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NATURALISM, ART, AND EXPERIENCE, 1889–1909

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ABBREVIATIONS FOR ARCHIVAL COLLECTIONS

- GEM Coll. Richard and Ronay Menschel Library. George Eastman Museum, Rochester, New York.
- NMAH Photographic History Collection. National Museum of American History, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.
- NRO Papers of Peter Henry Emerson. Norfolk Record Office, Norfolk, UK.
- RETAC Russell E. Train Africana Collection. Joseph F. Cullman 3rd Library of Natural History, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.
- RPS Coll. The Royal Photographic Society Collection. Victoria and Albert Museum, London, UK.
- YCAL Alfred Stieglitz/Georgia O’Keeffe Archive. Yale Collection of American Literature, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University, New Haven, Connecticut.

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ABSTRACT

In the final decades of the nineteenth century, Darwin's theory of evolution reverberated across nearly every part of culture, giving rise to new movements in philosophy, psychology, the social sciences, literature, and the visual arts, which collectively took up "naturalism" as their rallying cry. Rather than embodying a single idea, however, naturalism formed a contested terrain, wherein a mixture of old and new ideas about nature and human agency vied for cultural authority. For British and American photographers at the turn of the century, naturalism took root as a key organizing term, representing both an aesthetic ideal and a deeper set of philosophical commitments that engendered a new understanding of the medium. These photographers visualized the landscape, its human inhabitants, and wildlife subjects in ways that registered their novel beliefs about nature, and they simultaneously drew from those beliefs as they laid claim to photography as a mode of individual expression.

The narrative follows the transatlantic flow of naturalism within photography, starting with a reappraisal of British photographer P. H. Emerson's famed decision in late 1890 to withdraw his controversial 1889 treatise, *Naturalistic Photography for Students of the Art*. The opening chapter details Emerson's formative engagement with Herbert Spencer's evolutionary philosophy, revealing how an encounter with William James's writings on psychology led him to reconsider his core convictions about photography and art. The second chapter traces the influence of evolutionary thought on American pictorialism through a comparative analysis of two competing claimants to Emerson's legacy, Alfred Stieglitz and Rudolf Eickemeyer, Jr. The third chapter furnishes a culturally situated account of the emergence of nature photography as a distinct genre and a popular activity starting in the mid-1890s, focusing on the peripatetic life and career of British-American photographer Arthur Radclyffe Dugmore. His work is read

through his peripheral engagement with in the New York amateur photography scene and his involvement with the American nature study movement. Lastly, a chapter-length appendix recounts Emerson's attempt starting in the 1920s to secure his legacy by writing a history of artistic photography, which he completed but never published. Parsing the details of Emerson's unrealized history through his private correspondence with Stieglitz and Eickemeyer casts light on the fate of naturalism and the efforts of each photographer to shape the history of the medium in their own image.

INTRODUCTION

PHOTOGRAPHY AND EVOLUTION IN THE LONG NINETEENTH CENTURY

In the conclusion to *On the Origin of Species*, Charles Darwin famously described nature as an “entangled bank” of interconnected life forms that evolve through the mechanism of natural selection, a process in which slight variations among organisms determine whether they survive and propagate within their environment.¹ In the decades following the publication of Darwin’s groundbreaking book in 1859, his theory of evolution reverberated across nearly every part of culture, giving rise to new movements in philosophy, psychology, the social sciences, literature, and the fine arts, which collectively embraced “naturalism” as their rallying cry. Rather than embodying a single ideology, however, naturalism took hold as a contested terrain on which a mixture of old and new ideas vied for cultural dominance.

Over the same timeline, the exponential growth of industrial cities brought about dramatic changes in both the physical and social landscape, fundamentally altering the relationship between humans and the natural world. Among the classes of new urban dwellers, “nature” increasingly came to be seen as a thing apart, giving rise to a host of loosely connected movements at the turn of the century that championed nature by turns as a source of leisure, a wellspring of truth and authenticity, an object of nostalgia, a site of spiritual and moral uplift, and a palliative to the alienating conditions of modern life in the city.² In the same stroke, rising

¹ Charles Darwin, *On the Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection, or the Preservation of Favoured Races in the Struggle for Life* (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1870), 425.

² There is a prominent split among historians, some of whom have characterized these nature-centric movements as “anti-modernist,” while others have framed them differently as embracing rather than resisting modernism. While each variety is represented by different movements, and even within individual movements, the anti-modernist elements have received a

public awareness of the existential threat that unregulated human industry posed to wildlife and natural resources prompted the formation of early conservation movements.

Within the visual arts, naturalism took hold at the nexus of these cultural crosscurrents. More often than not, artists embracing the term focused on subject matters beyond the city, celebrating the natural beauty in the nearby countryside and extolling the virtues of rural life. In stylistic terms, naturalism implied adherence to an aesthetic ideal of “truth to nature,” a vaguely defined concept that connoted the accurate representation of the appearance of things. In practice, naturalism amounted to a version of eighteenth-century British aesthetic principles updated with insights from modern scientific theories of vision. Rather than a detached mode of realism, then, naturalism sought to communicate embodied experience, making explicit the mediating role of the human observer in perceiving or recording external nature. While distinguishing between nature and its appearance has a long history in the visual arts that reaches back well before the nineteenth century, the positivist spirit of the age lent a new scientific flavor to the age-old distinction.

As a theory ostensibly predicated on trained practices of observation, evolution appeared to offer vindication for empiricism, a philosophy closely allied to naturalism, which holds that knowledge is derived from sensory experience. And yet, by directly implicating the eye as a product of the very process it had aided in uncovering, Darwinian evolution placed a newfound strain on the self-abnegating myth underlying empiricism’s underlying claims to objectivity.³ As

disproportionate emphasis in the secondary literature relative to their prevalence in the period. For a classic example of the former, see T. J. Jackson Lears, *No Place of Grace: Antimodernism and the Transformation of American Culture, 1880–1920* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994). For a comparable instance of the latter view, see Peter J. Schmitt, *Back to Nature: the Arcadian Myth in Urban America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1969).

³ For a historical overview of how the terms of objectivity have shifted through time, which despite its breadth does not entertain the impact of evolution, see Lorraine Daston and

literary historian George Levine has observed, following Darwin, “the empirical no longer means direct access to the thing in itself, but mediated access, through one’s own perceptual equipment.”⁴ While naturalism aligned itself with empiricism’s scientific methods of inquiry, the limits of empiricism became a prominent theme within naturalistic art itself.

Darwin anticipated the influence that evolution would come to have on the study of the mind, declaring in *On the Origin of Species* that “psychology will be based on a new foundation, that of the necessary acquirement of each mental power and capacity by gradation.”⁵ Following the Darwinian premise that human mental abilities must fall along a continuum, many pioneering figures in the rising discipline of psychology embraced a comparative model of analysis that incorporated studies of animal behavior and intelligence. This interest in the mental and emotional lives of other animals spread to the broader public, where it helped to spur a cultural fascination in natural history and wildlife, which became popular subjects for illustrated volumes of descriptive non-fiction and realistic fiction. These multiple threads also converged in the nature study movement, a popular cultural and educational movement based mainly in the United States that emphasized experiential learning outside and sought to reconcile scientific, spiritual, and aesthetic outlooks toward nature in an effort to inspire a more conscientious, conservation-minded citizenry.⁶

Peter Galison, *Objectivity* (New York: Zone Books, 2007). Daston and Galison trace a shift within the late nineteenth-century sciences from an impersonal mode of objectivity based on faith in truth-to-nature toward one rooted more in “trained judgement.” *Ibid.*, 309–62.

⁴ George Levine, *Darwin and the Novelists: Patterns of Science in Victorian Fiction* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1988), 214.

⁵ Darwin, *Origin*, 1870, 424.

⁶ For a cultural overview of the nature study movement that includes a cursory discussion of photography’s role within it, see Kevin C. Armitage, *The Nature Study Movement: The Forgotten Popularizer of America’s Conservation Ethic* (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 2009).

Against this layered cultural backdrop, *Evolving Photography* traces the path of naturalism in photography over the two decades straddling the turn of the century, starting in England but focusing primarily on subsequent developments in the United States. It begins with an account of British naturalist and photographer P. H. Emerson, whose influential—though controversial—1889 treatise *Naturalistic Photography for Students of the Art* advanced a defense of photography as a fine art based on a standard of human vision informed by period accounts of psychology and visual perception. It explores Emerson's engagement with naturalism as an all-encompassing worldview in order to construct a convincing account of his decision to withdraw from photography in early 1891, renouncing his views in a dramatic self-published pamphlet titled *The Death of Naturalistic Photography*. While naturalistic photography was Emerson's own unique creation, naturalism as an aesthetic ideal and a philosophical framework persisted in a variety of mutated forms. The story of Emerson's crisis of faith thus functions as an extended opening monologue, which is followed by accounts of how naturalism's influence registered in two interconnected amateur movements: pictorialism, which was concerned with photography's status as an expressive medium irrespective of subject matter, and nature photography, which sought to merge scientific and sentimental approaches to the study of the non-human world. The popularity of each underwent a decline by the end of the 1900s, with pictorialism gradually ceding influence to other modernist movements, while nature photography matured from an amateur hobby into a pursuit dominated by professional biologists and globe-trotting adventurers.

Each chapter examines how late-nineteenth-century photographers visualized human, non-human, and landscape subjects in ways that register historically specific attitudes and beliefs about nature, while also considering how those same attitudes and beliefs underpinned their

understanding of photography as an expressive medium or a form of visual communication. In this way, the dissertation takes as its subject the reciprocal, mutually informing relationship between nature and photography at end of the long nineteenth century. Following the model of visual culture studies, it assumes that photographic representations of nature are non-neutral, such that they both reflected and informed perceptions of nature during the period as technologically and culturally mediated representations. It diverges from that model, however, by also figuring this familiar relationship in reverse, examining how preexisting cultural ideas about nature shaped debates around the status of photography. Earlier nineteenth-century critics, in their attempts to isolate what was unique about photography as a method of graphic depiction, called attention to a special link between photography and nature, occasionally going so far as to ascribe sole authorship in photography to nature itself, reducing the role of the photographer to that of a passive “operator.”⁷ Based on this premise, it stands to reason that if the very concepts of nature and agency on which that link was forged underwent a paradigm shift, as they did in the wake of Darwin’s writings, then the cultural ideas about photography that were bound up in it would likewise change in kind. In other words, even if one were to submit to the naive notion that much of the nineteenth-century public earnestly viewed photographs as exact reproductions of nature in a more or less literal sense, an essential question would still remain: which nature?

Scholarship of Darwinism’s impact on art and visual culture has proliferated over the past decade.⁸ To date, however, there have been no lengthy studies focused on the wide-ranging

⁷ For an overview of this common trope, see Jennifer Green-Lewis, *Framing the Victorian: Photography and the Culture of Realism* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1997), 59–64.

⁸ A number of projects appeared around 2009 to coincide with the sesquicentennial of *On the Origin of Species* and the bicentenary of Darwin’s birth. Two exhibition catalogues from that year that focus on Darwin and the arts are Diana Donald and Jane Munro, eds., *Endless Forms: Charles Darwin, Natural Science and the Visual Arts* (New Haven, CT: Yale Center for British

influence of evolutionary thought on photography in the nineteenth century.⁹ Certain striking affinities in the cultural status of Darwin's theory of evolution and photography lend added interest to such an undertaking. To wit, both emerged within a shared cultural context of the mid-nineteenth century. Each in their own way posed challenges to traditional conceptions of agency by demonstrating a means through which meaningful form could arise spontaneously through an automatic or mechanical process. To many, both seemed bereft of higher purpose or design, which in turn led some to view them as a leveling threat to traditional social hierarchies that turned a credulous public further down a wayward path toward materialism.¹⁰ Still others, of course, saw a liberating potential in these same features. Thus, photography and evolution each emerged as placeholders onto which society could project its lofty, progressive aspirations and its most deeply felt anxieties about the place of humans in a world increasingly controlled by

Art, 2009) and Pamela Kort and Max Hollein, eds., *Darwin: Art and the Search for Origins* (Cologne: Wienand, 2009). Recent monographs and edited volumes include Jonah Smith, *Charles Darwin and Victorian Visual Culture* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2006); Barbara Larson and Fae Brauer, eds., *The Art of Evolution: Darwin, Darwinisms, and Visual Culture* (Hanover, NH: Dartmouth College Press, 2009); and Julia Voss, *Darwin's Pictures: Views of Evolutionary Theory, 1837–1874*, trans. Lori Lantz (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2010).

⁹ Phillip Prodger's *Darwin's Camera: Art and Photography in the Theory of Evolution* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009) achieves the reverse, exploring Darwin's strategic use of photography in service of constructing and disseminating his ideas. Prodger's study touches on many of these cultural points of contact between photography and evolution, though it centers closely on Darwin and his circle in the 1870s.

¹⁰ French critic Charles Baudelaire's critique of photography in response to The Salon of 1859, which was incidentally written the same year that Darwin's *Origin* was published, famously made the case that photography played to the desire of the masses for the "exact reproduction of nature" and would "ruin whatever might remain of the divine" in the public's mind as a result. See Charles Baudelaire "The Salon of 1859," in Vicki Goldberg, ed., *Photography in Print: Writings from 1816 to the Present* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1988), 123. The perceived threat that Darwinian evolution posed to divinity is assumed to be familiar enough as to not require a detailed explanation.

forces larger than the individual. In sum, photography and evolution were kindred emblems of modernity.

In either case, they did so largely in spite of themselves, to the extent that those most closely invested in the practical applications of either typically came to adopt much more moderate and nuanced views regarding their social—or indeed metaphysical—implications. To be clear, then, in sketching out this analogy, the intention is not to suggest that some abstruse cultural force presiding over history somehow thrust photography and evolution—one an imaging technology and the other a theory of creation—into the world. Rather, it is to illustrate how the public reception of each found points of contact in preexisting cultural debates, which in turn makes their paired study distinct from, say, an analysis dealing with evolutionary themes in painting or literature.

By the turn of the century, the language of evolution became broadly linked to the period's prevalent narratives of progress. Common invocations of evolution provided a measure of reassurance by reframing the disorienting aspects of modernity as natural and inevitable processes. While much of the public embraced the idea of evolution in a general sense, many came to view Darwin's version with skepticism and subscribed to alternative theories that were thought to be more compatible with the moral imperative of self-determination and the comforting belief that evolution unfolded in an orderly, progressive direction. Chief among the popularizers of a more palatable view was Herbert Spencer, a contemporary of Darwin who expanded the logic of evolution into a universal cosmology. Spencer's expansive theory of evolution incorporated elements of Lamarckism, the leading alternative to Darwin's theory named after the French biologist Jean-Baptiste Lamarck, which holds that characteristics acquired through life experience could be passed downward as inherited traits. From this

foundation, Spencer concocted a theory of universal progressive evolution in which the cosmos and its contents follow an upward teleological path toward greater complexity and differentiation. The widespread popularity of Spencer's philosophy in late-nineteenth-century British and American culture formed one of the bases for historian of science Peter J. Bowler's use of the phrase "the eclipse of Darwinism" to characterize the period. As Bowler emphasized, the popularity of Spencer's synthetic philosophy and others like it were based less on evidence than motivated reasoning; such a model was appealing "because it allows us to believe that the vitality and creativity that most people feel to be the essential characters of life are the real driving forces of nature."¹¹ To that end, in looking to assess the impact of evolutionary thought on the artistic developments of the late nineteenth century, Spencer's popular views carry as least as much weight as Darwin's, which more typically registered as a specter at the margins rather than a declared model for organizing human action or guiding cultural progress.¹²

The starting point for thinking about naturalism and photography in the late nineteenth century is Emerson's *Naturalistic Photography for the Students of the Art*. While earning a medical degree from Cambridge during the early 1880s, Emerson received inspiration for his intellectual views from a generation of British intellectuals working in Darwin's wake who promoted a philosophical doctrine known as scientific naturalism, which sought to establish a new cultural order founded on modern scientific principles. Chief among these was the theory of

¹¹ Peter J. Bowler, *The Eclipse of Darwinism: Anti-Darwinian Evolution Theories in the Decades around 1900* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992), 16.

¹² For an art historical study that usefully foregrounds the influence of Herbert Spencer's theories over Darwin's during the period, see Kathleen Pyne, *Art and the Higher Life: Painting and Evolutionary Thought in Late Nineteenth-Century America* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1996).

evolution.¹³ Emerson adapted the theories of vision and evolutionary psychology that he encountered during his student years to a system of photographic aesthetics that strove to emulate human visual perception. By doing so, he thought that it would be possible to externalize his mental impressions, thereby inserting the requisite human element into photography to elevate it into an expressive medium.¹⁴ To achieve this result, Emerson devised a novel technique that came to be known as “differential focusing,” wherein the photographer renders a small, circumscribed portion of the image field in sharper focus relative to its surrounds.

Following a protracted controversy over Emerson’s book that played out over a span of nearly two years, he issued a dramatic renunciation of his ideas in a pamphlet titled *The Death of Naturalistic Photography*. Emerson cited a number of reasons behind his decision to reverse course, but most subsequent accounts have focused on a scientific paper by Hurter and Driffield, a pair of researchers based in England who had shown that a fixed relationship exists in the relative tonal relationships in a photographic negative, which in Emerson’s view left photography fatally limited in its expressive range.

While Emerson’s abrupt departure from photography in early 1891 forms one of the most often recounted incidents in the history of photography, later retellings of the episode have

¹³ For a recent account of scientific naturalism as a social movement, see Gowan Dawson and Bernard Lightman, eds., *Victorian Scientific Naturalism: Community, Identity, Continuity* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2014).

¹⁴ This is actually a point that many subsequent accounts of Emerson have missed, which suggest that Emerson was solely interested in replicating the image projected onto the retinal surface of the eye as accurately as possible. Based on his reading of psychology, he thought that by representing a visual impression, he would also be conveying what amounted to an idea, since under the empiricist model he was working within, ideas as he understood them were based solely on sense impressions. The opening chapter includes a lengthy discussion of this framework.

missed a key element of the story by prioritizing the Hurter and Drifffield experiments over the other rationales he cited, in particular an oblique reference to “recent researches in psychology.” Rather than furnishing a complete account of Emerson’s career in photography, the opening chapter serves as an extended meditation on Emerson’s understanding of naturalism rooted in his reading of period psychology. It details Emerson’s engagement with Spencer’s two-volume *The Principles of Psychology*, a text that Darwin would later recognize as the foundational text for the field of evolutionary psychology. Through a close reading of private letters and articles that Emerson wrote in the months surrounding *The Death of Naturalistic Photography*, it reveals that Emerson’s views were swayed in part by the American philosopher William James, whose critiques of Spencer’s rigid view of psychology led Emerson to revise his own views, which he incorporated into later efforts to rework his ideas. Rather than rejecting naturalism outright, Emerson found in James’s analysis a more nuanced account of evolutionary psychology that, among other qualities, afforded an active role for imagination in formation of ideas.

During the last decade of the nineteenth century, pictorialism emerged as an international movement organized around a shared conviction that photography could be used as a method of personal expression on par with other artistic media. Pictorial photographers enlisted multiple strategies toward a common goal of demonstrating that photography could transcend its impersonal, mechanical associations in a way that would reflect the thoughts and feelings of the photographer. They devised a variety of methods, ranging from soft-focus lens effects to techniques that introduced brushstrokes and other visible handwork, to make conspicuous the role of the photographer in creation of the photograph. In doing so, pictorial photographers sought to demonstrate their conscious control over every aspect of the photographic process,

thereby limiting the role that chance and automatism play in the formation of a photographic image.¹⁵

Emerson's influence on pictorial photography has been widely acknowledged, though assessments of his reception and impact have often added confusion rather than clarity to his ideas and the relationship between descriptive terms such as naturalism, pictorialism, or "straight" photography.¹⁶ In fairness, much of the confusion is a byproduct of Emerson's own later attempts to shift the definition of naturalistic photography away from a framework based on aesthetic ideals that he saw as common to all visual arts to one more invested in the purity of photographic methods. This change amounts to a shift in emphasis rather than a wholesale substitution, but it nevertheless has allowed for the propagation of ahistorical readings that position Emerson as an early champion of straight photography, a term popularized after the turn of the century by the influential critic Sadakichi Hartmann to express opposition to handwork techniques. Hartmann and other proponents of straight photography decried certain methods as illegitimate. Crucially, they based their arguments in practical distinctions, such that during the early 1900s the term had not yet assumed the full metaphysical weight that it would in the

¹⁵ For an account of the shifting ways that chance factors into photography's status as an art which, despite its merits, inexplicably overlooks the role of Darwinism, see Robin Kelsey, *Photography and the Art of Chance* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2015).

¹⁶ Two exhibitions have attempted to define an American movement of naturalistic photography that was distinct from, or even antagonistic toward, pictorialism. The first of these is Mary Panzer, *Philadelphia Naturalistic Photography, 1865–1906* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1982), which recounts the highly calculated institutional jostling that allowed Stieglitz to wrest power from the old guard based in Philadelphia, whose straightforward method led them to be characterized as naturalists. A more recent and closer stylistic analysis by Christian Peterson, *Peter Henry Emerson and American Naturalistic Photography* (Minneapolis: Minneapolis Institute of Arts, 2008), likewise defines naturalism as a distinct movement from pictorialism.

decades that followed, and “straight” photography would be elevated from a practical distinction to a structuring ideal.

The key difference between straight photography in its later iterations and naturalistic photography turns on naturalism’s emphasis of a biological basis—namely, human perception—as a standard of judgement, whereas the modernist proponents of straight photography sought a standard based in the material elements of photography itself—lenses, chemistry, and the like. So, while both may rightly be called “naturalistic” to the extent that they reject an *a priori* basis for aesthetics, they arrive in different places based on the initial judgement criteria.

In a similar vein, naturalism is not incompatible with pictorialism, and the persisting tendency to situate these terms as descriptors for opposing schools of thought is largely a result of retroactive repositioning that muddles the period meaning of both. In the case of pictorialism, which did not appear in general use before around 1903, the term suffers from an overly general foundation, namely, the idea that a camera might be used to make a “picture”—a representational category that carried far more aesthetic weight than it does today. Typically, its definition was functional and based on the aesthetic response that it triggered in a viewer with highly refined sensibilities.¹⁷ Simply put, if pictorialism implies the practice of using a camera to create pictures (and an associated belief that such a thing is possible), naturalism furnishes an explanation for what pictures are and provides an alternative to idealist aesthetics.

The second chapter traces the continued influence of naturalism in American pictorial photography through a comparative analysis of two competing claimants to Emerson’s legacy,

¹⁷ One of the earliest uses of the term “pictorialist” belongs to Alfred Stieglitz, who invoked the term in the first issue of *Camera Work* in an inflammatory letter directed at the chair of the hanging committee for the St. Louis Exposition. Stieglitz called into question his ability “to act as a spokesman for the photographic pictorialists.” See Editor [Alfred Stieglitz], “Pictorial Photography: The St. Louis Exposition,” *Camera Work* 1, no. 1 (January 1903): 37.

Alfred Stieglitz and Rudolf Eickemeyer, Jr. The first portion of the chapter describes the way that Stieglitz and his followers in the Photo-Secession, a group of elite pictorial photographers that he established in 1902, strategically used appeals to evolution in advancing their agenda. Like Emerson before him, Stieglitz found a useful rhetorical device in Spencer's concept of progressive evolution. Rather than viewing photography as an art whose native potential others had previously ignored, Stieglitz positioned himself along with the fellow members of the Photo-Secession as the active agents in photography's evolution, who were heroically transforming it into a medium worthy of recognition as a fine art. As historiographer John Davis has observed, "The Stieglitz 'enterprise,' ... was highly situational and positioned; it was always conscious of its own mythology, and it engaged in a kind of Darwinian struggle to ensure not only that its 'brand' of modernism triumphed but also that it did so in a way that seemed natural and inevitable."¹⁸ In late 1903, however, a group of photographers conspired to wrest power away from Stieglitz by forming a group called the Salon Club of America, which they positioned as a more "democratic" alternative to the Photo-Secession. Hartmann, who up until then had been a key advocate of Stieglitz's vision for pictorial photography, helped lead the charge, recruiting Eickemeyer as the face of the new movement.

The second portion of the chapter explores how these opposing factions, embodied in Stieglitz and Eickemeyer respectively, were not merely based on social allegiances but also different artistic sensibilities and temperaments. Both Stieglitz and Eickemeyer fashioned their early styles after Emerson's work, and they each rose to international prominence alongside one another in the early 1890s. While Stieglitz used his platform as an editor to promote

¹⁸ John Davis, "The End of the American Century: Current Scholarship on the Art of the United States," *Art Bulletin* 85, no. 3 (September 2003): 569.

photographers experimenting with more techniques, they both served as exemplars of straight photography according to Hartmann's definition.

The essential difference, then, between Stieglitz and Eickemeyer's respective practices comes to reside not in printing techniques or even styles as such, but rather the opposing ways they structured their respective practices. Eickemeyer, who followed Emerson's working method more closely, tended to rely on a large-format view camera. As a result, his typical process for creating pictures was a slow, iterative process that involved posing subjects and refining the formal elements through a succession of preliminary studies until he achieved the satisfactory final composition. Stieglitz, by contrast, placed a greater value on spontaneity and ephemeral atmospheric effects, which captured the fleeting moments of nature and modern life. He adopted a fast, reactive approach, which was more responsive to the dynamic elements in his surrounding environment. Stieglitz found an ideal tool for this alternative approach in the hand camera, which allowed him to move beyond the traditional genre study format that Eickemeyer embraced to a snapshot aesthetic that would become increasingly prevalent during the 1900s.

One of the areas that the dissertation seeks to foreground in charting naturalism's course is the mutually informing relationship between aesthetics and technology. Until relatively recently, histories of photography have, with a few exceptions, positioned the medium's technological evolution—that is, the various improvements or modifications to camera design, optics, printing techniques, chemical formulas, and exposure and darkroom procedures—as the principal driver of aesthetic change across time. More recently, these technology-focused driven histories have given way to culturally conditioned ones, in effect swapping one overdetermined, teleological model for another. What is effectively lost in both models is a sense for the contingent, often messy way in which history advances.

With that critique in mind, what follows does not aspire to be a study in the history of ideas, or at least not strictly so. More than the others, the opening chapter on Emerson is heavily rooted in philosophy in an effort to serve as a corrective to the histories that have framed his departure from photography on narrow technical grounds. By focusing on Emerson's larger view of naturalism, it seeks to bring clarity to the stakes of his reversal.

The third and final chapter focuses on the dynamic interplay between technology and culture to provide an account of the emergence of nature photography as both a genre and a practice starting in the mid-1890s. It explores how nature photography rose to prominence within the same network of camera clubs and photographic societies in which pictorialism flourished, with a result that many pioneering nature photographers brought the aesthetic codes and conventions of pictorial photography with them into the field. The chapter focuses on the peripatetic life of Arthur Radclyffe Dugmore, a Welsh-born photographer of British descent who arrived in the United States in 1890 following a turbulent youth spent sailing throughout the Mediterranean after his family fled Ireland due to his father's involvement in radical agrarian politics. Dugmore took up nature photography while working as a field assistant for a Princeton ornithologist, who hired him to create illustrations for a book on North American birds. He soon branched off on his own, however, and became involved in the burgeoning nature study movement. After the turn of the century, he published multiple photographically illustrated books and articles on natural history subjects and served as the staff photographer for *Country Life in America*, one of the key magazines aligned with nature study.

More than the preceding chapters, the final chapter takes an oppositional stance toward current scholarship, specifically in the standard critique levied about the depiction of wildlife subjects in early nature photography. By viewing Dugmore's work through the lens of nature

study, which sought to foster a sympathetic, non-destructive relationship between humans and their non-human counterparts, it explores how Dugmore and other early promoters of nature photography sought to model in their work the types of direct experiences that they hoped to encourage. They sought to portray nature not as something far removed from urban experience, but rather as an integral feature of the landscape, accessible in the nearby countryside and even within the city limits. In this way, Dugmore and his contemporaries furnish an alternative model to critical accounts of the genre based on critiques of wilderness ideology. The chapter also discusses the role of photography as a tool for studying animal behavior and intelligence, which found a popular cultural parallel in the nature fakers controversy, a literary debate starting around 1903 focused on the depiction of animal subjects in popular nature writing. While nature photography seemed immune to the charges of sentimentality and anthropomorphism that informed the controversy on the literary front, its perceived neutrality also helped to mask the genre's indebtedness to visual conventions that originated outside of photography.

Finally, a chapter-length appendix offers a historiographic essay based on Emerson's *History of Artistic Photography*, a book manuscript that he started in 1924 and occupied the final decade of his life. Emerson never found a publisher and the manuscript has since been declared lost. The essay is an attempt to reconstruct the main contours of the narrative, using letters that Emerson wrote to Stieglitz and Eickemeyer concerning the project as primary source evidence. Parsing the details of Emerson's unpublished history thus not only offers an occasion to consider Emerson's legacy in photography; it also brings together, in a somewhat unexpected way, three of the four main photographers in the foregoing study, shedding new light on the fate of naturalism and their respective efforts later in life to shape the history of photography in their own image.

CHAPTER 1

EMERSON'S EVOLUTION

“What becomes of eels in the winter, Harnsee?”

“Go to mud, sir,” answers the broadsman, emphatically.

“What becomes of eels in winter, Fred?”

“Bury themselves in the mud,” answers my friend, angler-naturalist.¹

What becomes of eels in the winter? This riddle frames the third installment of Peter Henry Emerson's "Letters from the Norfolk Broads," a six-part series of literary dispatches that the British naturalist-photographer sent to *The Fishing Gazette* over the winter of 1890–91 from his houseboat, *The Maid of the Mist*. Emerson goes on to recount an episode from December 4th, when a sudden thaw released the *Maid* from the River Waveney's frozen grip, allowing him and his hired crewman Jim to carve a passage from Bungay several miles downriver to Geldeston Lock.² By Emerson's account, England was in the midst of a historically harsh winter, which official records confirm: Westminster recorded a total of zero hours of sunshine for the entire month, and the average temperatures for the country at large still stand as the lowest for that month since recordkeeping began over three-and-a-half centuries earlier.³ Once the *Maid* was safely moored at the lock, the resident lockkeeper pulled open the gates and set down a few nets in hopes of catching a stray lampern for a shared evening meal. In Emerson's telling, when the

¹ Dr. P. H. Emerson, "Letters from the Norfolk Broads.—III," *The Fishing Gazette* 16, no. 721 (February 14, 1891): 85.

² Emerson omits these location names in the serialized version appearing in *The Fishing Gazette*. He includes them in an adaptation of the story published two years later in P. H. Emerson, *On English Lagoons: Being an Account of the Voyage of Two Amateur Wherrymen on the Norfolk and Suffolk Rivers and Broads* (London: David Nutt, 1893).

³ "Mean CET ranked coldest to warmest from 1659 to 2018," Met Office Hadley Centre Central England Temperature (HadCET) Data, Met Office Hadley Centre for Climate Change, sorted July 10, 2018, http://www.metoffice.gov.uk/hadobs/hadcet/mly_cet_mean_sort.txt.

lockkeeper returned after several hours to check the nets, he was shocked to discover them brimming with plump silver-bellied eels.

The lockkeeper's windfall serves to discredit Emerson's two interlocutors, an outcome neatly foretold by their overconfident replies. By identifying them with the epithets "broadsmen" and "angler-naturalist," Emerson marks each as a representative authority on the region's natural history, differentiated according to social class. By contrast, Emerson casts himself as a principled skeptic, admitting only those facts to knowledge that firsthand observation corroborates. He makes note of the broadsmen's folk wisdom and the angler-naturalist's lettered knowledge, for whom legitimate knowledge only comes by way of direct, unmediated experience.

While the intense skepticism Emerson exhibits here effectively mirrors his public persona elsewhere, his credulous mates present two contrasting models for understanding his cultivated doubt. Viewed in relation to the broadsmen, Emerson can be understood as channeling a familiar form of rural populism in which practical know-how is made to triumph over elite doctrine. While Emerson occupies a social rung well above Harnsee, Emerson's identification with rural folkways transcended mere ethnographic curiosity. He was an assiduous collector of folktales from the Broads and elsewhere, and he actively crafted his own.⁴ Considered in relation to Fred,

⁴ Much remains to be done to draw out comparisons between Emerson's photographic books and these volumes, which he often wrote in tandem during bursts of creative output. For example, the rhetoric he uses to frame these volumes suggestively mirrors the way he primes his readers to regard his photographs elsewhere. In the preface to *English Idyls*, a collection of English folktales published the same year as *Naturalistic Photography*, Emerson describes his stories as "little pictures," in which he has "attempted to reconcile scientific accuracy and artistic needs," adding that "landscape backgrounds to the figures have in addition all been *directly* studied from nature," language that recalls a description of a picture rather than a text. P. H. Emerson, *English Idyls* (London: Sampson Low & Co, 1889), n.p. This kind of appeal was in fact a common literary convention among Emerson's literary models, which highlights an

however, Emerson functions as an exemplar of the empirical method of natural history in which descriptive accuracy trumps analysis. While both of these models promote skepticism, in practice they are liable to end up in conflict at least as often as not.

On its face, this fisherman's yarn has evidently little to do with photography, the cultural activity on which Emerson's reputation, then as now, hangs. The timing, however, bears significance: within a month, Emerson had foresworn his faith in photography as an art and, shortly thereafter, withdrew from the craft nearly altogether. He moved his family out of London and, in the ensuing years, relocated to a number of coastal towns on either side of Britain.

Emerson had been cruising the Broads since September 15th, collecting stories, logging records of weather and wildlife, and conducting occasional photographic experiments. His journeys encompassed the region of interconnected waterways that had been his constant muse since first visiting in 1883. Emerson had quickly risen to become a revered figure within the English photography scene, but following the much-anticipated publication of his headstrong treatise *Naturalistic Photography for Students of the Art* in March of 1889, he found himself embroiled in an ongoing flap within the ranks of London's elite amateur photographers, which had spilled across the Atlantic to the clubrooms of Philadelphia, New York, and Chicago.

Naturalistic Photography was sweeping in its theoretical, art historical, and technical ambitions, but the critical blowback crystallized around Emerson's dogged assertion that photographs striving for artistic effect must emulate "normal" human vision. To achieve this end, Emerson outlined a practical approach that later came to be known as "differential focusing," which involves rendering a shallow and narrowly circumscribed portion of the image field in

alternative source for a whole set of rhetorical language that is commonly understood as being closely aligned with photographic culture.

sharper focus relative to its surroundings.⁵ Emerson maintained that this approach would more accurately render the corresponding scene as it appeared to the photographer, by accounting for foveate vision, a condition among humans and other simian primates resulting from a pit on the retina, known as the *fovea centralis*, which leads to higher acuity at the center of the visual field. But if Emerson saw his approach as inserting the human element that was understood to be a requisite for fine art, his detractors saw fuzzy pictures built on even fuzzier intellectual foundations. Though Emerson issued a hastily revised edition of *Naturalistic Photography* in late January 1890, it did little to appease his critics, and the tenor of the debate grew only more hostile as the year unfolded.⁶

In *The Maid*'s logbook entry for December 19th, Emerson notes watching a steamship struggle to break through the ice on Oulton Broad, an incident likely recorded in *The Fetters of Winter* (fig. 1.1), whereupon he resolved to board a train to London to rejoin his wife and then three children for the holiday season.⁷ Upon arriving in the city, he describes falling ill from the "mephitic fog" covering the urban environment and pledged to leave at the first opportunity. Before the year's end, he had drafted a black-bordered pamphlet bearing the funereal title, *The*

⁵ Emerson and others refer to this effect by several names, including "naturalistic," "artistic," "practical," and "selective" focusing, but differential focusing was the prevailing convention. Emerson never formally names his method in the first two editions of *Naturalistic Photography*, which adds some substance to his later pleas that focusing was merely one feature among many in a naturalistic photograph. Regardless of his intentions, reviewers were right to seize on his focusing method and its intellectual justification as the most novel aspect of his book.

⁶ The differences between the first and second edition are mostly negligible, with the most significant change being the addition of Emerson's widely reproduced "Science and Art" lecture delivered before the first Camera Club Conference in 1889. Emerson made some effort to tone down his rhetoric in certain key passages, but these minor changes went mostly unremarked by reviewers.

⁷ For the records of this incident, see Emerson, *On English Lagoons*, 138–39, 281.

Death of Naturalistic Photography. Addressing his fellow photographers in a histrionic tone that led some to question its sincerity, Emerson withdrew his controversial book. He mailed the statement to the editors of the major British and American photography journals and promptly departed for the Broads, having been in London for less than a month on balance.⁸

Later accounts portray *The Death of Naturalistic Photography* as a poorly conceived, and even more poorly timed, exit. It comes to functions as an emblem of Emerson's mercurial temperament that carries the ironic consequence of pitting him against the current of history twice—first as a radical and then as a reactionary—since his general views on photography's artistic potential (certain eccentricities excepted) earned general acceptance almost immediately after he abjured them.⁹ Since Emerson's rediscovery by Beaumont Newhall in the 1930s, and especially by the time the first major biographical accounts of Emerson appeared in the 1970s, photography's embrace not only as a legitimate art had become well enough established that taking Emerson's retreat seriously began to seem at best like a quaint historical exercise. Giving too much credence to Emerson's rejection of photography as art would also serve to undermine the shared commitment that defines the very scholarly field that regards Emerson as a subject worthy of historical consideration. *The Death of Naturalistic Photography* stands today at once

⁸ While the pamphlet bears a publication date of December 1890, the first notice does not appear until January 22, suggesting that Emerson drafted the pamphlet early in his return, or perhaps earlier, but he delayed sending it until just prior to skipping town.

⁹ Mary Warner Marien's remark that "Emerson's rejection of naturalistic photography, and hence his role in the development of modern photographic practice, continues to seem reckless and ill timed," provides an accurate reflection of the prevailing sentiment. See Mary Warner Marien, "Peter Henry Emerson, The Taxonomy of a Crow's Nest," *History of Photography* 21, no. 2 (Summer 1997): 102. General accounts of this period point to the formation of the Linked Ring in May 1892 as a tipping point in photography's recognition as an art. As Emerson was quick to point out, the exclusive Salon model adopted by the Linked Ring embraced several of the reforms that he had advocated as early as 1885, soon after the founding of the London Camera Club. See P. H. Emerson, "An Ideal Photographic Exhibition," *Amateur Photographer* 2 (October 23, 1885): 461–62.

as one of the most famous and least understood documents in the history of photography, and a thoroughgoing autopsy is still wanting.

For one, *The Death of Naturalistic Photography* actually comprises not a single reversal, but a carefully calibrated two-part pivot. At the same time that Emerson rejected photography as a legitimate medium of art, he rejected naturalism as a legitimate philosophy of art. Limiting one's consideration only to Emerson's rejection of photography, as has often been the case, reinforces a lopsided view of photography's drive toward institutional legitimacy in this period, by perpetuating the pernicious notion that art somehow functioned as a stable discursive category into which photographers variously strove to fit their works. Recuperating Emerson's turn from naturalism as he initially understood it opens an additional line of inquiry that ultimately proves necessary to address the photography question adequately: if neither photography nor naturalism retained any connection to art, how might they still relate to each other? Had Emerson come to regard naturalism as an inherently flawed philosophy, or a valid philosophy that he had simply erred in applying to art?

The following is not intended to function as a comprehensive biographical account of Emerson's career in photography. Such an account exists already in several iterations.¹⁰ The purpose instead will be to subject Emerson's recantation to a more rigorous review, hewing closely to the series of events leading up to *The Death of Naturalistic Photography*, its immediate aftermath, and not least of all the substance of the document itself. The objective will be not so much to pinpoint an exact moment that precipitated Emerson's crisis of faith. As

¹⁰ On top of several exhibitions and monographs devoted to Emerson, he has been the subject of two dissertations. See Bonnie Yochelson, "P. H. Emerson: An Art Historical Study of a Victorian Photographer" (PhD diss., New York University, 1985) and Ellen Handy, "P. H. Emerson's Vision of East Anglian Life and Landscape: Photography, Art, Science, Literature and Ethnography" (PhD diss., Princeton University, 1994).

anyone knows who has ever undergone a major change of heart (which is to say, all of us), hindsight inevitably reveals early signs of doubt, and the reasons that ultimately give rise to action are typically ambiguous or even peripheral. Instead, the goal will be to develop a fuller account of how Emerson understood and applied naturalism to photography, in order to build toward a more satisfying account of what exactly he thought he was laying to rest. This will be supplemented with material from various points in his truncated career as a practicing photographer, in order to underscore that naturalistic photography—as a theory, a technique, and a style—was at no point fixed. It was a living, evolving concept.

At the conclusion of *The Death of Naturalistic Photography*, Emerson outlines five factors that contributed to his renunciation:

Misgivings seized me after conversations with a great artist after the Paris Exhibition; these were strengthened by the appearance of certain recent researches in psychology, and Hurter and Drifffield's papers; and, finally, the exhibition of Hokusai's work and a study of the National Gallery pictures after three and a half months' solitary study of nature in my houseboat did for me.¹¹

Among the reasons he provides, the two that generally garner attention are his conversations with an unnamed “great artist” and the Hurter and Drifffield papers. In the former case, speculation initially centered on James McNeill Whistler, the American expatriate painter living in London whose atmospheric compositions, along with his provocative public persona, Emerson had begun to emulate.¹² This interpretation benefits further from the fact that Emerson shares certain biographical parallels with Whistler, who adopted London as his home during his mid-twenties after spending most of his youth in the United States. Emerson, who was born on a

¹¹ Peter Henry Emerson, *The Death of Naturalistic Photography* (1890), reprinted in Peter Henry Emerson *Naturalistic Photography for Students of the Art and The Death of Naturalistic Photography* (New York: Arno Press, 1973), n.p.

¹² See Newhall, *Fight for Photography*, 90.

colonial estate in Cuba to an American father and a British mother, lived in the United States during his early adolescence before relocating to England in 1869 following the death of his father.¹³ Whistler's distinctive aesthetic style looked to Japanese prints as an inspiration, which also helps to account for Emerson's expression of admiration for Hokusai, whose work was exhibited for the first time in England at the Fine Art Society gallery on New Bond Street from November through December 1890.¹⁴ Opinion on the unnamed artist's identity has since shifted, however, to George Clausen, a prominent British naturalist painter and a founding member of the New English Art Club, with whom Emerson engaged in a correspondence about art and photography starting in April 1889.¹⁵

While each of these may be considered in turn, the bulk of the account will focus on one part: this oblique mention of "the appearance of certain recent researches in psychology." This veiled comment is so easy to gloss over that it has almost entirely gone unremarked upon, both in the immediate fallout and since.¹⁶ But given that Emerson's desire to reproduce human vision was thoroughly and inextricably bound up in psychological questions about perception, it feels deeply significant. This reference forms the necessary complement to the frequently discussed

¹³ P. H. Emerson, *The English Emersons; A Genealogical Historical Sketch of the Family from the Earliest Times to the End of the Seventeenth Century, Including Various Modern Pedigrees, with an Appendix of Authorities* (London: David Nutt, 1898), 112–113.

¹⁴ See *Catalogue of a Collection of Drawings and Engravings by Hokusai* (London: Fine Art Society, 1890). Incidentally, the Fine Art Society was also a prominent dealer of Whistler's etchings.

¹⁵ Neil McWilliam and Veronica Sekules, eds., *Life and Landscape: P. H. Emerson, Art & Photography in East Anglia, 1885–1900* (Norwich: Sainsbury Centre for Visual Arts, 1986), 39.

¹⁶ The reference is curiously absent even from those accounts that explicitly take stock of Emerson's parting rationales.

Hurter and Driffield papers, and without both elements considered in tandem, the document fails to hold together.

As a medical student at King's College, London, and later Cambridge starting in the late 1870s, Emerson gained exposure to a generation of British intellectuals working in Darwin's wake who embraced a belief system that came to be known as "scientific naturalism."¹⁷ Thomas Henry Huxley, one of the movement's leading advocates, coined the term in 1892, which he applied retrospectively to a social doctrine that had taken hold in England during the second half of the nineteenth century.¹⁸ The promoters of scientific naturalism, which included prominent intellectuals like Huxley, Francis Galton, Herbert Spencer, and John Tyndall, set out to build a new social and cultural order on a foundation of scientific principles, the theory of evolution chief among them.

Spencer's *The Principles of Psychology* (hereafter *Psychology*), published as a single volume in 1855 and later revised and expanded into two volumes issued from 1870–72, marks one of the first noteworthy forays into evolutionary psychology. Darwin would later formally recognize Spencer's contribution, changing the earlier cited line from *On the Origin of Species* so that it read "Psychology will be based on *the foundation already well laid by Mr. Herbert*

¹⁷ The foundational overviews of scientific naturalism are Frank M. Turner, *Between Science and Religion: The Reaction to Scientific Naturalism in Late Victorian England* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1974) and John C. Greene, *Science, Ideology, and Worldview* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1981).

¹⁸ On the derivation of the term, along with a discussion of the alternative term "evolutionary naturalism," see Gowan Dawson and Bernard Lightman, "Introduction," in *Victorian Scientific Naturalism: Community, Identity, Continuity*, eds. Gowan Dawson and Bernard Lightman (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2014), 1–10.

Spencer, that of the necessary acquirement of each mental power and capacity by gradation.”¹⁹

Spencer sought to reconcile evolutionary ideas with associationist psychology by expanding the concept of experience, which was central to the empiricist theory of mental formation on which associationism was built, to encompass the accumulated experiences of an individual’s entire line of descent.²⁰ The result was a version of empiricism that in practical terms functioned much more like nativism, the doctrine that claims mental capacities are innate rather than acquired through experience.²¹

Spencer’s *Psychology* figured as one of Emerson’s main reference points for understanding psychology, and Spencer’s views, along with his distinctive rhetorical style, are apparent throughout Emerson’s writings on photography. When Emerson came to reject naturalism as a viable philosophy, he did so in part by leaving behind some of the excesses of Spencer’s synthetic system of belief, abandoning his belief that a solid link should be shown to exist between mind and matter, such that ideas are portrayed as mental objects that correspond to physical objects through visual sensation. Breaking with Spencer’s theory led Emerson to relinquish his commitment to a system of aesthetics predicated on purely scientific grounds.²² He found such a goal impossible, at least given the concurrent state of psychological research. Thus,

¹⁹ Charles Darwin, *On the Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection, or the Preservation of Favored Races in the Struggle for Life* (London: John Murray, 1882), 428; emphasis added. Cf. Introduction, 3.

²⁰ Robert Maxwell Young, *Mind, Brain, and Adaptation in the Nineteenth Century: Cerebral Localization and its Biological Context from Gall to Ferrier* (Oxford: University of Oxford Press, 1970), 169–73.

²¹ Based on his belief that individuals pass their experiences on to their progeny, Spencer’s theory of evolution is essentially Lamarckian rather than a Darwinian.

²² For a strictly art historical treatment of Emerson’s relationship to naturalism as an art movement in the 1880s, see Kenneth McConkey, “Dr. Emerson and the Sentiment of Nature,” in McWilliams and Sekules, eds., *Life and Landscape*, 48–56.

probing this dynamic tension between evolution and empiricism allowed a clearer sense of the larger stakes of naturalistic photography to emerge—as well as the particular circumstances of its demise.

Returning briefly, then, to Emerson aboard his chilly houseboat on the Broads, it would do well to mention that that he had not in fact observed the riverbed, and so, according to the strictures of empiricism, he had not exactly proven Fred and Harnsee wrong; the full nets merely indicate that *many* eels had not buried themselves on this occasion, which supports only the more modest conclusion that all eels do not go to mud in winter, or at least they do not *always* do so. The accumulation of past observations and inferences about eels proves an insufficient guarantee of their present or future behavior. And, of course, Emerson's readers cannot see the eels. These skeptic's quandaries consistently drove Emerson to entertain the impossibility of reliably conveying lived experience to others. In a wry parting note that nevertheless betrays his deeper anxiety, Emerson plays on the epistemic gulf separating witnessing and testimony that forms the fish tale's *raison d'être*. He notes, "I sent our esteemed editor half a stone of these self-same fish. Thereby hangs a tale."²³ In a deadpan manner characteristic of his mature literary work, which finds a visual complement in the formal ambiguities that pervade so many of his later photographs, he gestures with a wink toward the absurdity of transferring experience beyond its corporeal and temporal bounds, even as he admits no alternative.

²³ Emerson, "Letters—III," 87. Emerson's dispatches to *The Fishing Gazette* were not wholly unrelated to his photographic endeavors. The journal's editor, Robert Bright Marston, had commissioned Emerson in 1888 to produce illustrations for the centenary edition of Walton's *The Compleat Angler*. Robert's father, Edward Marston, headed the London-based publishing firm Sampson Low, Marston, Searle & Rivington, which took on the first two editions of Emerson's *Naturalistic Photography* along with several of his photographic books through 1890.

I. SPENCER'S EVOLUTIONARY PSYCHOLOGY

On March 26, 1889, directly on the heels of the publication of *Naturalistic Photography*, Emerson delivered a lecture before the annual conference of the Camera Club on the theme of “Science and Art.” Many photographic journals on either side of the Atlantic reprinted the talk, and it became incorporated into the second edition of the book as an appendix. The lecture reveals the full force of Emerson’s intellectual debts to Spencer. Emerson begins by appealing directly to Spencer’s sweeping concept of evolution as a universal first principle, characterized by a general movement toward greater complexity and differentiation that may be applied to all planes of physical, mental, and cultural existence. Emerson proceeds in a deductive manner, building outward from simple generalization, in order to arrive at a firm delineation between art and science. The payoff comes as an appeal to his fellow photographers:

It is obvious then, if we are to make progress, this differentiation must be made, thoroughly understood, and rigidly adhered to by every practitioner of photography. Each one must have his aim clearly stamped on his mind, whether it be the advancement of science or the creation of works whose aim and end is to give aesthetic pleasure.²⁴

In a characteristic Spencerian turn, Emerson collapses this descriptive account of an ostensibly natural tendency into a directive aimed at his fellow photographers.

While explicit references to Spencer do not appear in the first edition of *Naturalistic Photography*, the key section of the book, a chapter titled “Phenomena of Sight, and Art Principles Deduced Therefrom,” bears the unmistakable hallmarks of Spencer’s distinctive style of argumentation. *Naturalistic Photography* is often framed by art historians as an attempt to bring aesthetics within the sphere of scientific principles—indeed, Emerson himself claims as much. Read in light of Emerson’s affinity for Spencer, however, it is better understood as a

²⁴ P. H. Emerson, “Appendix II. Science and Art,” in *Naturalistic Photography for Students of the Art*, 2nd ed. (London: Sampson Low, Marston, Searle & Rivington, 1890), 296.

philosophical exercise in deductive reasoning dressed in scientific garb. Emerson begins from a series of generalizations about human eyesight and builds outward, eventually arriving at a series of conclusions about art that are ultimately unfalsifiable.

Spencer's *Psychology* held a special place in Emerson's intellectual development. In his autobiographical account of his formative years in medical school, *Paul Ray at the Hospital*, Emerson portrays himself as a worldly savant named Reve (*'Je suis philosophe,'* he declares).²⁵ The narrative includes lengthy descriptions of the contents of his bookshelf, providing a glimpse into his eclectic reading habits. Among the dozen or so volumes that he lists by name, including Darwin's *Origin*, Spencer's *Psychology* holds the special distinction of being the book that he portrays himself actively reading within the narrative.²⁶ It follows, then, that the references to Spencer in "Science and Art" turn out to be have been borrowed from Spencer's *Psychology*. As a justification for his focusing technique, Emerson cites Spencer's remark that an emotion is "vague in its outlines, and has a structure which continues indistinct even under the most patient introspection."²⁷ He argued that photographs adhering to his method will evince the "constructive imagination," which he notes is "the highest intellectual power according to recent psychologists," another oblique reference culled from the *Psychology*.²⁸

²⁵ P. H. Emerson, *Paul Ray at the Hospital: A Picture of Student Life* (London: W. Hall & Lovitt, 1882), 34.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 156.

²⁷ Emerson, "Science and Art," 300. The quote originates from Herbert Spencer, *The Principles of Psychology*, vol. 2 (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1872), 4.

²⁸ Emerson "Science and Art," 297. Cf. Spencer, *Principles*, vol. 2, 534–35. Mary Warner Marien, who has productively explored Emerson's intellectual influences more than anyone to date, attributes Emerson's use of the phrase "constructive imagination" to William Benjamin Carpenter, though she also notes that Spencer used the term in manner more akin to Emerson's usage, describing it as the "highest intellectual faculty." See Marien, "Taxonomy of a Crow's Nest," 105. Emerson rarely refers to mental capacities as "faculties," a designation that remained in common use but was losing favor in part due to the ascendancy of evolutionary

Spencer's core argument in his *Psychology*, which was part of his grandly ambitious *Synthetic Philosophy*, was to integrate associationist psychology with evolutionary theory.²⁹ While Spencer maintained that the nature of the causal relationship between the inner and outer worlds are ultimately "unknown," he defined mental evolution in terms of an "automatic adjustment of inner to outer relations,"—a phrase he repeated throughout the text. This phrase clearly places a priority on adapting to outward nature, reducing the mind and the imagination to passive mirrors of external nature. By embracing Spencer's model, Emerson formed his defense of photography as a fine art not so much by arguing, as his modernist successors would, that through thoughtful, deliberative manipulations it could transcend the mechanistic trappings of the camera, but rather by intimating that the human mind itself could be reduced to mechanical terms.

One of the main implications of Spencer's synthesis between traditional associationist psychology and evolution was to expand the concept of experience from the individual to an entire ancestral line of descent. Based on a Lamarckian understanding of evolution, whereby traits developed in an individual could be passed on directly to her progeny, "experience" came to encompass the entire aggregation of accumulated experiences reaching back to some unknown origin. The implications of this simple reconfiguration proved profound. It purported to end the central debate in psychology between nativist and empiricist factions essentially by declaring victory for empiricism, only to hand nativism the purse. By extending experiencing backwards to

perspectives. In the present reading, Emerson's glosses on perceptual psychology were less eccentric and piecemeal than Marien proposes. Where contradictions and inconsistencies do appear, they often did not originate with him; rather, they were imported full cloth from the authors he was reading. While he may have been an "intellectual grazer," as Marien contends, he subscribed to an internally consistent worldview. *Ibid.*, 107.

²⁹ Young, *Mind, Brain, and Adaptation*, 169–73.

form an infinite regression, Spencer reduced the debate over innate versus acquired capacities to a semantic disagreement; they were functionally indistinguishable in practice.

This plays out in Emerson's comments on the question of "educated sight," an idea with its roots in Locke's empiricism, in which the importance of genius and innate aesthetic sense are diminished in comparison to knowledge gained through experience. By following Spencer, Emerson departed from a Lockean model by replacing the blank slate of vision with an intricate web of associations that is perpetually built up through genealogical generations. Thus, despite Emerson's deference to the role of experience and attunement to one's surrounding environment, his accretive understanding of evolutionary psychology led him ultimately to view art as more of a contest of innate ability. The aesthetic faculty could be developed according to Emerson's version, but, like a latent image, it could only give form to that which was already there as an unformed potential. While one can achieve the status of an artist only through training, the emphasis ultimately lies with what Emerson calls "artistic instincts," for no amount of artistic training can overcome biological limitations. This general move toward innate or inherited limits on skill becomes more pronounced in Emerson over time. It is not without symbolic significance that after Emerson gave up photography, one of his primary pursuits later in life was charting his own genealogy. With regards to art, however, this change is most prominent in the subtle shift with respect to who Emerson considers worthy of being called an artist. In Emerson's early writings, he contends that "trained artists" are qualified to judge exhibitions, but in the third edition, however, that phrase becomes "men of artistic instincts," tipping the scales toward inherited ability. An essay included as an appendix of the 1899 edition includes Emerson's most severe expression of biological determinism. He reflects, "it is, I think, perfectly explicable on psychological grounds that a man appreciates works of art in proportion to his innate artistic

instincts.”³⁰ Here Emerson concludes by making a Social Darwinian appeal to biological hierarchy that would become synonymous with Spencer in the twentieth century.

II. THE POACHER’S ART

Scientific naturalism took root in Emerson as a kind of totalizing worldview. He and other exponents of scientific naturalism sought to replace traditional structures of cultural authority with a new social order aligned with the radically new concept of nature that evolution implied. In essence, it was a social movement dressed up in scientific robes. Emerson’s embrace of scientific naturalism manifested in a number of ways. It led him to view cultural norms and traditions with suspicion, which he applied to art and society in equal measure, dismissing anything that struck him as conventional or artificial; his early social views were decidedly anti-authoritarian and anti-clerical. In art, this same attitude caused him to place a high value on novelty and formal experimentation.

Emerson states at the beginning of the chapter on composition in *Naturalistic Photography* that he had given the most thought to its contents. More than any other, this chapter takes aim at Henry Peach Robinson, whose 1869 volume *Pictorial Effect in Photography* had become the standard reference work among pictorial photographers. Robinson, who grew into the role of Emerson’s chief antagonist, focused much of the book’s attention on rules of composition, borrowing liberally from popular authors on the subject, such as Ruskin and John Burnet. Where Robinson put forth an essentially idealist account of compositional laws, Emerson rejects the premise that there are *a priori* laws of composition, a stance that he equated with “the pseudo-scientific pursuits of Phrenology and Astrology.”³¹ Rather than sweeping composition

³⁰ P. H. Emerson, “Topography and Art,” *Photographic Art Journal* 3, no. 38 (February 1, 1890): 26.

³¹ Emerson, *Naturalistic Photography*, 2nd ed., 237.

aside, Emerson turned it on its head, arguing that what is really meant by composition is “selection,” for which, he maintained, there can be no laws—as each picture demands its own unique treatment. The formal qualities of a picture take their cues from—and are directly adapted to—the scene. The role of the naturalistic artist in Emerson’s conception, what he calls “the great principle of naturalism,” was to wait for a specific moment when nature presents one of its “propitious moods,” and then render the composition which, crucially, the artist understands to have a locus in nature itself. This confusion of categories, in which the picture exists externally in the world, serves as one of the hallmarks of Emerson’s naturalism. As a practical approach to composition, it proved a successful strategy for breaking with established convention.

The novelty of Emerson’s approach is apparent in his first published book of photography, *Life and Landscape on the Norfolk Broads* (1886), which he co-authored with the painter Thomas Frederick Goodall. The majority of Emerson’s initial ideas about art come by way of Goodall, to whom Emerson was introduced by A.G. Bell, another painter he met on an early trip to the Broads on a month-long chartered cruise in 1885.³² Bell and Goodall both held ties to the New English Art Club (NEAC), and it was Goodall’s Barbizon-tinged rural scenes that deserve much of the credit for shaping Emerson’s initial understanding of naturalism from an artistic standpoint.³³ In the introduction to *Life and Landscape*, Emerson indicates which images

³² For Emerson’s account of this trip, see P. H. Emerson, “Cruise on the Norfolk Broads, Prize Tour Competition,” *Amateur Photographer* 2 (November 20, 1885): 545–48.

³³ For more on Emerson’s relationship to Goodall, the NEAC, and other currents of artistic naturalism in the 1880s, see McConkey, “Sentiment of Nature,” 48–56 and Yochelson, “P. H. Emerson,” 77–125. Emerson knew several other artists affiliated with the NEAC, but the two others worth mentioning are the sculptor James Havard Thomas, who was Emerson’s closest confidante and lifelong pen-pal, and George Clausen, a founder and the most well-known member of the NEAC. Clausen shared in a few significant correspondences with Emerson between 1889–1891, which have become the basis for speculation that Clausen was the unnamed “great artist” with which Emerson spoke after the Paris Exhibition.

are his and which were the results of the collaborative partnership. By comparing the two sets of plates, one can discern Emerson's individual sensitivity to conventionality, and his keen interest in formal experimentation inspired by the scene. Collaborative images like *Setting the Bow-Net* suggest careful posing and follow uniform standards regarding the placement of the horizon line and the figures. The plates for which Emerson was solely responsible exhibit much greater formal variations, which suggest a more intuitive interaction with the landscape (fig. 1.2). Looking at the delicate swathe of reeds that envelop the foreground in *The Rushy Shore*, for example, one can easily imagine Emerson happening upon this groundless, textured effect caused by the still reflections of the reeds on the shallow water and resolving to make a picture on the spot, having no preconceived notion of his intended composition prior to peering into the ground glass and adjusting the camera based on what he saw (fig. 1.3). The approach encapsulates Emerson's intuitive, yet notionally passive model of artistic production, which finds a parallel in Spencer's idea of the "automatic adjustment of inner to outer relations."

A perennial observation about Emerson's work both then and now is that his pictures frequently fail to conform to the formal prescriptions he lays out in *Naturalistic Photography*. This disparity is prominent in *Life and Landscape*, in which he has not yet settled on a consistent style and many of the compositions, several of which he made before teaming up with Goodall, follow prevailing conventions. But even in his subsequent publications, which are more internally consistent in stylistic terms, his approach to focus varies widely; for every instance of a work appearing to meet the parameters of differential focusing, there are as many examples that are uniformly sharp or fuzzy. For instance, readers are destined for confusion when examining *Where Winds the Dyke* to make sense of how it realizes Emerson's technical prescriptions, even though he names the image as one of the most successful examples of a

naturalistic photograph (fig. 1.4). What accounts for this disconnect between his written method and his actual works?

A curious aspect of the scholarship on Emerson is that while his photographic and literary creations are given a dynamic arc, his theories about photography and art are presumed to be static, until they eventually collapse under their own weight all at once. This gives way to accusations that Emerson violated his own dogmatic technical prescriptions in practice. For example, a recent study notes that not only do many of the early platinum prints in *Life and Landscape* feature double-printed skies, but Emerson introduced an apparently non-native sky effect in *A Stiff Pull*, which was issued along with the 1890 companion portfolio to *Naturalistic Photography*. Emerson explicitly denounces the practice of double printing in the latter text.

What would happen if the poles of this problem were reversed? What if we critiqued the ways that his theories fell well short of his images in their ambitions? For his own part, Emerson was often pained by the numbing effect of theory on his ability to appreciate art, and even more nature—for which art was initially no more than a conduit. In an 1888 article titled “A Photographer’s Dream,” Emerson fancies being kept awake at night by papers with convoluted titles like “The Artistic Values of Relative Exposures as Compared with the Readings of the Wet and Dry Bulb Thermometers,” and “On the Value of Mist as a Pictorial Agent, Tracing the Pre-Historic Uses of Mist Back to the Great Originator, One ‘Nobody,’ of Ingenuus Puer-Land,” which dull his appreciation for nature.³⁴ Both of these titles, it should be noted, were indicative of very specific anxieties. The first anticipates by two years the distinction that Hurter and Driffield’s research would fatally compromise, while the second highlights a less pronounced,

³⁴ P. H. Emerson, “A Photographer’s Dream,” *Yearbook of Photography* (1888): 113–115.

but no less gaping weakness in his aesthetic system—which was that the difference between an artistic and a scientific photograph could be reduced to the absence or presence of “aerial turbidity.” If the only substantive distinction to be made between a photograph portending to be art rather than science was the weather, well, what kind of distinction is that really?³⁵

Emerson’s antagonism toward convention pushed him to place high value on novelty and experimentation. This was central to his understanding of naturalism, and it necessarily follows that his commitment to constant experimenting manifested on the levels of form, technique, and theory. Art historian Ellen Handy makes an astute insight when, commenting on the rapid pace with which Emerson turned out albums between 1886 and 1890, she notes, “The texts he wrote for these books conveyed the effects not within his photographic grasp.”³⁶ To put this another way, Emerson was given to leading with bold claims, which he would then try to back up in practice. Many of his declarations are best understood as hypothesis, which becomes clear only after developing a sense for his written tone. This proved to be an incredibly effective rhetorical strategy, but it also meant that a lot of contradictory statements were left in the wake once the dust had settled and historians were left to clean up. As someone who gained, and some extent cultivated, a reputation as a reclusive, philosophically minded thinker, Emerson’s empirical bent made him hostile to any claim that could not be verified through practice.

Along with the distaste for convention that left him endlessly searching out novelty, scientific naturalism also made him suspicious of the imagination. While the agnostic posture

³⁵ In an article that Emerson was commissioned to write in early 1890 giving photographic advice for “naturalists” (i.e. natural historians), the only distinction he is able to muster between pictorial and scientific work is aerial turbidity. P. H. Emerson, “Hints on Photography for Naturalists,” *Naturalists’ Record* 1, no. 6 (February 1890): 90–92.

³⁶ Ellen Handy, *Pictorial Effect, Naturalistic Vision: The Photographs and Theories of Henry Peach Robinson and Peter Henry Emerson* (Norfolk, VA: Chrysler Museum, 1994), 5.

that scientific naturalism claimed meant nominally that neither mind nor the environment had clear causal priority, in practice far more often than not it bred an intense distrust of the imagination, leaving the mind with little ability to exert an active influence over the world. Emerson juxtaposed what he saw as legitimate evolution—that which conforms to the environment—to an artificial evolution emerging “from the inner consciousness,” which is to say, from the imagination.³⁷ This suggests a certain discomfort with the implications of Darwinism that are endemic to late Victorian culture. Faced with the prospect of a completely non-teleological, chaotic world, an active imagination left to its own devices came to represent a kind of madness—an untethered chain of associative connections that provided no standard for verification or judgment.

One way that Emerson’s suspicion of imagination manifests is the marked lack of facial expressivity in almost any of his human models, which in part suggests an attendant reluctance to acknowledge active inner states. We can see the former in his winning entry for a Home Portraiture competition, an early portrait of his wife titled “Meditation,” which aggressively resists any suggestion of interiority (fig. 1.5). The takeaway here is not so much that emotions conveyed via facial expression are illegitimate, but rather that they are unreliable because they can be artificially reproduced or faked. In a review referencing Oscar Rejlander’s illustrations for Darwin’s *The Expression of Emotions in Man and Animals*, in which the photographer acts out various emotional states for plates in the book, Emerson dismisses them as artificial, quipping that the only emotion Rejlander successfully conveys is his own vanity (fig. 1.6).

³⁷ Emerson invoked the phrase frequently to discredit the legitimacy of works drawn from the imagination. See, for example, P. H. Emerson, “Photography, A Pictorial Art,” *Amateur Photographer* 3 (March 19, 1886): 138.

Emerson's search for truth in nature also lends a framework for understanding his typological portraits of the rural inhabitants on the Broads. In *Naturalistic Photography*, Emerson advises his readers to select models that were at once "picturesque and typical," asserting that one "should feel that there never was such a fisherman, or such a ploughman, or such a poacher, or such an old man, or such a beautiful girl, as he is picturing."³⁸ His methods for achieving this are cast into stark relief when comparing a proof copy and the final photogravure of one of his several homages to the French naturalist painter Jean-François Millet, *Haymaker with Rake* (fig. 1.7). A remarkable transformation occurs between the albumen proof that Emerson used to obtain a copyright on the image and the published version featured in *Pictures of East Anglian Life* from 1888 (fig. 1.8). The expressive specificity has been drained from the figure's eyes and mouth, transforming him into a generic icon of rural virtue.

In seeking to blend the picturesque with the typical, Emerson brings to mind Francis Galton's composite portraiture technique, which the British statistician (and Darwin's first cousin) had initially devised through conversations with Spencer.³⁹ The technique involved superimposing several portraits of individuals fitting into a certain class in order to generate a generic visualization of a social or ethnic "type" (fig. 1.9). While Emerson expressed reservations about the method, his complaints were of the technical rather than conceptual order—namely, he questioned Galton's choice of lens and the tonal accuracy of the resulting portraits.⁴⁰

³⁸ Emerson, *Naturalistic Photography*, 2nd ed., 251.

³⁹ Francis Galton, "Composite Portraits," *Nature* 18, no. 447 (May 23, 1878): 97.

⁴⁰ Emerson, *Naturalistic Photography*, 2nd ed., 137, 167.

Figures like the *Haymaker* also lend themselves to metaphorical readings as artists or creators in the naturalistic understanding of the term. The rake, in the haymaker's deft hands, manipulates and recombines raw matter into aesthetically pleasing and useful forms. The creative act of "making" here is refigured as reworking what has already been made by nature. To say that the haymaker "makes hay" is to enact the same linguistic inversion by which a photograph—or for Emerson any naturalistic artwork—is "made," rather than "taken." Under the logic of naturalism, photographs were expressly things taken rather than made. While this language of "taking" pictures persists in the way that we speak about photographs down to the present, it is also worth noting that, for Emerson, this same logic extended beyond photographs to paintings and other visual arts.

Indeed, many of Emerson's portrayals of rural figures open themselves to readings along these lines. *Gathering Water-Lilies*, from *Life and Landscape on the Norfolk Broads*, which has become his most widely recognized photograph, is one such example (fig. 1.10). Viewed as a straightforward genre scene, the picture portrays a rural couple enjoying a serene moment of leisure in a secluded patch of lily pads protected by an outgrowth of reeds.⁴¹ Read in a more symbolic register, however, the figures come to stand in for the reflexive process of artistic production under naturalism. The male rower, who stands in for the artist, performs a mechanical task, while directing his gaze toward a flower—an emblem of beauty—on the water's surface. The woman, a female personification of nature herself, leans over picking the object of beauty

⁴¹ Based on a text passage, it has been suggested that the couple is actually gathering the flowers to use as fishing bait, which supports a reading of the image as a scene of work rather than leisure. Based on the size of the lily and the related passage on which this claim is based, which references "a hook baited with a small white flower of an aquatic plant which grows in the tangled masses from the muddy Broads, and also with white daisy buds just about to open," this seems implausible. See P. H. Emerson and T. F. Goodall, *Life and Landscape on the Norfolk Broads*, (London: Sampson Low, Marston, Searle & Rivington, 1886), 11.

from within her own reflection. As the photographer mans the oars, nature, by some ineffable process, carries out the act of self-selection.

The ideal to which the artist aspired within the framework laid down by naturalism is perhaps best embodied, however, in the figure of the poacher, a recurring character throughout Emerson's literary and photographic works. For Emerson, the rural poacher embodied a romantic ideal, a kind of rogue outsider who disregards the conventional norms of society, acting instead in accordance with the laws of nature. He wields keen powers of observation, which helps him to outwit wild game and game wardens alike. In *The Poacher—A Hare in View*, also from *Pictures of East Anglian Life*, the poacher's tool of choice is a lurcher, whose actions the poacher has mastered (fig. 1.11). Like the naturalistic photographer, the poacher peers out intently into the landscape while effortlessly commanding the dog with a leash in his right hand, which resembles the pneumatic shutter release used with a view camera. With a single, unconscious reflex action, the poacher will trigger his tool, releasing the lurcher into the landscape to retrieve the object of his attention.

III. EMPIRICISM, IN THEORY AND IN PRACTICE

What does it mean to say that Emerson was wedded to empiricism? Scholarly consensus exists around this point, but the term and its application to Emerson benefits from further extrapolation. For starters, the word itself in any derivation does not appear in *Naturalistic Photography* or anywhere else in Emerson's written work. How do we account for this? Was his philosophical commitment so self-evident that he did not think it was necessary to identify by name, or did he consciously avoid it? An early review of *Naturalistic Photography* offers a clue:

The method of Dr. Emerson's book is good. The writer is analytical, *and very rarely empirical*. [...] The general acceptance of evolution principles, thought freed from

trammels, and the adoption of scientific methods, tend to give us treatises in which a rational and natural basis for all phenomena is sought.⁴²

The critic lauds the text for avoiding empiricism and adopting a rational approach in its place. And yet, the coupling of pure reason with scientific methodology here is liable to strike an odd chord for contemporary readers, given that when we speak of “the scientific method” today, we mean experiments driven by empirical data, with the purpose of insulating against reason’s failings.

An editorial from the *British Journal of Photography* clarifies this estranged sense of the term, stating, “distinctions may even be drawn between artifice, deception, fraud, charlatanry, empiricism, delusion, white lies, and black lies, but they all belong to the same family.”⁴³ Thus, to call something “empirical” doubled as a kind of slur, connoting a pseudoscientific or even consciously deceptive approach. This usage originated as a term to describe medical quacks and precedes its application to philosophy or psychology. To call something “empirical” in this sense implies a lack of rigor and an overreliance on informal and rule-of-thumb observations, rather than systematic study grounded in experiment.

George Davison, who began his photographic career as Emerson’s most enthusiastic defender and naturalistic photography’s primary disciple, expressed a similar sentiment in a significant article titled “Impressionism in Photography,” published in December 1890 while Emerson was away brooding on the Broads. Davison notes, “Empiricism, irrational authority, and conventions have been greatly cast aside, and freedom of thought and scientific investigation

⁴² “Reviews.—*Naturalistic Photography*,” *Journal of the Camera Club* 3, no. 32 (March 1889): 132; emphasis added.

⁴³ J. Traill Taylor, “Ethics of Photography and Photographers,” *British Journal of Photography* 32, no. 1569 (May 5, 1890): 342.

have taken their place.”⁴⁴ Were it not for the first word, this sentence might have been plucked directly from a page in *Naturalistic Photography*.

The underlying tension within Emerson’s work is often expressed in terms of conflicting allegiances to art and science. According to this version of events, naturalistic photography eventually crumbled because Emerson failed to appreciate the dialectical relationship under which these terms are constituted—in which art is negatively defined as that which science has not yet succeeded in bringing into its orbit. This explanation is sound as its goes, but it covers over another legitimate way of understanding Emerson’s unrest: a conflict playing out in the late Victorian period between two competing notions of science—one based in the gentlemanly

⁴⁴ George Davison, “Impressionism in Photography,” *Journal of the Society of Arts* 39, no. 1987 (December 19, 1890): 65–77. While Davison was widely understood to be Emerson’s primary disciple, Davison’s wholesale embrace of materialism in this lecture article marks an important departure, if mainly with respect to tone, from Emerson, who exercised more caution in his writing in order to avoid being accused of promoting coarse materialism, which despite Emerson’s anti-clerical bent, never appealed to him. In all likelihood, Emerson’s strong displeasure not only in how the paper appropriated his ideas without citing them, but also in how it positively embraces a view of naturalism more akin to the version put forth by Emerson’s critics than his own, played some role in finally pushing him to cut ties with naturalism. In lieu of crediting Emerson, Davison cites Francis Bate’s “The Naturalistic School of Painting,” which Emerson had previously (and incorrectly based on chronology) been accused of plagiarizing. Bate’s account, like Davison’s, is much more forwardly materialist, and thus more socially radical than Emerson’s upscale agnosticism. Emerson devotes a third of the “Renunciation” portion of *The Death of Naturalistic Photography* to casting aspersions onto Davison for the paper, which *The Amateur Photographer* found so unpalatable that they redacted portions before publishing it. Their feud continued for two months, with Davison distancing himself further from Emerson and dismissing Hurter and Driffield’s research. Class differences almost certainly played a role in their falling out, which underscores how discourses like naturalism can closely track onto social status or political temperament. Davison was born the son of shipbuilder in rural Suffolk, giving him an authentic claim to the region by birth that Emerson lacked; he would later identify as an anarchist, while Emerson gradually settled into patrician Toryism. Emerson issued a response to Davison titled “Mr. D-----’s Misrepresentations,” which he later lists as a separately published pamphlet, though no copy appears extant. This time, editors saw it fit to remove several paragraphs, though they retained the unfortunate line, “Poor Davison is of the same blood as Joey,” referring to the bungling deckhand from Emerson’s *Wild Life on a Tidal Water*. P. H. Emerson, “Dr. Emerson’s Reply to Mr. Davison,” *British Journal of Photography* 38, no. 1607 (February 20, 1891): 120.

amateur tradition of natural history, which privileged observation and description, and the other emphasizing controlled experimentation that was closely tied to the fracturing of science into specialized professions at the close of the nineteenth century.⁴⁵ During Emerson's formal schooling at Cambridge, he gained an appreciation for the latter, but on the Broads, he fully embraced the former; it was only the latter that was incommensurate with the terms of art.

Historians have widely identified an influential scientific paper published in May 1890 by Ferdinand Hurter, a Swiss-born chemist, and Vero Charles Driffield, a British chemical engineer, as the main reason for Emerson's dismissal of photography on the grounds that it was fatally limited in its expressive potentials.⁴⁶ The Lancashire-based pair of researchers had published a lengthy paper that demonstrated a constant relationship between exposure and the density of silver deposits on the resulting negative, which are expressed in a constant ratio in the final print. Their research would give rise to standardized darkroom procedures and reliable exposure aids, including their patented Actinograph, which could be used to gauge exposure by matching up light intensity, proprietary plate sensitivity ("speed"), and aperture against an index card that provided the mean light values according to time of day and year (fig. 1.12).⁴⁷

⁴⁵ For a classic account of this schism within British science, see David Elliston Allen, *The Naturalist in Britain: A Social History* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1976), 158–174.

⁴⁶ See Ferdinand Hurter and Vero C. Driffield, "Photo-Chemical Investigations and a New Method of Determination of the Sensitiveness of Photographic Plates," *Journal of the Society of Chemical Industry* 9, no. 5 (31 May 1890): 455–469. Several British photography periodicals reprinted the paper shortly after its initial publication.

⁴⁷ A critical history of the devices and methods for measuring light created in the late 1880s would be a worthwhile study. Of particular interest would be the differences between devices like the Actinometer employed charts and devices that required the photographer to make an empirical determination based on a series of increasingly opaque filters, which were suggestively titled "extinction meters." Hurter and Driffield's method did not actually eradicate this need for subjective judgment, evidenced by the amusingly imprecise labels for outdoor light conditions, which range from "very dull" and "dull," to "bright" and "very bright."

Without question, Hurter and Driffield's findings dealt a heavy blow to Emerson's working beliefs about the nature of photography. They had taken what he regarded as intuitive, embodied skills—those of gauging exposure and manipulating relative tonal values to correspond to visual impression—and reduced them to operations that were mindless, scientific, and mechanical. Skills acquired through habit and natural ability could now be outdone by consulting a chart and a slide-rule. The chef, it seems, had been upstaged by a cookbook.

The sections of *Naturalistic Photography* offering technical advice underscore the extent of value Emerson placed on embodied skill and empirical judgment in the tradition of natural history as an observational practice. In the section on exposure, he delineates three methods, which include removing the lens cap and replacing it, sliding a camera cloth over the lens and back, or “using a mechanical aid, called a shutter.”⁴⁸ He advocates the cloth method, advising that the second-hand of a pocket watch will be a sufficient aid, “for exposure, as we shall show, can never be reduced to a science.”⁴⁹ As a reason, he cites the endlessly delicate and variable conditions of light and atmosphere found in nature, which meteorology has not yet mastered. Here is another moment when the atmosphere, as a stand-in for nature, literally becomes the wellspring of art.

Even so, taking the Hurter and Driffield research as a fully sufficient explanation on Emerson's part is shortsighted. For one thing, their research had no bearing on the focus question and, as a result, the single issue that had framed the debate over naturalistic photography had, perhaps by design, entirely fallen from view. But it also ignores the fact that all along, in his full-

⁴⁸ Emerson, *Naturalistic Photography*, 2nd ed., 154.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 155.

throated embrace of naturalism, he had been championing an approach to art that was, if not mindless, by his own account “scientific” and “mechanical.”⁵⁰

Emerson had thus pegged his claims to photography’s artistic capacity in the empirical—as *opposed* to scientific—precision it entailed or, more accurately, science in its growing sense of controlled, quantitatively driven experiments. As Joel Snyder has pointed out, “mechanical” during the greater part of the nineteenth century did not necessarily connote machines but was more akin to “manual,” meaning an action carried out through skillful repetition, as in a craft.⁵¹ Related to this meaning, “mechanical” could also be contrasted with “liberal,” meaning an action that requires imagination or mental exertion. By drawing on the psychological groundwork laid by scientific naturalism, Emerson bases his appeal that photography can be an art not by showing that photography could transcend its mechanical status, but rather by demoting the human imagination to the realm of mechanism. In the context of scientific naturalism, to call something “mechanical” did not preclude it from containing imagination or mental content. In evolution’s wake, the prevailing concern of the artist inclined toward naturalism was less whether photography could pass muster as an art because of its reliance on an automatic machine, but rather to what extent human psychology, as a natural outgrowth of animal psychology, was itself reducible to mechanical and automatic processes.

This dynamic becomes especially clear in Emerson’s response to an effective critical rejoinder by painter Phillip H. Newman aimed at *Naturalistic Photography* titled “Imaging and

⁵⁰ Emerson twice finds reason to include Constable’s quote “In such an age as this, painting should be *understood*, not looked on with blind wonder, nor considered as poetic inspiration, but as a pursuit, *legitimate, scientific, and mechanical.*” *Ibid.*, 75, 268.

⁵¹ Joel Snyder, “Res Ipsa Loquitor,” in *Things That Talk: Object Lessons from Art and Science*, ed. Lorraine Daston (New York: Zone Books, 2004), 195–221.

Imagining,” which occupied Emerson’s attention right before leaving for the Broads.⁵²

Emerson’s circumlocutions in responding are telling:

To discuss this matter lands me in a psychological controversy where Mr. Newman cannot follow. [...] This amateur writer then calls realism, idealism, impressionism, &c., fashionable verbiage. I wonder what all the philosophers from Thales to Herbert Spencer would think of having some of their knottiest problems called ‘fashionable verbiage.’ [...] But this critic is not a psychologist (still, a ‘cultured person’ might have known this very title *was absurd*, for what is imagining but imaging—re-imaging).⁵³

Here we find Emerson put on the defensive on the subject of psychology. He invokes Spencer, but, as Newman would retort, he offers little elaboration on the “so-called ‘psychological difficulty,’” lapsing instead into well-trodden invective.⁵⁴

IV. TRANSGURED REALISM

Emerson took such an interest in Hurter and Driffield’s research that he sent letters to them from the Broads to ask for clarification about the implications of their findings.⁵⁵ Their contents demonstrate Emerson’s earnest attempt to understand their research, but they also provide some additional context for the state of his doubt in the winter of 1890. Excited to have received a lengthy reply to his initial inquiries, Emerson delved into greater detail in a mid-October letter about the implications of their research for naturalistic photography. Reiterating the importance he placed on the ability to modify tone, he notes that he is after the familiar

⁵² Philip H. Newman, “Imagining and Imaging,” *Photography* 2, no. 85 (June 26, 1890): 11–14.

⁵³ P. H. Emerson, “Imaging and Imagining’—A Rejoinder,” *Photography* 2, no. 89 (July 24, 1890): 468.

⁵⁴ Philip H. Newman, “‘Imaging and Imagining,’ A Reply to Dr. Emerson,” *Photography* 2, no. 96, (September 11, 1890): 579.

⁵⁵ For a descriptive account of these exchanges, see Ronald M. Callender, “Dear Mr. Driffield: Letters of Peter Henry Emerson and Hurter & Driffield,” *History of Photography* 28, no. 4 (2004): 315–22.

distinction between “the true appearance of things and not things as they really are.” His next statement is pivotal:

Now in this matter we have to take into consideration physiological and psychological factors. For a naturalistic work is really a work of what Mr. Herbert Spencer calls ~~transf~~ transcendental realism. That is...subjective and objective are intrinsically and transparently connected. It is not the objective only an artist wishes for—that is what the scientist calls for.⁵⁶

What Emerson intended to say, but could not conjure in the moment, was in fact “transfigured realism.”⁵⁷ A struck fragment suggests he labored to retrieve the phrase from memory while sitting in the hull of his wherry. The mistake is perhaps just as well, as it allows us to consider its relation to the philosophical school developed a century earlier by Emerson’s distant cousin in the United States. Emerson drew this distinction between things as they appear and things as they are with some frequency, but it has never been linked to Spencer directly.

