

**Identity Crisis:  
The State Of Photography Education Today**

**by A. D. Coleman**

During a class break one warm spring day, I was astonished to hear one of our imminently graduating seniors complain that his course of study had not provided him with employable skills that he could easily convert to a job in today's labor market. My immediate response was that not only was this true but that it was as it should be — and that, if he'd expected otherwise, he was, like Humphrey Bogart in *Casablanca*, "misinformed."

To understand my astonishment and my response, you'll need a bit of background. I teach the history and criticism of photography in a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree-granting undergraduate photography program within the Tisch School of the Arts, one of the seven colleges comprising New York University, which is among the oldest institutions of higher education in North America.

It has never been the function of universities, fine-arts programs, or undergraduate departments to *train* students in any practical skill that would automatically render them employable upon graduation. The baccalaureate degree represents only entry-level awareness of any field, of course. Beyond that, the philosophy of these systems, in fact, distinguishes between education and vocational training; their purpose is *education*. The inappropriateness of this student's expectations was as ludicrous as Bogey's claim that he'd come to Casablanca "for the waters." The difference was that, unlike Bogey, our student wasn't making a joke.

I pursued the discussion, in order to discover whether the student was ignorant or, instead, dumb. (This is a useful distinction propounded by my colleague, the Baltimore Oriole: Ignorance is a condition, dumbness is a commitment.) While the dialogue that ensued persuaded me that this student was deeply committed, subsequent discussion with his classmates revealed that most of them — roughly ninety-five percent, by my casual estimate — didn't realize that there were significant

differences between graduate and undergraduate education (beyond a vague assumption that, back in what they call "the olden days," the higher you went the tougher it got), nor that the historical mandates of university, fine-arts academy, polytechnic institute and workshop education were not only radically different but often fundamentally, even diametrically, opposed.

How had they gotten so (let me be generous) ignorant? Part of the answer is to be found on the academic letterhead of another colleague, Robert Muffoletto, editor of the new scholarly quarterly *FRAME/WORK*. Bob is forced to teach, ignominiously, in an oxymoron: the California State Polytechnic University in Pomona, whose founders were evidently unaware that the polytechnic institute arose precisely to oppose the European university system, with a socialistic agenda deliberately antagonistic to and incompatible with the premises of university study.

Let me be generous again: If our students are ignorant of the nature of the very contexts in which they study, perhaps it's because the teachers and administrators who inhabit those contexts are equally ignorant. This is particularly the case, I suspect, with North Americans, as none of the currently predominant contexts of photography education is indigenous to us; they are all European by birth. So it might be useful to reiterate the origins and purposes of these different approaches to education, so as to provide a basis for any subsequent discussion of their present-day manifestations and the differences between them.

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From time immemorial, people have gathered — singly or in groups — to study with those they thought had valuable skills, knowledge, or wisdom to impart. In primitive societies, the tribe's best hunter, flint-knapper, shaman, and medicine woman passed along their expertise to selected members of the next generation. Here lie the beginnings of the master-apprentice relation.

As tribes grew and merged, forming larger societies, the connections between teachers and their prospective students became less immediate and more arbitrary. A novice might decide to sit at the feet of someone he or she had never met and knew only by reputation, even to travel a great distance in order to do so. Certain teachers attracted numbers of such students — people who came to them, voluntarily, for the

purpose of learning.

Though not the earliest, the model most familiar to all of us is that of Socrates and his circle. Socrates taught workshops, open to the public. They were workshops in thinking: his students brought their best ideas, submitting them to the cleansing fire of Socrates's criticism. (Let there be no mistake about it; "All criticism is destructive, especially self-criticism," as Man Ray said.) The purpose of criticism, Socrates proposed, was to find the weak spots in the concept so that you could build a better one next time.

