glasgow: Fontana/Collins, 1977), pp. 15–31.
- Roland Barthes, "The Rhetoric of the Image," in *Image-Music-Text*, S. Heath [ed.] (Glasgow: Fontana/Collins, 1977), pp. 32–51; and in Alan Trachtenberg [ed.], *Classic Essays on Photography* (New Haven, Conn.: Leete's Island Books, 1980), pp. 269–85.

- Roland Barthes, *Camera Lucida*, trans. Richard Howard (London: Jonathan Cape, 1982).
- Stuart Hall, "The Determinations of Newsphotographs," *Working Papers in Cultural Studies*, No. 3 (1972).

Additional Reading:

- Geoffrey Batchen [ed.], *Photography Degree Zero: Reflections on Roland Barthes's Camera Lucida*. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2011.
- Victor Burgin, "Re-reading *Camera Lucida*," in *The End of Art Theory: Criticism and Postmodernity* (London: Macmillan, 1986), pp. 71–92.
- Eduardo Cadava and Paola Cortés-Rocca, "Notes on Love and Photography," *October*, No. 116 (Spring 2006): pp. 3–4.
- Jacques Derrida, "The Deaths of Roland Barthes," trans. Pascale-Anne Brault and Michael Naas, in Hugh J. Silverman [ed.], *Philosophy and Non-Philosophy Since Merleau-Ponty* (New York and London: Routledge, 1988), pp. 259–296.

- Michel Foucault, “The Discourse on Language,” trans. Rupert Swyer, Appendix to *The Archaeology of Knowledge* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1972), pp. 215–37
- Margaret Olin, “Touching Photographs: Roland Barthes’s ‘Mistaken’ Identification,” *Representations*, No. 80 (Fall 2002): pp. 99ff.
- Allan Sekula, “On the Invention of Photographic Meaning,” in Victor Burgin [ed.], *Thinking Photography* (London: Macmillan, 1982), pp. 84–109.
- John Tagg, “The Pencil of History,” in Patrice Petro [ed.], *Fugitive Images: From Photography to Video* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1995), pp. 285–303.
- John Tagg, “The Violence of Meaning,” *Crossings: A Counter-Disciplinary Journal of Philosophical, Cultural, Historical and Literary Studies*, No. 3 (1999): pp. 187–212.

July 2

4. End of an Aura: The Politics of the Caption

Reading:

- Walter Benjamin, “A Small History of Photography,” in *One-Way Street and Other Writings*, trans. Edmund Jephcott and Kingsley Shorter (London: New Left Books, 1979), pp. 240–257; “A Short History of Photography,” in Alan Trachtenberg [ed.], *Classic Essays on Photography* (New Haven, Conn.: Leete’s Island Books, 1980), pp. 199–216.
- Walter Benjamin, “The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction,” in *Illuminations*, Hannah Arendt [ed.], trans. Harry Zohn (London: Fontana/Collins, 1973).
- Walter Benjamin, “The Author as Producer,” in Victor Burgin [ed.], *Thinking Photography* (London: Macmillan, 1981), pp. 15–31.
- Siegfried Kracauer, “Photography,” in *The Mass Ornament: Weimar Essays*, Thomas Y. Levin [ed.] (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1995), pp. 47–63.

Additional Reading:

- Carolin Duttlinger, “Imaginary Encounters: Walter Benjamin and the Aura of Photography,” *Poetics Today*, Vol. 29, No. 1 (Spring 2008): pp. 79–101.
- Miriam Hansen, “Decentric Perspectives: Kracauer’s Early Writings on Film and Mass Culture,” *New German Critique*, No. 54 (Fall 1991): pp. 47–76.
- Rosalind E. Krauss, “Reinventing the Medium,” *Critical Inquiry*, Vol. 25, No. 2, “Angelus Novus”: Perspectives on Walter Benjamin (Winter 1999): pp. 289–305.
- Frederic J. Schwartz, “The Eye of the Expert: Walter Benjamin and the Avant Garde,” *Art History*, Vol. 24, No. 3 (June 2001): pp. 401–44.