What, then, is transfigured realism? Toward the end of the second volume of Spencer’s *Psychology*, he begins with summary of his general arguments up to that point: he does not believe in the authority of reason outside of the senses, he casts off metaphysics, and he compares “realistic” and “anti-realistic” positions. He introduces what he terms the “universal postulate,” and states in his characteristically obtuse fashion that “a subject must always have a predicate, since the negation of that proposition can’t exist, and thus reality must exist.” He then returns to the idea of the emotions, noting that “subjective affections produced by objective agencies which are unknown and unknowable.”⁵⁸ Translated into semiotic terms, he says that the referent is unknowable but is nevertheless implied by the sign with which it shares a material, yet

⁵⁶ P. H. Emerson, Letter to Hurter & Driffield, dated October 19, 1890, the Royal Photographic Society Collection, Victoria and Albert Museum, London, UK, [hereafter RPS Coll]. Author’s transcription.

⁵⁷ Spencer, *Psychology*, vol. 2, 490.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

unknown correspondence. Then, to illustrate his point, he offers an analogy that is alluring for its affinities to photography.

Spencer tells the reader to imagine that he is looking through a window at a trunk on the ground outside. He traces the edges with dots on a paper held to the window (i.e. the ground glass). This becomes a “representation of its form not as conceived but as actually seen.” He then discusses how the picture and the trunk are different in nearly every respect (ratios of lines, angles, dimension, etc.), but concludes that representation and reality are nevertheless connected in such a way that the relative positions of the eye, the glass, and the trunk, being held constant, no other figure is possible. Following up with a diagrammatic example, he introduces a cylinder of the form A B C D, and E, a cube in front of the cylinder, and F, which passes through the cube onto the cylinder, forming a projected shape G (fig. 1.13). He derives proof from this that even though the symbol in no way resembles the thing symbolized, every possible rearrangement corresponds to an exactly equivalent re-arrangement in the other.

He finishes his belabored analogy by revealing that the cube stands for an object in the world, the cylinder stands for what he calls the “receptive area of consciousness,” and the projected figure represents the “perception of the object.” He sums up the findings in a dense sweep of philosophical jargon:

Every change in the objective reality causes an exactly commensurate change in the subjective state, which constitutes cognition. Crude Realism assumes the lines and angles and areas on the curved surface are actually like those of the cube. Idealism concludes that no such cube is implied. Hypothetical realism admits the cube as a “needful hypothesis.” Skepticism takes this further and says that there is no reason to believe in the surface. Absolute Idealism says that only the figure exists, pushing skepticism to the extreme. Transfigured Realism takes an element from each. It affirms the connexion between the cube and its projected image, admitting also that the existence of the cube is

the primary certainty, but says there is no kinship whatever between the cube and the projected image. No element, relation, or law that relates cube to figure...⁵⁹

And so on. By advocating for transfigured realism, Spencer postulates a definite correspondence between mind and matter. While he maintains that the nature of their relationship cannot be known, his proofs, along with the diagram, invite speculation to the contrary, which is evidenced in Emerson's comment that "subjective and objective are intrinsically and transparently connected." The first example immediately brings to mind an image projected onto the ground glass of a camera obscura, while the second, by depicting the "receptive area of consciousness" as a curved form, suggests a retinal image.

Of course, a passing reference in a private letter—indeed, one that Emerson failed to cite correctly—must not overshadow or outweigh the extended commentary on vision included in *Naturalistic Photography*. The German physiologist Hermann von Helmholtz, rather than Spencer, is the source Emerson references most often in *Naturalistic Photography* to provide theoretical support for his practical techniques. Unlike Spencer, Helmholtz maintained that nothing more than a practical correspondence can be claimed to exist between visual impressions and corresponding objects. Once again, however, paying careful attention to the particular texts that Emerson cites yields additional insights into the conclusions he seems to have drawn. Many later accounts have assumed that Helmholtz's monumental multi-volume *Handbuch der Physiologischen Optik*, completed in 1867, served as the primary basis for Emerson's scientific ideas. In fact, Emerson seems to have relied on two of Helmholtz's shorter lectures, "The Recent Progress of the Theory of Vision" (1868) and "On the Relation of Optics to Painting" (1871), which were translated into English in a two-volume series of *Popular Lectures on Scientific*

⁵⁹ Spencer, *Psychology*, vol. 2, 498–99.

Subjects.⁶⁰ While this may seem a minor point of clarification, the differences between the popular lectures and the longer text are not without consequence. Even though Helmholtz intended the 1868 lecture to be a highly condensed summary of the larger work, there are marked differences between them in tone and in emphasis. In the *Handbuch*, Helmholtz clearly expresses his belief that visual impressions can claim nothing more than a cursory correspondence with objects in the world. In fact, elements of this view do appear in the “Recent Progress” lecture, which Emerson carries over into *Naturalistic Photography* through his statement that “the human eye does not see nature exactly as she is, but sees instead a number of signs which represent nature.”⁶¹ In the distilled talk, however, Helmholtz leaves open the possibility (as one is wont to do in a popular lecture) of a “complete correspondence” between external objects and mental perceptions, with the noteworthy exception of color, which of course would have posed no issue for photography at the time anyway. The philosophy historian Gary Hatfield points out that Helmholtz’s characterization of the relationship between perception and the external world in the expanded version is decidedly more reserved. Referring to *Physiological Optics*, Hatfield notes:

[Helmholtz] denied that spatial representations provide images of external spatial configurations. Indeed, he maintained that our ideas can possess no more than a “practical” correspondence with the world, and that the only comparison possible between ideas and things is in terms of the guidance our representations provide us for engaging in actions that bring about a desired result (in the form of an expected group of new sensations). He regarded any other comparison as “unthinkable” and “nonsensical.”⁶²

⁶⁰ Helmholtz’s *Handbuch* was not translated into English until 1924. Emerson was competent in French, making it plausible that he consulted a French translation. More to the point though, given that he only references the popular lectures, these texts formed the essential basis of his knowledge of Helmholtz.

⁶¹ Emerson, *Naturalistic Photography*, 2nd ed., 114.

⁶² Gary Hatfield, *The Natural and the Normative: Theories of Spatial Perception from Kant to Helmholtz* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1990), 209.

The difference is significant because it leaves open the possibility that Emerson understood Helmholtz and Spencer to be in agreement about an indirect (but perhaps “indexical”) correspondence between mental perception and its referents in the world. Helmholtz suggests at the end of the “Recent Progress” lecture that by analyzing the mathematical relationships between objects, “we may indeed look for a complete correspondence between our conceptions and the objects which excite them.”⁶³ That open-ended suggestion, coupled with Emerson’s remarks on Spencer, supports the view that Emerson initially believed that by registering his visual impression of a scene, he would have, in essence, externally manifesting his inner thoughts, a belief reflected in the oft-quoted line from *Naturalistic Photography* that “your photograph is as true an index of your mind, as if you had written out a confession of faith on paper.”⁶⁴ As an indication of Emerson’s growing doubts about that proposition, in August 1890, he submitted in an article that “mathematical and artistic perspective are different things”—an assertion that he claimed to be a new revelation.⁶⁵ The solid link that Emerson used to join visual impressions, inner thoughts, and external objects—the link that formed the central premise of *Naturalistic Photography*—was beginning to pull apart.

The theory of evolution, by ostensibly being based solely on observations tied to the natural world, appeared to vindicate the foundational tenet of empiricism that all knowledge descends from sensory experience rather than innate mental structures. But by showing the eye

⁶³ Hermann von Helmholtz, “The Recent Progress of the Theory of Vision,” in *Popular Lectures on Scientific Subjects*, first series, 2nd ed. trans. Philip Henry Pye-Smith (London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1881), 276.

⁶⁴ Emerson, *Naturalistic Photography*, 2nd, 247.

⁶⁵ P. H. Emerson, “A Few Points in Naturalistic Focussing,” *Photography* 2, no. 93 (August 21, 1890): 534.

to be a product of the very processes that it aided in uncovering, evolution also placed a newfound strain on empiricism's claim to objective knowledge.

Emerson's efforts to suppress the imagination and adapt to nature proved difficult to square with his lived experience—not to mention his undeniably active imagination. In November 1890, while Emerson was away on the Broads, his fifth photographic book, *Wild Life on a Tidal Water*, debuted in print. The book forms a marked stylistic departure from his previous works. Emerson trades the descriptive natural history and ethnography found in his earlier volumes for a self-conscious literary style, inserting himself as a narrator and thereby fully implicating himself as an observing subject.

Wild Life serves as an extended meditation on blurred thresholds—between sea and land, nature and culture, humans and other animals, and ultimately, between seeing and knowing. Emerson represents these perceptual ambiguities in the text through recurring zoomorphic motifs: fishermen have flippers, crabs exhibit human vices, sportsmen misidentify birds and vice versa. This theme carries over pictorially in scenes like *On Gorleston Sands*, in which a child digging for crabs on the shore resembles a bird engaged toward the same end (fig. 1.14). *In the Yarmouth River* presses this perceptual ambiguity even further: what appear to be two humans merge into a centaur-like quadruped (fig. 1.15). As art historian Charles Palermo has astutely noted, *Wild Life* marks an emergent strain of doubt in Emerson's temperament that presages *The Death of Naturalistic Photography* two months later.⁶⁶ By making explicit the observer's role in the act of observing, Emerson's photographs, not unlike Darwin's theory, undercut the romantic

⁶⁶ Charles Palermo, "The World in the Ground Glass: Transformations in P. H. Emerson's Photography," *The Art Bulletin* 89, no. 1 (March 2007): 139.

foundation of empiricism—namely that the suppression of the observing subject forms the basis for the necessary fiction on which scientific, objective knowledge is built.

V. PSYCHOLOGY AT THE EXPOSITION UNIVERSELLE

The first hint of what Emerson might have been referencing in *The Death of Naturalistic Photography* appears in a letter to James Havard Thomas from early 1890, while he was working on the first revision of *Naturalistic Photography*. Emerson relays to his friend:

I have been working very hard at Nat Photog and have the 2nd Edition ready for press [...] I am on to a phonograph—shall probably have one when you come—It will be to listening what photography has been to pictorial art. I have been reading the reports from La Salpêtrière hospital in France and [...] they are arriving [at] some terrible conclusions thro' hypnotism. A normal and perfectly healthy man's morality can be perverted by a few experiments with a magnet. It opens up a vast field to the psychologists, I'm afraid however that the field won't be ready enough for our philosophy of art. We were born just 100 years too soon to see the best fun. Recent investigations prove the idealistic brain won't hold and that all ideas come thro' the senses.⁶⁷

Emerson was presumably still committed to naturalistic photography at this point, and he believed that the magnet experiments provided further support for his naturalistic epistemology.

The world-renowned head of the Salpêtrière hospital, Jean-Martin Charcot, was a leading proponent of hypnotism as a technique for investigating patients suffering from hysteria. Charcot used photographic imagery to promote his belief that mental states, made manifest through physical expressions, were reducible to mechanistic laws. Charcot published a series of photographs featuring patients in hysterical states in a multi-volume album *Iconographie photographique de la Salpêtrière* (1876–80).⁶⁸ Emerson was aware of Charcot's photographic

⁶⁷ P. H. Emerson, Letter to James Havard Thomas, January 26, 1890, James Havard Thomas Papers, Tate Archive, London, UK.

⁶⁸ For a critical account of Charcot's photographs, see Georges Didi-Huberman, *Invention of Hysteria: Charcot and the Photographic Iconography of the Salpêtrière*, trans. Alisa Hartz (Cambridge, MA, MIT Press, 2004).

studies, making reference to them in one of his first public lectures on photography in 1886, but these recent reports appear to have given him a new sense of pause, which make them a compelling candidate for Emerson's reference to "recent researches."⁶⁹ And yet, settling on the reports from the Salpêtrière as the likely explanation poses the question: given that they seem to corroborate Emerson's naturalistic view of the mind, on what grounds would they have challenged his preexisting beliefs?

While Emerson's letters to Thomas do not provide any further clarity on this point, lining up the chronology of Emerson's private and public statements yields a plausible explanation. The following week, an essay by Emerson titled "Topography and Art" appeared in *The Photographic Art Journal*. It begins with an anecdote that Thomas shared with Emerson one evening while the two were discussing scientific viewpoints about art. Thomas described an encounter he had one evening with the prominent physiologist William Benjamin Carpenter. Carpenter was commenting on the beauty he saw in a topographical photograph of a cave that he had once visited. Thomas demurred, saying that it was not "a picture," to which Carpenter replied, "I know nothing of that, but the photograph gives me great pleasure."⁷⁰ The story illustrates a distinction between pleasure derived from personal associations with a place and genuine aesthetic pleasure.

Mary Warner Marien has pointed out that that Emerson's subsequent analysis in the essay closely resembles a specific passage in Carpenter's *Principles of Mental Physiology*, which explains how emotional responses can be triggered automatically by recalling past experiences. The article signals a new, though not fully developed departure in Emerson's thinking. Read in

⁶⁹ P. H. Emerson, "Photography, A Lecture Delivered at the Priory Hall, Great Yarmouth," *Amateur Photographer* 2 (April 2, 1886): 164.

⁷⁰ Emerson, "Topography and Art," 25.

conjunction with the reports from the Salpêtrière, it provides some indication that Thomas may have succeeded in complicating Emerson's understanding of how sense impressions operated within the mind by showing that once they become embedded as ideas, they become autonomous and can be reanimated by various means. While Emerson could still say that hypnotism validated his empiricist views, crucially, these new findings also opened onto the possibility of an independently acting mental architecture. As a further indication that this idea signaled a meaningful departure in Emerson's thinking, he included "Topography and Art" as an appendix in the third and final edition of *Naturalistic Photography*.

In Thomas's reply to Emerson's letter, he makes a comment that indicates the two had recently attended the Exposition Universelle in Paris together.⁷¹ Viewed in light of the conversations in which they were engaged at the time, this presents a case for thinking that in fact Thomas may have been the "great artist" who had played a role in unsettling his convictions. It is doubtful that the exact reports Emerson saw can be recovered, but the timing of the letter also suggests that he may have been reading accounts from the Paris Exposition, which not only featured art, but also marked a watershed in the history of psychology.

From August 6–10, 1889, the Paris Exposition played host to the first International Congress on Physiological Psychology. The purpose of the congress, which brought together a delegation of representatives from twenty-one countries, was to establish psychology as an independent discipline. Organizers initially slated Charcot to preside over the event, but he did not ultimately attend, devoting his energy instead to a parallel event, the first International

⁷¹ Thomas remarks, "I have seen list of winners. Tombola. Paris Ex. I am not in, were your numbers near mine if so you are not in." James Havard Thomas, Letter to P. H. Emerson, February 10, 1890, Papers of Peter Henry Emerson. Norfolk Record Office, Norfolk, UK [hereafter NRO]. A tombola is a type of raffle.

Congress on Hypnotism. The congress on psychology featured an International Advisory Committee comprised of leading researchers from Europe, including Helmholtz, Galton, Wilhelm Wundt, Alexander Bain, and Pierre Janet, along with a single committee member who had travelled from the United States: the Harvard professor William James. The event addressed a range of topics related to visual perception, including the role of movement in the formation of images, whether attention is determined by emotion, and hypnotism, which James describes in his report on the event for the British journal of philosophical and psychological investigation, *Mind*.⁷² James indicates that an unfavorable consensus had formed around the Salpêtrière school, making it unlikely that Emerson was referring to his report, but the general interest in hypnotism at the event was apparently so strong that they changed the focus of several sessions to the popular topic.⁷³

Jumping forward in time to April 1891, four months after Emerson had issued his renunciation, he said in a letter to Hurter and Driffield:

I must again thank you for your kind remarks in Photo Art Journal. It is as you say—my work was chiefly directed to what was done before the cap was removed. I then had run into one of the most difficult of psychological problems, i.e. the connection between mind and matter. From previous training (positively scientific) I was led to look at the matter from a purely positive or associative point of view—but recent researches in brain psychology of which appeared about the same time as your chemical researches led me to throw out the positive or Naturalistic view of art and philosophy generally, and your research led me to throw up all claims to photography as an art method per se. As you clearly put it, after the cap is off, it is a scientific matter.⁷⁴

⁷² William James, “The Congress of Physiological Psychology at Paris,” *Mind* 14, no. 4 (1889): 614–16.

⁷³ Michel Sabourin and Saths Cooper, “The First International Congress of Physiological Psychology (Paris, August 1889): The Birth of the International Union of Psychological Science,” *International Journal of Psychology* 49, no. 3 (2014): 228.

⁷⁴ P. H. Emerson, Letter to Hurter and Driffield, Dated April 6, 1891, RPS Coll. Author’s transcription.

This letter does not confirm the source of the recent research Emerson had in mind, but it underscores that the investigation into psychology was his primary reason for turning on naturalism, while Hurter and Driffield led him to reconsider photography.

Shortly after returning to the Broads in January 1891, Emerson coauthored a paper with his occasional collaborator, the painter Thomas Frederick Goodall, titled “Notes on Perspective Drawing and Vision.” Emerson and Goodall set out to demonstrate that conventional techniques of linear perspective do not correspond to vision, offering a series of informal proofs, along the lines of looking a landscape through one’s legs or holding up a slip of paper at various distances from one’s eyes.⁷⁵ The paper briefly reignited the debates that had formed around *Naturalistic Photography*. One critic flippantly suggested that a discussion rooted in psychology would have been more effective than the casual proofs offered in the paper.⁷⁶ Emerson’s rejoinder demonstrates his recent investment in psychological questions:

Mr. Wheeler says, “the accepted mental theory, according to which distance can never be directly seen as such—that is, it can never be apprehended as simple sensation.” Now Mr. Wheeler shows by his remark that he knows nothing of the will of the “sensationalist,” by whom the third dimension is considered to be a pure sensation. [...] I can say again, with one of the profoundest living psychologists, who emphatically calls “Wundt’s ‘theory’ the flimsiest in the world” [sic]. [...] Finally, all I have to say is, that since Mr. Wheeler seems innocent of the literature written against Wundt, Helmholtz, and Co., it is useless to open a discussion. It only remains to state our observations are in no sense “judgments,” but pure sensuous impressions. [...] Finally, I would recommend Mr. Wheeler to the works of Stumpf, Schön, Volkmann, Hering, and others.⁷⁷

⁷⁵ P. H. Emerson and T. F. Goodall, “Notes on Perspective Drawing and Vision,” *British Journal of Photography* 38, no.1623, (June 12, 1891): 378–79.

⁷⁶ W. H. Wheeler, “Remarks on Dr. Emerson’s Notes on Perspective Drawing and Vision,” *Photographic News* 35, no.1717 (July 31, 1891) 539.

⁷⁷ P. H. Emerson, “Perspective Drawing and Vision, Reply to Mr. Wheeler,” *Photographic News* 35, no.1721 (August 28, 1891): 614–15.

There it is. The psychologist whose name Emerson omits is in fact James, and the text he quotes is a chapter from his monumental, two-volume work, *The Principles of Psychology* (hereafter *Principles*), titled “The Perception of Space.” James’s *Principles*, twelve years in the making, first appeared in print on September 26, 1890, shortly after Emerson had departed for the Broads. Copies of James’s *Principles* did not arrive in England until late December 1890, all but ruling out the possibility that Emerson had read James’s *Principles* prior to *The Death of Naturalistic Photography*.⁷⁸ The key chapter on “The Perception of Space,” however, was in fact available at an earlier date, having been published serially in *Mind* over the course of 1887.⁷⁹ Emerson’s recommendations for further reading are lifted nearly verbatim from James, suggesting that he did not actually consult them, but instead seized on an opportunity to stack names in his favor.⁸⁰ The issue Emerson raises, in which he now finds himself at odds with Helmholtz, involves an esoteric, though incredibly spirited disagreement among prominent psychologists over whether space (or “extension” as it was often called) was an intrinsic quality of objects, and thus should be considered a “sensation” as it manifested in perception, or whether it was a conventional sign, originated in the mind, which bore only a conventional connection to the objects in the world.⁸¹

⁷⁸ “The Text of *The Principles of Psychology*,” in William James, *The Principles of Psychology*, vol. 3, eds. Frederick H. Burkhardt, Fredson Bowers, and Ignas K. Skrupskelis (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1981), 1576.

⁷⁹ William James, *The Principles of Psychology*, vol. 1 (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1890), 134–282. For the earlier version, see William James, “The Perception of Space,” pts. 1–4, *Mind* 12, no. 45 (January 1887): 1–30; no. 46 (April 1887): 183–211; no. 47 (July 1887): 321–353; no. 48 (October 1887): 516–548.

⁸⁰ The one name missing from Emerson’s repetition of James’s list is Joseph LeConte, which is noteworthy because LeConte features prominently in the first two editions of *Naturalistic Photography* alongside Helmholtz as a source of Emerson’s information about the eye, though he disappears from third edition.

⁸¹ An influential overview of the main issues in psychology during this period, which James also endorsed, is James Ward, “Psychology,” *Encyclopædia Britannica*, vol. 20, 9th ed. (Edinburgh, UK: Adam and Charles Black, 1886), 37–85. Ward, who was a professor at

VI. JAMES'S CRITIQUE OF SPENCER

James devoted significant energy in his *Principles of Psychology* to discrediting Spencer's views in his *Principles of Psychology*, a comparison that he underscored by giving his work the identical title. Mapping the nuances of James's views of spatial perception onto Emerson's beliefs about vision would be difficult and ultimately a bit foolhardy given Emerson's penchant for glossing over particulars in service of his larger argument. In essence, though, by proposing that spatial relationships were primary sensations, James rebuffed the prevailing view among British and German psychologists that spatial sense forms through an automatic mental process, which Helmholtz calls an "unconscious inference"—a term that curiously merges passive and active elements in a manner that recalls Darwin's phrase "natural selection."

The main criticism that James levied against Spencer concerned his contention that consciousness forms entirely through automatic adjustments to inputs from the environment—that is, the idea of the mind existing in complete correspondence to external nature. James initially outlined his critique in an 1878 essay titled "Remarks on Spencer's Definition of Mind as Correspondence," essentially arguing that Spencer's model amounted to a limited, if not perverse, mixture of environmental and biological determinisms.⁸² James puts forth what would become his central criticism of Spencer, and positively one cornerstone of his philosophical

Cambridge, was a strong critic of scientific naturalism and associationist psychology. Ward and James shared similar ideas about spatial perception. The journal *Mind* also served as a forum for ongoing debates over competing theories of vision. For discussion of the "James-Ward" position, see George Croom Robertson, "The Psychological Theory of Extension," *Mind* 13, no. 51 (July 1888): 418–424; Dr. Edmund Montgomery "The Psychological Theory of Extension," *Mind* 13, no. 52 (October 1888): 579–584; William James, "The Psychological Theory of Extension," pt. 1, *Mind* 14, no. 53 (January 1889): 107–109; James Ward, "The Psychological Theory of Extension," pt. 2, *Mind* 14, no. 53 (January 1889): 109–115.

⁸² William James, "Remarks on Spencer's Definition of Mind as Correspondence," *Journal of Speculative Philosophy* 12, no. 1 (January 1878): 1–18.

pragmatism, which was a rejection of the conception of mental evolution as the process of “adjustment of inner to outer relations,” and more generally the idea that the function of the mind was to develop accurate representations of things in the world.

At the risk of reducing a disagreement drawn out over two 1500-page texts to two simple drawings: James summarized his grievance in his *Principles* through a schematic diagram comparable to Spencer’s cube and cylinder illustration (fig. 1.16). Using a series of Xs and Os to illustrate various influences on the brain, James argued that some ideas enter consciousness directly through the senses, but other, abstract ideas—the examples he gives include our enjoyment of music and the feeling of loneliness—do not bear any resemblance to objects in the world. Building on this observation, James muses that “our higher aesthetic, moral, and intellectual life seems to have entered the mind by the back stairs.”⁸³

Crucially, James’s disagreement with Spencer was not so much about the validity of joining the theory of evolution to the human intellect, but rather about how to interpret the influence of evolution appropriately. In James’s view, Spencer had wholly ignored the role that chance and accident, key features in Darwin’s theory of evolution, played in mental development. These elements, in turn, gave rise to the possibility of what James called “psychogenesis,” or the belief that ideas might spontaneously develop within the mind independent of any external stimulation.⁸⁴

James challenged Spencer’s evolutionary epistemology by working within the same parameters that he had set forth, providing an explanation for how the mind can assert its own agency, while still falling within the laws of organic evolution. Much like James, Emerson did

⁸³ William James, *The Principles of Psychology*, vol. 2 (New York: Henry Holt and Co., 1890), 627.

⁸⁴ James, *Principles*, vol. 1, 627.

not cast aside his underlying philosophical commitments to naturalism; rather, he arrived at a more nuanced understanding of how naturalism might work, one that carved out a space for the imagination to function freely and for ideal conceptions to take hold that do not directly originate in nature.

Emerson planned his return to the Photographic Society of Great Britain in 1893 to deliver a speech intended to revive naturalistic photography through revisions based on his new insights. In the speech, which Emerson was not able to deliver in person due to the death of his brother, he declared that while photography necessarily falls short as an expressive medium, photographers should still strive to make their images “decorative” while, so far as possible, creating the “illusion” of an impression of nature. Emerson’s use of the term “decorative” underscores his turn to Whistlerian ideas, no longer believing that art must follow nature exactly. His invocation of the term “illusion,” however, owes a clear debt to James.

Three years removed from *The Death of Naturalistic Photography*, this is the speech that marks his main post-mortem effort to reanimate naturalistic photography with his new findings. He finds reason to quote James again, though not by name:

Now, gentlemen, I will quote you a paragraph from a text-book on Psychology, published only last year; a passage which shows how this view is now so far accepted that it has entered psychological text-books for students. The quotation is:—

“Almost all the VISIBLE shapes of things are what we call perspective distortions. Square table tops constantly present two acute and two obtuse angles, circles drawn on our wall-papers show like ellipses, &c., and the transitions from one to another of these altering forms are infinite and continual.”

That, gentlemen, is the position. Whence it is evident that no photograph gives things as we see them with our two eyes, though some photographs give results nearer to what we see than others, and those are the naturalistic photographs.⁸⁵

⁸⁵ P. H. Emerson, “Naturalistic Photography,” *Photographic Times and American Photographer* 23, no. 605 (April 21, 1893): 209–10.

This passage also comes from the “Perception of Space” section of James’s *Principles*, though it is also reproduced in the 1892 abridged volume, simply titled *Psychology*. It is unclear why he makes the point of saying that it was “published only last year,” given that he is on record reading James at the very latest in August 1891. Perhaps he wanted to give the impression that he diligently kept up with current research. He may have also wished to signal that his crisis of faith had come about as a response to new research, rather than insights spelled out as early as 1887, several years before he wrote *Naturalistic Photography*.

James’s writing, by showing that the mind could function autonomously and still be considered naturalistic, played a role in convincing Emerson artistic idealism and an active imagination were legitimate and, moreover, that evolution was fully compatible with both of them. Emerson did not reject naturalism because of James, but rather he found through James a more nuanced expression of naturalism that managed to avoid the deterministic trappings of the version championed by Spencer.

Emerson went on to publish two more photography books in the ensuing years, *On English Lagoons* in 1893 and *Marsh Leaves* in 1895, but he stopped producing new photographs for public consumption following the stint on the Broads that ended in August 1891. None of the plates appearing in these final books postdate that time.⁸⁶ Most later accounts of Emerson’s career call attention to the way that the ethereal landscapes appearing in these final two books signal a turn toward a sensibility more concerned with interiority, which follows from his embrace of Whistler. Returning to those plates with Emerson’s new views on psychology in

⁸⁶ The Royal Photographic Society held a retrospective exhibition of Emerson’s work in May 1900. The exhibition included most of his published works, and Emerson indicated that none of the photographs, with one exception—a portrait of a woman he made in November 1892—date to before to the end of 1891. P. H. Emerson, “Opening Address,” *Photographic Journal* 24, no. 8 (May 1900): 265.

mind, however, presents an alternative interpretation. In *Marsh Farm in Early Spring*, for example, the horizon line appears subtly askew, creating an upward sense of movement. The orientation of the horizon and the plough lines in the foreground recalls the Zöllner line illusion that James included in “The Perception of Space” (figs. 1.17, 1.18). Others plates, such as *Daughter of the Marshes*, suggest a softened naturalism, one less concerned with biological typologies and more responsive to spontaneous, individual expressions (fig. 1.19). The portrait, which is unlike anything else in Emerson’s catalogue, depicts a woman gazing directly at the camera, exuding a warm, self-possessed contentment. It invites speculation about what kinds of work Emerson would have produced had he decided to remain active in photography.

When Emerson wrote *Naturalistic Photography*, he was confident, following recent advancements in psychology, that scientific research would make it possible to pry open the gates of the mind, allowing him to peer in and discover the proverbial mass of silver eels contained within. When he rescinded this view, he did so in part because he had come to accept that psychology was as yet in its infancy. While the proofs that Emerson’s calls forth in “Perspective Drawing and Vision” read as quaint exercises, in another sense they signal a shift in Emerson’s rhetoric away from the Spencerian deductive reasoning model and toward the emerging norms of experimental psychology, which sought to integrate standards of falsifiability. At the same time, Emerson had relinquished his belief photographs were capable of reproducing vision. In the final version of *Naturalistic Photography*, Emerson’s commuted his remark on photographs being a “true” index of the photographer’s mind, replacing it with a decidedly equivocal “rough index.”⁸⁷

⁸⁷ Emerson, *Naturalistic Photography*, 3rd ed., book 3, 25.

At the same time that Emerson came to accept the imagination as legitimate, he also, albeit begrudgingly, came to admit the culturally constructed nature of aesthetics. He admits, in *The Death of Naturalistic Photography*, that “if there can be no scientific basis for an art, as some have asserted, Meissonier can claim to be as artistic as Monet, and Monet as Meissonier.”⁸⁸ This reads as a conditional proposition, which anticipates some follow-up statement, but the predicate never actually comes. In this moment of concentrated frustration, we encounter Emerson, the empiricist, directly confronting the problem of having no external standard for verification.

Some caution must be exercised in this analysis of Emerson’s reversal, to avoid the temptation to see his knowledge of James’s paradigm shifting study in psychology as evidence that Emerson had fully cast off the worst trappings of scientific naturalism or, alternatively, fully appreciated the virtues of James’s rising pragmatism. His awareness of these texts does, however, show that he kept abreast of current developments, which instilled in him a form of humility or confidence to disclose openly all that he did not know and had assumed that he did.

By initially embracing scientific naturalism, Emerson became entranced by the notion that psychology would soon pry open the gates of the human mind and allow him to peer in and discover, so to speak, the mass of wriggling silver eels contained within. When he eventually rejected naturalism, he did so in part because he came to accept that the nascent field of psychology was not yet up to the task of explaining the mind; moreover, it seemed that at least some of those eels (to paraphrase James’s shorthand) had slipped in unseen through the back gate. Perhaps most of all, he came to appreciate how scientific naturalism had pushed him down a path that invariably led toward metaphysics, the very thing it had promised to leave behind.

⁸⁸ Emerson, *Death of Naturalistic Photography*, n.p.

Emerson's rejection of the coarser naturalism also coincides with a more general decline in Spencer's influence even among the proponents of scientific naturalism. In May 1893, Huxley delivered an invited lecture at Oxford on the theme of "Evolution and Ethics." The speech marks a significant break from Spencer over the idea that evolution could be leveraged as an instrument of social progress. "Some day, I doubt not," Huxley reflects, "we shall arrive at an understanding of the evolution of the aesthetic faculty, but all the understanding in the world will neither increase nor diminish the force of the intuition that this is beautiful and that is ugly."⁸⁹ Like Huxley, Emerson remained optimistic about the future insights into aesthetics that psychological research might yield, but he ultimately came to realize that aesthetic judgments, no less than ethical ones, cannot be explained away by appealing to evolutionary struggles for existence. For Emerson, his recognition that there may be no universal standards for art left him with no solid ground to turn to in his artistic practice.

In a recent analysis of Emerson's career, Douglas Nickel reflected that by following Helmholtz in acknowledging vision as a deeply embodied act, Emerson fits within a broader historical movement at the end of the nineteenth century toward notions of interiority, a trend that Nickel sees reflected in the works of several modernist luminaries including, suggestively, William James.⁹⁰ That is a valid, if not prescient, assessment of where Emerson ended up. It must be added, however, that he arrived there reluctantly and only after he had abandoned his most deeply held intuition, on which he had staked his very career in photography.

⁸⁹ Thomas H. Huxley, *Evolution and Ethics, and Other Essays* (New York: D. Appleton and Co., 1899), 80.

⁹⁰ Douglas R. Nickel, "Peter Henry Emerson: The Mechanics of Seeing," in *The Meaning of Photography*, eds. Robin Kelsey and Blake Stimson (Williamstown, MA: Sterling and Francine Clark Institute, 2008), 74.

CHAPTER TWO

EVOLVING AN ART

Technically, good negatives are more often the result of survival of the fittest than of special creation: the photographer is like the cod which produces a million eggs in order that one may reach maturity.

George Bernard Shaw, 1906¹

The April 1904 issue of the American photographic journal *Camera Work* features an essay by British photographer J.C. Warburg, suggestively titled “Photography and Natural Selection.” Admitting that many of his readers may not be prepared to accept the Darwinian premise that humans are descended from apes, he says that it will nevertheless be widely acknowledged by his readers that the process of evolution can be observed across many realms of life beyond natural history. From this starting point, Warburg sets out to “trace its action, and the action of variation and selection in photography.”² Starting with photography’s earlier technological development, he points out how the modern dry plate contains within it vestiges of the older wet-plate process, which it gradually overtook in the “struggle for existence.” From there, Warburg sketches out two axes on which modern photography has evolved: one that relates to its applied ends, what he calls its “*mental* objective[s],” and another that deals with its material means, or its “*mechanical* methods.” In laying out the former, Warburg follows much the same path as Emerson in his “Science and Art” lecture, asserting that photography came into the world as an amorphous “art-science” but has subsequently decoupled, with each branch becoming more and more differentiated over time.

¹ George Bernard Shaw, “Bernard Shaw’s Appreciation of Coburn,” *Camera Work* 15 (July 1906): 33.

² J. C. Warburg “Photography and Natural Selection,” *Camera Work* 6 (April 1904): 22.

Where Emerson initially focused on the antipodes of art and science, Warburg introduces a third term into his taxonomy, positioning “personal or topographical” photography as an intermediate “species” in between science and art. Echoing Emerson’s argument in his later “Topography and Art” essay, Warburg reserves this third category for photographs that may contain incidental elements of beauty but primarily serve as personal records of specific people or places. Warburg invokes a familiar distinction hinging on the implied role of the human observer to distinguish between photography’s artistic and scientific objectives, such that scientific photographs seek “*truth to fact*,” while artistic ones aspire to “*truth to appearance*.” Like Emerson before him, he frames this evolutionary divergence in normative terms, to the effect that photographs partaking of more than one category are destined to result in a “sterile hybrid.”

With his next point, however, Warburg extends Emerson’s organizing logic in a key way. He remarks that “in the natural course of events, each variety of method will work itself out separately,” such that “the technique and the effects aimed at and produced will vary with the *genius* of the methods.”³ Here, Warburg enlists evolution to build toward an argument based on medium specificity, suggesting that both photography generally and its various sub-species are each evolving individually, independently of one another and other visual media. To support this claim, he calls attention to the marked differences in aesthetic effects produced by silver bromide, platinum, and gum-bichromate methods, along with various photo-mechanical techniques, and the newly-invented color autochrome process, which he notes is still in its “primitive” state. On this point, however, Warburg strikes a decidedly less prescriptive note,

³ Ibid., 24.

warning against those who would attempt to intervene in photography's "natural" development.

He cautions:

We are in the early days of photographic art-evolution as yet, and though artificial selection *may* be useful, it depends entirely on the wisdom of those who select, and they can not, in the nature of things, see very far into the future. It is safer to let natural selection do its work, perhaps a little more slowly but more surely in the end, than to meddle in problems whose ultimate outcome we can not grasp; in seeking to root out the bad, we stunt and destroy what might, if left alone, be the beginning of a useful and valuable departure.⁴

Taken as a whole, Warburg's essay illustrates the multiple ways that appeals to evolution wound their way into discussions around photography during the late nineteenth century. Evolution functioned, by turns, as a metaphor for success or failure within the marketplace, the growth or decline of aesthetic trends and techniques, the realization of an individual picture or photographer's personal aesthetic, or the overall progress made by pictorial photographers toward legitimizing their craft as a recognized art form. In applying the same evolutionary logic to both photography's ends and means, Warburg also points to a defining yet unresolved tension among pictorialists: was photography an art by virtue of its ability to realize aesthetic ideals common to all graphic arts, or, conversely, was it an art because it contains within it certain capabilities that other arts lack?

It is Warburg's final, cautionary note, however, that ultimately makes the essay memorable. By advocating that natural selection be allowed to run its course, Warburg deviates from period norms by resisting the temptation to figure evolution as a teleological progression toward a preordained goal. In that regard, his conclusion is authentically Darwinian in spirit, if not in substance. Far more often than not, when evolutionary metaphors spilled forth from the pens of turn-of-the-century pictorialists, they served one of two ends: to explain that which had

⁴ Ibid., 24.

already transpired as a foregone conclusion, or to recast a desired outcome as a soon-to-be-realized inevitability. It is possible that Warburg fancied himself a principled Darwinian, thereby setting himself apart from the majority of his peers—though his disclaimer at the outset leaves that potential in doubt; a more compelling explanation, however, may lie in his furrowed mention of “the wisdom of those who select.” Given the forum in which he was writing, the comment was almost certainly directed at an audience of one.

Camera Work was the special creation of Alfred Stieglitz, the great impresario of American pictorial photography, who conceived of the journal as the unofficial organ of the Photo-Secession, an invitation-only group of elite pictorial photographers that he brought together in the lead up to an exhibition at New York’s National Arts Club in February 1902. The Photo-Secession was modeled in part after the Linked Ring, a group of British photographers formed mainly by Emerson’s former antagonists, who broke off from the Photographic Society in 1892 to establish a club devoted solely to advancing the cause of art in photography. Unlike Stieglitz’s group, however, the Linked Ring unlocked their doors to international membership, such that many of the core members of the Photo-Secession, Stieglitz among them, were also “Links.”

Stieglitz, for his part, offered an alternative evolutionary gloss for how *Camera Work* came into being, proclaiming in the journal’s premier issue that it had come about as “the logical outcome of the evolution of the photographic art.”⁵ The force behind Stieglitz’s usage, which is much more common to the period, follows less of a Darwinian logic than a culturally-adapted strain of Lamarckism, which presents evolution as an orderly process toward a definite goal that could be arrived at through willful human intervention.

⁵ Alfred Stieglitz, “An Apology,” *Camera Work* 1 (April 1903): 15.

Stieglitz found a champion of this neo-Lamarckian viewpoint in George Bernard Shaw, an Irish playwright and critic whose work he deeply admired, who developed a philosophy that he called “Creative Evolution.”⁶ Shaw conceived of humans as possessing a vital, unconscious life force and who were engaged in an epic struggle to dominate their material environments. The view was perfectly fitted to Stieglitz’s self-conception as a heroic crusader for the cause of artistic photography.

Warburg’s toothless conclusion helps to explain, in part, why Darwinism left much to be desired as a framework for cultural criticism. The mechanism of natural selection contains no instrumental purpose. It puts forth a model for explaining the way things develop in nature, but it offers little basis for organizing or directing human behavior. This dilemma provides the cultural context for historian of science Peter J. Bowler’s characterization of the decades straddling the twentieth century as “the eclipse of Darwinism.” Bowler sums up the issue by observing that most people “reluctant to concede that selection is a haphazard, trial-and-error process preferred to believe that development is predisposed to advance in purposeful or orderly directions.”⁷ In other words, an underlying need to preserve a humanistic sense of agency and control fueled the widespread appeal of the Lamarckian alternative to Darwinism.

Thus, while the idea of evolution captivated a late-nineteenth-century society drawn to modern narratives of progress, a pattern of motivated reasoning engendered widespread skepticism toward Darwinian ideas, matching in strength or even overshadowing concerns based

⁶ Shaw first introduced this term in his 1903 play *Man and Superman*. Stieglitz featured Shaw’s criticism in *Camera Work* several times, starting in 1903. He was so taken by Shaw and his philosophy that he made arrangements to visit him in London in 1904, but his depleted physical state at the time left him unable to realize his plans.

⁷ Peter J. Bowler, *Evolution: The History of an Idea*, 3rd ed. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003), 225.

on perceived theological conflicts. This skeptical stance can be seen in a print from 1900 titled *The Darwinian Theory* by William B. Dyer, a Chicago-based pictorialist and a member of the Photo-Secession. The print was exhibited at the Philadelphia Photographic Salon of 1900, which featured a jury consisting of Stieglitz, along with Gertrude Käsebier, Joseph Keiley, Frank Eugene, and F. Holland Day, all of whom, with the exception of Day, would soon take up membership in the Photo-Secession. The print features a young girl in a Dutch bonnet gazing down thoughtfully at a toy gorilla, which she cups gently in her hands (fig. 2.1). Keiley, who wrote the official review of the salon in *Camera Notes*, the predecessor of *Camera Work* that Stieglitz edited from 1897–1902, had this to say about the picture: “*The Darwinian Theory*...is a quaintly satirical smile at the theory of Darwin, in which the artist seems to say, look on this delightful little one and then on the suggestive object that she holds, and say if you can entertain so unpoetic, so material, so preposterous a notion?”⁸

Keiley’s description of the picture’s premise, which rejects Darwinism more on the basis that it is unconscionable rather than unfounded, is indicative of broader cultural sentiment, but it also carries within it a unifying lens for understanding pictorialism as a proto-modern movement that reluctantly embraced modernity. Pictorialists split over the means and methods they deemed legitimate toward achieving their desired goal of transforming photography into a medium of personal expression, but they found common ground in the idea that, in seeking that end, photographers would have to transcend photography’s materialist associations through the willful assertion of a personal vision and conscious denial of the chance elements that so often appear within photographs—elements that subsequent modernist movements would come to

⁸ Joseph Keiley, “The Salon: Its Place, Pictures, Critics and Prospects,” *Camera Notes* 4, no. 3 (January 1901): 211.

prize as a defining trait of the medium. Separately, but in a similar way, by coopting the language of social Darwinism—a concept more indebted to Spencer’s phrase “survival of the fittest” than Darwin’s own ideas—Stieglitz and others found a rhetorical strategy that could be mobilized to quell dissent and justify the shifting aesthetic trends and social alliances within the movement.

Upon his arrival onto New York’s burgeoning photography scene in 1890, Stieglitz had quickly established himself as a force within the budding network of pictorial photographers in the United States, using various platforms and editorships to influence—some would say dictate—the overall direction of American pictorial photography. Returning to Warburg’s meek call for prudence, it stands to reason that Warburg, who was well-regarded within pictorialist circles but seemingly declined to hold formal affiliations, had an aversion to the exclusionary nature of such groups. Regardless of Warburg’s stance though, there was, unbeknownst to him, a dramatic irony lurking beneath his plea. A plot was underway to undercut Stieglitz and his outsized powers of “selection.”

I. LITTLE TIN GODS ON WHEELS—THE PHOTO-SECESSION AND ITS DISCONTENTS

Four months earlier, in December 1903, a group of eleven photographers spread throughout the country came together to form a new association, which they named the Salon Club of America. The club’s stated aim was to create a more “democratic” alternative to the Photo-Secession, with the criterion for membership being a demonstrated record of having work accepted by a major salon or exhibition.⁹ The group started as a print exchange, with members

⁹ For a thorough history of the Salon Club of America, see Gillian Barrie Greenhill, “The Outsiders: The Salon Club of American and the Popularization of Pictorial Photography” (PhD diss., Pennsylvania State University, 1986).

creating and sharing portfolios of each other's work. In May 1904, however, a prospectus began to circulate in the photographic press announcing what was billed, rather disingenuously, as the "First American Salon." The exhibition, which was to take place in mid-December at New York's Clausen Galleries, was jointly sponsored by the Salon Club of America and the Metropolitan Camera Club of New York, which was presided over by Curtis Bell, a Salon Club member with friendly ties to New York's financial and social elite—names like Morgan and Vanderbilt—who were listed as patrons of the exhibition. Bell issued an open call, stipulating that only photographs with "distinct evidence of artistic feeling in subject and execution" would be admitted. A jury of prominent artists, mostly comprising painters from the National Academy of Design with the painter John La Farge serving as chair, would oversee the selection process. In a tacit swipe at the Photo-Secession, the notice further emphasized that "no one 'school' or 'fad' would take precedence."¹⁰ On June 28, 1904, members of the Salon Club, who were joined by delegates from photographic organizations in Boston, Washington, Toronto, Philadelphia, Chicago, and Brooklyn convened at the Metropolitan Camera Club, where they formed a formal alliance named the American Federation of Photographic Societies. Following the First American Salon's showing in New York, it was decided that the works would travel to each member city within the federation.¹¹

In the ensuing months, an institutional drama played out filled with intrigue, betrayals, and pseudonymous polemics, the likes of which had not been seen since the dust up over Emerson's book fifteen years earlier. Meanwhile, amidst the controversy, Stieglitz had sailed to

¹⁰ "The First American Salon at New York," *Photographic Times* 36, no. 5 (May 1904): 232.

¹¹ "A Federation of American Photographic Societies for Exhibition of Pictures and Education in Photographic Art," *Photographic Times-Bulletin* 36, no. 8 (August 1904): 348–349.

Europe to recover from what he described as acute mental and physical exhaustion, leaving him to oversee developments remotely.

The August 1904 issue of *The American Amateur Photographer*, where Stieglitz had served as an editor from 1893–96, carried an article by Roland Rood titled “The Three Factors in American Pictorial Photography.” Rood, a landscape painter by training, was a relative newcomer to the New York photography scene who would come to distinguish himself among an expanding field of critics by bringing to bear his knowledge of modern theories of aesthetics grounded in psychology. He was the son of Odgen Rood, a Columbia University professor and the author of *Modern Chromatics*, a standard reference work on modern color theory first published in 1879, which Emerson had held up alongside Helmholtz’s popular lectures as a foundational work on visual perception and the arts.¹²

In the article, Rood sought to place American pictorial photography in historical context by paying tribute to the individuals he deemed primarily responsible for the successful movement it had become. After taking stock of some continued challenges, he turned to introduce his subjects:

But through all this I distinctly see three notes, powerful in their significance, three factors that have played an all important part. They are Alfred Stieglitz, Rudolf Eickemeyer and Sadakichi Hartmann. To these three men the movement today owes its existence. To take away any of them would mean to lose years of what has been done. Their untiring efforts, singularly individual, but concentrated on one point, have *evolved an art* and forced a breach through that barrier of ignorance with which the most cultured were surrounded.¹³

¹² Emerson first made mention of Rood’s *Modern Chromatics* in *The Death of Naturalistic Photography*, citing it as evidence that no objective standard for translating tonal values could be achieved.

¹³ Roland Rood, “The Three Factors in American Pictorial Photography,” *American Amateur Photographer* 15, no. 8 (August 1904): 346–49; emphasis added.

Rood's contention was that Stieglitz and Rudolf Eickemeyer, Jr., two leading American pictorial photographers, along with Sadakichi Hartmann, a pioneering photography critic and Rood's mentor in the role, had collectively, through their individual efforts, transformed photography into a medium worthy of being called an art.

Rood casts Stieglitz as an idealistic visionary, likening him to Leonardo in his unceasing devotion to his ideals and crediting him with embellished achievements, such as being the first photographer "who photographed night" or "who accomplished the task of composing figures into pictorial compositions." Eickemeyer, by contrast, he compares to Titian, emphasizing his "great sense of beauty, and of the meaning of the surface of things," whose works "express the serene soul of nature."¹⁴ Rood frames Eickemeyer as Stieglitz's populist counterpart through his unabashed embrace of photography's commercial side, operating a successful portrait studio on Fifth Avenue and pioneering the use of photographs as illustrations in literary magazines and mass-market illustrated books. Finally, Rood describes Hartmann as a Renaissance man of a different sort, who had found success as a playwright, painter, journalist, critic, and poet, but distinguished himself above all as a modern critic on par with Ruskin and Taine. He credits Hartmann as the first critic to write essays devoted to single photographers, a model that he notes has since taken hold internationally.

Had the piece ended there, it might be filed away as an impressive but otherwise unremarkable bit of puffery. Curiously, though, the article continues: a fourth figure graces the final page, graphically presented alongside the other three with a formal portrait, in the form of Curtis Bell. Touching only briefly on Bell's photographic merits, the article pivots toward a

¹⁴ Ibid., 347–48.

discussion of the “new movement afoot” and ends rather abruptly calling on photographers to support Bell’s promising new departure.¹⁵

Rood, it would soon come to light, was not the author of this final portion. The very next issue of the journal contains a letter from Rood identifying changes that had been made to the article without his permission and calling on Hartmann and the journal’s editor to assume responsibility.¹⁶ The trap was sprung. The details of what transpired are somewhat murky, but in short, Rood had written the article at Hartmann’s behest.¹⁷ Hartmann subsequently modified the manuscript after Rood handed it off to an assistant editor. The journal’s principal editor, occupied with attending to his ailing spouse, approved the article but added a disclaimer before the text, noting its peculiar nature. On learning of the incident, Joseph Keiley, who had endeared himself as of late as Stieglitz’s bulldog, fired off a letter to Stieglitz in London detailing the ruse and his prompt intervention. After the article appeared, Keiley called on Rood in his parlor, whereupon he found Rood and Hartmann together. He confronted them about the deceit, chastising Hartmann and imploring Rood to right the record.¹⁸ He followed up with a seven-page typed letter to Rood, excoriating him for his complicity and maligning the character of both Hartmann and Eickemeyer.¹⁹ Keiley had already been suspicious of Rood, confiding to Stieglitz two-months earlier, “I must keep an eye on him. His views are different from ours—I’m friendly with him however, and will not hesitate to point out significant things if it would be harmful to

¹⁵ Ibid., 349.

¹⁶ Roland Rood, “Letters to the Editors.,” *American Amateur Photographer* 15, no. 9 (September 1904): 421.

¹⁷ Joseph Keiley, Letter to Alfred Stieglitz, August 9, 1904, Alfred Stieglitz/Georgia O’Keeffe Archive, Yale Collection of American Literature, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University, New Haven, Connecticut [hereafter YCAL].

¹⁸ Joseph Keiley, Letter to Alfred Stieglitz, August 11–12, 1904, YCAL.

¹⁹ Joseph Keiley, Letter to Roland Rood, August 14, 1904, YCAL.

the movement.”²⁰ Rood, for his part, admitted that he was aware of the changes Hartmann had made, but he plead innocence, insisting that Hartmann had gone behind his back.²¹

For six years prior to this incident, Hartmann had been the indispensable critical voice underlying Stieglitz’s vision. He had penned dozens of articles to fill the pages of *Camera Notes* and *Camera Work* that articulated the goals of the movement and set the pace for debate. Hartmann’s relationship with Stieglitz had started to sour earlier in the year, in part from Hartmann’s feeling that other critics, such as Keiley, were receiving preferential treatment. Hartmann would spell out his reasons for why he “rolled to the other side” in a letter to Stieglitz several months later, citing a dispute over an advance, being talked down to, and being snubbed of invitations to several Photo-Secession dinners and Stieglitz’s storied luncheons. But, above all else, he took umbrage at Stieglitz’s “dictatorship,” expressing genuine support for the “new movement,” which he considered to be a “saner and more liberal one” than the Photo-Secession.²² Personal politics aside, Hartmann had also grown disaffected by the aesthetic direction of the Photo-Secessionist, whose core members, including Keiley, Edward Steichen, Gertrude Käsebier, and Frank Eugene, practiced increasingly involved methods of modifying their prints through handwork to produce painterly effects that, in Hartmann’s view, overstepped the proper limits of photography to their work’s overall detriment. Hartmann’s oft-quoted article “A Plea for Straight Photography,” which was written as a critique of the recent Photo-Secession’s exhibition held at the Carnegie Institute in Pittsburgh in February 1904, presaged the later fallout. In the review, Hartmann refers to Stieglitz, Steichen, and Keiley, who oversaw the

²⁰ Joseph Keiley, Letter to Alfred Stieglitz, June 04, 1903, YCAL.

²¹ Keiley, Letter to Stieglitz, August 9, 1904, YCAL.

²² Sadakichi Hartmann, Letter to Alfred Stieglitz, September 2, 1904, YCAL.

hanging of the show, as “pictorial extremists, who lay more stress on ‘individual expression’ than any other quality,” which, he argued, had given rise to its own brand of conventionalism.²³

Rood’s article left Hartmann blackballed from the Photo-Secession and put him on the outs with Stieglitz, with whom he would not make amends for six years. Resolved to push on in support of the First American Salon, Hartmann, who often published under the name Sidney Allan, crafted multiple articles over the course of 1904 under a litany of different pseudonyms—Juvenal, Caliban, Grandpa, Klingor the Magician—caricaturing the Photo-Secession and its autocratic leader in genres corresponding to the assumed name (fig. 2.2).

In their bid to made First American Salon a success, however, Bell and Hartmann were missing a key ingredient. They needed recognized names in pictorial photography, who would lend legitimacy to the undertaking. Bell solicited F. Holland Day, a Boston-based photographer who had established him as a rival to Stieglitz following an exhibition he organized in London and Paris in 1900 titled the *New School of American Photography*. Day would ultimately lend four pieces to the exhibition, but he declined any formal affiliation with the Salon Club. The other logical choice for the role was Rudolf Eickemeyer, Jr., who agreed to partake, likely with some coaxing from Hartmann, who had championed him in articles dating back to 1898 as Stieglitz’s closest equal.

Eickemeyer signed on to the Salon Club, though the circumstances around his initial participation suggest a degree of ambivalence. During the founding meeting of the American Federation of Photographic Societies, Eickemeyer had been elected to the position of Salon Director, but curiously, of the nine officers appointed, he was the only one not present at the

²³ Sadakichi Hartmann, “A Plea for Straight Photography,” *American Amateur Photographer* 16, no. 3 (March 1904): 102.

organizing meeting, and he would not actually serve in the role until the salon's second annual iteration.²⁴

Eickemeyer and Stieglitz had risen to fame alongside one another starting in the early 1890s, trading off taking top honors at international exhibitions in Hamburg, Paris, and Greater London. Together, they were the first two Americans to become members of the Linked Ring, simultaneously gaining entry in early 1895. On the surface, the two maintained generally cordial relations—Stieglitz had regularly featured Eickemeyer's work in *Camera Notes*—but their decidedly different aesthetic sensibilities, temperaments, and lifestyles gave a palpable edge to their rivalry from an early date. Tensions between them had boiled over on at least one previous occasion in 1894, during the period leading up to their admission to the Linked Ring, which resulted in an incident severe enough to warrant a letter from Eickemeyer's father to Stieglitz apologizing for his son's behavior.²⁵ At some point in the months surrounding the Rood article, their relationship cooled again considerably. As late as October 1903, however, Stieglitz was in contact with Eickemeyer about featuring his work in *Camera Work*. That same year, Eickemeyer awarded Stieglitz the grand prize in a competition he juried, sponsored by the Bausch & Lomb

²⁴ "A Federation of American Photographic Societies," 349.

²⁵ See Rudolf Eickemeyer, Sr., Letter to Alfred Stieglitz, December 1894, YCAL. The letter does not divulge the exact nature of the altercation, but Eickemeyer's father notes that he "cannot help to feel that [Rudolf] was almost criminally careless in his action"—damaged property, perhaps. As for the cause of the incident, it may have stemmed from Stieglitz having recently learned from a fellow photographer that Eickemeyer had been in the practice of hiring a professional printer, Alfred Clements, to make the prize-winning platinum photographs that he had been submitting to international competitions. Many of the exhibitions included a rule that the entries must be printed personally by the photographer, such that bringing forth the allegation publicly would have amounted to a minor scandal. Memory of the incident did not fall away; Keiley alluded to it a decade in his letter to Rood, painting Stieglitz as a savior who had essentially saved Eickemeyer from embarrassment concerning "an award which had been won under what had very much the appearance of misrepresentation." See Clarence B. Moore, Letter to Alfred Stieglitz, December 19, 1894, YCAL, and Joseph Keiley, Letter to Roland Rood, August 14, 1904, YCAL.

lens company. Stieglitz had not extended an invitation to Eickemeyer to join the Photo-Secession, however, which resulted in Eickemeyer delivering chilly remarks directed at Stieglitz at one of the Camera Club's dinners. But while he was not a formal member, Eickemeyer's work had been included in the Photo-Secession exhibition in Pittsburgh. In one of the reviews Hartmann wrote up for *Camera Work*, he noted that Eickemeyer, along with Yarnall Abbott, another photographer at group's margins, were poorly represented, lamenting that "by having failed to show their most representative work they have missed a rare opportunity," but further musing, "or is it possible that the very high standard of this exhibition has made their work look less important?"²⁶ In an ironic turn, Hartmann would later allege that the final bit had been added without his foreknowledge.²⁷

The Salon Club continued its promotional campaign by stoking antipathy toward the Photo-Secession. In one of Hartmann's most pointed polemics titled "Little Tin Gods on Wheels," which he published under the pseudonym Juvenal, he called out the lesser members of the Photo-Secession individually by name, asking if they will "any longer stand the undemocratic, un-American policy" imposed by the Photo-Secession's tightly controlled inner circle.²⁸ Bell, presenting a more positive framing, argued in a similar vein that the Federation would lead "the battle for the fair—the liberal—the American policy of equal opportunity to all and favor to none."²⁹ Bell and Hartmann also actively sought out submissions from notable

²⁶ Sadakichi Hartmann, "The Photo-Secession Exhibition at the Carnegie Art Galleries, Pittsburgh, PA," *Camera Work* 1, no. 4 (April 1904): 50.

²⁷ Sadakichi Hartmann, [Letter to the Editor], *Camera* 8, no. 10 (October 1904): 404.

²⁸ Juvenal, "Little Tin Gods on Wheels," *Photo-Beacon* 16, no. 9 (September 1904): 282–286. The article takes its name from an 1879 send-up of American high society by the author and jurist Robert Grant written as a Greek satire.

²⁹ Curtis Bell, "Get Together," *Photographer* 1, no. 12 (July 16, 1904): 187.

foreign photographers. While Hartmann made efforts to appear neutral before the public, in June he had quietly circulated a signed letter requesting for entries on behalf of the Salon Club to several prominent European camera clubs. Stieglitz, who maintained an extensive foreign network through correspondence, was of course soon alerted to their existence. His knowledge of the letters would not come to light until the following year, but it allowed him to stonewall most foreign participation from behind the scenes.³⁰

Despite its claim to a more liberal structure, the jury scheme devised by the Salon Club was not particularly democratic or even novel in its design. As the controversy around the First American Salon roiled, a parallel power struggle played out in tandem, which was widely dubbed “The Fiasco in St. Louis.” In this instance, a committee involved with the 1904 St. Louis World’s Fair had approached Stieglitz to request the Photo-Secession’s participation in an exhibit of American pictorial photography. Stieglitz refused in protest on the basis that, in his view, photography was not being granted equal footing among the other arts at the fair. He sought assurances from the organizers that at least one photograph would be shown in the Fine Arts Building—a symbolic gesture that would signal photography’s equal status among the fine arts. Instead, the fair relegated all of the photography exhibits to the Liberal Arts Building, which, according to one account, wound up being shared by everything “from stuffed Polar bears to French millinery.”³¹

³⁰ See Harry Rubincam, “Pointed Paragraphs,” *Camera Craft* 10, no. 3 (March 1905): 153–155. Several European photographers exhibited works at the First American Salon, but few of them were recognized names within the international scene. The one exception was H.P. Robinson, who was deceased, but had twelve works posthumously shown.

³¹ [Walter Zimmerman], “The Fiasco at St. Louis,” *Photographer* 1, no. 12 (July 16, 1904): 178.

Separately, Stieglitz objected to the St. Louis exhibition's jury, which, like the First American Salon, was wholly comprised of painters rather than photographers. On the one hand, then, Stieglitz's oppositional stance toward both exhibitions may be rightly construed as elitist, captured in his claim that the organizers at St. Louis had submitted to "the cries of the mob of button-pressers."³² On the other hand, it also reflects his strongly-held conviction that photography was deserving of recognition as an independent art, a view that a jury of painters undermined. After all, exhibitions of this sort, with open calls and juries with little familiarity with the nuances of pictorial photography, were precisely the sort of thing from which the Photo-Secession had seceded.

Ultimately, the results of the St. Louis Exhibition and the First American Salon vindicated Stieglitz's autocratic approach. For his part, Eickemeyer showed ten works at the First American Salon and earned a gold medal in St. Louis. And while both exhibitions went off as planned, neither one garnered particularly favorable critical mentions. The St. Louis exhibition was by all accounts a cramped hodge-podge, which amounted to a national embarrassment compared to the tightly curated exhibits from the British, French, and German delegations. The initial showing of the First American Salon in New York suffered from a similarly crowded display, with pictures stacked from floor to ceiling in the limited exhibition space. In either case, the juries had been overrun by submissions. The jury in St. Louis reviewed upwards of 3,300 framed works, from which 150 were chosen.³³ The volume of entries to the First American Salon dwarfed those numbers, with estimates ranging from between 7,200 to upwards of 10,000 works

³² Alfred Stieglitz, "The Fiasco at St. Louis," *British Journal of Photography* 51, no. 2311 (August 19, 1904): 739.

³³ Walter Zimmerman, "The Fiasco at St. Louis—Part II," *Photographer* 1, no. 14 (July 30, 1904): 210.

submitted for review. To manage the task, Bell took it upon himself to winnow the selection down to 1,800 works before passing them to the jury, which, as critics pointed out, directly belied the supposedly democratic spirit of the event.

Amid these lurid details and political calculations driving pictorial photography's development, Warburg's modest plea for a hands-off approach comes to look thoroughly quaint, if not a little naive. At the same time, focusing narrowly on the social dynamics at play risks obscuring the legitimate disagreements among the various parties regarding each faction's particular views of photography, with respect to both the aesthetic standards to which they thought it should be held and its identity as a medium. As a disaffected member of the Salon Club would reveal after the exhibition, the jury of painters "threw out all pictures submitted, which, in their judgement, appeared to have been produced by photography *with the aid of the hand.*" While, as the reviewer notes, this might be seen as a principled endorsement of straight photography, he says the jury erred in using as its basis for judgement what amounted to an "ethical, rather than an esthetic distinction," and thus, counterintuitively, it had "performed its task from a photographic, rather than from a pictorial standpoint." His proposed remedy: photographers, not painters, should serve as judges.³⁴ For the Second American Salon in 1895, the jury process was reworked so that prints would first be screened through local clubs, after which they sent the selections to New York, where Eickemeyer and a small jury of photographers performed a second culling process, before ultimately passing off their selections to the final jury of painters.

³⁴ Walter Zimmerman, "The First American Photographic Salon," *American Amateur Photographer* 17, no. 1 (January 1905): 7–16.

Sorting through the varied and shifting viewpoints and arguments expressed by the diverse ranks of pictorial photographers and critics at the turn of the century is a daunting task. In the assessment of one modern historian, pictorial photography's development was "not the natural, linear evolution that many historical paradigms suggest"—paradigms which, it should be added, accept at face value the principal logic marshalled by the movement's prevailing voices—"but rather an intricate, divergent, often passionately conflicting barrage of strategies."³⁵

With that in mind, it will serve to take up Rood's genealogy in earnest (Curtis Bell excepted), limited as it might be, considering Stieglitz and Eickemeyer as embodiments of two contrasting visions for the photographic medium. Undertaking such a comparison requires a bit of imagination given the way that their respective fates would soon diverge. Stieglitz would continue a steady rise in stature and assume a position as the revered avatar of American modernism that he holds to this day, while Eickemeyer gradually fell into suburban obscurity. He continued to participate in the international salon circuit through the 1920s, but as his attention increasingly shifted to his commercial studio work and domestic life, many of the pieces he submitted became versions of prints he had produced during his most productive stretch in the mid-1890s. To the extent that Eickemeyer does retain a place within the history of photography, it is primarily in his role as a foil to Stieglitz's modernist project, serving as the embodiment of the traditional, nineteenth-century view that modernism left behind.³⁶ Rather than attempting to

³⁵ Paul Spencer Sternberger, *Between Amateur and Aesthete: The Legitimization of Photography as Art in America, 1880–1900* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2001), ix.

³⁶ Nearly all of the modern scholarship on Eickemeyer relies on this perspective in part. See especially several articles by Roger Hull, including "Rudolf Eickemeyer, Jr., and the Politics of Photography," *New Mexico Studies in the Fine Arts* 2 (1977): 20–25; "The Traditional Vision of Rudolf Eickemeyer, Jr.," *History of Photography* 10, no. 1 (January–March 1986): 31–62; and "Emplacement, Displacement and the Fate of Photographs," in *Multiple Views: Logan Grant*

recover his legacy for the present, a more modest effort involves working to restore an authentic sense for why Eickemeyer's pictures resonated with late nineteenth-century audiences.

As further justification for the comparison, both photographers hold strong claims as the inheritors of Emerson's legacy in an American context.³⁷ Each acknowledged their debts to Emerson in shaping their early careers and incorporated elements of his teachings into their respective practices. When Stieglitz reviewed the final American edition of *Naturalistic Photography* in *Camera Notes* in 1899, he touted it as a "classic" text, which formed a necessary part of any aspiring pictorial photographer's education. "To it," Stieglitz confidently declared, "pictorial photography owes the stability which it now enjoys."³⁸ Eickemeyer also frequently cited Emerson, whom he called the "Father of Pictorial Photography," as a primary influence in lectures and articles as far back as 1889.³⁹ Perhaps more than any other photographer on either side of the Atlantic, Eickemeyer modeled his work after Emerson—occasionally veering into derivative territory, as in his 1892 homage *The Lily Gatherer* (fig. 2.3).

Bridging the divide between Hartmann and Stieglitz stands Hartmann who, despite his quixotic temperament, was not only the most prolific but arguably the most perceptive critic in the American photography scene. Born Carl Sadakichi Hartmann in 1867 in Nagasaki Harbor to

Essays on Photography, 1883–1989, ed. Daniel P. Younger (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1991), 169–192.

³⁷ A thorough account of the reception of Emerson's work and ideas in the United States remains to be written. Several studies, however, have created exhibitions based loosely on formal and thematic points of contact. See, mainly, Mary Panzer, *Philadelphia Naturalistic Photography, 1865–1906* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Art Gallery, 1982) and Christian A. Peterson, *Peter Henry Emerson and American Naturalistic Photography* (Minneapolis, MN: Minneapolis Institute of Arts, 2008).

³⁸ Alfred Stieglitz, "Reviews and Exchanges—Naturalistic Photography," *Camera Notes* 3, no. 2 (October 1899): 88.

³⁹ Rudolf Eickemeyer, Jr. "Some Practical Hints on Winter Photography," in *The Modern Way of Picture Making* (Rochester, NY: Eastman Kodak, 1905), 148.

a German father who worked as a trader and Japanese mother who died during childbirth, Hartmann spent his childhood in the care of his wealthy uncle and grandmother in Hamburg, Germany. Following a rebellious youth, marked by him escaping the naval academy he had been placed in and running away to Paris, he was sent to live with another uncle in Philadelphia in 1882 at the age of fourteen. He began writing for local newspapers and immersed himself in literary circles. He authored several symbolist plays, including one titled *Christ*, which was so salacious that he found himself in jail over the Christmas of 1893. His first piece of photographic criticism was an 1898 profile of Alfred Stieglitz, which puts forth Eickemeyer as a chief rival.⁴⁰

This was the advent of writers who identified foremost as critics and who could guide pictorial photography's development from what was an ostensibly disinterested viewpoint. Hartmann used his erudite criticism (and the other tactics at his disposal) to advance the conversation around pictorial photography in a decidedly modern direction. At its best, he adapted his criticism to the particulars of the present, shifting before trends began to stagnate, which occasionally gives the appearance of contradictions when considering his larger body of criticism as a whole. In all of these respects, he too must be counted as an heir to Emerson.

II. ORGANIC IDEAS—NATURALISM'S FORKING PATH

The differences in the ways that Eickemeyer and Stieglitz approached photography, along with the ways that they self-fashioned their identities as photographers, stem from a mix of native temperament and biographical particulars. Both men were first-generation Americans born into prosperous patriarchal German families, each of whom had immigrated to the United States in the wake of the German revolutions of 1848–49. They were near contemporaries—

⁴⁰ Sadakichi Hartmann, "An Art Critic's Estimate of Alfred Stieglitz," *American Amateur Photographer* 30, no. 6 (June 1898): 257–262.

Eickemeyer was born on August 7, 1862, making him eighteen months older than Stieglitz, who was born on New Year's Day, 1864. Despite these similar backgrounds, a palpable class distinction—based more in social milieu and lifestyle than accumulated wealth—sheds light on their different career paths and, in a related way, their respective fates as photographers.

The Eickemeyer family settled in Yonkers, a suburb of New York conveniently situated a few miles north of Manhattan up the Hudson River in Westchester County.⁴¹ The town remained largely undeveloped in the 1850s, and Eickemeyer spent much of his youth roaming the woodlands, pastures, and country lanes that would later serve as the pastoral backdrop for many of his later photographs. As a lifelong resident of Yonkers who would go on to become a pillar of the community, Eickemeyer witnessed its transformation firsthand from a farming-based community with a few riverfront factories into a sprawling suburb built around a thriving industrial waterfront. From Eickemeyer's birth through 1910, the population of Yonkers grew nearly ten-fold, from a settlement of just over 8,000 to a bustling town of nearly 80,000 residents. A commuter rail connecting Yonkers to Manhattan was completed in 1888, just as Eickemeyer was coming of age in his mid-twenties. These rapid transformations, which registered not only in Yonkers's demographics but also in the essential appearance of the landscape in Westchester County, inevitably influenced Eickemeyer's worldview, helping to account for the rural nostalgia that inflects so many of his photographs.

Rudolf Eickemeyer, Sr. was a successful inventor and engineer who held over a hundred patents, including several for machines used to manufacture men's hats. The firm he founded, Eickemeyer and Olberholtzer, would eventually merge with General Electric. Eickemeyer got his

⁴¹ For a complete culturally situated biography of Eickemeyer, see Mary Panzer, *In My Studio: Rudolf Eickemeyer, Jr. and the Art of the Camera 1885–1930* (Yonkers, NY: Hudson River Museum, 1986).

start in photography in 1884. While working as an apprentice in his father's firm, he bought a camera to document his father's machines. He was largely self-taught as a photographer and artist, which would later serve as a point of pride, learning the craft from manuals and gleaned advice from a local professional. Hartmann would later claim that Eickemeyer's lack of training in art left him "better adapted to photography," implying that he was beholden to aesthetic theories and similarly less inclined to overstep the bounds of legitimate technique in photography.⁴²

In February 1889, Eickemeyer became a founding member the Yonkers Photographic Club. By the following year, his photographs began to appear in regular columns in the *Photographic Times*, where they were paired with short descriptions and practical advice to amateurs. The images, which varied between domestic genre studies, outdoor portraits of his young wife, landscapes, and scenes of rural life in the Emersonian mold, foretold the eclecticism that would become a distinguishing trait of Eickemeyer's practice. Hartmann, in one of his characteristically double-edged bits of praise, would describe Eickemeyer as the most "versatile" of American photographers.⁴³

In 1891, Eickemeyer married Isabelle (Belle) Hicks, whose family resided in Sherwood House, a Colonial-era farmhouse located several miles northwest of downtown Yonkers. Many of Eickemeyer's best-known works were made during regular weekend retreats to Sherwood House, documenting the scenic byways and country lanes found along the way. Eickemeyer's father, expecting that his son would carry on the family business, was not generally supportive of

⁴² Sadakichi Hartmann, "Portrait Painting and Portrait Photography," *Camera Notes* 3, (July 1899): 18.

⁴³ Sadakichi Hartmann, "Exhibitions of Photographs by Rudolph Eickemeyer, Jr.," *Camera Notes* 3, no. 4 (April 1900): 216.

his son's growing interest in photography, despite his quickly accumulating successes. In 1893, on the heels of earning his first major award at an international competition, he wrote to his father, confiding, "I think many times how unfortunate it is that my ability lies simply in a pursuit which if I allowed full play would lead me further and further away from my legitimate business where I must look for my (mine and Belle's) bread and butter."⁴⁴ It wasn't until his father's death in 1895 that Eickemeyer felt emboldened to pursue his passion for photography full-time. The work ethic that his father had instilled, however, led him to pursue photography professionally, becoming a partner in several different high-end portrait studios on Fifth Avenue catering to a wealthy clientele.

Where Eickemeyer's sense of familial duty and fondness for suburban life tempered his artistic ambitions, Stieglitz, by contrast, set out on a path that led him to prioritize his passions above all other concerns. Stieglitz was born in Hoboken, New Jersey, a town directly adjacent to Manhattan across the Hudson River. He was the oldest of six children, born to German-Jewish parents. Edward Stieglitz, his father, ran a highly profitable imported wool and dry goods business, which afforded the family financial independence. In 1886, Edward purchased a twelve-acre summer home, Oaklawn, on Lake George, a popular vacation destination several hours further up the Hudson. In 1891, thirty-six more acres would be added, creating a family estate in a natural setting that became a retreat for Alfred throughout his life.⁴⁵

Edward Stieglitz was a Sunday painter and a patron of the arts, meaning that Alfred came into contact with artists from an early age; in the mid-1870s, for example, the German painter

⁴⁴ Rudolf Eickemeyer, Jr., Letter to Rudolf Eickemeyer, Sr. April 28, 1893, Hudson River Museum, Yonkers, New York.

⁴⁵ Katherine Hoffman, *Stieglitz: A Beginning Light* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2004), 10.

Fedor Encke took up residence with the Stieglitz family for a year. Disappointed with the American educational system, in 1881 Edward Stieglitz sold his business and the family relocated to Germany. Before settling down, they traveled around Europe, during which time Stieglitz formed a relationship with Wilhelm Hasemann, a naturalist genre painter known for his scenes of rural life in Gutach, a popular town among artists located in Germany's Black Forest region.

In Berlin, Stieglitz enrolled in Charlottenberg Polytechnic, pursuing a degree in mechanical engineering. His focus soon shifted from engineering to chemistry, however, finding mentors in two well-respected chemists, August Hofmann and Hermann Wilhelm Vogel, the latter of whom provided Stieglitz with a formal education in photochemistry. As a student in Berlin, Stieglitz had occasion to immerse himself in the city's rich scientific culture, attending public lectures by Hermann von Helmholtz and the physiologist Emil du Bois-Reymond.⁴⁶ Separately, Stieglitz also continued his pursuits of arts and literature, regularly attending operas, furthering his fondness for the German Romantic works of Goethe and Schiller, and also developing a taste for the realist novels of Zola and Mark Twain.

When Stieglitz returned to New York in 1890, he briefly attempted to conform to a conventional lifestyle path thrust upon him by his father by becoming a partner in a photolithographic engraving company. In 1893, he married Emmeline Obermeyer, the sister of

⁴⁶ While it is tempting to draw insights from the fact that Stieglitz attended lectures by Helmholtz, this desire should be stifled. Stieglitz later recalled that he found the talks opaque and stopped attending midway through the series. Similarly, in an extant letter from Du Bois-Reymond, written in response to Stieglitz's request for reading recommendations, Stieglitz's former professor recommended as his "first wants" texts by Darwin, Huxley, and two German naturalists working in a similar vein, though little evidence exists that these texts influenced Stieglitz's thought in any clear way, if indeed he consulted them at all. See Sue Davidson Lowe, *Stieglitz: A Memoir/Biography* (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 1983), 82.

one of his business partners, who was nine years his junior. By all accounts, it was an unpleasant marriage from the start—she did not share his passions and yearned for a more conventional domestic lifestyle—but a generous living stipend that he received from her family, combined with further allowances given to him from his father, freed him to pursue his personal interests generally unencumbered by family responsibilities.

Despite the vast amount of scholarship on Stieglitz, his liberal education and diverse interests do not easily lend themselves to a straightforward intellectual portrait, which has allowed subsequent biographers to emphasize particular details into order to peg him as a realist of the American tradition, an impassioned follower of German idealism, a symbolist, and various combinations and shades thereof. Of course, this difficulty in pinning down his beliefs is part and parcel of what defines him as a prototypical modern artist—his enigmatic, often shifting views were a core feature of the modernist identity he cultivated. The most convincing accounts, however, settle on a version of Stieglitz as a romantic, a philosophical idealist at heart, whose scientific training and early exposure to artistic forms of naturalism helped to ground his style within a realist framework.⁴⁷

Eickemeyer, by comparison, suffers from the opposite problem: there is a dearth of evidence in his published work or private writings on which to form a sense of his philosophical leanings. His later scrapbooks contain clippings about public debates on evolution and theology and similar topics, suggesting that he subscribed to a mainstream, compatibilist view of science and religion, while resting content not to delve too deeply into the particulars. The root of his

⁴⁷ For accounts focusing on Stieglitz's relationship to nineteenth-century science, see Geraldine Wojno Kiefer, *Alfred Stieglitz: Scientist, Photographer, and Avatar of Modernism, 1880–1913* (New York: Garland, 1991) and Chiara Ambrosio, “‘Beauty is the Universal Seen’: Objectivity as Trained Vision in Alfred Stieglitz's Experimental Aesthetics,” *Visual Studies* 29, no. 3 (2014): 250–260.

naturalism, like Emerson's, could be found in a deeply felt admiration for the natural, unpeopled landscape, and his belief that nature formed the wellspring of beauty.

Unlike Stieglitz, for whom a family retreat at Lake George offered a seasonal respite from a life centered on the city, Eickemeyer built his self-identity around country life, experiencing New York mainly as a commuter. Where for Stieglitz travel more often than not meant boarding a steamship for an extended stay in Europe, Eickemeyer generally found fulfillment exploring the interior of his native country. Starting in 1883, he made the first of several trips south to Alabama, where he hunted and camped along the Tuscaloosa River with a family friend who worked as a cotton planter and owned a former plantation. On subsequent trips, Eickemeyer made photographs of the local black tenant farmers and sharecroppers in the area, which he exhibited widely and later turned into his first photobook, *Down South*, in 1900. Other preserved photo-albums that he made between 1885–1887 document excursions to Colorado, Washington Territory, and the nearby Berkshire Hills.⁴⁸ While these early albums mainly consist of standard traveler's fare, they contain hints of his more mature style. In particular, his album titled *Among the Berkshire Hills* from 1886 shows his nascent interest in aesthetics. Several images of haying and reaping illustrate an attunement to the established conventions of rural genre scenes. Other pictures indicate an early interest in formal experimentation, either through selective vignetting, off-kilter framing, and, most significantly, unconventional landscapes dominated by dense, encompassing foreground elements. Hartmann

⁴⁸ The Smithsonian Institute's National Museum of American history houses many of Eickemeyer's personal photo-albums, along with a collection of prints, scrapbooks, and ephemera. The Hudson River Museum in Yonkers owns a smaller collection of albums and personal effects.

would later praise the pictures of this latter type, which he called “foreground studies,” as Eickemeyer’s most original work (fig. 2.4).

Reflected in the opposing identities of Stieglitz and Eickemeyer—the former thoroughly cosmopolitan and the latter rooted in local, regionalist concerns—Sadakichi Hartmann found two distinct sensibilities he could usefully put forth as a study in contrasts to advance the conversation around pictorial photography. His willingness to play both sides, however, ultimately went beyond the need to invent a foil for Stieglitz, to the extent that each, in their own way, appealed to a different side of his own personality. As a fixture of the New York arts scene in the 1890s, he earned a reputation as a consummate Bohemian. By the same token, however, Hartmann cultivated an interest in American nature writing.⁴⁹ He befriended Walt Whitman, publishing a book based around their conversations in 1895 and after 1900 regularly wrote his own nature essays, many of which feature Eickemeyer’s photographs as illustrations. In Hartmann’s 1905 essay “A Plea for Localism,” written under his alter-ego Sidney Allan, he provides a rational defense of these diverging interests:

Many readers may not be willing to concede to localism as much importance as I do. They might argue that it narrows one’s viewpoint and that cosmopolitanism is the true thing. No doubt eclecticism—which to me is synonymous with cosmopolitanism—is a very valuable attribute, but one must possess rare digestive power to assimilate all modern art influences and yet remain original. We are apt to form an opinion about an object before we have learned to know it by experience.⁵⁰

For Hartmann, a deeply felt connection of place was an essential trait of art, which could be applied to the countryside just as soon as the city.

⁴⁹ See Roger Hull, “Nature Writings of Sadakichi Hartmann,” *Sadakichi Hartmann Newsletter* 5 (Spring 1975): 1–4.

⁵⁰ Sidney Allan, “A Plea for Localism,” *Camera* 9, no. 12 (December 1905): 450–53.

From these starting points, however, a key difference emerges between Stieglitz and Eickemeyer that translates into two antithetical views and opposing working methods. Emerson, in his rejection of scientific naturalism, came around to admitting that all ideas were not co-extensive with sensory impressions, thereby granting the imagination a legitimate role in art. Through James's concept of psychogenesis—which posits that some mental content does not originate from “conscious intercourse with the outer environment”⁵¹—Emerson had arrived at an alternative theory of mind, still naturalistic in character, which allowed for a freestanding imagination to serve as a basis for art. Based on his newfound beliefs about photography's mechanical limitations—namely, what he saw as the inability to modify tonal relationships through legitimate photographic means and the impossibility of rendering human perception truthfully through photographs—he rejected the notion that a photograph could convey human ideas or sentiments, insisting that photography was solely an impersonal means of representation. Photographs, Emerson concluded, could be beautiful in the same way that a decorative arrangement of flowers is beautiful, but most people would not be prepared to call a beautiful arrangement of flowers a work of art, at least not according to his narrow definition.

For the pictorial photographer intent on following the path of naturalism left in Emerson's wake, then, there were two options: either one could accept photography's limited value as a means of personal expression while finding contentment in its use as a humble means of representing the beauty that one finds in nature, or, conversely, one might view the limitations that Emerson spelled out as challenges to be overcome, thus attempting to show that photography could be made to represent an impression of nature—admitting that a literal impression was beyond the reach of *all* visual art—or perhaps even an imaginative ideal.

⁵¹ James, *Principles of Psychology*, vol. 2, 618.