Aside from monasteries, a few atypical conclaves of scholars, and certain schools connected with the Catholic Church, there was nothing even approximating the formal institution of higher learning until the invention of the university early in the twelfth century.<sup>1</sup> In some ways, the university can be seen as an outgrowth of the *studium generale* — a type of school attached to some cathedrals — but there are no earlier models of formalized higher education. The university is generally conceded to be uniquely medieval — no less typical of the Middle Ages than the parliament and the cathedral.<sup>2</sup> As Nathan Schachner puts it, "Three all-embracing institutions characterize the Middle Ages — the Church, the Empire, and the University. Of these the first two were derivative; only the University was peculiarly a medieval invention."<sup>3</sup>

The fundamental idea of the university is that of an interdisciplinary community of scholars. Though, in the minds of many, it has come to represent a system encompassing all knowledge, the term *university* itself simply meant aggregate or collection. "Historically, the word university has no connection with the universe or the universality of learning; it denotes only the totality of a group, whether of barbers, carpenters, or students did not matter."<sup>4</sup> Universities, then, were essentially guilds of masters and students — unsubsidized by state or church, organized for such practical reasons as collective bargaining with townspeople to keep the prices of food and

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<sup>1</sup> The university originated circa 1100, though the "great century of university growth was the thirteenth." Wieruszowski, Helene, *The Medieval University: Masters, Students, Learning* (New York: D. Van Nostrand Co., 1966), p. 16.

<sup>2</sup> "The university, like the parliament, is a creation of the Middle Ages." *Ibid.*, p. 5.

<sup>3</sup> Schachner, Nathan, *The Medieval Universities* (New York: A. S. Barnes/Perpetua, 1962; original edition, 1938), p. 1.

<sup>4</sup> Haskins, Charles Homer, *The Rise of Universities* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1979; first edition, 1923), p. 9.

lodging down. Colleges were subdivisions of universities — initially, nothing more than endowed hospices for indigent scholars.

Excluded from the universities of students (*universitas scholarium*), professors formed guilds of their own (the *universitas magistrorum*), with admission thereto by examination only. The certificate awarded to those who passed these tests, the license to teach (*licentia docendi*), "thus became the earliest form of academic degree," according to Charles Homer Haskins.<sup>5</sup> Among the defining aspects of the university, the same source tells us, are "the notion of a curriculum of study, definitely laid down as regards time and subjects, tested by an examination and leading to a degree"; the multiple faculties and colleges; and "its main business, the training of scholars and the maintenance of the tradition of learning and investigation."<sup>6</sup>

First and foremost, then, one went to the university to learn how to study, to acquire knowledge for its own sake. In that process, the student learned to teach. A "bachelor's" degree qualified one only to tutor students less knowledgeable. An advanced degree entitled its bearer to teach anywhere — or else to practice law or medicine, or to enter the ministry. Beyond that, there was not much one could do with a university degree. In reading the following passage, bear in mind that the "vocational motive" of which its author speaks was restricted to the occupations just mentioned:

Not only was the vocational motive a strong incentive to study in the medieval university, but there was much enthusiasm for knowledge and much discussion of intellectual subjects. The greater universities, at least, were intellectually very much alive, with something of that "religion of learning" which had earlier called Abelard's pupils into the wilderness, there to build themselves huts that they might feed upon his words.<sup>7</sup>

Most authorities credit the "influx of new knowledge into western Europe . . . chiefly through the Arab scholars of Spain — the works of Aristotle, Euclid, Ptolemy,

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<sup>5</sup> Haskins, *op. cit.*, p. 11. Strasser cites ". . . the elements of the original university idea: A corporation of individuals from many places, which includes at least a plurality of professors, all parties being dedicated — though in varying degrees — to the pursuit of at least one branch of higher learning, upon the successful completion of which they will be granted the license to teach their discipline anywhere." In Strasser, M. W., "Educational Philosophy of the First Universities," in Radcliff Umstead, Douglas, *The University World: A Synoptic View of Higher Education in the Middle Ages and Renaissance*, Medieval and Renaissance Studies Committee, Vol. II (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh, 1973), p. 5.