July 5

5. foto-auge/foto-mund: Montage, Perception, Message

Reading:

- Franz Roh, “Mechanism and Expression: The Essence and Value of Photographs,” in Franz Roh and Jan Tschichold [eds], *foto-auge: 76 fotos der zeit* (Stuttgart: Akademischer Verlag Dr. Fritz Wedekind & Co., 1929), pp. 14–18.

Additional Reading:

- Stephen C Hutchings, “Photographic Eye as Poetic I,” *History of Photography*, Vol. 24, No. 4 (Winter 2000): pp.300ff.
- Alexander N. Lavrentiev [ed.], *Aleksandr Rodchenko: Experiments for the Future: Diaries, Essays, Letters, and Other Writings*, trans. Jamey Gambrell, (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 2005).
- David Mellor [ed.], *Germany, The New Photography, 1927–33: Documents and Essays* (London: Arts Council of Great Britain, 1978).
- Patrice Petro, “Modernity and Mass Culture in Weimar: Contours of a Discourse on Sexuality in Early Theories of Perception and Representation,” *New German Critique*, No. 40 (Winter 1987): pp. 115–46.
- Simon Watney, “Making Strange: The Shattered Mirror,” in Victor Burgin [ed.], *Thinking Photography* (London: Macmillan, 1981), pp. 154–76.



July 6

6. Desire and Distraction: Reading the Illustrated Newspaper

Reading:

- Patrice Petro, “Modernity and Mass Culture in Weimar: Contours of a Discourse on Sexuality in Early Theories of Perception and Representation,” *New German Critique*, No. 40 (Winter 1987): pp. 115–46.
- Patrice Petro, “After Shock/Between Boredom and History,” in Patrice Petro [ed.], *Fugitive Images: From Photography to Video* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1995), pp. 265-84.

Additional Reading:

- Ken Baynes, *Scoop, Scandal, and Strife: A Study of Photography in Newspapers* (London: Lund Humphries, 1971).
- David Evans, *John Heartfield, AIZ: Arbeiter-Illustrierte Zeitung, Volks Illustrierte, 1930-38*, Anna Lundgren [ed.] (New York: Kent Fine Art, 1992).
- Matthew S. Witkovsky, *Foto: Modernity in Central Europe, 1918–1945* (New York; London: Thames and Hudson, 2007).

July 8

7. The Urge to Look and Look Again: Consumption, Spectacle and Truth in the 1930s' Photo-Magazine and Photo-Documentary Book

Reading:

• Stuart Hall, "The Social Eye of Picture Post," *Working Papers in Cultural Studies*, no. 2 (Spring 1972).

• Elizabeth McCausland. "Photographic Books." *The Complete Photographer*. Willard D. Morgan [ed.]. Vol. 8, Issue 43. Chicago: National Educational Alliance, 1942, pp. 2783–94.

• Edwin Rosskam. "Not Intended for Framing: The FSA Archive." *Afterimage*, Vol. 8, No. 8 (March 1981): pp. 9–11.

• Alan Trachtenberg, "A Book Nearly Anonymous," chapter 5 of *Reading American Photographs: Images as History, Mathew Brady to Walker Evans* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1989).

• Tagg, John, "The Plane of Decent Seeing: Documentary and the Rhetoric of Recruitment." Chapter 2 of *The Disciplinary Frame: Photographic Truths and the Capture of Meaning*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2009, pp. 51–94.

• John Tagg, "Melancholy Realism: Walker Evans's Resistance to Meaning." *Narrative*, The Journal of the Society for the Study of Narrative Literature, Vol. 11, No. 1 (January 2003): pp. 3–77.