In Eickemeyer and Stieglitz's contrasting views, we find these two alternatives carried out to their natural ends. Eickemeyer, who closely emulated Emerson's teachings, came to embrace his parsimonious view, regarding photography as little more than a modest means of interpreting nature's beauty. In 1895, Stieglitz published a private letter that Eickemeyer had written him in response to a dismissive exhibition review submitted by one of Stieglitz's painter friends. Eickemeyer expressed his support, remarking that "he sees the limitations of our art. The work of the men he cites pleased him because the subjects [photographed] were capable of a fairly satisfactory interpretation with the camera."⁵² This belief that photography was a tool for reflecting one's sense of beauty in nature, rather than intervening to impose one's personal aesthetic sensibilities onto nature, led Eickemeyer to embrace a more straightforward approach to photography, which Hartmann characterized, in direct contrast to Stieglitz, as "scientific realism."⁵³ Intended as a kind of damning praise, what Hartmann meant by the term was that Eickemeyer's photographs were exacting, leaving nothing to chance, but they lacked vital evidence of artistic temperament. Initially, Hartmann viewed this as a fatal flaw within Eickemeyer's work, which he connected to a flaw of character, rather than a lack of wanting, describing him as "a photographer without passions and without emotions."⁵⁴

Stieglitz, for his part, initially trended in the opposite direction. Taking to heart Emerson's early views, Stieglitz embraced an instrumentalist view of pictorial photography during the early part of his career. "The means are but secondary," he asserted in an early review, "and whatever school, whether impressionist, realist, naturalist, or whatever you may, stick to

⁵² Rudolf Eickemeyer, Jr., "Limitations of Pictorial Photography," *American Amateur Photographer* 7, no. 5 (May 1895): 221.

⁵³ Hartmann, "An Art Critic's Estimate," 258.

⁵⁴ Hartmann, "Exhibitions of Photographs by Rudolph Eickemeyer, Jr.," 216.

truth in nature.”⁵⁵ In other words, Stieglitz upheld nature as a standard by which photographs should be judged, but he did not think that photographers should be beholden to a particular working method.

At the same time, Stieglitz understood that for photography to be taken seriously as an art, he needed to furnish evidence of the photographer’s mind at work, both rhetorically and, so far as possible, visually. The editor’s statement in the premier issue of *Camera Notes* famously lays down Stieglitz’s radical ambitions. The mission of the journal, thusly stated, would be to “publish nothing but what is the development of an organic idea, the evolution of an inward principle; a picture rather than a photograph, though photography must be the method of graphic representation.”⁵⁶ By distinguishing a picture from a mere photograph, the statement reiterates the basic underlying tenet of pictorialism, namely, that pictures constitute a special subclass of images, which are set apart by their particular aesthetic qualities. Judging whether an image rises to the status of a picture depends on the aesthetic response that it triggers in the viewer rather than the materials or methods of its creation, and as a result, the photographic character of the object is deemed an incidental, if necessary, feature.

But what should be made of the claim, contained in this memorable turn of phrase, that the photographs gracing the journal’s pages would embody an “organic idea”—the outcome of the “evolution of an inward principle”? This language is a far cry from Emerson, who, in his first public lecture on art and photography, declared, “The days of metaphysics are over, and with

⁵⁵ Alfred Stieglitz, “The Joint Exhibition at Philadelphia,” *American Amateur Photographer* 5, no. 5 (May 1893): 203. This language parrots Emerson’s claim in *The Death of Naturalistic Photography*, in which he announced, “I am for the present and future neither idealist, realist, naturalist, nor impressionist.” Emerson, *Death of Naturalistic Photography*, n.p.

⁵⁶ Publication Committee, [Introduction], *Camera Notes* 1, no. 1 (July 1897): 3.

them, we hope, has died all that class of pernicious illogical literature, *evolved from the inner consciousness of man.*⁵⁷

While it is more or less universally assumed that this oft-quoted opening line of *Camera Notes* flowed from Stieglitz's hand, the available evidence suggests that it was likely a favorite turn of phrase of Stieglitz's editorial assistant, William M. Murray, who had, in turn, borrowed it from an 1870 piece of literary criticism on Shakespeare's plays.⁵⁸ As Stieglitz would point out in a tribute to his former colleague, Murray had a passion for literature, which is evidenced in many allusions that fill his articles.⁵⁹ Traced to its ultimate source, however, the "organic idea" descends from German idealism, Hegelian in spirit and coinage, and implies a constructive imagination, which "stands in antithesis to the empirical manifold, either determining it or reflecting on it."⁶⁰

Taken in a general sense, then, "the evolution of an inward principle" could simply mean an original concept or composition brought to fruition in a print, though the challenge would be

⁵⁷ Emerson, "Photography A Pictorial Art," 138; emphasis added.

⁵⁸ See, for example, Murray's review of an exhibition of photographs by Henry Troth, in which he remarks, "The work is not only the embodiment of an idea, but the evolution of its inward principle is so well carried out that the several parts harmoniously blend together into a perfect whole." W.M. Murray, "The Troth Exhibition," *Camera Notes* 1, no. 4 (April 1898): 119. The phrase appears to come from Henry Joseph Riggles, *The Method of Shakespeare as an Artist, Deduced from an Analysis of His Leading Tragedies and Comedies* (New York: Hurd and Houghton), 1870, vii. The pertinent passage reads:

For a play is a work of art, which represents human life and action, and like all works of art must possess organic unity, that is, all its parts must be necessary to constitute it a perfect whole, and the spirit and force of the whole must be found in every part. This can be effected [sic] only by its being an *evolution of an inward principle, the development of an organic idea* (emphasis added).

⁵⁹ Alfred Stieglitz, "To William M. Murray—An Appreciative Acknowledgement," *Camera Notes* 6, no. 1 (July 1902): 5.

⁶⁰ Quoted in Robert Pippen, *Hegel's Idealism: The Satisfactions of Self-Consciousness* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 78.

to demonstrate how an idea with no external referent in the phenomenal world could be represented through a photograph. Stieglitz and his fellow pictorialists increasingly found a rather literal way to enact this concept, deploying new techniques that allowed for local manipulation of prints and negatives by hand, which in effect allowed for an endless variety of unique prints to be produced from a single negative, which did not bear any discernible resemblance to things as they are perceived in nature. In this way, the negative came to serve as an arbitrary starting point from which a unique, highly personal expression could “evolve,” providing a contextual basis for Shaw’s suggestion that good negatives were not the result of special creation; the print, not the negative, formed the standard upon which photography should be judged. For Murray, the organic idea supplied a justification—indeed, an imperative—for local interventions by hand. The photographer, he said, “must learn to subdue, by artificial means, all the details of the picture, however beautiful in themselves, that interfere with the presentation of the principle idea,” which formed a practical necessity “if he would be the maker of a picture rather than the mere agent in the evolution of an automatic process.”⁶¹

A number of techniques, developed starting in the mid-1890s, allowed for the introduction of handwork onto a print or a negative, thereby, in a sense, overcoming the limitations Emerson identified in the Hurter and Driffield experiments. The first of these methods, the gum-bichromate process, was introduced around 1894 by Alfred Maskell, a Brit, and Robert Demachy, a Frenchman, both of whom were members of the Linked Ring and active on the international salon circuit. Gum printing, as it is called, was a modified form of the carbon

⁶¹ William M. Murray, “Picturesque Tonality in Photographic Work, and How It May Be Obtained in Transparencies and Lantern Slides,” *Camera Notes* 2, no. 1 (July 1898): 7.

transfer process that integrated pigmented gum arabic as a binding agent, which allows the photographer to selectively manipulate portions of the print with a brush.

Demachy, whose photographs and essays Stieglitz promoted, was the recognized master of the technique. His suggestively titled *Struggle*, featured in a 1903 number of *Camera Work*, is a representative example. A female nude is shown grasping at a groundless swirl of brushstrokes, simultaneously pulled upward and downward, suspended in the dual-process of emerging from or being absorbed into the painterly swirls that envelop her body. Beyond its expressive message, the picture invites a meta-analysis, suggesting a metaphor in which the photographic medium itself was embroiled in Darwinian struggle, by turns violent and beautiful (fig. 2.5).

Stieglitz himself collaborated with Joseph Keiley to develop a kindred method, a modification of the platinum process that allowed for localized development through the application of glycerine. They adapted the general principle from a technique already used for retouching, and thus the “improvements” that Keiley and Stieglitz developed involved exploiting those techniques to render the effects ends in themselves.⁶² In their account of the process, they point to its liberating potential, allowing the photographer to “reclaim his print from the rigid bondage of hitherto unalterable renderings of values recorded.”⁶³

While the use of any such methods could be explained simply enough as material explorations, their proponents tended to gravitate toward the instrumentalist view in the pitched debates over the medium’s limitations, arguing that the ends achieved justified the means deployed, and moreover that, the more one looked, the apparent boundary delimiting

⁶² Adrienne Lundgren, “The History and Use of Glycerine in Platinum Printing,” in *Platinum and Palladium Photographs: Technical History, Connoisseurship, and Preservation*, ed. Constance McCabe (New York: American Institute for Conservation, 2017), 205.

⁶³ Joseph Keiley, “The ‘Camera Notes’ Improved Glycerine Process for the Development of Platinum Prints,” *Camera Notes* 3, no. 4 (1900): 222.

photography was fugitive. Likewise, critics of these methods, including Hartmann and Eickemeyer, might have simply dismissed them as mere curiosities, but, forced to defend their views, came to advance a definition of “straight” photography that excluded handwork and local manipulation as illegitimate, in vaguely ethical terms. Neither Eickemeyer nor Hartmann was a purist in temperament, however; the former practiced less conspicuous forms of local tone modification, and the latter granted that such techniques, in the service of naturalism, were perfectly admissible.

While these methods appeared on the scene after Emerson had withdrawn from photography, he took the occasion of his retrospective exhibition at the Royal Photographic Society in 1900 to denounce the methods, thereby laying the groundwork for later historians to reclaim Emerson as a champion of straight photography *avant la lettre*. In an address titled “Bubbles,” Emerson attacks the examples of gum and glycerine-developed platinum prints appearing in an annual retrospective of American work in *Photograms of the Year*.⁶⁴ Relying on his characteristic invective, Emerson tears into the illustrated examples representing “the American School,” suggesting that a view of the North Carolina hills by Keiley, for example, had been so altered that it more resembles a “scrubby English hedge” than a mountain range, and declaring “it is useless crying liberty when there is no liberty (fig. 2.6).”⁶⁵ Somewhat curiously, Emerson glosses over an example of the glycerine platinum method by Stieglitz, *Study of a Baby*, praising Stieglitz as one who avoids such methods (fig. 2.7). Stieglitz employed the technique much more conservatively than Keiley, using it to form a soft vignette around the

⁶⁴ P. H. Emerson, “Bubbles,” *Wilson’s Photographic Magazine* 37, no. 525 (September 1900): 388–391. For the article Emerson references, see Joseph T. Keiley, “The American School,” *Photograms of the Year* (1899): 6–26.

⁶⁵ Emerson, “Bubbles,” 388.

baby, an effect reminiscent of traditional studio portrait retouching. The otherwise unremarkable picture illustrates that Stieglitz, unlike many of his peers whose work he would promote as an editor, suggests an intuitively felt sense that the overuse of such techniques exceeded the proper limits of photographic technique in its ambition to remain true to nature. But short of relying on such methods, Stieglitz was left to seek out other ways to demonstrate that a photograph could be more than a mere reflection of nature's beauty—that it could embody an organic idea.

The article's reproduction of another example of Eickemeyer's work, *The Dance*, sticks out among the other selections, not so much due to its relatively unretouched character, but, as a carefully orchestrated domestic genre scene that decidedly feels out of place among the other works, belonging to the century that was ending (fig. 2.8). Emerson did not find occasion to comment on it, but Hartmann would. Writing in *Camera Notes* the following year, he takes up the issue of genre scenes, suggesting that they are "antithetical to the ideals of modern art." He cites Eickemeyer's *The Dance* as an admirable failure, proving the rule that successful photographic genre scenes are impossible. Eickemeyer, he notes, "thought out the composition night and day, altered it frequently, made study after study until he finally succeeded in getting the faultless picture from a photographic point of view," but, he concludes, from the standpoint of art, "it is of no more interest than a reproduction of a painting by Diehlman," a middle-brow American genre painter.⁶⁶ If photography was to become a modern art, in Hartmann's view, this was the type of picture that Eickemeyer and others would have to leave behind.

III. PHOTOGRAPHING, FAST AND SLOW

From the outset of their careers, both Eickemeyer and Stieglitz took inspiration from Emerson's teachings. In a review of the Joint Exhibition at Philadelphia in 1893, Stieglitz asked

⁶⁶ Sidney Allan, "On Genre," *Camera Notes* 6, no. 1 (July 1901): 11.

his readers: “How many appreciate the enormous benefit that P. H. Emerson has bestowed upon photographic art? Call him by whatever name you may, criticise him from any point of view, and still the fact remains: his teachings formed the basis of what we saw in this exhibition.”⁶⁷

Likewise, Eickemeyer made Emerson the centerpiece of an evening lecture at Columbia College in March 1894. Given that Eickemeyer wrote very little in the way of photographic criticism, the unpublished lecture provides valuable insights into Eickemeyer’s working philosophy during the most productive period in his early development as a photographer. Rejecting the soft-focus techniques and overly sharp photographs, Eickemeyer holds out Emerson’s naturalistic method as his model, suggesting that the ideal to strive for is “to reproduce as nearly as possible, the impression made upon the mind, by a scene in Nature.”⁶⁸

Stieglitz’s legacy is indelibly linked to Emerson on the mythical basis that it was Emerson who first recognized Stieglitz’s talents and awarded him a medal in 1887 in the *Amateur Photographer*’s “Holiday Work Competition” for his genre study *A Good Joke* (also titled *The Last Joke, Bellagio*) (fig. 2.9). Emerson praised the picture as the “only spontaneous work” in the competition.⁶⁹ The picture depicts of a group of Italian children gathered around a maid collecting water at a fountain. The smallest boy, standing at the center of the scene, turns his head away from the group toward the camera and, based on the punchline he has just delivered, casts a self-satisfied, impish grin. The maid’s soft smile signals the good-natured

⁶⁷ Alfred Stieglitz, “The Joint Exhibition at Philadelphia,” *American Amateur Photographer* 5, no. 5 (May 1893): 202.

⁶⁸ Rudolf Eickemeyer, Jr. “Picture-Making with the Camera,” Unpublished typescript lecture, ca. 1894, Photographic History Collection, National Museum of American History, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C. [hereafter NMAH].

⁶⁹ Charles Caffin, *Photography as a Fine Art: The Achievements and Possibilities of Photographic Art in America* (New York: Doubleday, Page & Co., 1901), 27.

innocence of the joke, while two older smiling girls self-consciously divert their eyes in Stieglitz's direction, as if to gauge his response.

All of these aspects give the scene an air of freshness and authentic charm, providing an unguarded glimpse into the everyday lives of people for whom, we are made to infer, modernity has not yet reached. In a variant, Stieglitz cropped the scene, cutting out two well-dressed passers-by pausing to observe the action underneath a sign advertising rooms-to-let, whose presence betrays the popular tourist locale where the picture was made (fig. 2.10). For the most part, the figures appear naturally posed, as if Stieglitz had happened upon them as he walked through town. A closer look, however, reveals the staging directions Stieglitz provided, instructing each of the children to cross their hands or fold their arms for fear that they might create a blur, which the young joke-teller's sidekick in the foreground usefully illustrates.

These contrasting elements create a peculiar tension and position the scene somewhere between a genre scene and something more, as Emerson's aptly described it, spontaneous. Emerson, for his part, assiduously avoided having his models peer directly toward the camera, for fear that their expressions would invariably betray signs of self-consciousness and belie his directorial role in the process. While Stieglitz's picture deviates from this convention, the unguarded expressions of the three children facing the camera convey a familiar range of reactions befitting their respective ages and genders, thus adding a layer of naturalness to the scene.

It is also important to note that such compositional tropes were already part of the nineteenth-century genre artist's toolkit, so Stieglitz was not entirely departing from convention. Examples of figures directing wayward glances toward an implied viewer can be traced as least as far back as the seventeenth-century Dutch genre painting tradition, in which artists typically

used this glance to solicit a moral reaction. Similarly, the subject matter—barefoot children at play in the street, sharing of stories around a well—falls well within the established themes of genre art. The picture qualifies as a genre scene principally by virtue of its narrative conceit. Even still, these unexpected elements anticipate an emerging paradigm shift within photography, precipitated by underlying technological advancements in camera technology as much as emerging trends within modern art. These changes would soon usher a new visual standard for naturalism starting in the mid-1890s, which transformed photography from a tool for story-telling into a medium primarily used to capture fragmentary moments of modern life. In this way, *A Good Joke* stands out from the more conventional genre studies that Stieglitz was producing into the early part of the 1890s. A typical example is *The Letter Box*, a picture that Stieglitz made during a return trip to Gutach in 1894, which portrays two barefoot girls reaching up to place a letter in a mailbox (fig. 2.11). *The Letter Box* was featured as one of the plates in *Picturesque Bits of New York and Other Studies*, a portfolio of Stieglitz's work published in 1897. When Hartmann reviewed the portfolio, he dismissed the picture along similar lines as Eickemeyer's *The Dance*, calling it “merely a genre study, an attempt at story telling that arouses no special interest.”⁷⁰ In Hartmann's view, genre scenes ran counter to the demands of modern art both in their narrative quality and in their lack of spontaneity. The emerging shift in sensibilities from genre scenes to snapshots—or picturesque “bits”—brought to the fore a new quality that could be used to define what is distinctive about photography, namely, its ability to lend representational specificity to depictions of everyday life.

Eickemeyer devoted a considerable portion of his larger body of work to genre scenes stylistically indebted to Emerson's pictures of rural laborers on the Norfolk Broads. Between

⁷⁰ Hartmann, “An Art Critic's Estimate,” 259.

1900 and 1904, Eickemeyer published four illustrated photobooks, *Down South* (1900), *In and Out of the Nursery* (1900), *The Old Farm* (1901), and *Winter* (1903). Printed under the same publisher as Stieglitz's *Picturesque Bits*, Eickemeyer's picture books were geared to a more general audience, featuring relatively cheap half-tone reproductions and introductory essays by well-known authors or snippets of poems that matched the pictured subject matter but did not address the underlying character of the photographs in any detail.

The first of these, *Down South*, depicts the lives of black tenant farmers and sharecroppers in post-Reconstruction Alabama and featured an introductory essay by Joel Chandler Harris, a popular white folklorist known for his fables and folktales written in a Southern black dialect. Eickemeyer made the photographs for the book during trips in 1890 and 1894 to Mt. Meigs, Alabama, visiting a member of a family known to the Eickemeyers from their time in Germany who had become a cotton planter and owned one of the plantations in the area.⁷¹ Following Emerson's model, the book portrays the field work and domestic lives of the rural blacks, presenting them as peasant types performing their labor in carefully arranged scenes that conform to the prevailing conventions of naturalism in genre art (fig. 2.12). The book presents a sentimental, idealized image of life for black laborers in the rural South, ignoring the underlying social and racial dynamics of the early Jim Crow era in favor of a nostalgic, and indeed nearly antebellum, vision.⁷²

⁷¹ Eickemeyer's first trip to the area had been in 1883. For more on the history of Mt. Meigs, including information about the plantations the individuals Eickemeyer photographed, see Frances Osborn Robb, *Shot in Alabama: A History of Photography, 1839–1941* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2016), 166–168. See also John B. Scott, Jr. *Memories of the Mount: The Story of Mt. Meigs, Alabama* (Montgomery, AL: Black Belt Press, 1993).

⁷² *Down South* has been rightly criticized for its treatment of black subjects. Emerson, who applied a similar idealizing vision to his rural subjects, can be rescued in part through the textual portions of *Pictures of East Anglian Life*, which point to some of the injustices faced by his sitters. In that sense, just as important as what the pictures in *Down South* show is what they

The work, which Eickemeyer exhibited internationally, received mixed reviews, which were often inflected by the era's casual racism.⁷³ Hartmann, for his part though, focused his criticisms of the work more along the lines that they were unconvincing as genre studies. "He told me one day in his logwood study in Yonkers, that he made them with the intention of doing for the Southern negro something similar to what Millet did for the French peasant," Hartmann related about Eickemeyer in a review for a British journal, adding flatly, "he did not accomplish his ambition."⁷⁴ For Hartmann, the work sacrificed spontaneity in a failed attempt at storytelling. He singled out Eickemeyer for being too exacting, but he found this to be a nearly universal flaw among photographic genre scenes. Hartmann summed up his fundamental complaint about Eickemeyer by saying, "His work lacks the 'certain unexpectedness' which I consider a very prominent quality in pictorial representation."⁷⁵

Hartmann's critique rang true. By the turn of the century, traditional genre scenes had become almost entirely replaced by a modern snapshot aesthetic. This shift would be accelerated through the widespread commercial availability of easy-to-operate, handheld cameras. During the transitional period of the early 1890s through the early 1900s, however, two distinct approaches to pictorial photography, each one making a claim to naturalism, co-existed with one

leave out. Eickemeyer excluded from the book, for example, a portrait of one of the white plantation owners who played host during his visits, Colonel Wigglesworth, who was a former officer in the Confederate States Army. Eickemeyer's portrait of Wigglesworth was exhibited at the Royal Photographic Society in 1895 and appears in his personal album titled *Mt. Meigs, 1890*, NMAH.

⁷³ Reviewers typically approached the work as ethnographic studies rather than pictorial photography. One reviewer, for example, describes the series as "scientific research" among an "alien race." See J. Perry Worden, "Art in Amateur Photography," *The Churchman* (October 3, 1896): 407.

⁷⁴ Sadakichi Hartmann, "Rudolph Eickemeyer's Negro Studies," *Amateur Photographer* (December 28, 1900): 314.

⁷⁵ Hartmann, "Negro Studies," 313.

another. The first mode, which Eickemeyer embodied, was plodding and deliberative, requiring careful arrangement of figures into poses that conformed to the pre-established visual conventions of naturalism. Emerson, for his part, worked almost exclusively in this mode. Photographers given to this approach tended to favor traditional large-format view cameras. They started with an idea for a picture, which may have taken inspiration from something witnessed firsthand, and they proceeded to orchestrate the conditions necessary to create the picture that conformed to their initial conception. The process was not entirely premeditated, however, since each stage in the production of the picture provided an occasion for refinement of the initial concept. The result was a slow, iterative process that sought to realize a picture out of a concept.

The second mode, by contrast, was faster, relied more upon quick intuition and judgement, and was more reactive to immediate stimuli present within the environment. Technological improvements fueled this approach and increased faster exposure times, allowing photographers favoring this second mode to soon transition toward hand cameras. Rather than telling a story or realizing a preconceived concept, the images they produced sought to represent more fleeting moments of life. Granted, these two contrasting approaches to photographing—one slow, thoughtful, and considered, the other quick and intuitive—could be used to describe the contrasting approaches of photographers all the way down to the present. The point of describing them here, however, is to suggest that they first began to emerge as distinct, recognizable visual idioms starting in the mid-1890s. While both followed the conventions of naturalism, the faster mode, aided by new camera technologies, simultaneously helped to rewrite those visual conventions.

The difference in approach is usefully illustrated through a comparison of two prints, Eickemeyer's *Vesper Bells* and Stieglitz's *Early Morn*, which they chose to represent themselves in *American Pictorial Photography, Series I*, a photogravure portfolio of work by members of the Camera Club of New York published in 1899. Stieglitz had selected Eickemeyer's *Vesper Bells* as the frontispiece for the third issue of *Camera Notes* the previous year, in which it appeared alongside a feature article that Stieglitz commissioned from Eickemeyer explaining "How the Picture Was Made" (fig. 2.13). The article recounts the "various stages" Eickemeyer went through "until at last the final and complete picture was evolved."⁷⁶ Eickemeyer relates that he found inspiration for the photograph after coming upon "an old lady shelling peas," in the milk room of an old farmhouse, which in actuality was Eickemeyer's grandmother who posed for the scene in Sherwood House.⁷⁷ Eickemeyer recounts in detail the incremental improvements he made over four consecutive weekends to realize the picture—introducing various props, such as a wall-mounted Bavarian cross to complete the religious theme, and a potted geranium and ball of yarn to fill the empty spaces within the composition. He describes other staging techniques he deployed, such as using sheets to control the lighting conditions. He also reveals that he subsequently developed portions of the negative locally in order to achieve the tonal relationships he desired. Echoing a familiar trope among pictorialists, he claimed he gave all of these steps to the reader as "a lesson in patience."⁷⁸

Stieglitz's *Early Morn* likewise conforms to the established conventions of genre scenes, but, much like *A Good Joke*, the scene tugs at convention in a way that anticipates a new visual

⁷⁶ Rudolf Eickemeyer, Jr., "How the Picture Was Made," *Camera Notes* 1, no. 3 (January 1898): 63–65.

⁷⁷ Hull, "Traditional Vision," 35.

⁷⁸ Eickemeyer, "How a Picture Was Made," 66.

paradigm (fig. 2.14). The picture, which Stieglitz made in 1894 during a return journey abroad to the Black Forest, depicts a man and a woman harvesting grain in a field lined by rustic cottages and a waterwheel. The composition shows all the trappings of a traditional naturalistic genre scene. In one of the few modern appraisals of the picture, art historian William Inness Homer draws a direct comparison to Emerson, noting that *Early Morn* “represents a successful fusion of the Emersonian sharp foreground and suggested air and atmosphere in the distance with the flavor of the ‘noble peasant’ taken from Barbizon School painting.”⁷⁹ This analysis is good and accurate as it goes, but it misses a key component, which is how *strange* the composition is. The female figure appears strained, as if one of Millet’s gleaners had trouble uprooting a wheat stalk. The graceless arch of her back and her blurred face do not so much generalize her form as turn her silhouette into an illegible hump. The male figure, meanwhile, hunches over slightly while smiling expectantly in the direction of the camera. Both figures appear in a transitional state, caught between their task and standing up to greet Stieglitz or perhaps pausing to ask if they are performing their labor in a suitably picturesque manner.

Thus, while *Early Morn* is a genre scene of sorts, the effect is much more spontaneous, on the order of a snapshot, if not an entirely successful one. What the picture illustrates, though, is Stieglitz’s restlessness at the convoluted steps required to construct genre scenes of the sort at which Eickemeyer excelled, from the elaborate staging to figuring out how to induce the figures to “act natural.” Where Eickemeyer’s approach was reflective, based on creating scenes drawn from his personal memories and past experiences, Stieglitz located authenticity in the passing

⁷⁹ William Inness Homer, *Stieglitz and the Photo-Secession* (Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1983), 23.

present and recognized the value of the “certain unexpectedness” that Hartmann identified as a defining element in modern art.

Two years before making the picture, Stieglitz had transitioned to using a hand camera, which he came to recognize as a tool much better suited to his purpose. For *Early Morn*, however, he seems to have opted for a traditional stand camera, which helps to account for its awkwardness.⁸⁰ His first success with the hand camera would come in early 1893, when he ventured out into a blizzard in New York to create *Winter—Fifth Avenue*. After the photograph appeared, Hartmann praised it as the highest achievement to date in American pictorial photography. Coming in just behind, in a 1900 profile on Eickemeyer, Hartmann called one his signature foreground studies from 1894, titled *Fleur-de-lis*, “one of the best photographs ever produced in America, and only second to Stieglitz’s ‘Winter on Fifth Avenue.’”⁸¹ Each picture is markedly different in form and execution, such that considering each one in turn may help to clarify the unique conception of the medium that each photographer aspired to and the different practical techniques they employed to realize their contrasting ideals.

IV. A TOOL OF EXPERIENCE—THE HAND CAMERA AND STIEGLITZ’S *WINTER—FIFTH AVENUE*

Apart from experimenting with materials and processes, pictorialists found another tool for exploring and developing new visual forms—one that would ultimately prove more important and lasting in its influence—in the hand camera. Simply stated, the introduction of the hand camera did more to transform photographic aesthetics than any technology since photography’s

⁸⁰ This assessment is based on the size of the extant platinum contact prints, which are roughly 6.5 x 9 inches. See Sarah Greenough, *Alfred Stieglitz: The Key Set, The Alfred Stieglitz Collection of Photographs*, vol. 1 (Washington, DC: National Gallery of Art, 2002), 117.

⁸¹ Sadakichi Hartmann, “Rudolf Eickemeyer, Jr.,” *Photographic Times* 32, no. 4 (April 1900): 165.

inception; its influence on photography, from both a cultural and an aesthetic viewpoint, are difficult to overstate.

In fairness, it is more accurate to say that the hand camera was not a single invention, but rather a synthesis of several technological advancements—including faster dry plates, which were eventually replaced by celluloid roll-film, the mirror-reflex system, the focal-plane shutter, and all variety of contrivances that commercial manufacturers came up with to streamline the process of focusing, timing an exposure, and switching to a fresh negative.

Credit for the invention of the hand camera is typically given to Thomas Bolas, a British photographer and journal editor, who in late 1880 built and demonstrated an instrument that he called a “detective camera.” The device was more or less a miniaturized view camera with a racking bellows and simple lens objective enclosed in a box with space in the back to carry multiple unexposed plates. The focal length had to be determined in advance, and a rubber tube and ball affixed to the box was used as a pneumatic shutter. As the name implied, Bolas initially conceived of his invention as an aid for law enforcement, and indeed criminal investigators at Scotland Yard adopted Bolas’s design shortly after. More generally, though, its chief benefit was the ability to photograph human subjects at relatively close range, such that they were unaware of the camera’s presence. For his original prototype, Bolas painted the wooden enclosure black to resemble a shoe-black’s block, which he then set down on the sidewalk in busy London. In this way, he was able to portray his subjects “in an unconscious manner.”⁸²

One of the first great hand camera evangelists was Walter D. Welford, an editor of the British journal *Photography*. He published one of the first manuals on the subject, designed and

⁸² “How to Secure Surreptitious Pictures,” *Anthony’s Photographic Bulletin* 12, no. 3 (March 1881): 71.

marketed his own modestly priced version, the “Welford No. 1 Hand Camera,” and established a club devoted to hand camera work in 1893. In April 1893, he delivered a paper before the London and Provincial Association that was summarized in the July issue *The American Amateur Photographer*, the same month that Stieglitz was transitioning into his new role as an editor for the journal. Welford outlined seven distinct ways that the hand camera has altered the overall landscape of photography. To start, he notes how the commercial market for hand cameras, driven by public demand, has become a major driver of technological innovation, which has led to increased speed of plates and given rise to a host of new patents more generally. In a similar vein, he references how the hand camera, owing to its general ease of use, had dramatically increased the overall number of people taking up photography. Turning toward aesthetics, he lists several ways that the hand camera has ushered in new vision conventions, increasing the attention to small-format work, and, by virtue of its discreteness and the speed at which exposures can be made, creating a heightened degree of naturalness in posing while simultaneously providing new ways to illustrate everyday life, whether for the ends of journalism or art.

His final point, however, which the summary report in *The American Amateur Photographer* gives over the most space to, deals with how the hand camera acts as a means of self-improvement, serving as a tool of “physical and mental education.” It achieves this end, he argues, by improving vision, decision-making, and artistic perception, going so far as to “materially alter even a man’s character.” The user of the hand camera, Welford states, “becomes sharp, prompt, and decisive, and past hesitations vanish”; to this, the editor, possibly

Stieglitz, adds that “the use of the hand camera under difficult situations promotes coolness and patience.”⁸³

It does not take much effort to see how artistic-minded photographers intent on naturalistic depiction would find a value in a discrete device that permitted human figures to be photographed in unposed or “unconscious” states. Representing sitters in such “natural” conditions, such that they gave off the appearance of being unaware of the camera’s presence, was the essence of naturalism in one meaning of the term. Before it would become embraced as a tool of the photographic artist, however, the hand camera would have to overcome several hurdles. The early name “detective camera” carried with it a stigma, suggesting that it was primarily a tool for stealthily photographing people without their permission. Many photographers objected to the name for that reason, preferring “hand camera” as a more neutral term. In an early discussion about the invention at a New York camera club, one member claimed that credit for the invention was owed not to Bolas but a Brooklyn-based photographer, who had actually proposed the name “artist camera.” This is evidence that photographers recognized its value for the artist, either as a tool for making quick studies or as ends in themselves, from an early date.⁸⁴

Many pictorial photographers of the older generation looked down upon the hand camera as a toy unsuited for serious work. Starting in the mid-1880s, a slew of companies cropped up marketing hand-cameras with names like the “Facile,” as fun and easy-to-use devices requiring little-to-no skill to operate. Supporting the brand’s popular motto, “You press the button, we do

⁸³ Walter D. Welford, “The Influence of the Hand Camera,” *American Amateur Photographer* 5, no. 7 (July 1893): 307.

⁸⁴ “Proceedings of Societies, Society of Amateur Photographers of New York,” *Photographic News* 33, no. 1590 (February 22, 1889): 124.

the rest,” the first Kodak camera released by George Eastman in 1888 came preloaded with film for one-hundred exposures, which could be mailed in for development and printing. While some pictorial photographers recoiled at this type of advertising rhetoric, thereby dismissing hand cameras as middle-class trifles, their popular, mass-market nature also meant that many hand cameras were fatally limited in their design functionality. The most basic models were little more than boxes outfitted with simple shutters and short-focus lenses with a fixed aperture that were designed to create images that were sharp throughout.

With the widespread popularity of hand cameras, however, commercial manufacturers of hand cameras, responding to the desires of more ambitious amateurs, segmented the market, thus helping to pave the way for their adoption by pictorial photographers. The story of Stieglitz coming to embrace the hand camera in 1892 counts as one of the most often recounted episodes in his career. In his telling, one day in the winter of 1892–1893, he borrowed a hand camera from William B. Post, a fellow member of the Society of Amateur Photographers of New York, whose work from his recent travels abroad impressed Stieglitz. Stieglitz soon bought his own, likely a Tisdell & Whittlesey quarter-plate detective camera.⁸⁵ As the story goes, on February 22, 1893, George Washington’s birthday, Stieglitz ventured into the streets amidst white-out conditions, patiently braving the elements at the corner of Fifth Avenue and 35th Street for three hours to produce the negative for *Winter—Fifth Avenue*. The atmospheric scene of a horse-drawn coach barreling down the avenue quickly became one of his signature images, which he exhibited as a cropped photogravure enlargement on at least twenty-five occasions before 1900 (fig. 2.15).

⁸⁵ There is some debate over what camera he used to create his iconic images from this period, which is further complicated by Stieglitz’s tendency to exaggerate in his later retellings how his pictures were made. Several accounts claim that it was a Folmer & Schwing four-by-five camera, but the proportions of negative, known from later uncropped prints, suggest that it was likely the Tisdell & Whittlesey camera that is held by the George Eastman Museum.

With the understanding that Stieglitz was given to mythologizing in his accounts of how his most well-known pictures came about, it is nevertheless useful to consider how the details of the story support a novel claim about how, in his view, photography could make a claim to art. In his much-reproduced 1897 essay “The Hand Camera—Its Present Importance,” Stieglitz emphasizes that, above all, “The one quality absolutely necessary for success in hand camera work is Patience.” Describing the circumstances surrounding *Winter—Fifth Avenue*, he repeats the claim that he stood “awaiting the proper moment” for three hours. “Of course,” he continues, “the result contained an element of chance, as I might have stood there for hours without succeeding in getting the desired picture.”⁸⁶

Taking this account not as a face-value description of the circumstances leading to the picture but rather as a claim about photography, the question becomes, what sort of claim is this? It is seemingly not a claim, like Eickemeyer’s, despite his own appeal to the virtue of patience, that photography is a slow, iterative process—whereby a loosely formed idea takes shape over time through a succession of trial-and-error attempts. Stieglitz did, in fact, create other photographs of the same snow-covered avenue, but the account focuses on the singular image (fig. 2.16). Nor, seemingly, would it constitute an “organic idea,” in which a concept for a picture emerged from the depths of Stieglitz’s consciousness, whereby he subsequently willed it into material form—though, this is somewhat less clear. In the early printed versions, he did crop and enlarge the scene to create several variants. He even did a bit of retouching to the version published in *Camera Work* in 1905 to remove several railroad ties in the foreground, though this would fall under what Hartmann granted as an admissible intervention, since it “did not interfere

⁸⁶ Alfred Stieglitz, “The Hand Camera—Its Present Importance,” *American Annual of Photography and Photographic Times Almanac* 11 (1897): 25.

with the natural qualities of photographic technique.”⁸⁷ Finally, it is not the result of chance or accident, whereby, following Shaw’s Darwinian analogy, Stieglitz haphazardly spawned a thousand negatives in hopes that one might reach maturity. Stieglitz defines his process against that of the so-called “button pressers,” who occasionally luck into a worthwhile result.⁸⁸

In Murray’s review of *Picturesque Bits of New York, and Other Studies*, he related that many around the club deemed the memorable image a “lucky hit,” and they were surprised to learn that it had been the result of hours of patient waiting.⁸⁹ Patience thus becomes a necessary surrogate for skill and effort—for the conspicuous signs of labor and craftsmanship that served as the principal signifiers of value in the traditional arts. The hand camera further shifts the logic of the genre scene to a fragmentary modern world, in which what is visualized is understood not as a portrayal of the photographer’s memories or conceptions synthetically arranged into a narrative pattern, but instead as so many fragmentary “bits” of life.

By placing the camera directly into photographer’s hands, the hand camera transformed what had been thought of as an inflexible “machine” into a dynamic “tool” of the artist on par with an impressionist’s brush. In fact, Hartmann’s defense of straight photography ultimately hinged on this very distinction. Amidst the controversy over the First American Salon, Hartmann and Roland Rood, along with the Photo-Secessionist Harry C. Rubincam, engaged in a lively debate stretching out over several months over the underlying stakes of Hartmann’s “A Plea for Straight Photography.” Rood and Rubincam positioned themselves at opposite poles. Rood,

⁸⁷ Hartmann, “Plea for Straight Photography,” 108.

⁸⁸ For more on Stieglitz and the role of chance, see Kelsey, *Photography and the Art of Chance*, 149–179.

⁸⁹ William M. Murray, “Review and Exchanges—Picturesque Bits of New York, and Other Studies,” *Camera Notes* 1, no. 3 (January 1898): 84–85.

girding himself with arguments from psychology, followed Emerson in arguing that photography was an impersonal, mechanical process, making manipulative handwork techniques little than futile attempts to overcome native limitations. Rubincam, standing behind the Photo-Secession's more liberal view, put forth the familiar instrumentalist takes that any methods used were justified by the ends achieved, while declaring that "no man on earth...can place his finger on any line of limitation that will be other than arbitrary."⁹⁰ Hartmann, however, sought to push past the quasi-ethical disagreements over methods. Dismissing Rubincam by suggesting that practical distinctions were easy enough to make, he focused instead on Rood's criticism, to which he replied, "as long as [Rood] considers the camera *a machine (and not a tool)* incapable of being influenced by the personal equation of thought, I do not see how he can believe in straight photography, except as a record of nature and life."⁹¹ Hartmann ultimately provides clarity rather than resolution, but the linguistic distinction he makes is instructive. The introductory text to Stieglitz's *Picturesque Bits* draws from this same language, observing that photographers have lately come to realize that it is possible "to make the camera a *tool in their hands* as the painter uses his brush," and praising Stieglitz by saying that, in all of works, "we see the same master hand in the composition."⁹²

The conception of photography that Stieglitz proposes in *Winter—Fifth Avenue*, then, is an improved version of Emerson's naturalism. Stieglitz waits tirelessly for nature to present itself as a picture that conforms to his aesthetic sense, innately formed and cultivated through

⁹⁰ Harry C. Rubincam, "Straight Photography," *Photographer* 1, no. 5 (May 28, 1904): 66.

⁹¹ Sidney Allan, "And If So, Why Not?" *Photographer* 1, no. 20 (September 10, 1904): 306; emphasis added.

⁹² Walter E. Woodbury, "Concerning the Contents.," in Alfred Stieglitz, *Picturesque Bits of New York and Other Studies* (New York: R.H. Russell, 1897), n.p.

experience. Crucially, there is no claim that a preformed mental idea preceded the photograph. In this way, the picture also makes a claim as a photographic representation of visual experience, filtered through Stieglitz's inner psyche. It conforms to an ideal of naturalism by virtue of appealing to experience rather than the intellect. Where Emerson relies on the ground glass to mediate his perception, Stieglitz foregoes the slow, laborious task of setting up a scene with a view camera; taking the camera in his hands, it becomes an extension of himself, serving as a tool for recording his directly felt, unmediated experience.

The particulars of the image support this interpretation. While nearly all analyses of the scene call attention to the figure of coachman heroically weathering the elements as the ostensible subject of the composition, this reading seems slightly off-base. The picture's main subject, which Stieglitz makes clear in its title, is not the coachman but rather the street. In the early versions that were exhibited and published around the turn of the century, Stieglitz cropped the image, giving it a vertical orientation that focuses the attention on the action taking place within street rather than the peripheral sidewalks. He omits several figures, which can be seen in later prints from the 1920s, who are shoveling snow on either side of the omnibus, symmetrically framing it in a way that emphasizes the foreground plane (fig. 2.17). In the original, cropped versions, however, he positions the coach slightly left of center. The track patterns in the foreground and the coachman's thrusting arm draw the focus further to the left, coalescing around an undefined point in the distant background. Rather than representing an encounter with a foreground subject, then, *Winter—Fifth Avenue* more accurately seeks to emulate Stieglitz's embodied experience of staring down the avenue during a blizzard.

The picture is thus about the street, and the atmospheric effects produced by the wintery conditions, but its ultimate subject is the conditions of visual experience itself. And, like

Emerson before him, Stieglitz's path into modernity is marked by signs of visual doubt. The hulking forms that occupy the street are only vaguely defined in their outlines, such that the coachman, his vehicle, and the two horses merge into an undifferentiated mass of human, animal, and machine. More disconcertingly still, the coachman's outstretched arm points toward a strange figure across the visual gap—presumably some combination of a horse, man, and cart but entirely illegible as such—appearing to step off the sidewalk. The figure invites a comparison to Emerson's zoomorphic depiction of two boys fishing in *Wild Life on a Tidal Water*, resembling a peculiar, unidentifiable quadruped lurching forward on the street (fig. 2.18). Like Emerson, then, Stieglitz's visual doubt manifests as both perceptual and formal uncertainty, probing the limits of empiricism to provide the necessary visual cues to differentiate between forms in nature.

Crucially, the hand camera not only changed the underlying conventions of naturalism by being discrete enough to photograph human subjects at close range; it also fundamentally transformed the way that photographers interacted with their equipment and, by extension, the social and material world around them. By liberating the photographer from the necessity of using a tripod, hand cameras turned the act of photography into an active physical experience. In this way, by joining together the photographer and camera in a seamless way, the hand camera addressed, albeit in a less literal way, the same issue that led pictorialists down the path toward handwork—namely, it provided a means of signaling the photographer's embodied role in the creation of a picture.

To articulate this ideal, Stieglitz cites the authority of J. Craig Annan, an influential Scottish pictorialist, who suggests that in using the hand camera, “the adjustments ought to be so simple that the operator may be able to bring it from his satchel and get it in order for making an exposure *without a conscious thought*,” adding that “he should study to become so intimate that

it will become a second nature with his hands to prepare the camera while his mind and eyes are fully occupied with the subject before him.”⁹³ By coming to know the camera so well that it becomes a natural, unconscious extension of his body, Stieglitz’s conscious mind is free to engage the world before him. To the extent that it does constitute an “organic idea,” it does so through the momentary convergence between the photographer’s accumulated experience and, following the evolutionary model of empiricism, the inherited experiences of his ancestors and the incidental elements of the external world.

This view that Stieglitz sought an aesthetic ideal that represented embodied experience is similar in spirit to what historian of science Chiara Ambrosio has recently characterized as “trained vision” in the pursuit of objectivity. Ambrosio bases her reading on Stieglitz’s formal background in the traditions of late-nineteenth-century German laboratory science, arguing that his conception of photography forms a parallel to period notions of objectivity, informed by Peter Galison and Lorraine Daston’s historical account of the concept that actively draws attention to the role of the observing subject in the creation of the image.⁹⁴ In Ambrosio’s words, “Trained vision does not betray the reality of individual moments in time; it validates and sanctions their existence by disclosing the very eye that collected those instants and deemed them important in some respect.”⁹⁵ Like Emerson, then, following this interpretation Stieglitz came to acknowledge the mediating role of his own perceptual equipment—his eyes and mind as much as his camera—in the search for truth in nature. As Ambrosio points out, this same formula would form the basis for Hartmann’s definition of straight photography, in which he directs:

⁹³ Alfred Stieglitz, “The Hand Camera,” 22

⁹⁴ See Daston and Galison, *Objectivity*, 309–362.

⁹⁵ Ambrosio, “Beauty is the Universal Seen,” 254.

“Rely on your camera, on your eye, on your good taste and knowledge of composition, consider every fluctuation of color, light, and shade, study lines and values and space division, patiently wait until the scene or object reveals itself in its supremist moment of beauty.”⁹⁶ The process of creating a photographic picture is thus rendered as a conscious activity, relying on one’s own accumulated experience and training in order to sense rightly the moment when nature’s beauty reveals itself.

Another source we might look to, which keeps intact Ambrosio’s reading but bypasses the need to situate its claim within a dualist paradigm of objectivity, is William James’s doctrine of radical empiricism. Several biographical accounts of Stieglitz have suggested an affinity between Stieglitz’s practice and James’s experientially-rooted philosophy.⁹⁷ While James first introduced the notion of “radical empiricism” in his 1897 book *The Will to Believe* as a defense of pluralism, starting in a series of journals articles dating to 1904, he subsequently refined and expanded on the concept, tying it to the idea of “pure experience.”⁹⁸ James’s core premise, which shares a close affinity to conception of spatial extension presented in his *Principles*, is that the perceived relations between things are equally constituents of experience as things in themselves. According to James’s logic, then, consciousness and its contents are inseparable, such that a thought can be a thing and vice versa. From this, we are presented with a way that an idea might enter into a “straight” photograph through suggestive or symbolic elements, by striving to

⁹⁶ Hartmann, “A Plea for Straight Photography,” quoted in Ambrosio, “Beauty is the Universal Seen,” 254.

⁹⁷ See, for example, Kiefer, *Stieglitz*, 5.

⁹⁸ See William James, “Does ‘Consciousness’ Exist?,” *Journal of Philosophy, Psychology, and Scientific Methods* 1, no. 18 (September 1, 1904): 477–491; “A World of Pure Experience,” *Journal of Philosophy, Psychology, and Scientific Methods* 1, no. 20 (September 29, 1904): 533–543; “A World of Pure Experience II,” *Journal of Philosophy, Psychology, and Scientific Methods* 1, no. 21 (October 13, 1904): 561–570.

represent the transitions among things, rather than simply the things themselves. In this way, James's conception of aesthetic experience as continuous and embodied shares an affinity with the connections Hartmann draws between perception, conception, and technique.⁹⁹

With this image of the hand camera as a conduit for direct experience in mind, it is also instructive to consider several extant photographs that show Stieglitz physically engaged with a hand camera, observing how his self-conscious posture and body language conveys an underlying ideal. It was a point of debate among early hand camera enthusiasts how the device ought to be held in order to obtain the more desirable results. The early majority take was that, rather than holding the camera at eye level, it was better to hold the camera either against the chest or underneath an arm, bracing it against the hip for support. Each of these options provided stability for the camera in the absence of a tripod. In the case of holding it against the chest, achieving this stability also required controlled breathing. An advertisement for Stieglitz's Tisdell & Whittelsey detective camera illustrates the latter stance (fig. 2.19). Assuming a comfortably poised posture on a small patch of grass, the man holds the camera at waist level as he peers ahead, his attention trained on the scene in front of him rather than his camera. A portrait of Stieglitz from 1904 by Heinrich Kühn, a prominent Austrian-German pictorialist, made while Stieglitz was visiting Kühn in Austria, illustrates the chest method (fig. 2.20). Stieglitz assumes a slightly crouched stance within a dense, unmanicured field of wild grasses and flowers. His Graflex camera is pressed tightly against the front of his body, such that it almost appears to extrude as an appendage from his midsection. Rather than looking down into the hooded viewfinder, he stares intently outward in the direction his camera is pointed. Nearly

⁹⁹ For a thoughtful discussion of the parallels between Hartmann and James's aesthetic philosophies, see Emily Gephart, "Sensation and Suggestion: William James and Sadakichi Hartmann's Symbolist Aesthetics," *William James Studies* 13, no. 2 (Fall 2017): 167–189.

recalling Emerson's *Poacher—A Hare in View*, Stieglitz appears to be stalking his subject, primed to fire the shutter when nature "reveals itself."

A second shot, made the following year by an unknown photographer, figures Stieglitz perched with his Graflex on a bridge in New York (fig. 2.21). Stieglitz carries the same posture, bending his knees slightly with his feet wedged against the steel brackets of a support beam. In this more candid view, however, Stieglitz has his eyes buried in the focusing hood as he composes the scene. This snapshot would serve, however, as a source image for an iconic advertisement Steichen created for the Little Galleries of the Photo-Secession, a rotating exhibition space that Stieglitz and Steichen created in 1905 in part as a response to the First American Salon (fig. 2.22). For the relief print that Steichen adapted, Steichen altered several key elements of the composition. Rather than appearing within an urban setting, Stieglitz is shown in silhouette on a moonlit hillside. He becomes creaturely, stalking by twilight. Additionally, Steichen has altered the head, so that Stieglitz's gaze is directed outward. In this way, Stieglitz is shown as a master of his instrument, which is figured as a natural extension of himself.

V. NATURE PHOTOGRAPHY'S INDUCEMENTS—EICKEMEYER'S *FLEUR-DE-LIS*

Eickemeyer was slower in coming around to the hand camera, though he too eventually came to sing its praises. In 1900, he put his name behind a pamphlet issued by Eastman Kodak called *Pocket Kodak Portraiture*. By recognizing that a primary benefit of the hand camera lies in its inconspicuous nature, Eickemeyer initially embraced it as a tool for informal portraits of children and family members. In contrast to his genre studies, Eickemeyer advocated an undirected approach. "*I especially made it my purpose to avoid any attempt at composition,*" he emphasizes, "*but left everything in the rooms as they happened to be at the moment,*" contenting

himself to wait patiently for his subjects to become so habituated to the camera that they forget its presence.¹⁰⁰

By adopting this more spontaneous approach, Eickemeyer was able to achieve in his portraits of children a quality of freshness and spontaneity that his genre studies typically lack. For Eickemeyer's landscape work through the early 1900s, however, he remained committed to his traditional eight-by-ten-inch view camera. Hauling around a large camera on his weekly excursions through the Yonkers countryside posed a logistical challenge, however, which Eickemeyer solved by creating what he called a "camera bicycle"—essentially a wooden trunk that held his camera, several lenses, plates, and a tripod, which could be converted into a cart outfitted with bicycle wheels and a long bamboo handle (fig. 2.23).¹⁰¹ While Eickemeyer valued the degree of detail and control afforded by the larger camera, at some point along the way he also began to carry a folding pocket camera with him into the field, which he used like an artist's sketchbook, making notes of places of interest in the landscape.¹⁰²

Regardless of his apparatus, working in the open field forced Eickemeyer to cede some of the control that he exerted over his genre scenes and studio portraits. The necessity of adapting to the uncontrollable conditions of outdoor work was conducive to formal experimentation, which helps to account for the novelty that Hartmann singled out in his foreground studies. "When he is alone with nature," Hartmann reflected, "he seems to forget his scientific methods, and [tries] to simply realize what she offers."¹⁰³

¹⁰⁰ *Pocket Kodak Portraiture* (Rochester, NY: The Kodak Press, 1900), n.p.

¹⁰¹ Rudolph Eickemeyer, Jr., "Camera Bicycle," *American Annual of Photography* 12 (1898): 152.

¹⁰² Panzer, *In My Studio*, 64.

¹⁰³ Hartmann, "Photographs by Rudolph Eickemeyer, Jr.," 165

Eickemeyer's breakthrough in this format came in 1894 with *Sweet Home* (sometimes *Home Sweet Home*), an homage to American playwright John Howard Payne's popular parlor ballad of the same name (fig. 2.24).¹⁰⁴ More than any other picture, *Sweet Home* secured Eickemeyer's reputation as a leading international pictorial worker. Between 1894 and 1898 alone, it earned him awards at ten exhibitions in London, New York, Hamburg, Paris, Brussels, and Vienna. The print depicts a gently curving footpath through a thick layer of snow leading upward toward the homestead, whose welcoming roofline is just visible over the ridge of a hill in the upper register of the composition. The high placement of the horizon line invites a comparison to Emerson's *A Rushy Shore*, which also lends some insight into how viewers likely conceived the picture. Rather than composing the picture to match a preformed idea, it seems more likely that, after setting up his camera, Eickemeyer was struck by the view projected onto the ground glass, which would have of course been inverted, placing the horizon, to his eyes, in a more conventional position in the lower third of the frame.¹⁰⁵ In this way, Eickemeyer follows Emerson's principle that a naturalistic composition should take its inspiration from the subject matter.

The critic Charles Caffin aptly characterized Eickemeyer's foreground studies as *paysages intime*, or familiar landscapes, a subgenre developed by naturalist painters of the French Barbizon School during the mid-nineteenth century.¹⁰⁶ "My Sundays throughout the

¹⁰⁴ Eickemeyer made a photograph based on Payne's childhood home in East Hampton, New York, but based on his descriptions, his *Sweet Home* is almost surely a view of Sherwood House. See Rudolf Eickemeyer, Jr., "The Seasons," unpublished typescript lecture, NMAH.

¹⁰⁵ Interestingly, in a recent discussion with a practicing photographer who teaches an introductory course in large-format photography, he pointed out to me that his introductory students consistently position the horizon line higher than traditional landscape conventions dictate.

¹⁰⁶ Charles Caffin, "Photography as a Fine Art. VI—The Landscape Subject," *Everybody's Magazine* 5, no. 25 (September 1901): 321–334. This essay highlights Eickemeyer

entire year are spent in the locality where the picture was made,” Eickemeyer recalled of *Sweet Home*’s origins, “and winter and summer, rain or shine, in company with my dogs I have tramped these deserted fields, orchards, and stretches of woodland.”¹⁰⁷ This idea of traversing the same landscape across multiple seasons in order to cultivate a deeper appreciation of its character became the organizing theme for Eickemeyer’s foreground studies, which he would elevate into a broader philosophy of art. “I have always been found on the side of those amateurs who believe that photography has its limitations,” he asserted, “and that more picturesque results can be attained by the successful interpretation of simple subjects near at hand than in the photographing of mountain ranges, huge cataracts or other stupendous phenomena of nature.”¹⁰⁸ Collapsing his views on photography’s technical limitations onto his preference for the commonplace elements of the nearby countryside, Eickemeyer found a unifying basis for his simple, straightforward approach to style and subject matter.

In 1905, Eickemeyer adapted his larger body of nature photographs into a lantern-slide lecture, titled “The Seasons” or “The Fairyland of the Seasons.” The illustrated talk, which contained up to 136 slides, took audiences on a virtual journey through the changing seasons, with Eickemeyer narrating the transitions through lyrical descriptions and bits of poetry inspired by the scenes. In his introductory remarks, he expressed his philosophy that “every object out of doors has a pictorial aspect, and that even the humblest rock, weed or cluster of wild flowers has

and Steichen’s landscapes, which Caffin later included as a chapter in *Photography as a Fine Art*. The version appearing in the book was edited to exclude Eickemeyer. For an account of this episode, see Hull, “Emplacement, Displacement and the Fate of Photographs,” 169–192.

¹⁰⁷ [Rudolf Eickemeyer, Jr.], “Editorial Comments,” *American Amateur Photographer* 6, no. 7 (July 1894): 329.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 330.

a lesson to convey.”¹⁰⁹ In summing up his goals for the lecture, he remarked “If they will induce anybody to take a deeper interest in nature I shall consider my objective fully accomplished.”¹¹⁰ As he saw it, his photographs, by virtue of their representational accuracy, served as placeholders for nature, which he hoped would cultivate a desire in his viewers to experience scenes like the ones he portrayed firsthand.

Hartmann seized upon this idea, presenting it as a novel way of thinking about what distinguishes photography as a visual art. Rather than aspiring to convey a personal impression, Eickemeyer, with the aid of his camera, was able to reveal hidden aspects of nature that the average person took for granted. Hartmann was particularly fond of Eickemeyer’s depiction of common wildflowers, such as *After the Rain* from 1900, which portrays a cluster of dandelions beside a rain-soaked country lane (fig. 2.25). On this theme, he writes:

Flowers do not, as a rule, fill us with sentiment beyond the feeling that they are pretty, and so their depiction in such a manner that would call upon us for sympathy is rarely accomplished; but Mr. Eickemeyer, out of an abundance of love for them, does really translate frail, ephemeral creatures of nature in pictures of rare and suggestive beauty. They do not merely represent aspects of originality and interest combined with marvelous accuracy, but are at the same time a glorification of that which is generally neglected or overlooked by the superficial observer of nature.¹¹¹

Hartmann, even after he came to stand behind Eickemeyer fully, persisted in his stance that he lacked an artist’s temperament, but in spite of this, in his words, Eickemeyer’s “love of nature makes him at times unconsciously, despite the wise lore he has stored in his mind, a poet, as, for instance, in those magnificent ‘Fleur de Lys’”¹¹²

¹⁰⁹ Eickemeyer, “The Seasons,” n.p.

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹¹ Sidney Allen [sic], “Rudolf Eickemeyer, Jr. An Appreciation,” *Photo-Era* 15, no. 3 (September 1905): 82.

¹¹² Hartmann, “Rudolph Eickemeyer, Jr.,” 165.

Eickemeyer's *Fleur-de-Lis*, which like *Sweet Home* dates to 1894, presses the foreground conceit to its limit (fig. 2.26). The scene places the viewer within a dense thicket at the edge of a verdant marsh. A scattered line of lilies in the near foreground form a diagonal row leading toward a clearing of water, which flows upward in a zig-zag pattern toward the distant background. The horizon is not visible, creating the suggestion of an endless expanse of vegetation. Both the composition and the contents are intensely organic, teeming with life and harmoniously ordered in a patterned, and yet not entirely linear manner. In this way, the scene casts nature as a dynamic, interconnected system, with winding paths punctuated by moments of stillness that invite the onlooker to wander and pause to rest at various still moments to delight in the dense ecology. It is complete as a picture yet not self-contained, inviting contemplation of what lies beyond in every direction.

Between 1901 and 1906, Hartmann would explore these themes in eight nature essays illustrated with Eickemeyer's photographs, which appeared in various popular magazines, including *Scribner's*, *Harper's Monthly*, and *Metropolitan*. Like much nature writing from the period, Hartmann geared the essays to urban audiences, taking them on a virtual ramble down rustic lanes and by picturesque ponds and seashores. The style of Hartmann's essays borrows elements from other American nature writers whom he admired, such as Walt Whitman and Henry David Thoreau, but most of all they are indebted to John Burroughs, the preeminent American nature essayist of the period. Starting in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, Burroughs developed a distinctive essay style that blended lyrical prose with vivid, scientifically accurate descriptions of local flora and fauna. His first collection of published nature essays, *Wake-Robin*, published in 1871, became one of the best-selling books of the period and helped to

define the publishing boom in American nature-writing that flourished through the first decade of the twentieth century.

Burroughs's distinctive outlook, which blended moral, aesthetic, and scientific perspectives, extolled the virtues of close observation and emphasized the lessons that could be gleaned from the parts of nature that were closest at hand. His works would provide the intellectual foundation for the American nature study movement, an education movement that sought to instill a conservation ethic through hands-on experiences outside, which spread throughout the country at the turn of the century.

Hartmann personally interacted with Burroughs on a number of occasions, making several pilgrimages to visit the venerated sage of American nature writing at Riverby, his wooded "estate" in West Park, located a few hours up the Hudson River from New York. Their first encounter took place in 1886, when Hartmann was only nineteen years old. Hartmann's final visit, which he adapted into an essay for *Century* magazine, occurred in 1921, just a few months before Burroughs's death. A photograph of the encounter shows Hartmann, looking thoroughly cosmopolitan with his signature fedora, cane, and full-length coat, reaching out to shake the hand of an aging Burroughs on the porch of his modest dwelling (fig. 2.27).

In describing Burroughs's writings and how they reflect on his serene way of being, Hartmann effused:

They reveal a man who has lived as widely and intimately, who has made nature his real home. All day long he is mingled with the heart of things; every walk along the river, into the woods, or up the hills is an adventure. He exploits the teachings of experience rather than of books.¹¹³

¹¹³ Sadakichi Hartmann, "A Visit to John Burroughs," *Century Magazine* 101, no. 5 (March 1921): 619.

In this final remark, Hartmann alludes to the organizing mantra of nature study, embodied in a quote attributed to the Harvard naturalist Louis Agassiz, “study nature, not books.” Hartmann’s appeal to direct experience gestures toward an anti-intellectual current within the movement’s ideology, which he amplified by praising Burroughs as someone who has “burst free from the shackles of intellectual authority.”¹¹⁴

It is through this lens of Hartmann’s admiration for American nature writing in the tradition of Burroughs that the meaning of Eickemeyer’s foreground studies comes into sharper focus. They embody an intimate knowledge of a familiar landscape made to reveal its inner workings through patient, careful observation. They make manifest in pictures an ideal of the naturalist as a keen observer engaged in a descriptive pursuit, which denies any categorical separation between aesthetics and epistemology, or science and sentiment. They seek to embody an enriching form of direct experience.

One of Hartmann’s nature essays, “The Camera in the Country Lane,” offers his strongest expression of this view. Because it explicitly takes up photography as its subject rather than nature as such, the essay is also unique within the suite of texts. The premise, central to the nature study ethos, was that a deeper “sympathy” for a place could be cultivated through sustained, close looking, which the camera helps to mediate. Hartmann performs for the reader his attunement to being “consciously observant” of the shrubs, weeds, and stones that pass before his view, noting how, through repeatedly retracing the same grounds, he and his surroundings “have learned to understand each other.”¹¹⁵ In this way, the nature study theme contained in Hartmann and Eickemeyer’s collaborative photo-essays seeks to train its readers in a specific

¹¹⁴ Ibid., 619.

¹¹⁵ Sidney Allan, “The Camera in a Country Lane,” *Scribner’s Magazine* 31, no. 6 (June 1902): 680.

mode of looking and experiencing. Turning to Eickemeyer's foreground studies, Hartmann reflects:

But the immediate foreground has always had my fullest sympathy. Stooping to examine some flower-leaves, or to pluck a blade of grass, I suddenly realized that the humble vegetation at my feet was an entire world into itself, a new realm, entirely unexplored by the careless passerby.¹¹⁶

Here, Hartmann expresses his admiration for Whitman's image of the cosmos being contained in a single blade of grass, leaving him to lament that landscape painters had long neglected the inherent beauty and complexity of the minute details all around them. It is precisely in this possibility, he argues, that Eickemeyer has happened upon a novel form of expression through the photography. "It was left to the camera," Hartmann concludes, "to reveal the constructive beauty of these simple fragments of nature, and to break near to us and to make common property of what heretofore only attracted the attention of the botanist and the wild-flower enthusiast."¹¹⁷

In *Fleur-de-Lis*, Hartmann finds the most refined expression of nature as a dynamic, interconnected ecosystem, in which each part finds a place in a beautiful whole. He concludes by emphasizing the non-separation of humans within the life of that natural system, remarking:

All the elements and many a workman from the ranks of the animal kingdom had to combine to produce this field of fleur-de-lis, running in waves as the wind comes and goes, with its large leaves twinkling in the sun as if the dew were still on them. Even we, who nonchalantly make our way through the tall meadow-grass, may be active in the evolution of this part of Nature's farm, by carrying some seed that has nestled in our clothes, from one place to another; and so we shall have involuntarily worked with the spring, preparing the way for a summer richer in flowers and a more bountiful fall.¹¹⁸

¹¹⁶ Ibid., 680.

¹¹⁷ Ibid., 680.

¹¹⁸ Ibid., 686–688.

The meaning of Eickemeyer's photograph, then, rests not in the aesthetic value of the picture as such, as in the way that it activates a way of seeing that translates into the experience of the actual landscape, which is the source of the picture.

While Hartmann embraced the naturalistic premise that pictures originate in nature itself, crucially, like many nature photographers, his devotion to the premise was somewhat flexible, to the extent that he allowed for alterations to a physical scene to bring its formal elements more in line with preformed aesthetic ideals. This amounts to a curious tautology, but it was a common argument among nature photographers from this period that such manual interventions were permissible so far as they resulted in somehow rendering nature in a more natural way.

Hartmann, however, who was astute enough in his role as critic to perceive such a contradiction, recast the compulsion to intervene in terms of human fallibility and conditioning biases. "Nature composes its pictures with marvelous precision," he observes, "Every branch and leaf has its value, and if the artistic photographer finds it necessary to rearrange them, it is only because we, used to certain stereotype laws of beauty, do not dare to copy the wild, uncultivated style which nature herself dictates."¹¹⁹

Eickemeyer would go on to furnish illustrations for two books in the nature study genre, a 1904 reprint of Hamilton Wright Mabie's 1896 volume *Essays on Nature and Culture* and Stanton Davis Kirkham's *In the Open* from 1908. Mabie's text, which is dedicated to Burroughs, strongly reflects the nature study philosophy, presenting a compatibilist view of Christian theology and evolutionary perspectives of nature through a series of philosophical essays. The text touches on an aesthetics of experience loosely formulated on evolutionary psychology, featuring, for example, on "The Race Memory," which posits that humans "carry in our own

¹¹⁹ Ibid., 683.

natures the record of every sort of contact with Nature, and of every stage of the evolution of the soul.”¹²⁰ Kirkham’s text, while less lofty in its philosophical ambition, is likewise based around promoting direct contact, situating Eickemeyer’s photographs as placeholders that entice the reader to seek out their subjects firsthand. “Nature,” Kirkham’s text begins, “is in herself a perpetual invitation to come into the open.”¹²¹

¹²⁰ Hamilton Wright Mabie, *Nature and Culture* (New York: Dodd, Mead & Company, 1904), 48.

¹²¹ Stanton Davis Kirkham, *In the Open: Intimate Studies and Appreciations of Nature* (San Francisco and New York: Paul Elder & Company, 1908), v.

CHAPTER THREE

NATURE PHOTOGRAPHY AS EXPERIENCE

I am quite prepared to hear, in imagination, objections from the photographic or naturalistic purist against securing pictures of animals or other creatures “in captivity,” which I would endeavor to meet with one simple question: What is our object in photographing a creature at all?

F.C. Snell, *The Camera in the Fields* (1905)¹

A curious article appears toward the end of the inaugural issue of *Camera Work*, under the title “Effective Lighting in Bird-Photography.” The journal identifies its author, Arthur Radclyffe Dugmore (1870–1955), earlier in the journal as a “painter and naturalist.”² The issue features sixteen original essays and poems, but Dugmore’s article is one of just two texts that includes an editorial preface, presumably written by Alfred Stieglitz. The note reads:

So general is the interest to-day displayed in Natural History photography that it affords us much pleasure to reproduce an example of “bird-work” as is the illustration appearing in this number of “Camera Work.” Mr. A. Radclyffe Dugmore, the maker of the picture, has written this short article in explanation of some of the difficulties encountered in presenting these subjects pictorially and at the same time retaining their value to the naturalists. Mr. Dugmore is the well-known author of “Bird Homes,” “Nature and the Camera,” etc., and needs no further introduction.³

¹ F. C. Snell, *The Camera in the Fields: A Practical Guide to Nature Photography* (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1905), 14–15.

² Stieglitz, “An Apology,” 15

³ A. Radclyffe Dugmore, “Effective Lighting in Bird-Photography,” *Camera Work* 1 (January 1903): 53–54.

What accounts for this introduction to a piece that runs little longer than a page? For one, Dugmore, a Welsh-born British artist who had come to the United States in 1889, was a relatively unfamiliar name in a familiar cast of contributors, having joined the New York Camera Club just one year earlier.⁴ But the note also hints at some anxiety over the article's inclusion on the basis of its subject matter. In *Camera Work*'s opening salvo, Stieglitz and his editorial staff declares that the new journal "makes its appearance as the logical outcome of the evolution of photographic art," a triumphal claim that echoes the Spencerian optimism found in Emerson's early public lectures, here recast nearly two decades on as a *fait accompli*.⁵ American pictorial photography, it was to be understood, had finally come into its own through the formation of the Photo-Secession the previous year, and *Camera Work* would serve as its "official mouthpiece"—a kind of Salon in printed form featuring works of the highest aesthetic quality alongside similarly elevated writing. Natural history photography risked appearing at odds with that mission, regardless of—or perhaps by virtue of—its popularity.

The notice served to assure readers that the "picture"—a word chosen to convey its status above a mere photograph—was on the order of a work of art. The accompanying plate, titled *A Study in Natural History*, performs a similar function, signaling Dugmore's status as an artist in a modern sense, while drawing attention from the subject matter toward the aesthetic features of the photograph—the rhythmic symmetries formed by the non-descript young birds, the delicate tonal gradations in their soft plumage, and the gently sloping curve of the branch on which they are arranged (fig. 3.1). The title's effect comes into focus by contrasting it with the caption given to the same image in *Nature and the Camera* (1902), which had been released two months

⁴ Dugmore was elected to the Camera Club of New York on January 27, 1902. "Trustees' Meetings," *Camera Notes* 5, no. 4 (April 1902): 310.

⁵ Stieglitz, "An Apology," 15.

earlier. The focus shifts to a description of the birds, who are identified as “three young Baltimore orioles and a young catbird” (fig. 3.2).⁶

To complete the artistic makeover, the muddy half-tone from *Nature and the Camera* becomes a decadent photogravure. While each of the plates in *Camera Work* was crafted to show the breadth of effects that could be achieved through fine photomechanical printing, *A Study in Natural History* stands apart as a tour-de-force in artistic reproduction. The scene is printed in a lush Vandyke brown on a delicate, hand-torn leaf of translucent Japanese tissue, which has been tipped onto a smaller, cream-toned mount. This layering produces a tromp-l’oeil effect, such that the image appears as though printed directly on the solid cream backing rather than floating above it on the translucent tissue. The composition itself shares strong formal affinities with Japanese bird-and-flower woodblock prints, thereby linking it to an aesthetic style popular among the Secessionist vanguard. Had this connection somehow been missed, a text by Sadakichi Hartmann appearing earlier in the issue, titled “Repetition, with Slight Variation,” outlines the principles of Japanese aesthetics, which are echoed throughout Dugmore’s composition.

Collectively, these multiple framing gestures obscure the underlying strangeness of Dugmore having been tapped for *Camera Work*’s high-profile debut. Wildlife photography was

⁶ This scene was reproduced in several of Dugmore’s later books, in which it was presented with a different caption each time. In *Wild Life and the Camera* (1912), a mixed caption reads “A Study of Young Birds at their most becoming age—three Orioles and a Cat-bird.” In *The Autobiography of a Wanderer* (1930), the image gets the full poetic treatment, with the caption “A ‘Beauty Chorus’ of Birds.” See A. Radclyffe Dugmore, *Nature and the Camera: How to Photograph Live Birds and Their Nests; Animals, Wild and Tame; Reptiles; Insects; Fish and other Aquatic Forms; Flowers, Trees and Fungi* (New York: Doubleday, Page & Co., 1902), facing 59; A. Radclyffe Dugmore, *Wild Life and the Camera* (London: William Heinemann, 1912), facing 10; and A. Radclyffe Dugmore, *The Autobiography of a Wanderer* (London: Hurst & Blackett, Ltd., 1930), 102.

still a relatively new branch of work in 1903, and its technical demands, coupled with its close association with natural history, meant that it was not typically considered as a class worthy of consideration in pictorial terms. Stieglitz admits as much when he says that Dugmore's achievement in the picture was having managed to portray the birds in a visually pleasing manner while also "retaining their value to the naturalists." Through an equivocal bit of phrasing, Stieglitz manages to avoid imposing a rigid dichotomy between art and science, but the implication remains clear that the image's potential utility for naturalists places it in tension with the art-for-art's-sake doctrine championed by the Photo-Secession. The summary at the end of the issue makes this distinction explicit, noting that Dugmore's picture "shows that even scientific subjects may be given pictorial worth without loss to their scientific value."⁷

Stieglitz's attempt to thread Dugmore's photograph between two competing visual modes, with one keyed toward aesthetic appreciation and another concerned with photography's evidentiary and descriptive capacities, offers a useful starting point for considering natural history photographs as a complex class of images that operate at the interstice of art and science. As it turns out, this discursive tension—between an investment in the intrinsic beauty of wildlife on one hand, and a dispassionate interest in their habits and behaviors on the other—was not simply a temporary artifact of wildlife photography's inchoate development; it has endured as one of the genre's defining features.

Parsing the discursive fluidity of early wildlife photographs can be productive in a limited sense, exposing a fault line within the self-reinforcing system that reigned during the pictorialist period of dividing works according to a dialectical logic used to distinguish artistic photographs based on subject matter as much as style. Following the migration of Dugmore's

⁷ "The Pictures in this Number," *Camera Work* 1, no. 1 (January 1903): 63.

photographs, for example, from natural history books, to popular lifestyle magazines, to the rarified spaces of art journals demonstrates their adaptability, which gave wildlife photographers a rare freedom to repurpose their work to suit different audiences. But undertaking a comprehensive analysis along those lines would prove counterproductive, since it would almost inevitably serve to reinforce the logic that it would seek to expose, without offering a positive framework for understanding how photographs of wildlife functioned independently of period categories. Rather than dwelling on how photographs like Dugmore's were adapted for different institutional contexts, then, a more constructive line of inquiry will consider the rhetoric underlying wildlife photography across discursive boundaries. This approach does not furnish an account of what wildlife photography is, or claimed to be, but instead focuses on what wildlife photographs do, or sought to do, by considering the appeals that they make to the viewer, which, in turn, reflect the underlying values and interests of their makers and the late-nineteenth-century cultural matrix in which they were created.

I. NATURE PHOTOGRAPHY'S CULTURAL ORIGINS

Today, Dugmore's photograph would readily be classified as an example of "nature photography." This term, in fact, entered the American and British vernacular right around 1900, following a marked increase in efforts to photograph animals in the open field over the previous decade (fig. 3.3). Nature photography, then as now, primarily denoted photographic depictions of wildlife—that is, undomesticated animals appearing in a natural habitat—but could also encompass flora or uninhabited landscapes. The genre flourished within the same network of urban camera clubs that fostered pictorialism's growth. Its development follows a similar trajectory to pictorial photography, with a select group of pioneering British photographers—most prominently Reginald Badham Lodge and the brother pair of Richard and Cherry

Kearton—developing a successful working model starting in the mid-1890s, which their American counterparts began to replicate by the end of the decade.⁸ Unlike pictorialism, however, nature photography was decidedly less international in scope, with most of the activity limited to Great Britain and the United States before the end of the 1900s.

The claim that nature photography originated in the last decade of the nineteenth century comes with a necessary caveat, which is that photographs of wildlife were created, albeit in smaller numbers and with varying degrees of success, before the 1890s. It is prudent to bear in mind that a photograph depicting an animal in a natural setting does not necessarily constitute an example of nature photography, depending on the parameters used to define that term. A handful of examples of photographs featuring wildlife exist that date to the 1870s and 1880s. In his survey history of early wildlife photographers, British naturalist Charles Guggisberg features a woodcut illustration based on a photograph of a penguin colony produced during the

⁸ Both Lodge and the Keartons made their first photographs of birds in Enfield, a suburb to the north of London. Lodge's work first appears in a three-part series of articles in the British journal *The Photogram* starting in late 1894. See R.B. Lodge "Stalking with the Camera," *The Photogram* 1, no. 10 (October 1894): 239–240; *The Photogram* 1, no. 11 (November 1894): 281–83; *The Process Photogram* 4, no. 41 (May 1897): 134–36. Lodge also exhibited a series of photographs of sea birds at the Royal Photographic Society's annual exhibition in 1895, for which he received the first exhibition medal awarded for natural history work. The Kearton brothers' first photographic forays—Cherry, the younger, was considered the photographer and Richard was the naturalist and writer, though they worked collaboratively—can be found in Richard Kearton, *British Birds' Nests; How, Where, and When to Find and Identify Them* (London: Cassell and Co., 1895), which is often cited as the first book published in England illustrated solely with photographs of wildlife. A photograph of a song thrush's nest from 1892 is frequently given historical accolades as being the first of its kind, with varying qualifiers attached to the claim. The Zoological Photographic Club, which formed in 1899, describes it as "the first British nature photograph." This honorific is, somewhat paradoxically, perhaps more appropriate than other more qualified assessments, since the Keartons hold a rightful claim as being the pioneers of nature photography as a genre, but photographs featuring wildlife, including bird's nests with eggs, predate 1892, several of which are detailed in the next section.

oceanographic tour of the *HMS Challenger* between 1872 and 1876.⁹ While the penguins are clearly the subject of the photograph, the image itself was made within the context of a more general geological survey.

Among the earliest examples of photography being used directly for the purpose of studying wildlife is William Green, a British portrait photographer from Berwick-on-Tweed, England, who created a series of photographs of bird rookeries on the Farne Islands on the northern coast of Northumberland during the summer of 1881, and the following summer on Bass Rock off the northern coast of Scotland. On each occasion, he was accompanied by Edward Bidwell, a member of the British Ornithologists' Union, who had enlisted Green to help in the creation of photographic studies. While many of the photographs show overall views of the colonies, a series of images depicting the nesting site of a single gannet on Bass Rock created over a seven-week period is particularly worthy of note, in that it anticipates the later use of wildlife photography for illustrating aspects of animals' life histories through sequences of images. Dated June 7, 1882, the first plate in the series depicts a gannet's egg on a nest, and the second plate, dated seven weeks later, shows a fledgling gannet, identified in the caption as having emerged from the egg shown in the first plate (figs. 3.4, 3.5). Interestingly, Green's pioneering efforts may have been lost, if not for the efforts of Peter Henry Emerson in assigning them historical priority. Emerson responded to an article discussing the history of wildlife photography in the *British Journal of Photography* in 1898 citing Green's early contributions, which had been overlooked.¹⁰ Emerson later awarded Green a posthumous bronze medal for

⁹ C.A.W. Guggisberg, *Early Wildlife Photographers* (London: David and Charles, 1977), 15. The Natural History Museum in London houses the original photographic albums.

¹⁰ See "Ex Cathedra," *British Journal of Photography* 45, no. 1975 (March 11, 1898): 145 and "Wild-life Photography," *British Journal of Photography* 48, no. 2128 (February 15, 1901): 111. The second note is signed "x," but the style suggests that Emerson is the likely

“being the first to photograph nesting birds in their natural surroundings,” a designation that is usually applied to the Kearton brothers’ photograph of a song thrush’s nest a full decade later.¹¹

An early effort to photograph bird colonies in North America also dates to the summer of 1881. Alpheus H. Hyatt, the curator to the Boston Society of Natural History, photographed a colony of gannets on the Bird Rocks (Rochers-aux-Oiseaux), a pair of islets that form part of the Magdalen islands archipelago, located in the Gulf of St. Lawrence to the north of Prince Edward Island (fig. 3.6). Hyatt had gone to the island for research purposes with a prominent group of ornithologists, including William Brewster, the co-founder of the American Ornithologists’ Union, and Samuel Henshaw, the director of the Museum of Comparative Zoology at Harvard University. Hyatt’s photograph, which shows the bird colony from a distance, reportedly required an exposure of twenty seconds, an indication of the technological impediments at the time. Despite having taken place in the same summer, these early successes by Green and Hyatt do not appear to have been coordinated. That they both succeeded in depicting seaside rookeries owes some credit to the contrast produced by white seabirds against dark rocks, aided by bright, coastal light. The sheer number of birds also dramatically improved the odds of producing a successful photograph.

author. For a subsequent mention of Green’s work, see Douglas English, “The Evolution of Nature Photography,” *Discovery: A Monthly Popular Journal of Knowledge* 17, no. 198 (June 1936): 190–91. Notably, English, who became well known in England for his carefully staged photographs of rodents, was one of the few photographers to earn a silver medal from Emerson, which he earned for his “art natural history photographs.” See P. H. Emerson, “Artistic (Medal) Competition for High Class Artistic Work,” *British Journal of Photography* 71, no. 3367 (November 14, 1924): 407.

¹¹ P. H. Emerson, *Emerson-Medallists. 1925–32*, privately printed pamphlet, ca. 1932, Richard and Ronay Menschel. Library, George Eastman Museum, Rochester, NY [hereafter GEM Coll].

These early efforts generated some passing excitement within natural history circles, but they garnered little attention from photographic journals. Green's photographs, however, likely served as an inspiration for a short story by Arthur Conan Doyle appearing in the *British Journal of Photography* in October 1881, titled "After Cormorants with a Camera," which features one of the earliest uses of the "camera hunting" trope that would become ubiquitous in later discussions of nature photography.¹² Doyle draws out various subtle analogies between the pastimes of hunting and photography, and the story's narrator even pauses to reflect on the dignity of his photographic pursuit compared with that of his two sporting companions, who spend their day haphazardly shooting at clusters of cormorants with muzzle-loaded shotguns. Nature photographers would come to play up this moral distinction in their efforts to promote photography as a humane alternative to sport hunting.

Apart from photography's technical limitations, the difficulty of reproducing photographs in print proved to be another major limiting factor for the development of the genre prior to the 1890s, when halftone reproduction processes allowed for illustrations from photographs to appear regularly within books and periodicals. Both Green and Hyatt's photographs are only preserved through reproductions in journals after 1900.¹³ Thus, attempting to pinpoint the first photograph of a nondomestic animal in a wild setting to serve as a point of origin for nature photography can quickly devolve into a wild good chase of sorts, with the end result being of marginal historical value, especially since the works are no longer extant in many cases. A series

¹² Arthur Conan Doyle, "After Cormorants with a Camera," *British Journal of Photography* 28, no. 1119 (October 14, 1881): 533–34; no. 1120 (October 21, 1881): 544–46.

¹³ For the reproductions of Green's photographs, see "Reports of the Meetings for the year 1901—(2) Bass Rock; 19th June," *History of the Berwickshire Naturalists' Club* 18 (1901–1902): 25–35. For Hyatt's photograph, see Edward R. Warren, "A Pet Kittiwake," *Bird-Lore* 29, no. 4 (July–August 1927): 243–247.

of glass lantern slides showing birds in natural surroundings were reportedly shown at the eighth annual meeting of the American Ornithologists' Union in 1890, for example, though many of them apparently consisted of mounted specimens placed within a landscape. The following year, the union showed a group of eighty examples of living birds, though these are only known through second-hand accounts.¹⁴

Starting in the mid-1890s, a host of technological innovations in lenses, shutters, and photographic chemistry enabled the first cohort of camera-wielding naturalists to venture forth into the field in search of wildlife subjects. Innovations such as the focal-plane shutter, dry gelatin plates, and the modern telephoto lens brought wildlife photography further into the realm of practical possibility in the late 1880s and early 1890s, which were followed by more incremental improvements, such as faster dry plate chemistry, the incorporation of isochromatic dyes that rendered colors in monochrome more accurately, higher optical density lenses that transmitted light more effectively, and single-lens reflex systems. These refinements lowered the technical barriers to entry for amateur hobbyists and gradually brought more photographers into the fold. By the middle of the decade, specialty cameras featuring compact bodies made from durable materials specifically marketed for wildlife photography began to appear, starting with the Dallmeyer "Naturalists' Hand Camera," which debuted in 1894 (fig. 3.7).¹⁵

It would be misleading, though, to suggest that technology was the causal agent directing nature photography's development. In several cases, in fact, an independent desire to photograph wildlife, rooted in the broader cultural fascination with natural history, gave rise to important

¹⁴ Alfred O. Gross, "History and Progress of Bird Photography in America," in *Fifty Years' Progress of American Ornithology, 1883–1933*, rev. ed. (Lancaster, PA: [American Ornithologists' Union], 1933), 161–62.