<sup>6</sup> Haskins, *op. cit.*, pp. 24-25.

and the Greek physicians, and those texts of the Roman law which had lain hidden through the Dark Ages"<sup>8</sup> with generating the heated intellectual environment in which the university idea could flourish. Law, medicine, science, theology, philosophy; these were the concerns of university study on its highest levels. The basis of the curriculum were the seven liberal arts: the *trivium* (grammar, rhetoric and dialectic) and the *quadrivium* (music, arithmetic, geometry and astronomy). More emphasis was placed on the former than on the latter, until the 13th century.

"To medieval men the collegiate skills were called 'liberal arts' because they were arts that liberated those who practiced them," Strasser indicates. "Once acquired — and they do not exist outside of those who possess them — the liberal arts are enriched capacities to perform well in certain lines of endeavor. This is why a liberal art is recognizable only in its use. It is a liberty born of strength. It follows that this liberty can be displayed only by the person who knows that in his field there is more than one way to achieve ends."<sup>9</sup>

Thus the original universities are best understood as "schools of philosophy, mental and physical, [where] the attention of students in [liberal] Arts was chiefly directed to the logic, metaphysics, physics, and ethics of Aristotle."<sup>10</sup> The thrust, then, was theoretical, abstract — what would come to be called *the life of the mind*. "Then as now, the moral quality of a university depended on the intensity and seriousness of its intellectual life."<sup>11</sup>

A brief summary of the curriculum of the University of Paris will indicate how this "moral quality" was achieved. Students could enter the university at the age of 14; a knowledge of Latin — acquired in what were called grammar schools — was required.<sup>12</sup> They took courses two and three times over, the first time from a master, the next from a bachelor, for review purposes. ("Bachelor" was understood as an intermediary degree.<sup>13</sup>) The shortage of books (all texts were manuscripts, this being well before Gutenberg), along with the cost of paper/vellum, meant that the oral tradition remained

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<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 91.

<sup>8</sup> E.g., Haskins, *op. cit.*, pp. 4-5.

<sup>9</sup> Strasser, *op. cit.*, p. 17.

<sup>10</sup> Rait, Robert S., *Life in the Medieval University* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1931), p. 138.

<sup>11</sup> Haskins, *op. cit.*, p. 91.

<sup>12</sup> Rait, *op. cit.*, pp. 133-134.

strong — involving students and teachers in much repetition of texts and memorization.<sup>14</sup> This period of study was followed by stringent oral exams: first, private debates (responsiones) with a master in his discipline; then public examination (or disputationes) by a board of masters, depending much on rhetoric, logic, and verbal performance.

The student who survived these trials went on to work as a full-time faculty member in his discipline for two years. Finally, after a private examination conducted by four masters, he became a candidate for the master's degree, the ceremonies for which included a presentation of his arguments to the entire academic community. The significance of these rites of passage is summed up well in the following passages:

[B]y cultivating in its students the arts of disputation and teaching, the medieval university was re-establishing in its own way the ancient Greek ideal of education as virtually synonymous with rhetoric. . . . [T]his emphasis on oral expression produced much more than mere fluency of speech. What it was intended to provide . . . was a *mastery* of whatever information a student had acquired. It is in this sense that the 13th century may be said to have retained — or, rather, recovered with the help of Aristotle — the classical idea of education: the idea that our knowledge is complete only when we can express it.<sup>15</sup>

. . . most 13th century graduates did not intend to embark upon a teaching career. The point is that at the time of graduation they were accomplished in the performance of their craft: the two-fold craft of knowing how to assimilate difficult materials and how to communicate them.<sup>16</sup>

When, and only when, students could express their knowledge well enough to hold their own in a public debate with their masters were they themselves

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<sup>13</sup> Strasser, *op. cit.*, p. 11.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 11.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 14.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 15.

acknowledged as masters.<sup>17</sup>

The value to the individual of such an education seems self-evident. Yet we must keep in mind that this system primarily served the wealthy. Few in the working class could afford the expense of supporting their offspring through such a lengthy course of study; barring subsidy from some patron, that society had no assistance to offer the student, the teacher, or the dedicated scholar. University education, and the choice of teaching as a profession and/or the pursuit of research, therefore must be seen as privileged from the outset; certainly it was so understood once the university system was entrenched, at the beginning of the Renaissance.