Additional Reading:

• Erskine Caldwell and Margaret Bourke-White, *You Have Seen Their Faces* (New York: Modern Age Books Inc., 1937).

• Walker Evans, *American Photographs* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1938).

• Dorothea Lange and Paul Schuster Taylor, *An American Exodus: A Record of Human Erosion* (New York: Reynal and Hitchcock, 1939).

• Archibald MacLeish, *Land of the Free* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Co., 1938).

• Loudon Wainwright, *The Great American Magazine: An Inside History of Life* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1986).

• Richard Wright, *12 Million Black Voices: A Folk History of the Negro in the United States*, Photo-Direction [sic] by Edwin Rosskam (New York: The Viking Press, 1941).

July 9

8. File Photos: The Archive, The Camera and The Filing Cabinet

Reading:

- Robin E. Kelsey, "Viewing the Archive: Timothy O'Sullivan's Photographs for the Wheeler Survey, 1871-74," *The Art Bulletin*, Vol. 85, No. 4 (December 2003): pp. 702-23.
- Allan Sekula, "The Body and the Archive" *October*, No. 39 (Winter 1986).
- John Tagg, "A Means of Surveillance: The Photograph as Evidence in Law," in *The Burden of Representation: Essays on Photographies and Histories* (London: Macmillan and Amherst, Mass.: University of Massachusetts Press, 1988), pp. 66-102.
- John Tagg. "The Archiving Machine; or, The Camera and the Filing Cabinet." *Grey Room*, no. 47 (Spring 2012): pp. 24-37.

Additional Reading:

- Michel Foucault, "The Eye of Power," in *Power/Knowledge*, Colin Gordon [ed.] (Brighton: Harvester Press, 1980), pp. 146-65.
- Michel Foucault, "The Means of Correct Training" and "Panopticism," in *Discipline and Punish: Birth of the Prison*, trans. Alan Sheridan (London: Allen Lane, Penguin Press, 1977), pp. 170-94 and pp. 195-228.
- Robin Kelsey, *Archive Style: Photographs and Illustrations for U.S. Surveys, 1850-1890* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007).
- Rosalind Krauss, "Photography's Discursive Spaces: Landscape/View," *Art Journal*, Vol. 42, No. 4 (Winter 1982).
- J. J. Long, "The Collection" and "The Photograph," Chapters 2 and 3 of *W. G. Sebald: Image, Archive, Modernity* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007), pp. 27-70.
- John Tagg, "The One-Eyed Man and the One-Armed Man: Camera, Culture, and the State," Chapter 1 of *The Disciplinary Frame: Photographic Truths and the Capture of Meaning* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2009), pp. 1-49.