¹⁵ "Technical Meeting," *Photographic Journal* 19, no. 2 (October 22, 1894): 49.

technological innovations benefitting photography in a general sense. Transformational inventions like the focal-plane shutter, the modern telephoto lens, and the single-lens mirror reflex system all came about as a result of practical efforts to photograph living animals more effectively. As Matthew Brower observed in his recent pioneering study of early wildlife photography, “animals were not simply one photographic subject among many. They were one of the key subjects driving the technical development of photography.”¹⁶ What this pattern indicates, however, is that in order to arrive at an adequate historical understanding of nature photography’s origins, it becomes necessary to turn first not to technology, but to the cultural context that supported its rise.

Nature photography is often framed in contemporary scholarship as a genre that seeks to visualize nature in a pure state, absent of any human elements. Its visions of nature in the raw are celebrated by turns as monuments to a world that lies beyond humanity’s grasp, or critiqued as problematic expressions of wilderness ideology, which imagine nature as a space beyond modern civilization, and thus beyond the concerns of ordinary people.¹⁷ Ultimately, however, these two perspectives differ more in terms of attitude than substance; between them, there exists a consensus that nature photography represents nature as a space from which humans are excluded.

Brower adopts the skeptical view of the genre that has developed in recent years. “Wildlife photographs erase their taking, offering their viewers transparent access to nature,” he contends, “But by erasing their taking, wildlife photographs leave no space within their visual

¹⁶ Matthew Brower, *Developing Animals: Wildlife and Early American Photography* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2009), 21.

¹⁷ For a historical gloss of the American wilderness myth and the conceptual and political stakes undergirding it, see William Cronon, “The Trouble with Wilderness; or, Getting Back to the Wrong Nature,” in *Uncommon Ground: Rethinking the Human Place in Nature*, ed. William Cronon (New York: W.W. Norton, 1995), 69–90.

economies for viewers to occupy. Thus, the images provide their viewers with access to a deep nature from which they are fundamentally excluded.”¹⁸ Brower’s assessment borrows from postmodern theorists, chief among them John Berger, for whom modernity is defined by a gradual retreat of animals from the everyday lives of humans. In Berger’s 1977 essay “Why Look at Animals?” he paints a vision of modern life starting in the nineteenth century in which animals have all but disappeared from the urban landscape, replaced by images of animals and zoological gardens, which amount to a “living monument to their own disappearance.”¹⁹ For Berger, then, the authentic relationships built on mutual dependence that defined human-animal interactions during the pre-industrial period have been replaced by so many representations.

This account of wildlife photography has proven durable in part because it reprises a familiar narrative that presents human alienation from nature as modernity’s defining trope, with animals serving as a useful foil for the retelling. On strictly formal grounds, this reading is also hard to dispel—human elements are indeed excluded from a majority of nature photographs. One of the problems introduced by this narrative, however, is that it tends to cast nature photographers, who, as a group, are generally passionate about raising societal awareness about non-human forms of life, into unwitting agents potentially acting against their own interests. While this conceptual dilemma does not necessarily undercut the critical interpretation of the genre, turning to consider the actual practices of early nature photographers, along with the rhetoric they mobilized in both texts and images, paints a different picture altogether. Rather than

¹⁸ Brower, *Developing Animals*, xiv. Brower adds emphasis to this formulation through a footnote, asserting, “There is no position in the image’s internal economy for the viewer to locate themselves in relation to the depicted animals. The camera’s position does not present itself as an embodied human viewer.”

¹⁹ John Berger, “Why Look at Animals?” (1977), reprinted in *About Looking* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1980), 24.

working to advance an exclusionary or insulated concept of nature, most early nature photographers followed precisely the opposite motive: they promoted nature photography as an inclusive, participatory hobby, which they used to draw people out into the world in order to experience the rich variety of life around them firsthand.

Bearing this in mind, Berger's underlying premise concerning the disappearance of animals from modern life also calls for added scrutiny. As nature photography first gained a foothold in the late 1890s, the public devoted a disproportionate amount of their attention to birds. The cultural fascination with birds in the late nineteenth century was in no small part due to their pervasive *presence* in the urban landscape. Bird-watching, which was more commonly referred to as "bird study," emerged as a middle-class leisure activity alongside nature photography in the 1890s.²⁰ The first modern field guides, written for popular audiences with accessible, informal descriptions, promoted bird-watching as a means of self-improvement that fostered a sense of kinship toward birds. *Bird-lore*, the official journal of the Audubon societies, which debuted in 1899, promoted bird study alongside nature photography. Illustrated guides like Mabel Osgood Wright and Elliott Coues's *Citizen Bird* and Neltje Blanchan's *Bird Neighbors*, both released in 1897, offered rich descriptive accounts using anthropomorphic language that mobilized tropes of domesticity, civic responsibility, and national pride.²¹ *Bird Neighbors* alone sold over 150,000 copies.²² The first edition featured color plates based on

²⁰ Mark V. Barrow, *A Passion for Birds: American Ornithology after Audubon* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2000), 154.

²¹ For a discussion of anthropomorphic tropes in early field guides, see Spencer Schaffner, *Binocular Vision: The Politics of Representation in Birdwatching Field Guides* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2011), 26–50.

²² Barrow, *A Passion for Birds*, 165. Another source puts this figure at 250,000. See Gloria Shearin, "Neltje Blanchan," in *Early American Nature Writers: A Biographical Encyclopedia*, ed. Daniel Patterson (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2008), 64.

photographs of stuffed specimens, evidence of photography's mass market appeal but also its then limitations. By the 1904 edition, however, the author integrated a series of Dugmore's photographs of birds from life into the text.²³ As historian Thomas Dunlap notes, birds held a special place in the American cultural imagination not only because their colorful plumes and attractive songs endowed them with aesthetic value, but also because they benefitted from being close at hand within the urban landscape.²⁴

Bird-watching and nature photography were both viewed by reformers as ways to develop skills of visual discernment. In Florence Merriam's *Birds Through the Opera Glass* (1889), the book that is widely credited as the first modern field guide, Merriam remarks that "the first law of field work is *exact observation*, but not only are you more likely to observe accurately if what you see is put in black and white, but you will find it much easier to identify birds from your notes than from memory."²⁵ While Merriam was referring to the practice of jotting down field notes, with the growth of nature photography by the end of the next decade, she could have just as well been referring to a camera. For both the professional and the pleasure-seeking naturalist, photography functioned less as a tool for discovery and more like the traditional field notebook, in which observations could be recorded and important details could later be pulled in order to produce a fuller account of one's personal experiences in the field.

²³ See Neltje Blanchan, *Bird Neighbors. An Introductory Acquaintance with One Hundred and Fifty Birds Commonly Found in the Gardens, Meadows, and Woods about Our Homes* (New York: Doubleday, Page & Co., 1904). This edition also marks the title's integration into Doubleday, Page & Co.'s Nature Library series.

²⁴ Thomas R. Dunlap, *In the Field, Among the Feathered: A History of Birders and Their Guides* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 28.

²⁵ Florence Merriam, *Birds Through an Opera Glass* (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin and Co., 1889), 3.

There was also growing public awareness by the end of the nineteenth century that human activity had come to pose an existential risk to wildlife populations, which fueled the rise of citizen-led conservation groups devoted to animal protection, along with the passage of more game laws and the establishment of wildlife refuges. Organizations such as the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, founded as the Plumage League in 1889 in England, and the American Audubon societies, which first formed in 1886 and incorporated into a national organization in 1905, reflected increasing public concern for declining bird populations due to market hunting, egg and nest collecting, and the millinery trade. Early wildlife photographers frequently cited concerns about species extinction and positioned photography as a means of making lasting records of threatened wildlife for posterity. While concerns escalated that birds *could* vanish from the modern landscape, they certainly had not vanished by any stretch of the imagination.

Nature photography can be taken as a convenient shortening of the more cumbersome “natural history photography,” but the phrase also carried a historically distinct set of connotations tied to a new complex of cultural ideas about “nature” starting the late nineteenth century. In response to the rapid growth of industrialized cities in the United States, the newly established urban professional and leisure classes turned to the non-human world of nature as a source of authenticity, spiritual uplift, aesthetic appreciation, revitalization, and self-improvement. A loosely connected group of lifestyle and social reform movements coalesced around a shared conviction that direct experiences in nature would ease the disorienting and dehumanizing aspects of modern urban life.

While this national back-to-nature spirit drew some inspiration from the wilderness mythologies promulgated by the American transcendentalist philosophers of the mid-nineteenth century, the “nature” promoted by civic reformers and magazine publishers in the early 1890s

was distinct from the one championed by the preceding generation in key ways. Instead of far-off peaks and sublime vistas, nature came to mean green spaces that were accessible just beyond, or often within, the city limits.²⁶ Nature could thus be found in the nearby countryside and commuter suburbs, as in Eickemeyer's Yonkers, or slightly further afield in the cottages and vacation resorts where wealthy urbanites retreated during the summer months, as in Stieglitz's Lake George. It could also be accessed in the urban parks and gardens that flourished during the City Beautiful Movement. The prominent ornithologist Frank M. Chapman, whose *Bird Studies with a Camera* of 1900 was the first guide to bird photography published in the United States, got his start by photographing birds on lunchtime jaunts through New York's Central Park, just across the street from his office at the American Museum of Natural History. Chapman's book opens with a chapter titled "Bird Photography Begins at Home," in which he remarks that the possibilities for nature photography are "perhaps nowhere more evident than in the immediate vicinity of one's home."²⁷ This distinction is crucial for understanding how nature photography initially gained traction, where it was practiced, and who practiced it. As an outgrowth of the nature-based movements in the modern industrial cities of the United States and Great Britain, nature photography was to a large degree an urban phenomenon.

This is not to say that some intrepid photographers did not venture further afield in search of more exotic subjects. Excursions to more distant locales were common among the more high-profile wildlife photographers whose work appeared regularly in books, popular magazines, and

²⁶ See Peter J. Schmitt, *Back to Nature: the Arcadian Myth in Urban America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1969). Emphasizing the urban roots of the movement, Schmitt argues, against several other mid-century accounts, that the cultural embrace of nature by this period was not reactionary or expressly anti-modernist at its core.

²⁷ Frank M. Chapman, *Bird Studies with a Camera, with Introductory Chapters on the Outfit and Methods of the Bird Photographer* (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1900), 40.

scientific journals. In the American context, this smaller subset may be roughly divided further into sportsmen, who incorporated camera hunting into sporting or camping expeditions, and academic naturalists, for whom accumulating knowledge about wildlife was an end in itself. Belonging to the first group are photographers like William Carlin and Leverett White Brownell, both members of the New York Camera Club, and George Shiras III, a U.S. Congressman turned wildlife photographer.²⁸ The latter group, by contrast, was comprised mainly of ornithologists, such as Frank M. Chapman, Herbert K. Job, and Francis Hobart Herrick, who integrated photography into their existing fieldwork.

A new literary movement also flourished in this period which focused on realistic accounts of animals. John Burroughs became a leading literary voice of the movement, writing essays that celebrated the accessible, commonplace elements of nature over the more remote wilderness spaces favored by his predecessors. Alongside popular nature essays and fictional animal stories, natural history books written for general audiences also became popular. Lifestyle magazines like *Outing*, *Field and Stream*, and *Country Life in America* promoted nature photography alongside other outdoor hobbies like bird-watching, gardening, camping, hunting, and bicycling. Publishers enlisted photographers to supply illustrations for mass market books and magazines and carried articles promoting nature photography as an accessible and rewarding outdoor hobby.

Nature study, a progressive education movement that sought to integrate natural science teaching with the romantic, emotional, and aesthetic outlooks toward nature, also took hold in the 1890s and was integrated into school curricula throughout the United States after the turn of

²⁸ For an account of Shiras's work, see Matthew Brower, "George Shiras and the Circulation of Wildlife Photography," *History of Photography* 32, no. 2 (Summer 2008): 169–175.

the century.²⁹ The movement was built around the belief that direct, personal experiences in the natural world would help to instill a conservation-minded ethic in young people. According to Liberty Hyde Bailey, the national figurehead of the movement and a key early promoter of nature photography through his role as the editor of *Country Life in America*, the motivating principle behind nature study was “not directly the acquiring of science, but the establishing of a living sympathy with everything that is.”³⁰ Nature study likewise placed an emphasis on observation and developing the skill of visual discernment—or what Bailey described as “seeing the things that one looks at, and the drawing of proper conclusions from what one sees”³¹—which was seen as essential for cultivating a well-informed, engaged democratic citizenry. As a hands-on activity that facilitated close looking, nature photography came to serve an essential role within the nature study curriculum.

Nature photography thus took root at the turn of the century within the context of this larger boom in nature writing and publishing, along with the spread of the nature study movement. The blossoming interest in wildlife, which provided the fertile conditions for the growth of nature photography, embodied a new complex of ideas about the non-human world positioned at the nexus of science, aesthetics, and conservation.

²⁹ For overviews of the movement and its aims, see Kevin C. Armitage, *The Nature Study Movement: The Forgotten Popularizer of America’s Conservation Ethic* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2009) and Sally Gregory Kohlstedt, *Teaching Children Science: Hands-On Nature Study in North America, 1890–1930* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010).

³⁰ L. H. Bailey, “What is Nature-Study?” in *Cornell Nature-Study Leaflets: Being a Selection, with Revision, from the Teachers’ Leaflets, Home Nature-Study Lessons, Junior Naturalist Monthlies and Other Publications from the College of Agriculture, Cornell University, Ithaca, N.Y., 1896–1904* (Albany, NY: J.B. Lyon Company, Printers, 1904), 11.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 11.

Nature photography's liminal status finds further basis in an attendant shift that occurred during this period in the cultural meaning attached to the label "naturalist." Natural history, a field rooted in the longer tradition of natural theology, was gradually giving way to more orthodox scientific practices.³² Biology and its various subfields were emerging as professional disciplines, creating a rift between formally trained, professional naturalists, whose work was primarily based in museum collections, and naturalists in the traditional sense, who carried on informal practices of field observations and collecting. This relationship took on a decidedly less antagonistic form in the United States than in England, since American natural history collections were not nearly as well established. By the end of the century, there still remained many New World species to collect and classify in order to fill out the evolutionary tree of life, which drew more professionals into the field and blurred the lines between professional and amateur naturalists more generally.³³ Much like the photographic community of this period, naturalists blurred the amateur-professional distinction. This fluidity was particularly strong in ornithology, causing Chapman to once observe that "in no other branch are the professionals so outnumbered by amateurs."³⁴

More generally though, the designation "naturalist" increasingly came to function as a kind of catchall label used to designate everyone from museum professionals, sport hunters,

³² For a history of the British context, see Allen, *Naturalist in Britain*. For an account focused on the American context, see Robert E. Kohler, *All Creatures: Naturalists, Collectors, and Biodiversity, 1850–1950* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2006).

³³ The American Ornithologists' Union (A.O.U.), which was founded in 1883, published its first "Checklist of North American Birds," which established a uniform system of nomenclature in 1886. The British Ornithologists' Union, founded in 1858, predates the A.O.U. by twenty-five years.

³⁴ Frank M. Chapman, "An Opportunity for the Local Ornithologist," *Bird-Lore* 7, no. 6 (December 1905): 286. Quoted in Barrow, *A Passion*, 5.

taxidermists, specimen collectors, bird-watchers, conservationists, and “nature lovers” of a more leisurely stripe. In practice, the boundaries separating these roles were thoroughly porous, and a single individual might embrace several, or even all, of these titles simultaneously. Given that each of these “naturalists” came to embrace photography to serve their respective interests, arriving at a unitary account of the diverse motives and ends of nature photography poses a unique challenge.

Professional naturalists returned to fieldwork in greater numbers after the turn of the century as behavioral studies of animals from life, commonly referred to as “life histories,” became increasingly relevant in the field, a development that photography helped to bring about.³⁵ From the late nineteenth century, the study of animal behavior, or ethology as it soon came to be known, was closely allied with comparative psychology, a subfield of psychology that grew from evolutionary theory. As a result, studies of animal behavior, whether they purported to consider the subject first on its own terms or set out to investigate the so-called “human side” of animals, served the instrumental purpose, which was to advance our understanding of the nature and origins of human mind.³⁶

³⁵ To give some sense of when this shift in natural history beyond taxonomic classification toward the study of living animals occurred, Charles Bendire’s *Life Histories of North American Birds*, published in two volumes in 1892 and 1895, are generally regarded as the first comprehensive life history studies conducted in North America. See Herbert Friedman “Advances in Life History Work,” in *Fifty Years’ Progress of American Ornithology, 1883–1933*, rev. ed. (Lancaster, PA: [American Ornithologists’ Union], 1933), 101–109.

³⁶ A philosophical divide emerged among comparative psychologists between those who believed that animals should be considered first on their own terms prior to making comparative leaps to human psychology and those who sought evidence of human mental traits directly. While this methodological disagreement played an important role in the field’s development, there was a general consensus that the value of studying animal intelligence was linked to the insights it might provide about the origin and nature of the human mind. Those advocating a direct approach would often refer to the “human side” of animals, a phrase that was also used pejoratively by critics. See Dugmore, *Wild Life*, 98. For an overview of the development of

Shortly after the turn of the century, questions about animal intelligence spilled over into American popular culture. During a highly publicized debate in 1903, later dubbed the “nature fakers” controversy, John Burroughs lambasted what he viewed as a growing tendency in popular nature writing toward sentimentalized, anthropomorphic portrayals of wildlife.³⁷ Framing wildlife as individuals, rather than interchangeable members of a species, became one of the key rhetorical devices used by nature writers to cultivate sympathy between readers and real or fictional animal subjects. Theodore Roosevelt coined the phrase “nature faking” in a 1907 article defending Burroughs that effectively drew the public controversy to a close.³⁸ It quickly took on a more general meaning, however, and grew to encompass photographs of taxidermy specimens deceptively passed off as living animals—a practice that did occasionally take place, but where accusations, born of the public’s incredulousness about what were novel and unfamiliar views of animals, vastly outnumber the documented cases.³⁹ While nature faking in this sense is mostly distinct from the quasi-scientific debate about the limits of animal intelligence or individuality, both share a common root in a broader societal investment in nature as a truth-bearer, whose integrity needed to be actively defended.

comparative psychology focused on the United States, see Donald A. Dewsbury, “Chronological History of Comparative Psychology Through 1919,” in *Comparative Psychology in the Twentieth Century* (Stroudsburg, PA: Hutchinson Ross Publishing Co., 1984), 33–82.

³⁷ For an overview, see Ralph H. Lutts, *The Nature Fakers: Wildlife, Science & Sentiment* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1990).

³⁸ Theodore Roosevelt, “Nature Fakers,” *Everybody’s Magazine* 17, no. 3 (September 1907): 427–430.

³⁹ There is an irony in latter applications of Roosevelt’s term. A nature photography enthusiast, Roosevelt penned an introduction for A.G. and Mary Wallihan, *Hoofs, Claws and Antlers of the Rocky Mountains, by the Camera* (Denver, CO: F. S. Thayer, 1894), which was the first book published in the United States to be illustrated with wildlife photographs. While it seems to have gone unremarked at the time, a dozen or so images included in the book that are not attributed to the Wallihans quite clearly make use of staged taxidermy specimens.

Nature study's emphasis on direct experience offers a conceptual point of entry for understanding the organizing rhetoric of nature photography. The special importance given to experience by nature study promoters has roots in the same empiricist philosophical tradition that gave rise to naturalism in its myriad forms. The core tenet of empiricism, that all knowledge derives from sensory experience, lends itself to an educational philosophy that favored direct observation. This dynamic is reflected in the movement's often repeated dictum, attributed to the Harvard biologist Louis Agassiz, "study nature, not books."⁴⁰ For nature study advocates, this motto echoed their faith in nature as an unimpeachable standard of truth. For critics, however, it reflected strains of anti-intellectualism and revealed the lack of pedagogic rigor besetting the movement.

Taking cues from American pragmatist philosophers like John Dewey, nature study enthusiasts drew from an interpretation of Darwinian evolution that was non-dualist, embracing a holistic view of life and mind that resisted separating humans from nature or neatly compartmentalizing experience into intellectual, spiritual, emotional, or aesthetic phenomena.⁴¹ For Dewey, experience served as the key term in his philosophy of education, and later within a broader theory of aesthetics, which he used to emphasize that learning must not be closed off from the world.⁴² Dewey cautiously embraced nature study, asserting that lessons must be

⁴⁰ For more on this phrase, see Sally Gregory Kohlstedt, "Nature, Not Books: Scientists and the Origins of the Nature-Study Movement in the 1890s," *Isis* 96, no. 3 (September 2005): 325.

⁴¹ Armitage, *Nature Study Movement*, 55–58.

⁴² See John Dewey, "My Pedagogic Creed," *School Journal* 54 (January 1897): 77–80, which includes a passing reference to nature study. His later books, including *Experience and Nature* (1929) and *Art as Experience* (1934) present more ambitious accounts relating what he calls "empirical naturalism or naturalistic empiricism," to epistemology and aesthetics. John Dewey, *Experience and Nature* (London: George Allen & Unwin, Ltd., 1929), 1a.

structured toward a constructive end, while rejecting approaches that lacked a clear structure. Dugmore and other early nature photographers borrowed from the experiential model of education embraced by nature study, maintaining that photography was an ideal way to bring necessary structure to one's experience of nature.

II. THE MIGRATORY LIFE OF ARTHUR RADCLYFFE DUGMORE

Dugmore serves as a useful intermediary between the various interests around which nature photography coalesced.⁴³ His initial foray into wildlife photography dates to 1897, when his mentor, Princeton ornithologist William Earle Dodge Scott, enlisted his aid to produce illustrations for a volume on North American birds. Starting in 1900, Dugmore began working for Doubleday, Page & Co., a leading American publisher of nature writing and natural study literature, which enabled him to expand his repertoire to include all varieties, large and small, of mammals, birds, and even fish. He quickly earned him a national reputation for his work, such that by 1903, Chapman, writing in his capacity as the editor of *Bird-Lore*, declared Dugmore to be “the leading nature photographer in this country.”⁴⁴ In 1905, when the Eastman Kodak Company decided to publish a popular guide to amateur photography, it hired three of the preeminent figures in American photography to write supplemental essays covering non-

⁴³ The details of Dugmore's personal life can be found in his autobiography published in England in 1930, as well as a biography issued a year later under his longtime American publisher, Doubleday, written by the radio and television broadcaster Lowell Thomas. See Thomas Lowell, *Rolling Stone: The Life and Adventures of Arthur Radclyffe Dugmore* (New York: Doubleday, Doran & Company, Inc., 1931).

⁴⁴ Frank M. Chapman, Review of *Nature and the Camera*, in *Bird-Lore* 5, no. 2 (March–April, 1903): 65.

technical themes: Alfred Stieglitz, who wrote on composition, Rudolf Eickemeyer, Jr., who covered landscapes, and Arthur Radclyffe Dugmore, who discussed nature photography.⁴⁵

From 1902–1909, Dugmore served as an official staff photographer for *Country Life in America*, a lifestyle magazine published by Doubleday, Page & Co. He traveled throughout the United States and Canada on assignment and sought out new and interesting subjects to photograph. His articles focused on individual animals and tended to highlight curious or exceptional behaviors that he had witnessed, providing a platform for speculation about the emotional or intellectual sides of his subjects. His tenure with the magazine overlapped almost perfectly with the presidential term of Theodore Roosevelt, who helped to fuel the nature publishing boom through his masculine, wilderness-loving persona and embrace of natural history, conservation, and sports-hunting.

In 1909, Dugmore resigned from his post at *Country Life in America*, seizing an opportunity to follow Roosevelt's widely publicized expedition to British East Africa. The 1909–10 expedition marked a watershed moment both in Dugmore's career and in the broader history of nature photography, signaling a symbolic shift away from its beginnings as an amateur hobby focused around the nearby countryside toward a profession dominated by a select group of globetrotting adventure seekers. From the time that Dugmore photographed his first birds for Dodge through his first trip to Africa, he cultivated diverse relationships within the communities of professional naturalists, nature-study enthusiasts, as well as artists and amateur photographers. His career, along with the diverse life experiences that shaped his outlook toward non-human

⁴⁵ *The Modern Way in Picture Making, Published as an Aid to the Amateur Photographer* (Rochester, NY: Eastman Kodak Co., 1905).

life, provide an ideal lens for exploring the development of early nature photography in all of its phases.

The unconventional, peripatetic nature of Dugmore's early life offers some necessary reference for understanding how he became a wildlife photographer and how his experiences variously inflected his approach to his subjects. He was born on Christmas Day in 1870 in Betws-y-Coed, Wales. His mother, Emily Evelyn Brougham, was the niece of Lord Henry Brougham, Lord Chancellor of England; his father, Francis (Frank) Sandys Dugmore, was an eccentric and volatile character who held various ranks in the British military and supported radical social movements throughout his life. Arthur gained his first experiences with wildlife roaming the grounds of Broughall Castle, near Offaly in the Midlands Region of Ireland, which his family rented during one of his father's military appointments. Among his father's wide-ranging hobbies, he had an aviary of forty birds of prey, which he maintained in hopes of fostering a revival in of what by then had already become the antiquated sport of falconry. Arthur thus spent his early childhood tending to the falcons, learning to hunt, and collecting nests and eggs on the castle grounds.⁴⁶

In the 1870s and 1880s, rural Ireland was in the throes of the Land War, a period of intense social unrest over tenant-landlord relations. Despite ties to nobility through marriage, Dugmore's father became an active supporter the Irish National Land League, a radical agrarian political organization that sought to abolish the prevailing system of rack-rents and absentee landlordism in the region. Starting in 1878, he opened up Broughall Castle for leadership planning meetings. Dugmore states in his autobiography that local inhabitants grew suspicious of his father despite his support for their cause, which resulted in an incident in which he was

⁴⁶ Dugmore, *Autobiography*, 11.

accused of murder, landing him in jail for several months.⁴⁷ Newspaper reports provide an alternative account that he was, in fact, jailed for inciting non-payment of rent. Whatever the case, upon his release on bail in May 1883, the family fled the castle, purchased a yacht named the *Rosalind*, and embarked on a new life at sea.

Dugmore's family spent the next six years sailing throughout the Mediterranean, making ground for various stretches in Lisbon, Cadiz, Tangiers, Sicily, the Greek Islands, Athens, Constantinople, and travelling as far as Russia by way of the Black Sea. In 1887, Frank Dugmore volunteered again for the British military, this time in South Africa, leaving Arthur along with his mother and his siblings in Naples. Arthur took painting classes during this period at the Reale Istituto dei Belle Arti (now the Accademia di Belle Arti di Napoli), which would be the height of his formal education. He also learned the basics of photography during this time.⁴⁸ His father returned a year later, at the end of 1888, and informed Arthur that they were set to sail across the Atlantic to the Gulf Coast of Florida, where they would oversee a profitable orange growing interest.⁴⁹ So, in January 1889, Dugmore and his father left their family and, with a crew of four others, set sail on the *Rosalind's* first transatlantic voyage.

⁴⁷ Dugmore states in his autobiography that his father had been framed by local residents who had become suspicious of him. Given his volatile personality, it also falls within the realm of reason that he was guilty of the separate murder charge. In 1894, Francis Dugmore joined a group called the British Freeland Association led by Austrian chemist Dr. Julius Wilhelm, which intended to form a socialist colony north of Mombasa in British East Africa. The group quickly dissolved, and he subsequently bounced around between various volunteer positions in the British army. In 1898, his mental health clearly having deteriorated, he shot and killed another officer and later killed himself while awaiting trial. It is unclear from Dugmore's accounts whether he knew the full extent of his father's fate.

⁴⁸ Ibid., 56.

⁴⁹ Ibid., 74.

Following a series of misadventures in the Caribbean, the crew touched ground in Florida via the Port of Tampa in July 1889. Florida was in the midst of a speculative land boom in the 1890s. As many other fortune seekers, when Dugmore and his father arrived at the plot that his father had promised to turn into a profitable citrus grove, they discovered an inhospitable swampland. This turned out to be one scheme too many for Dugmore, and he resolved to set out on his own. He briefly entered into a partnership with an itinerant portrait photographer, establishing a studio in the small town of Leesburg under the name Field & Radclyffe, taking his middle name to avoid any association with his father.⁵⁰ This initial venture was quickly dissolved when his partner left for another town, but it gave Dugmore the confidence to strike out on his own, so he set up a small tent studio in the nearby resort town of Tarpon Springs (fig. 3.8).

While being actively pursued by his father, and “sleeping in the tent and living mostly on soda crackers,” Dugmore found a lifeline when he came into contact with a doctor from Philadelphia who hired him as a boatman.⁵¹ The doctor introduced him to W. E. D. Scott, a curator of the museum of biology at Princeton University, who since 1886 had been using Tarpon Springs as a base for studying birds in the region. With Scott’s assistance, Dugmore made his way north, assuming false names and buying short distance train and boat tickets to evade his father. He temporarily took up residence with the Scotts at their home in Tarrytown, New York. Scott enlisted Dugmore as a field assistant, and over the next two winters they would travel to Jamaica and Florida on specimen collecting trips. While working under Scott, Dugmore became conversant in ornithology, learning how to dress skins and mount specimens.⁵²

⁵⁰ Lowell, *Rolling Stone*, 131.

⁵¹ Dugmore, *Autobiography*, 78.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 80.

Dugmore moved to New York City in 1892 where, for a short time, he took a job as a mechanical draughtsman for the Empire City Subway company. Over the next several years, he lived a self-styled Bohemian lifestyle, occupying a rented art studio on East 14th street in Manhattan, while trekking out to visit the Scotts on weekends. He painted in his spare time and remained involved in natural history, becoming elected to the American Ornithologists' Union in 1893.⁵³

III. A "LIVING LABORATORY"—NATURE PHOTOGRAPHY AS SCIENCE

In the spring of 1897, Scott enlisted Dugmore to produce photographic illustrations for a book on North American birds. Dugmore's first photographs for Scott of birds appear in an article that Scott wrote for *Scribner's Magazine* in 1897. The illustrations depict photographs of mounted specimens, which were intended to demonstrate a modern, artistic approach to taxidermy, which sought to replicate naturalistic poses of animals from life, rather than the traditional approach of mounting specimens on standard T-shaped perches in stiff, upright positions. Scott offered various pieces of artistic advice that anticipate Dugmore's later approach to wildlife photography: composition is essential; a detailed background will detract from a central idea; and oftentimes a single twig or plant is sufficient to suggest the setting. While Scott saw value in photography for providing lifelike impressions, he cautioned against trusting the camera in make judgements. "The camera sees what you do not," he warned, "If you attempt to copy its results, the end attained will not appeal to those who have not seen with a camera." The true goal should be to appeal to those "who have observed and retained certain impressions of birds through their unaided senses."⁵⁴

⁵³ Ibid., 94.

⁵⁴ W. E. D. Scott, "Bird Pictures," *Scribner's Magazine* 21, no. 3 (March 1897): 502–503.

Dugmore joined Scott for six months beginning in spring of 1897, working out of a small home in South Orange, New Jersey, to produce illustrations under Scott's supervision for the 1898 volume *Bird Studies*. Roughly half of the illustrations were mounted specimens, which Dugmore surrounded with foliage appropriate to the birds' native habitats to make them appear more naturalistic (fig. 3.9). For many species, however, they settled for photographs of study skins from Scott's collection, a clear misstep that resulted in illustrations of little scientific utility, much less aesthetic appeal (fig. 3.10). A small number of illustrations featured juvenile birds photographed from life, posed on single branches against neutral backgrounds. Only one of the illustrations, however, which shows a wood thrush setting on a nest, bears the designation "photographed from life," suggesting that it was made *in situ*, rather than in a studio setting.⁵⁵ The halftone of the image is so heavily retouched, however, that it resembles a wash drawing more than a photograph, evidence that Dugmore was not yet proficient working in the open field (fig. 3.11). While the illustrations in Scott's *Bird Studies* are of mixed quality and generally copy the standard conventions of scientific taxidermy even when they do feature living birds, they offer a useful glimpse into Dugmore's early working methods and the insights he borrowed from Scott's unique approach to studying bird life.

As a student at Harvard in the early 1870s, Scott was one of the founding members of the Nuttall Ornithological Club, the first official ornithology organization in the United States. He studied zoology under Louis Agassiz, one of the intellectual forbears of the nature study movement. Agassiz's influence is apparent in Scott's deeply humanistic approach to natural history, which sought to blend scientific instruction with aesthetic and moral perspectives. While

⁵⁵ W. E. D. Scott, *Bird Studies: An Account of the Land Birds of Eastern North America* (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1898), 3.

Agassiz was among the leading American critics of Darwin's theory of evolution, Scott deviated from his teacher's views on that issue, devoting his research to exploring the underlying evolutionary process by which species form under domestication. In his wide-ranging 1903 memoir, *The Story of a Bird Lover*, Scott summed up his attitude toward the study of birds as follows:

I think that the human side of this whole study is perhaps the most important part. The study of birds develops every kind of aesthetic sensibility; it is a pleasure and a benefit to see the beauty of their coloring, the grace of their motions, and to hear the sweetness of their song; and when this is awakened in you, the more vital elements of love, sympathy, and helpfulness will naturally follow.⁵⁶

Following his graduation from Harvard, Scott worked as a taxidermist in New York for a short time, until he was hired in 1875 as a curator in the museum of biology at Princeton University, becoming one of the first curators of birds in the country. Over the next two decades, he undertook collecting trips throughout the United States, focusing the bulk of his attention in the Gulf Coast of Florida starting in 1878. He amassed a collection over the subsequent two decades that was only surpassed domestically by the American Museum of Natural History and the Smithsonian Institution.⁵⁷ Between his first visit to the region and his first contact with Dugmore a decade later, Scott witnessed a staggering decline in bird populations in the region's once plentiful heron and egret rookeries, which had been decimated by exotic plume hunters working as suppliers for the millinery trade.⁵⁸ He described in gruesome detail a practice wherein plume

⁵⁶ W. E. D. Scott, *The Story of a Bird Lover* (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1903), xi.

⁵⁷ Frank M. Chapman, "Collections of Birds in the United States and Canada: Exhibition Collections," in *Fifty Years' Progress of American Ornithology, 1883–1933*, rev. ed. (Lancaster, Pa., [American Ornithologists' Union], 1933), 143–157.

⁵⁸ W. E. D. Scott "The Present Condition of Some of the Bird Rookeries of the Gulf Coast of Florida," *Auk* 4 (1887): 135–144, 213–222, 273–284.

hunters used young birds to lure the adult egrets back to their nest so that they could shoot them, resulting in “a vast pile of carcasses of dead parents, stripped of their beautiful plumes, and thousands of young birds left to starve to death in misery in their nests.”⁵⁹

Scott experienced a similar conversion experience over the summer of 1895, when he accidentally shot a mother Baltimore oriole that was bringing food to its young. He resolved to rear the orphaned birds himself, which in turn led him to become interested in studying live birds in captivity. Following this experience, he shifted his attention from systematics and taxonomy to what he described as the study of “an animal as an *individual*.”⁶⁰ Over the next several years, he built an expansive aviary consisting of roughly five hundred live birds from around the world, converting six rooms of his house into what he described as a “*laboratory for the study of live birds*.”⁶¹ The frontispiece of his autobiography, an environmental portrait of Scott by the wildlife illustrator Robert Bruce Horsfall, highlights his intimate relationship with the avian subjects in his living laboratory (fig. 3.12). The trees and plants visible in the back of the room near a large, sunny window, closely resemble some of elements in Dugmore’s photographs, suggesting that some of the work for Scott’s book may have been carried out indoors.

If Scott’s hands-on approach to wildlife informed Dugmore’s working methods, his intimate, speculative approach to their ways of being deeply shaped his ethical views towards wildlife and his efforts to relate to them on individual terms. In the concluding section of his autobiography, a chapter titled “A Naturalist’s Vision,” Scott laid out his hopes for the future of wildlife research. He claimed that coming to know a group of twenty robins so intimately “*as to*

⁵⁹ Scott, *Story of a Bird Lover*, 258.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 334.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 343.

know them by their faces” would ultimately yield greater revelations about the evolutionary process than traditional systematics. He also believed that studying birds in controlled settings, i.e. in captivity, could reveal hidden intellectual traits of birds that would escape detection in the wild, presenting his laboratory as model for future research in comparative psychology.⁶² He concluded the book with an excerpt from German comparative psychologist Karl Groos’s book *The Play of Animals*, which a year after its initial publication in 1897 was translated into English by his Princeton colleague, the psychologist James Mark Baldwin. The passage reads:

The animal psychologist must harbor in his breast not only two souls, but more; he must unite with a thorough training in physiology, psychology, and biology the experience of a traveler, the practical knowledge of the director of a zoological garden, and the outdoor lore of a forester. And even then he could not round up his labors satisfactorily unless he were familiar with the trend of modern aesthetics. Indeed, I consider this last point so important that I venture to affirm that none but a student of aesthetics is capable of writing the psychology of animals.⁶³

Looking past the peculiar allusion of aesthetics for the moment, for Groos, as for Scott, to be an effective student of animal life required a generalist’s knowledge.⁶⁴ While Scott viewed formal

⁶² Ibid., 346.

⁶³ Karl Groos, *The Play of Animals*, trans. Elizabeth L. Baldwin (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1898), xviii. Quoted in Scott, *Story of a Bird Lover*, 365.

⁶⁴ Groos proposed an instrumentalist evolutionary account of play, which positioned itself as an alternative to a model put forth by Herbert Spencer, which closely mirrored an account by German philosopher Friedrich Schiller. The Schiller-Spencer model posited that play constituted “surplus energy,” which begins to accumulate after the immediate survival needs of an organism have been satisfied. Groos rejected this idea, arguing that play serves as necessary practice for essential behaviors that aid in survival later in life. He saw in the play of animals, which he based in the concepts of inner imitation (*innere Nachahmung*) and conscious self-deception (*bewusste Selbsttäuschung*). While Groos’s ideas did not have a lasting influence on the scientific community, his evolutionary account of animal play became a point of reference in the nature faker’s controversy. Burroughs cited Groos on multiple occasions to furnish an explanation for how play, an area of behavior suggestive of active learning, could be explained by instinct. See John Burroughs, “On Humanizing The Animals,” *Century Illustrated* 67, no. 5 (March 1904):

training as essential for setting rigorous experimental parameters, he maintained that developing a sense for drawing inferences from an accumulated set of data ultimately hinges as much on one's practical life experiences. Dugmore internalized this holistic view of natural history, which he would later bring to bear on his photographic practice.

Following the publication of *Bird Studies*, Dugmore approached Frank N. Doubleday, who the previous year had started a new publishing venture, with some samples of his work. Impressed by the efforts, Doubleday offered to pay Dugmore to create illustrations for a book devoted to wild flowers written by his wife, the nature writer Neltje Blanchan De Graff Doubleday, who published under the pen name Neltje Blanchan. His flower illustrations appeared in Blanchan's 1900 title *Nature's Garden*, which marked the start of Dugmore's fruitful association with the publisher. Scott introduced Dugmore to one of his neighbors, Henrietta Watkins, whom he married in January 1901. The two moved into a home in South Orange, which Dugmore used as a base for his expanding efforts, with Watkins joining him as an assistant in the field.⁶⁵

Over the next few years, Dugmore traveled the country on various assignments, producing illustrations for nature books and articles in *Country Life in America*. He visited Virginia to photograph mockingbirds, toured Canada in an effort to photograph the declining beaver populations, hiked to the Adirondacks to photograph porcupines, and traveled to Newfoundland and the High Sierras to shoot salmon, graylings, trout, and other fish. Along with photographing animals, he produced articles on camping, fishing, fur trapping, and other outdoor activities.

773; and John Burroughs, "Human Traits in the Animals," *Outing Magazine* 49, no. 3 (December 1906): 304;

⁶⁵ Dugmore, *Autobiography*, 104.

IV. “A REVOLUTION IN NATURE PICTURES”—APPEALS TO TECHNOLOGY AND EXPERIENCE

For this first cohort of nature photographers, the sheer novelty of being able to photograph a wild animal in its natural habitat supplied its own incentive, such that little independent motive or justification was needed to take up the pursuit. To wit, a retrospective essay from the 1930s tracing the development of bird photography in the United States observed that throughout the 1890s, photographs of wild birds were “ends in themselves merely to please the eye,” and it was not until the 1900s that they became valued as “important records of bird life and behavior.”⁶⁶ As with photography’s other branches, what started as a technical challenge progressed into a full-fledged genre, replete with recognizable conventions organized around a clear set of directives and governing norms. This transformation took place gradually, such that in 1905, when the author of a nature photography manual posed the rhetorical question, “What is our object in photographing a creature at all?” the answer was still open for debate.

Like Dugmore, many nature photographers initially positioned their work as an improvement over traditional, hand-drawn methods of natural history illustration, which they anticipated would soon be rendered obsolete. Following this line of reasoning, much of the work prior to 1900 self-consciously emulated conventions from traditional modes of natural history illustration and taxidermy display. However, as techniques for photographing animals in the field improved, with the introduction of faster plates and better lenses, along with practical innovations like photographic blinds and automatic or remote triggers, the direction of influence reversed. While Scott cautioned against using the camera as a basis for taxidermy modeling, traditional illustrators and museum preparators gradually came to depend on photographic source

⁶⁶ Gross, “History and Progress,” 164.

material to render their work more lifelike. As an early example of this dynamic, Robert W. Shufeldt, an honorary curator at the Smithsonian Institution, included photographs of living birds that he had posed in the same manner as mounted specimens in a 1892 government report on museum taxidermy (figs. 3.13, 3.14).⁶⁷ The comparisons highlighted how taxidermists could use photography to achieve more realistic posing. Shufeldt conducted his studies in a studio setting using models obtained from a local animal emporium in Washington, D.C., but in short order natural history museums in the United States and Great Britain started making use of photographic studies from the field as references for “habitat dioramas,” illusionistic taxidermy displays that depicted animals within an environment, which gained in popularity over traditional mounted displays during this same period.⁶⁸

⁶⁷ Robert W. Shufeldt, “Scientific Taxidermy for Museums. Based on a Study of the United States Government Collections,” in *Report of the Smithsonian Institution and National Museum for Year 1892* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1893), 369–436. See also R. W. Shufeldt, “Notes on Photographing a Live Specimen of Gambel’s Partridge,” *Auk* 11, no. 2 (April 1894): 128–30, 192. For a description of Shufeldt’s method, see R. W. Shufeldt, “Photographic Studies of Live Birds,” *Photographic Times* 30, no. 3 (March 1896): 97–101. Shufeldt is something of a pariah among early wildlife photographers, both due to his basis in a studio as well as his brazen disregard for the welfare of his subjects, which portended a host of troubling social and personal views. A scandalous affair engulfed his personal and professional life in 1897, followed by the publication several highly racist texts in the following decades. For details on the Shufeldt affair, see Barrow, *A Passion for Birds*, 63–66.

⁶⁸ Shufeldt describes a practice at London’s South Kensington museum of photographing groups of birds in situ and subsequently killing them and recreating the scene from the photographs using the same birds. See R. W. Shufeldt, “The Preservation of Wild Animals,” *Cosmopolitan* 21, no. 3 (July 1896): 300. Habitat dioramas, for which artist’s sketches and detailed field notes were used in a manner similar to how photographs would later be employed, had already begun to gain popularity before the advent of nature photography. The dioramas at the Booth Museum of Natural History in East Sussex, which opened in 1874, are frequently cited as pioneering examples of the format, though much earlier examples exist, such as the displays featured in Charles Willson Peale’s famous 1822 self-portrait in his Philadelphia museum. Diana Donald, *Picturing Animals in Britain, 1750–1850* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2007), 318–19. For a historical account of habitat dioramas in North America and internationally, see Karen Wonders, *Habitat Dioramas: Illusions of Wilderness in Museums of Natural History* (Uppsala: Uppsala University; Stockholm, Sweden: Almqvist & Wiksell International, 1993).

For their part, wildlife photographers quickly came to recognize that the long-term value proposition of their work would not be found in creating aids for identification—a format which called for expressions of generic form—but as a tool for visualizing wildlife engaged in characteristic behaviors within their native habitats. As Chapman expressed in the introduction to *Bird Studies with a Camera*, “Bird photography, as I would encourage its practice, does not mean simply photographing birds; it means the use of the camera as an aid in depicting the life histories of birds.”⁶⁹ Chapman and other nature photographers viewed the artistic and scientific objectives not merely as compatible but perfectly in sync, with a shared ideal of producing convincing, lifelike representations of animals absorbed in activity, unaware of the photographer’s presence.

In other words, as nature photography matured as a genre, it came to embrace naturalism as its default visual mode. This may seem obvious, and perhaps even a logical tautology, but it underscores the extent to which nature photographers, in seeking to create naturalistic representations of wildlife, were operating within a well-established visual idiom that drew as much or more from genre art as from the prevailing conventions of natural history illustration from the period.

In keeping with the genre’s indebtedness to naturalism, nature photographs were likewise judged based on how closely they conformed not to any a priori standard of truth, but rather to the expectations of an experienced observer, who in this case also happened to also be a “naturalist” in the sense of being a student of natural history. Dugmore articulates this dynamic in his article for *Camera Work* when he remarks, “That it is difficult *to induce a bird to assume a position in keeping with our ideas* is unfortunately only too true, as those know who have tried it,

⁶⁹ Chapman, *Bird Studies*, 1.

but is it not also difficult to secure proper and effective lighting for a genre study or a landscape?”⁷⁰ The comparison to a genre art is apt, which is reflected in the titles and captions applied to nature photographs. Nature photographers relied on a host of “inducements,” ranging from traps and bait, to less invasive techniques like making a loud noise or waiving a handkerchief, to elicit a characteristic action or direct an animal’s gaze. To create *A Study in Natural History*, for example, Dugmore set up what amounted to a makeshift studio in the field, using an enclosure made out of mosquito netting, a muslin backdrop, reflecting cloths, and a branch that he has positioned so that it appeared, as he put it, “in its natural growing position.”⁷¹ He emphasized, however, that these preparations were not guarantees of a successful outcome, and success in nature photography, much like other branches that involved pictures drawn from life, ultimately depended on a combination of patience and good luck.

This conception of nature photography, in which the photograph is understood as a reflection of the naturalist’s skill at observation and accumulated knowledge of natural history, relies on what can be called an *appeal to experience*. This understanding forms a stark contrast with the technological rhetoric found in many discussions of nature photography, in which the camera functions as a mechanical surrogate for the human observer, thereby rendering the traditional role of the field naturalist obsolete. According to this latter line of argument, which is based on an *appeal to technology*, the camera sees what the human agent cannot and captures fleeting moments in the hidden lives of animals previously and otherwise inaccessible to vision.

Historian Finis Dunaway has explored this popular trope in early commentaries on nature photography, remarking that the genre “involved the displacement of seeing, recording, and

⁷⁰ Dugmore, “Effective Lighting,” 53; emphasis added.

⁷¹ Dugmore, *Nature and the Camera*, 58.

remembering from human observers to machines, from people to the camera.”⁷² To support this assessment, Dunaway calls on an important early essay by Dugmore that appears in the premier issue *World’s Work*, a general interest monthly started by Doubleday, Page & Co. in 1900, titled “A Revolution in Nature Pictures.” Dugmore begins the article by arguing that photography marks a radical advancement in natural history illustration, since it removes the “personal equation” that afflicts earlier natural history drawings.⁷³ To illustrate his point, Dugmore reproduces a copperplate engraving of a stormy petrel from Count de Buffon’s *The Natural History of Birds* of 1783, which is put forth as “The Old Method of Bird Illustration.” The chosen illustration is deliberately crude, while the caption somewhat misleadingly characterizes its 107-year-old source as a “standard work of natural history” (fig. 3.15).⁷⁴ The illustration, which turns out to be a later copy from the engravings commissioned for the original 1783 French edition, offers no readily discernible identifying marks specific to a petrel. Instead, it resembles a more primitive interpretation of a generic bird set atop an equally nondescript rock.⁷⁵ The bird’s elongated legs lend it a distinctive humanlike posture and proportions, which in Dugmore’s article serves to underscore the unconscious human bias at work in traditional natural

⁷² Finis Dunaway, “Hunting with the Camera: Nature Photography, Manliness, and Modern Memory, 1890–1930,” *Journal of American Studies* 34, no. 2 (August 2000): 212.

⁷³ A. Radclyffe Dugmore, “A Revolution in Nature Pictures,” *World’s Work* 1, no. 1 (November 1900): 33.

⁷⁴ While Count de Buffon’s *The Natural History of Birds* is indeed a celebrated volume in the history of ornithology, it was well over one hundred years old in 1900, making it roughly the equivalent of a contemporary naturalist calling a work from 1900 a “standard work.” To the extent that it remained a useful volume for ornithologists, it was not due to the illustrations.

⁷⁵ The illustrations included in *World’s Work* capture the trend of analog degeneration among traditional printmaking techniques, in which generations of copies based on an original work become increasingly distorted or cartoonish with each new iteration, a tendency for which photography offered a corrective. For a classic account of this phenomenon as it relates to scientific illustration, see William M. Ivins, *Prints and Visual Communication* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1953).

history illustrations. Turning to photography, Dugmore asserts that, “The human eye itself is scarcely quick enough to take note of” the many fleeting poses that living animal assumes, and therefore “it is to the camera we must turn, and use it as eye, notebook, and pencil.”⁷⁶ He rounds out the conceit later on, adding that photography “is of great scientific value, for it cannot lie, and it records in an unmistakable form every detail presented.”⁷⁷ According to this view of nature photography, the camera’s value rests with its ability to see what the human observer cannot.

How are we to reconcile this type of rhetoric with the nearly antithetical viewpoint put forth in *Camera Work*? In one model, the camera operates as a guarantor of factual reporting by eliminating the human element, while in the other the camera acts as a mere tool, not so different from a pencil and sketchpad save for an added degree of speed and precision, for transposing an artist’s observations. Rather than viewing Dugmore’s remarks as inconsistent or hypocritical, it is helpful to consider how he tailored his appeals to his audience in each case. When claims of scientific knowledge were at stake, it made sense to emphasize the technical and impersonal elements of the photographic process, while minimizing the role of the human agent in the production of the photograph. In a fine art context, by contrast, in which individual expression was the end goal, the opposite was true.

Appeals to technology have tended to dominate discussions of early wildlife photography. This owes much to the fact that, as an explanatory framework, calling attention to the technological features of the camera readily foregrounds that which is ostensibly novel and distinct about photographic images. Following this tendency, accounts of wildlife photography

⁷⁶ Dugmore, “Revolution in Nature Pictures,” 34.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 36. Also quoted in Dunaway, “Hunting with the Camera,” 211.

often begin with the pioneering photographic studies of animal locomotion conducted in the late 1870s and 1880s by Eadweard Muybridge, Etienne Jules Marey, and Ottomar Anschütz, and present the camera as an analytic tool of scientific discovery. All three photographers, working in separate contexts, devised methods for producing a series of instantaneous exposures, which they used to parse an action into a series of multiple discrete frames.

With regards to nature photography as it was typically practiced, however, drawing on these pioneering studies as a starting point gives rise to a misleading account. The co-emergence of nature photography and animal behavior studies at the turn of the century also seems to invite a technological explanation, but in fact the relationship between the two was not directly causal, but more incidental—the hours of patient and sustained observation required for nature photography intuitively made naturalists more attentive to animal behavior. An early history of the growth of life history studies in ornithology lays out this subtle, but crucial distinction:

In order to get good pictures, the cameraman had to know his subjects, and conversely, in getting his photographs, he learned a great deal about the species he watched. Photography necessitated close observation of individual birds, not merely relatively long distance, field glass identifications. However, photography as such is only incidental to our subject; the important thing was that detailed studies of individual birds (not merely species, but individuals) became important.⁷⁸

Rather than functioning as an analytic tool, then, for the most part, the camera functioned as a means of synthesizing scattered observations culled from experience. This point comes through most clearly in nature photographers' repeated emphasis that, above all, the key to successful pictures lies in having an intimate knowledge of natural history. To that end, however, appeals to technology were also not necessarily incompatible with appeals to experience. To wit, just prior to his claim about the camera's superiority to the human eye, Dugmore remarked, "without

⁷⁸ Friedman, "Advances in Life History Work," 103.

endless study of living birds, how can any one expect to know the attitudes assumed by the different species?”⁷⁹ Rather than working against one another, nature photographers saw both appeals as complementing one another, though experience ultimately mattered more than technology.

The ability to discern the characteristic attitude or behavior from a false or artificial one signaled one’s status within the broader community of naturalists and conveyed the depth of one’s accumulated knowledge of the natural world. An appeal to technology could be used to strengthen the semblance of descriptive accuracy in photography, but such appeals alone offered little means for discriminating whether a particular action or posture was typical or exceptional. In each case, even when the photograph was produced “automatically” using devices like trip wires or remote triggers, photographers selected which images they found useful or effective based on their existing knowledge of their subjects. They used photographic blinds, telephoto lenses, magnesium flashes, and remote triggering devices to catch an animal in a natural pose, but with the exception of photographic blinds, these techniques often yielded results that seemed more artificial, and less naturalistic, resulting in frozen poses or jarring lighting.

Dugmore’s indebtedness to the conventions of genre art is evident in the compositions and captions of the photographs included in the article for *World’s Work*. Photographs like “A Sleepy Trio (Young Baltimore Orioles),” which depicts three bird chicks resting on a branch, or “Bringing Home Provisions,” which shows an indigo bunting with a grasshopper in its mouth perched on a stem of Queen Anne’s lace, recall the familiar genteel conventions of genre scenes from the period (fig. 3.16). These typical captions illustrate how photographic meaning is dependent on context.

⁷⁹ Dugmore, “Revolution in Nature Pictures,” 36.

Seeing nature photographs as genre art raises a complicated, and in certain respects problematic, point of comparison between the marginalized human communities that typically served as subjects for naturalistic art on the one hand, and the non-human animals that comprise the subject of wildlife photography on the other. As an example of this dynamic, the year after Dugmore's debut article in *World's Work*, he accompanied a young W. E. B. Du Bois to make illustrations for a study first published in the magazine, titled "The Negro as He Really Is."⁸⁰ The article explores the lives of African Americans in Dougherty County, Georgia, the heart of the Black Belt, a region populated by tenant farmers and sharecroppers in the post-Reconstruction South. Many of Dugmore's illustrations, which include several vocational portraits and a suite of scenes depicting a woman sharecropper ploughing a cotton field, echo Eickemeyer's genre scenes of black rural laborers in *Down South*. As art historian George Dimock has explored, however, a number of the photographs and their accompanying captions also embrace racist stereotypes that visually undermine Du Bois's nuanced sociological account.⁸¹ One of these scenes, for example, which is captioned "A Parson and Part of His Flock," invites a formal comparison to nature photography (fig. 3.17). The distanced, low-to-the-ground perspective, which shows the backside of a group of churchgoers conversing on the sidewalk, suggests a kind of stalking, illustrating how the same technique to capture subjects in an "unconscious" state applied to snapshots both in the street and in the field. While the formal similarity was likely unintended, the comparison is also mutually instructive for showcasing how all varieties of the "other" were imagined through similar tropes and visual strategies.

⁸⁰ W. E. B. DuBois, "The Negro as He Really Is," *World's Work* 2, no. 2 (June 1901): 848–866.

⁸¹ George Dimock, "The Negro as He Really Is: W. E. B. Du Bois and Arthur Radclyffe Dugmore," *Exposure* 46, no. 1 (March 2013): 36–50.

V. THE STUDIO IN THE FIELD—STALKING VS. THE CONTROL METHOD

Nature photographers subdivided the practical techniques for nature photography into two useful categories, which they referred to as the “stalking” and the “control” method.⁸² The stalking method is as it sounds, and referred to approaching an animal stealthily in order to photograph it unawares. The control method, by contrast, consisted either of confining an animal in some type of enclosure and waiting for it to become accustomed to its new surroundings, or making use of lures or bait to draw a subject before the camera lens. The stalking method appealed more to the sportsman’s sensibilities and necessitated strategies for concealment such as the use of hides or blinds. Designs for photographic blinds ranged from simple and practical, such as the portable tent that Chapman designed using a common umbrella, to more elaborate arrangements.⁸³ The Kearton brothers, for example, famously constructed life-sized replicas of an ox and a sheep, in which they enclosed themselves along with their camera. Of course, natural features in the landscape, such as a bush or high reed beds, were also suitable for the same end.⁸⁴

Another invention that allowed photographers to avoid detection, and therefore to photograph an animal in an unaware state, was the telephotographic lens. Interestingly, the initial conception for the telephoto lens owes a direct debt to the practical experiments of Peter Henry Emerson discussed in Chapter One. Thomas R. Dallmeyer, the lens-maker who joined Emerson on the Broads in the fall of 1890, took out a patent for the first “telescopic photographic” lens in November 1891. In a pamphlet published in 1892 describing the circumstances surrounding its

⁸² This distinction was first articulated using these terms in Douglas English, *Photography for Naturalists* (London: Iliffe & Sons Limited, 1901), 9–16. Subsequent manuals widely adopted these designations, with slight variations.

⁸³ See Frank M. Chapman, “The Use of a Blind in the Study of Bird-Life,” *Bird-Lore* 10, no. 6 (November–December 1908): 250–52.

⁸⁴ For a more thorough account, see Brower, *Developing Animals*, 83–134.

invention, Dallmeyer relates: “I desire to record the fact that it was at the request of my friend Dr. Emerson, to aid him in recording incidents in Ornithology and Natural History generally, that the first Telephoto lens was constructed.”⁸⁵ As it turns out, Emerson’s dual desires to photograph wildlife on the one hand, and to render perspectives that more closely matched human vision on the other, found a single, elegant solution in Dallmeyer’s novel invention. The basic design of the lens, which was a forerunner of the modern varifocal zoom lens, comprised of a fixed anterior positive (concave) element and a moveable posterior negative (convex) element, allows for the “nodal point”—the point at which the light rays passing through the lens converge—to be projected forward in space to variable distances by altering the distance between the two lens objectives.⁸⁶ This arrangement offered two distinct advantages: first and foremost, it allowed for magnified views of distant objects. And incidentally, this feature also allowed for additional intervening space between the camera and the subject at shorter distances, thereby reducing perspectival distortion and rendering spatial relationships in a way that more closely conformed to human perception. Emerson, for his part, seized on this latter feature to create portraits that were more “naturalistic” according to his understanding of the term.⁸⁷ It was the former benefit, however, that would be the primary advantage to nature photographers.

⁸⁵ Thomas R. Dallmeyer, “Preface,” *The Telephotographic Lens* (London: J.H. Dallmeyer, 1892), n.p.

⁸⁶ Based on this arrangement, a telephoto lens is defined as a lens whose physical lens is shorter than the focal length. The lens can have a fixed focal length and still be classed as telephoto, though the adjustable focal lengths were another novel feature of Dallmeyer’s design.

⁸⁷ A halftone reproduction of a portrait Emerson made with a telephoto lens, which is unfortunately of poor quality, can be found in P. H. Emerson, “What is a Naturalistic Photograph?” *American Annual of Photography and Photographic Times Almanac* 9 (1895): 123–25. It is plausible that a telephotographic lens made *Daughter of the Marshland* from *On English Lagoons* based on its visual qualities and the available information about the image.

Specifically, early reports on the telephoto lens consistently emphasized the novel potential it wielded for photographing wildlife. One of the sample images that Dallmeyer exhibited when he presented his invention before the London Camera Club in 1891 depicted a crow in mid-flight preparing to settle onto a nest and was reportedly made from a distance of one hundred yards.⁸⁸ One attendee of the demonstration observed that, “With this new lens, pictures of wild animals will be possible without going near enough to scare them away, and, perhaps we should add, without the risk of being scared by models who would certainly decline to ‘look pleasant.’”⁸⁹ The lens thus allowed the photographer to assume a position beyond the detectable range of the animal subject.

The telephoto lens opened up new possibilities for visualizing animal life. With respect to the appeal to technology that underlies this claim, however, it is worth pointing out that the natural impediment that the lens overcomes relates not to distance as such, but rather to the incidental difficulty of getting close to certain wildlife without provoking a flight response. Unlike other novel imaging technologies that date to roughly the same period, such as chronophotography or x-ray photography, under normal circumstances, telephotography does not produce images that conflict with longstanding norms of visual representation. The telephoto lens made it possible to photograph phenomena that were previously only observable with the aid of field glasses, but crucially, the hindrances to close observation owed to factors unrelated to

⁸⁸ One report mentions that William Abney, the president of the Royal Photographic Society at the time, deposited the negative in the British Museum’s “Historical Collection,” which has since been incorporated into the British Library, but unfortunately the original negative could not be located.

⁸⁹ “A New Lens,” *Year-Book of Photography and Photographic News Almanac* (1892): 310.

human physiology. It thus functioned as a kind of prosthetic to vision, extending it rather than replacing it, and producing images that were readily legible to viewers.

Despite the novel picture-making potential of telephoto lenses, early versions had fatal drawbacks that limited their utility for photographing wildlife. They had to be focused in advance—by most accounts a notoriously touchy process—and high magnification models required abundant light to produce adequate exposures, prolonging exposure times and thus making them impractical for photographing moving things, such as animals. Dugmore and other authors instructed novices to opt for lower magnification telephoto lenses and to restrict their use to motionless subjects, such as nesting birds.⁹⁰ Dugmore became highly proficient with the telephoto lens and other stalking techniques later in his career, which he used extensively during his trip to Africa and his subsequent books focusing on caribou and beavers in Canada.⁹¹ For his early works, however, he typically relied on some form of the control method.

In 1900, Dugmore authored his first book, *Bird Homes*, published by Doubleday & McClure, which shortly after became Doubleday, Page & Co. following the addition of Walter Hines Page, the editor of *World's Work*, as a managing partner. In 1904, the book was integrated as the second volume, following Blanchan's *Bird Neighbors*, into the publisher's "Nature Library" series, a collection of photographically illustrated natural history books written by authorities on a range of topics for a general audience. By marketing the collection aggressively

⁹⁰ Dugmore, *Nature and the Camera*, 8.

⁹¹ For the latter, see Arthur Radclyffe Dugmore, *The Romance of the Beaver* (Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott, 1913); *The Romance of the Newfoundland Caribou: An Intimate Account of the Life of the Reindeer of North America*. (Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott, 1913); *In the Heart of Northern Forests* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1930); *The Workers in the Wilds, Being an Account of the Life and Work of the Beaver* (London: H. Jenkins, Ltd., 1934); and Arthur Radclyffe Dugmore and Phillip Goodwin, *Adventures in Beaver Stream Camp: Lost in the Northern Wilds* (New York: Doubleday, Page & Co., 1918), re-issued as *Two Boys in Beaver-Land: A Book of the Woods* (New York: Doubleday, Page & Co., 1921).

as a standard reference collection for home libraries, Doubleday turned it into a highly successful series. It went through yearly reissues, and by 1912 it had expanded to include seventeen volumes, many of which featured Dugmore's illustrations. Dugmore later reflected that *Bird Homes* was far and away is best-selling title.⁹² Following the success of *Bird Homes*, he published *Nature and the Camera* two years later, a more general guide to photographing all varieties of animal life.

Both books share structural similarities to the earlier works released by the Kearton brothers for British audiences. *Bird Homes* closely mirrors the Keartons's pioneering *British Birds' Nests* from 1895, featuring photographs of various nesting sites paired with commentaries on where to find them and how to photograph them. Likewise, *Nature and the Camera* was roughly modeled on elements in two of the Keartons's subsequent releases, *With Nature and a Camera* in 1897 and *Wild Life at Home* in 1898. The striking continuities between these works suggest that Dugmore, along with his publisher, were eager to reproduce the successful format hit upon by the pioneering brothers.

The quality of the illustrations in Dugmore's first two books demonstrates the progress that Dugmore had made in a short span of time. *Bird Homes* features thoughtfully composed photographs of nests made in the open field, which are combined with portraits of birds posed in controlled settings using backdrops and staged flora. In one of the images, he experimented with a remote triggering method, which he used to photograph a wood thrush nesting in a shady branch thirty feet from the ground. To make the photograph, which required an exposure of four seconds, he positioned the camera in the tree and ran a long rubber tube from the ground, where

⁹² Dugmore, *Autobiography*, 108.

he used a bicycle pump to trigger the shutter mechanism. Despite the elaborate set up, the result was a marked improvement over his earlier effort with the same subject (fig. 3.18).

Dugmore implored his readers to exercise caution when approaching nesting sites to avoid disturbing them, since it might harm the occupants or leave them open to environmental threats. In the same stroke, however, he admits that many sites are not conducive to photography, and offers a variety of minimally invasive strategies for obtaining better compositions. He notes, for example, that clippers are a useful accessory for removing obstructing twigs and leaves. In several instances in which the nests were concealed inside of a tree, he went so far as to wait until the birds had abandoned the nest before sawing a square hole in the trunk to create a cross-sectional view, revealing the eggs contained within (fig. 3.19).

The illustrations in *Nature and the Camera* are incrementally more ambitious, comprising a combination of photographs in controlled environments with additional scenes that appear to have been made in the open field. One is tempted, when reflecting on some of the elaborate stagecraft that went into some of the scenes, to dismiss them as artificial or deceptive based on a contemporary understanding of the genre. Dismissing them along these lines, however, misjudges how they were likely to have been read by period viewers. For one, Dugmore provided thorough descriptions of his working methods, such as his use of mosquito netting enclosures, and he used photographs to illustrate the effects that could be achieved through the various techniques he had developed. But the more fundamental point, which is easy to lose sight of, is that Dugmore's various manipulations, inducements, and sleights of hand would not necessarily have been seen as violating the codes or expectations governing nature photography at the time.

Up through the early 1900s, discussions of naturalism, it must be recalled, were chiefly organized around a language of visual *effects*. For the most part, naturalism had not yet come to designate methodological purity, a paradigm shift that did not fully take hold until the following decade. Instead, it conformed to an instrumental logic, which applied to photographic methods and practical staging techniques in equal measure. In *Nature and the Camera*, for instance, Dugmore freely advocates the use of retouching or double printing “to render the print more beautiful and more suitable for reproduction.”⁹³ He similarly recommended pruning foliage not only as a practical necessity, but also as a way of removing unpleasant lines within the composition, which, he notes, might appear “artificial.” He even goes so far as to say that “it is permissible to introduce flowers into the picture if they serve to give a better idea of the nature of the surroundings,” or to transplant a nearby bush into the scene, so long as it does not “violate any behavioral understanding.”⁹⁴ Likewise, while Dugmore emphasizes that precautions must be taken not to disturb the animals’ habitats, his immediate rationale had less to do with ethical concerns than pragmatic considerations, since “the results will appear unnatural to the experienced observer.”⁹⁵

This instrumentalist mindset can be explained, in part, by nature photography’s development alongside pictorial photography in amateur photographic clubs and societies. Dugmore and other nature photographers who participated in club life borrowed from the critical language of pictorialism to orient their practice and its aims. The discussion surrounding an exhibition of prints by William Carlin and Leverett Brownell in 1898 at the New York Camera

⁹³ Dugmore, *Nature and the Camera*, 20.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 28.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 30.

Club give a clear sense for how the language of pictorial photography translated into wildlife studies. While the reviewer of the exhibition in *Camera Notes* cites the inherent difficulty of obtaining pictorial effects with subjects that cannot be easily controlled, he concludes that both photographers succeeded in the goal of obtaining “naturalistic pictures,” which were “at once interesting to the sportsmen, satisfying to the naturalist and attractive to the lover of the picturesque.”⁹⁶ Brownell and Carlin, who produced the photographs over three year period in Montana and Idaho, employed a combination of stalking and control techniques, enlisting the aid of a trapper to immobilize a lynx on one occasion, or approaching deer low to the ground and making clicking noises to induce an active, frontal pose (fig. 3.20). Despite their efforts, Carlin was compelled to respond to critics of the exhibition who had argued that some of the pictures appeared “unnatural.” Making an appeal to experience rather than technology, he countered that, “I am inclined to think that the critic has grown so used to seeing the exaggeration of many drawings, and has studied animals so little, that he does not recognize what is natural.”⁹⁷

From an aesthetic standpoint, photographers deemed interventions necessary, and if carried out in a tactful manner, they were thought to increase rather than diminish the resulting naturalism of the scene, which in turn added to both the scientific and artistic value of the resulting work. This phenomenon can be observed even more clearly in Dugmore’s innovative photographs of aquatic life, particularly his extensive series of fish illustrations for *American Food and Game Fishes*, first issued as a standalone guide in 1902 that later became the eighth volume in the Nature Library. For the series, he devised a clever practical solution to the

⁹⁶ W. M. Murray, “The Carlin-Brownell Naturalistic Portraits of Animals, Birds, and Reptiles,” *Camera Notes* 2, no. 4 (April 1899): 173.

⁹⁷ W. E. Carlin, “Natural History and Photography,” *Camera Notes* 2, no. 2 (October 1898): 51.

technical problem of photographing fish under water. In order to limit the range of the fish's movement, he built a custom aquarium with a shallow depth from front to back, inserted a glass partition into the tank to separate the fish from an arrangement of aquatic flora in the background, and finally lined the outside of the tank with white oilcloth to provide a neutral background (fig. 3.21).⁹⁸ Dugmore would transport the aquarium with him on a fishing boat, and after catching an example of a new species, he would proceed back to the shore to make photographs of the fish before releasing them back into the water. He suggested tying a thread to aquatic plants in the background, which could be pulled to indicate motion, though he admitted that this was "fake" and suggested an alternative solution to reproduce an actual current.⁹⁹

The tank method proved highly successful from a visual standpoint, resulting in photographs that were more elegantly composed than any previous examples. The January 1907 issue of *Camera Work* included one of Dugmore's fish photographs, the only occasion that Dugmore was featured in the journal outside of the inaugural issue. The image, a slight variant of which had been included in *American Food and Game Fishes*, depicts a pair of white or common grunts (*Haemulon plumieri*). For the reproduction in *Camera Work*, the journal gave the picture the generic title *Fish* and described it as a "beautiful fish study" that highlights the decorative scale patterns and facial striping found in the species (fig. 3.22).

Dugmore's reappearance in *Camera Work* after a four-year hiatus can partially be explained through the internal politics at the New York Camera Club. Stieglitz likely sought to position Dugmore as an ally in an escalating conflict with the club's leadership, which resulted in Stieglitz's sudden expulsion in February 1908. Stieglitz responded to the slight by forming a

⁹⁸ A. Radclyffe Dugmore, "Photographing Live Fish," *Outing* 40, no. 6 (September 1902): 772.

⁹⁹ Dugmore, *Nature and the Camera*, 107.

splinter group called the “Camera Workers,” which consisted of roughly twenty members who defected from the club after the incident. In the initial reports of the newly formed group, Dugmore was named in as the president of the new group.¹⁰⁰ Dugmore, however, was never an official member of the Photo-Secession. In his lengthy autobiography, he only gives passing mention to his involvement with the New York photography scene, noting, “I became a member of the New York Camera Club, where I met so many of the men who were interested in photographic work, such as Alfred Stieglitz, Clarence White, Edward Steichen, and others.”¹⁰¹ Based on two extant pieces of correspondence between the two photographers, it appears that Stieglitz’s strategic alliance with Dugmore was a way to secure backing for the new venture, which also provides an indirect indication of Dugmore’s financial success. Stieglitz had convinced Dugmore to be the principle signor on the lease for the new headquarters on East 25th Street in Manhattan. The second of the two letters from Dugmore to Stieglitz, dated August 1912 while he was on a photographic expedition in Nova Scotia, includes a strongly worded request to remove his name from the lease after receiving notices of non-payment from the landlord.¹⁰²

Viewed in the evolving trajectory of *Camera Work*, however, Dugmore’s reprised appearance in the journal came during a staged debate over the legitimacy of handwork, but also during increased feelings of stagnation in terms of style and subject matter. Stieglitz presented the picture as a representative example of photography in its “pure phase”—meaning not that the

¹⁰⁰ See “Alfred Stieglitz’s Expulsion,” *Photo-Era Magazine* 20, no. 4 (April 1908): 212.

¹⁰¹ Dugmore, *Wanderer*, 121

¹⁰² Arthur Radclyffe Dugmore, Letter to Alfred Stieglitz, August 20, 1913, YCAL.

fish were presented in a pure state, but rather that the negative had not been manipulated or retouched.¹⁰³

VI. LIMITS OF CONTROL—THE ETHICS OF NATURE PHOTOGRAPHY

By drawing attention to the aesthetic motivations underlying the methods of early nature photographers, the goal is not to suggest that ethical concerns did not factor into their practice. Rather, it is to point out that the intersectional notions of purity that later came to be associated with the genre, along with photography in a more general sense, had not yet fully taken hold. As the 1900s progressed, photographers increasingly came to embrace the ideal of “pure” or “straight” photography, which was defined in negative terms as a normative ideal of non-intervention. In the same way that they invoked an “untouched” negative to demarcate photographs as a special class of pictures that offered direct, unmediated access to nature, the tactile interventions associated with the control method became a taint on the “untouched” wilderness spaces to which nature photography laid claim. As this dialectical view of nature as a space that excluded humans increasingly came to govern nature photography, critics maintained that the use of the control method at once diminished the beauty of nature scenes and compromised their value as scientific records. For this first generation of nature photographers, however, their concerns were less informed by abstract notions of purity than with practical concerns about the wellbeing of their animal subjects.

The text of *Bird Homes* foregrounds the conservation and educational objectives of the nature study movement and highlight various ethical considerations for collecting eggs and the

¹⁰³ “Our Illustrations,” *Camera Work* 17, no. 1 (January 1907): 42. See also David Starr Jordan and Barton Warren Evermann, *American Food and Game Fishes. A Popular Account of All the Species Found in America North of the Equator, with Keys of Ready Identification, Life Histories and Methods of Capture* (New York: Doubleday, Page & Co., 1902), 426–27.

instructional value of nature photography. Dugmore anticipated one of the criticisms voiced by some skeptics of the hobby, who worried that promoting nature photography would unintentionally do further harm to wildlife populations by providing what amounted to visual signposts, which would not only aid naturalists, but also market hunters, indiscriminating collectors, or unreformed adolescent boys. While some early conservationists viewed the killing of animals in any context as unjustifiable, most focused their criticisms on hunting for sport rather than necessity. Naturalists like Scott drew a distinction between their collecting practices, which were carried out in a limited capacity and served a scientific end, with those who indiscriminately shot birds for recreation or financial gain. Skeptics of nature photography's conservation claims, however, cited instances of heedless photographers causing harm to animal habitats through their eagerness to procure pleasing compositions. As they also pointed out, photographing a wild animal did not preclude killing it. While Dugmore acknowledged these concerns, he countered that the value of nature photography lies in its ability to "cultivate the faculty of observing," which he believed, in turn, would necessarily foster a sense of responsibility and affection for non-human forms of life.¹⁰⁴

Despite the prevailing rhetoric advanced by nature photographers that sportsmen or would-be game hunters could be convinced to forego their guns and take up the camera, there is scant evidence to suggest that they earned many converts who were not already sympathetic to their views. Nevertheless, this belief—that putting cameras in the hands young people would foster a conservation mentality—amounted to an article of faith among Dugmore and the other proponents of the nature study ethos. "Let the man who kills a hawk or even a snake first inquire

¹⁰⁴ A. Radclyffe Dugmore, *Bird Homes. The Nests, Eggs, and Breeding Habits of the Land Birds Breeding in the Eastern United States; with Hints on the Rearing and Photographing of Young Birds* (New York: Doubleday & McClure, 1900), 9.

into the habits of that particular kind of hawk or snake,” Dugmore surmises in *Nature and the Camera*, “and usually he will find that by killing it he will be doing harm to his own interests.”¹⁰⁵

Much of the rhetoric in Dugmore’s first book focuses on ideas of visual discernment. “The first thing is to teach people to *see*,” he stresses in the introduction to *Bird Homes*, “and very few of those who have not gone into the matter sympathetically realise how little of the visible world of nature they do see.”¹⁰⁶ He presents aesthetic appreciation and scientific understanding as mutually compatible goals, such that learning about the structure of a bird’s nest in the process of photographing it will “convince any one that it is a work of art.”¹⁰⁷ Echoing his mentor Scott, Dugmore maintained the belief that photography could act as a gateway beyond dry scientific inquiry toward “what might be called the ‘human’ side” of birds, along with an appreciation of their individuality.¹⁰⁸ The introduction to *Nature and the Camera* proceeds along similar lines, reprising many of core tenets of the nature study movement. “As a means of studying nature in most of its many forms,” he asserts,

there is, perhaps, nothing better than the camera. Not only does it teach us to see much that would otherwise pass unnoticed, but it enables us to make records of what we see—records that are, as a rule, infinitely better and more useful than pencil notes; and the studying and photographing of one subject leads to another [...] until we have an acquaintance with things natural more intimate and far broader in its scope than would have resulted had we been content simply to try to see things and write notes on them.¹⁰⁹

Dugmore consistently framed the camera as a revelatory tool, which helps its users to perceive objects in the world more acutely and appreciate the interconnectedness of all forms of life.

¹⁰⁵ Dugmore, *Nature and the Camera*, v.

¹⁰⁶ Dugmore, *Bird Homes*, 4.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 11.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 3.

¹⁰⁹ Dugmore, *Nature and the Camera*, v.

Chapman emphasized photography's potential along similar lines, observing that "birds to which our long familiarity has partially dimmed our vision now become possible subjects for our camera, and we find ourselves observing their movements with an alertness before unknown."¹¹⁰ Like Dugmore, Chapman presents the camera as a revelatory machine, providing new insights into nature that were not hidden from view, but had simply passed by unnoticed.

While most nature photographers did not object to the control method, and many even endorsed it on aesthetic grounds, there were ethical limits to its use. Starting in 1901, a controversy arose over a particular technique described in Francis Hobart Herrick's *The Home Life of Wild Birds*, which he describes as a "new method" of bird study. In the book's introduction, Herrick, who was a professor of biology at Western Reserve University in Cleveland, explained that his photographs were meant to further understanding of bird behavior, with a goal of extrapolating the "psychological principles" underlying their actions.¹¹¹ Skeptical of the view that the more advanced forms of human cognition could be found in animals, Herrick maintained that direct comparisons between humans and non-human animals invariably resulted in a debased anthropomorphism, arguing instead that each species must be considered first on its own terms.¹¹² The main setback to research into bird behavior, as Herrick described it, was that birds must be observed at close range over extended time intervals in order to discern their actions adequately. He maintained however that, contra Scott, birds studied in captivity were "no

¹¹⁰ Chapman, *Bird Studies*, 40.

¹¹¹ Francis Hobart Herrick, *The Home Life of Wild Birds: A New Method of the Study and Photography of Birds* (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1901), 3.

¹¹² *Ibid.*, xv.

longer perfectly natural and free,” and thus “no longer wild but tame.”¹¹³ Herrick sought to come up with a method that would address both of these countervailing problems.

The immediate problem that Herrick faced was common among wildlife photographers, which is that birds, in seeking to protect themselves from predation and the elements, typically make their nests in locations un conducive to photography, namely shaded spots high in the boughs of a tree. To solve this practical dilemma, he proposed a combination of concealment and control techniques. He set up canvas tent in an open field to serve as a blind, which allowed him to sit comfortably for long durations without being seen. Then came the controversial aspect. He proceeded to transport the entire nesting site to a new position more amenable to photography. He described cutting down an entire limb that contained a nest from a higher position and fastening to the same tree lower to the ground, ensuring that the nest “shall occupy the same relative positions”—save, of course, that it was now conveniently four feet off of the ground rather than forty. In his book, Herrick likened this to moving into an apartment on the lower floor of a building.¹¹⁴

Herrick characterized his arrangement as an “outdoor observatory for the study of wild birds,” which preserved the orientation of the nest and allowed the birds to carry on in a wild state, while simultaneously ensuring effective lighting and a neutral backdrop that would offer sharp silhouettes and remove visual distractions (fig. 3.23). By virtue of what he describes as an “invisible chain” that exists between parents and their young—incidentally, the same phenomenon that Scott had described with fatal results in the snowy egret rookeries—the birds return to the nest in spite of its new location. He described this result as scientifically significant

¹¹³ Ibid., xvii.

¹¹⁴ Ibid., 1

in itself, since it effectively demonstrated that parental instinct overcomes any instinctual fear that may have arisen from moving the nest.

In terms of practical results, Herrick's method proved quite effective, resulting in a series of striking and lucid photographs illustrating birds engaged in a variety of characteristic behaviors and expressive poses (fig. 3.24). The controversy began when a reader of Herrick's book submitted an article to *Bird-Lore*, titled "The Chebec's Second Brood," which described an unfortunate incident that occurred while attempting to enact Herrick's method of bird study. After transplanting the nest of a least flycatcher (also called a "chebec" due to its distinctive call) to a new location, he left it overnight, and an evening thunderstorm killed one of the brood before he could reach the nest.¹¹⁵ The author warned that, had he not been close by during the storm, the entire brood along with its parents likely would have died.

Chapman included an editorial comment in the subsequent issue, and while he managed to muster a show of deference to his professional colleague, his ire over the incident is difficult to miss. "To the bird-photographer who has conscientiously photographed his nests *in situ*, often risking life and limb in his effort to picture the nest just where the bird placed it," he inveighed, "this summary manner of settling the difficulties so frequently imposed by the site are, at first thought, not a little shocking."¹¹⁶ Not only was the method dangerous, but it also seemed to skirt the basic rules of sportsmanship. Herrick fired off a lengthy article in a subsequent issue of *Bird-Lore*, in the guise of a straightforward article bearing the coy title "The Chebec's First Brood," in which he defended himself against claims that his method was reckless. He concluded the article,

¹¹⁵ Ralph Hoffman, "Chebec's Second Brood," *Bird-Lore* 3, no. 5 (September-October, 1901): 161.

¹¹⁶ [Frank M Chapman], "Editorials," *Bird-Lore* 3, no. 5 (October 1901): 179.

however, by noting that he had integrated several new precautionary elements to his set-up, including the addition of protective netting around the nest site.¹¹⁷

Chapman responded once again, this time with an uncommonly long editorial that ran nearly two complete pages. Repeating his earlier concerns about the danger and deprivation caused to the bird, he added an additional line of critique, namely, that the movement of the nesting site necessarily produces “artificial conditions.” Against what one might expect, however, he drew the practical conclusion that this amounts to an aesthetic failing rather than a scientific one, such that the results “do not possess the charm and interest attached to those made under natural conditions,” but, as records of life in a nest, they were sound.¹¹⁸

Other readers commenting on the incident levied criticisms along similar lines. Leverett Brownell, in an article for *Camera Notes* titled “Realism in Nature Photography,” describes Herrick’s method as a “menace,” both because it poses an unnecessary threat to birds, but also because the method is “misleading,” such that “it is bound to produce an artificial effect” that a seasoned naturalist could readily detect.¹¹⁹ Herrick did not respond to these subsequent critiques, but three years later he issued a revised edition of his book, which includes his new precautions, along with an extended analysis, citing Groos among other comparative psychologists, arguing strongly in favor of the mechanistic view that bird behavior was reducible to instinct.

Chapman and Brownell’s aesthetic criticisms require additional explanation, to the extent that the same complaints were not brought against Dugmore for his use of interventions that

¹¹⁷ Francis H. Herrick, “The Chebec’s First Brood,” *Bird-Lore* 4, no. 3 (May-June 1902): 80-84.

¹¹⁸ [Frank M. Chapman], “Editorials,” *Bird-Lore* 4, no. 3 (June 1902): 101.

¹¹⁹ Leverett Brownell, “Realism in Nature Photography,” *Camera Notes* 6, no. 3 (February 1903): 140.

were even more involved, resulting in scenes decidedly more “artificial” based on Brownell’s blanket appeal to experience. Explanations for the maligning of Herrick’s methods, even as Dugmore’s passed largely unremarked, however, was rooted in both ethical and aesthetic concerns. By photographing his birds in single sittings, temporarily removing juveniles from the nest rather than relocating the entire nesting site, Dugmore avoided the potentially fatal consequences of Herrick’s approach. From an aesthetic viewpoint, while Dugmore’s photographs relied on elaborate stagecraft, his photographs were not made under an explicit scientific pretext. And crucially, the staging elements were, at least in theory, more readily apparent to the viewer. A chief criticism of Herrick’s photographs and others that seemed to actively suppress the method of their making was less concerned with artifice as such, but specifically their potential to deceive. An astute naturalist, so the argument went, would readily be able to detect the artifice, but the credulous public would end up with a false idea of the natural world.

Brownell also found grounds for a sweeping critique of the control method, which would have applied to Dugmore’s work, on methodological grounds. He argued that any form of direct contact with wildlife subjects, by its very definition, compromised their wildness, such that “they are reduced from their original wild condition to a state of semi-tameness,” irrespective of “what backgrounds and surroundings are arranged to make them feel natural and at ease.”¹²⁰ His line of reasoning anticipates future critiques that were more concerned with purity of methods than visual results as such. His rationale, however, wherein naturalism becomes a function of means rather than ends, presupposes that nature photography was singularly concerned with depicting animals in a purely wild state—something which Dugmore’s photographs call into question.

¹²⁰ Ibid., 137.

More often than not, Dugmore's fascination with photographing birds did not involve studying behavior as a function of the wildness per se, but rather capturing momentary expressions of *tameness*. One needs to look no further than the cover of the aforementioned issue of *Bird-Lore* to illustrate this point. It features an illustration of a female chestnut-sided warbler feeding two of her young, which are calmly perched atop Dugmore's outstretched index finger (fig. 3.25). The illustration is one of quite literally dozens of photographs that Dugmore made showing birds alighting on his hand in the act of feeding. It verged on an obsession for Dugmore, when he set down to photograph new bird, to see whether he could entice it to land on his hand so that he could photograph it. Dugmore's self-portraits with birds became his signature images, which publishers used to promote his books along with series like the Nature Library. As depictions of tameness, they serve as symbols for the accessible vision of the natural world promulgated by many supporters of the nature study movement. To the extent that some associated this benign vision of nature with sentimentalism, they also touch on the proxy debates about the mental and emotional lives of animals that reached their cultural apogee during the nature fakers controversy.

VII. THE DIALECTIC OF WILDNESS—MODELING INTERSPECIES ENCOUNTERS

To build a sense for the particular resonance that Dugmore's portraits with birds would have had for period viewers, it will be beneficial to make a brief excursion to consider tameness, the range of cultural meanings it held at the turn of the century, and the special role it played in the field of comparative psychology. For the generation of scientists working in Darwin's wake, the most vexing question raised by the theory of evolution arguably fell not to the biologist, but the psychologist. If it was accepted as true that humans had evolved through the same organic

process as all other forms of life, it stood to reason that vestiges of the highest cognitive functions attributed to humans, namely the abilities to learn and to reason, would likely exist in some form elsewhere within the animal kingdom. This idea challenged several longstanding cultural beliefs about humans and animals alike, from the Cartesian notion that animals were mindless automata, to the traditional religious belief, with origins in the Classical period, which humans occupy a rung above animals in the great chain of being. Darwin anticipated evolution's importance for the study of mind in the conclusion to *On the Origin of Species*, when he foretold that psychology would thereafter become an inquiry into "the necessary acquirement of each mental power and capacity by gradation."¹²¹ Over a decade later, he turned to the intellectual and emotional implications of evolution in his two most significant late works, *The Descent of Man* from 1871 and *The Expressions of the Emotions in Man and Animals* published the following year. "It is a significant fact," he observes in the former, "that the more the habits of any particular animal are studied by a naturalist, the more he attributes to reason and the less to unlearned instincts."¹²² For his part, then, Darwin was confident that studying animal behavior would eventually yield definitive evidence for human-like intelligences in other animals.

From this starting point, comparative psychology emerged during the last quarter of the nineteenth century as a scientific discipline that sought to establish formal methods for studying intelligence in animals. While much of the discussion early on relied upon anecdotal evidence, the work of the British psychologist C. Lloyd Morgan during the 1890s ushered in more rigorous

¹²¹ Darwin, *Origin*, 1870, 488.

¹²² Charles Darwin, *The Descent of Man, and Selection in Relation to Sex*, vol. 1 (London: J. Murray, 1871), 46.

experimental methods.¹²³ He developed a foundational precept in the field, known as Morgan's Canon, which states, "In no case is an animal activity to be interpreted in terms of higher psychological processes if it can be fairly interpreted in terms of processes which stand lower in the scale of psychological evolution and development."¹²⁴ This framing concept, which is also known as the principle of parsimony, established a structural skepticism within the field toward anthropomorphic interpretations of animal behavior.

While wildness is often operationally defined as a function of place, i.e. wilderness, in the formal context of comparative psychology it typically followed a behavioral definition, indicating fearfulness or shyness around humans. Wildness and tameness under this definition, to state what will perhaps be obvious, are relational concepts referring to the behavior that animals exhibit toward humans. Darwin famously pointed out that the birds he encountered in the Galapagos were remarkably tame despite having never come into contact with humans, helping to overturn a commonly held belief that animals are wild by nature and only become tame through human interventions. In *The Voyage of the Beagle*, first published in 1839, he noted that he was not the first to observe this tendency: "Formerly the birds appear to have been even tamer than at present. Cowley (in the year 1684) says that the 'Turtle-doves are so tame, that they would often *alight upon our hats and arms*, so as that we could take them alive."¹²⁵

Juvenile birds were frequent subjects for exploring the facets of tameness, for much the same reasons that Dugmore and other nature photographers were drawn to them—namely, they

¹²³ Donald A. Dewsbury, "Issues in Comparative Psychology at the Dawn of the 20th Century," *American Psychologist* 55, no. 7 (July 2000): 750.

¹²⁴ C. Lloyd Morgan, *An Introduction to Comparative Psychology*, 2nd edition (London: W. Scott, 1903), 59.

¹²⁵ Charles Darwin, *The Voyage of the Beagle* (New York: P.F. Collier & Son, 1909), 422; emphasis added.

were docile and many different species could be observed at once or in close succession. In the introduction to Morgan's *Habit and Instinct*, an 1896 volume entirely devoted to experiments using juvenile birds as subjects, he made an astute remark about a fundamental problem besetting comparative psychology. He noted that the difference between instincts and habits on the one hand, and higher reasoning powers on the other, strictly speaking, cannot be observed. "[I]n the case of the activities themselves," he reflects, "we are dealing with matters of actual observation; but if we say that the activities are due to instinct, we are dealing with something which cannot be directly observed, but which we infer to be present."¹²⁶ This basic epistemic distinction between empirical observations and inferential judgements points to a methodological dilemma facing the field psychology in the broadest sense, but for the present purpose, it is worth dwelling on the way that it creates an attendant problem for the visual artist.

The frontispiece to *Habit and Instinct* is a sketch, which appears to be based on photographic studies, by George Edward Lodge, the younger brother of Reginald Badham Lodge, who along with the Kearton brothers was one of the pioneering figures in nature photography in England. It features eight species of juvenile birds gathered on a sparse garden plot. The scene centers around a pair of ducks gazing intently at a young plover, who is lying prostrate before them; the two ducks are identified as a "tame duck" and a "wild duck," respectively (fig. 3.26). The labels invite the viewer to seek out visual differences between the two birds, only to come up wanting. Through what was likely an unintended bit of visual absurdism, Lodge took one of Morgan's general motivating questions, namely *what does*

¹²⁶ C. Lloyd Morgan, *Habit and Instinct* (London: Edward Arnold, 1896), 3.

tameness represent? and reframed it as a specific visual problem—*how can tameness be represented?*¹²⁷

Tameness, as a readily observable trait that was clearly mutable in animals, as evidenced by domestication, became a promising avenue for testing theories of animal learning. Separately, however, the tameness-wildness dialectic came to serve as contested cultural terrain for projecting normative beliefs about human-animal relations. For both of these reasons, it became a frequent point of reference during the nature fakers controversy of the mid-1900s. A polemical essay by John Burroughs appearing in the March 1903 issue of *Atlantic Monthly*, titled “Real and Sham Natural History,” set the high-profile literary debate over the representation of animals in motion. Burroughs, who had been a nationally revered American nature essayist since the early 1870s, took aim at a new crop of writers whom he accused of blurring the proper boundaries separating fact from fancy. He accused them of doing a disservice to the public interest by crafting excessively anthropomorphic stories about animals laden with sentimentality. While Burroughs freely blended facts from natural history and personal, poetic insights in his own nature essays, he felt that a growing number of examples in the genre veered too far into the realm of speculative fiction or outright fantasy. On its surface, the controversy was a conflict over the importance of truth in nature writing, but the underlying terms of the debate centered around more fraught questions of animal intelligence. Describing the animals as they appeared in

¹²⁷ As for the experiment, which bears some passing relevance, Morgan set out by framing wildness as a function of environment, in order to test how far it can also be defined as a biologically embedded trait of an animal. By comparing the behavior of a wild duck—that is, a duck hatched from an egg collected outside of captivity and collected for the purpose of the experiment—and a tame duck of a domesticated variety, he theorized that it would be possible to discern what, if any, aspects of wildness are innate. He found that both ducks were highly adaptable to their environments, supporting a conclusion that wildness is related to the life experiences of an individual organism.

one recent book, Burroughs impugned that they “are simply human beings disguised as animals; they think, feel, plan, suffer, as we do; in fact, exhibit almost the entire human psychology.”¹²⁸

Burroughs reserved his harshest criticism for William J. Long’s 1902 book *School of the Woods*, which, as the title indicates, featured stories depicting young woodland creatures learning various life skills and moral lessons from their parents. His criticism of Long, a Congregationalist minister, brings the controversy’s religious undercurrents to the fore. In a rebuttal, titled “The Modern School of Nature-Study and its Critics,” Long mobilized elements of nature study ideology to insist on a fundamental distinction between science and nature study, the latter of which, he maintained, entailed approaching animals not as interchangeable members of a species, but as individuals.

Long’s overtly religious take on nature study is not reflective of the movement as a whole, but it appealed to a large subset within the movement who saw in it a way to recover the gentler and more spiritual versions of nature against the sterile view of science or the harsh, red-in-tooth-and-claw view that some proponents of evolution embraced. Rather than rejecting evolutionary doctrine outright, however, devout nature study enthusiasts typically looked for ways to reconcile the teachings of evolution and traditional Christian thought. A characteristic example of this tendency is Thomas G. Gentry’s *Intelligence in Plants and Animals*, which Doubleday, Page & Co re-issued in 1900 from a privately printed work published three years earlier under the alternate title *Life and Immortality: Or, Soul in Plants and Animals*. The book’s content remained unchanged, with the exception of several photographs by Dugmore that were integrated into the text to complement the quaint wood engravings that appeared in the original.

¹²⁸ John Burroughs, “Real and Sham Natural History,” *Atlantic Monthly* 91, no. 545 (March 1903): 299.

In an effort to reconcile Christian dominion theology with evolutionary ideas, the text argued that evolution places all life on a path toward spiritual perfection overseen by humans, marked by a movement from a savage condition toward a final state of harmony among all creatures brought about by the earthly struggle for existence. This trajectory is the subject of two of the original illustrations. The first depicts a pair of cavemen attacking a bear with clubs, as a group of prehistoric animals roams around the background. The second, which is given the title “Era of Mind and Heart,” portrays a well-dressed man of European descent sitting on a log, peacefully carrying on with the modern equivalents of the prehistoric animals shown in the first picture (fig. 3.27).¹²⁹ Gentry draws on the logic of evolution to advance a Christian millenarian perspective, showing universal tameness as its ultimate telos.

Advocates of nature photography as a humane alternative to gun hunting drew upon similar conceits, citing the hobby’s popularity as a sign of moral progress in the human race. Bailey, for example, conjured a similar morally coded version of evolution in an essay titled “The New Hunting,” which first appeared in a commemorative portfolio of nature photographs titled *Nature Portraits* in 1902, and was later incorporated into his influential volume *The Nature-Study Idea*, published the following year. Bailey begins the essay by explaining that the desire to hunt has evolutionary origins, which can be traced back to primitive humans. He contends, however, that hunting is no longer an evolutionary imperative, arguing that killing for sport “lies outside the realm of struggle for existence.”¹³⁰ The essay concludes with a rather curious allusion to dominion theology. “It is inevitable that the animal creation, as a whole, shall

¹²⁹ Thomas G. Gentry, *Intelligence in Plants and Animals; Being a New Edition of the Author’s Privately Issued “Soul and Immortality”* (New York: Doubleday, Page & Co., 1900), 462.

¹³⁰ L. H. Bailey, “The New Hunting,” in *Nature Portraits: Studies with Pen and Camera or our Wild Birds, Animals, Fish and Insects* (New York: Doubleday, Page & Co., 1902), 4.

recede as the earth is subdued to man,” he remarks, “But too often this creation has fallen long before its time—fallen as a result of unnecessary killing.”¹³¹ In short, the taming of the animal kingdom is inevitable, but nature should be allowed to run its course.

Viewing the nature fakers controversy from a historical distance, one is able to see more readily how religious and cultural views and social agendas related to conservation and animal welfare inflected the positions adopted on either side. The debate suffered from a surplus of motivated reasoning, with each side drawing on anecdotal evidence in support of its desired view of nature. Burroughs, for his part, claimed to have science on his side, citing a wealth of evidence from books on comparative psychology to support a parsimonious view. At the same time, however, arguing that animals lacked reason often doubled as a defense for sport hunting and its attendant cult of manliness. In Roosevelt’s article from 1907 in which he defended Burroughs, effectively drawing the controversy to a close, he proposed that a genuine appreciation for animals could only come through experiencing the Darwinian struggle for existence firsthand. As historian Greg Mittman points out, Roosevelt’s social Darwinist view of nature was “no less fanciful than the largely benevolent vision offered by Long.”¹³²

While the debate primarily centered on literary portrayals of animals, photography was implicated in the nature fakers controversy in multiple senses. The public demand for true-to-nature imagery led publishers to seek out photography for works of non-fiction and fiction alike. The medium’s strong cultural association with objectivity helped to insulate wildlife photographs—and to some extent the texts in which they appeared—from charges of sentimentality. In this way, photography could be used to ground speculative claims about

¹³¹ Ibid., 5.

¹³² Greg Mittman, *Reel Nature: America’s Romance with Wildlife on Film* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2009), 12

animals' inner lives. For example, in his retelling of an encounter with an especially charismatic blue jay, Frank Chapman, who was typically given to the parsimonious view on the subject of animal intelligence, found himself at a loss to explain the bird's remarkable behavior as anything other than active reasoning. Admitting the speculative nature of his claims, he closed the case with an appeal to technology, noting that "the facts in the case are irrefutably recorded by the camera, and the reader may accept or reject their explanation according to his belief or disbelief in the intelligence of individual animals."¹³³ Chapman thus presents the photographs as reliable records of the behaviors he witnessed, but he leaves it to his readers to infer for themselves what the photographs show.

Dugmore, for the most part, avoided wading too deeply into the murky waters of the controversy, choosing instead to remain within the comfortable realm of suggestion. Early in his career as a wildlife photographer, he created photographic illustrations for fictional animal stories. One of his first commissions, for example, was for a new 1899 edition of Sidney Lanier's *Bob: The Story of Our Mockingbird*, a parable about an altruistic pet written in 1883, which the updated preface describes as "a picture of a bird-individual and a bird-species."¹³⁴ To complete the commission, Dugmore posed a living mockingbird that he had personally collected in a variety of domestic scenes (fig. 3.28). Many of the non-fiction articles that Dugmore wrote for *Country Life in America* and other periodicals in the 1900s also touched upon questions of animal intelligence in some fashion. The types of animal subjects he was given to

¹³³ Frank M. Chapman, "Strange Experiences of a Blue Jay Family," *Century Magazine* 64, no. 3 (July 1902): 405–412.

¹³⁴ Charles Day Lanier, "Prefatory Note," in Sidney Lanier, *Bob: The Story of Our Mockingbird* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1899), n.p. Lanier's writing is characteristic of a prominent strain of American literary naturalism from the period, which sought a reconciliation between the evolutionary views of Darwin and Spencer and the Christian teachings of his Presbyterian upbringing.

photographing—beavers, opossums, dogs, along with various species of birds—were all animals that exhibited behaviors suggestive of higher intellectual powers.

A representative example is a story appearing in *Country Life in America* in 1903, titled “How the Vireo Outwitted the Cowbird.” Cowbirds, along with cuckoos, captivated naturalists because of their parasitic nesting behavior, wherein they deposit their eggs in the nest of another bird, causing it to care for the egg as though it were one of its own. In Dugmore’s story, a red-eyed vireo recognized the foreign intruder and built a second nesting tier on top the offending egg. In order to illustrate this curious phenomenon, since the cowbird’s egg was no longer visible, Dugmore created a photographic triptych, starting with an image showing the vireo’s egg placed in the nest, followed by an image showing the empty nest, and finishing with a cross-sectional view made by cutting away half of the two-story nest to reveal the cowbird’s egg hidden underneath (fig. 3.29).

To Dugmore, who used the story to pose the question “does ‘instinct’ explain everything?” the ability of the vireo to identify an unfamiliar object and implement a practical solution strongly suggested an active mind at work.¹³⁵ The problem of course, which Morgan had identified, was that attributing the vireo’s behavior to either cleverness or some esoteric instinct response amounted to an unverified—and perhaps unverifiable—inference. To wit, Burroughs raised this exact case in one of his rejoinders to his adversaries, pointing out that the more common outcome—that the host bird fails to detect the cowbird’s sleight of hand—provides one of the strongest cases *against* reasoned behavior, though he was forced to admit, rather

¹³⁵ A. Radclyffe Dugmore, “How the Vireo Outwitted the Cowbird,” *Country Life in America* 3, no. 6 (April 1903): 240.

begrudgingly, that this exceptional case “shows something very like sense and judgment, though of a clumsy kind.”¹³⁶

Based on the balance of Dugmore’s writing, it is clear that he was more open to ascribe human mental capacities to animals than Burroughs and his staunchest defenders were willing to do. Still, by focusing on non-fiction stories and remaining grounded in open-ended speculation rather than overt sentimentality, Dugmore avoided Burroughs’s ire. Where questions of animal intelligence served as the flashpoint in the nature fakers controversy, a less contentious belief, which provided some common ground between opposing viewpoints, could be found in the idea that animals live rich emotional lives. Dugmore was cautious in acknowledging the temptation of ascribing human emotions to animals, but his intimate interactions with birds made him sensitive to the diversity of feelings that they appeared to exhibit. “After close study of birds and animals one is forced to realise that the difference between theirs and human characteristics is not so great as many would suppose,” he resolved, “For jealousy, individual likes and dislikes, selfishness, generosity, the sense of a common responsibility—all of these are to be found in even the smallest of birds.”¹³⁷

For Burroughs, tameness was to be discouraged, because fear among animals served as their primary defense against acts of violence enacted by humans. “What an animal lacks in wit it makes up for in caution,” he contended, adding, “Fear is a good thing for the wild creature to have in superabundance.”¹³⁸ Burroughs also granted, however, that animals exhibit a range of emotional states—not simply fear, but also more complex states such as joy, sympathy, and

¹³⁶ John Burroughs, “Current Misconceptions in Natural History,” *Century Magazine* 67, no. 4 (February 1904): 515–16.

¹³⁷ Dugmore, *Wild life and the Camera*, 80.

¹³⁸ Burroughs, “On Humanizing the Animals,” 774.

jealousy, which allow them to form attachments that, he conceded, may rightly be called “friendships.”¹³⁹ Through the language of friendship, it became conceivable, even without admitting to more complex intellectual traits, for humans to forge meaningful bonds with other species. This view offers one way of understanding the rhetorical power behind Dugmore’s self-portraits with birds; they invite the viewer to imagine an encounter with the animal other, to probe the limits and the possibilities for what such an encounter would mean.

At the height of the nature fakers controversy, Burroughs agreed to write an introduction for a new edition of the Nature Library series. His essay, titled “The True Test of Good Nature Literature,” first appeared in the May 1904 issue of *Country Life in America* with Dugmore’s photographs interspersed amid the text. Throughout the essay, Burroughs rehearses the guiding themes of nature study, stating that immersive, firsthand experiences in nature have an inherent civilizing effect on those who open themselves to them. The illustration prominently featured in the center of the essay’s first page is a tightly cropped view of Dugmore’s signature trope: a group of young chickadees in his hand, as an adult chickadee hovers before them with food (fig. 3.30). Incidentally, the magazine drew the photograph from an earlier essay by Dugmore, titled “My Chickadee Friends.”¹⁴⁰ An excerpt from the essay that serves the image’s caption reads, “To love the bird, to appreciate its place in the landscape and in the season, to relate it to your daily life, to divine its character, to know it emotionally in your heart—that is much more.”¹⁴¹

¹³⁹ Burroughs, “Current Misconceptions,” 510.

¹⁴⁰ A. Radclyffe Dugmore, “My Chickadee Friends. An Account of My Experience with a Chickadee Family,” *Everybody’s Magazine* 8, no. 5 (May 1903): 433.

¹⁴¹ John Burroughs, “The True Test of Good Nature Literature,” *Country Life in America* 6, no. 1 (May 1904): 51.

And yet, reading Dugmore's photographs in this light required an openness to viewing animals as more than simply a bundle of instincts. The way in which they invite viewers to consider that possibility explains their rhetorical power. The indeterminacy of photographs portraying animal behavior highlights an inherent limitation in Bailey's definition of nature study as "seeing the things that one looks at, and the drawing of proper conclusions from what one sees," since, in nearly every case, two distinct diametrically opposed conclusions could be drawn from the same observed phenomenon. Thus, what Dugmore was inclined to characterize as "friendship," Herrick could describe in diametrically opposite terms, reducing the encounter to an "invisible chain" between adult birds and their offspring powerful enough to offset the instinctual fear response.

Through the language of friendship, whether literal or metaphorical, Dugmore's photograph can be read as visual embodiments of the "living sympathy" ideal that nature study sought to cultivate. The open hand signifies a relationship based on mutual trust rather than fear. In the same light, it shows that wildness and tameness are based on lived experiences and ultimately depend on the behavior of humans towards animals as vice versa. They offer a visual counterpoint to the camera hunting photographs in which the fearful gaze of animals staring into the camera serves to reinforce the feeling of distance between humans and the animal other, thereby naturalizing the "wildness" of wild animals.¹⁴²

¹⁴² For an analysis of these types of photographs as being rooted in the rhetoric of "camera hunting," see Matthew Brower, "Trophy Shots: Early North American Photographs of Nonhuman Animals and the Display of Masculine Prowess," *Society & Animals* 13, no. 1 (2005): 13–32.

VIII. A BIRD IN THE HAND—TOUCHING WILDLIFE

While considering the role of tameness as a concept in light of the nature fakers controversy can offer some sense for the rhetorical power of Dugmore's self-portraits with birds, it does not fully account for Dugmore's seemingly boundless enthusiasm for this particular visual trope. How can we understand his preoccupation with this peculiar habit of inviting birds of different species into his hands so that he could photograph them? In one sense, it can be read as a kind of ongoing, informal experiment to test the limits of tameness in birds. He kept notes on which species reciprocated his offers and those that he found to be unfriendly. He recorded the greatest success with blue-winged warblers, worm-eating warblers, chickadees, and chipping sparrows, while his efforts with chewinks, red-winged blackbirds, and yellow-breasted chats proved unsuccessful.¹⁴³ He initially found chestnut-sided warblers to be less than friendly, but after succeeding in getting a pair to land on his hand, he resolved that he may have been too quick to judgement.¹⁴⁴

In another sense, his self-portraits with birds serve as testaments to his individual skills as both a photographer and a naturalist. Two of the most visually striking examples of the motif, which became two of his best-known images, were featured at the end of his 1900 article for *World's Work*. The first, titled "A Brood of Wild Chipping Sparrows," shows Dugmore's well-manicured hand, with the French shirt cuff peeking out of the left side of the frame, grasping a flexible branch. A group of four young chipping sparrows are clustered on top of the hand, eagerly awaiting their turn as the mother bird, perched on the branch, feeds one of them (fig. 3.31). The composition is proportioned to the birds' scale, such that the hand presents a jarring

¹⁴³ Dugmore, *Nature and the Camera*, 50–51.

¹⁴⁴ Arthur Radclyffe Dugmore, "The Increase of the Chestnut-sided Warbler," *Bird-Lore* 4, no. 3 (May–June 1902): 80.

contrast to the young birds. The second image is similarly themed, but shifted from bird to human scale. It shows Dugmore, dapperly dressed in a pin-striped shirt, bowtie, and his signature tweed flat cap, with a worm-eating warbler perched atop his outstretched finger feeding its young. A narrow, vertical twig intersects the left margin of the frame, while on the opposite side, just above the bottom of the frame, Dugmore's free hand is seen squeezing a rubber bulb, indicating his role as the photographer (fig. 3.32). An unpublished variant of the photograph reveals that Dugmore used the vertical branch as a guide, marking the edges of camera's field of view (fig. 3.33). The picture makes manifest the method of its production, with Dugmore's hands creating a physical link between the camera and the birds. By inserting himself into the scene, Dugmore renders visible the interventions that early nature photographs entailed.

The visual allure of these pictures also supported a concerted effort, on the part of Dugmore and his publisher, to cultivate an aura around him as a naturalist of rare talents. The Kearton brothers had built an international reputation by adopting a similar strategy. In their best-selling titles, *With Nature and a Camera* and *Wild Life at Home*, they included multiple staged photographs, by turns amusing and harrowing, illustrating the extraordinary lengths they would go to in order to procure photographs of rare or hard-to-access birds and nesting sites. In the former class are a portrait of Cherry standing atop Richard's shoulders peering into a stilted tripod aimed high in a hedgerow, and the pictures of Cherry encased in full-scale hollow dummy models of an ox and a sheep that the brothers had constructed to serve as photographic hides (fig. 3.34). Their works paired these with more perilous scenes, which show the brothers perched atop a ladder precariously situated in the upper branches of a tree, or wading into shoulder-deep water with a camera in tow, or repelling down the face of an imposing cliff with nothing but a hemp climbing rope to access a nest (fig. 3.35). They strategically used these images to promote

themselves as intrepid adventurers who would go to impossible lengths to photograph nature in its endless variety. The images became iconic and arguably did more to advance their international reputation than their actual photographs of wildlife.

Dugmore's self-portraits with birds conform to a similar strategy. In 1903, *Everybody's Magazine* commissioned Dugmore to produce a series of photographically illustrated "character studies," which explored his personal encounters with various animals. The editor's introduction to the first article lays out the basic strategy used to promote Dugmore to the public. The key passage reads:

He seems to have a peculiar faculty, like Thoreau, of making friends of all sorts of wild creatures; in two days in the woods, for instance, he will get such a wild bird as a worm-eating warbler so accustomed to him that she will feed her young on his hand, having her pictures taken at the same moment!¹⁴⁵

When both images were later reprinted in Dugmore's *Wild Life and the Camera* (1912), a book less concerned with methods of nature photography than the insights into animal behavior that Dugmore had gleaned through his experiences as a photographer, subtle revisions reoriented the reading of the images. "A Brood of Wild Chipping Sparrows" is reproduced with a revised caption: "The Tameness of a Family of Chipping Sparrows."¹⁴⁶ In the first case, in which the purpose of the article was to highlight Dugmore's talents, the caption emphasizes the wildness of the birds. In the second case, in which the emphasis shifts to Dugmore's personal relationship to the birds, the photograph is no longer an illustration of wildness but of its opposite. The substitution of "family" for the less cultured "brood" signals a corresponding shift and makes the birds relatable in human terms. Similarly, in the updated version of Dugmore's self-portrait, the

¹⁴⁵ Dugmore, "The Outlaw: A Character Study of a Beaver Who Was Cast Out by His Companions," *Everybody's Magazine* 4, no. 19 (March 1901): 204

¹⁴⁶ Dugmore, *Wild Life and the Camera*, 68.

framing twig and the left hand holding the bulb are cropped out, shifting the emphasis from Dugmore's role as a photographer toward the interspecies encounter at the heart of the image.

Articles about Dugmore appearing in the popular press consistently played up his apparent talent for befriendng birds and portrayed him as a kind of modern-day Saint Francis. In an article from 1907 to promote his forthcoming trip to Africa, for example, the reporter casts Dugmore as “the nature detective,” offering the following description from their initial meeting:

Presently, from a bough over his head there swooped down two full-grown cuckoos—birds which the natural history says are seldom known to approach close to a human being—and circled about him. A moment thus, and they plumped right on to his knee and looked up at his face. He smiled. He held out a finger, and both birds perched on it. And there they played until he calmly tossed them aside and went about his work of preparing his big box for making photographs. This was A. Radcliffe [sic] Dugmore, ‘the nature detective.’ Other men have photographed birds and animals in their native state; he alone enjoys the confidence of the wood people to the extent of having them come and play with him and become willing subjects for the camera.¹⁴⁷

The article distinguishes Dugmore from nature photographers who make use of “baits or blinds” to lure their subjects into their frame, indicating that his approach is more true to life, and even more “honest,” since he does not rely on “deceptive” practices to coax his subjects into assuming a desirable pose. For his part, Dugmore was happy to play the role into which he was cast, offering, “I would not photograph a bird unless it confided in me sufficiently to pose voluntarily.” The article featured a color spread with the best-known pictures of Dugmore with birds, appearing alongside a fanciful illustration of Dugmore in his flat cap passing out portraits to a circle of forest animals (fig. 3.36). “Without a doubt,” Dugmore gushed, “the most exciting moment in my entire career as a nature photographer was when for the first time a wild bird came and perched on my hand.” When asked about the most important discovery he had made

¹⁴⁷ “Exciting Work of a ‘Nature Detective,’” *The North American*, section 6, (Sunday, November 3 1907), n.p.

while using the camera in the service of nature study, he replied that “one the most interesting discoveries is that birds not only have individuality, but they have more individuality than human beings. There is more difference between two birds of the same breed than between two children of the same family.”¹⁴⁸ No doubt Dugmore is playing into a public persona, but his commentary offers insights into his views of wildlife.

While Dugmore’s self-portraits with birds served a similar, self-promoting end as Kearton brothers’ self-portraits, they differ in terms of the underlying ideologies they promoted. The Keartons styled themselves as peerless adventurers willing to venture into places otherwise inaccessible to humans in order to retrieve the hidden secrets deep within nature. In this way, their photographs reaffirm an implied separation between humans and nature. Dugmore’s intimate encounters, by contrast, promoted an altogether different sensibility aligned with the nature study movement, underscoring the mutual affinities between humans and non-human forms of life. They sought to make the viewer active participants in nature, rather than passive observers of a nature beyond their grasp or concern. Through the simple gesture of including himself within the picture, Dugmore proffers an alternative framework to wilderness ideology for understanding how nature photography might function. If a series of quaint, even sentimental, pictures can be said to embody a radical social proposition, it rests in this proposition.

But above all, his self-portraits with birds were about his own personal experience in nature. Dugmore’s autobiography is genteel to a fault, rarely staking out political positions or indulging in excessively ornate prose. When he turns to describing the first time he succeeded in getting a bird to perch on his hand, however, he submits to a rare outburst of emotion:

Sitting there in the clearing that adjoined the woods in which was the nest of this interesting family of chickadees, surrounded by sweet-scented myrtle and the

¹⁴⁸ Ibid., n.p.

huckleberries whose tiny green fruit was hanging in small clusters, at my feet the exquisite waxlike bells of the stagger bush, of which there are few more dainty or beautiful flowers, I felt that for once at least I must be fairly close to nature in one of her happiest moods, and in all the splendor of the fullness of summer. For there were birds, both young and old, treating me with confidence, the old ones flying about as though thoroughly agreeing to this strange friendship. Now on my hand, now on my shoulder, sitting so close to my face that I could, with my cheek, stroke both Chickadee and his confiding mate. Their soft feathers against my skin and their small warm feet on my fingers gave a thrill that went through my system, leaving a glow of pleasure such as one seldom has the good fortune to experience.

Continuing, he then attempted to describe what gave rise to this experience:

What was it that gave this pleasure? Only the immediate presence of some very small birds—birds that so many people know not even by name. What was there in this to give that strange thrill? Each time a bird comes to me of its own accord I feel it, and am repaid a hundred-fold for any hardship I may have encountered in trying to make them realize my friendly intentions. At first, as a bird comes near, inquiry showing its every move, one's heart throbs with the great pleasure of anticipation, that pleasure which is so often the end of our dearest hopes. Nearer and nearer comes our would-be friend, and harder and harder does the heart beat, until we dread lest its throbbing may frighten away the bird, and we hold the breath and wish the heart would make less noise. There is a choking sensation in the throat, such as one feels when listening to beautiful music, as the bird finally comes on one's hand, and the realization of a thing accomplished seems to release the heart, and breath comes freely. The bird has touched one's hand, and—well, what more is needed?¹⁴⁹

For Dugmore, the experience of having a bird touch his open hand formed a deeply moving—indeed, breathtaking—experience, for which there was nothing else comparable in his incredibly rich and varied life experiences. He presents this singular moment as both an emotional release and an *aesthetic* experience in the Deweyan sense—where action, emotion, and feeling merge—noting that “for once,” he felt “close to nature in one of her happiest moods.” The feeling of feathers against his skin produces a visceral response, which is heightened by his sense, whether real or imagined, of the reciprocal nature of the encounter; he has earned the bird's confidence,

¹⁴⁹ Dugmore, *Autobiography*, 439.

who in turn rewards his friendly intentions by voluntarily making contact with Dugmore “of its own accord.”

Treating Dugmore’s encounter as an aesthetic experience also recalls Karl Groos’s theory of play in humans and animals. For Groos, play in its purest form was a form of experimentation, which builds on a genetic account of artistic production and aesthetic appreciation. In this way, the deep joy springing from Dugmore’s imagined relationship with the birds can be understood as a playful form of make-believe, or “conscious self-illusion” which, Groos argues, is no less powerful by dint of its artifice. Groos coined a charming turn of phrase to describe the psychological pleasure derived from such playful encounters, which he describes as “*joy in being a cause*.”¹⁵⁰ “Plays, with curiosity involved,” Groos remarked, “frequently turn on the pleasure of obtaining knowledge or experience, which is the same thing as knowing how. Self-experience, or the pleasure in being a cause, is the same thing exactly as the pleasure in creating an effect.” For Dugmore, and likewise for the bird, the intentions behind the gesture held less significance than the gesture itself.

Groos suggestively also related the instinct for play with both an innate acquisitiveness, what he called the “desire of possession of lifeless objects,” and a hunting instinct, which he called “the instinct of destructiveness.” Since the pleasure derived from playful actions does not depend on a concrete outcome, Groos concluded, hunting and collecting can develop into ends in themselves. For Groos, then, the same principle that lies behind free play and experimentation shares a common psychological foundation with the motive that leads to the destruction of wildlife through hunting and collecting.

¹⁵⁰ Groos, *Play of Animals*, xxiii.

It is tempting, after reflecting on these suggestions from Groos, to read Dugmore's preoccupation with luring birds into his hands as a sublimated desire to take possession of nature, which many period commentators pointed to as a root cause of hunting and egg and nest collecting. Typically, they levied this view as a kind of veiled critique of unbridled capitalism, fueled by a latent desire to colonize nature. Scott argued in his autobiography that acquisitiveness is seemingly not restricted to the human species, remarking that "no miser or collector of bric-à-brac is more assiduous than is the magpie in the same direction," and going so far as to conclude that "the passion of obtaining or possessing, crops out everywhere in the animal kingdom. It is not always clear what results may accrue from this instinct, what taste will develop, or what line of work follow collecting, whether this be postage-stamps, birds, or gold."¹⁵¹

Recent scholarship in the field of animal studies, however, provides a basis for an alternate reading. According to this view, the sense of touch serves as one of the primary means by which humans perceive the world and imaginatively reach beyond themselves to experience the other. The seemingly irresistible impulse to reach out and pet the fur or the feathers of other animals can thus be understood not as a latent desire to take possession of nature, but rather as a desire to "go beyond the boundaries of one's own skin."¹⁵² Dugmore's insistence on the voluntary nature of these encounters supports a reading of these images as rooted in a desire for understanding rather control.

¹⁵¹ Scott, *Story of a Bird Lover*, 340.

¹⁵² Ann C. Colley, *Wild Animal Skins in Victorian Britain: Zoos, Collections, Portraits, and Maps* (London: Routledge, 2016), 128. To advance this reading, Colley cites the edited volume *Thinking Through Skin* by Sara Ahmed and Jackie Stacey (London and New York: Routledge, 2001).

The conversion stories that conservation advocates told often focused on a moment of revelation explicitly tied to an experience of taking a bird into one's hands. Recall Scott's conversion story when he accidentally shot a mother bird, leaving its chicks orphaned. "*On taking it in my hand*," he confided, "I found that it was a female Baltimore oriole," which led him to the realization that he had likely deprived a family of young orioles of their mother. Chapman described a similar transformative experience he had as a child when he encountered a chickadee in the woods. "With regret for the universality of the instinct," he lamented, "I found that to see was to desire," which compelled him to kill it with his bean-shooter. "Strangely enough," he continued, "the killing of the bird seemed, from my point of view, to constitute an introduction to a creature which before I had only known imperfectly, and my acquaintance with the Chickadee may be said to have begun when *I picked up the first bird that fell before my aim*."¹⁵³ Following that transformative moment, Chapman noted, he cultivated friendships with many of the species, adding that on several occasions they have "honored me above most men by alighting on my hand."¹⁵⁴

Chapman followed this episode with a retelling of a story of one of his first experiences with bird photography. In February 1899, he took his camera and tripod with him on a lunchtime walk through the Ramble, a wooded path in Central Park, across from his office at the American Museum of Natural History. He described enticing a group of chickadees with bits of bread and nuts, before mustering the courage to attempt to photograph one on his hand, which he succeeded in doing by training the camera toward a tree trunk and bracing his outstretched arm against it while holding a nut in his open palm (fig. 3.37). Chapman concluded the episode with

¹⁵³ Chapman, *Bird Studies*, 48; emphasis added.

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 48.

an emotional overture that echoes the profound joy Dugmore expressed in successfully photographing a bird in his hand, proclaiming that “a *click* announced the realization of a bird photographer’s wildest dream.”¹⁵⁵ Chapman was so enraptured by the results that he featured the photograph as the frontispiece to *Bird Studies with a Camera*, and three years later Dugmore followed suit, including “A Brood of Wild Chipping Sparrows” on the cover of *Nature and the Camera*. The prominent placement of these photographs in their major works suggests that they were more than simply passing novelties.

This pervasive visual motif of birds in photographers’ hands challenges the view that nature photography, at least in its early phase, was designed to reinforce a normative divide between humans and the rest of the natural world. Because humans are not present within nature photographs, this line of reasoning goes, the photographs serve as an implicit endorsement of the view that humans *ought* not be present. By inserting himself in his photographs, Dugmore challenges this logic and creates a space for humans in nature. By showing himself in the act of photographing, he positions nature photography as a conduit to lived experiences. One of the ways that nature photographs fell short of being able to reproduce lived experiences is that they lack the tactile sense that is integral to such experiences in nature. By portraying himself in the act of touching an animal, Dugmore imagined a way of overcoming this limitation.

IX. NATURE PHOTOGRAPHY COMES OF AGE—DUGMORE’S 1909 AFRICAN EXPEDITION

In late 1908, Dugmore resigned from his post at *Country Life in America* and announced that, before the end of the year, he would embark on a four-month photographic expedition to British East Africa. Dugmore had planned the safari to overlap with Roosevelt’s highly

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 52.

publicized expedition, which was scheduled to coincide with the end of his second presidential term. The stated purpose for the Roosevelt expedition was to collect specimens for the newly conceived National Museum of Natural History in Washington, which opened under the auspices of the Smithsonian Institution in March 1910.

The reports of Dugmore's announcement in the media mention that he had initially hoped to join Roosevelt's party as their official photographer, but Roosevelt instead awarded that honor to his son, Kermit.¹⁵⁶ It was later revealed, however, that Roosevelt had made arrangements with Cherry Kearton to make a documentary film of their adventures once the expedition was underway.¹⁵⁷ Roosevelt was a longtime admirer of the Kearton brothers' work and had exchanged correspondence with them following the publication of their pioneering books of the late 1890s. In the early spring of 1908, Roosevelt had personally arranged for Richard Kearton to visit him in Washington, where the topic of the safari was doubtless raised. Kearton's visit was likewise treated as a media event in the American press, with announcements featuring quotes from the British naturalist cheerfully touting the president's recent attacks on the so-called nature fakers.¹⁵⁸

Not to be outdone, and recognizing the rare opportunity before him, Dugmore secured a series of loans totaling four thousand dollars to fund his own trip, which included a substantial advance from *Collier's Weekly* in exchange for agreeing to write a series of illustrated reports of

¹⁵⁶ "To Photograph in Jungle," *New York Times*, September 9, 1908, 8.

¹⁵⁷ The film, titled *Roosevelt in Africa*, was released in 1910 and contained thirteen minutes of footage. No wildlife actually appear in the film, which mainly portrays gatherings of Maasai people, who are misidentified as "Zulus." In an effort to cash in on the public's fascination with the expedition, a film company based in Chicago actually produced a fake documentary, which was filmed in a studio and featured a staged scene of a captive lion being shot by an actor made up to look like Roosevelt. For more, see Mittman, *Reel Nature*, 9–10.

¹⁵⁸ "To Talk Nature-Lore with Roosevelt," *New York Times*, March 1, 1908, C3.

his adventures upon his return.¹⁵⁹ The magazine had reportedly first approached Roosevelt with an offer, and they wagered that Dugmore, who had risen in stature to become a relatively well known public figure, would garner interest in Roosevelt's stead. To capitalize on the media hype surrounding the Roosevelt expedition, Dugmore left for Africa several months ahead of Roosevelt, stopping off briefly in England to procure supplies, before arriving in Mombasa toward the end of January. He was accompanied by James L. Clark, a taxidermy artist at the American Museum of Natural History, who had asked to serve as his field assistant (fig. 3.38).

Dugmore and Roosevelt's interest in East Africa owes much to Carl Georg Schillings, a German naturalist and photographer, who had undertaken four safaris in German East Africa between 1896 and 1904. Schillings authored two reminiscences of his adventures illustrated with his photographs—*Flashlights in the Jungle*, published by Doubleday in 1905, and *In Wildest Africa* issued in 1907, each of which numbered almost 800 pages in length.¹⁶⁰ Dugmore's own book-length account, *Camera Adventures in the African Wilds*, which he published in 1910 shortly after his return, closely mirrors the episodic format of Schillings' books. The technical quality of the photographs in both of the German explorer's books, however, left much to be desired. In reference to the illustrations made with a telephoto lens, Schillings included the rather amusing disclaimer that, "To get them into focus, so to speak, the reader should hold them at

¹⁵⁹ Dugmore, *Autobiography*, 133.

¹⁶⁰ To give a sense of the demand for these works, two English translations of the first book, in fact, appeared on the American market in 1905. See Carl Georg Schillings, *Flashlights in the Jungle: A Record of Hunting Adventures and of Studies in Wild Life in Equatorial East Africa* (New York: Doubleday, Page & Co., 1905) and C. G. Schillings, *With Flash-Light and Rifle: Photographing by Flash-Light at Night the Wild Animal World of Equatorial Africa* (New York: Harper & Bros., 1905). Roosevelt and Dugmore both cite Schillings as an inspiration. See Dugmore, *Autobiography*, 130, and Theodore Roosevelt, *Outdoor Pastimes of an American Hunter* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1905), 336.

arm's length."¹⁶¹ Indeed, many of them are so fuzzy that they might have been better suited in a pictorialist salon (fig. 3.39). Needless to say, a well-experienced photographer would have doubtless recognized the possibility of better results.

To prepare for the expedition, Dugmore spent multiple weeks experimenting with equipment and refining his techniques at the New York Zoological Park, where he was given free rein to work by William Hornaday, the park's director, who shared Dugmore's conservation-minded spirit. Dugmore commissioned a customized reflex camera designed to withstand the elements and accept both telephoto and regular long focus lenses. He experimented with a variety of advanced remote triggering techniques, involving an array of electric flashlights connected to trip wires, which he drew upon in Africa to photograph lions, using a zebra carcass as bait.

In addition to Clark, Dugmore's party consisted of two local guides, some twenty-eight porters, and a cook. They trekked approximately 1,500 miles over the four-month stretch, securing around 300 photographs of lions, zebras, rhinoceroses, giraffes, and twenty other species. Dugmore's closest brush with danger, which resulted in his most memorable photograph from the trip, involved an encounter with a charging rhinoceros (fig. 3.40). As Dugmore described it, he and Clark were watching a sleeping rhino, and, after growing impatient, he yelled out to get his attention. "Like a flash," he recalled, "the big animal was up and without waiting a moment he headed for us with tail erect and nostrils dilated, snorting as he came."¹⁶² Dugmore managed to steady his camera just long enough to secure the shot as the charging beast

¹⁶¹ Schillings, *Flashlights in the Jungle*, x.

¹⁶² Arthur Radclyffe Dugmore, *Camera Adventures in the African Wilds, Being an Account of Four Months' Expedition in British East Africa, For the Purpose of Securing Photographs of the Game from Life* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, Page & Co., 1910), 23–24.

was only fifteen yards away. Clark, hearing the shutter, fired off his rifle, diverting his path at the last possible moment. The resulting photograph provided an illusionistic experience of a face-to-face encounter with an exotic beast.

Dugmore carried on a good-natured rivalry with Roosevelt both during and after the expedition. He later recounted one incident in which his party happened upon a water buffalo that Roosevelt had shot three days earlier but failed to kill before losing it in a dense thicket. Upon discovering the poor animal lying tangled in the underbrush, Dugmore made a photograph, which he forwarded to Roosevelt's camp along with a wry note asking whether Roosevelt, who was considering a third presidential run, would object if he sent a copy to the New York newspapers.¹⁶³ While in jest, the note casts light on the underlying difference in how Dugmore and Roosevelt viewed wildlife. On his return to the United States, Dugmore voiced some directed criticisms of the Roosevelt expedition in the press, insinuating that it promoted "killing for the sake of killing," and sounded the alarm on the sheer number of hunting safaris taking place.¹⁶⁴ The two generally remained on friendly terms, however; Dugmore related that when they crossed paths several days later, he shared more of his photographs with Roosevelt, who offered to vouch for their authenticity should anyone allege that they were "fakes."¹⁶⁵

Dugmore departed from Nairobi on June 12, leaving behind Clark, who stayed on as an assistant to the newly-arrived Cherry Kearton. On the steamship back to New York, he drafted his articles for *Collier's* and wrote several of the chapters for *Camera Adventures in the African Wilds*. In anticipation of Dugmore's return, *Collier's* ran an article that included the

¹⁶³ Ibid., 146.

¹⁶⁴ "Back from the African Jungle," *New York Tribune*, October 3, 1909, 8.

¹⁶⁵ "Camera Hunter Says He Met Roosevelt," *New York Times*, October 3, 1909, 8.

sensationalist headline “The Camera that Beat Roosevelt to Africa.”¹⁶⁶ Dugmore’s personal gambit had paid off, and upon his return, he emerged as a nationally recognized celebrity. He embarked on popular lecture tour, which included a sold-out performance at Carnegie Hall. He regaled audiences with stories of his near-death encounter with a rhino and his other exploits in the field, which were reproduced at life-size using glass lantern slides (fig. 3.41). Photographs like the one of the charging rhinoceros enabled viewers to place themselves in Dugmore’s position, imagining a lived encounter with an animal that they would likely never have an opportunity to confront outside of captivity.

By 1911, Dugmore had been made a life member of the American Museum of Natural History and New York Zoological Society, and his book had been translated into French and German. In November 1912, he relocated with family to England. He remained active with photography and, the following year, was elected to the Royal Photographic Society. He briefly worked as a correspondent during World War I, and after being exposed to poison gas at the Battle of Somme in 1916, he returned to the United States to lecture on Allied efforts.¹⁶⁷ Over the span of the decade, he delivered some 125 lectures in the United States, speaking in front of 138,000 people by his estimates.¹⁶⁸

Over the next several decades, Dugmore continued making photographs and paintings of wildlife. Galleries in London and the United States showed his paintings through early 1930s,

¹⁶⁶ Arthur Radclyffe Dugmore, “Snapping Africa’s Big Game—The Camera that Beat Roosevelt to Africa,” *Collier’s Weekly* 43 (April 17, 1909): 12–13.

¹⁶⁷ For an account of his war experiences, see Arthur Radclyffe Dugmore, *When the Somme Ran Red* (New York: G.H. Doran Co., 1918).

¹⁶⁸ These figures are compiled from a typescript document listing the cities and venues where Dugmore lectured and the estimated attendance. Not all of Dugmore’s popular lectures were devoted to wildlife. See “Miscellaneous Items Related to A. Radclyffe Dugmore,” Accession no. M047.4, Russell Train Coll.

including a solo exhibition in 1929 at New York's Anderson Galleries, where Eickemeyer and Stieglitz had each had retrospectives in 1922 and 1925, respectively.¹⁶⁹ Returning to Africa in 1922, where the focus had shifted from still photography to film, he produced several films and briefly formed a partnership with a filmmaker from Detroit under the name Nature Films, Ltd. Their first film, *The Wonderland of Big Game*, ran for eleven weeks at Polytechnic Hall on Upper Regent Street in London. For the duration of the run, Dugmore delivered a two-hour lecture before each of three daily showings.¹⁷⁰ Following a second film, *The Vast Sudan* (1924), he retired to a life of painting and writing, releasing several more books based on his rich life experiences.

The 1909–10 Africa expedition marks a turning both in Dugmore's career and a symbolic coming-of-age moment within the broader history of nature photography. It signaled a turn away from its roots as an amateur hobby focused around the nearby countryside toward an elite profession undertaken by a select group of globetrotting adventure-seekers. As another indication of nature photography's transition into an international phenomenon, in December 1909, a new organization called the Nature Photographic Society formed in England with the purpose of creating "a fellowship among nature photographers in all parts of the world."¹⁷¹ Dugmore and Cherry Kearton, who had each started with a humble interest in photographing the birds and animals around them, went on to become two of the leading names in wildlife film the world

¹⁶⁹ Not much attention has been given here to Dugmore's paintings, which were competent, though altogether unexceptional. Many of them borrowed their compositions from his photographs. In defense of this practice, he fairly points out that painting wild animals from direct observation would have been implausible. See "Big Game Animals, Birds, and Other Paintings by Major A. Radclyffe Dugmore," (New York: The Anderson Galleries, 1928).

¹⁷⁰ Dugmore, *Autobiography*, 275.

¹⁷¹ "Notes" *Nature* 82, no. 2095 (December 23, 1909): 225.

over. Environmental historian Roderick Nash characterized the Roosevelt Expedition as the culmination of a paradigm shift in America's relationship with nature, signaling a change from being "an exporter to an importer of wild nature."¹⁷²

In certain respects, Dugmore's expedition to Africa, and the fame that came with it, undermined the accessible vision of nature photography cultivated under the nature study movement. He became a mythical figure with an exceptional set of skills as a naturalist that were not granted to everyday people. Following his trajectory, nature photography itself underwent an attendant evolution by the end of the 1900s, transforming from a homegrown hobby, meant to foster appreciation of the nature of which we are a part, into a mass culture spectacle.

¹⁷² Roderick Frazier Nash, *Wilderness and the American Mind*, 5th ed. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2014), 242.

CONCLUSION

The thief and the murderer follow nature just as much as the philanthropist.

Thomas Henry Huxley, "Evolution and Ethics" (1893)¹

A popular anecdote concerning William James involves an autumn afternoon in 1903, when the Harvard philosopher was entertaining his colleague Josiah Royce at his country house in New Hampshire. As the story goes, James's daughter crept up on the pair with a hand camera, and just before she clicked the shutter, James shouted, "Royce, you're being photographed! Look out! I say, *Damn the Absolute!*"

The story encapsulates James's collegial antagonism toward Royce's idealist philosophy. But it is also a joke about photography that points to our deeply ingrained and impressively resilient habits of speaking about photographs as though they reproduce visions of nature itself. While naturalism inspired movements throughout the fine arts and literature in the late nineteenth century, it was perhaps particularly well suited to photography given the cultural associations it carried since its inception in the earlier part of the century. Indeed, references to photography frequently appeared in discussions of naturalism in other media as a metaphor for their ideal. An assessment of naturalism as a waning literary movement from 1903, written by Martin Schütze, a University of Chicago professor who was incidentally the husband of the prominent Photo-Secessionist Eva Watson-Schütze, offers a typical example:

Its only fault lies in its one-sidedness. Its theory rests upon the assumption that in registering an impression the senses perform a purely passive, receptive office, detached from the higher mental and spiritual activities; that the senses receive, in a manner

¹ Huxley, *Evolution and Ethics*, 80.

comparable to that of the photographic plate, a charge of impressions to be stored away in the dark room of memory for the mind to develop when it gets ready.²

Schütze here articulates the central critique of scientific naturalism as Emerson practiced it—namely, that in demanding passive conformity to one’s surrounding environment, it ignores the complexity of lived experience despite its grander claims to that very effect. In Emerson’s initial conception, naturalism provided an opening for photography to lay claim to being art not, as his successors would, by suggesting ways that it might overcome its mechanistic trappings, but rather by reducing the human mind to mechanism. Naturalism thus furnished a novel framework under which photography might succeed as an art not by meeting the preexisting standards, but also by reorienting artistic activity as a passive process of recording experience.

What is equally noteworthy in Schütze’s analogy, though, is the characteristic way that it seamlessly moves from a description of a particular style of literature to a statement about what is understood to be photography’s fixed essence. This particular slippage is pervasive in period discussions of photography and naturalism. It appears, for example, in Roland Rood’s suggestion that photography constitutes a “permanent style.” What is so curious in Rood’s particular formulation is that he clearly perceived the larger problem—that conventions of truth in nature evolve through time, and that the changing fashions of the present guide these shifts—and yet he still places photography as a stable medium whose only style is naturalism.

The implications of the tendency to move almost unconsciously between speaking about naturalism as a style and a default condition of photography has persisted even as the term itself has outlived its usefulness. To this end, the history of photography in the present day has arrived at a somewhat curious, though by no means inexplicable, position. For more than a generation,

² Martin Schütze, “The Services of Naturalism to Life and Literature,” *Sewanee Review* 11, no. 4 (October 1903): 425–443. (433)

photography historians have built a profession around pointing out all of the ways that photographic representations diverge from reality and visual perception. The pedagogical value of this lesson, of course, depends on a presumption that most lay people still find something seemingly irresistible about the prospect that a conventional photograph provides a transparent record of things (or things seen), whose meaning is self-evident. At the same time, however, it has become an equally accepted thought so as to be taken for granted that photographs can, in fact, represent thoughts sprung from the mind of their maker and, in a related way, can convey the experience of an individual.

How is it then that photographs must necessarily fail as records of visual experience but may succeed as expressions of ideas or lived experience? The answer, of course, lies in the literalness with which the first proposition is constructed. Biologists do not generally express concern that a naturalist's notes based on observations in the field might be somehow mistaken as a direct copy of visual experience because the translation into writing makes the distinction obvious. Similarly, there is little risk that an impressionist painting would ever be mistaken for the painter's literal vision, such that accounts of impressionism in painting are rarely concerned with emphasizing the impossibility of achieving representational correspondence.

Naturalism took shape in the late nineteenth century as a reaction to the Darwinian theory of evolution and the fundamental challenges it posed to traditional ideas around human agency, divine order, and cultural authority. As each of the foregoing chapters has explored in different respects, the crisis of post-Darwinian culture was not simply a matter of rescuing humans from the specter of environmental determinism and a mechanistic universe; it was equally an effort to recover standards and hierarchies in the face of the flattening effects of Darwinism and to assess the limits of human nature. The widespread appeal and particular character of naturalism around

the turn of the century thus reflects, on the one hand, the period's faith in science and technology as agents of cultural progress and, on the other hand, a conviction of the necessity of some external standard to structure human life under modernity.

As an approach committed to verifiable standards, naturalism is also centrally concerned with delineating limits. Writing in 1900 on what he saw as the futility of handwork methods in photography, Emerson declared, "It is useless crying liberty when there is no liberty. We are hard bound by the mechanical conditions of our craft, and if these workers require that 'perfect freedom' which they are always crying for, let them become artists and adopt media where there *is* perfect freedom, and leave us poor photographers alone."³ Here, a common thread emerges connecting his initial project to define art in terms borrowed from Spencer's mechanistic psychology and his subsequent rejection of photography as an inflexible medium on technical grounds. In each instance, he seems to have found the prospect of "perfect freedom" not simply implausible, but also deeply unsettling.

In 1898, five years after Thomas Henry Huxley delivered his famous "Evolution and Ethics" lecture, in which one of Darwin's staunchest defenders appeared to cast doubt on the possibility of deriving a system of morality from natural selection, John Dewey returned to the topic in a talk bearing the same title at the University of Chicago. Dewey acknowledged that Huxley's lecture marked a turning point in his thought, which many observers interpreted as a sudden "*volte-face*," a phrase that has often been used to characterize Emerson's turn several years earlier.⁴ Dewey went on to note that many of Darwin's conservative opponents claimed the speech as a surrender, suggesting that Huxley had jettisoned the theory of evolution and

³ Emerson, "Bubbles," 388.

⁴ John Dewey, "Evolution and Ethics," *The Monist* 8, no. 3 (April 1898): 323.

embraced a return to traditional dualism, restoring the distinction between mind and matter and, by extension, the categorical separation between humans and other forms of life.

While the critics' victory lap was doubtless overstated, the critical response to Huxley's lecture is helpful for illustrating the challenge facing supporters of Darwinian evolution in their efforts to elevate and expand it into a guiding philosophy for culture and society. Huxley had come instead to recognize that natural selection, as a universal principle passively governing all of the nature, had little to no bearing on the realms of ethics or aesthetics. It might, at best, yield some explanation of particular preferences, notions of beauty, or habits of mind, but it offered no reason to suggest that any of these mental formulations were good or virtuous; it simply suggested that they were natural. Faced with this dilemma, late-nineteenth-century proponents of evolution found several possible interventions. One common solution was to recast evolution as a progressive force with an upward teleology. This view formed the basis for Herbert Spencer's popular Lamarckian philosophy, which, in practice, offered an appealing form of absolution, to the extent that any kind of action—or inaction—could be retroactively justified as a natural, and therefore inevitable, process.

Given the pitfalls of naturalism as either an aesthetic style based on accurately reproducing visual experience or as a philosophy for guiding cultural progress, the question becomes: how might it have otherwise succeeded in its stated aspirations? Shifting the terms of speaking about naturalism and photography away from a model narrowly focused on vision and toward a more expansive period concept of "experience" provides some benefit at the basic descriptive level by avoiding the fraught concept of "vision." What is particularly clarifying about the practices of early nature photographers is the way the practical difficulty of their pursuit affected a less rigid and more situational concept of naturalism. In thinking about

experience in a broader sense, there also remains much more to be said about how the practices of photography that emerged during the late nineteenth century transformed the social and natural landscape. In other words, it would be productive to think less about the extent to which photographs serve as surrogates of experience and more about how the ways that cameras function, to use Eickemeyer's term, as "inducements" to engage the world in novel ways. Photographers use their craft to justify all sorts of curious behaviors and interactions in an environment, from standing in a blizzard on Fifth Avenue for several hours to sitting in a makeshift blind at the edge of a forest for days on end hoping for the right combination of conditions to present themselves. One question that has surprisingly been given little consideration regarding these familiar incidents is what work—intellectual or experiential—takes place as photographers patiently wait for nature to present itself as a picture. What exactly was Stieglitz doing during those three hours? Did he stand in one spot, or did he walk around? Did he interact with passersby, or was he left to himself? Perhaps, like Hartmann's description of Eickemeyer patiently waiting for the foliage to be stilled so that he could complete his foreground study, "the best thing to do under the circumstance is to light a cigarette, sit down on a convenient stump...and wait for a calm."⁵

Understanding naturalism as a method that seeks to take its cues from nature provides another way of recovering its value as an effective way of, so far as possible, skirting convention. Emerson's importance can ultimately be located less in the particulars of his theoretical positions and more in his role as a disruptor of norms. Rather than passively accepting the idea that photographs are exact replicas of nature, he called attention to the various ways that photographs differ from our embodied experience of nature. His particular pathology, which is

⁵ Sadakichi Hartmann, "Exhibition of Photographs by Rudolph Eickemeyer, Jr." *Camera Notes* 3, no. 4 (April 1900): 216.

by no means specific to him, was in holding open the possibility that they might be and striving to achieve that end. For Dewey, who was looking to recover the value of naturalism as a mode of social thought or artistic practice, responding to nature and being guided by experience produced a generative feedback loop. Using a gardening analogy, he argued:

We are led to conceive, not of the conflict between the garden and the gardener; between the natural process and the process of art dependent upon human consciousness and effort. Our attention is directed to the possibility of interpreting a narrow and limited environment in the light of a wider and more complete one,—of reading the possibilities of a part through its place in the whole. Human intelligence and effort intervene, not as opposing forces but as making this connexion.⁶

Naturalism promotes spontaneity and improvisation. By taking cues from what is within arm's reach, which for the student of nature study might mean a leaf, while for the photographer means the image appearing on the ground glass or view finder, responsiveness to stimuli and direct experience gives rise to novel insights, even if those insights must ultimately be given further context in order to fill out the process of “seeing the things that one looks at, and the drawing of proper conclusions from what one sees.”

Another way to recover naturalism as a productive mode of thought is by considering the extent to which photographic technologies, often presumed to be the result of conquering some novel frontier of physics, are in fact organized around human experience. For historians of photography and what is increasingly referred to as “lens-based media,” it would be advantageous to differentiate more clearly between technologies based purely in applied physics or materials science and those built according to human standards. Admitting that, in many if not most instances, the two go hand-in-hand, another way to express this distinction draws on the competing definitions of “empiricism” in the late nineteenth century, one which applies to

⁶ Dewey, “Evolution and Ethics,” 325.

experimental science generally and another more informally referring to knowledge derived from observation. The Hurter and Driffield experiments can be understood as empirical in the former sense, which resulted in the discovery of uniform patterns that, at least in theory, superseded the judgement of an observing subject. It was this latter aspect that gave Emerson pause, since it seemed to strike a fatal blow to what Emerson had identified as the human element in a process that he otherwise saw as being fully determined by natural forces outside of human control. With this in mind, what Emerson's response to the Hurter and Driffield experiment reveals is that Emerson was not so much a naturalist per se, at least where matters of art were concerned, but a humanist who sought a human standard for art.

As the third chapter revealed, however, Emerson's quest for a human standard yielded a highly consequential practical result in the telephotographic lens. Unlike other concurrent technologies, such as the X-ray photograph, which sought to transcend human vision, the telephoto lens fit within the existing paradigm of natural vision and improved perspective to more closely conform to the long-established conventions of representing visual experience—that is, creating pictures that “look right”—while maintaining those relationships through high levels of magnification, effectively extending vision beyond its natural limits. The telephoto lens is thus an example of an experiential technology that augments experience and operates within the conventions of naturalism while simultaneously altering those conventions through practice. Another example of an experiential technology, which played a prominent role in the second and third chapters, is the hand camera. By their very definition, hand cameras are built according to a human standard. Like the telephoto lens, early users of hand cameras embraced them as tools for naturalistic depiction, which both conformed to and transformed the prevailing conventions of naturalism in photography. What subsequent technologies fit this model?

APPENDIX A

P. H. EMERSON'S *HISTORY OF ARTISTIC PHOTOGRAPHY*

In March 1924, P. H. Emerson set out to write what he called a “History of Artistic Photography.”¹ Nearly a quarter-century had passed since Emerson’s retrospective at the Royal Photographic Society. He had only resurfaced a handful of times in the intervening years, offering the occasional statement or fact correction in a journal, but, by and large, he had remained steadfast in his withdrawal from the photographic community. A recent event, however, had triggered the end of his self-imposed exile: the Royal Photographic Society (RPS) had awarded the Progress Medal, its highest honor, to Alfred Stieglitz. The society gave the medal annually (with several gaps) since 1878, but prior to Stieglitz receiving it, Emerson had been the only honoree to be recognized for artistic, rather than technical, achievements in photography. Emerson was doubtless beset by envy at the monolithic stature Stieglitz had cultivated in the decades since his departure from the world of photography, but he also rightly sensed that the award portended a new chapter in photography’s history—one in which the history of medium as an art was beginning to coalesce around a master narrative. The driving force behind Stieglitz’s award was J. Dudley Johnston, the newly appointed president of the RPS and a latter-day stalwart of pictorialism who had been admitted to the Linked Ring in 1907. Emerson thus clearly saw that if he stood idle, the essential task of shaping the medium’s history along artistic lines would fall to his former adversaries and their allies. And in this, he faced a fate worse than being cast as an eccentric: he risked being swept aside as a historical footnote.

¹ P. H. Emerson, “History of Artistic Photography,” *British Journal of Photography* 71, no. 3351 (July 25, 1924): 454.

By the mid-1920s, various modernist movements in photography were well enough along, and pictorialism far enough eclipsed, that the aging cohort of photographers who had overseen the formative period in the medium's development as an art were able to look back on the stretch of years spanning the 1880s through World War I with the benefit of historical perspective. The final issue of *Camera Work* had been published in 1917—and by that time Stieglitz's interests had long since shifted from pictorialism as such. The 1910 International Exhibition of Pictorial Photography, which Stieglitz had organized at Buffalo's Albright Art Gallery, was to meant to serve as a triumphant expression to photography's long drive toward institutional acceptance—what Sadakichi Hartmann trumpeted in his review of the exhibition as “the realization of an ideal”²—but in hindsight it had come to represent pictorialism's swan song—in part, it seems, by design. The Photo-Secession never formally dissolved, but the group ceased collecting membership dues in 1911. For its part, the American Federation of Photographic Societies, which lost support of the Salon Club in 1907, mounted its final salon in 1913. In England, meanwhile, the Linked Ring had followed a roughly parallel trajectory, holding its last salon in 1909 and quietly disbanding the following year.

Of course, the photographers who had made their reputations under the aegis of pictorialism did not stop making photographs, but many of them had begun the process of self-consciously considering their legacies. Both Stieglitz and Rudolf Eickemeyer, despite not having kept pace with his former rival, accepted invitations to mount career retrospectives at New York's Anderson Galleries, Stieglitz first in 1921 and Eickemeyer the following year. For his part, Stieglitz, who remained committed to his progression as an artist, bristled somewhat at the idea of a retrospective. The exhibition included 145 of his photographs spanning his career,

² Sadakichi Hartmann, “What Remains,” *Camera Work* 33 (January 1911): 30.

starting with *The Last Joke—Bellagio* of 1887, which is listed in the catalog as “My First Prize Winner,” a reference to the award he had received from Emerson.³ Many of the older images, however, were reinterpreted through new prints, and he boasted that 128 of the prints had never been seen before in public. Even still, both Stieglitz and Eickemeyer had begun efforts to cement their positions by strategically placing their works in respected public collections. Eickemeyer, for his part, gave five framed works from his show at the Anderson Galleries to the National Museum (now the Smithsonian Institution), setting the stage for subsequent transfers consisting of the bulk of his personal prints, albums, and scrapbooks between 1929 and 1930. Likewise, Stieglitz had been trying for years to gift his photographs to New York’s Metropolitan Museum of Art, an offer the museum would eventually accept in 1928. As Stieglitz was preparing to receive the Progress Medal, he arranged with Johnston to donate fifteen issues of *Camera Work* to the RPS to complete its run of the journal.⁴ Shortly after the transfer, Johnston had appointed himself to the role of honorary curator of the society’s permanent collection, which at the time only included around 100 prints. In the coming years, Johnston worked aggressively to expand the society’s holdings, focusing on works in the pictorialist mold.⁵

To be sure, pictorialism—as a popular style, if not as a movement—continued to thrive through the 1920s and beyond in a variety of forms.⁶ In 1914, for instance, Clarence H. White, a

³ *An Exhibition of Photography by Alfred Stieglitz: 145 Prints, Over 128 of Which Have Never Been Publicly Shown, Dating from 1886–1921* (New York: The Anderson Galleries, 1921).

⁴ “R.P.S. Proceedings: Council Meeting,” *Photographic Journal* 64, (February 1924): 112.

⁵ By 1930, Johnston had acquired substantial bodies of work by H.P. Robinson, Frederick Evans, Julia Margaret Cameron, and Alvin Langdon Coburn, among others.

⁶ For explorations of pictorialism after the First World War, see Christian Peterson, *After the Photo-Secession: American Pictorial Photography, 1910–1955* (New York: W. W. Norton &

leading member of the Photo-Secession, co-founded the Clarence H. White School of Photography with the painter Max Weber. In operation until 1942, the school integrated White's pictorialist principles into its curriculum and counted many well-known photographers among its students.⁷ International exhibitions and salons of various sorts also continued past the 1920s, but many of the core exhibitors from previous decades had stopped submitting new works with the same frequency. Longstanding members of the host organizations composed the systems of juries for such exhibitions, which more often than not engendered a de facto conservatism in the works admitted to the walls. Perhaps more to the point, the well-worn tropes and hazy, handmade aesthetic of pictorialism, despite its continued dominance at these exhibitions, were no longer fresh or modern in any meaningful sense.

In more general terms, though, the vestiges of pictorialism persisted in the multiple modernist projects that followed it. The movement's varied influence can be seen everywhere from the formalist concerns of Group f/64, to the genre-tinged scenes of rural labor crafted by the FSA photographers, to the experimental approach to materials and techniques advanced by the photographers of the Bauhaus in its European and American iterations. Thus, the 1920s and early 1930s represented a key period of transition for photography, not only in terms of aesthetic trends, but also in the medium's self-conception as a coherent visual tradition with a unified history.

Company, 1997) and Alison Nordström, *TruthBeauty: Pictorialism and the Photograph as Art, 1845–1945* (Vancouver: Vancouver Art Gallery, 2008).

⁷ For a thorough account of Clarence H. White's long influential career in photography, see Elizabeth Anne McCauley, *Clarence H. White and His World: The Art & Craft of Photography, 1895–1925* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Art Museum, 2017).

I. STIEGLITZ AND THE PROGRESS MEDAL

The story of Stieglitz coming to receive the Progress Medal from the RPS began two years earlier, in 1921, when Johnston and several other RPS members formed a subcommittee called the Pictorial Group. The group held regular meetings to discuss topics related to art and photography, but tellingly, their attention soon took a turn toward matters of history. In February 1923, the group invited C. Lewes Hind, a critic and historian of post-impressionist painting, to address its members in his capacity as an art expert and an outsider to photography. Following a brief recitation of the gentle distinctions and truisms that critics in Hind's position had been making for decades, he concluded his remarks with a reminiscence about a recent trip to New York, where he had the privilege of meeting Stieglitz at the Anderson Galleries and visiting him and Georgia O'Keeffe in their Manhattan studio. During the discussions following Hind's talk, he suggested that the RPS find a way to honor Stieglitz and in the process invite him to speak.⁸

Johnston and the Pictorial Group's other members, including R. Child Bayley, Frederick Evans, and J.C. Warburg—all of whom at one time or another had been direct beneficiaries of Stieglitz's efforts to promote pictorial photography—ran with the idea.⁹ In November 1923, Johnston wrote Stieglitz informing him that he had been nominated for the Progress Medal; two months later, the society's council unanimously approved the proposal. Johnston invited Stieglitz

⁸ C. Lewis Hind, "The Lesson of Photography," *Photographic Journal* 63 (February 1923), 56–63. Hind mentions visiting Stieglitz in "his gallery," but he likely encountered Stieglitz at the 1921 exhibition at the Anderson Galleries, since 291 had closed in 1917 and the Intimate Gallery would not open until 1925. Hind quotes from Stieglitz's well-known artist's statement from the exhibition's catalogue, which begins "I was born Hoboken," pausing to explain Hoboken's reputation as a "very terrible Philistine place in New York" to his British peers.

⁹ In 1909, Stieglitz featured Johnston's photographs in a group show at 291 on the "New English School." Likewise, texts or photographs by Evans, Child Bayley, and Warburg had all been featured in *Camera Work* at one time or another.

to accept the honor in person, which he declined. The society recognized Stieglitz “for his services in founding and fostering pictorial photography in America, and in recognition of his initiation and publication of *Camera Work*, the most artistic record of the photography ever attempted.”¹⁰ But when the resolution first appeared in the society’s journal, the language differed slightly, honoring Stieglitz “for promoting the advancement of,” rather than “founding and fostering,” pictorial photography in America.¹¹ Johnston acknowledged the error in an apologetic letter to Stieglitz, the contents of which suggest that he had advanced knowledge of—and perhaps even exerted some influence over—the resolution’s phrasing.¹²

The distinction bears importance, in that it was precisely this detail—that Stieglitz had been the “founder” of pictorial photography in the United States—that finally stirred Emerson to take up the project of writing the “whole inner history” of pictorial photography, a pledge he had made to Stieglitz as far back as 1902.¹³ The two photographers had remained cordial, but Stieglitz’s association with the Linked Ring, combined with his growing position of influence in the United States and abroad as the leader of the Photo-Secession, had essentially reversed the power dynamic between them. The strain this put on their relationship is palpable in their off-and-on correspondence, growing more pronounced through time. As a photographer, Stieglitz had mostly steered clear of gum printing and like methods that Emerson deemed beyond the pale

¹⁰ “The Progress Medal,” *Photographic Journal* 64 (June 1924): 282.

¹¹ “R.P.S. Proceedings: Council Meeting,” *Photographic Journal* 64 (February 1924): 112–113.

¹² J. Dudley Johnston, Letter to Alfred Stieglitz, March 7, 1924, YCAL.

¹³ P. H. Emerson, Letter to Alfred Stieglitz, October 10, 1902, YCAL. The review that triggered this retort from Emerson is Alfred Stieglitz, “Modern Pictorial Photography,” *Century Magazine* 44, no. 6 (October 1902): 822–25.

of pure photography, but his willingness to promote such methods and defend their legitimacy as an editor was enough to put him on the wrong side of history in Emerson's mind.

Delving into the underlying reasons for why Emerson took such umbrage with Stieglitz being recognized by the leading British photographic organization as the founder of American pictorial photography offers insight into Emerson's conception of himself as a photographer and of his place in the broader history of photography. In 1904, for the golden jubilee of the *British Journal of Photography* marking its fiftieth year in print, the journal invited Emerson to write a historical synopsis of the development of pictorial photography. He took the occasion to recapitulate his fatalist view of photography as an art, but underneath a formal portrait of Emerson reproduced in the article, he is listed as "the founder of modern pictorial photography," which was almost certainly a self-imposed epithet that the journal's editor, sympathetic to Emerson's view of photography, let pass without qualification.¹⁴ Emerson's grievance thus stems in part from the bestowal of founder's status to Stieglitz, since a comparable distinction was not attached to Emerson's Progress Medal.

Emerson initially envisaged a text more modest in scope, which he planned to include as an outline essay in a twenty-two-volume uniform edition of his collected writings. Only one title from the complete works ultimately appeared in print: a revised third edition of *English Idyls*, a collection of folktales first published in 1889. The publisher scrapped the rest of the volumes, presumably in part due to poor sales, but also because of a censorship dispute.¹⁵ Leaving behind

¹⁴ P. H. Emerson, "A Note on the Present Position of Pictorial Photography," *British Journal of Photography* 51, no. 2301 (June 10, 1904): 493.

¹⁵ The end of the 1924 edition of *English Idyls* includes a publisher's advertisement for the uniform edition. The first numbered volume in the series was slated to be titled *Cosas de huego* (which can be translated wryly into "playthings"), and was to consist of eight unpublished plays, an essay on rules for billiards, a detective work, and "a paper on Artistic Photography, including an outline of its history." See P. H. Emerson, *English Idyls*, 3rd ed. revised and

those ambitions, Emerson turned his attention toward expanding his history of photography, an undertaking that ultimately consumed much of the final decade of his life.

By his own account, Emerson completed an initial draft of the manuscript in November 1927, but he subsequently struggled to secure a publisher and spent several years searching for sponsors, first in England and then in the United States. He eventually resolved to self-publish the volume, but years of pursuing personal passions coupled with heightened taxes levied in response to the war had depleted his inherited wealth, leaving him poorly positioned to cover the elaborate costs for the finely illustrated work that he had imagined. He continued work on the manuscript, undertaking a major revision around 1932 after reading several recent monographs that expanded his understanding of photography's history throughout the European continent. Around the same time, however, his health began to falter. He moved from a rental cottage in Lowestoft, Suffolk, located adjacent to the Broads, to Falmouth, a town on the southwestern tip of England close to his mother's birthplace. Emerson passed away on May 12, 1936, on the eve of his eightieth birthday. The manuscript was never published, and it is presumed lost.¹⁶

rearranged (London: A.G. Berry, 1924). Emerson details his falling out with the publisher, A.G. Berry, in a letter to Charles Ganz over Berry's attempt to censor a detective story titled "The Sausage-Maker," which featured a German butcher living in Cuba who kidnapped children and made them into sausage. Lending credence to Emerson's account, a different publisher released Emerson's compilation of detective stories the following year, in uncensored form, as *The Blood Eagle and Other Tales*. See P. H. Emerson, Letter to Charles Ganz, September 25, 1925, Ralph Waldo Emerson Collection, YCAL.

¹⁶ The whereabouts of the manuscript, along with the halftone plates prepared for the publication, are not publicly known, if they have survived. The chain of custody of Emerson's personal effects can be traced through probate records to his widow, Edith Amy Ainsworth Emerson, and one of his daughters, Sybil Emerson. A cache of his personal correspondence was transferred through family descent to the Norfolk Records Office in the 1980s, though none of the extensive correspondence Emerson undertook during the 1920s or 1930s is preserved in that archive. Thus, not only the manuscript but also the preparatory materials, including halftone blocks that he reported having made, as well as an extensive amount of international correspondence related to the project all remain unaccounted for. My own effort to locate materials through two living descendants has not turned up any additional material. Following

While Emerson's history may never be recovered, thankfully, he left a sizeable paper trail in the form of published lists and private correspondence from which a relatively complete account of the project may be reconstructed. His private correspondence offers insights into the history's narrative structure, its biases, the scope of Emerson's awareness of both the history of photography and contemporary trends, the published sources he used, and particular photographers he planned to include (or exclude) in the text. In particular, two sets of personal correspondence provide a contextual grounding for the project. The first are the letters Emerson began writing to Alfred Stieglitz in February 1924, shortly after Stieglitz received the Progress Medal. Emerson's aggressive tack, however, which was by turns pandering and hostile, was understandably met with a general evasiveness on Stieglitz's side, thereby limiting the letters' value. (To wit, Emerson's very first remark to Stieglitz, with whom he had not corresponded in a decade, begins "Owing to the stupid and mendacious statements of the ill-informed, I am writing a true history of the development of artistic photography"¹⁷).

his death in 1936, the initial obituary appearing in the *British Journal of Photography* incorrectly indicates that the manuscript was never finished. This prompted a response from the photographer L. T. Woods, with whom Emerson corresponded about the project, urging the RPS to arrange for the transfer of materials related to the manuscript to their archive. A subsequent letter from Charles Ganz, a literary historian and folklorist who was friends with Emerson in his later years, clarified that the manuscript had been completed. There is a small set of correspondence between Charles Ganz and H. H. Blacklock, then the Secretary of the RPS, held by the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, in which Blacklock expresses interest on behalf of the RPS in arranging access to the manuscript. There the trail falls cold. Given that the manuscript surely contained more than a few incendiary appraisals of members of the Society's leadership past and present, it falls to speculation what all transpired if access to the manuscript was ever granted by Emerson's widow. See "Death of Dr. P. H. Emerson, M.B., B.A., a Photographic Pioneer," *British Journal of Photography* 83, no. 3974 (July 3, 1936): 426; L. T. Woods, "Dr. P. H. Emerson's 'History'," *British Journal of Photography* 83, no. 3976 (July 17, 1936): 459; Charles Ganz, "Dr. P. H. Emerson," *British Journal of Photography* 83, no. 3977 (July 24, 1936): 474; Letters from Charles Ganz concerning the death of P. H. Emerson, Ralph Waldo Emerson Collection, YCAL.

¹⁷ P. H. Emerson, Letter to Alfred Stieglitz, February 14, 1924, YCAL.

The second set of correspondence, which ultimately bears far more fruit, consists of a series of fifty-eight letters that Emerson wrote to Rudolf Eickemeyer, Jr. starting in December 1924, shortly before he ceased his communications with Stieglitz (see Appendix B for complete transcripts of these letters). Emerson remained in contact with Eickemeyer through the spring of 1928. It is clear from the letters that Emerson sought to undercut Stieglitz's legacy by repositioning Eickemeyer as the rightful founder of American pictorial photography. Emerson's strategy directly echoes the episode in 1904, when Sadakichi Hartmann and Curtis Bell sought to use Eickemeyer in their conquest to diminish Stieglitz's influence. Thus, Emerson's gambit ironically marks the second time that Eickemeyer had been called upon to serve in a personal campaign against Stieglitz—a role with which, it should be said, Eickemeyer seems to have been happy to go along in either case.

Parsing the details of Emerson's unpublished history not only offers an occasion to consider Emerson's legacy in photography; it also brings together, in a somewhat unexpected way, three of the four main photographers in the foregoing study (Dugmore excepted), shedding new light on their respective efforts to shape the modern history of photography in their own image. While Emerson's outsized preoccupation with claims to priority can admittedly feel rather empty, if not a little bit petty, giving thought to his attempt to forge a revisionist history during the key period in the photography's modern historiography seems a worthwhile exercise. Needless to say, just one year after Emerson's death in 1936, Beaumont Newhall mounted his landmark historical survey of photography at the Museum of Modern Art, New York, an exhibition that came to define the modernist photographic tradition in the twentieth century. Emerson ultimately owes his place within that history to Newhall's decision to feature Emerson in that exhibition and the associated catalog.

II. WRITING THE PICTORIALIST CANON

Histories of photography written before the 1920s tend to focus on the medium's early inventors and the major technical milestones in the years that followed. Historical analyses of photography from an aesthetic point of view typically show up around the margins, if at all. A characteristic example of a technically driven history, which is contemporaneous with Emerson's active years, is John Werge's 1890 history, *The Evolution of Photography*.¹⁸ Werge's book, which takes the form of a memoir punctuated by a transatlantic voyage from England to the United States, is organized into discrete historical epochs. It starts with the inventors and moves to the wet collodion period, before arriving triumphantly at the modern era of the gelatin silver print. In writing his own history, Emerson consulted Werge's book as a resource to determine which inventors merited singling out for indirectly advancing pictorial pursuits. Other technical histories familiar to Emerson were William Jerome Harrison's *A History of Photography* and Josef Maria Eder's *History of Photography*, though an English translation of the latter title did not appear until 1945.¹⁹

Discussions of photographic aesthetics, by contrast, were contained in what historiographer Martin Gasser has called "histories written as handbooks," that is, practical

¹⁸ Incidentally, Werge's book delivers on the promise implied in his title—though perhaps unwittingly—by incorporating certain subtle Darwinian undertones into the narrative. He strikes upon many of the key inventions seemingly by accident rather than through the willful agency of their inventors. Curiously punctuated by the passing of key figures from the preceding cohort, each period overlays a theme of generational succession onto the conventional narrative structure of technological progress.