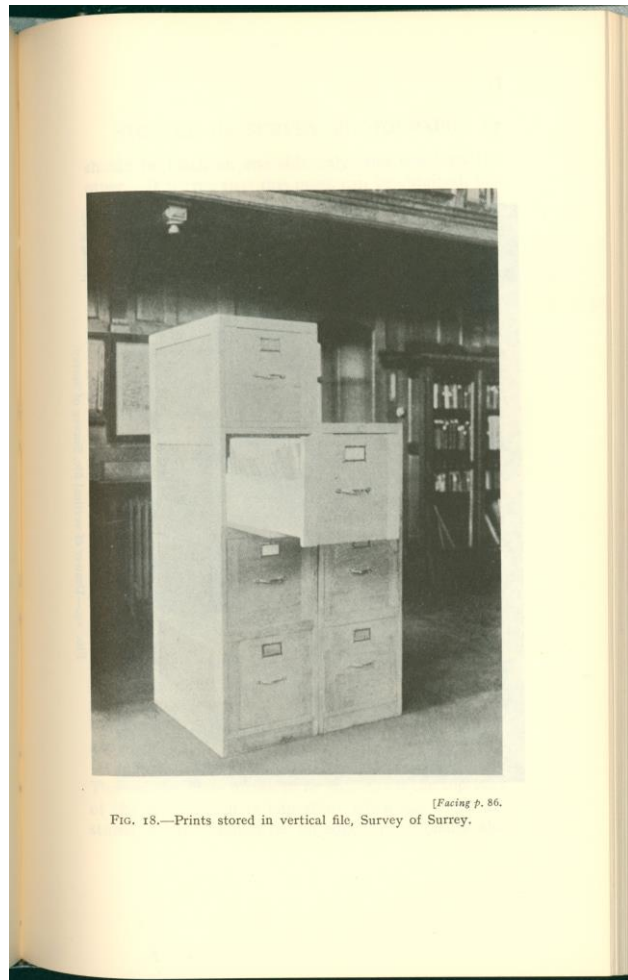
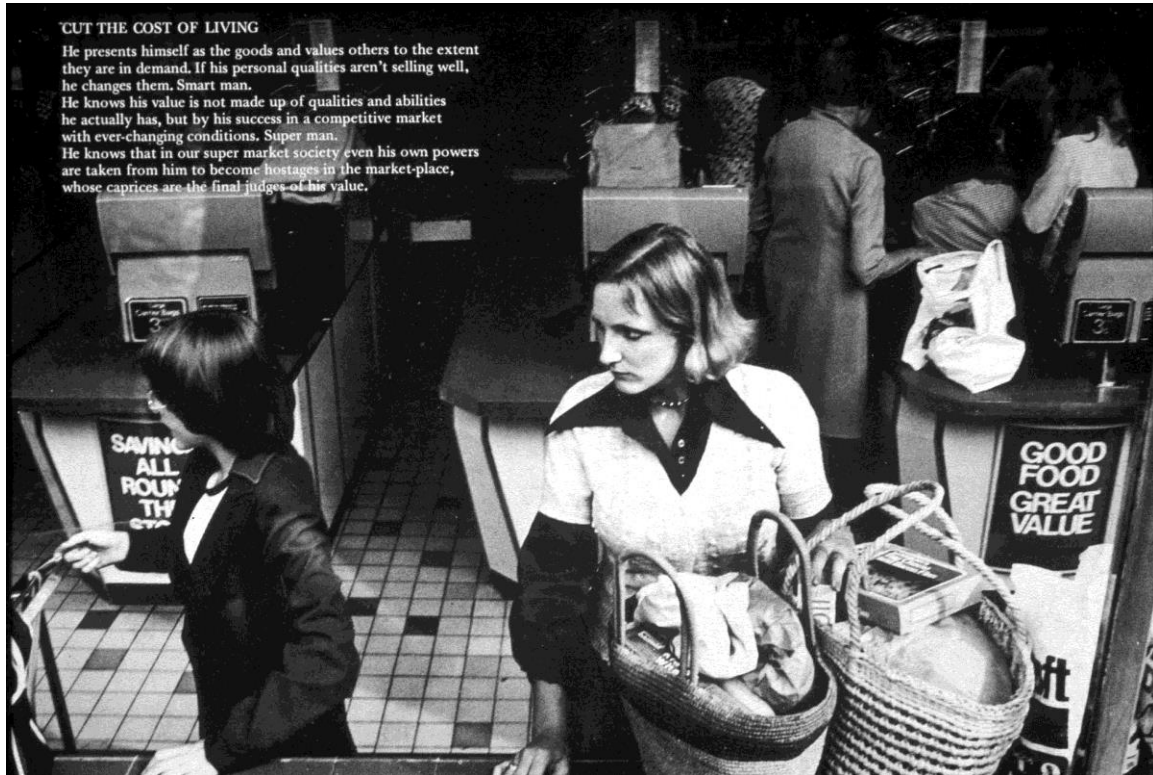


FIG. 18.—Prints stored in vertical file, Survey of Surrey. [Facing p. 86.]

Photo/Text: A Seminar Conference



Date to be announced.

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