¹⁹ In a letter to Stieglitz explaining his history, Emerson wrote "I am not writing the scientific end—Eder did that + if he had not done it I should not be competent to do it." P. H. Emerson, Letter to Alfred Stieglitz, March 25, 1924, YCAL.

manuals on photography or particular photographic processes.²⁰ This popular format was aimed at audiences of practicing or would-be photographers, and the inclusion of brief histories and discussions of aesthetics followed an underlying belief that an adequate understanding of the medium or technique's origins and achievements to date would instill a progress narrative that would facilitate further experimentation.²¹

By the late nineteenth century, such handbooks were also commonly illustrated with examples of work by contemporary photographers. A pertinent example of this type is R. Child Bayley's *The Complete Photographer*, which was first published in 1906 when Bayley was editor of the *British Journal of Photography*. The book quickly became a standard reference for amateur photographers and appeared in thirteen reprints under both British and American imprints up until 1952. The introductory chapter, which lifts a page from Werge's history, is titled "The Evolution of Photography" and provides a historical gloss on the medium's invention. Organized thematically, the remaining chapters start with an overview of technical subjects, including lenses and basic darkroom procedures, and progress toward discussions of specialty topics, such as the use of hand cameras, or specific genres like portraiture or architectural photography.

One of Bayley's final chapters broaches the subject of pictorial photography. Following an overview of general art principles, Bayley presents an outline history of photographers important to the medium's development as an art. The text is tentative, particularly as it moves into the present, but it lays down the basic contours of an emerging canon of British and

²⁰ Martin Gasser, "Histories of Photography, 1839–1939" *History of Photography* 16, no. 1 (Spring 1992): 50–60.

²¹ Anne McCauley, "Writing Photography's History before Newhall," *History of Photography* 21, no. 2 (Summer 1997): 89.

American pictorialists. Bayley begins with the portrait work of David Octavius Hill and Julia Margaret Cameron, which is followed by the composite techniques of O. G. Rejlander and H. P. Robinson.; he proceeds to touch upon Emerson and naturalistic photography, before moving to George Davison's print *The Onion Field*, which is reproduced in the text, noting that its first public display at the RPS annual exhibition in 1890 marked a watershed event (fig. A.1). To create his signature image, Davison used a pinhole lens to envelop the pastoral landscape in a soft, textural blur, an effect he further heightened by printing the scene as an enlargement on rough drawing paper. The picture's resonance lies in the way that it perfectly channeled an emerging interest in experimental material and techniques among pictorial workers. But in its underlying claim to naturalism, to Emerson it also came to epitomize the later perversion of his teachings by relying on unconventional lenses and paper to achieve heightened soft-focus effects.

Following an account of the Linked Ring's formation, Bayley concludes the chapter by promising an account of the present trends in the United States and continental Europe. In lieu of his own account, however, Bailey solicited statements on the topic from Stieglitz and the prominent French pictorialist Robert Demachy. Stieglitz reprinted the statement along with Demachy's statement in a 1907 issue of *Camera Work*.²² His statement reads less like a state of current affairs than an abstract meditation on the nature of revolutionary change, whose success, he posits, depends on a fanatical commitment to the cause from its leaders, who must sacrifice part of their individuality in pursuit of the greater purpose. The passage, which is thoroughly out of place in Bayley's volume, though not out of character for its author, reveals a penchant for wrapping sweeping claims in a veil of false humility. In a letter to Stieglitz in 1924 on the

²² Alfred Stieglitz, "Pictorial Photography," *Camera Work* 18 (April 1907): 23–27.

practice of historical writing, Emerson chided Stieglitz for the statement's lack of specificity, quipping, "I do not call it 'straight' to write as you did in Child Bayley's complete photographer that American photography is ahead of any others without giving examples."²³

Given Bayley's role in the Pictorial Group, there is little doubt that his chapter on pictorial photography served as a touchstone two decades later, in December 1923, for the annual address that Johnston delivered in his new role as president to the RPS, in a lecture titled "Phases in the Development of Pictorial Photography in Britain and America." Notably, in framing his remarks, Johnston too found recourse to an evolutionary analogy irresistible, borrowing from the popular theory of recapitulation—wherein the development of an individual mirrors the evolutionary stages common to the race—to the development of the movement:

The history of Pictorial Photography shows that its stages of development bear close analogy to the evolution of the individual who takes up its practice. The first workers were so lost in wonder at the production of a visible image, that for some time any subject was sufficient for their purpose. It was only by degrees that this feeling died away and gave place to a desire to turn this new graphic process to a designed and definite end.²⁴

Johnston, like other pictorialists, thus projected a teleological progression onto photography culminating in its self-realization as an art, which, incidentally, is a view explicitly defined in anti-Darwinian terms as the creation of meaningful form through conscious design. In the body of the address, Johnston followed the pattern set forth by Bayley, placing emphasis on Hill, Rejlander, Robinson, and Cameron as the major precursors to the pictorialist movement. Turning to modern developments, he gives Emerson a passing acknowledgement, before anointing Davison as "the first of the modern school," and crediting *The Onion Field* as "the definite

²³ P. H. Emerson, Letter to Alfred Stieglitz, October 3, 1924, YCAL.

²⁴ J. Dudley Johnston, "The Presidential Address: Phases in the Development of Pictorial Photography in Britain and America," *Photographic Journal* 63 (December 1923): 568.

starting point of modern pictorialism.”²⁵ Turning to the United States, he begins with an extended paean to Alfred Stieglitz, but follows up with a more robust account. In compiling this list of noteworthy Americans, Johnston had leaned on Coburn, who was living in London and with whom Johnston had formed a close relationship.²⁶ He mentions Stieglitz’s rivalry with F. Holland Day and proceeds by listing out the prominent photographers who formed the core of Photo-Secession—Alvin Langdon Coburn, Gertrude Käsebier, Clarence H. White, Edward Steichen, Frank Eugene, and George Seeley.

To be clear, neither Johnston’s presidential address nor Bayley’s historical outline were wholly novel accounts; rather, they amounted to a synthesis of a narrative that had been taking shape from the late 1880s, when pictorial photographers began looking for historical antecedents to situate themselves and the medium they were claiming as an art within a longer tradition—a self-conscious effort in shaping a usable past in which Emerson himself had been invested during his active years. Emerson’s efforts to this end began in 1890, when he wrote a review in the *American Amateur Photographer* on an exhibition of Rejlander’s work held at the London Camera Club. Later that same year, he contributed an interpretive essay on Julia Margaret Cameron—who along with David Octavius Hill comprised the two indispensable forerunners of pictorial photography—for the fifth issue of *Sun Artists*, a series of quarterly portfolios featuring four photogravure reproductions of selected works by individual photographers.²⁷ In format,

²⁵ Johnston, “The Presidential Address,” 575, 581.

²⁶ Johnston made mention of his debt to Coburn in a subsequent letter to Stieglitz, in which he also asks for Stieglitz’s feedback on the contours of his speech.

²⁷ Of the eight issues of *Sun Artists* published between 1889 and 1891, Cameron’s was the only one to feature a non-living artist. The other issues, however, uniformly paid tribute to the more senior of artistic-minded British photographers, including H.P. Robinson, Col. J. Gale, Lydell Sawyer, Frank Meadow Sutcliffe. Highlighting these photographers in lieu of younger workers in *Sun Artists*, which the editors framed as “a monument to great British photographers who had brought honour to the Art,” can thus similarly be read as a self-conscious form of

tone, and quality, *Sun Artists* was a direct antecedent to the approach that Stieglitz brought to *Camera Work*, consisting of issues devoted to single artists with multiple photogravure reproductions of their work accompanied by a written appreciation.

American pictorialists found relatively fewer forerunners to speak of in their home country, which meant that there tended to be quite a bit of overlap between their accounts and those of their British counterparts. Charles Caffin's *Photography as a Fine Art*, first published in 1901, stands out as a book-length study from the turn of the century that hones in on artistic developments in the United States. Its format is unique, in that it is less of a handbook—though photographers were still very much the intended audience—than a collection of interpretive essays on specific genres illustrated with works by individual contemporary photographers. The introductory chapter, which follows the convention of a prehistory of pictorialism, includes examples of early American daguerreotypes and studio portraiture, which ultimately serve as evidence of the country's relative lack of cultural sophistication in earlier eras. The format of remaining chapters is a product of the book's genesis as serialized essays in magazines. "Beginning with a consideration of *persons*," Caffin muses in the introduction, "the book has grown more and more towards a consideration of *principles*. It evolved itself that way and, perhaps, not unfitly."²⁸ Of note is one conspicuous revision that transpired in the transition from articles to book: the sixth chapter, which addresses landscape photography, originally featured illustrations by Eickemeyer; in the book, however, publishers replaced Eickemeyer's images

legacy building. Quoted in Robert Deane, "Sun Artists Journal," *Encyclopedia of Nineteenth-Century Photography* (New York: Taylor & Francis Group, c.2008), 1359.

²⁸ Caffin, *Photography as a Fine Art*, viii.

with photographs by Edward Steichen.²⁹ In other words, Eickemeyer was able to relate to Emerson's anxieties about being written out of history by Stieglitz and his allies through his own firsthand experience, a fact that adds a layer of significance to the precarious alliance they would form in their later correspondence. Also worthy of note is that Caffin's book features four of the six members of the Photo-Secession mentioned in Johnston's address, Steichen included.

Bayley undertook a comprehensive revision of *The Complete Photographer* for the ninth edition, which was published in 1926. The substantive changes to the text and illustrations reflect that the master narrative around British and American pictorial photography was beginning to come into view. While many of the plates are the same, in earlier editions the illustrations are arranged rather haphazardly, with some discernible effort to line up subject matter with themes in the text. For the 1926 edition, however, the illustrations mirror the story told in the chapter on pictorial photography, starting with a calotype portrait by Hill as a new frontispiece. Interspersed in the chapter on photography's evolution are now canonical works by Rejlander, Cameron, Robinson, Davison, and Stieglitz. To underscore the new historical value being conferred onto the images, each appears with a date in the caption. Under Davison's *The Onion Field*, there is also an added note that the print was exhibited under an alternate title, "An Old Farmstead," further situating it as a history object rather than one of many interchangeable examples of contemporary work.

Similarly, the chapter on pictorial photography includes multiple updates and revisions. Curiously, while there are no plates illustrating Emerson's work, the discussion around *Naturalistic Photography* receives a favorable discussion spanning nearly two pages. Given the

²⁹ For a full account of this episode, see Roger Hull, "Emplacement, Displacement, and the Fate of Photographs," in *Multiple Views: Logan Grant Essays on Photography, 1983–89*, ed. Daniel P. Younger (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico, 1991), 169–192.

nuance contained in these revised passages, there can be little doubt that Emerson, who notes in his letters to Stieglitz that he had called on Bayley to serve as a go-between in his initial attempts to contact him, had appealed for the revisions himself. Bayley even goes so far as to lament the “absence of naturalism” pervading later pictorialist works, which instead feature various forms of handwork. This change effectively bridges the conceptual divide between Emerson’s naturalism and the modern concept of straight photography—a connection that Emerson was clearly keen to make despite its shaky historical grounding.³⁰

Equally suggestive is Bayley’s removal of references to the Linked Ring. Where Davison and *The Onion Field* had earlier marked the key pivot from Emerson into the modern era, in Bayley’s revised text, Davison’s masterpiece is given a lesser billing as Emerson’s naturalistic principles “made manifest.”³¹ Emerson was fast at work reshaping history to his image. The passages from Stieglitz and Demachy also disappear from the new edition. Indicating his mixed allegiances, however, Bayley still includes a lengthy and detailed tribute to Stieglitz. But when it comes to the moment of enumerating the key modern British and American pictorial photographers beyond Emerson and Stieglitz, he refers readers instead to another text: Johnston’s presidential address.

III. THE EMERSON MEDALS

If Johnston’s presidential address furnished the basic narrative that Emerson set out to challenge, it also supplied Emerson, who was more than two decades estranged from the modern developments in pictorial photography, with a useful roadmap for conducting his own research. Emerson recognized that he was starting from a disadvantaged position by virtue of being closed

³⁰ R. Child Bayley, *The Complete Photographer*, 9th ed. (New York: Frederick A. Stokes Company, 1926), 348.

³¹ Bayley, *Complete Photographer*, 9th ed., 348.

off from the network of photographers, editors, and collectors on which the successful realization of such an ambitious project would invariably depend. And in more practical terms, he recognized that he would need a way of gathering prints to use for illustrations.

Emerson arrived at a clever, albeit thoroughly self-aggrandizing solution, which conveniently doubled as a slight to the authority of the RPS. In July 1924, he announced a competition in the *British Journal of Photography* for “high class artistic work.”³² The prizes for the best would be a medal bearing his visage and namesake. He told anyone wishing to participate to send him twelve unmounted prints from “untouched” negatives, stipulating that “gums” and “oils” would not be considered. In subsequent communications, he added that he was being assisted in the review process by an unnamed committee of artists, and as a consolation for those photographers whose work was deemed artistic but who did not pass muster for a medal, they would have their names entered into a “honor roll” that would appear in his history.³³

Emerson designed the medals, eventually minted in bronze and silver, on a design that he had commissioned in 1907–08 from James Havard Thomas for billiards competitions (fig. A.2). The recto features Emerson’s profile after a sketch done by his daughter, Sybil, who was an aspiring artist who had trained for a time under Thomas; the verso is adorned with a familial coat of arms that he had commissioned while researching his family genealogy. Emerson published an initial list of ten medal recipients in late 1924. Along with the names of the honorees, he announced that the competition would be extended through April 1, 1925. While he boasted

³² Emerson, “Artistic (Medal) Competition,” 407.

³³ See “Dr. Emerson’s Awards,” *Photo-Era* 54, no. 2 (February 2 1925): 119. In a letter to Eickemeyer, he specified that the “committee” assisting him consisted of a landscape painter and the other a portraitist, though they are not named. See P. H. Emerson, Letter to Rudolph Eickemeyer, Jr., January 19, 1925, NMAH.

about having received submissions from ten different countries—and indeed, the original recipients include photographers from Denmark, Sweden, and Germany in addition to those from within the UK—the list was lacking representation from the United States. To remedy this oversight, he published the new notice in the American journal *Photo-Era*.

Following a gap of several years, during which time he claimed to have the initial draft of the manuscript, he returned to the subject of medals in 1930. A September issue of the *British Journal of Photography* published an updated list, although only three new names appeared. In a significant change over previous versions, however, the revised list introduced the tiered system of bronze and silver medals. One noteworthy addition to the list is the Scottish photographer E. Drummond Young, whom Emerson recognizes for his portraits and “a text book,” referring to Young’s *The Art of the Photographer*, a handbook on artistic photography published in 1929. The book is thorough and tastefully designed but is otherwise unexceptional; what it demonstrates, however, is that Emerson had begun actively paying attention to new scholarship on photography. As any historian will do, Emerson looked to the published histories around him as guides to both structure and content. As the project progressed, he looked increasingly toward contemporaneous sources, in particular ones that dealt with photographic traditions outside of England.

Emerson’s growing interest in histories of photography from foreign countries becomes even more apparent in the final updates to his medal list, published in two separate lists in 1932 and 1933. The additions to each of the lists are heavily indebted to two German-language histories: Helmuth Theodor Bossert and Heinrich Guttman’s *Aus der Frühzeit der Photographie, 1840–70*, published in 1930, and Camille Recht’s *Die alte Photographie*, published a year later in 1931. Both histories focused on the first three decades of photography,

pulling examples from France, Great Britain, the United States, and the German and Austro-Hungarian Empires. Each also provided a working model for presenting the history of photography from an art historical perspective. Bossert and Guttman were an art historian and a critic, respectively, and Recht was a critic and editor. These novel histories not only allowed Emerson to expand his geographical consideration; they also encouraged a dramatic reconsideration and expansion of the early canon. Bossert and Guttman's volume features a disproportionate number of Hill's portraits, but it also includes an assortment of pioneering photographers whose names rarely if ever received mention in historical accounts in British and American journals, names like the oft-overlooked French pioneer Hippolyte Bayard or the early German daguerreotypist Hermann Biow. In particular, Bossert and Guttman's book seems to have come as a revelation to Emerson: the medals added in 1932 are tied to nearly a dozen photographers—and in several cases, individual photographs—reproduced in their history.

In addition to the entries culled from these two German-language histories, the later additions include a number of awards for technical advancements rather than artistic photographs. These awards recognize the innovations like the platinotype process, the telephoto lens, and the hand camera, which Emerson deemed instrumental for expanding the aesthetic limitations of the medium. With their inclusion, however, Emerson also betrays the pretense of the medal scheme. Given that these were awarded five years after Emerson first reported having completed his manuscript, it is likely that they were meant to bring the list of recipients more in line with the narrative that he had already written.

In fact, despite Emerson's framing of the competition as an open call for entries, from the very start he actively solicited works from photographers and collectors, holding out the promise of a medal as an inducement to send prints. Emerson's correspondence with Stieglitz and

Eickemeyer, for example, both follow this pattern. Several of the initial medal recipients were deceased, and to that point, Emerson noted that relatives sent some of their entries while others were lent, presumably by request.³⁴ In follow-up communiqués, he even made an appeal to works by several deceased photographers by name: “I should like to see the work of Roger Fenton, Maxwell Lyte, Col. Stuart Wortley, Llewelyn, Lamb (Aberdeen), Whaite (Edinburgh), Adam Salomon (Paris), Lord Walter Campbell,” and subsequently seeking out work from “the late Messrs. Mudd, Hubbard, and Sherlock,” and “the late Lake Price, by Manners-Gordon, and by the late R. Bingham,” though, somewhat curiously, only Fenton ultimately found a place on the medal roll.³⁵ He also publicly sought information regarding certain historical particulars and solicited information on the correspondence between Sir David Brewster and Samuel Buckle. The specificity of these requests, coupled with the breadth of his private inquiries, make clear that Emerson was endeavoring to undertake a truly monumental history.

IV. THE EMERSON MEDALISTS

The following is an annotated index of Emerson medalists compiled from separate lists published in 1924, 1930, 1932, and 1933.³⁶ The combined list, which is understood to be complete for the original scheme, features fifty-six medalists, of which thirteen are silver and

³⁴ “Emerson’s History of Artistic Photography,” *Photo-Era* 54, no. 2 (February 2, 1925): 119.

³⁵ Emerson, “History of Artistic Photography,” 454; P. H. Emerson, “Historical,” *British Journal of Photography* 71, no. 3356 (August 29, 1924): 531; P. H. Emerson, “Historical,” *British Journal of Photography* 71, no. 3362 (October 10, 1924): 619.

³⁶ See “News and Notes—Artistic Medals for High-class Art Photographs,” *British Journal of Photography* 71, no. 3367 (November 14, 1924): 694; “Emerson Medallists,” *British Journal of Photography* 77, no. 3671 (September 12, 1930): 550; “Emerson Medals,” *British Journal of Photography* 79, no. 3775 (September 9, 1932): 555; and *Emerson-Medallists. 1925–32* (privately printed pamphlet, ca. 1932), Richard and Ronay Menschel Library, George Eastman Museum, Rochester, New York [hereafter GEM Coll.]; *Emerson Medals* (privately printed pamphlet, October 7, 1933), GEM Coll.

forty-three are bronze. In the 1933 pamphlet that Emerson printed to send to later recipients, he indicated that, due to the contests' popularity, he would continue to award medals for distinguished work found in various "annuals"—illustrated retrospectives of the best work from the preceding year in photography. In keeping with the international scope of medalists in general, Emerson reviewed a diverse range of annuals and recognized work from Austria, Belgium, Czechoslovakia, Japan, Spain, and New Zealand. Since these awards were not tied to history, however, they are not listed or discussed here. The present list is thus considered complete as far as the history is concerned.

With respect to national affiliations, the designation "British" has been used in place of "English" (Emerson's preferred term) to reflect modern style conventions. Each entry includes the original language from Emerson's lists followed by brief biographies and commentaries. The 1933 list is rife with spelling mistakes, but these are likely the result of transcription errors based on Emerson's poor handwriting rather than genuine misattributions. The comments note entries seemingly informed by Werge 1890, Bayley 1906, Bossert and Guttman 1930, or Recht 1931.

SILVER MEDALS

A. Awarded in 1924

1. *H. G. Ponting (English) for Japanese stereographs and one portrait only (1924 text); for artistic stereographs in war and peace (1933 revised text).*

Herbert George Ponting (British, 1870–1935) is best known today as the official photographer for Robert Falcon Scott's British Antarctic Expedition to the South Pole from 1910–13. Ponting's appetite for adventure is apparent from his early biography: he moved to California in his twenties, where he worked in mining and later purchased a fruit ranch. He traveled throughout East Asia from 1901–06, including a series of stereo-

views documenting the Russo-Japanese war of 1904–05. In 1904, the firm Underwood & Underwood published a two-volume set of 100 stereo-cards titled *Japan: Through the Stereoscope*, which featured many of Ponting's views (fig. A.3).

2. *Julie Laurberg (Dane) for studio portraits, especially of children and architecture.*

Julie Laurberg (Danish, 1856–1925) studied painting and photography in Paris and Italy. She opened a successful photography studio in central Copenhagen in 1895. From 1907, she took on her former pupil and fellow medalist, Franziska Gad, as a partner. The two worked under the studio name Julie Laurberg & Gad until Gad's death in 1921 (fig. A.4).

3. *P. Lewis (English) for landscapes and landscapes with figures (1924 text); for instantaneous landscapes (1933 revised text).*

Percy Lewis (British, active Italy, ca. 1890s–1907) rose to the upper ranks of British pictorial photographers in the early 1900s after creating an acclaimed series of Venetian scenes with a hand camera. Many of the scenes are formally reminiscent of Stieglitz's early Italian works. One period critic praised Lewis's hand camera work as “the apotheoses of the snapshot.”³⁷ Lewis abruptly abandoned photography in 1907 for a career as a musician. His work is featured in Bayley 1906 (fig. A.5).

³⁷ Percy Lewis, “My Best Picture and Why I Think So,” *The Photographic News* (September 27, 1907): 299.

4. *Captain D. English (English) for artistic natural history photographs.*

Douglas English (British, 1870–1939) was a pioneering nature photographer who specialized in charming pictures of rodents. English’s 1936 article “The Evolution of Nature Photography” highlights the contributions to the genre of Emerson and William Green, another medal recipient who is scarcely mentioned elsewhere. He authored an early manual on nature photography, *Photography for Naturalists* (1901), along with several photographically illustrated story books on rodents written for children. Two examples of English’s work appear in Bayley 1906 (fig. A.6).

B. Awarded in 1930

5. *W. Türck (Dane) for figure-subjects, children out of doors, and interiors, 1908.*

William Henrich Türck (Danish, 1872–1946) established a photography studio in Copenhagen in 1896 with James Gotfred Elleby (Danish, 1865–1932) under the trade name Elleby & Türck. Both men became members of the Danish Photographers Association (*Dansk Fotografisk Forening*) the same year. Their partnership ended in 1907, but Türck continued to operate studios in Copenhagen and Lyngby until 1925. A series of photogravure postcards of scenes from Danish life likely published by Türck around this time under the trade name “V. Türck” most closely matches the material that Emerson likely judged (fig. A.7).³⁸

³⁸ At this time, Scandinavian languages considered the letters “v” and “w” interchangeable, and the V. likely connotes Vilhelm, a common Danish spelling of William.

6. *E. Drummond Young (Scot) for portraits and his excellent text book on the subject.*

Edward Drummond Young (Scottish, 1876–1946) founded a photographic firm W.

Drummond Young & Son with his father around 1897. In 1929, Young, who was trained as a painter, published *The Art of the Photographer*, a manual covering all aspects of artistic photography (fig. A.8).

C. Awarded in 1932

7. *Hippolyte Bayard (French), 1839, for pictorial photographs and for inventing a process of taking photographs and for having first exhibited publicly pictorial photographs (in Paris) in 1839.*

Hippolyte Bayard (French, 1801–1887) is credited with inventing a unique direct positive photographic process on paper in 1839. He staged an exhibition of his photographs in Paris on June 24, 1839. A description of Bayard along with several reproductions of his works appears in Bossert and Guttmann 1930 (fig. A.9).

8. *An unknown French photographer in Paris, 1865, for an unknown lady with a cigarette.*

This cryptic description is made even more provocative by silver medal status, thereby placing it above both Hill & Adamson and Julia Margaret Cameron. But what initially looks like an unsolvable mystery actually refers to an image appearing under this title in Bossert and Guttmann 1930. The sitter is identifiable as Sophie Troubetskoy, Duchess of Morny (Russian, lived in France and Spain 1836–1898), a Russian princess who married Charles de Morny, a half-brother of Napoleon III (fig. A.10).

9. *Karl “Klic,” painter (Bohemian), 1875, for having invented the photo-aquatint process and done many plates in the process.*

Karel Václav Klíč (Czech, 1841–1926) developed a commercially practical method of photogravure printing in 1878. His patented dust-grain technique, which involved transferring an image to the plate with carbon tissue, improved on the method devised by William Henry Fox Talbot, thus becoming known as the Talbot-Klíč Process. Klíč further refined the process in 1890.

D. Awarded in 1933

10. *Col. Nicéphore de Niépce (French) for the invention of photography.*

Joseph Nicéphore Niépce (French, 1765–1833) is now generally credited as the inventor of photography. Niépce had succeeded in making permanent images through the agency of light as early as 1826. In 1829, he formed a partnership with Louis-Jacques-Mandé Daguerre, who had simultaneously been exploring ways to create lasting images using light and chemistry. Niépce died in 1833, but Daguerre continued researching and refining a process, which was made public in 1839. W. Jerome Harrison’s *A History of Photography*, which Emerson recommends in *Naturalistic Photography*, advances a forceful case for regarding Niépce as the rightful inventor of photography.

11. *Rev. J.B. Reade, M.A., F.R.S. (English) for having invented the calotype process and hypo fixer.*

Rev. Joseph Bancroft Reade (English, 1801–1870) began experimenting with photography shortly after William Henry Fox Talbot’s first public demonstrations of his technique of photogenic drawing in February 1839. Starting in March 1839, Reade

treated paper with nut gall extract in an effort to improve the paper's sensitivity to light. Gallic acid, which is derived from nut galls, is the key ingredient that distinguishes the calotype from the basic salted paper process, and Talbot may have known about Reade's experiments. At the time the award was given, there was also some controversy, since debunked, over whether Reade and not Sir John Herschel was the first one to use hyposulfite of soda ("hypo") as a fixing agent.³⁹ While many of the available histories at the time discuss Reade's experiments, including Harrison's *The History of Photography*, Emerson's confident attribution is likely based on Werge 1890, which puts forth the claim that Reade "is incontestably due the honour of having first applied tannin as an accelerator, and hyposulphite of soda as a fixing agent."⁴⁰

12. *Charles Victor Hugo (French) for the photograph of Vaquere's [sic] cat, taken at Jersey when in exile.*

French writer Victor Hugo developed an interest in photography while living in political exile on Jersey between 1852–1855. He encouraged his two sons, including **Charles Victor Hugo** (French, 1826–1871), and one of his followers, **Auguste Vacquerie** (French, 1819–1895), to set up a photographic workshop in their home on the island. The photograph, which dates to around 1853, shows the sleepy cat named Grise listening to Phèdre and is most often attributed to Auguste. Bossert and Guttman 1930 reproduced the image (fig. A.11).

³⁹ See R. Derek Wood, "J.B. Reade's Early Photographic Experiments: Recent Further Evidence on the Legend," *British Journal of Photography* 119, no. 5845 (July 28, 1972): 644–646.

⁴⁰ John Werge, *The Evolution of Photography* (London: Piper & Carter and J. Werge, 1890), 15.

13. *W. Carleman (Swede), a painter, for the letterpress half-tone block, 1870.*

Carl Gustaf Wilhelm Carleman (Swedish, 1821–1911) was a painter and a pioneering Swedish photographer. He invented one of the earliest halftone systems for mechanically reproducing photographs, which was used for illustrations in the Stockholm magazine *Nordisk Boktryckeri-Tidning* in 1871 and issues of the French newspapers *Le Monde Illustré* and *Illustration* from 1874. Carleman’s system was also used to reproduce scenes from the aftermath of the Paris Commune in Iwar Haeggström’s 1871 book *Paris’ Ruiner* (fig. A.12).

Bronze Medals

A. Awarded in 1924

14. *R. Adamson & 15. D. O. Hill, R.S.A., 1842, for calotype portraits only.*

Robert Adamson (Scottish 1821–1848) and **David Octavius Hill** (Scottish, 1802–1870) formed Scotland’s first photography studio in 1843, which they operated until Adamson’s untimely death in 1848. Hill, a painter affiliated with the Royal Scottish Academy, initially hired Adamson, an aspiring engineer and chemist, to assist with making portraits as reference material for a large-scale painting commission. Pictorial photographers widely cited their calotype portraits as the principal forerunners of artistic photography. Emerson’s award is significant in two respects: first, due to the nature of their partnership, most contemporaneous accounts typically gave sole credit to Hill for the photographs, and thus Emerson’s insistence on listing Adamson separately can be read as a corrective. A hint to the underlying rationale appears in the 1930 listing, in which Emerson adds, “they worked together—Hill was no photographer, and Adamson no

artist”; second, Emerson’s choice to award a bronze medal can only be seen as a major slight given their, or rather Hill’s, firmly established position within the historiography of photography as an art (fig. A.13).

15. *S. Buckle (English) for calotype technique and calotype landscapes and one figure subject (1924 text); for landscapes and a figure-subject (calotype), 1853 (1933 revised text).*

Samuel Buckle (British, 1808–1860) took up photography at least as early as 1851, winning an award at the Great Exhibition in the Crystal Palace that year for his calotype prints. Buckle and H.P. Robinson had photographic establishments located only ten minutes apart from each other in the 1850s. Had Emerson known this, it is possible that he may have thought to honor Buckle in part to undercut Robinson’s legacy (fig. A.14)

16. *Julia M. Cameron (English), 1864–70, for portraits only.*

Julia Margaret Cameron (British, 1815–1879) began photographing relatively late in life at the age of 48. Along with David Octavius Hill, Cameron had been regarded since the early 1890s as the most important forerunner to pictorial photography. Emerson wrote an introductory essay for the issue of *Sun Artists* on Cameron published in October 1890, a connection that makes his contrarian decision to only award her a bronze medal even more curious (fig. A.15).

17. *Dr. H. B. Goodwin (Swede) for portraits only.*

Henry Buergel Goodwin (Swedish, born Germany, 1878–1931), was a photographer and linguist. Goodwin learned photography in the early 1900s in the Leipzig studio of

Nicola Perscheid, the next medalist on the list. He opened a studio in Stockholm called “*Kamerabilder*” (“Camera Pictures”), and he made photography a full-time practice in 1916. Goodwin’s photographs were published widely in *Vogue* and *Vanity Fair* starting in the 1910s, several years before Steichen began working for them, which may explain Emerson’s interest in Steichen’s work for the two Condé Nast magazines in his letters to Eickemeyer (fig. A.16).

18. *N. Perscheid (German) for portraits and open air figure-subjects.*

Nicola Perscheid (German, 1864–1930) began his career in the late 1880s as an itinerant portrait photographer moving between multiple cities in Germany, France, and Austria-Hungary. In 1920, Perscheid developed a popular soft-focus portrait lens with a wide depth of field known as the “Perscheid lens” (fig. A.17).

19. *“Unknown Artist” for landscapes and flowers.*

This appears on both the 1924 and 1930 lists, but it disappears from the 1932 list. In the initial announcement of medal winners, Emerson makes a call for the submitter to come forward. It is possible that Emerson identified the photographer after 1930, in which case the most likely candidate would be J.M. Whitehead, who earned a bronze medal in 1933 for “landscapes, fruit, and flowers.”

B. Awarded in 1930

20. *W.A. Cadby (English) for children’s portraits and alpines.*

William A. Cadby (English, 1866–1937), was a mainstay of the London photography scene starting in the 1890s. Will Cadby and his wife, Carine Cadby, were both successful pictorial photographers who were independently elected to membership in the Linked Ring. Between 1912 and 1923, they collaborated on several illustrated books for children as well as an illustrated guide to Switzerland. A child portrait attributed to Cadby is included in Bayley 1906 (fig. A.18).

C. Awarded in 1932

21. *Louis Pierson (French), 1855. The actress Elise Félix (“Rachel.”)*

Pierre-Louis Pierson (French, 1822–1913) was well-known for his striking portraits of French society during the Second Empire. In 1855, he joined with brothers Léopold Ernest and Louis Frédéric Mayer to form the firm of Mayer & Pierson. They were appointed as the official photographers of Napoleon III, and Pierson’s portraits of the Emperor’s court and family, in particular his theatrical depictions of the Countess Castiglione, created a public sensation. The presumed portrait of actress Elizebeth Félix (French 1821–1858), known as Mademoiselle Rachel, who was one of Napoleon III’s mistresses, appears in Bossert and Guttman 1930 (fig. A.19).

22. *Gaspard Félix Tournachon, “Nadar” (French), Racine’s Vine and interview with Chevreul, the colour-savant, 1869 (portrait)*

Gaspard-Félix Tournachon (French, 1820–1910), better known as **Nadar**, was a leading early French photographer and portraitist. By the 1930s, Nadar’s role in the modernist canon as the leading mid-nineteenth-century French art photographer had been solidified. An introductory essay in Bossert and Guttman 1930 is titled “Von Niépce bis

Nadar,” and Nadar’s photograph of Racine’s Vine, which depicts a thriving, sinewy vine planted in Paris by the seventeenth-century poet Jean Baptiste Racine, is also reproduced in the book. Nadar interviewed the scientist and color theorist Michel Chevreul on his 100th birthday. On September 5, 1886, *Le Journal Illustré* published a series of twelve halftones of scenes from the interview, along with transcripts (fig. A.20).

23. *The quarter Kleine Fleet at Hamburg, 1860, by an unknown Hamburg photographer.*

This is another reference to a photograph reproduced in Bossert and Guttmann 1930. A fleet in this case refers to a canal that flows through a city, and thus the caption refers to the crowded neighborhood defined by the Kleine Fleet (fig. A.21).

24. *Captain Cromer (French) for portraits and landscapes.*

Gabriel Cromer (French, 1873–1934) was a photographer as well as a prominent early collector and historian of photography. He became the librarian for the Société Française de Photographie in 1927. He hoped that his collection would become the basis for a national French museum dedicated to photography, but his proposal was never taken up. Multiple histories of photography from this period drew heavily from Cromer’s collection, including those of Bossert and Guttmann 1930 and later Newhall 1937. The Eastman Kodak Company purchased a large part of his collection in 1939, which was later transferred to the George Eastman House. The collection includes a letter from Emerson to Cromer from 1927 (fig. A.22).

25. *J. Craig Annan (Scot) for the excellence of his photo-aquatints.*

James Craig Annan (Scottish, 1864–1946) learned photography through working for his father’s firm, T. & R. Annan and Sons. In 1883, he travelled to Vienna, where Karel Klíček taught him the dust-grain photogravure technique, which he subsequently introduced in Britain. He was a highly successful pictorial photographer, working primarily in photogravure. He was elected into the Linked Ring in 1894. Stieglitz featured his work several times in both *Camera Notes* and *Camera Work*. Craig Annan also played a central role in securing the legacy for David Octavius Hill through photogravure prints from original Hill & Adamson paper negatives that he began making around 1890.

26. *T. Bolas, F.I.C., F.C.S. (English) for his accurate learning and honest contributions to photographic journalism and for his invention of the hand camera.*

Thomas Bolas (British, 1848–1932) became interested in photography through his background as a chemist. He published scientific articles on photography in chemical and photographic journals in the 1870s and became a member of the Royal Photographic Society in 1875. Bolas is credited with the original design for the hand camera, which he called the “detective camera,” and patented in 1881. He served as editor of the *Photographic News* from 1884 to 1891, a period that spans most of Emerson’s career in photography, including the controversies over *Naturalistic Photography*.

27. *Minna Keene (English) for her pictorial photos, landscapes, interiors and figure-
subjects.*

Minna Keene (British and Canadian, born Germany, 1861–1943) was a successful, self-taught photographer. She was a member of the Linked Ring and the London Salon of Photography. In 1908, she became the first woman to earn admission as a fellow to the Royal Photographic Society. Keene lived a peripatetic life, relocating to South Africa in 1903 and Canada in 1913, where she remained for the remainder of her life (fig. A.23).

28. *Miss Gad (Dane) for her studio portraits of children and architecture.*

Fransziska Gad (Danish, 1856–1921) operated a photography studio in Copenhagen starting in 1907 with fellow medalist Julie Laurberg. The partnership, which specialized in architectural photography and portraiture, ran until Gad's death in 1921.

29. *Colonel Noverre (English) for pictorial "pin-holes."*

William Lynd Noverre (British, active in India and England, 1840–ca.1905) made his first photographs during his stint in the British Indian Army in the 1860s. He continued his interest in photography in London after completion of his service. He was elected to membership in the Royal Photographic Society in 1886 and admitted as a fellow in 1895. Noverre's platinotypes printed on rough drawing paper drew considerable attention at the annual exhibitions of the Royal Photographic Society in 1888 and 1889. Emerson refers to Noverre's work in *The Death of Naturalistic Photography*, cautioning those who might be inclined to find "salvation" in his use of rough surfaces to avoid "Noverre's dust-

heap.”⁴¹ Based on Emerson’s exchanges on pinhole photography with Eickemeyer, it is clear that he is using Noverre to undercut the prominence of George Davison’s *The Onion Field* (fig. A.24).⁴²

30. *E. H. Atkinson (English) for his excellent untouched half-tone block.*

Edward Hall Atkinson (British, died after 1938) was a process engraver who formed a partnership with James Garratt. They began operating under the name Garratt & Atkinson in 1899. From the 1920s, Atkinson operated as a sole proprietor. Atkinson lacks the distinction of most of the other named figures on the list, which suggests that Emerson may have enlisted Atkinson to make the blocks for his book.

31. *W. L. Colls (English) for the excellence of his photo-aquatint plates.*

Walter L. Colls (British, 1860–1942) was a leading photogravure printer in England. Colls and Emerson became friends in the 1880s, and it was Colls who taught Emerson the photogravure process. Colls oversaw the printing of several of Emerson’s books, including *Wild Life on a Tidal Water*. It is likely that he printed the plates for Emerson’s final two photographic books as well, since it is often mistakenly assumed that Emerson printed the plates himself and no printer is listed. Colls was a member of the Linked Ring, and between 1895 and 1897 he produced yearly portfolios illustrated in photogravure of work exhibited at the London Photographic Salon.

⁴¹ Emerson, *Death of Naturalistic Photography*, n.p.

⁴² P. H. Emerson, Letter to Rudolf Eickemeyer, Jr., September 3, 1927, NMAH.

D. Awarded in 1933

32. *Sabatier Blot (French) for portraits, 1842.*

Jean-Baptiste Sabatier-Blot (French, 1801–1881) was a French painter and a pioneering daguerreotypist. He became a pupil of J.L.M. Daguerre and created at least two portraits of the inventor, which serve as the primary references for his likeness. Recht 1931 reproduced an example of his work, drawn from the Gabriel Cromer Collection (fig. A.25).

33. *Le Sec (French) for landscape and still life.*

Henri Le Secq (French, 1818–1882) was a prominent painter and early photographer who was one of five photographers, including fellow medalist Hippolyte Bayard, selected in 1851 by the French government to serve on the Commission des Monuments Historiques. These photographers set out on Missions Héliographiques, documenting the historical sites and architecture for the purposes of preservation. Images fitting these descriptions appear in Recht 1931. (figs. A.26, A.27)

34. *Dr. D. O. H. Fielitz (German), court-physician to the King of Prussia, for portraits.*

Carl Heinrich Oscar Fielitz (German, 1824–1859) was another early daguerreotypist. It was Fielitz's father, and not Fielitz, who worked as a court physician. Fielitz spent several years in the United States starting in 1850, and upon his return he opened a studio in Brunswick that specialized in "American"-style daguerreotypes, which were known for their high polish. Bossert and Guttmann 1930 reproduced examples of Fielitz's work (fig. A.28).

35. *R. Fenton (English) for the Russian Battery at Sevastopol after its capture by the British.*

Roger Fenton (British, 1819–1869) took up photography after being inspired by examples he saw at the Great Exhibition in 1851. He was instrumental in the formation of the Photographic Society of London in 1853, which became the Royal Photographic Society in 1894. In 1854, Fenton created a large series of commissioned photographs from the Crimean War, which became his most recognized works and are regarded as some of the first documentary photographs of war. The photograph credited to Fenton of the Russian battery at Sevastopol appears in Bossert and Guttman 1930, but they misattributed the image, which was made by **James Robertson** (British, 1813–1888), another photographer who documented the Crimean War (fig. A.29).

36. *H. Biow (German) for portraits.*

Hermann Biow (German, 1804–1850) was an early daguerreotypist. He partnered with Carl Ferdinand Stelzner to open Germany's first daguerreotype studio in Hamburg 1841, which lasted until 1843. He died in 1850 as a result of inhaling fumes used during the photographic process. Bossert and Guttman 1930 reproduced examples of Biow's work (fig. A.30).⁴³

⁴³ Many of the examples, as well as those from Fielitz, were reproduced earlier in Wilhelm Weimar, *Die Daguerreotypie in Hamburg, 1839–1860: Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der Photographie* (Hamburg: Kommission bei Otto Meissners Verlag, 1915).

37. *Braun of Dornach (German) for flowers.*

Adolphe Braun (French, 1812–1877) was active in Paris and Dornach, a suburb of Mulhouse in the Alsace border region, which was a textile manufacturing center in the nineteenth century. He is best known for photographic flower studies that he made during the 1850s to serve as aids for textile designs. In the 1860s, Braun invested in the carbon method devised by Joseph Swan, another Emerson medalist, which he used to create photographic reproductions of works of art. Examples of Braun's flower studies appear in Bossert and Guttmann 1930 and Recht 1931 (fig. A.31).

38. *William Green (English) for being the first to photograph nesting birds in their natural surroundings, 1881–86.*

William Green (British, 1844–1918) operated a portrait studio in Berwick-upon-Tweed, the northernmost town in England, from 1879 through the 1890s. In the summer of 1881, members of the British Ornithologists' Union enlisted Green to photograph nesting sites on the Farne Islands and Bass Rock off the coast of Northumberland in northern England (see figs. 3.4, 3.5).

39. *W. H. Harrison (English) for inventing the gelatino-bromide dry plate and pyro developer.*

W. H. Harrison (British, d. 1897) briefly succeeded Thomas Bolas as editor of the *Photographic News* in the early 1890s. Earlier in life, Harrison worked as a telegraph line engineer for the Great Western Railway Company. In 1868, he communicated to the *British Journal of Photography* his success in creating a bromide emulsion dry plate and

using alkaline solution of pyrogallol (called “pyro” by photographers) as a developer. The invention of the gelatin dry plate is typically credited to Richard L. Maddox in 1871. Werge 1890 grants priority to Harrison for the invention, which is likely the source of Emerson’s attribution, and in this instance, Werge may be correct in his assessment: Harrison had developed the technology several years earlier, but he failed to pursue its further development.

40. *R. A. Bennett (English) for having invented the rapid gelatino-bromide dry plate.*

In 1878, **Charles Harper Bennett** (British, 1840–1927) discovered that heating the emulsion for a prolonged period greatly increased the sensitivity, as well as the consistency, of gelatin dry plates. This improvement reduced necessary exposure times to fractions of a second, thereby making it as important to the development of instantaneous photography as concurrent improvements to shutter technology. The incorrect initials in Emerson’s listing are likely the result of a transcription error, but it is worth noting that another dry-plate innovator, **Richard Kennett** (British, 1817–1896), took out a patent in 1873 for a dried silver bromide emulsion that was dissolvable in warm water, which he called a “pellicle.” Werge 1890 discusses both inventors.

41. *Peter Maudsley (English) for inventing bromide printing paper.*

Peter Mawdsley (British, 1825–ca. 1906), proprietor of the Liverpool Dry Plate Company, first described the potential of a gelatin silver printing paper in 1874. It took several years before a photographic paper utilizing a gelatin emulsion became commercially successful. Mawdsley appears in Werge 1890.

42. *W. Willis (?)* [sic] *for inventing the platinotype process.*

William Willis, Jr. (British 1841–1923) took out the first patent for the platinum printing process in 1873. The process built on John Herschel’s earlier research into the light sensitivity of iron and platinum salts. Willis made several subsequent improvements to the process and established the Platinotype Company, which began selling pre-coated platinum papers starting in 1880. It is highly unlikely that Emerson, an early evangelist for the platinotype, would have been uncertain about Willis’s identity; the question mark is likely a transcription issue, possibly related to the suffix “Jr.” Willis appears in Werge 1890.

43. *Sir J. Swan, F.R.S. (English)* *for having invented the transfer method in carbon printing.*

Sir Joseph William Swan (British, 1828–1914) was a physicist, chemist, and prolific inventor who is best known as an early developer of the incandescent light bulb. In 1864, Swan patented a method, which became known as the “Swan process,” for transferring an exposed piece of carbon tissue to a temporary support for development, which was then transferred to a final paper support, resulting in a double-transfer process. The carbon process has a longer history, and historians typically credit Alphonse Poitevin for the invention in 1855, but Swan’s incremental improvements established the mature form of the process and paved the way for its widespread commercial adoption. Werge 1890 references Swan.

44. *J. M. Whitehead (Scot) for landscapes, fruit and flowers.*

John M. Whitehead (Scottish, c.1864–1949) was one of the most successful pictorial photographers based in Scotland. He began submitting his work to international exhibitions in 1890 and remained a fixture at salons and photography exhibitions throughout Europe and abroad through the 1930s. A flower still life by Whitehead is reproduced in Bayley 1906 (fig. A.32).

45. *Dr. L. Mees, S. H. Wratten and J. Cadett (all English) for the advancement of the process of panchromatic photography.*

The German chemist Hermann Vogel was instrumental in the development of panchromatic emulsions through his research dating to 1873 that dyes could be added to photographic emulsions in order to could render them more sensitive to certain wavelengths of light, a discovery which led to the development of the first orthochromatic emulsions. Another German chemist, Adolf Miethe, who was separately known as an inventor of the telephoto lens, improved on orthochromatic emulsions by increasing their sensitivity to red light, producing a panchromatic emulsion that was sensitive to all colors of the visible light. **James William Thomas Cadett** (c.1853–1949) co-operated a British dry plate firm, Cadett & Neall, starting in 1892. Cadett developed and began manufacturing orthochromatic dry plates in 1896. The firm was absorbed into Kodak Ltd. in 1907. **Charles Edward Kenneth Mees** (British, 1882–1960) and Frederick **Charles Luther Wratten** (English, 1840–1926) were co-proprietors of a competing dry plate company, Wratten & Wainwright, which was incorporated in 1906. Mees and Wratten worked together to develop improved panchromatic plates that were sensitive to longer wavelengths. They also developed a series of colored optical filters,

known as Wratten filters, that could be mounted to lenses. In 1912, Wratten & Wainwright was also bought by Kodak Ltd. George Eastman convinced Mees to move to Rochester by making him the first director of Kodak Research Laboratories. A small set of correspondence between Emerson, Mees, and Wratten dated between 1924 and 1933 are preserved by the George Eastman House.

46. *T. R. Dallmeyer (English) for the telephoto lens.*

Thomas Rudolphus Dallmeyer (British, 1859–1906) took over his father’s successful optical business in the 1880s. Dallmeyer was a friend of Emerson, and the two collaborated on the Broads over the winter of 1890-91 in an effort to create a lens that would accurately mirror the optical features of human vision. Dallmeyer was the inventor of the first modern telephotographic lens in 1891, a distinction he shares with the German scientist Adolph Miethe. In his written reminiscences on the telephoto lens, Dallmeyer credits Emerson with giving him the inspiration for the invention. He had a controversial two-year term as president of the Royal Photographic Society beginning in 1900, during which he helped to arranged Emerson’s retrospective exhibition. He was also instrumental in securing the society’s Progress Medal for Emerson in 1895.

47. *R. Eickemyer [sic] (United States) for having founded pictorial photography in the U.S.A. (at Yonkers), and for his artistic photo, “On the shoals at Bargetat [sic] (N.J.)”*

Rudolf Eickemeyer Jr. (American, 1862–1932) was one of the foremost pictorial photographers in the United States from the 1890s through the early 1900s. Along with Alfred Stieglitz, he was one of the first American photographers elected to membership in the Linked Ring. Eickemeyer is notably the only American photographer based in the

United States on Emerson's list of medalists. As the correspondence between Emerson and Eickemeyer reveals, Emerson's granting the medal for "having founded pictorial photography in the U.S.A." is intended to rebut the language associated with the Progress Medal that Stieglitz received from the Royal Photographic Society in 1924, which was granted in part "for his services in founding and fostering Pictorial Photography in America." The image, which has not been located, is listed in the catalogue for Eickemeyer's solo exhibition at the Camera Club of New York in 1900 as "Wrecked on the Shoals" and is a green-tinted carbon print based on a negative of a boat wreck in Bargenat Bay, New Jersey, around 1890.

48. *J. Ross by W. Richmond (English) for the telecentric lens.*

Andrew Ross (British, 1798–1859) founded a successful lens manufacturing company in 1830, which after 1897 became known as Ross Ltd. The company developed several telephoto lenses after 1900. The Telecentric lens, a telephoto lens with five elements, was patented by two Ross opticians, John Stuart and William F. Bielicke, in 1912 and sold until 1922.⁴⁴ The chief benefit of the lens according to marketing material was that it gave better definition (i.e. reduced aberration) with a wide-open aperture. **George Arthur Richmond** (British, died 1953), joined Ross Ltd. around 1902, eventually becoming chief optical designer for the company. Richmond shares a 1922 patent for a five-element telephoto lens, which is possibly the Teleros, the lens that succeeded the

⁴⁴ The reader should note that "telecentric" has taken on a different meaning in relation to optics, and this lens is simply a telephoto lens with improved definition.

Telecentric and stayed in production until the late 1930s. If this is the case, Emerson may have recognized the Teleros as an improved Telecentric-type lens.

49. *Simpson, M.A., English (Cantab.) for the chloride of silver printing paper.*

George Wharton Simpson (c.1824–1880) served as the editor of the weekly *Photographic News* for two decades, from 1860–61 through his death in 1880. He also edited *The Year-book of Photography* over that same timespan. Simpson first described the collodio-chloride printing process in the *Photographic News* on October 1864. John Werge, who was a close friend of Simpson, notes that the process never became popular due to difficulties with toning. Given the paper's lack of widespread adoption, Emerson's medal is slightly curious, though Simpson's affiliations—both with the *Photographic News* and Cambridge—may provide some clue. Simpson's invention is described in Werge 1890.

50. *F. Judge (English) for landscapes.*

Fred Judge (British, 1872–1950) was a professional photographer based in Hastings, East Sussex. He began producing photographic postcards in 1903, focusing on local views and current events. He also exhibited his own work at international salons and was admitted as a fellow to the Royal Photographic Society in 1915. A winter landscape by Judge appears in Bayley 1906 (fig. A.33).

51. *F. Colman (United States) artist, for a series of Capri photos.*

This is almost certainly **Charles Caryl Coleman** (American, 1840–1928), a key figure in the expatriate artists’ community in Capri from the mid-1880s through the end of his life. Emerson had likely met Coleman over the winter of 1889–90, when Emerson and James Havard Thomas sailed to Capri together. Thomas remained in Capri and became a fixture of the same expatriate community. In several letters to Emerson from ca. 1889–1890, Thomas mentions Coleman, spelling his name “Colman” in at least one instance. In the letter from February 10, 1890, that references their visit to the Paris Exposition, Thomas remarks, “Coleman has been much occupied taking photos of his studio. He has also been taking some figures by camp light. 4 minutes exposure, sufficiently good to show that some beautiful things can be done by that light.”⁴⁵ The following year, on January 13, 1891, Thomas wrote,

Colman [sic] got back here yesterday and I lunched with him today, don’t know how he is taking his loss of Rosina, as I had not a minute’s private talk with him. He was delighted with the photos you sent him as were all the others that were there. He asked me to ask you to put aside a copy of *Wild Life* for him, he asked me to do this as he may not have time to write you for a few days + wanted to secure one, a luxe I believe.⁴⁶

⁴⁵ James Havard Thomas, Letter to P. H. Emerson, February 10, 1890, NRO.

⁴⁶ James Havard Thomas, Letter to P. H. Emerson, January 13, 1891, NRO. On the letter, Emerson has written “artist” in parenthesis above the word “Colman.” Rosina likely refers to Rosina Ferraro, a Capri native who served as a model for many of the artists on the island, including Coleman. Ferraro married one of the other American painters in Capri in Rome later that month and moved to New York City by the end of the year.

Coleman's interest in photographing by moonlight may have inspired Emerson's photograph *The Moonlit River* in *On English Lagoons*, which he distinguished as being a "Genuine moonlight photo."⁴⁷ (figs. A.34, A.35).

52. *Fréchon (French), of Basra, for a series of French cottage interiors, published in Country Life.*

Émile Fréchon (French, 1848–1921) was a journalist and photographer who was active in Algeria from 1881 until his death. His working style combined elements of orientalism and naturalism. Emerson, while serving as a judge at the annual exhibition of the Photographic Society, London in 1893, awarded Fréchon a gold medal for a collotype of an Algerian harem. Fréchon operated a studio in Biskra, but he maintained connections to his birthplace in Normandy and regularly contributed scenes of traditional French life to *Country Life* during the 1900s (fig. A.36).

53. _____ (*Scot*), of *Christorphon, N.B.*, for a series of *instantaneous landscapes*.

This photographer's name is redacted from all versions of the 1933 pamphlet for an unstated reason. The locale is likely Corstorphine, Scotland, a suburb just north of Edinburgh. There were photographers active in Corstorphine, but without additional details it is difficult to speculate further. One clue is the place name "N.B.," which stands for North Britain and was commonly used as a postal address in Scotland in the nineteenth century but fell out of use by the early twentieth century. Another, corroborating clue lies in the award being given for "instantaneous landscapes," which

⁴⁷ "House Exhibitions," *The Photographic Journal* 24, no. 9 (May 30, 1900): 266.

would likely date the work to the mid-1880s through the 1890s, when such pictures would have been noteworthy technical achievement. A photographer that fits these credentials is **Sidney Charles Salmon** (Scottish, 1852–1918), who operated a studio from 1887 through 1918 in Corstorphine and was active in the Edinburgh Photographic Society. Salmon’s studio mark reads “Sidney Salmon, Photographer, Corstorphine, NB” (fig. A.37).

54. *Villon de Villeneuve (French) for portraits of the actors and actresses of the Comédie Française, 1853–5 (calotypes).*

Julien Vallou de Villeneuve (French, 1795–1866) was a painter and later a photographer, who studied under Jean-François Millet. He began using photography in 1842, creating reference works for his work in other media. He was a founding member of the Société française de photographie. He created a popular series of portraits printed in various formats from calotype negatives of performers in the Comédie-Française in theatrical poses. Several portraits by Villeneuve appear in Recht 1931 (fig. A.38).

55. *Brassaï (French) Paris for night photography, Paris de nuit.*

Brassaï (née Gyula Halász) (French, born Hungary, 1899–1894) worked as an artist in several media but first gained international recognition for his photographs in Paris during the interwar period. *Paris de Nuit*, a book of lyrical Parisian street scenes taken at night and printed in photogravure, was first published in 1933, making Brassaï stand out as the most contemporary figure on the list of medalists. Brassaï described his curious,

but ultimately flattering, experience of receiving the medal from Emerson, whom he had not known previously, in an article written for *Camera* in 1969 (fig. A.39).⁴⁸

V. THE EMERSON MEDALISTS—COMMENTARY

Emerson's overall list of medalists offers a general impression of the manuscript's narrative thrust. The structure and language of individual listings lend additional insights into how he sought to distinguish his history vis-à-vis other histories that circulated during the period. Among the original ten recipients are both Hill and Cameron's names, two choices that conform to the general consensus among historians starting from the 1890s; in this light, however, his decision to grant them only bronze medals should be read as a deliberate contrarian gesture. Additionally, Emerson's insistence on individually recognizing Hill's partner, Robert Adamson, is also highly significant, in that it deviates from prevailing convention from the period to give Hill sole artistic credit.

In 1843, Hill, a painter and prominent member in Royal Scottish Academy, had enlisted Robert Adamson, an aspiring engineer who learned photography following bouts of ill health in his youth, to assist with making calotype portraits to use as reference material for a largescale painting commission. Together, they established the first photographic studio in Scotland. Their partnership only lasted several years, ending with Adamson's untimely death in 1847, at which point Hill abandoned photography and returned to painting. Based on Hill and Adamson's professional dynamic and respective social ranks, most accounts of their work from the 1890s through the first quarter of the twentieth century granted Hill artistic credit for the delicately

⁴⁸ Brassai, "My Memories of E. Atget, P. H. Emerson and Alfred Stieglitz," *Camera* 48 (January 1969): 4–37.

rendered portraits, glossing over or altogether omitting Adamson's contributions. Stieglitz, for example, devoted three separate issues of *Camera Work* to Hill's work, in 1905, 1907, and 1912, but each time the plates only bear Hill's name in the credit line. By the 1920s, Hill's singular reputation as a pioneering photographic artist had become thoroughly engrained in historical discussions. In 1931, Heinrich Schwarz, an Austrian art historian who later emigrated to the United States, published a book-length study on Hill. Schwarz's volume is considered to be the first major monograph on an individual photographer written from an art historical vantage. Emerson, for his part, dismissed Schwarz in a late letter to Stieglitz as a "Viennese scribble."⁴⁹

Were there any question that Emerson's choice to include Adamson was intentional, in the 1930 update, Emerson adds a note to say "they worked together—Hill was no photographer, and Adamson no artist."⁵⁰ This distinction suggests that, even though Emerson may have come around to the notion that photography could be artistic (a major admission in its own right), he sought to maintain a separation between the work of an artist and the technical pursuits of photographers, while still upholding the fundamental importance of both.

Hill and Cameron secured their respective positions in the photographic firmament through calculated campaigns waged by the later custodians of their works who circulated their images widely through exhibitions and journals. Cameron's revival owes a debt to her son, Henry Herschel Hay Cameron, a pictorialist in his own right who was an early member of the Linked Ring. In April 1889, H.H.H. Cameron organized an initial retrospective exhibition of his

⁴⁹ P. H. Emerson, Letter to Alfred Stieglitz, September 27, 1933, YCAL.

⁵⁰ "Emerson Medallists," *British Journal of Photography* 77, no. 3671 (September 12, 1930): 550.

mother's work in London, the first since her death in 1879.⁵¹ Emerson based his tribute to Cameron for *Sun Artists* on his experience visiting that show on New Bond Street.

On behalf of Hill, J. Craig Annan spearheaded similar efforts. His father, Thomas Annan, operated a successful photographic printing firm in Scotland and had come into possession of many of Hill and Adamson's original paper negatives following Hill's death in 1870. Through his connection to his father's printing business, J. Craig Annan became adept at the photogravure process. Beginning in 1890, Annan created a series of photogravure reproductions of Hill and Adamson images from the original calotype negatives. The availability of the negatives facilitated the widespread circulation of their work in both British and American contexts through the first decades of the twentieth century. Emerson's later decision to award silver medals to Hippolyte Bayard, however, suggests that he would have positioned Bayard over Hill and Adamson as the first artistic photographer of note.

Of equal significance to the medalists in reconstructing Emerson's narrative are those whose names are conspicuous through omission. Neither Rejlander nor Robinson's names appear; while Robinson's exclusion is unsurprising given Emerson's past spats, the absence of Rejlander suggests that Emerson dismissed combination printing as an illegitimate method that ran counter to his preferred ideal of "pure" photography. In a similar vein, another noteworthy omission is the mid-nineteenth-century French sculptor and portrait photographer Antoine Samuel Adam-Salomon. Along with Cameron and Rejlander, Adam-Salomon is one of just three figures Emerson cites in *Naturalistic Photography* as the only photographers who made artistic

⁵¹ Julian Cox and Colin Ford, *Julia Margaret Cameron: The Complete Photographs* (Los Angeles: J. Paul Getty Museum, 2003), 541. The exhibition catalogue includes the first publication of Cameron's well-known autobiographical essay, "Annals from My Glass House," which was also reprinted the following year in the Chicago-based journal, *The Beacon*. See Julia Margaret Cameron, "Annals from My Glass House," *The Beacon* 2 (July 1890): 157–60.

work prior to him.⁵² Emerson even went so far as to dedicate the first two editions of *Naturalistic Photography* to Adam-Solomon, whom he lauds as “the first artist of acknowledged ability who was original enough to practice photography for its own sake.”⁵³ Emerson’s admiration for Adam-Salomon likely had as much to do with his biography as his actual portraits: he was an artist by training who became something of a provocateur in the French art establishment by exhibiting his photographs at the Paris Exhibition of 1867. Emerson’s original source for information about Adam-Salomon and Rejlander was Edward L. Wilson’s 1881 handbook *Wilson’s Photographics*, from which Emerson cribbed several quotes from Adam-Salomon that aligned with his initial conception of photography’s artistic potential. At issue, it seems, were later revelations that Adam-Solomon had experimented with liberally retouching his negatives by hand to a greater extent than his comments on the subject implied. Bayley pointed out this irony in the 1926 revision of *The Complete Photographer*, describing Adam-Salomon’s appearance in *Naturalistic Photography* as perplexing and calling him “a pioneer in the modification of photographs by brushwork.”⁵⁴

Other subgroupings, which mirror Emerson’s idiosyncratic taste, lend the list a distinctive character. His final award, given to Brassai for his 1933 photobook *Paris de Nuit*, for example, strikes an unexpected, modern chord in a list that otherwise tilts decidedly toward the prior century in its aesthetic sensibilities. The inclusion of pioneering nature photographers William Green and Douglas English in a history of “artistic” photography bespeaks Emerson’s personal

⁵² Emerson appears to have consulted Edward L. Wilson, *Wilson’s Photographics* (Philadelphia: E. L. Wilson, 1881) in writing these passages on retouching, as two quotes, attributed to Adam-Salomon and Rejlander respectively, appear in Wilson’s popular manual.

⁵³ Emerson, *Naturalistic Photography*, 2nd ed., iii.

⁵⁴ Bayley, *Complete Photographer*, 9th ed., 348.

interest in natural history. And given that nature photography has typically resided at the margins of aesthetic histories of the medium, their appearance invites speculation how nature photography as a genre might have followed an alternate trajectory, however slight, had Emerson's history found its way into print. To that same end, the international spread within Emerson's selections is remarkable for the period. Indeed, it is this feature of the book more than any other that would likely have been a source of critical engagement for later historians of photography. In particular, the photographers from Scandinavian countries—including Julie Laurberg, Franziska Gad, and William Henrich Türck from Denmark, and Gustaf Carleman and H.B Goodwin from Sweden—seldom if ever show up in later histories, even ones that aspire to be global in scope. Unlike most of the other photographers, it is not immediately apparent how Emerson came to know their work. His general admiration for Scandinavian art and culture, however, finds other clear precedents: he had come away from the 1889 Paris Expo, for example, with the opinion that the only truly fresh material on display had come from the region.⁵⁵

While the geographical distribution of medalists, despite being almost exclusively focused on western European countries, is commendable for the period, even more striking is the fact that only one American photographer based in the United States made the list: Rudolf Eickemeyer, Jr. This oversight is certainly not due to a lack of knowledge about trends in American photography; rather, it gets at one of the critical dynamics behind the entire undertaking—Emerson's complicated relationship with Alfred Stieglitz and by association American pictorial photography more generally. The keys to understanding this dynamic reside not in the lists of medalists, but in his private letters.

⁵⁵ Emerson, *English Emersons*, 131.

VI. EMERSON'S CORRESPONDENCE

Between February 1924 and January 1925, Emerson wrote thirteen letters to Stieglitz—roughly a pace of one per month.⁵⁶ Taken together, these letters help to lay the groundwork for Emerson's underlying motives behind his history project. The bulk of the content revolves around requests for prints which are, in turn, met with evasions. In the opening letter, Emerson offers Stieglitz a tepid congratulatory note for receiving the Progress Medal before attempting to cajole him into sending his most recent work. In subsequent letters, Emerson expresses particular interest in examples Stieglitz's "cloud songs," a reference to Stieglitz's *Songs of the Sky*, the precursors to Stieglitz's celebrated *Equivalents* series, which had been exhibited at the Anderson Galleries in an encore exhibit that year. In his requests for recent work, Emerson demonstrates his engagement with recent developments in American photography, and he appeals to Stieglitz's ego by showing seemingly genuine interest in his new body of work.

At the same time, he seemingly could not help himself from antagonizing Stieglitz by casting aspersions at members of his inner circle. Coburn, Caffin, Demachy, Käsebier, Shaw, Strand—he dismisses each one in turn as a second-rate photographer or critic.⁵⁷ For his part, Stieglitz was content to play along, demurring but mailing recent magazine articles with reproductions of his new work as a token gesture. Emerson attempted to appeal to his sporting nature, noting that the likes of Clarence White and J. Craig Annan—even George Davison—had

⁵⁶ Many of these letters are reproduced and interpreted in Newhall, *The Fight for Photography*. Newhall also created decent transcriptions of all the correspondence between Emerson and Stieglitz, which are deposited along with the originals in the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library.

⁵⁷ Nancy Newhall mistakenly writes that Emerson expressed admiration for Käsebier, mis-transcribing a remark as "I now view one find—Käsebier," but the actual line reads, "I never saw one good Käsebier." P. H. Emerson, Letter to Alfred Stieglitz, January 22, 1925, YCAL.

agreed to send prints, but Stieglitz never capitulated, and the correspondence fizzled by the start of 1925.

As Emerson was winding down his communications with Stieglitz, he found a more receptive audience who would ultimately prove more useful for his ultimate purpose in Rudolf Eickemeyer. Emerson had never met or corresponded with Eickemeyer previously. In his first letter from mid-December 1924, he introduces himself and notes that he had been given Eickemeyer's name as someone who "did art photography in the Eighties in the United States—before my naturalistic ideas were adopted over there."⁵⁸ This marked the beginning of a long-distance relationship that developed over four years.

Emerson's letters to Eickemeyer reveal many different insights into his research and motives, not the least of which are the extraordinary lengths he went to in his effort to refute Stieglitz's claim to having been the founder of American pictorial photography. The fact that Stieglitz's award stipulated the United States as its geographic context adds a confounding wrinkle to Emerson's ire, but this is partially explained in a remark in an early letter to Eickemeyer asking for information about American photographers: "I want some more of my countrymen (I am an American you know)."⁵⁹ Incidentally, he had made this same claim in one of his first letters to Stieglitz from 1889, mentioning that his father had been from Massachusetts.⁶⁰ While most recent historians more or less agree that Emerson assumed an English identity and was, for all intents and purposes, an English photographer, these references at the very least suggest that he held fast to some part of his American heritage. While these

⁵⁸ P. H. Emerson, Letter to Rudolf Eickemeyer, Jr. December 19, 1924, NMAH.

⁵⁹ P. H. Emerson, Letter to Rudolf Eickemeyer, Jr., January 19, 1925, NMAH.

⁶⁰ P. H. Emerson, Letter to Alfred Stieglitz, September 29, 1889, YCAL.

overtures are likely a strategic attempt to cultivate a sense of solidarity with the addressees, he appears to have at least flirted with the possibility of reclaiming his status as an American in his history. But short of doing so, he likely intended to claim priority for having ushered in pictorial photography in the United States from afar based on prints he had sent to exhibitions in Philadelphia in 1886, while Stieglitz was still completing his education in Germany. This move, however, would not provide the necessary precedent for the additional claim of being an American photographer *working in* the United States, and thus this latter point serves as the point of departure for Emerson's interest in Eickemeyer.

Stepping back briefly: the relationship between Emerson and Stieglitz was a complicated one, making it hard to determine, even in light of a rich set of clues, how Emerson ultimately decided to factor Stieglitz into the story he planned to tell. Despite his clear desire to undercut Stieglitz's legacy, he understood at a more visceral level that their fates were ultimately entwined. If he could not erase Stieglitz—whom he maintained pride over having discovered, and whose work he also, if reluctantly, admired—he may have thought to wrest away Stieglitz's "founder" status by representing him through a more recent photograph. Based on the sum of the evidence, it appears that Emerson would have focused on Stieglitz's work as an editor, providing what he refers to as "propaganda on behalf of Art Photography," while emphasizing that he did not begin working in earnest in the United States until his return from Germany in 1890, which would enable Emerson to point out that he had exhibited his works in the United States several years earlier.⁶¹

But Emerson's jealousy ran deep. In addition to trying to upend Stieglitz's legacy in the United States, he also took aim at the very basis of their connection—namely, the award that he

⁶¹ P. H. Emerson, Letter to Alfred Stieglitz, October 3, 1924, YCAL.

had given Stieglitz for his work in Italy in 1887. Emerson pressed Eickemeyer for information about two photographers who are entirely forgotten today, H.W. Gridley and J. Holcombe, who were Americans who had made pictorial work in Italy in 1886, the year before Stieglitz's arrival. Emerson's interest in their work was not entirely without basis: while serving on the jury of the 1886 exhibition of the RPS (then the Photographic Society of Great Britain), he had awarded Gridley and Holcombe medals for their Italian photographs. By retracing the order of events, Emerson sought to claim that Gridley and Holcombe's work had served as inspiration for Stieglitz's successes the following year.

Emerson presented Eickemeyer with a flurry of questions in an effort to extract information about other American photographers, while also pressing him about his own work that he made and exhibited prior to 1890, the year that Stieglitz returned from abroad. Throughout much of their early exchanges, Eickemeyer betrays his naiveté about Emerson's alliances. In one response, for example, it is clear that he suggested to Emerson that his print *Sweet Home* should be among the prints considered, which he supports by noting that it had earned published praise from Davison when it was first exhibited in England. After seeing the print, Emerson chides Eickemeyer for claiming any originality in the composition, which features a prominent foreground, harping that he had many compositions of that sort dating back to 1885 (which, incidentally, is possibly a reference to his own foreground study dating to that year, *A Rushy Shore*).

Where Emerson assumed a decidedly antagonistic posture toward Stieglitz, his correspondence with Eickemeyer is on sum more self-assured—by turns complimentary and condescending. It is clear that he did not regard Eickemeyer as his equal; Eickemeyer, who viewed Emerson as a role model, was eager to meet his needs in any case. In addition to sending

multiple batches of prints (over fifty in total), he fielded detailed questions about his career and other American photographers. Emerson focused on photographers active during the late 1880s and early 1890s, including J. Wells Champney, Robert S. Redfield, W.B. Post, Thomas McCollin, and John E. Dumont, all of whom could be fit into the model of pure photography that Emerson held up as his later ideal. At the same time, Emerson also probed for information on the recent activity of Secessionist photographers, asking, for example, Eickemeyer's opinions on Steichen's commercial work for *Vanity* and *Vogue*.

Eickemeyer struggled to meet Emerson's request to provide material evidence of work that he had exhibited prior to 1890. Emerson initially expressed interest in two photographs dating to 1886–87, *A Friendly neighbor* and *Widow's Half-Acre*, but, gripped by paranoia about the claim he sought to make against Stieglitz, he insisted that Eickemeyer provide documentary proof that the prints were shown in an exhibition, going so far as to insist that he consult a lawyer to verify his claims. Unsatisfied with the work that he had received, and noting that many of the negatives had apparently been worked upon, Emerson informed Eickemeyer in March 1925 that he would be added to the honor roll, but the committee had decided not to award him a medal.

Following that letter, there is a sixteen-month gap in their correspondence. During that time, Eickemeyer took an extended trip to Europe with his second wife, Florence Brevoort Eickemeyer, making stops in England, Wales, Scotland, Norway, France, Belgium. While in England, they appear to have called on Emerson in Eastbourne, a seaside town south of London where Emerson was living at the time. The correspondence picked up again upon Eickemeyer's return to Yonkers with a heightened feeling of camaraderie, as well as a new sense of resolve to establish a series of pictorial works that Eickemeyer exhibited prior to 1890. Over the next two years, Eickemeyer sent multiple parcels containing prints, albums, and ephemera—including an

album of early work from 1886 titled *Among the Berkshire Hills*, the catalog from his 1900 solo exhibition at the Camera Club of New York, and four volumes of journal clippings that he had kept from the mid-1890s. Emerson took the liberty of writing marginal comments throughout the albums, initialing prints he liked and underlining comments or scrawling interjections at critic's statements he disliked in the scrapbooks. On a clipped copy of an article by H.P. Robinson titled "Rambling Papers," for example, Emerson amended the title to read "Rambling papers by a *cretin*."⁶²

These humorous barbs aside, Emerson made use of Eickemeyer's resources to add to his knowledge about early American pictorial work. He pulled details from exhibition reviews to bolster his narrative, including an anonymous review of several exhibitions held in London in 1894, which calls the influx of out-of-focus and brushed-on prints as "trashy," while giving Eickemeyer a better note than Stieglitz among the American exhibitors.⁶³ Emerson also took interest in an unsigned review of the inaugural exhibition of the Yonkers Photographic Club in 1889, which turns out to have been written by Eickemeyer, that praises works by two of the club's founders, George Stengel and F. W. R. Eschmann, identifying them with "the Emersonian or naturalistic school of photography."⁶⁴ Needless to say, Emerson followed up by seeking Stengel and Eschmann's contacts.

Emerson initially decided that he would reproduce one of Eickemeyer's award-winning genre scenes, *The Kitten's Breakfast* (fig. A.40). A thoroughly sentimental portrayal of Victorian

⁶² Rudolph Eickemeyer, Jr. *Scrapbooks, Volume 4 (December 28, 1894–April 1895)*, NMAH.

⁶³ The review is Hugh D'ontknowho, "Notes on Photography in England," *Photographic Times* (October 26, 1894): 371.

⁶⁴ [Rudolph Eickemeyer, Jr.], "Annual Exhibition of Work by Members—Attractive Display, Yonkers Photographic Club," *Yonkers Statesman Daily*, May 10, 1889.

domesticity, the picture is an odd fit with Emerson's usual taste, but he seems to have been drawn to the subtext of a youthful patriarch, coupled with Eickemeyer's ability to coax five figures into a strong formal composition without drawing undue attention to the elaborate staging involved. Perhaps thinking the better of it, Emerson eventually settled on an alternate print, a green-toned carbon print of a shipwreck off Barnegat Bay on the New Jersey coast that had been shown in Eickemeyer's exhibit at the Camera Club of New York. The picture was not one of Eickemeyer's signature images, and it is possible that the copy Eickemeyer sent Emerson was unique, so unfortunately no known version of it is extant.

Emerson also sought Eickemeyer's help in finding an American publisher for his manuscript. Eickemeyer obliged by connecting him with Frank Fraprie, the editor of *American Photography*, but a deal failed to materialize. In Emerson's final letter to Eickemeyer, which is dated April 12, 1928, Emerson tells him that he finished his manuscript the prior November and bids him farewell. Five years later, Emerson's privately printed roll of medalists recognizes Eickemeyer with a bronze medal "for having founded pictorial photography in the U.S.A. (at Yonkers)," and for his photograph of the shipwreck at Barnegat. Because Eickemeyer had passed away in 1932, it is unknown whether he was alive to learn of the honor that Emerson finally decided to grant him, though the physical medal is preserved with his materials at the Smithsonian Institution (fig. A.41).

VII. EMERSON'S MODERNISM, NEWHALL'S NATURALISM

The late 1920s and early 1930s experienced a new, self-conscious interest in the history of photography. This period of self-reflection about the medium and its history saw its culmination in Beaumont Newhall's landmark exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art, New York (MoMA), *Photography, 1839–1937*. Newhall's hugely influential 1937 show remained a

touchstone for the rest of the twentieth century. As with many watershed moments in history, however, *Photography, 1839–1937* is best seen as a summative statement of a decade or more of piecemeal efforts, rather than a singular, transformative event, which is the lens we tend to see it through today. The exhibition, which came to fruition just a year after Emerson’s death, is ultimately what secured Emerson’s place in the modern photographic canon.

Newhall used the show to define a modern aesthetic for photography, which he predicated on the notion of “straight” photography espoused by Stieglitz and his later contemporaries of the f/64 Group, namely Edward Weston and Ansel Adams. He internalized the f/64 photographers’ distaste for pictorialist aesthetics, later recalling that he “treated soft-focus work as an aberration that should be eliminated.” For this reason, Newhall looked to form a canon of photographers reaching back to the early days of the medium who spurned what he saw as painterly effects in favor of pure approach to the medium.⁶⁵ In this sense, his method shares meaningful overlap with Emerson’s own approach. While Emerson, who held firm to an ideal that rejected the extremes at either end of the focusing spectrum, would have rejected some of Newhall’s choices (he dismissed Mathew Brady’s Civil War photographs, for example, calling them “all very sharp + clear with nothing pictorial about them”),⁶⁶ they would have found much common ground in their respective views and aesthetic preferences.

While Newhall’s training in art history informed his methodology, his approach to content was decidedly more inclusive than Emerson’s. In part, this difference may be accounted for by the fact that Newhall, to the best of his ability, eschewed a self-conscious definition of art as a matter of modernist principle, whereas Emerson remained committed to a more traditional

⁶⁵ Beaumont Newhall, *Focus: Memoirs of a Light in Photography* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1993), 46.

⁶⁶ P. H. Emerson, Letter to Rudolf Eickemeyer, Jr., March 7, 1925, NMAH.

notion of art as a discretely defined field. Newhall thus cast a widest possible net for material that he deemed interesting from a formalist standpoint, including, for example, “scientific” imagery like Muybridge’s studies of animal locomotion and early X-ray photographs, which Emerson deemed inartistic, despite whatever merits he may have found in them otherwise. There are other indications, however, that Emerson had assimilated to certain modernist sensibilities. His willingness to highlight works by unknown photographers, for instance, reflects a modernist sensibility that would grow more pronounced over the twentieth century that photographs can be judged on their visual merits alone, without any special consideration for the creator or the original context for which the work was created.

To that same end, it is noteworthy that Emerson, like Newhall, found value in press photography as a means of recording modern life. In one of his early calls for submissions, Emerson notes, “I *especially invite Press photographers* to send in a dozen prints, especially American and English Press photographers.”⁶⁷ While only a few references that can be deemed press photography appear—most prominently Nadar’s pioneering photographic interview with Chevreul (which Newhall also highlighted)—his suggestive plea for press photographs demonstrates a willingness to go beyond the narrow confines of photographs principally or primary intended as art.

Part of the overlap between Emerson and Newhall’s respective viewpoints follows from the fact that much of their research had been conducted concurrently, and, as such, they traversed a lot of the same ground. To wit, Newhall’s first published text on photography was a review of Bossert and Guttman’s *Aus der Frühzeit der Photographie, 1840–70*, published in 1932. Much like Emerson, Newhall had seen the book as a “revelation,” which would appeal to readers due to

⁶⁷ Emerson “History of Artistic Photography,” 454.

the “astounding modernity of feeling.”⁶⁸ He had likewise also taken inspiration from Camille Recht’s *Die alte Photographie*, which, like Emerson, introduced him to an array of new material.⁶⁹

Newhall later recalled that this first chance to engage with the history of photography in earnest came in 1934, when he received a scholarship that enabled him to travel to London to attend summer school at the Courtauld Institute of Art. “I spent much of this time in the library of the Royal Photographic Society,” he reminisced, adding that “I was made welcome by James Dawdle [sic] Johnston,” whom he described as a “generous and genial man” who frequently invited him to afternoon tea to discuss photography and its history.⁷⁰ Newhall had thus conducted much of his primary research using the same research library from which Emerson had drawn.⁷¹ And while Newhall paid homage to several of the touchstones in Johnston’s pictorialist-focused history, such as Robinson’s combination prints, he ultimately shared Emerson’s distaste for high pictorialist aesthetics.

Newhall joined MoMA as a librarian in 1935 during his graduate studies in art history at Harvard University, where he studied under Paul Sachs, who was also on the Board of Trustees of the museum. In 1936, the museum’s director, Alfred Barr, who was also a former student of Sachs, offered Newhall the opportunity to put together an overview of photography as part of a

⁶⁸ Beaumont Newhall, “Review of *Aus der Frühzeit der Photographie, 1840–70*, by H. T. Bossert and H. Guttman,” *American Magazine of Art* 25, no. 2, (August 1932) 130–31.

⁶⁹ Beaumont Newhall, “The Challenge of Photography to the Art Historian,” in *Perspectives on Photography: Essays in Honor of Beaumont Newhall*, eds. Peter Walch and Thomas F. Barrow (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1986), 4.

⁷⁰ Newhall, *Focus*, 34.

⁷¹ Emerson notes in a letter to J. Dudley Johnston that he planned to visit the collection. From this it can reasonably be extrapolated that Emerson used the RPS library as a basis for his historical research. See P. H. Emerson, Letter to J. Dudley Johnston, August, 29, 1924, RPS Coll.

series of survey exhibitions on the history of different media.⁷² To bring his ambitious plan to fruition, Newhall formed an advisory committee that included prominent figures in photography from the United States, along with international representatives from France, Germany, and England. He invited Stieglitz, whom he had come to revere, to serve as honorary chairman of the committee, but Stieglitz flatly declined. Stieglitz considered himself an active living artist and had learned firsthand, from the Buffalo show and elsewhere, the downsides of being included in exhibitions designed as historical surveys. Newhall eventually dedicated the catalogue to Stieglitz, though Stieglitz had not even agreed to lend examples work for the exhibition, such that he was only represented by plates from *Camera Work*, a substitution that reviewers of the exhibition picked up on and lamented.

Newhall traveled to Europe during 1936 to borrow works from private collectors and prominent public collections. He borrowed a number of prints from the collection that Johnston had built at the RPS, including two works by Emerson that were likely pulled from albums donated in 1933.⁷³ He also borrowed many works from the prominent French collector Gabriel Cromer, such as Julien Vallou de Villeneuve's portraits of actors from the Comédie Française, which Emerson had recognized with a medal (alongside Cromer himself) and had likely also borrowed directly from Cromer for reproduction.

In the text for the catalog that accompanied Newhall's show, Emerson receives mention following a discussion of Hurter and Driffield's experiments in a section bearing the heading

⁷² Newhall, *Focus*, 43–44.

⁷³ In 1933, Richard Polak, a pictorialist who specialized in photographs after traditional Dutch genre paintings, gifted three of Emerson's books—*Life and Landscape on the Norfolk Broads*, *Pictures of East Anglian Life*, and *Wild Life on a Tidal Water* to the RPS Collection. The latter two books features prints that Newhall included in *Photography, 1839–1937*. See "Gifts," *Photographic Journal* 73 (November 1933): 477.

“The Death of Naturalistic Photography.”⁷⁴ For Newhall, who set out to derive aesthetic conditions specific to photography from its technical history, Emerson’s initial role had simply been to validate the significance of Hurter and Driffield, whose research into sensitometry was instrumental in establishing all sorts of standardized methods and tools for exposure, development, and printing that Newhall’s audience in 1937 would have already taken for granted. Newhall’s initial appraisal was less than complimentary: naturalistic photography, he imputed, “preaches a doctrine of direct manipulation,” while Emerson, for his part, committed the cardinal modernist sin of conflating the ends of photography and painting. Even so, the fact that Newhall included an entire section on Hurter and Driffield—whose experiments he almost surely learned about through Emerson’s writings—implicitly validates Emerson’s decision to renounce his initial views of the medium and thereby sets up Emerson as the pivotal figure that he grew into in later editions of Newhall’s history.

As the story goes, Newhall originally discovered Emerson by chance, happening upon a secondhand copy of the third edition of *Naturalistic Photography* at a bookstall outside of Union Square in mid-December 1935. The book immediately piqued his interest, insofar as the ideas “sounded like Stieglitz, Adam, Weston...”⁷⁵ If the story is to be believed, it implies that Newhall subsequently referred back to the earlier editions of *Naturalistic Photography*, possibly consulting earlier editions during his borrowing trip to the RPS, which enabled him to retell the story of Emerson’s disillusionment as it happened.

Thus, despite Newhall’s initial criticisms, by including Emerson in the MoMA exhibit, Newhall had effectively secured a place in history for Emerson. Newhall included two

⁷⁴ Beaumont Newhall, *Photography, 1839–1937* (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1937), 62–63.

⁷⁵ Newhall, *Fight for Photography*, 108.

photogravures by Emerson in the blockbuster exhibition: *In the Haysel*, the frontispiece to *Pictures of East Anglian Life* (fig. A.42) and *Getting Ready for Fishing* from *Wild Life on a Tidal Water* (fig. A.43).⁷⁶ Indeed, the contrast between the two selections already presages the liminal status that Emerson would come to occupy as a hinge set between nineteenth-century Victorian aesthetics and twentieth-century modernist formalism. *In the Haysel* recalls a typical pastoral genre scene, but the assertive bilateral symmetry tugs at convention. *Getting Ready for Fishing*, by contrast, is more radical in its compositional elements. The stark, cramped harbor with haphazardly strewn objects coalescing to form a neat play of geometry and tonal values, combined with its aggressively banal subject matter, anticipates the ease with which Emerson's oeuvre could be repurposed to appeal to twentieth-century audiences keen on abstraction.

In terms of Newhall's narrative, the pivotal declaration in the text comes when, turning away from those earlier pictorial photographers whom he portrays of striving to imitate painting, he declares, "But we are seeking standards of criticism generic to photography."⁷⁷ In other words, Newhall sought to establish a vocabulary specific to the medium of photography. By framing his ambition in terms of criticism, he appears to bypass any metaphysical claims about the nature of photography itself, but this gesture toward criticism, whether intentional or not, is largely undercut through the content of the section, which is titled "The Basic Laws" and resituates the project in a much stronger positivist light. With this in mind, Newhall's choice of the qualifier "generic" in lieu of its near cognate "universal" does not seem trivial or arbitrary. He proceeds deductively, starting from certain fundamentals of optics and photographic chemistry, from which he derives aesthetic boundaries for photography based on its observable

⁷⁶ Newhall, *Photography: 1839-1937*, 108.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 41.

attributes. His method, in other words, is naturalistic in much the same way that Emerson's was naturalistic. One is able to draw a relatively straight line from Newhall's thesis in *Photography, 1839–1937* to the pivotal chapter in *Naturalistic Photography*, titled “Phenomena of Sight, and Art Principles Deduced Therefrom,” in which Emerson follows a parallel path of deductive reasoning, building from material facts to general aesthetic principles. At the basic level of method, then, Newhall and Emerson's projects share meaningful affinities—they sought positive, natural standards for aesthetic judgments ostensibly based in empirical observations rather than pure reason. In seeking these natural standards, their accounts are similarly motivated by underlying concerns over aesthetic relativism.

This is not to say that there are not significant differences between their approaches. Newhall, whose education was ultimately rooted in the teachings of Alois Riegl and the Vienna School of Art History, gravitated for a “scientific” approach that prioritized a pure formalism, whereas Emerson, whose intellectual formation was based in Victorian scientific naturalism, sought organic explanations grounded in human physiology. This key distinction, which proves paramount, resulted in Emerson's selection of a biological standard—namely, the eye—which forged a connection between the photograph and the human agent behind the camera, while Newhall turns instead to the optics and chemistry—the material elements of the photographic craft. So, while both of their methods may rightly be called “naturalistic,” crucially, they arrive at radically different places based on their initial premises. Emerson started out by seeking a system of aesthetics grounded in an evolutionary account of human psychology; in that sense, he initially sought a standard that was generic to humans, not to photography as such. Newhall, by taking the material circumstances governing photography as his point of departure, arrived at a

characteristically modernist argument about medium specificity. For Newhall, unlike Emerson, a unified definition of “art” is never clearly spelled out, which appears as a matter of principle.

With these distinctions in mind, one novel way to interpret Emerson’s shift in views, which resulted in *The Death of Naturalistic Photography*, is, perhaps counterintuitively, as a move toward a more modern view of photography rooted in an argument about medium specificity. To advance this reading, one would only need to see Emerson’s statement that photography is not an art as essentially saying that photography is unlike *other* forms of art. In subsequent revisions to Newhall’s catalogue, which were republished as a standalone book simply titled *The History of Photography*, Emerson’s importance gradually increases. By the third edition in 1949, Emerson leads off with the chapter on “Photography as an Art.”⁷⁸ This piecewise makeover reached its culmination in Nancy Newhall’s 1975 monograph on Emerson, which declares him to be “the first to work out an aesthetic based on [photography’s] then limitations, which he believed might soon be overcome.”⁷⁹

Since we lack access to Emerson’s *History of Artistic Photography*, we are unable to know for certain how he would have addressed photography’s perceived limitations three decades on from when he initially set out to overcome them. Nonetheless, what is clear, is that his notions about art and photography continued to evolve and adapt to present conditions.

⁷⁸ Beaumont Newhall, *The History of Photography from 1839 to the Present Day*, rev. ed. (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1949), 119.

⁷⁹ Newhall, *Fight for Photography*, 3.

APPENDIX B

THE CORRESPONDENCE OF P. H. EMERSON AND RUDOLF EICKEMEYER, JR., 1924–1928

Between December 1924 and April 1928, P. H. Emerson sent fifty-eight letters to Rudolf Eickemeyer, Jr., which are preserved in a notebook in the Photographic History Collection at the Smithsonian Institution's Nation Museum of American Art. Emerson's letters to Eickemeyer fill in many of the background details about his unpublished *History of Artistic Photography*, including clues about his underlying motivations for the project, references to photographers who interested him (some of whom are quite obscure), details about the proposed format of the book including its illustrations, and the difficulties that he encountered in his attempts to secure a publisher both in England and abroad.

The bulk of Emerson's communications, however, hone in on his attempts to build a case (a legally enforceable one, at that), that Eickemeyer, not Stieglitz, was the rightful founder of pictorial photography in the United States. Unlike Emerson's correspondence with Stieglitz from the same period, which rarely moved beyond surface matters, the letters to Eickemeyer strike a more amicable tone, which grew more trusting over time. As a result, far more details about the project are disclosed. Other interesting details about their relationship are contained in passing remarks, including statements that appear to suggest that Emerson played host to Eickemeyer and his wife at his seaside flat in Eastbourne while they were on an extended trip to England, Scotland, Wales, Norway, and France in 1925. There is a sixteen-month gap in their exchanges during this period, and when the letters pick up again in 1926, a newfound sense of camaraderie seems to emerge.

Emerson indicates that he completed the manuscript around 1927, but, as the historiographic essay in Appendix A describes, Emerson appears to have continued to expand

and revise the text into the early 1930s. Emerson's handwriting is notoriously difficult to parse, which, incidentally, proved a constant source of frustration for the original recipients of his letters (Eickemeyer and Stieglitz each make repeated pleas for clearer script). Where a word or phrase is mostly illegible, in most cases a more conservative approach has seemed more prudent, so ellipses have been added rather than speculating on what a scribble might say. Annotations are included, which provide basic biographical information about the figures Emerson mentions, along with a few contextual notes where it seemed warranted. Text alignment and formatting have been adjusted for the sake of uniformity, but other particularities of Emerson's writing style, such as his frequent use of a '+' in place of 'and,' have been preserved throughout.

5 Lascelles Mansions
Eastbourne
Sussex
England
Dec. 19, 1924

Dear Sir:

I have been given your name as one who did art photography in the Eighties in the United States—before my naturalistic ideas were adopted over there. I am looking for American art photographers in the Eighties and can only find a few sharp all over landscapists and composition pictures after the formulae of that very bad artist—H.P. Robinson, whom that greatest ass E. Wilson ran!

Can you tell me of any one in USA who did naturalistic photos before 1890–1 and if so who? I am writing a history of art-photography as you may have seen—see in *Photo-Miniature* for November. I remember some works of yours at that period. Did you ever come across any Americans H. Gridley + J. Holcombe¹ who worked in Italy before 1886? I daresay you will have

¹ Horace Warren Gridley (American, b. 1854, active Europe 1880s) and James W. Holcombe (American, active Italy 1880s–90s) were American expatriates active in Italy who exhibited in London in the 1880s. They each earned medals for platinum prints shown at the Photographic Society of Great Britain's annual exhibition in 1886, for which Emerson served as a judge. The following year Emerson awarded Stieglitz his medal for *The Last Joke—Bellagio*,

[to see] about sending me 12 prints unmounted and unenlarged done from untouched negatives and if good enough the names of the producers go in the roll of art photographers which will be published in my book.

I find one clique in USA think that art photography began with them—i.e. the ex-photo-secessionists—a weak + feeble crowd as a rule + now played out.

I shall consider it a favor if you can help me with any information at once.

With kind regards,
Faithfully,
P. H. Emerson
B.A., M.B. (Cantab)

If Gridley and Holcombe did not exhibit over there before '90, they don't count for what I want.

Private

5 Lascelles Mansions
Eastbourne
Sussex
England

Jan 16, 1925

Dear Mr. Eickemeyer

Thank you for your courteous letter. Please send 12 of your very best prints of any date, unmounted & not enlarged, and in addition the print you speak of Davison having liked. Not that Davison's opinion was of any value artistically—it was not. I have known him [to] praise platinotypes as photogravures! + a man who can do that does not know his job. But I'd like to see it. Stieglitz has the credit amongst some of having been the founder of American pictorial photography, that I know to be all wrong.

It was H. GRIDLEY—not Dudley. There was a Mr. Lemarne and Lt. Howell² who exhibited at Paris 1889—also a Mr. Rice of Grand Rapids. Do you know of any of these?

which Emerson clearly sought to diminish by featuring award-winning work done in Italy by American photographers prior to Stieglitz.

² Emerson appears to be working from memory here. Lt. Howell is probably John Wesley Powell (American, 1834–1902), director of the United States Geological Survey, who oversaw the hanging of an exhibition of Western views for the Paris Exposition. Powell served in the Union Army during the American Civil War, rising to the rank of second lieutenant. The exhibition featured photographs by multiple photographers, including John K. Hillers, who

Faithfully, P. H. Emerson

5 Lascelles Mansions
Eastbourne
Sussex
Jan 19, 1925

Dear Mr. Eickemeyer,

I got your letter of Jan 7th to-day! The mail from U.S.A. takes a long time. In it there was your letter + 3 magazine extracts + 2 press cuttings. I tell you this because the thick envelope came open—the gum evidently would not hold it stuck.

I shall be pleased to see some of your later work.—

I think I saw a photograph by Stieglitz (1889) at Royal Photo. Soc., which was not of the old style.³

I am writing this in haste to warn you about your thick envelopes.

Faithfully + gratefully,
P. H. Emerson

5 Lascelles Mansions
Eastbourne
Sussex
England
19/1/25

Dear Mr. Eickemeyer,

I wrote you this morning thinking the parcel might not come for a week—but it arrived safely this afternoon & I am much obliged to you. As I especially asked you for prints before 1891 it rather places you hors concours for competition for the medal. These sent will put you on the roll alright, but for a medal perfection is required, so will you kindly send me one dozen of

joined several of Powell's expeditions as trip photographer. Emerson is thus mistaken, in that Powell was the organizer rather than the photographer. There are no records of Lemarne or Rice in the catalogue of exhibitors. See *Catalogue Général Officiel de l'Exposition Universelle de 1889. Tome Second* (Lille: Imprimerie L. Danel, 1889), Classe 12, 22.

³ Stieglitz had four pieces accepted to the Royal Photographic Society exhibition in 1889, the first year he exhibited there.

your very best including these I have designated at the right [list at the end]—you can send more if you like—only please wrap your parcel in stronger paper—the paper was badly torn. You will have learnt what my scheme is from Photo-Miniature. I have had very little good work from USA. I have the chief really artistic photographers of the world in the roll. But I want some more of my countrymen (I am an American you know).⁴ I will return these dozen with the others which I hope you will send—I do not care much for the 1922 one + we consider no gum bichromates nor oils nor bromoils. Like the quality of ‘After the rain’ but feel it is a bit weak in composition. We think the camp in the Catskills charming—the catalogue is very useful but it has no dates⁵—the life blood of the historian.

Will you kindly tell me—

Date of your birth + where you first exhibited + the date of it + put the letter + dates when you take upon the next batch that I trust you will send.

Do you happen to know of the following early American photographers or their work J. H. [sic] Gridley, J. Holcombe, Lt. Howell, Mr. Lemarne + a photographer called Rice of Grand Rapids. Also Lawrence who did a very pretty fairy wood once (fig. B.1)⁶—he was an associate of that misguided group of photo-secessionists. I have a bit of the work Holland Day brought over here in 1910 lent to me recently—rubbish most of it done with those terrible Smith lenses.⁷

Or can you tell me of any really artistic American workers in pure art photography. I can’t find any or very few. Now there is another point and this is confidential. The Royal Photographic Society gave the progress medal to Stieglitz for his Camera Work chiefly and for being the founder of American pictorial photography. Of course the present crowd of Royal Photographic Society is a laughing stock, as is the ‘history’ promulgated by the President—a businessman and a mediocre photographer. The Royal Photographic Society was never in lower

⁴ Emerson’s claim that he is American, which he also made in his letters to Stieglitz around this time, indicates that he had been considering positioning himself as an American working abroad in his history, another choice that is likely informed by Stieglitz’s similar status at the beginning of his career.

⁵ The catalog mentioned here is from Eickemeyer’s solo exhibition held at the Camera Club of New York in 1900 (which Stieglitz facilitated). Eickemeyer’s personal copy of the catalog, which resides at the Hudson River Museum, Yonkers, contains a note on the cover written in pencil from Eickemeyer to Emerson directing him toward the list of awards for *Home Sweet Home*, along with a small tick mark beside the catalogue entry for *Wrecked on the Shoals*, the print that Emerson ultimately singled out for recognition.

⁶ Frederick K. Lawrence (American, active 1900s), a Chicago-based photographer who was an associate of the Photo-Secession. Lawrence’s photograph *The Fairy Woods* appears in a 1907 review of the Photo-Secession. See Maude I. G. Oliver, “The Photo-Secession in America,” *International Studio* 32, no. 127 (September 1907): 199–215.

⁷ In a letter from earlier in 1924, Emerson had specifically asked Stieglitz for his opinion on Smith lenses. The original “Smith” lens, produced in the United States by Pinkam & Smith from around 1901, was a soft-focus lens similar to the Dallmeyer-Bergeim lens designed in 1893 on the same principles as the Dallmeyer telephotographic lens system.

water + I guess there will be a “dust up” before long—I mean I think the members will go for the management. It has got into the hands of a little clique of incompetents as far as art-photography goes. The exhibitions over here this year were very poor, especially the Salon which is so puffed + [...] in Photograms—you will see for yourself what a poor bit of stuff has been reproduced but the Editor is of course well known to have no [...] faculty + Tilney little more.⁸ He is a 3rd rate painter who makes a living on exploiting photographers + many are getting sick of the [...] ignorance of all official ‘artistic’? photography over here. Perhaps you can now understand why Stieglitz was given the progress medal for having founded American pictorial photography. Now it seems to me your claims are greater than his + I’d be obliged if you can help me to clear this point up. Was Wells Champney⁹ an artistic photographer—did he do the Music of the Birds + what about W.B. Post + Redfield¹⁰—before 1900 I mean. Stieglitz did not return to New York to reside permanently until 1890—+ then he was working for 5 years at his business of photogravure + are there ‘cloud songs’ which Rosenfeld ~~sp~~ [...] of any where?¹¹ Rosenfeld’s English makes my head ache—if you can help me in all this I will be grateful. I may enter you for many works in to the roll + for awarding them I am assisted by two very accomplished artists—a portrait painter + a landscape painter that are marvelous—but I have no doubt when I open a parcel whether the work will get in to roll—but for the medals a very high standard is required—in part my medal is the most difficult medal to win that has ever been offered. You can rest assured you will get on the roll—whether you will get a medal depends upon the future work you send.

I hope I have not given you a too severe task, but if you will clear up the points I have asked I shall indeed be grateful to you + if you will write me a list of all the really artistic American photographers you know of it will be most welcome + needless [to] say considered confidential.

With kind regards,
Faithfully,
P. H. Emerson

Please do the parcel up in very strong paper.

⁸ Frederick Colin (F.C.) Tilney (British, 1870–1951), a photographer, painter, and translator. Francis James (F.J.) Mortimer (British, 1874–1944), editor of *Photograms of the Year* at the time.

⁹ James (J.) Wells Champney (American, 1843–1903).

¹⁰ William B. Post (American, 1857–1921) and Robert S. Redfield (American, 1849–1923), a Philadelphia-based photographer.

¹¹ Paul Rosenfeld (American, 1890–1946), a critic in the Stieglitz circle.

I shall like in addition to the prints suggested to see some of your wild flowers + best portraits.— do you consider that you were the founder of American Pictorial photography in USA? Where did you first exhibit + what?

Please send:

Sweet Home

Kitten's Breakfast

The Lily gatherer

In the shade of the willows

A Summer Sea

As she comes down the stairs

When the daylight dies

The Vesper Bell

Now comes still evening on

2 or 3 of your best portraits

5 Lascelles Mansions, Eastbourne, Sussex

Jan 22 1925

Dear Mr. Eickemeyer

I am writing history and have to ask questions as they arrive. I posted you a bundle of these yesterday. There are some more I shall be obliged if you will reply to as given our commitment. Before I go any further I may tell you my committee has placed your name on the roll to appear with a brief notice in my history. It is a compliment to you to have got to the roll with your work done before 1891. Whether you will be awarded a medal or not will depend upon your best 12 prints selected from your life work. I have listed for you in yesterday's letter some of the things it will be advisable for you to send—you can send more than 12 for the medal if you like. We review the work of a medallists very thoroughly + seriously—some have sent in 30 prints—some 60 when it is a question of a medal. To get in the roll requires a good standard but to get a medal requires a very high standard indeed. The medal is considered the most difficult award to earn that has ever been offered for photography.

The questions I'd be obliged if you would answer are:

- (1) Did you do any writing or lecturing on art-photography + if so what dates?
- (2) Have you published any books illustrated by art photography + if so when? i.e. full titles, publisher + dates.
- (3) When (date) was the exhibit of your work at the Anderson Gallery, and will you send me a catalogue.

- (4) Please give me the best of the 5 prints that were accepted for the permanent collection.
- (5) Wells Champney gave a lecture before the New York Society in 1889 on naturalistic photography [...] that is the earliest reference I can find of an American in America doing propaganda work for the cause in lectures or writing—not of photographs.¹²
- (6) For the record I feel you had nothing to do with the stupid Photo-secession school + [...]—is that so?
- (7) Do you consider you were the founder of modern pictorial photography in USA, i.e. non-sharp work? Of course Gridley, Holcombe + Stieglitz were in Europe then—Stieglitz did more propaganda work for artistic photography after his return to the States in 1890—he was over there in 1888 for a short time, but I can't find that he did any propaganda work there.
- (8) Private—I note you make a great deal in the notes of you having been a member of the linked ring + of being a member of the London Salon. You like most foreigners have a very exaggerated idea of the exclusiveness of the linked ring + its influence. Many of the very best photographers would not joint it + there were very many mediocrities in it. I have the full list of names. In last year's catalogue of the Salon there are 83 names given as acting members—but the bulk of the work will not get onto the roll + I have the best in the roll. The Salon exhibition last year was very poor. Photograms is no guide to the state of art photography notwithstanding the puffs of the Editor—very many of the best art-photographers do not send their work for reproduction—+ [...] Mortimer and Tilney [...] made of the Royal Photo Soc [...] of 1889 [...line illegible...].¹³
- (9) Did you ever do any pinholes + if so when (date?).¹⁴ That is all for the present. I hope it is not too much.

Faithfully,
P. H. Emerson

If Gridley and Holcombe
did not exhibit over there
before '90 they don't count
for what I want.

¹² See "Society of Amateur Photographers of New York—Regular Meeting, Tuesday, May 14, 1889," *Anthony's Photographic Bulletin* 20, no. 13 (July 13, 1889): 413–14; see also J. Wells Champney, "Naturalistic Photography," *The Cosmopolitan* 7, no. 4 (August 1889): 33–34.

¹³ Emerson has outlined this question in black ink.

¹⁴ With this question, Emerson is likely probing for examples to challenge the priority of George Davison's lauded pinhole photograph *The Onion Field* (1890), which is referenced as a landmark work in Johnston's history, among others. Emerson would eventually award a medal to Col. Noverre for pinhole photographs.

Private

5 Lascelles Mansions
Eastbourne
Sussex
England
Feb. 16, 1925

Dear Mr. Eickemeyer:

Please accept my apologies for writing + thank you heartily for your contributions, which you may rely upon as being sacred. [...] + I have had all sorts of revelations as to the intrigues going on and what has gone on.

I find it useless to refer to so-called 'criticism' in the photo press + to reproductions in publications like Photograms—the process of reproduction often gives a false idea of the originals and as for printed criticism I have only found one writer on matters photographic who knows his job + he turned painter. I am trying to get at who started naturalistic photography in the States—I am inclined to think you did. Stieglitz certainly did not—he was a propagandist for it + helped that way. I never thought his work [...] but he was one of the earliest in Europe to take with naturalistic photography—he first exhibited here in 1887! H.W. Gridley + J. Holcombe both got medals at the Royal Photo. Soc. in 1886 (I was a judge that year). They were both Americans + their work was done in Italy—Stieglitz started to do work in Italy too in 1887, the year after, probably having heard of their success the year before.

I did not think your horse or widow's acre bichromate. Stieglitz started scientific photography in 1884 but not pictorial matters before 1886–7, probably the latter. I think him better than Coburn whose sincerity I doubt.¹⁵ Coburn is a person of enormous vanity [...] + lives to advertise himself. Holland Day much of the same type—it all seems unhealthy to me + not a bit American—I don't mind you saying whether you care about your own work in this case for I am writing history and no man can take part in any event + not speak of himself when asked about them. Therefore, I want the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. See you were and possibly are a sportsman—i.e. you shoot [...]—always a healthy sign. So, if you can help me to find in the main who started doing naturalistic photography in the US—whom I believe to be yourself—please don't spare speaking of yourself. Your lawyer, if he be a personal friend and does not charge for friendly advice might help you in this matter—for it's legal evidence I want. You will see my point or at least he will and an accurate history has to be very careful. If at some club you could look up the early exhibits and notes before 1890 and see if any American in the USA did some work before yourself I'd like to know him. I exhibited naturalistic photos at New York in 1886! I think it was New York or Philadelphia—it was one of them + again in 1889. I

¹⁵ Alvin Langdon Coburn (American, active in England, 1882–1966). Apart from being one of the photographers that Stieglitz promoted, Coburn had close ties during this period with J. Dudley Johnston and the Royal Photographic Society.

got a certificate for New York + letter about my new departure from Wells Champney, Dumont + McCollin.¹⁶

I hope you can read this.

With kind regards,
Faithfully,
P. H. Emerson

5 Lascelles Mansions
Eastbourne
Sussex
England
Feb. 21, 1925

Dear Mr. Eickemeyer,

The 18 photos with your photos exhibited at the Anderson Gallery arrived quite safely and in good order this morning. I will return them with the others when I have your 12 prints which are promised. In the meanwhile the greatest care will be taken of them—rest-assured.

With grateful thanks,
Faithfully,
P. H. Emerson

5 Lascelles Mansions
Eastbourne
Sussex
England
Feb 23rd, 1925

Dear Mr. Eickemeyer:

I wrote you yesterday a hurried line acknowledging the safe arrival of your sheet of photos in the exhibition, 1922. But unfortunately, most of them are so small that I can judge nothing + even with a magnifying glass can't read the numbers in the pictures. It struck me since

¹⁶ John E. Dumont (American, 1856–1944) and Thomas H. McCollin (American, 1837–1919).

I wrote that you perhaps sent them to me to suggest some of the twelve you should send besides those I have already specified. If that was your meaning so far as I can judge from the very small photos besides these I have named the likeliest looking as far as one can judge are a snow scene with sheep? An old negroe with a hoe on the same sheet. A girl in an oval frame holding a flower in her right hand in the same shirt as the lily gatherer (already specified) + an old negress at a gate with a child + an old negro looking up the road—a child with a book + a cat [...]—the one that I specified. A landscape (bottom row second from left) some plants in the foreground with water in the distance. There is a shot upon which is a girl holding [...] of corn or wheat that also may be good. But one cannot say anything definite, for they are too small to judge for quality which as you know is the great thing in a print apart from composition + one can only judge roughly of that in these small prints.

Know I have done my best under the circumstances—I hope you can read this.

Yours Faithfully,
P. H. Emerson

Private

(I think you will be able to read this)

5 Lascelles Mansions
Eastbourne
Sussex
England
Feb. 26th 1925

Dear Mr. Eickemeyer,

I have been re-reading your letters now that I have breathing space for a day + I think it will be best for me to consolidate the information I shall be very grateful for + for which I shall give you full credit in my book.

The loan of any prints—2 or 3 even would serve—of the following—prints done before 1892. Wells Champney, Redfield, W.B. Post, McCollin (Philadelphia), Dumont (Philadelphia), or if they have prints in the New York Art Museum collection you must be kind enough to report upon them.

Also, on the following:

Lieutenant Howell (USA army or navy?) + Lemarne (exhibited at Paris Exhibition of 1889!).

A man Rice or Rise I think of Grand Rapids also exhibited at the Royal Photographic Society Exhibition in London in the circa 1885–91. One of the Photo-Secessionists Lawrence who did the only good photo-secession photo I have seen—a faery wood reproduced in the Studio book.

H.W. Gridley, J. Holcombe who exhibited Italian things here, you say you have never heard of either there—they are American but seem to have disappeared.

Did you make your widow's half acre + horse from paper negatives? + if so was the paper sensitized according to the old calotype formula?

What is your opinion of Holland Day's + Coburn's work? I don't think either of them were as good as Stieglitz, where I agree with you he's been vastly overrated. How long did that absurd little publication [...] run by Dixon last + who was Dixon?¹⁷

What do you think of Steichen's modern work in *Vanity + Vogue*—his work as a photo-secessionist—his mirror was rotten and like much of the photo-secessionist work mere “freak-stuff.”

Whom do you consider to be real good art photographers in USA at the moment? Of course I do not include ‘gum’ + ‘oil’ + soft-lens freaks—

I told you in confidence Davison was not much—he once praised two little Dutch pictures—two platinotypes exhibited at Pall Mall + called them photogravures. He did not know the difference. He got his name good as it was thro' being Secretary of the Camera Club + scribbling on art in the press. Near all of his ideas taken from my Naturalistic Photography. He managed at first to get together about 12 decent prints—the result of his “life's work” as an art photographer. As you say of Stieglitz, many reputations have been made over here of mediocrities who were in the lime light thro' their position—i.e. Horsley Hinton—a crude and vulgar person who died of drink + got his notoriety through editing the Amateur Photographer. Mortimer was the person [...] for him, having been Editor of the AP since 1908 until 1918 when Child Bayley took over the Editorship + Mortimer was ‘art’ Editor—what little he knew of art can be seen in his selection for AP + for that pretentious publication Photograms. With the coarse reproductions for which Mortimer had the impudence to claim that they are the best collection of prints ever published in book form—which is ‘[...]’ insolence or ignorance—they are mere ‘pictures of the year’ to be looked at and then thrown in the rubbish heap of same value as the weekly illustrated press or the Daily Mirror—of no art value whatever. They trade [...] + [...] they are puffing it I still say it is losing ground quickly. If photographers themselves do not know what art is, many have ~~friends who do~~ artist friends who do know.

You will see what I want to get at is the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth—a very difficult thing to do. Meanwhile I shall be glad to receive your 12 selected prints.

With kind regards,
Faithfully,
P. H. Emerson

5 Lascelles Mansions

¹⁷ Probably Edward R. Dickson (American, born Ecuador, 1880–1922), editor of the journal *Platinum Print*, which ran between 1913 and 1917.

Eastbourne
Sussex
England Mar. 2, 1925

Dear Mr Eickemeyer:

Just a line to tell you the 12 prints (12–23) safely arrived this day—very many thanks. I will write you full when I get a reply to the last queries I asked you.

Yours faithfully,
P. H. Emerson

5 Lascelles Mansions
Eastbourne
Sussex
England

Dear Mr. Eickemeyer

March 7 1925

Thank you for the newspaper [...] record—I am glad to read that your friends appreciate what you have done and I'd like to see the place you praise, but I fear I shall never see the States again—we are so heavily taxed here that we can only just live even when we are all together in a house which is a difficulty.

I don't know whether you have received all my letters—but I am not clear about many things historically, which I want very much to clear up. To recapitulate—I have [...] some matters I particularly wish to clear up, and if you can spare the time to answer them [...] I shall be grateful.

I see you have had better weather over there than we have had. This has been a dreadful summer, autumn and winter—wet all the time and much illness about.

With kind regards
Yours faithfully,
P. H. Emerson

Your name is Dutch is it not—not German. Are you of the old Knickerbocker crowd or when did your ancestors go to U.S.A.?

Private

- (1) Have you published any books illustrated by photography? If so, please give title, date, of publication + publishers.
- (2) Your earliest pictorial photos are the horse head + the widow's half acre. Did you take them on paper films? i.e. were they calotypes—did you prepare the paper or what? Can you give me any evidence that they were done in 1886 + 1887? Exhibited anywhere or published anywhere or records in any photo paper of the period would be such evidence—you see Stieglitz's friend has quite wrongly claimed that he is the founder of American Pictorial Photography—so we have to go carefully—Stieglitz began to work in the chemical side of photography + I doubt if he did any pictorial work before 1887 when he did his Italian tour. He went mum on my queries on that point, which is surprising to say the least of it. I hear all sorts of rumours inter alia that he is 'cracked'—i.e. mad. They say he is a frightful humbug + so on—I met him once + he was clearly a "neurotic."¹⁸
- (3) What is your opinion of Clarence White + Coburn's work? Do you know Steichen's work in *Vanity + Vogue* + what do you think of it?
- (4) Who do you consider amongst American photographers (professional + amateur) to have been artistic or rather to have done artistic work—at any time; Brady's Civil War photos I know were all very sharp + clear with nothing pictorial about them. I was given the name of one Cox as an early pictorialist, but I can find nothing about him.¹⁹
- (5) Do you happen to have a catalogue of the 1886 exhibition at New York²⁰—if so I shall be grateful for the loan of it. Did you exhibit at it? I think that's about it—but the questions are all important and of course your replies will be taken in confidence.

Private

5 Lascelles Mansions

¹⁸ Emerson called on Stieglitz in his hotel room in London during a trip abroad in 1904. Stieglitz had invited Emerson, but he had suffered a nervous breakdown of sorts and was bed-ridden; thus, Emerson's assessment is not far off given the circumstances of their sole encounter. He later recalled that he noticed a shadowy outline of a figure entering his room, who he was later informed was Emerson.

¹⁹ Probably George Collins Cox (1851–1903), who served as a judge at the first joint exhibition of the New York, Boston, and Philadelphia photographic societies in 1887. Cox specialized in photographs of public figures, including a well-known portrait of Walt Whitman from 1887.

²⁰ Emerson is referring to the first annual joint exhibition of the New York, Boston, and Philadelphia photographic societies, which opened in New York on May 28, 1887. Emerson was awarded a diploma for the photographs he submitted. "The First Annual Exhibition of Photographs. Second Notice," *Anthony's Photographic Bulletin* 18, no. 8 (April 23, 1887): 233.

Eastbourne
Sussex
England
March 16, 1925

Dear Mr. Eickemeyer

Your kind letter of Feb 25 was duly received this day. (Postmark date March 6).

Will you kindly favor me with close attention to the following + it will explain what I mean about the attorney.

You may not know but the Royal Photographic Society has since Sir William Abney's death fallen into the hands of mediocrities + during the past two years its doings have disgusted men who have the good of the society at heart. Well that won't trouble you but amongst the [...] committee + the Royal Photographic Society was to give Stieglitz the society's progress medal (its highest distinction) for having founded American Pictorial photography—of which meaning USA photography + for his Camera Work. For the latter he may deserve it, but that he founded American (USA) pictorial photography is nonsense. Now from what I can discern you were the first to do pictorial photography in USA (For Gridley + Holcombe apparently did not live there). Now Stieglitz started scientific photography in Berlin in 1885 + from what I can find he did not attempt Pictorial photography in Germany where he was domiciled until 1887. His photos first appeared here in 1887 in a competition of the Amateur Photographer. I was the judge + gave him first prize for his photos which were mainly Italian. Mr. Gridley + Holcombe both got medals for their Italian work at the Royal Photo Soc. in 1886 (I was a judge there too + they were much more artistic than Stieglitz's work.) Stieglitz did not return to USA to live until nearly the end of 1890—tho' he paid a short visit over there in 1888.

Now your widow's half acre + 'horse' taken 1886 are the first artistic photos done in the United States by an American residing in the United States. So you see how the Royal Photographic Society stultified itself in including the award to Stieglitz having founded American pictorial photography. It is demonstrable that he did not + from the dates in your photos + what you tell me you are the man who did that.

Now in law + all history is based on law + I am writing history it is necessary to supply evidence in any history that you took the widows half acre + the horse in or before 1886—evidence would be proof of exhibition—or reference to it in a newspaper or a statement argued by yourself + some other that they saw them in 1886—i.e. the widows half acre + the horse—taken on paper negatives.

You may think this is making a mountain of a molehill—but historical work to be of any value must be based on legal evidence—your attorney will tell you that. It's amazing how photographers get their dates wrong after not doing any process of discovery at all. For example, you have got the date of DAVISON'S Onion Field incorrect. Davison did not exhibit that photograph here until 1890. I saw it the first time it was exhibited—it is and was a

fake. The composition is weak + the sky faked also the lighting of part of the picture—I have a print of it in my possession now. The old farm was a giant old place + I know exactly where it is + where it was taken. Some fuss was made about it by his friends at the time but those who knew condemned it for the reasons I have given.

Thank you for the catalog + photos of your sporting expedition. I will return all together.

It is no use to ask you for some more photos now—for this letter will not reach you until almost March 26 + a reply will not get me until about April 7 or 8 + my scheme closes on April 1st so unless you have already printed another batch of prints it is useless to send any more + we shall judge you for the medal on the prints received up to March 31—i.e. the 31st of this month. I hope you will understand my position in the matter of precedence.

I think you will find Davison's Onion Field reached you in '91 or after in New York. The man who selected prints to send to the Paris Exhibition in 1900 did not select Davison's Onion Field but some others of his not pinholes + he was there—the Paris exhibition jurors do not like “fakes.” + are down on them.

Kind regards – in haste
Yours faithfully,
P. H. Emerson

You might send me a list of any books illustrated with photographs that you have published for my bibliography. i.e. Title—Publisher—date of publication. What was Stieglitz's last exhibition like at the Anderson galleries—the one from last month. What are Stieglitz's photos like—are they anything out of the ordinary in any way.

5 Lascelles Mansions
Eastbourne
Sussex
England
March 18, 1925

Dear Mr. Eickemeyer:

I wrote you rather a hurried letter on Saturday last to show you clearly that I cannot credit you with being the first in USA to practice modern pictorial photography without having legal evidence + a distinguished barrister says that any evidence which would hold would be a record of your having exhibited a pictorial print in 1886 or brought it before a member of a society or published a reproduction in a publication or in a book or the original print having been presented to a public gallery who had a record made at the time! I believe you are the first to have done this

+ clearly there is evidence enough to show that you did it years before Stieglitz when the ignorant council of the Royal Photo Soc. awarded the progress medal for having founded Pictorial photography in American + for his Camera Work. You can't trust memory for dates. You see how you were several years out about Davison's Onion Field—your only way is to look up old exhibition catalogues over there + reports of American works up to 1890!

No. I do not want to reproduce your things. But as I told you, I wanted your very best work to put before my committee to see if they considered it worthy of a medal. Of course, for a medal a much higher standard is required for the roll. Our medals are acknowledged by all [...] to be the most difficult medals to [...] at any time in the history of photography + before we give a medal we make a very searching examination of a man's best work.

The greatest of enlargements is just too big a sheet to go in a letter. My committee are having the best portrait photographer in the world prepare us some enlargements to form an opinion on the matter. Personally, I have no [...] in enlargements. Besides we get the real artistic capabilities much better from unenlarged prints + that is why we refuse to consider enlargements.

As I may have the pleasure of seeing you this year other matters upon which I should have written can wait till we meet. I am living in a small place here + am so sorry I cannot offer to invite to put you up. But if you could run down for the day + have lunch with us we shall be delighted. There are good trains down from London + you could get back the same night.

The list of medals awarded since Nov. 1st will be [...] for early in April—as new contributions for medals are received after April 1st owing to my notice in the British Journal of Photography.

With kind regards,
Faithfully,
P. H. Emerson

Private

5 Lascelles Mansions
Eastbourne
Sussex
England

Dear Mr. Eickemeyer

March 19, 1925

I am wondering if Davison's friend of whom you referred in a former letter is Steichen. Davison was naming Steichen to me but he (Davison) was never a judge of art photography. I know he used to write florid praise about some little platinotypes, which he called in his writing "photogravures"! As Whistler said of this sort of thing: we know him—they say he is an active

Bolshevik and as he is a friend of that little neurotic Coburn (who is a socialist and an occultist and everything man should not be) it does not surprise me that he should name Steichen—I have seen a few reproductions of Steichen's: the gr– the terrible “pond” for example, but never anything good. He works for ‘Vanity’ + ‘Vogue,’ New York publications. I have not seen the work. How do you find it? I hear he has stopped the terrible photo-secession work [...] as they all have. What sort of things did Stieglitz show at the Anderson Gallery this month. He gets in with a lot of crack brained painters and so loves himself. I think he is mentally deranged or a gigantic humbug. If you could take some of these cranks to the Rockies and make men of them that would be a good thing. I am ashamed to see that cunning little Coburn going about here and calling himself an American.—²¹

I sent you the facsimile of a letter Whistler wrote me not to show you that he liked my work, but that he liked and admired pure photography. I showed him some gums and he screeched with laughter.

With kind regards,
Faithfully,
P. H. Emerson

5 Lascelles Mansions
Eastbourne
Sussex
March 21, 1925

Dear Mr. Eickemeyer

I am returning all your photos (50 in number) in one parcel this day.

I very much regret my committee will not award them a medal, but your name is on the roll alright.

Many of the negatives have been retouched or otherwise worked upon—to their detriment my co-[...] think. Your untouched negatives get you in to the roll.

I am very grateful to you for having sent good work + am glad to have such a good sportsman on the roll.

With kind regards,
Faithfully,
P. H. Emerson

²¹ Ironically, Coburn had photographed extensively in the American West around 1911.

Please acknowledge receipt of photos—sorry no time for more as I have several parcels of prints to deal with as my scheme closes on April 1st next.

If you could spare me a spare print of that wreck of the Sandhill I shall be grateful—

Oak Cottage, Somerleyton, Suffolk - July 22, 1926²²

Private

Dear Eickemeyer,

I have your two letters + your list of photos. Please be assured that I want to prove legally that you have precedence over Stieglitz for artistic work in USA, so my sympathies are with you for Stieglitz is a vain + neurotic + I think erratic fraud. He did some good early work in 1887—not before + that is after he had got the tip of how to set to work from others. Hubris [...] + [...] vanity had him [...] all sorts of ‘impossible work’ where thro much [...] old duffers like Seligmann + co is [...] stuff.

(1) What did you do in Europe in 1887? Did you see the Royal Photo Exhibition in London in 1887?

I think the best way will be for you to send me first your 1886 album—The Berkshire Hills. It will be quite safe if properly packed + I will return it at once + then if I want the 1891 album I can ask you for it. I suppose the 1885 photos of the Rockies are all sharp views of the Rockies.

Of all the many parcels of photos sent me from all parts of the world, none were lost—so I think 5 will be quite safe.

Faithfully,
P. H. Emerson

Private

Oak Cottage, Somerleyton, Suffolk

Aug. 13, 1926

Dear Mr. Eickemeyer,

²² There is a fifteen-month gap between this letter and the preceding one. During that time, Eickemeyer visited Europe, including London, and apparently stopped briefly in Eastbourne to call on Emerson, though this is left somewhat ambiguous in the following exchange. At some point during this stretch, Emerson relocated from Eastbourne to Somerleyton, a village in Suffolk.

I received your letter + photos to-day—I of course ‘spotted’ Mrs. Eickemeyer at once. Your [...] was a very nice one but what interested me most was the sailing boat for I was a very keen small-boat sailor + looks a nice hardy craft. It all looks a very jolly place for summer time + I do wish I was there for we here had a very wet + gloomy summer—one of the wettest I can remember + this part is the least rainy in Gt. Britain.

I did not know Mrs. Eickemeyer was a water color painter. Did she do anything in this line at Beachy Head? I shall look forward to the album with great interest + it may solve the difficulty.

Stieglitz did his first artistic photos in Italy in 1887. Same look after the style of two Americans who exhibited in London in 1886! He first exhibited over here in 1887, a competition given by the English Amateur Photographer. I judged it + placed Stieglitz first + Keighley second.²³ Stieglitz’s early work was much better than his later work, but it was never very artistic. Keighley is a faker + never did in his whole life but one or two good photos. There are dozens of better men than either of them on my roll. Stieglitz’s chief work was his propaganda work in boosting Pictorial photograph in the early days. Coburn is a little brain sucker + really knows very little about it. Holland Day did better work but always middle note—it’s a funny thing but there are [...] few artistic American photographers. Some of the best USA photographers were the early daguerreotypers—USA men excelled at that work.

I hope your book will be a success. A man called on me the other day + out jumped an old English sheep dog like yours + I at once thought of you and your dog. He was a very fine Sealyham puppy who he was trying to train in the ways that he should go. They tell me the Sealyham is a great underground dog, good for rats, robbers + burglars.

Kind regards + greetings to Mrs. Eickemeyer.

Faithfully,

P. H. Emerson

Oak Cottage
Somerleyton
Suffolk

Aug 15, 1926 Private

Dear Eickemeyer

I posted you a letter this morning to clear the ground before the arrival of your albums for remarks upon them [which] will take ‘some writing.’

²³ Alexander (Alex) Keighley (British, 1861–1947)

Of course, remarks in that were based on your letter of July 31 with extracts from your albums. I have been considering your case from a legal aspect + the following has occurred to me.

You said in a former letter that Clements of Philadelphia printed the photos you took near the Berkshire Hills in 1886 in September of that year.²⁴ It would put you in a stronger position if you could get Clements to give you a certificate to that effect where he names the photos he printed, especially the six I agreed—I forget the titles at the moment, but “haying” is one. If Clements will supply you with any other evidence that he printed them at the date you say it would be useful.

I must be properly fair + say Stieglitz was [...] in latter years has played the poseur + ‘humbug’—in his early years he did much good for the cause. I only enter medals gained at Pall Mall (RPS/exhibition) + yours will be so entered—but I don’t place any great stock in having gained a medal at the RPS—[...] gained 4—one every year for 4 years running!

I am not placing any credit to anyone for having belonged to the linked ring + salon. There were very many mediocrities in both + several of the best men would not join the linked ring. I am one of these + [...] was another. A lot of people think it was Steichen to be [...] in Stieglitz’s Camera Work. Then again several of the best photographs were not represented. [...] not amongst other Steichen work, but when I heard he was reproducing + including work by Demachy + Horsley Hinton, I would have nothing to do with it. Stieglitz had neither the literary nor artistic equipment to conduct [...] a publisher + [...] at the RPS, most were when they called [...] one of the most artistic productions ever produced—which is about as old [...illegible line...] that mediocrity Clarence White. There was an edition of some artists printed here about 1890 + not very artistic + filled with works of art as Bernard Shaw, Demachy, Craig Annan, F.H. Evans, [...illegible line...]. He got a bit of those [...] American artists spying on him + thought he was helping art by going this [...] + I believe he [...] it. Steichen was another [...]—Did you know him?

However I’ll get this off + you will be [...] if Clements + getting his statement duly written before before [...].

Faithfully,
P. H. Emerson

Oak Cottage, Somerleyton, Lowestoft, Suffolk

Sept 27, 1926

Dear Eickemeyer,

²⁴ Alfred Clements (British, active United States, 1860s–1900s)

I got your letter + quite sympathize with you in the losing your pet dog.²⁵ We become attached to a dog + the loyalty and affection is wonderful + they never or hardly ever annoy one because they can't talk + say things which would annoy—It is difficult to fill the place of a loved pet but I have always found it the best cure to get another and that it is possible [...] to love a dog we all loved some years ago—it was with us for 14 years—an [...] and it is very likely we will get a new puppy [...line illegible...].

Thank you for replying about the 1887 exhibition of the Photo Soc.—my poacher was on exhibition there. [...] it was the first time Stieglitz exhibited in a show over here. He sent some photos that year to a competition in the A.P.—I was the judge + I placed him first + Keighley second. There were many things better in Italy in 1887—no great [...] of [...] artistry + he [...] to it the work of two American who sent some of their photos to an amateur exhibition in [...] 1886. His earlier work is the best I have seen of his.

Faithfully, Kind regards to Mrs. Eickemeyer,
P. H. Emerson

Oak Cottage, Somerleyton, Suffolk

Oct 17, 1926

Dear Eickemeyer, Your album of photos Among the Berkshire Hills 1886 reached me this morning. I was very interested to see the photos. The horses head I think much better in the original than in the enlargement—the latter was too “fuzzy.”

The best eight in my opinion are—

1. Hello
2. A friendly neighbor.
3. [...]
4. Reaping
5. Haying
6. The Coming Storm
7. Buck trail
8. Going home.

Now please confirm or correct me:

You allege + are prepared to swear (if necessary) that you took the above eight photos in 1886 (July) + printed them on your return home in 1886. If you are prepared to do this will you write me a statement to that effect. i.e. I, R. Eickemeyer, hereby declare that I took the eight photographs in my album entitled Among the Berkshire Hills 1886 in the month of July 1886 + printed them in the same year. Here enumerate the eight as above. Now you should challenge Stieglitz to produce eight prints taken by him in 1886. It would be interesting to see what he says—I have ticked the 8 in your album with a pencil + I have written my initials P. H.E. on them as a guarantee that I examined the prints in October 1926 at the above address.²⁶

²⁵ Eickemeyer had a charismatic sheepdog, which he named Sir Toby Belch after a character in William Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night*.

²⁶ These markings are visible in the referenced album. Rudolf Eickemeyer, Jr. “Among the Berkshire Hills,” 1886, NMAH.

I had to pay 6/9 in the [...]—I don't know whether you prepared the carriage. If so we must get it back.

I shall not require to see the 1891 album or any others. I shall return the album this week by whatever means I find most convenient—probably by registered post + please immediately with receipt—acknowledge. It is up to you now to find if Stieglitz did any artistic work at all in 1886. I do not think he did—but [...] artistic work in 1887 in Italy—Stieglitz + his friends (especially Seligmann²⁷) are good liars that no one who knows them will believe anything they say. Seligmann recently wrote in the New York Mercury that Stieglitz got the progress medal for founding American pictorial photography + as the first person who was ever awarded the progress medal by the RPS for artistic work. I wrote the editor + pointed out that I got the same medal in 1895 “for the advancement of artistic photography”—30 years before Stieglitz got it. Coburn is just as big a liar + poseur.

Kind regards + your wife
Faithfully,
P. H. Emerson

Oak Cottage, Somerleyton, Suffolk

Oct 23, 1926

Dear Eickemeyer

Thank you for your last letter. You will by now have received my letter acknowledging the receipt of your photos (1886) + my comments therein + request for a declaration about the eight photos I have named.

I note you have taken up with bromoil.²⁸ I shall not see your prints for I shall not be in London before the Salon closes. I am in no way interested in any of these ‘fake’ processes, which are neither art nor photography. If a man does not find pure photography flexible enough he would be wise to take up pure painting—as some photographers have done, e.g. [...]. *De gustibus non et disputandum*²⁹—but these bromoils are not photographs, whatever they may be.

I have this day posted your album back to you by post. The P.O. will not insure parcels over ten lbs. thus in weight—nor will they accept boxes of any kind to U.S.A.—tho' they do so for some Continental countries. I had great trouble in mailing photos to U.S.A. before + the only mail I will [...] use is ordinary post for which I paid 5/- Thus four cases with the album + photos

²⁷ Herbert J. Seligmann (American, 1891–1984)

²⁸ Eickemeyer submitted a bromoil print, *A Virgin Pasture on the Eastern Shore*, to the 34th London Salon in 1926.

²⁹ “In matters of taste, there can be no disputes.”

have gone off to-day (Oct. 23rd) marked photographs only. I had to declare their value for customs purposes in a separate form + I put 'of no commercial value' + declared the goods as 'amateur photos in an album.' I claimed 6/3 for the American Express Co. for I was charged 6/3 here for carriage from Southampton + you said in your letter you had paid 'expenses' to me. [...] they have no [...] to have the carriage paid from Southampton here.

I hope this is all clear—I am up to my neck in gardening—digging out all the old stuff, replanting + cutting down old fruit trees all in wet and cold weather for the Autumn rains are on. There were pheasants showing in the woods near here. It was a good for year for pheasants and a bad year for partridges.

Kind regards + greetings to wife
Faithfully,
P. H. Emerson

Oak Cottage, Somerleyton, Suffolk

Nov 9, 1926

Dear Eickemeyer,

You will have received several letters + I trust the albums—which I had to send by post. After some delay, I got out of the American Express Co. a detailed copy of the 6/3 charged me. Your letter dated Nov. 2—Reference ES/c.j. states the charge is made up as follows:

Customs [formalities] + entry –	3.6
Opening for customs + Dock due –	2.6
Royal Co Collection fee	.3

	6.3

[...] amount I paid the [...] Co. here as they will not let me see the base value I had done so.

The American Express Co. say that if “[...] the foregoing charges are payable to shipper we suggest that you [address] the matter direct.

This is [...] as you said you prepaid express carriage to me direct. Will you go [...] the matter.

Faithfully,
P. H. Emerson

Oak Cottage, Somerleyton, Suffolk

Nov 12, 1926

Dear Eickemeyer,

Thank you for letter, photo + declaration. I hope Peter Pan will console you.³⁰ I prefer the name to the other.

I sent your delivery of the 6/3 charge as sent me by the American Express Co. at Southhampton.

I hope you received the album safely.

I returned you the Express Co's receipt + should say [...] on the back the express [...] 6/3 had to be paid.

Your platinotypes done in 1886 were printed wonderfully since most platinotypes of that age "yellow."

Alright don't bother about Stieglitz—It's no use writing to him—he only replies in an asinine way—he is not straight + if he knew I am backing your claim for priority in these photos I fear he will fake up some old photos + say they were taken prior to yours. I shall not go further with the matter. Child Bayley³¹ was [...] by him + it was thro' his influence that S got the progress medal—chiefly for his publication of the Camera or whatever the magazine was called. Stieglitz is [...] up with vanity + his lying friend [...] Seligmann will tell any lie about him. But if you know any mutual friend of yours and Stieglitz's you might get him to pump Stieglitz as to what pictorial photos he took before 1887. But you must do as you think fit.

Faithfully,
PHE.

Oak Cottage. Somerleyton. Suffolk

Dec 3rd 1926

Dear Eickemeyer

I received postal order for 6/3 this morning for excess charges for your book. You will have received my letter with your receipt from the Express Co.

I am glad to hear the album arrived safely—this is a relief. Now the only matter left with regards to the album is as I understand from your declaration those prints in the album were printed in September 1886? Please let me know.

³⁰ A dog to replace Eickemeyer's late sheepdog, Sir Toby Belch.

³¹ Roger (R.) Child Bayley (British, 1869–1935).

As regards bromoil I don't want to start a controversy. I went into this matter most carefully. Consulting some of the greatest artists [...] including Whistler + they all condemned it + I would [...] to get any legitimate photographic effect by pure photography. Of course if one tries to get effects not within the limitations of the art one only [...] a bad artist.

I see the egregious + shallow ass Dudley Johnston has been comparing that poor mediocrity H.P. Robinson to Mrs. Cameron—who was a real art photographer. This fellow Johnston is making the RPS journal a laughing stock.

I am very busy for the moment but hasten to acknowledge the postal order.
Glad your dog [...] so well.

Happy xmas + prosperous New Years.

Faithfully,
P. H. Emerson

I fear illustrations in [...] Photog.
would be too coarse.

Oak Cottage. Somerleyton. Suffolk.

Jan 5, 1927

Dear Eickemeyer,

Happy New Year! I have once or twice asked you two or three questions but I suppose they were most in the morass of my bad writing. So I repeat + shall be much obliged if you will reply:

- (1) Did you do these platinotypes in the 1886 album which you sent me in September 1886—if not when did you print them?
- (2) You, Stieglitz + another were invited to the Philadelphia Exhibition—who was the third?³²
- (3) What sort of stuff did Stieglitz send?
- (4) What do you think of Steichen's work? His later work. His early work is childish but I hear he goes in for f/64 work now.

Kind regards,

³² The Sesquicentennial International Exposition ran from June 1 to December 1, 1926. The exhibition featured eighteen photographers highlighting pictorial photography. England was represented by Charles Job, Fred Judge, and H.P. Robinson. The United States was represented by Rudolph Eickemeyer, H.A. Latimer, Alfred Stieglitz, and Floyd Vail. See *Report of the National Sesquicentennial Exhibition Commission of the United States Government Exhibits at the Sesquicentennial International Exposition, Philadelphia, Pa., 1926* (Philadelphia: Rufus H. Darby Printing Co., 1927), 450.

Faithfully,
P. H. Emerson

Oak Cottage, Somerleyton, Lowestoft, Suffolk

17/March/27

Dear Eickemeyer,

You are enough “to craze a donkey’s heart” as they say here.³³

- (1) I note now you first exhibited in 1893—the lily pond. Was that in the USA + where? When did you first exhibit over here? + what + where?
- (2) You + Stieglitz + another were asked to send photos to the Philadelphia Exhibition—who was the third person?
- (3) What did Stieglitz send? Clouds or portraits or early work or what? Did Steichen send—
- (4) Have you seen the late Wells Champney’s portraits + what did you think of them. He is a portrait painter.

If you could answer these questions per return of post it would help me.

My [...] about Steichen—was he is now doing f/64 work—by f/64 work is meant very sharp work, i.e. with a very small stop—i.e. f/64.

Yours ever + with haste
P. H. Emerson

Private

April 19, 1927

Dear Eickemeyer,

Thanks for your letter. I wrote you per return of post this morning + begged you to reply to my unanswered query per return post + asked you to lend me a copy of the ‘wreck’ or send me a duplicate print.

I am sorry to worry you but after all it is about you + your work that I am worrying you – I have to correspond still with many correspondents + this history business is a worrying job. It will be alright if all photographers were gentlemen or at least honorable men but the bulk of

³³ For another instance of this idiom, see Emerson, *On English Lagoons*, 169.

them are I regret to say the opposite + vain as neurotic schoolgirls + are [...] to do with clashing cliques + a vast amount of ignorance on art matters.

Vail³⁴ told me Steichen was now doing f/64 stuff—it does not matter for he is of no account in the history of art photography. There are always petty [...] and Coburn is one of the worst [...] + he too is really of no account—he never understood ‘tone’ or ‘composition’—Stieglitz is no great artist but he is better than Coburn, tho’ equally vain—they are both neurotics, I suspect [...].

Spring is here—warm Spring + flowers. I am afraid the States will never see me there—we are all so heavily taxed that none but the rich can go to USA for pleasure. Before the war we were comfortably off but since the war we are hard up + no money for travelling. Child Bayley has just gone to the States—on business I suppose—art photography here is dead—there is no Britisher practicing it now who is worth a curse + I think the great [...] of camera workers now say that by 1930 everyone will be doing moving pictures are right. That is only the Royal Photo [...] into [...] feeble hands. My history I look upon as the obituary of real art photography.

Faithfully,
P. H. Emerson

Good luck with the dog book.

Oak Cottage, Somerleyton, Suffolk

April 20, 1927

Dear Eickemeyer,

Thanks—at last—but still one query remains unanswered—a query I have put to you two or three times already. It is who besides yourself + Stieglitz was invited to exhibit at Philadelphia 1926 + what did Stieglitz send—portraits or clouds or what? It will help me if you were to sit down + answer this per return.

I think it was Vail who told me about Steichen—but it does not matter. Steichen is no good + never was—it’s only that supreme ass Dudley Johnston who ever thought anything else. I really think when you kindly answer the above there will be nothing more to ask. Hope the ‘Toby’ book will be a success. Child Bayley the [...] Editor of AP is going or has gone to USA.

Yours faithfully,
P. H. Emerson

³⁴ Floyd E. Vail (American, 1854–1931), was a New York-based photographer involved in the Camera Club of New York and a fellow of the Royal Photographic Society who was active in international salons in the 1920s.

In great haste

P.S. I am going to have an illustrated edition of my history. I will put [in] your wreck off the New Jersey coast if you will send me the print to copy per return + give me permission to reproduce it. I will return the print to you. Don't send any other for no other will do. I forget the exact title, it was wrecked at some place beginning with a B—Sandhills was it [...]—a very fine thing and unfaked.

Private

Oak Cottage, Somerleyton, Lowestoft, Suffolk

May 13, 1927

Dear Eickemeyer,

Thank you for your reply—I thought you, Stieglitz + another were invited to show at the great exhibition at Philadelphia last year. I was misinformed.

No. You did not give me any of your prints. You sent the wreck with the others + they were everyone returned to you. I think I asked for a copy of the wreck but it never arrived. I particularly want to include it for we considered it the best “marine” photo we have ever seen. I hope it will be along quickly—I am having the prints reproduced—a splendid lot! One man wrote me he would rather have his print in the history than a medal—but he does not realize how highly those medals were valued—

Banfield is sure very terse.³⁵ I know nothing of him except that he seems to be official photographer of that inartistic little pictorial group. The work I have seen of his is mediocre—little portraits + other things. That little pictorial group of the RPS was lowering its prestige into the dust. Not one of them is worth anything artistically. Child Bayley—editor of Amateur Photographer is now in the States.

[...] Faithfully, P. H. Emerson.

I will send you a prospectus of the history + you can fill in an order if you wish. There will be two editions: a limited edition de luxe on hand made paper + an ordinary edition without illustrations—they cost too much for use in both editions.

The USA is hated here just now—its envy of course!

³⁵ Arthur Clive (A.C.) Banfield (1875–1965) was admitted as a Fellow to the Royal Photographic Society in 1921 and was a frequent contributor to *The Photographic Journal*.

Oak Cottage, Somerleyton, Lowestoft, Suffolk

May 16, 1927

Dear Eickemeyer,

Just a line to acknowledge receipt of the wreck which arrived quite safely and undamaged. Very many thanks.

You say it was an early one. Many photographers' early work has been their best before they were led away to work for the reporters + press. Every good (first class) artist I have met won't look at touched up work—including Whistler.

I am glad you have sent good news of the 'Toby' book—good luck with it.

Do you know a New York bookseller who would like to make a specialty of the history—if so you might [...] him for me. If I could get an American publisher or bookseller to back say 500 copies it would ensure the success of the book from the [...] point of view.

There will be two editions, (1) De Luxe printed on hand-made paper with the illustrations and (2) the ordinary edition on ordinary paper without the illustrations. I can't note [...] each yet.

I think after you see the beautiful pure untouched photographs in the book you will never retouch your photos again + will do no more bromoils.

Kind regards, faithfully,
P. H. Emerson

Oak Cottage, Somerleyton, Lowestoft, Suffolk

June 4/27

Dear Eickemeyer,

Your lady sent an order for a copy of my "history" for me to send to the publisher. I am much obliged but I have not yet arranged with a publisher and cannot show the MS to any publisher until I get all the "blocks" made + [...] is delaying + [...] they delay me for weeks + entail a whole lot of unnecessary correspondence.

When I have arranged all details + price of the book I will send you a prospectus with an order form + you can fill it in. No English publisher will send the book to USA unless they get the money first but I may arrange with an American publisher to take an American Edition. All this takes time so please await my prospectus.

I acknowledged receipt of the wreck photo yesterday + today I have received a [...] for the reproduction—a very good one.

Faithfully in haste,

P. H. Emerson

Oak Cottage, Somerleyton, Lowestoft, Suffolk

June 12, 1927

Dear Eickemeyer,

I have seen H.P. Robinson's book [...] on sale in USA for many years + I have heard of his 'influence' but I have never been able to come across any photos to result of that influence. i.e. combination photos done with dressed up models all sharp all over + taken in bright sunshine. Can you tell me of any—or one?

Did you use any Robinsonian argument in your criticism of the RPS exhibition which you wrote?

Please regard all this as private + tell me. Clarence White alleged that there were no artistic photos done in USA before 1890—of course your early ones had not been exhibited + they certainly have nothing Robinsonian in them.

Faithfully,
P. H. Emerson

Strictly private + confidential

Oak Cottage, Somerleyton, Lowestoft, Suffolk

June 24, 1927

Dear Mr. Eickemeyer,

Thank you for your letter of June 10 received this morning—14–16 days en route. I do not understand this mail—16 days to get a letter from you. Yes! Your print is safe + the block made and a very good one.

So you are back in camp—very jolly if the weather is fine—but if you get the summer we are getting—rain, rain + cold winds . . . I hope you are more lucky. I should like to be there, but Kismet. I have written to Fraprie³⁶ once or twice + he kindly lent me a book. I have all my blocks for the book now + [...] for printing I would like to publish it myself—these publishers want too big a bite out of the peach.

³⁶ Frank Roy Fraprie (American 1874–1951), editor of several photography journals, including *The Photographic Times* and *American Photography*.

I propose to have 3 editions. An edition de luxe printed on hand-made paper bound sumptuously in morocco + white buckram about 200 pages, size 10 ¼ x 7 9/16 (which is of course the size of the plates) with 68 illustrations, two photogravures + 66 first class half tones—limited to 200 numbered copies with printer's certificate that only 200 were printed. Published price £5-5-0.

Ordinary Edition A. Printed on fine paper + bound in cloth with the illustrations as before price 27/6 - £1.7.6.

Ordinary Edition B. The same with no illustrations £1/6/6.

Now what I should like would be if you could get someone to take some copies of both Editions. I would let anyone [...] to have copies at 33 1/3% discount F.O.B. i.e. I declare them free on board the vessel at Liverpool. That would be 70/-, 15/-, 11/- for copies of each edition, so they would gain 30/- 12/6 +5/0 on each copy of each edition they sell. I don't know if the customs would make them pay duty.

As a business man you will follow this.

Tell me what you think—

I make it so I will sell 50 copies of the Ed. de luxe for £175. 250 copies of the ordinary Ed. A for £187.10.0 + 250 copies of the ordinary edition B, without illustrations, for £137.10.

Or the 550 copies for £500. If he sells all at the published price he would realize—
£262.10.0 + £343.15.0 + £206.5.0 = £812.10 for a total of £312.10.0.

That is correct is it not?

Faithfully,
P. H. Emerson

It would cost him nothing to advertise it in his magazine.

Oak Cottage, Somerleyton, Lowestoft, Suffolk

July 8, 1927

Dear Eickemeyer,

Your letter of June 24 received + I am obliged. Robinson was not the inventor of the double method of double printing—that was entirely Rejlander's discovery + Robinson imitated it. If Robinson can only claim the placing of figures in the open so that they are not staring into the camera—he can claim nothing of Hill, Buckle³⁷ + others did that before Robinson. Robinson was a mental deficient (those prints + medically) he was a cretin with an enormous vanity + quite unscrupulous + knew nothing of real art works. I + others [...] him [...] he could not apply— see

³⁷ Samuel Buckle (British, 1808–1860). Buckle appears on the list of Emerson medalists.

his ‘Storm clearing off,’ allegedly to be one of his masterpieces, which is very poor. I forget your Sweet Home—what was it? Was it a pure photograph or had it been worked on?

I do not attach much value to anything Clarence White did or said, but it must be remembered that you + I must be prepared to meet all criticisms. Now tell me—have you any old catalogues of the Yonkers Photo Club for 1886, 1887, 1888, 1889—if so, please post them to me at once or any press cuttings of any of these exhibitions in which your work was mentioned. As I told you your sworn evidence is not proof that you did those photos in 1886 + I shall have to be guarded in my statement. You see Stieglitz’s brother-in-law³⁸ is a lawyer + if it came to argument of priority between you + Stieglitz—Stieglitz would have a lawyer turned on free of cost.

Today’s standards are much lower than they were in the Eighties.

I suppose you have not received my letter about getting someone to buy an Edition of my history at once—I gave you the prices + anyone who could place the Edition would make a handsome profit. If you are going to help me with this please go write at once + oblige.

In great haste.

Faithfully,

P. H. Emerson

July 8, 1927

Dear Eickemeyer,

I posted you a letter this morning but I forgot to say: Remember Stieglitz exhibited naturalistic photos at New York Society in 1887—the year you took your [...]! You must be careful for Stieglitz’s friends will rally around him + the R.P.S. will do all they can to defend the step they took in giving Stieglitz the RPS progress medal for founding Pictorial photography in USA. They do not want to be STULTIFIED! You can see this. If you can send me any press cutting or catalogue of the Yonkers Club with your prints exhibited before 1887, do + that will check the matter. It’s a pity you did not tell me of these before + as a fact you did not exhibit in the States before 1893 except at the Yonkers Photo Club—but the latter can’t be rendered. You see Robinson’s remarks on your work would be little useful for he hated naturalistic photography at the time + of course Stieglitz was also [...] Naturalistic Photography. Did you meet Child Bayley while he was over last summer?

Faithfully,

PHE

³⁸ Joseph Obermeyer (American, 1862–1943)

Oak Cottage, Somerleyton, Lowestoft, Suffolk

July 10, 1927

Private

Dear Eickemeyer,

Every new point raised makes me think back—no! I don't think Robinson can claim any merit for photographers being taught not to stand before the camera. I don't think you have studied the early American work—the old daguerreotypists and that was a branch in which the USA excelled. [...] did things for example + [...] was a very sage [...]. Did you see an American [...] in Sun + Shade—a number of American photographers [...] years ago they have some art + [...] any one of Bullock. I think elsewhere [...]! Well Robinson [...] that + a feeble imitation it was too. The American Amateur Photographer for which I was the first English correspondent put its [...] to a low roll and let Robinson write for it—Robinson was a mental deficient if you must know the truth—what we call a cretin. He was already childish after his book in 1867—he was half-educated, started life as a shop worker. What we call a 'counter-jumper' here + of no account. [...illegible line...]. He was never really of any account over here. Rejlander a much better man (when he [...]) but art photography here [...] until he died—1875. Mrs. Cameron a real artist wouldn't touch it or have anything to do with photography + so Robinson was [...] for 1875 while I began in 1882 to revile him and his teachings. He was dead by 1886 but scuffled on to the end—sad stuff—piteous stuff. Now you have it.

Your [...], PHE

Please let me know if you can get anyone to take a small Edition of my history for the American market. It would be a great help.

Oak Cottage, Somerleyton, Lowestoft, Suffolk

Aug. 5 1927

Dear Eickemeyer,

Your letter of May 25 + July 25 both arrived together this morning. The weather here is very close + oppressive so please excuse the brief note.

If you have any press cuttings, magazine cuttings, or catalogues of the Yonkers Photo Club referring to your 1886 photos (which I have seen—those signed in pencil—six in all) please

let me see the printed things at once. I do not wish for any printed matter referring to any photos taken after 1887. If you stick to those dates precisely that's all I have to ask for. Also did you write anything on art photography anywhere before 1890 + if so where + what.

Cheerio – Faithfully,
P. H. Emerson

Have you been able to do anything about getting any publisher or printer to buy a small Edition of my 'history' when it appears?

Private

Oak Cottage, Somerleyton, Lowestoft, Suffolk

Aug. 9, 1927

Dear Eickemeyer,

Thank you for your letters + the very interesting photos. A jolly place for camp.

I am glad to hear what may prove to be some real evidence about your early work will reach me shortly + I shall be glad to see a half-tone of your Home Sweet Home. Why did you not send it with your other photos if you value it so highly from the artistic point of view. Unless you have seen all or nearly all of the best artistic photography done I caution you in a friendly way not to claim too much for it—i.e. that it was epoch making. We care nothing for the opinions of the Washington people + know for certain that the bulk of the stuff they have collected is rubbish—so that they were accepting it is no real recommendation. I only tell you this to warn you to be careful how you make that claim in public. It may be all you say + it may not. If it is all you say I will try to include it in my book. We liked your father's portrait very much but unfortunately work had been done upon the hat to make it stand out from the background—an artistic blunder which will always detract from its merit in the view of competent artists.

The ephemeral reputation that Stieglitz has gained amongst scene [...] newspapers in New York is of no value at all + may last his lifetime. Stieglitz did some good work but not great work at the start, but trailed off until he was producing childish trash. He had a thin vein of art in his composition but was no artist. His chief merit has been that he always stood out for pure photography + never produced any fake—but that alone does not make an artist. His Camera Work was a publication for which he had neither the brains nor equipment to conduct + it was an imitation of Sun Artists—but the stupid cliques at the RPS who know nothing about art gave him the progress medal for it + for founding pictorial photography in the States, while [...] he never did.

Another point—don't quote Robinson, or Davison or Hinton as having praised your "Sweet Home." Neither [sic] of them knows anything of art. Davison even in 1890 claimed two platinotypes as photogravures—the man who can do that proves he has no [...] at all—it is an [...]!

There is nothing surprising in what you tell me about the stupidity of amateur photographers. It was ever thus. The real artistic photographer is born + can never be made + very, very few have ever been born. That is beginning to be realized everywhere.

Pictorial photography is moribund over here + a great [...] small camera maker says by 1930 he predicts that his firm will be making no more but the 'moving' camera like the 'cine' of Kodak or the 'Pathé' will be used by all photographers. Finding cheap cameras will soon be out + that will give still life photography its last trick—that is the future but whether it will arrive in 1930 I doubt.

Now as to the cost of my history or rather the price. I do not want a number to buy the expensive editions—I want it to be limited to 250 or at most 500 copies + it is bound to rise in value. [...] I asked you to ask Fraprie if he will buy a small American Edition of the history as you are in touch with him. Can you do this? If so, will you do this at once + ask him to write me. That could be a great favor for which I shall be grateful.

Kind regards + in haste,
P. H. Emerson

Oak Cottage, Somerleyton, Lowestoft, Suffolk
Aug. 15, 1927 (Monday)

Dear Eickemeyer,

On Saturday afternoon (Aug. 13) I received the Kennel Club magazine and your letter dated Aug. 4.

(The Kennel Club mag was in good condition + your article interested us all).
To-day Aug. 15 I received a letter of yours dated July 31 with the Saturday post mark of 3 P.M. Aug. 1. I did not note the date when your letter dated Aug. 4 was posted + the envelope has been destroyed.

I note the contents of your letters + will say nothing until I receive the 4 vols. which you have sent me—they have not arrived yet—3:22 pm Aug. 15.

It is good of you to take all this trouble + I am glad you have done so for it is really of more interest to you than to anyone, but I fear you won't be able to prove priority to Stieglitz for there is record (legal form) of his exhibiting in New York in 1887. But of course nevertheless Stieglitz did not found pictorial photography in the USA. Can't say that any one person can

claim to have done this. All this arises thro' the incompetency of that little "pictorial group" at the R.P.S.—viz. Dudley Johnson, Bertram Cox, Scott, Lawton, and others³⁹—all mediocrities + [...] of pseudo-history. I personally for one came before Stieglitz in the USA for I exhibited 23 large naturalistic photographs at Philadelphia in 1886—also 20 at the same place in 1889, also 4 at New York in 1887—when he got an award. That alone settles all Stieglitz's pretensions of having founded Pictorial photography in the USA. Of course all depends what is to be considered 'pictorial photography' for several of the daguerreotypists did pictorial photographs several years earlier. Gathering Waterlilies is the title of one of my early photos exhibited in London, March 11, 1886—a photograph which was more plagiarized than almost any photo according to Child Bayley.⁴⁰

What Stieglitz or Robinson or Davison say or said is of no account for neither [sic] of them ever understood art. Davison was an imitator of everyone except in one or two cases. Now I will await the arrival of your albums before I write anymore.

[...line illegible...] + when the albums arrive I will write you at once.

Faithfully,
P. H. Emerson

Please tell me if Fraprie will buy part of the Edition of my history in the terms I sent you. 33 1/3 discount F.O.B. at Liverpool + he pays any customs, duty + carriage for Liverpool.

Private

Oak Cottage
Somerleyton,
Suffolk
Aug 19, 1927

Dear Eickemeyer,

Your albums have not arrived yet (the 19th) tho' the letter + Kennel Club mag posted on August 4 arrive last Saturday the 13th! So much for the American Express. I am writing this today because I want it to catch Saturday mail.

I am not sure whether I understand you clearly but if you mean that Home Sweet Home was epoch making because it had a very high horizon + was nearly all foreground + was taken as

³⁹ Bertram Cox (British, 1876–1957); Thomas H.B. Scott (British, 1872–1945), who served as President of the RPS from 1925–27; R. H. Lawton (British, d. 1946).

⁴⁰ Bayley's statement contains some truth. Emerson also surely recognizes the irony here, which is that Eickemeyer is among the chief offenders, *The Lily Gatherer* being a close copy of *Gathering Waterlilies*.

an upright—I must for your own sake correct you—very many photos composed in that style were done here + exhibited before 1887—6 years before you did Home Sweet Home. And several were done before 1887 and several such have been reproduced for my book. I tell you this so that you shall not delude yourself to the enemy + the Stieglitz crowd. A claim like that is the very thing that will delight them + level of your confusion—I will tell you what we think of the art qualities of the photo when I see it.

All the press praise in the world will not make Stieglitz's photos live. Press puffs are ephemeral + the only thing that will keep a picture or photo alive to posterity are its intrinsic art qualities. This is indisputable. None of the Stieglitz work will live for 50 years after his death. Tho' he did a few good things in the early days—but no masterpieces. What do you think of Stieglitz's Camera Work? Goodbye for the present. I will notify you [...] the albums arrive.

Faithfully,
P. H. Emerson

Oak Cottage, Somerleyton, Lowestoft, Suffolk

September 1st, 1927
'5 c partridge'

Dear Eickemeyer,

I regret to have [to] report again that your albums have not arrived. I wrote to the American Express Co. at Southhampton + have had no reply. I find American business men have very bad manners.

I asked you to ask the Editor of [the] magazines at Boston if he would buy a small edition of my history + gave you the terms. You said you were in touch with him—I have heard nothing from him (Mr. Fraprie). Nor from you + I expect you put it to him—on a matter of business I should like to hear from him 'Yes' or 'No' with an alternate suggestion if any.

I thought the Editor of the Photo-Era was one French⁴¹—it was until quite recently. Please clear this up for me.

Faithfully,
P. H. Emerson

Oak Cottage, Somerleyton, Lowestoft, Suffolk

Private

⁴¹ Wilfred A. French (American, died 1932). French had stepped down as editor of *Photo-Era* in 1924.

Sep 3, 1927

Dear Eickemeyer,

Now I want to clear up the matters we have had so much correspondence about.

- 1) I now have legal evidence that you were doing pictorial photography in 1888—viz. Haying exhibited at Yonkers in May 1889. It was too early that year (May), I take it, for labourers to be “haying,” therefore the photo must have been taken the year before—i.e. 1888. That’s how that piece of business stands at present after much correspondence; much of it unnecessary.
- 2) I tell you that very many photographs with that high skyline of your Sweet Home were done before you did that—the earliest I can find was done in 1860! It shall be reproduced with others in my book. I cannot help what ill-informed + half-educated newspaper men write, especially in the photographic papers. I only warn you that your claim has no basis in fact + as a friend I warn you to say nothing about it. If you had seen all the photos that I have seen done before you did that Sweet Home, you would not dream to make such a claim. As for the artistic merits of the photo, that is a matter of opinion—it does not appeal to me. I ask you not to discuss this any more as I have no time to waste.
- 3) That very rough Whatman paper always gives luminosity—the first to do that sort of thing was Col. Noverre, who exhibited a carbon landscape at Pall Mall, which aroused much discussion. I don’t see anyone doing them now. Their novelty was the chief attraction. I think pinholes were first done by Captain Colson who published a pamphlet on them in 1887.⁴² All these same people think that Spiers⁴³ [was] first, then Davison, Clarke, Watkins, Chamberlain + others afterwards.⁴⁴
- 4) You say you did not send the ‘Sweet Home’ with your other photos because you thought I wanted your earlier ones—you forgot you sent me two lots—(A) an early lot (B) a later lot, nearly all taken after Sweet Home + after 1900—some of them in 1904+5. I kept a list with notes of all the photos sent to us + if it were necessary I could send you all the titles of work sent which you did after 1900 but it isn’t.
- 5) If you think the drawing for the book-plate infringes for copyright of Sweet Home, prosecute the chap; but I do not think it does + I am sure you would lose your case if you

⁴² René Colson (French, 1853–1941). The referenced pamphlet is R. Colson, *La Photographie sans Objectif. Applications aux vues Panoramiques, à la Topographie, aux Vues Stéréoscopiques* (Paris: Gauthier-Villars, 1887).

⁴³ Ernest George Spiers (British, active 1880s, died 1900). Spiers had a brief stint as co-secretary of the London Camera Club with George Davison around 1888.

⁴⁴ Lyonel Clarke (British, active 1880s–90s), librarian of the London Camera Club; Alfred Watkins (English, 1855–1935), who was awarded the Progress Medal by the RPS in 1910; Joseph Chamberlain (British, active 1880s–1890s), secretary of the Tunbridge Wells Amateur Photographic Association.

were to prosecute. I return the book plate—I beg of you to drop the Home Sweet Home argument—I have much other correspondence to attend to + no time to waste.

[bottom portion of page missing]

The above is business. I hope you keep well. I will return the albums when I hear you have arrived back at Yonkers + I am much obliged to you for letting me see them.— I wrote to the American Express Co. [...] + have had no answer. The more I see of American business men the less I think of them. I suppose you did not send all the albums upon the date on which you said you had sent them—if you did what excuse did the company give you for the delay—this time one month to reach me. From Aug. 4 to Sep. 4

Kind regards,
Faithfully,
P. H.E.

I wrote two letters to the American Express Co + have had no reply—American manners + business.

Oak Cottage, Somerleyton, Suffolk

Sep 6 1927

Will write you a longer letter in a few days.

Dear Eickemeyer,

The box of albums reached me this afternoon at 5:45—all in good condition. I looked up “Home Sweet Home,” for your own sake you must not claim any originality for that style of composition. Very very many of that style of composition were done + exhibited years + years before “Home Sweet Home” + Stieglitz’s friends will be very quick to point this out. So, until you have seen my history where many of them will be reproduced take a friend’s advice + make no claim of originality or of artistic merit.

It’s not in the same class as the Wreck from any point of view especially artistically. In fact, I could not have it in my history. I must break this to you + I am certain that any good artist would confirm that.

Faithfully,
PHE

Private

Oak Cottage
Somerleyton
Sep 6, 1927

Private

Dear Eickemeyer,

I at once wrote to you on Saturday last telling you that the albums had all arrived safely + in good order. Just a month they have been en route according to your letter. I have been through them all—the “nineties” I know to be a very sterile period over here—it seems to have been the same in USA.

Of course the first thing I sought was the “Home Sweet Home.” I do hope you have not [...] made any claims for that style of composition. Many photographs were done ten years before (1885) in that style of composition only more provincial. There is nothing original in your photo believe me. You will see several like that done years before in my history. I am going to be frank with you—I do not care for it as a picture + it is not in the same class has your wreck which is a very fine thing. I like your interiors + one of the lily gatherer but it has grave faults of composition. I do not think the enlargement of Haying is as good as the small print you sent me before. I glanced over all the letter press and [...] these writers don’t know anything about art. The two journal articles who wrote [...] on the Photo Club Exhibition + one English by ‘Hugh YOU-DONT-KNOW-WHO. I never saw Stieglitz so feeble + Davison so weak—Robinson is the same old drivel. Of course one cannot judge fairly from reproductions for one never knows how much hand work has been done on the block or copperplate. For example Craig Annan does a bit of handwork on all his plates.

With this reservation, I think only the following photos in all 4 albums are of art merit.

- 1 – Your father
- 2 – Haying
- 3 – The lily pond
- 4 – Hickory Dickory Dock
- 5 – Caught in mischief
- 6 – Are these celestial manners
- 7 – La cuisine de Dimanche
- 8 – The Kitten’s Breakfast (a better composition than Hickory Dickory)
- 9 – Blind [...]
- 10 – The mystery of Life
- 11 – Reflections

12 – Portrait of a lady

One could not place them in order of merit without seeing the originals for tone values. I am much obliged to you for you letting me see them. The claim that you exhibited in 1889 (May) is of course incontestable.

When you notify me of your return to Yonkers next month I will return the albums.

Kind regards,
Faithfully,
P. H. Emerson

I do not know yet whether I shall have to pay any more—they may make a claim later. I will tell you if they do. I will have much more to say about the photos in the albums.

Oak Cottage

Sep 7 1927 Private

Dear Eickemeyer,

I have read all the “criticisms” and they are nearly all complete rubbish. The only good ones are British Journal—Sept. 28 1894 + notes on photography in England by Hugh Dontknowho. Stieglitz’s criticism is rubbish—I did not know he knew so little about it! Davison’s criticism is all weak + I know he knows very little about it. Did you exhibit at Paris in 1900? The big international exhibition?

Art photography in this country began to slump after 1893 + it has never recovered + the leadership has [...] to Scandinavia.

Your best work is the wreck + I think any good artist will tell you so—. If you’d like to send me an untouched print from the untouched negative of the Kitten’s Breakfast I will consider printing it in my book, but please note the conditions + [...] at once. What has happened to Stengel + Eschmann⁴⁵—they and you were the pioneers of naturalistic photography in the States. The articles in the Yonkers Statesman were good.

Faithfully,
PHE

⁴⁵ George S. Stengel (American, 1872–1937) and F.W.R. Eschmann (American, died 1915) were founding members of the Yonkers Photographic Club with Eickemeyer.

Oak Cottage, Somerleyton, Suffolk

Sep 7 1927

Dear Eickemeyer,

Kindly oblige + answer all my queries per return! 1. Are Stengel and Eschmann alive? 2. Can you get the prints of either of them which they exhibited at Yonkers in 1889–90—if so I shall be very glad to see them. Please tell me if they are alive + who wrote these notices in the Yonkers Statesman. They are alright or nearly alright.

Faithfully,
P. H. Emerson

Your albums have been a great use to me, not probably in the way you thought but I got a lot out of them. What a rogue this Hinton was—a thoroughly dishonest scoundrel.

Oak Cottage, Somerleyton, Suffolk

8 Sep 1927

Dear Eickemeyer,

Thank you for writing to FRAPRIE. I got a bill for £1.9.6 from the Railway Co. here for your albums + paid it this morning. I will try to get the Co. in [...] to refund it and if they will not I will send you the receipt + you can send me a postal order. I will tell you what they say as soon as I hear.

I wrote you all about Home Sweet Home + I beg of you not to claim any originality for that composition—dozens of similar compositions were done in 1885, or before, some will be reproduced in my book. I saw the original Onion Field + have a smaller copy. It was a fake. I do apologize for my bad writing.

Faithfully,
P. H. Emerson

Oak Cottage, Somerleyton, Lowestoft, Suffolk

Sept 29 1927

Dear Eickemeyer,

I received your letter dated Sep 19 to-day. Thanks for your replies. It was £1.6.7. I paid at most £1.9.6. This is a stupid error of these [...] people the American Express Co. I have received nothing as yet, but am in no hurry.

Alright old man—I was afraid you were going to claim that style of composition was original—believe me it is not. As I wrote you in my last—I have a photo done before 1860 in that style of composition and many done since.

I won't discuss the artistic merits of it as we differ widely. The exhibition you speak of in Calcutta is a [...] very bad judging + some official [...] with one of the full medals! It was of no account.

Yes—I'd like to reproduce the Kitten's Breakfast, which I think excellent + not so Home Sweet Home, but neither of them anywhere near to wreck which is a very fine thing.

I think you are wrong in saying photography was governed by fixed rules of composition at the date of which you speak—all the rules were broken down long before that.

Kitten's Breakfast—I would prefer a loan of the platinum print to a block made in USA. I find most of the American blocks are terrible fakes and there is not a block in the Philadelphia Camera that is not a dishonest fake. If you will part with the platinum print of it I will take great care of it + get a real pure block made at my expense. I like it + think one of your strong points is interiors. I like Hickory, Dickory Dock but it is spoilt as a perfect composition by the mice which you can see are stuffed + of parts of the [...]—a small thing but in the [...] it is full of things which [...], for if you will send an [...] Kitten's Breakfast platinotype I will see to the rest + return it to you. [...line illegible...]

Faithfully,
P. H. Emerson

[October 23, 1927]
Private

Dear Eickemeyer,

Your letter of 12th arrived yesterday Oct 22nd, but no money has arrived from the Express Co.—it's an amazing so-called business firm? Yes. I like your interiors + your wreck—sorry about the mouse—he looks as if 'Pussy' had swallowed him + spat him up again what a devil of a tail for a white mouse—glad to hear 'Pussy' is on the way—

I + many others hold composition to be the greatest quality in an art photo + we do not consider any photo without good composition to enter into the realm of art photography. Your interiors + wreck are well composed.

You will have noticed that my committee would have nothing to do with ‘medals’—we paid no regard to the medals a man had won. Few photographers are judges of an art photo. For example, few can tell when the tone is fake. I never yet met a judge who could do so.

You see now what the blind leading the blind brings about. Art photography over here is probably dead. Killed by those who fostered bromoil + of such rubbish as B. Cox, Johnston, + [...].

Who [...] to give the Pictorial Group control of his £1000. He should have [...]—the standard group may only be a thing [...] he runs bromoil because he makes money out of it—so does Sinclair. Editors run it because it is good for trade + Fraprie is a business man.

Faithfully,
P. H. Emerson

Oak Cottage, Somerleyton, Suffolk

Oct 26, 1927

Dear Eickemeyer,

Your ‘Kitten’s Breakfast’ arrived this afternoon—it came no doubt off the [...] which got into Plymouth yesterday.—I have sent the photo to the reproducers in this mail + will return it to you as soon as I get a satisfactory block.

You say there is no retouching on it—well! I don’t understand the light on the child’s face with her back to the window—that is higher in tone than the faces facing the window. It is not a serious matter + would only be taken into consideration in awarding a medal + then only by me + a few others like me. Fakers of tone or tone values is not understood by 99 photographers out of 100.

I have not been refunded the £1.6.7 so I suggest you send me a postal order for that amount—

How do you want the albums returned? I can’t return them by registered post except in two parcels for 11 lbs is the maximum weight of mail—or would you like them returned by the awful American Express Co. + insured + if so for what amount. Please let me know this.

Faithfully,
P. H. Emerson

I should like my [...] to see some prints of Eschmann + Stengel—it proves they exhibited at the first Yonkers show in 1889.

Oak Cottage, Somerleyton, Suffolk

Nov 14, 1927

Dear Eickemeyer,

I received no letter from you this weekend in reply to mine. I will return your albums when I know how you want them to be sent.

I have your Kitten's Breakfast back from the reproducers + they have made an excellent block. I am mailing it off by registered post on Monday, so please tell me when it reaches you.

Faithfully,
P. H. Emerson

Oak Cottage, Somerleyton, Suffolk

Nov 15, 1927

Dear Eickemeyer

I posted you yesterday "The Kitten's Breakfast" + trust it will reach you safely. The parcel is too large to 'register'—so please let us clear the business. I should like to see some of Stengel and Eschmann's work—just 4 or 5 unmounted prints.

Faithfully,
P. H. Emerson

Oak Cottage, Somerleyton, Suffolk

Nov 23, 1927

Dear Eickemeyer,

I got your letter of Nov. 13th to-day. I will return the albums next week via American Express Co. Tho' I hate dealing with such [...] people. They paid me 19/6 according to the letter which I forwarded you—I am still owed 7/1 which please remit by postal order + that will be settled. I sent you the photo of Kitten's Breakfast so I [...] you + you shall receive it at once.

The blocks I have had made could not be better + are untouched. I don't trust American block workers at all + only a few English works. There are few men as [...] to print in my book thus all the blocks are untouched facsimiles.

I generally hold that dishonesty is the chief cause of incompetent judging. I judged by turns at the RPS—Pall Mall exhibit + at several after showing all over the country + I never met a fellow judge who knew tone values—I don't know a single photographer who would have noticed the errors in your photos that I have pointed out. Davison who had some reputation amongst those who did not know him once mistook some platinotypes for photogravures. Greater ignorance has no man + he has mailed to the [...] his photography. He knows very little about it + his rough paper is [...] some rough paper pinholes in 1888 + 1889 by a Col. Noverre. He was always imitating someone. Good bye and good luck.

Faithfully,
P. H. Emerson

Oak Cottage, Somerleyton, Suffolk

Dec. 1, 1927

Dear Eickemeyer,

I forwarded you last night your four albums of press cuttings to the American Express Co. at 25 [...] to Southhampton—in the case in which they arrived. I sent them to Southhampton + paid the carriage s1/9 is for Southhampton + all charges after that will be collected from you at Yonkers according to your desire. I insured them for \$50.00. I could not insure them for \$100 as you did because to do that I should have had to get a [...] paper signed + I have no time to do that + you can buy old copies of all the magazines for \$50.00 + new albums + it is all they are worth + as you gave no instruction about the insurance I did not like to go more.

Neither you nor the Express Co. has reimbursed me the 7/1 as that I paid here on the arrival - £1.6.7—as I told you the American Express Co. sent me only 19/6. I sent you this letter so please send me a postal order for 7/1 + 1/9 carriage from here to Southhampton—8/10.

In haste for part,
Faithfully,
P. H. Emerson

Oak Cottage, Somerleyton, Suffolk

Dec. 5, 1927

Dear Mr. Eickemeyer,

Your case with 4 albums went out from here on Wednesday by express carriage paid to The American Express Co, 25 Oxford St. Southhampton. I had to pay 1/3 for the care from here to Southhampton + 6 to the [...] here = 1/9. The 7/1 still owing me for money I paid on the parcel when it came has not yet arrived—please add the 1/8 to it = s8/10. (Eight shillings + 10) + send me a postal order for the amount per return + then this matter will be cleared up so far as I am concerned. They will collect from you at Yonkers for the carriage to + from Southhampton. I [...] in all the papers to American Express Co. [...] + no doubt it left on Saturday + you will receive it safely in due course.

What's the matter with photography is that very very few photographers understand the ABC of art + they talk foolish rubbish. Out of all that hang at the Royal Photo Soc I don't know one who knows anything about it.

We are having a cold East wind weather + the lake near here is black with wild fowl, duck, widgeon + teal. There have now been so many here + to [...line illegible...]. Well good day and good luck.

Faithfully,
P. H. Emerson

Oak Cottage, Somerleyton, Suffolk

Dec. 15, 1927

Dear Eickemeyer,

Thank you for postal order for s7/1 received this morning. Glad the photos arrived safely. I have written you several letters about the albums which went off on the date I said.

I shall be glad if you will send me Stengel's address—I note Eschmann is dead.

Now about date of publication of my book—please note that I will not fail to advise you when that date will be. Will see that you have a prospectus. There are many matters to be looked into—financial + copyright before that date will arrive. I think when you do see the book you will be quite satisfied that the money you spent in sending me the albums + in sending them back was well invested.

The great thing I have to find out is what prices the Americans will pay + Fraprie will help me in that. From a letter I had from you on this matter, I gather Americans are pretty “close” people—they have that name in England. They say over here an American will not give or spend money unless his name is printed in the papers—whether this be a libel or not I cannot tell. Americans are not liked at all over here—part is no doubt jealousy, but part is due to other causes—The American Express Co. kept up their bad business + lack of courtesy to the end. I

asked them to acknowledge the receipt of the albums at Southampton. Filling in all the papers they sent me to fill in—yet they never had the courtesy to acknowledge the receipt for the case with the albums. My son who was in South America for years on engineering works says American are candidly disliked in S. America + that it is due to the lack of courtesy, which with people of Spanish + Portuguese descent is unforgiveable.

Now for more pleasant subjects. There have never been so many wild-fowl over here with the memory of the oldest gunners. A lake near here is black with fowl, wild duck, widgeon + teal + wild geese are over in large numbers. One odd flight shorter gets from 14–16 ducks + and many [...] flight—a new source of income for a poor professional gunner.

Well, now I must sleep. I wish you + Mrs. Eickemeyer the compliments of the season + for a prosperous New Year!

Faithfully,
P. H. Emerson

Oak Cottage, Somerleyton, Lowestoft, Suffolk

March 1, 1928
Private

Dear Eickemeyer,

Glad the albums arrived safely. That Co. ought to change its name—Express forsooth + takes a month to get a package to USA!!

I wrote to Stengel weeks back and no reply. I asked him to send me a dozen unmounted prints which are referred to in that article you wrote in the Yonkers paper of the first exhibition at Yonkers. This is another reason Americans are not loved over here—they are so casual + ill mannered about answering letters—this is a case in point. I have had several Americans [...] me + [...] are in the same way. Here is what Clarence White did. He wrote to me + sent me a large parcel of photos mounted on cardboard + in art mounts, then I asked for unmounted prints + no stages for [...]. I had to pay 7/6 to get them back to him + he never even acknowledged their arrival! He was very angry to learn he did not get a medal I heard afterwards! For Clarence White is one of the most over-rated ~~chaps~~ men [...] + it is clearly due to Stieglitz's waxing fondly of him that he got an ephemeral reputation.

The Käsebieter woman is another one who is no good + several more. I note your [...]. I will not [...] them under £1000 a year salary + [...] do this than do that if I had any other way of getting a living. But tastes differ. Did you ever go to Wayne near Philadelphia? I had a friend, an Englishman here who travelled a great deal in USA. He is a [...]—he liked Wayne better than any place we saw. Supposedly it is where Fort Wayne was in the revolution. He says the roads in Salt Lake City + [...] are wonderful.

Talking of snow scenes, I saw a good reproduction of a very good snow scene of Fraprie. I thought it had been worked on but that may have been due to the reproducers. It is very difficult to judge these [...] plates for medaling with a pure photograph.

We have had wonderful [...] spring weather, [...]line illegible...] when I shall be 72!

Faithfully,
P. H. Emerson

P.S. Will you copy out for your album 1894—Having a [...] in the ‘linked ring’ and copy you don’t know who. It’s this for [...] in the back of the linked ring exhibit of 1894.

Oak Cottage, Somerleyton, Lowestoft, Suffolk

April 12th, 1928

Dear Eickemeyer,

Your welcome letter + souvenir of Eastbourne duly + safely arrived. I like several of the photos—some of Beachy Head + one of the Downs. Very good + interesting + we are all glad to have them. There have been several suicides at Beachy Head since you were there—as you probably heard it is a favourite spot for suicides. Many thanks for them. It is a pity the little girl had not light hair + blue eyes for she is not a typical Sussexian or South Saxon.

I am 72 (seventy two) on the 13th of next month (May). The wet summer last year gave me bad rheumatism but I have now recovered. I was overworked too. I am resting + trying to get a publisher for my history which I finished last November.

I wish I could go to Vermont, but there is no chance of that. You would be surprised if you knew how hard up most people excepting the rich are to-day + the government goes on taking money pandering to the socialists + there is no chance of the income tax coming down. It stands at 4/- in the £ or 1/5 of your income goes straight to the tax gatherers hands. We have to pay 8/5 on a 12/6 bottle of whisky—it is endless + everyone tries to get into a smaller house—the farming industry is in a bad way—

There is much doing in photography this year—a big congress of professional photographers, but they are nearly all doing badly financially. Art photography has never been worse since the collodion period—everyone is agreed that art photography is in the doldrums + when you find such mediocrities as Bertram Cox + Dudley Johnston “horsing” it everywhere what can you expect—I never saw a beautiful photo done by either of them.

The international congress to be held in London in July may do some good to scientific photography⁴⁶—but it will be no good for art photography. I really think art photography is dying.

The quotation I asked for appeared in the Photo Times (New York) 1894 + was signed YOU DON'T KNOW WHO. The title I forget. It was about the '94 Salon Exhibition + was especially down on much of the framing.

Well good bye. Kind regards to your wife + self + good luck.

Faithfully,
P. H. Emerson

⁴⁶ The seventh International Congress of Photography was held in London during the second week of July, 1928. There was an associated exhibition, which featured works from an international list of pictorial photographers alongside scientific and technical displays.

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FIGURES

Fig. 1.1. P. H. Emerson, *The Fetters of Winter*, from *Marsh Leaves*, 1895. Photogravure.

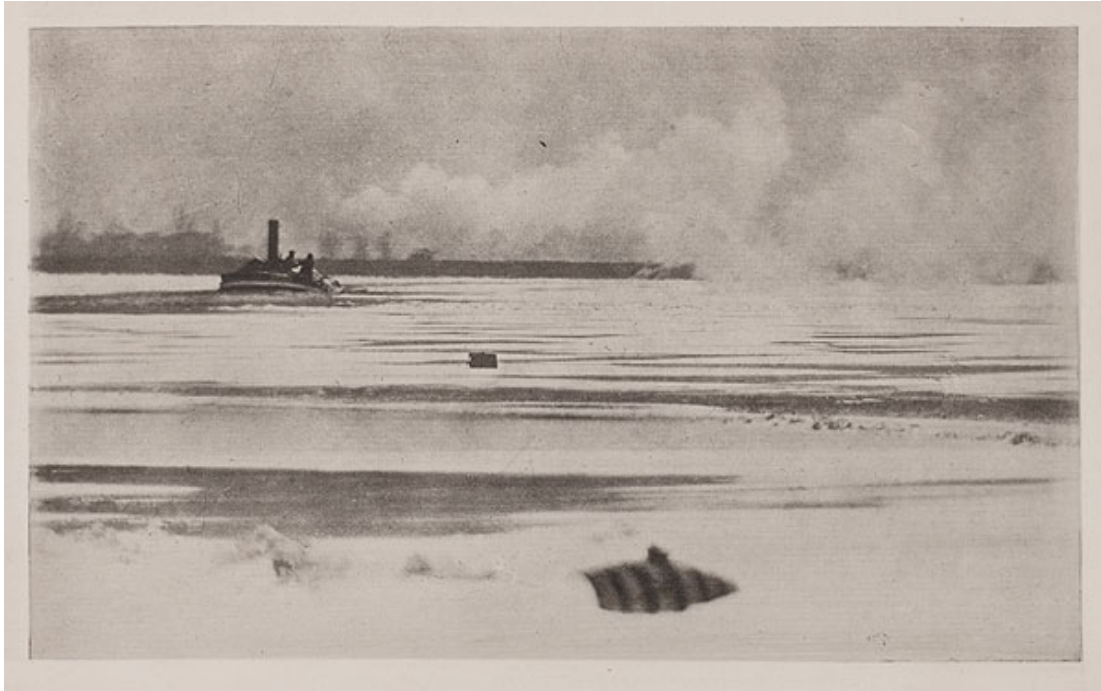


Fig. 1.2. P. H. Emerson and T.F. Goodall, *Setting the Bownet*, from *Life and Landscape on the Norfolk Broads*, 1886. Platinum print.



Fig. 1.3. P. H. Emerson, *A Rushy Shore*, from *Life and Landscape on the Norfolk Broads*, 1886. Platinum print.



Fig. 1.4. P. H. Emerson, *Where Winds the Dyke*, from *Pictures of East Anglian Life*, 1888. Photogravure.



Fig. 1.5. P. H. Emerson, *Meditation*. In *The Amateur Photographer, Home Portraiture Supplement*, April 30, 1886. Photolithographic halftone.



Fig. 1.6. O.G. Rejlander, *Surprised Man*. Plate 7, figure 1 in Charles Darwin, *Expressions of the Emotions in Man and Animals*, 1871. Heliotype.



Fig. 1.7. P. H. Emerson, *Haymaker with Rake (Norfolk)*, from *Pictures of East Anglian Life*, 1888. Photogravure.



Fig. 1.8. Left: P. H. Emerson, *Haymaker with Rake (Norfolk)*, 1887. Albumen print (detail). The National Archives, London, UK. Right: P. H. Emerson, *Haymaker with Rake (Norfolk)*, from *Pictures of East Anglian Life*, 1888. Photogravure (detail).



Fig. 1.9. Frontispiece of Havelock Ellis, *The Criminal*, 1890. Halftone.



Fig. 1.10. P. H. Emerson, *Gathering Water-lilies*, from *Life and Landscape on the Norfolk Broads*, 1886. Platinum print.



Fig. 1.11. P. H. Emerson, *The Poacher—A Hare in View (Suffolk)*, from *Pictures of East Anglian Life*, 1888. Photogravure.



Fig. 1.12. Hurter & Driffield's Actinograph. Collection of the author.



Fig. 1.13. “Transfigured Realism” diagram from Herbert Spencer, *The Principles of Psychology*, vol. 2, 1872, 496.

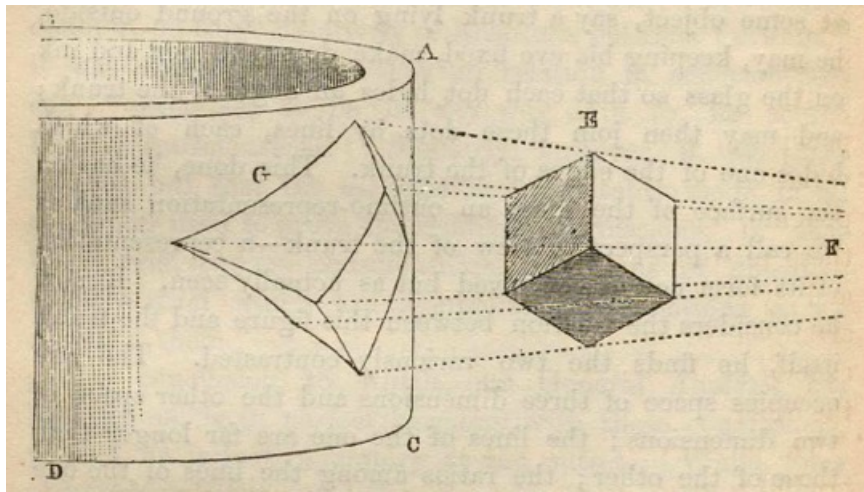


Fig. 1.14. P. H. Emerson, *On Gorleston Sands*, from *Wild Life on a Tidal Water*, 1890. Photogravure.



Fig. 1.15. P. H. Emerson, *In the Yarmouth River*, from *Wild Life on a Tidal Water*, 1890. Photogravure.



Fig. 1.16. Diagram from William James, *The Principles of Psychology*, vol. 2, 1890.

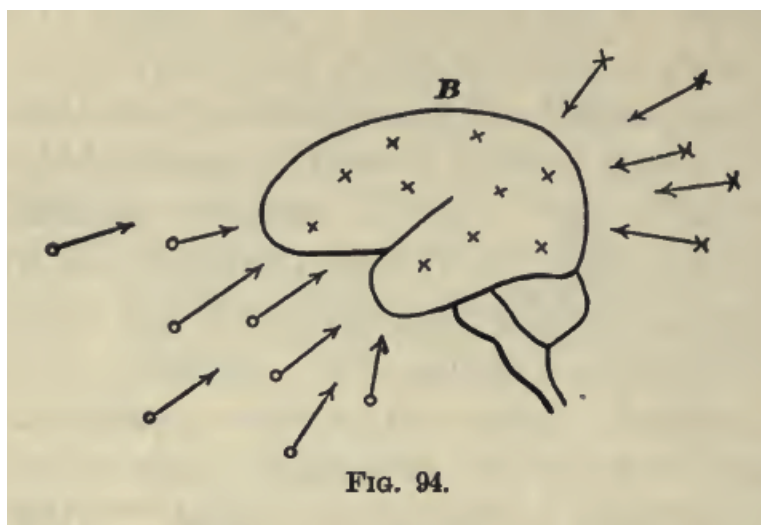


Fig. 1.17. P. H. Emerson, *Marsh Farm in Early Spring*, from *On English Lagoons*, 1893. Photogravure.



Fig. 1.18. Diagram of Zöllner's pattern in William James, *The Principles of Psychology*, vol. 2, 1890.

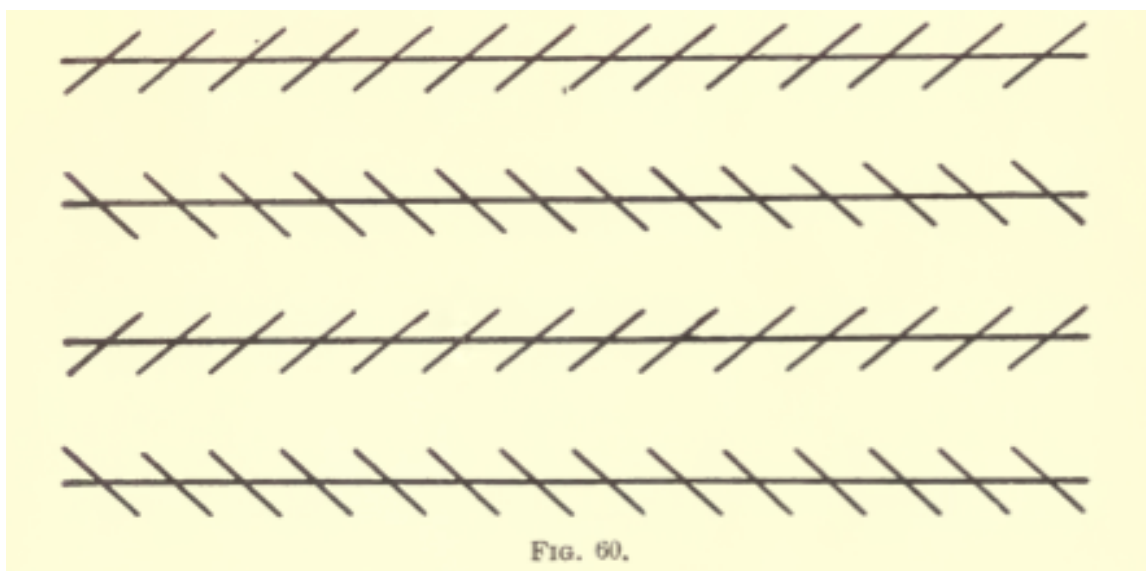


Fig. 1.19. P. H. Emerson, *A Daughter of the Marshes*, from *On English Lagoons*, 1893. Photogravure.



Fig. 2.1. William B. Dyer, *The Darwinian Theory*, 1900. Platinum print. Princeton University Art Museum.



Fig. 2.2. Unknown illustrator, Caricature of Alfred Stieglitz. In Caliban [Sadakichi Hartmann], "Gessler's Hat," *The Camera* 8, no. 11 (November 1904): 44.



Fig. 2.3. Rudolf Eickemeyer, Jr., *The Lily Gatherer*, 1892. Platinum Print. Library of Congress.



Fig. 2.4. Rudolf Eickemeyer, Jr., *Untitled (Foreground Study)*, from the album *Among the Berkshire Hills*, 1886. NMAH.



Fig. 2.5. Robert Demachy, *Struggle*, 1903. Gum bichromate print. Metropolitan Museum of Art. www.metmuseum.org.



Fig. 2.6. Joseph Keiley, *Twilight Study in North Carolina Mountains*. Halftone reproduction of a glycerine-developed platinum print. In *Photograms of the Year*, 1899.



Fig. 2.7. Alfred Stieglitz, *Study of a Baby*. Halftone reproduction of a glycerine-developed platinum print. In *Photograms of the Year*, 1899.



Fig. 2.8. Rudolf Eickemeyer, Jr., *The Dance*, ca. 1899. In *Camera Notes* 4, no. 2 (October 1900). Photogravure.



Fig. 2.9. Alfred Stieglitz, *A Good Joke*, 1887. Albumen print. Museum of Modern Art, New York.



Fig. 2.10. Alfred Stieglitz, *The Last Joke—Bellagio*, 1887. Platinum print. National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.



Fig. 2.11. Alfred Stieglitz, *The Letter Box*, 1894. In *Picturesque Bits of New York and Other Studies*, 1897. Photogravure.



Fig. 2.12. Rudolf Eickemeyer, Jr., *Returning from the Fields*, ca. 1894. In Eickemeyer, *Down South*, 1900. Halftone.



Fig. 2.13. Rudolf Eickemeyer, Jr., *Vesper Bells*, 1898. In *Camera Notes* 1, no. 3 (January 1898). Photogravure.

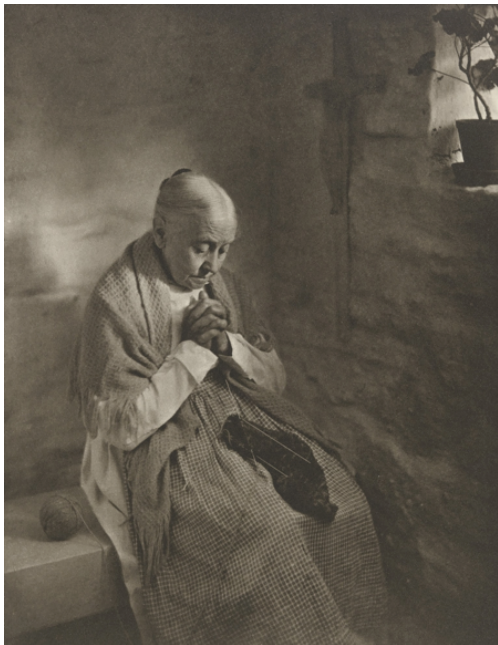


Fig. 2.14. Alfred Stieglitz, *Early Morn*, 1894. In the portfolio *American Pictorial Photography*, Series I, 1899. Photogravure.



Fig. 2.15. Alfred Stieglitz, *Winter—Fifth Avenue*, 1893, printed 1896. Photogravure. Yale University Art Gallery.



Fig. 2.16. Alfred Stieglitz, *Winter, New York*, 1892–93, printed 1920s. Gelatin silver print. Philadelphia Museum of Art. www.philamuseum.org.



Fig. 2.17. Alfred Stieglitz, *Winter—Fifth Avenue*, 1893, printed 1920s. Gelatin silver print. Philadelphia Museum of Art. www.philadelphiamuseum.org.



Fig. 2.18. Left: P. H. Emerson, *In the Yarmouth River*, 1890 (detail). Right: Alfred Stieglitz, *Winter—Fifth Avenue*, 1893 (detail).



Fig. 2.19. Advertisement for Tisdell & Whittelsey Detective or Hand Camera, 1889.

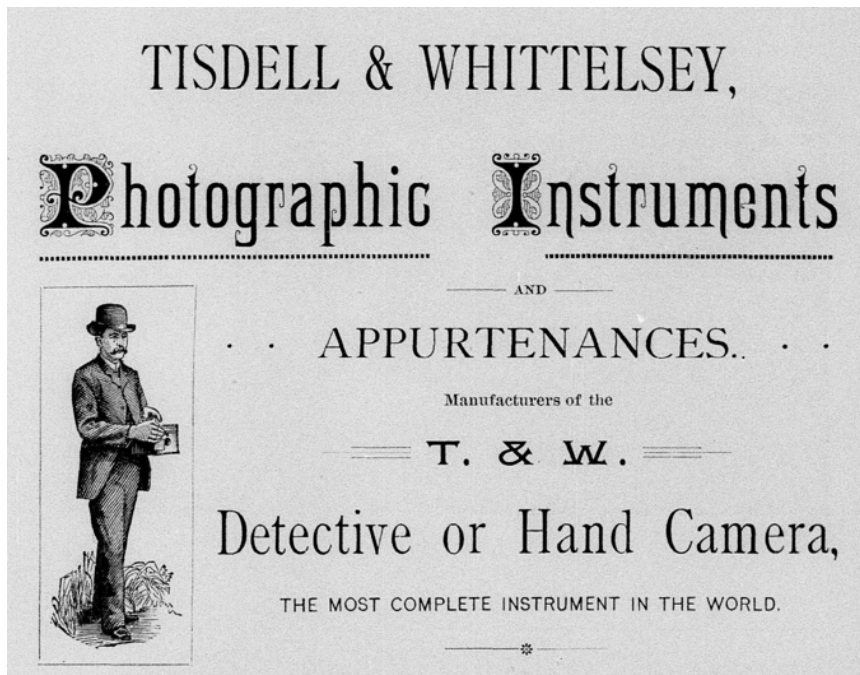


Fig. 2.20. Heinrich Kühn, Alfred Stieglitz with his Graflex, 1904. Gelatin silver print. Yale University Art Gallery.



Fig. 2.21. Unknown photographer, Alfred Stieglitz on a Bridge with his Graflex, ca. 1905. Gelatin silver print. The Metropolitan Museum of Art. www.metmuseum.org.



Fig. 2.22. Edward Steichen, Advertisement for the Little Galleries and the Photo-Secession, 1906.



Fig. 2.23. Rudolf Eickemeyer's Camera Bicycle. In *American Annual of Photography* 12 (1898).



Fig. 2.24. Rudolf Eickemeyer, Jr., *Sweet Home*, 1894. Carbon Print. Hudson River Museum.



Fig. 2.25. Rudolf Eickemeyer, Jr., *After the Rain*, 1901. In *The Photographic Times* 33, no. 12 (December 1901). Photogravure.



Fig. 2.26. Rudolf Eickemeyer, Jr., *Fleur-de-Lis*, 1894. Platinum print. Hudson River Museum.



Fig. 2.27. John Burroughs and Sadakichi Hartmann, 1921. Gelatin silver print. University of California, Riverside Special Collections.



Fig 3.1. Arthur Radclyffe Dugmore, *A Study in Natural History*. In *Camera Work* I, no. 1 (January 1903). Photogravure on Japanese tissue.

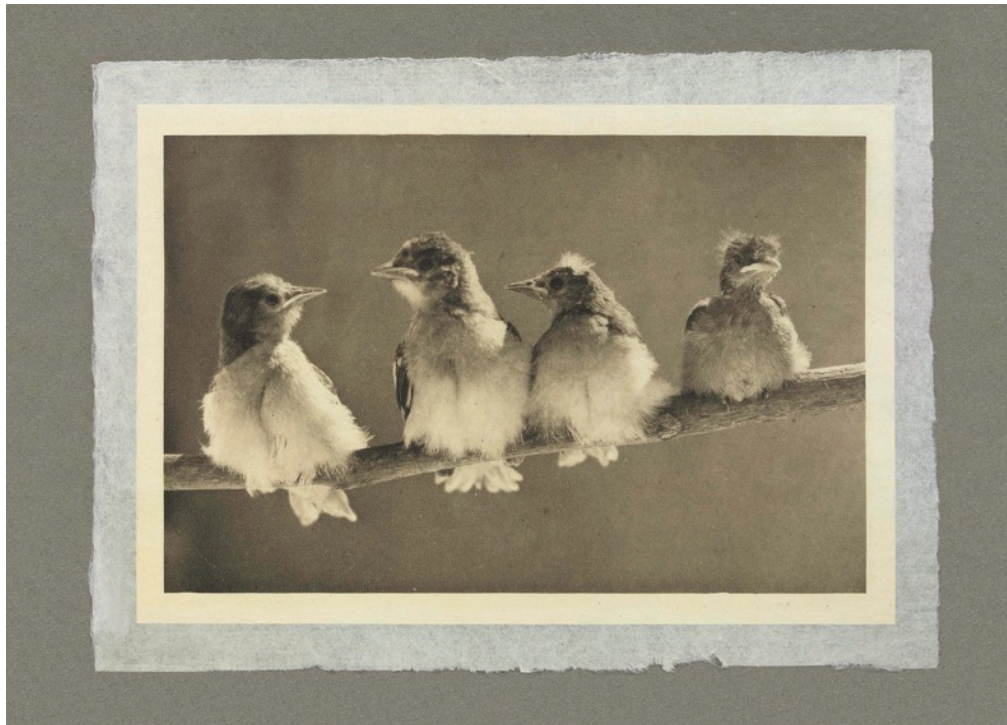


Fig. 3.2. Arthur Radclyffe Dugmore, “Three Young Baltimore Orioles and a Young Catbird.” In Dugmore, *Nature and the Camera*, 1902, 58. Halftone.



Fig. 3.3. Google Ngram Viewer, “nature photography” bigram (case insensitive), showing frequency of incidence by year based on the current English language corpus (English 2012), which includes English language texts published in any country. <http://books.google.com/ngrams/>. Accessed March 7, 2017.



Fig. 3.4. William Green, “Egg in the nest, June 8, 1882.” In *History of the Berwickshire Naturalists’ Club* 18 (1901–1902): 28. Halftone.

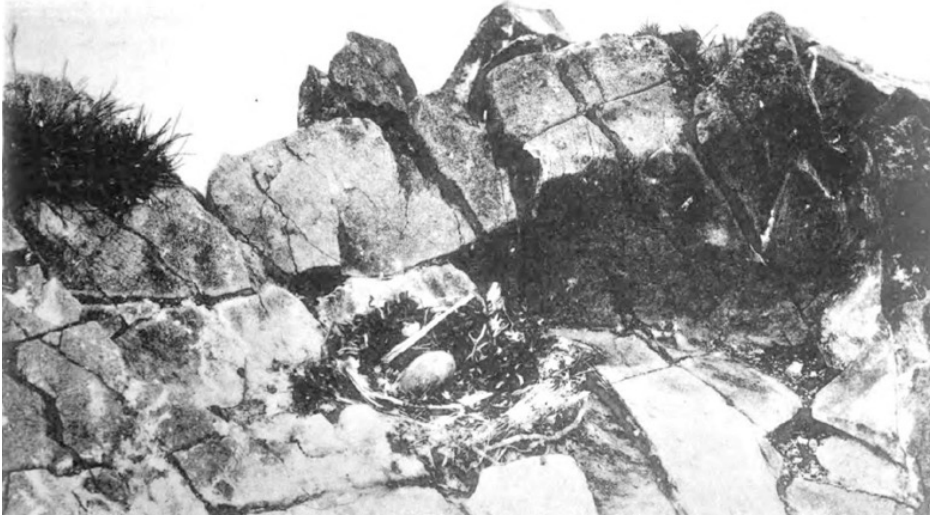


Fig. 3.5. William Green, “The fledgling hatched, July 27, 1882.” In *History of the Berwickshire Naturalists’ Club* 18 (1901–1902): 30. Halftone.



Fig. 3.6. Alpheus Hyatt, Gannets and other sea birds on Bird Rock, Gulf of St. Lawrence, July 4, 1881. In *Bird-Lore* 29, no. 4 (July–August 1927): 244. Halftone. Extended caption reads “Photograph by Prof. Alpheus Hyatt, July 4, 1881. Doubtless the first photograph ever taken of the birds on the Rock, and possibly the first photograph of birds made in America by a naturalist.”

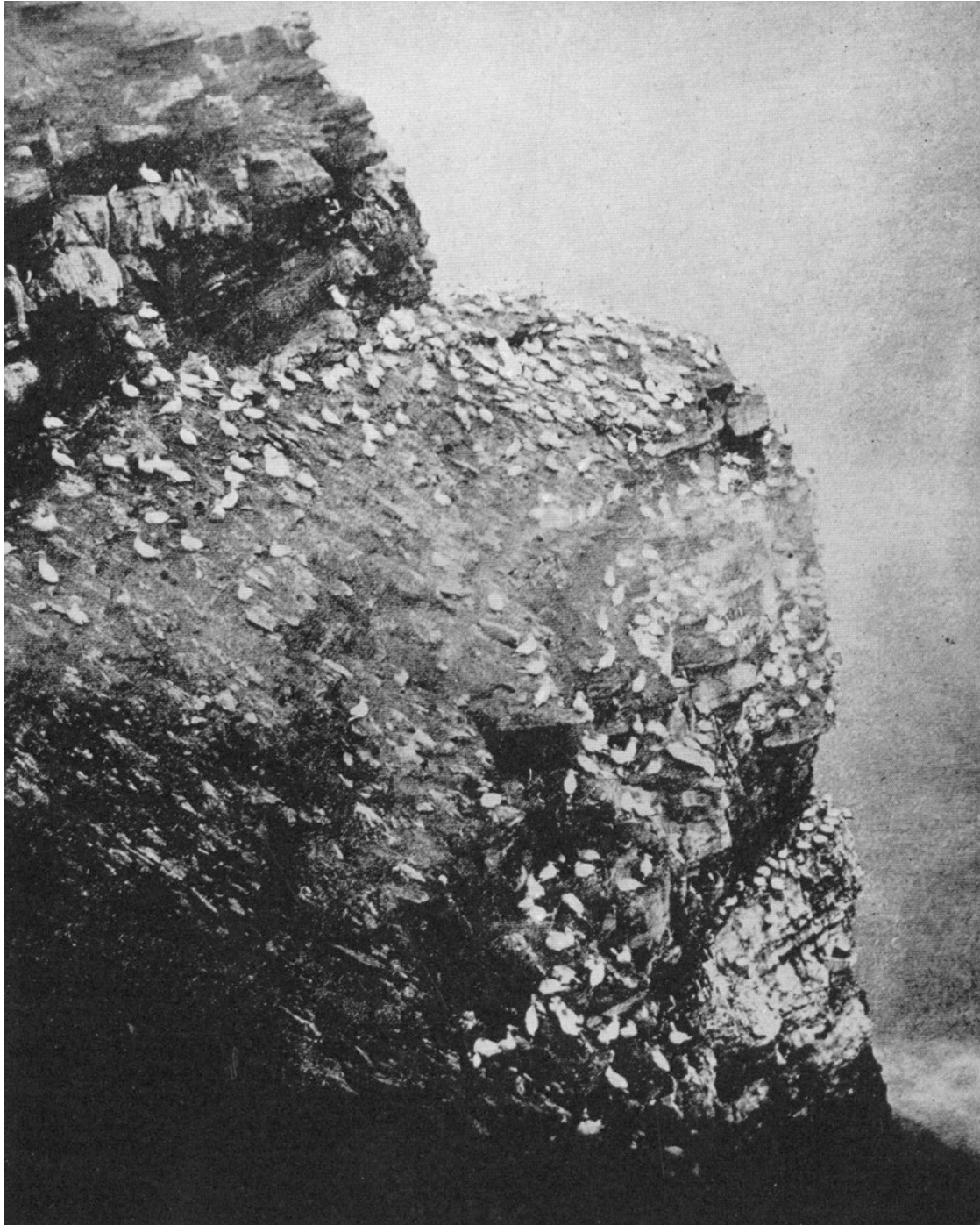


Fig. 3.7. Woodcut illustration of the Dallmeyer Naturalist's Hand Camera, which debuted in 1894. *The British Journal of Photography* 42, no. 1817 (March 1, 1895): 137. Partial frame single-lens reflex system visible on the interior.

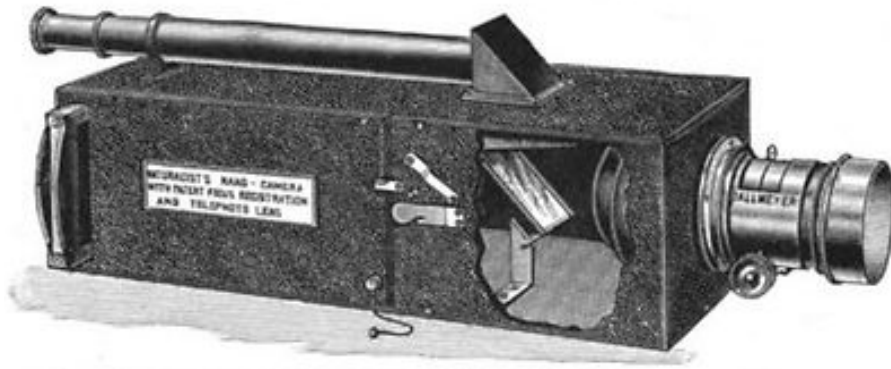


Fig. 3.8. Dugmore's portrait studio in Tarpon Springs, Florida, c.1890. In Lowell Thomas, *Rolling Stone*, 1931, 40. Halftone.



Fig. 3.9. Arthur Radclyffe Dugmore, Wood Thrush. In W. E. D. Scott, *Bird Studies*, 1898, 13. Half-tone. Example of a mounted specimen placed in a natural setting.



Fig. 3.10. Arthur Radclyffe Dugmore, Yellow-Breasted Chat. In W. E. D. Scott, *Bird Studies* 1898, 221. Half-tone. Example of an illustration made from a study skin.

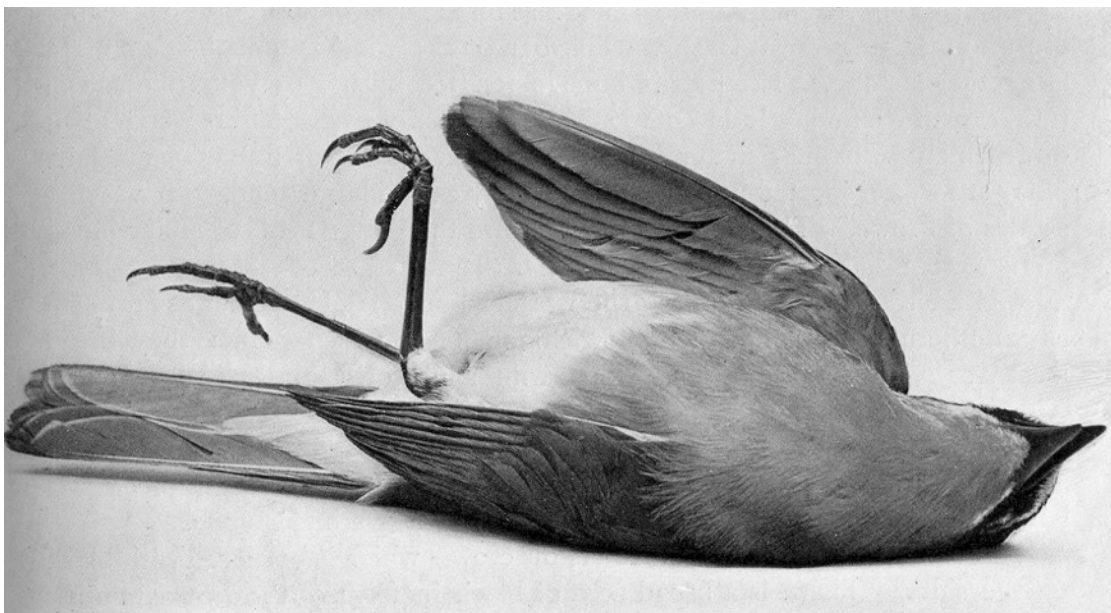


Fig 3.11. Arthur Radclyffe Dugmore, “Wood Thrush setting. Photographed from life.” In W. E. D. Scott, *Bird Studies*, 1898, 3. Halftone.



Fig. 3.12. Robert Bruce Horsfall, “A Room in Mr. Scott’s Laboratory at Princeton.” In W. E. D. Scott, *The Story of a Bird Lover*, 1902, frontispiece. Halftone after a drawing dated May 1902.



Fig. 3.13. Robert Wilson Shufeldt, Gambel's Partridge (*C. gambeli*, male). Act of Preening and Elevating of Plumage. From a Photograph of Living Bird. Plate 49 (top). In Shufeldt, *Scientific Taxidermy for Museums*, 1892. Halftone. The blurriness, especially visible near the head, is due to the movement of the bird.



Fig. 3.14. Robert Wilson Shufeldt, Quail (*Colinus*, female). Elevation of Feathers Prior to Shaking Herself. (Cat. No. 112923, U.S.N.M.). Plate 49 (bottom). In Shufeldt, *Scientific Taxidermy for Museums* 1892. Halftone.



Fig. 3.15. Unknown illustrator (after Jacques de Sève), *The Stormy Petrel*. In Count de Buffon, *The Natural History of Birds*, vol. 9, 1793. Engraving.



Fig. 3.16. Arthur Radclyffe Dugmore, "A Sleepy Trio." In *World's Work* 1, no. 1 (November 1900): 33. Halftone.

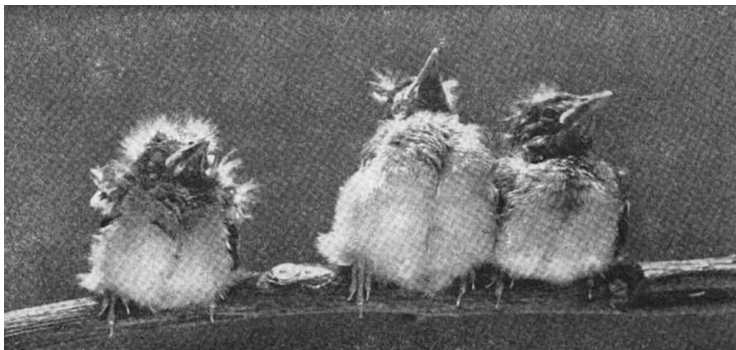


Fig. 3.17. Arthur Radclyffe Dugmore, "A Parson and Part of His Flock." In W. E. B. DuBois, "The Negro as He Really Is," *World's Work* 2, no. 2 (June 1901): 854. Halftone.



Fig. 3.18. Arthur Radclyffe Dugmore, Wood Thrush on Nest. In Dugmore, *Bird Homes*, 1900, 5. Halftone.



Fig. 3.19. Arthur Radclyffe Dugmore, “The Downy Woodpecker’s Home.” In Dugmore, *Bird Homes*, 1900, 102. Color halftone.



Fig. 3.20. William E. Carlin, *A Young Buck*, ca.1895–98. In L. H. Bailey, *Nature Portraits*, 1902. Photogravure.



Fig. 3.21. Diagram of apparatus for photographing fish. In Dugmore, *Nature and the Camera*, 1902, 95.

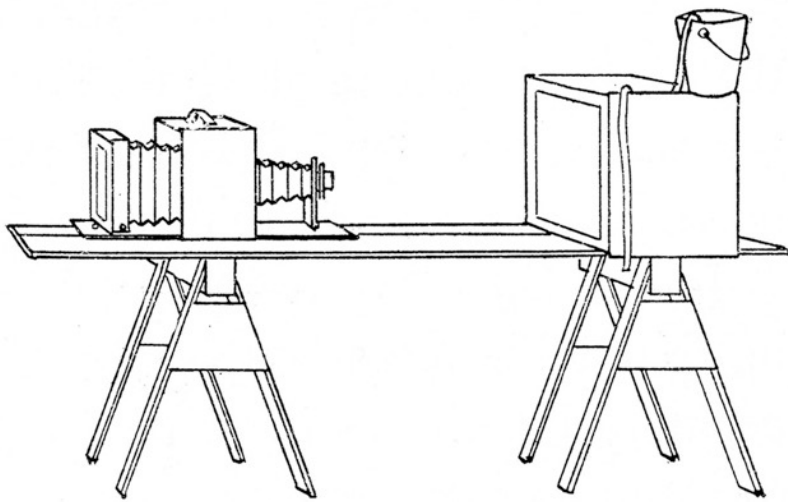


Fig. 3.

Fig. 3.22. Arthur Radclyffe Dugmore, *Fish*. In *Camera Work* 17 (January 1907): 39. Photogravure.



Fig. 3.23. Francis Hobart Herrick, "Outdoor Observatory for the Study of Wild Birds." In Herrick, *The Home Life of Wild Birds*, 1901, 16. Halftone.



Fig. 3.24. Francis Hobart Herrick, "Cedar-bird about to Feed Young by Regurgitation." In Herrick, *The Home Life of Wild Birds*, 1901, 8. Halftone.



Fig. 3.25. Arthur Radclyffe Dugmore, “Chestnut-sided Warbler Feeding Her Young on the Author’s Hand. In *Bird-Lore* 4, no. 3 (May–June 1902): cover. Halftone.

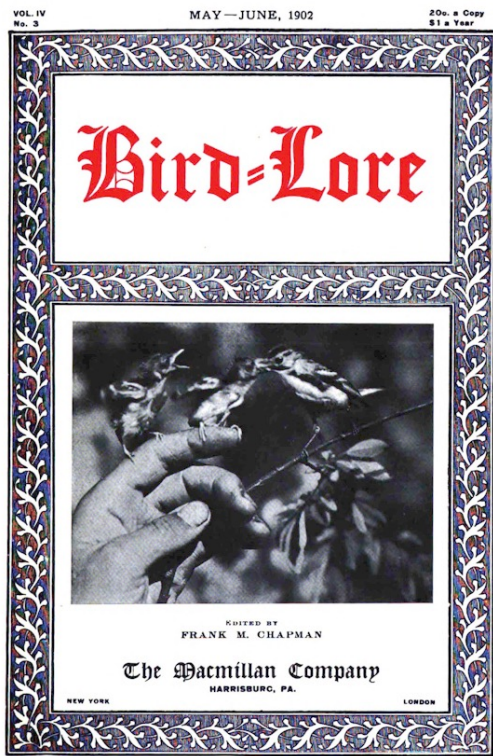


Fig. 3.26. George Edward Lodge, *Group of Young Birds*. In C. Lloyd Morgan, *Habit and Instinct*, 1896, frontispiece. Halftone.



Fig. 3.27. Edwin Sheppard, "Era of Mind and Heart: Things as They Will Exist in a Future Earth-Life." In Thomas G. Gentry, *Life and Immortality: Or, Soul in Plants and Animals*, 1897, 462. Wood engraving.

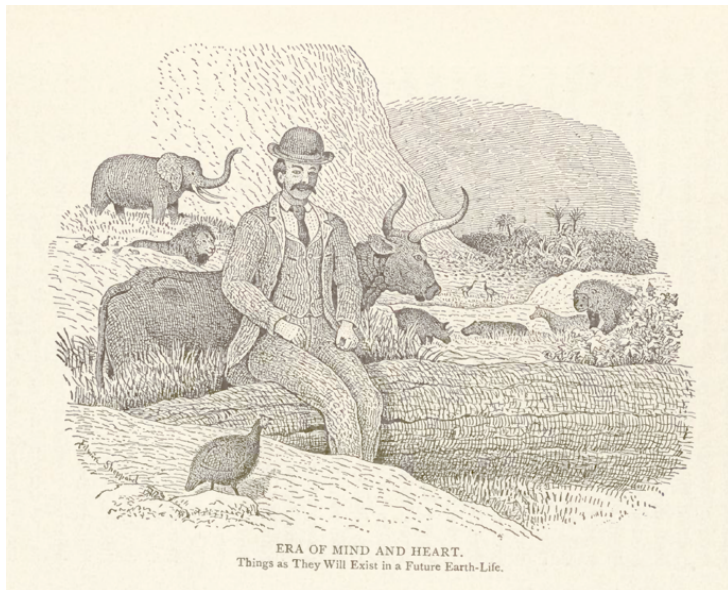


Fig. 3.28. Arthur Radclyffe Dugmore, "For It Was His Own Image in the Looking-Glass of a Bureau." In Sidney Lanier, *Bob: The Story of Our Mocking-Bird*, 1899, 28. Color halftone.



Fig. 3.29. Arthur Radclyffe Dugmore, series of images illustrating a two-story nest. In Dugmore, “How the Vireo Outwitted the Cowbird,” *Country Life in America* 3, no. 6 (April 1903): 240. Halftone.



Fig. 3.30. Arthur Radclyffe Dugmore, “To Love the Bird, to Relate to It in Your Daily Life—That is Much More.” In John Burroughs, “The True Test of Good Nature Literature,” *Country Life in America* 6, no. 1 (May 1904): 51. Halftone.



Fig. 3.31. Arthur Radclyffe Dugmore, "A Brood of Wild Chipping Sparrows." In *World's Work* 1, no. 1 (November 1900): 45. Halftone.

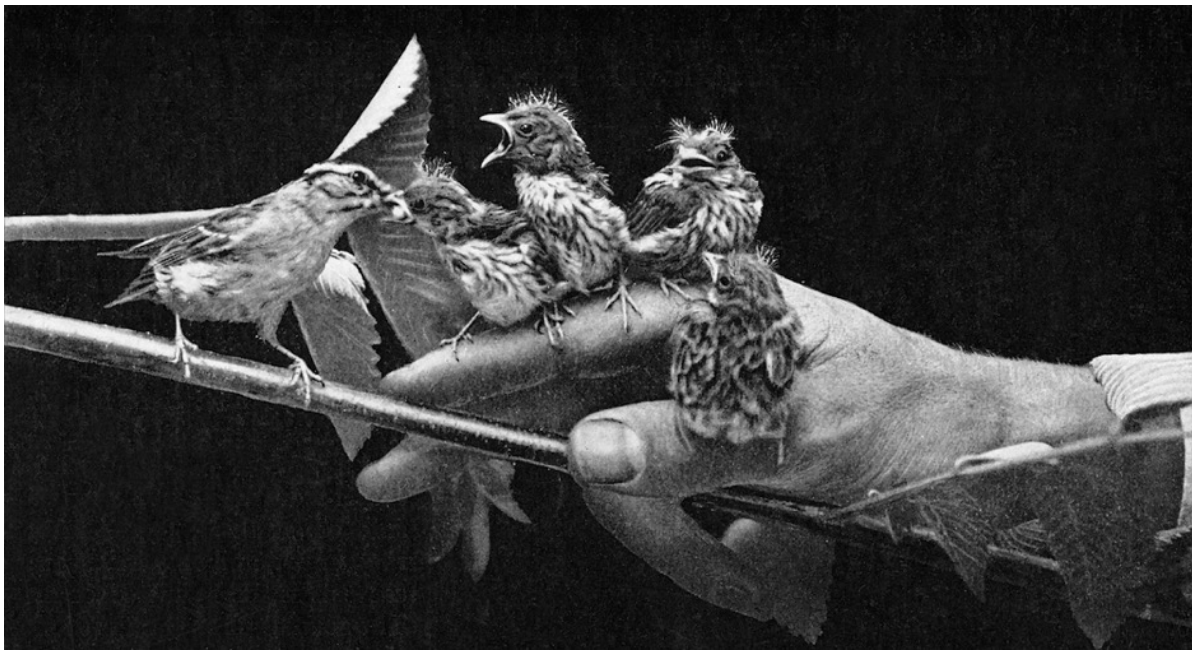


Fig. 3.32. Arthur Radclyffe Dugmore, "The Author Photographing a Wild Bird on His Hand." In *World's Work* 1, no. 1 (November 1900): 46. Halftone.



Fig. 3.33. Arthur Radclyffe Dugmore, Self-portrait with a Pair of Worm-Eating Warblers. Gelatin silver print. RETAC.

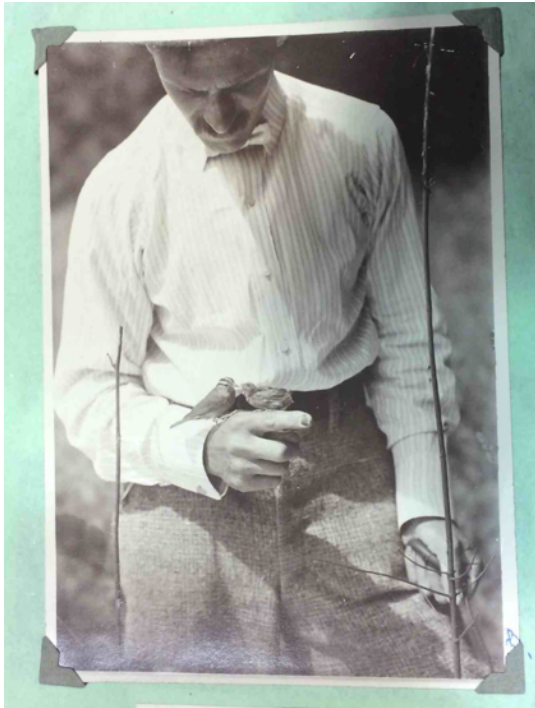


Fig. 3.34. Cherry and Richard Kearton at Work., ca. 1890s. Gelatin silver print. © Royal Photographic Society/National Media Museum/Science & Society Picture Library.



Fig. 3.35. Cherry Kearton, "Photographing a Nest in a Tree." In Richard Kearton, *With Nature and a Camera*, 1898, 343. Halftone.



Fig. 3.36. Page spread from *The North American Review*. RETAC.



Fig. 3.37. Frank M. Chapman, "A Bird in the Hand." In Chapman, *Bird Studies with the Camera*, 1900, 51. Halftone.

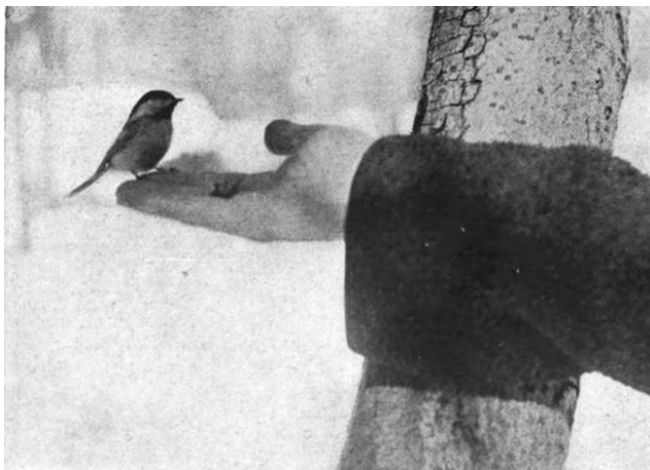


Fig. 3.38. Messrs. A. Radclyffe Dugmore and James L. Clark on the Way to Africa, 1909. In Clark, "Pioneer Photography in Africa," *The American Museum Journal* 16, no. 3 (March 1916): 156. Halftone.



Fig. 3.39. Carl Georg Schillings, "Telephotograph of a Herd of Waterbuck (*Cobus Ellipsiprymnus*, Ogilb.) Running Away," ca. 1903. In Schillings, *In Wildest Africa*, 1907, 270. Halftone.



Fig. 3.40. Arthur Radclyffe Dugmore, "Rhinoceros Photographed at a Distance of Fifteen Yards When Actually Charging the Author and His Companion." In Dugmore, *Camera Adventures in the African Wilds*, 1910, 16. Photogravure.



Fig. 3.41. Poster promoting an illustrated lecture based on Dugmore's African safari. RETAC. The partially obscured text at the bottom reads "Undoubtedly the world's greatest photographer."

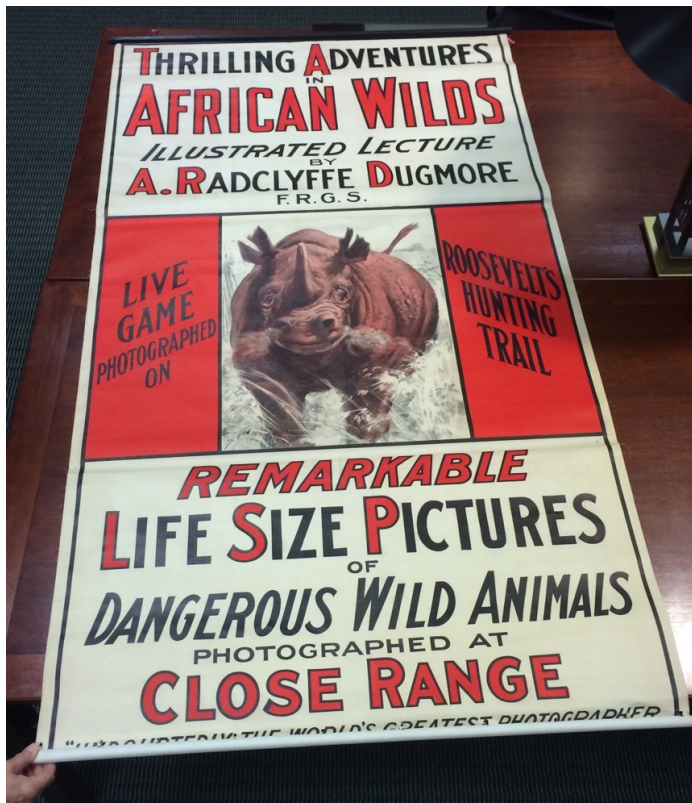


Fig. A.1. George Davison, *The Onion Field*, 1890. In *Camera Work* 8 (April 1907).
Photogravure.



Fig. A.2. Halftone illustration of Emerson Medal. In P. H. Emerson, *Penultimate Notes*, 1925.



Fig. A.3. Herbert Ponting, *Funeral Procession of a Buddhist, Osaka*, ca. 1904. Stereograph. Published by Underwood & Underwood. Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

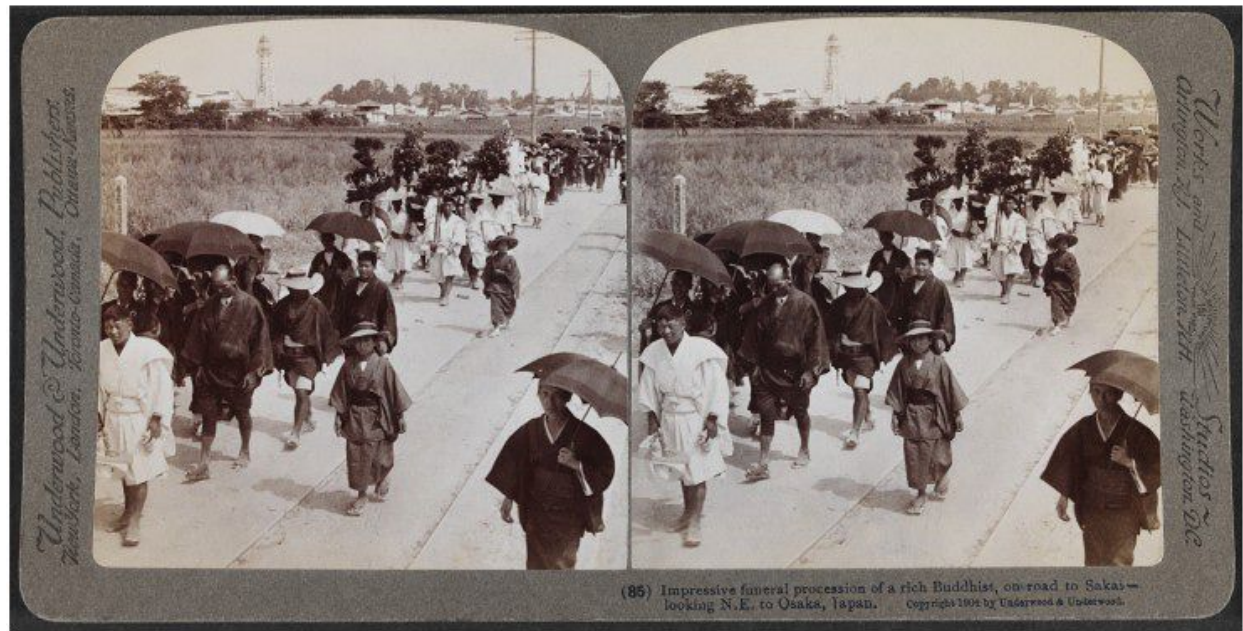


Fig. A.4. Julie Laurberg and Franziska Gad (Julie Laurberg & Gad), *Portrait of Elna Munch*, ca. 1907–1910. Silver print. National Library of Denmark.



Fig. A.5. Percy Lewis, *Santa Maria della Salute*. In Bayley, 1906. Halftone.



Fig. A.6. Douglas English, *Mrs. Rattus, Old English Black Rat*, ca. 1900. Carbon print. © Royal Photographic Society/National Media Museum/Science & Society Picture Library.



Fig. A.7. V. Türck, *Humblebaek Bakke*, ca. 1910. Photogravure postcard.



Fig. A.8. E. Drummond Young, *Rev. T.M. Monaghan*, ca. 1920s. Carbon print. Scottish National Portrait Gallery. Also reproduced in Drummond Young, 1934.

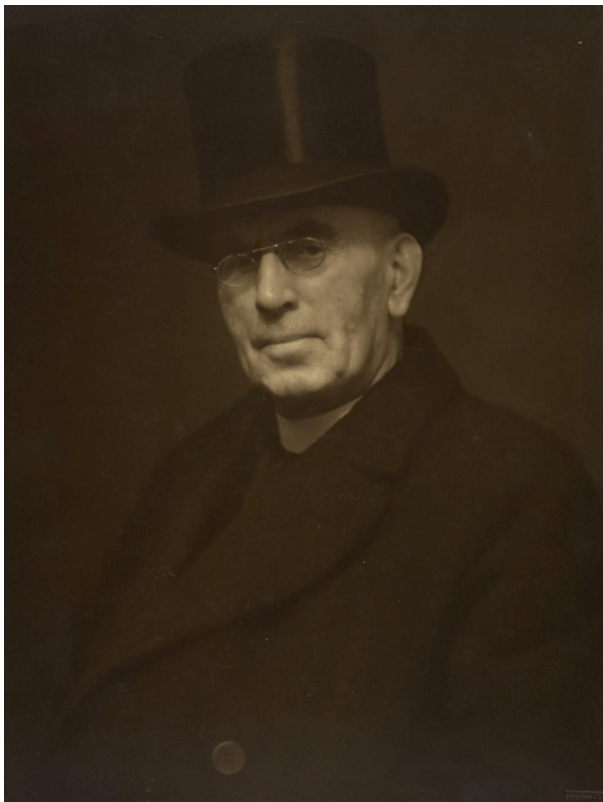


Fig. A.9. Hippolyte Bayard, *The Mills of Montmartre*, ca. 1842. Halftone reproduction of a salted paper print. In Bossert and Guttman, 1930. In 1927, this image graced the cover for the catalogue of the twelfth Salon International d'Art Photographique de Paris.

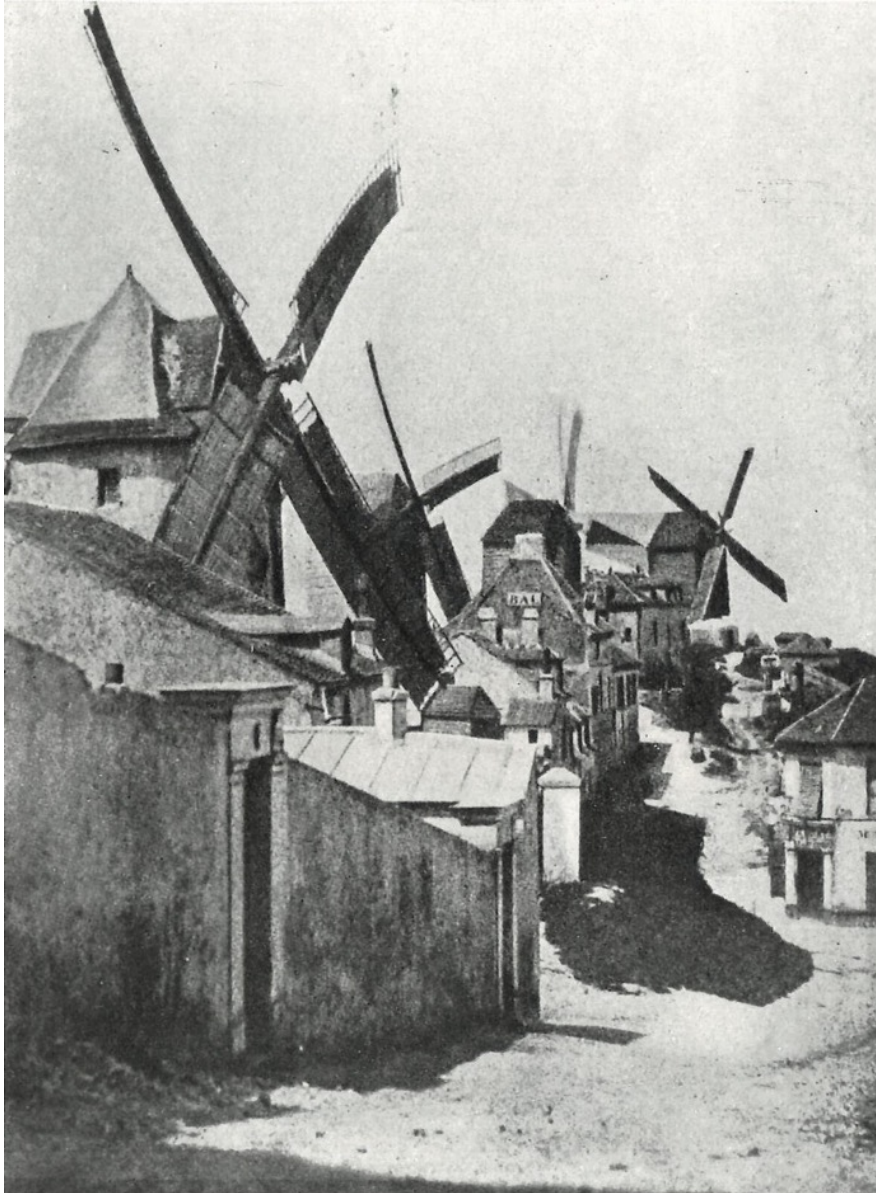


Fig. A.10. Unknown French photographer, *Lady Smoking a Cigarette* [*Sophie Troubetskoy*], ca. 1865. In Bossert and Guttman, 1930. Halftone.



Fig. A.11. Auguste Vacquerie, *Grise, la Mère de Mouche* (*écoutant Phèdre*), ca. 1852–1853. Salted paper print. Bibliothèque nationale de France. Reproduced in Bossert and Guttman, 1930 as Charles-Victor Hugo, *Mouche, Auguste Vacquerie's cat*, 1853–1855.



Fig. A.12. C.G.W. Carleman, *Vendôme-Kolonnen*. In *Paris' ruiner: med tre fotografiska grayvrer efter Carlemans system*, 1871. Halftone print.



Fig. A.13. David Octavius Hill and Robert Adamson, *Dr. Alexander Munro, Professor of Anatomy at Edinburgh University*, ca. 1843–1844. Salted paper print from a calotype negative. The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston.

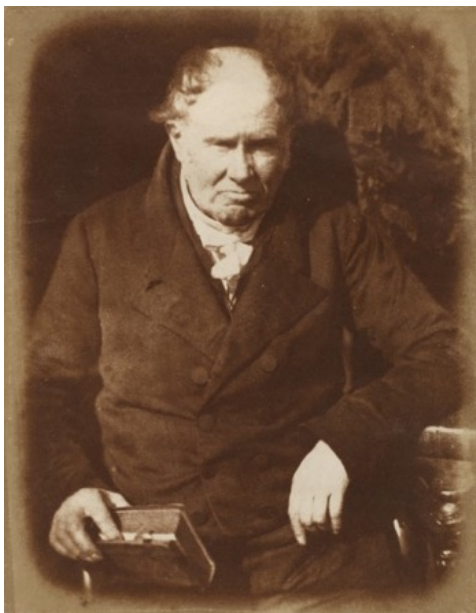


Fig. A.14. Samuel Buckle, *Study, Near Warwick*, ca. 1855. Print by Francis Frith, ca. 1865. Albumen print. The J. Paul Getty Museum.



Fig. A.15. Julia Margaret Cameron, *Sir John Herschel*, 1867. In *Sun Artists* 5 (1890). Photogravure. Art Institute of Chicago.

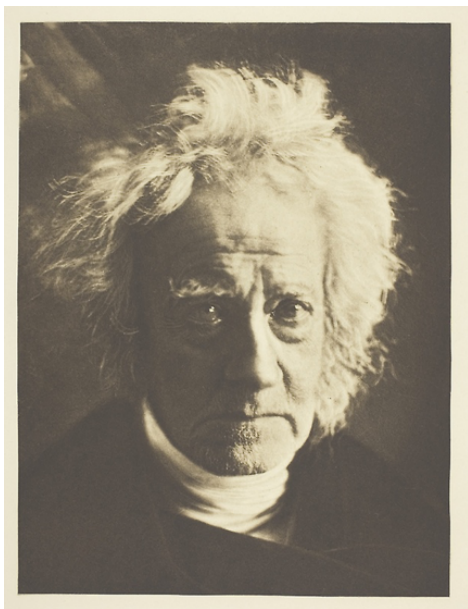


Fig. A.16. Henry B. Goodwin, *Portrait of Ida Goodwin*, 1918. Gelatin silver print. Moderna Museet.



Fig. A.17. Nicola Perscheid, *The Reaper*, 1901. In *Photographisches Centralblatt*, 1901. Photogravure.



Fig. A.18. Will A. Cadby and Carine Cadby, *Winter Blossom*. In Will Cadby, *Switzerland in Winter*, 1914. Halftone.



Fig. A.19. Pierre-Louis Pierson, *The Actress Elisa Félix, Known as Rachel (1820–1858)*, ca. 1855. In Bossert and Guttman, 1930. Halftone.



Fig. A.20. Gaspard Félix Tournachon (Nadar), *Racine's Vine*, ca. 1860. Albumen print. Bibliothèque nationale de France. Reproduced in Bossert and Guttman, 1930.



Fig. A.21. Unknown German photographer, *The "kleine Fleet," Hamburg, 1860*. In Bossert and Guttman, 1930. Half-tone.



Fig. A.22. Gabriel Cromer, *Pors-Even*, from the album *Paimpol et environs*, 1895. Gelatin silver chloride print. Bibliothèque nationale de France.



Fig. A.23. Minna Keene, *Decorative Study No. 1, Pomegranates*, 1906. Carbon print. © Royal Photographic Society/National Media Museum/Science & Society Picture Library.



Fig. A.24. Col. W. L. Noverre, *In the Highlands*. In *Photographische Rundschau* 17, no. 7 (1903): 81. Halftone.



Fig. A.25. Jean-Baptiste Sabatier-Blot, *Maria Laisné and Her Maternal Grandmother*, 1843. Ex-Collection of Gabriel Cromer. Reproduced in Recht, 1931. Courtesy of the George Eastman Museum.



Fig. A.26. Henri Le Secq, *Fantaisies*, from the series *Fantaisies*, ca. 1855. Bromide silver print, printed 1930 by Gabriel Cromer from a waxed paper negative. Ex-Collection of Gabriel Cromer. Reproduced in Recht, 1931. Courtesy of the George Eastman Museum.



Fig. A.27. Henri Le Secq, *Boats at Dieppe*, ca. 1854. Bromide silver print, printed 1930 by Gabriel Cromer from a waxed paper negative. Ex-Collection of Gabriel Cromer. Reproduced in Recht, 1931. Courtesy of the George Eastman Museum.

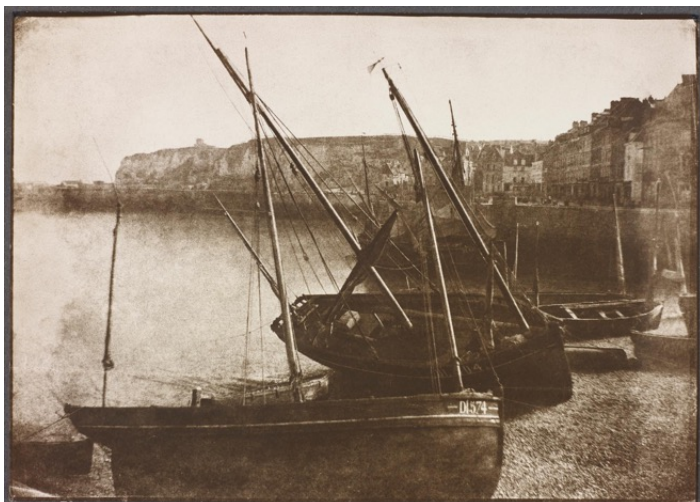


Fig. A.28. Carl Heinrich Oskar Fielitz, *Charlotte Fietliz, the Mother of the Daguerreotypist*, ca. 1855. Half-plate daguerreotype. Museum für Kunst und Gewerbe Hamburg. Reproduced in Bossert and Guttman, 1930 as “Mrs. Fielitz, Wife of the Doctor to the Court.”



Fig. A.29. James Robertson, *Russian Battery in Redan fort, Sevastopol*, 1855. Albumen print. Rijksmuseum. Reproduced and misattributed to Roger Fenton in Bossert and Guttman, 1930.



Fig. A.30. Hermann Biow, *Alexander von Humboldt*, 1947. Full-plate daguerreotype. Museum für Kunst und Gewerbe Hamburg. Reproduced in Bossert and Guttman, 1930.



Fig. A.31. Adolphe Braun, *A Camera Study of Flowers*, ca. 1860. In Bossert and Guttman, 1930. Halftone.



Fig. A.32. John M. Whitehead, *Honesty*. In Bayley, 1906. Halftone.

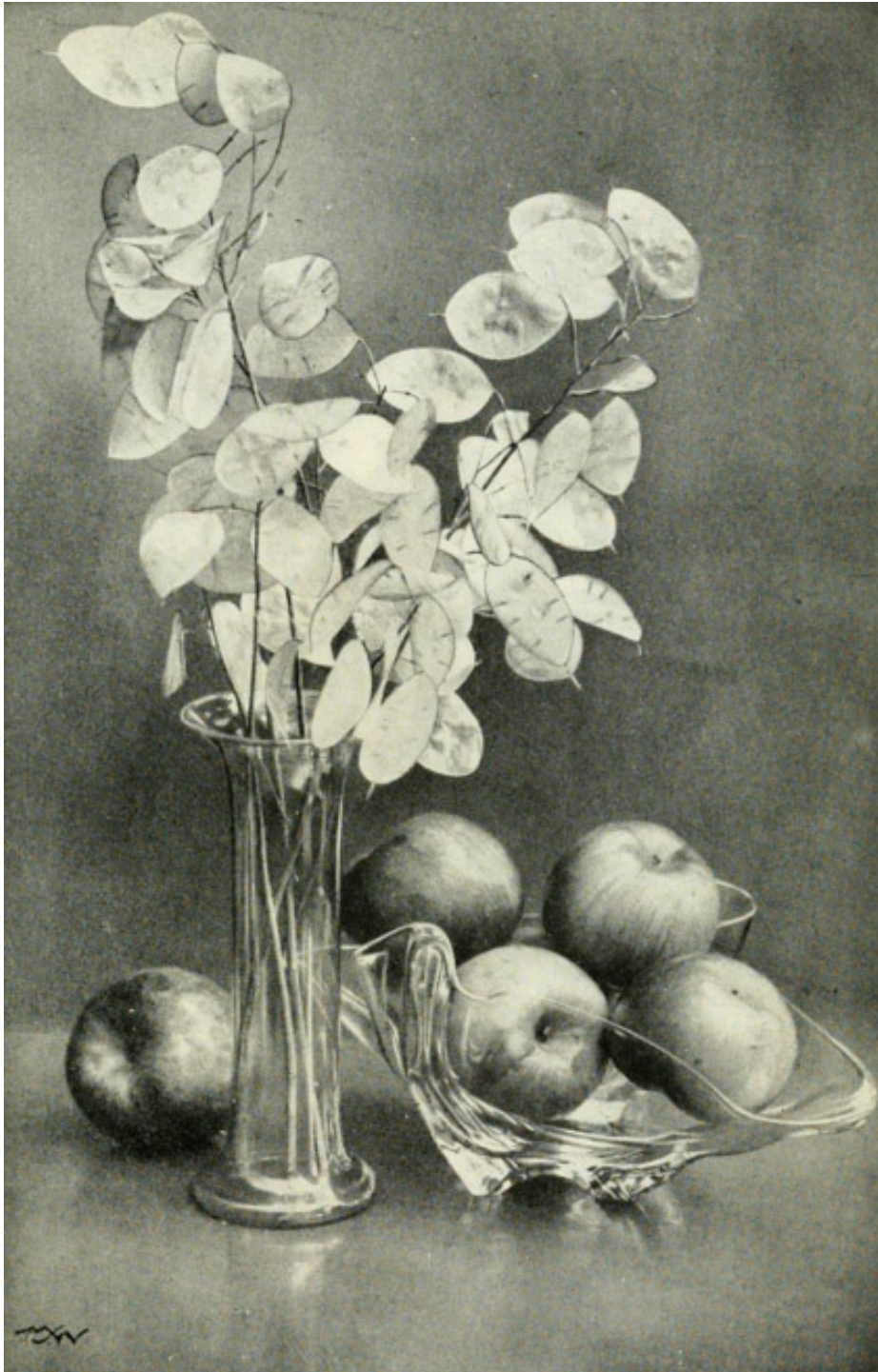


Fig. A.33. Fred Judge, *November*. In Bayley, 1906. Halftone.



Fig. A.34. Charles Caryl Coleman, *Capri*, 1911. Oil on canvas. Private Collection.



Fig. A.35. Peter Henry Emerson, *The Moonlight River*, ca. 1891. In Emerson, *On English Lagoons*, 1893. Photogravure.



Fig. A.36. Émile Frechon, *A Lesson in Netting*, 1908. In *Country Life* 23, no. 594 (May 23, 1908). Halftone.



Fig. A.37. Sidney Charles Salmon, *St. John's Road, Corstorphine*, ca. 1890. The Corstorphine Heritage Centre.



Fig. A.38. Julien Vallou de Villeneuve, *Paul-Louis Leroux*, from the album *Portraits of Comédie française Actors and Actresses*, ca. 1853. Salted paper print. Ex-Collection of Gabriel Cromer. Reproduced in Recht, 1931. Courtesy of the George Eastman Museum.



Fig. A.39. Brassai, plate from *Paris de Nuit*, 1933.



Fig. A.40. Rudolf Eickemeyer, Jr. *The Kitten's Breakfast*, 1894. Platinum print. NMAH.



Fig. A.41. Bronze Emerson Medal awarded to Rudolf Eickemeyer, Jr. NMAH.



Fig. A.42. P. H. Emerson, *In the Haysel*, from *Pictures of East Anglian Life*, 1888. Photogravure.



Fig. A.43. P. H. Emerson, *Getting Ready for Fishing*, from *Wild Life on a Tidal Water*, 1890. Photogravure.



Fig. B.1. Frederick K. Lawrence, *The Fairy Wood*. In Maude I.G. Oliver, "The Photo-Secession in America," *International Studio* 32, no. 127 (September 1907): 213. Halftone.