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By the end of the Middle Ages, artists were being trained in a rigorously controlled apprenticeship system within what were essentially production houses for patron art. Prior to the apprentice system, art was largely church-sponsored, taught and produced within the monasteries. "This transition from the theological to the secular sphere marks a watershed in the history of art; it made possible communal participation," argues Albert Boime.<sup>18</sup> Thus the cultural situation of art production shifted dramatically; artists, as workers, found themselves practicing and marketing their skills in the same social environment as other craftsmen and artisans.

This secularization of art-making both expanded the client base for artists and forced artists in turn to widen the range of their skills to serve the needs of this increased variety of customers. "Under both commune and princes the [Renaissance] artist fulfilled an important function in the life of the city, since the Church, the nobles, and wealthy merchants were in constant need of his works. He could satisfy all these different demands since, because of the apprentice system, he was a versatile craftsman."<sup>19</sup>

That versatility, characteristic of Renaissance artists, resulted from early training in several crafts achieved through a hands-on, learn-by-doing instructional system. In

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<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 20.

<sup>18</sup> Boime, Albert, *The Academy and French Painting in the Nineteenth Century* (New York: Phaidon, 1971), p. 1.

<sup>19</sup> Gardner, Helen, *Art Through the Ages* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1959, fourth edition), pp.

Helen Gardner's description,

Each well-known artist had a shop (*bottega*) — forty-one of these are recorded in Florence (total population about 150,000) between 1409 and 1444 — which a boy could enter at the age of ten or twelve as an apprentice. [Others suggest that the earliest one could start was age 14.] There he learned how to grind colors, prepare a panel of seasoned wood for painting, use gold leaf, and transfer cartoons (the master's preliminary drawing) to the panel or wall. After some years spent in mastering these and other fundamentals of his craft, an apprentice was entrusted with the execution of minor parts of an altarpiece, usually following the design of the master.<sup>20</sup>

Such education was a two-way street, of course. The master in turn accepted the responsibility of training his own competition. He "was obliged to teach the apprentice, through practical training, all that he knew of his art. The young artist was immediately confronted with the object to be produced and became technically trained before being introduced to theoretical principles. [When] the apprentice progressed to the next level of training, that of the *compagnon*, or journeyman, . . . he participated to a much greater extent in the master's work."<sup>21</sup> Eventually, if he so chose, he left the master's shop, was entitled to apply for certification, and if approved was admitted to the painters' guild as a master himself, with the right to set up a *bottega* of his own. To go from apprentice to master took from 6 to 16 years, depending on one's field.

Though it emerged towards the end of the Renaissance, the art academy was less a Renaissance phenomenon than a Mannerist response to the post-Renaissance.<sup>22</sup> "The first academies were founded to provide a sense of security in an insecure time by establishing artistic rules based on the ideals of the High Renaissance. Nostalgia for the achievements of the "great masters" and a conscious search for formulas as a means of attaining perfection provided academic criticism and rules to plague the painter," Gardner tells us at one point.<sup>23</sup> Elsewhere she suggests that, "As an outgrowth of the individualistic and rationalistic spirit of the Renaissance, the traditions and standards of

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290-91.

<sup>20</sup> *bid.*, pp. 290-91.

<sup>21</sup> Boime, *op. cit.*, pp. 1-2.

<sup>22</sup> See Pevsner, Nikolaus, *Academies of Art* (New York: Macmillan, 1940).



the shop system were gradually relaxed during the fifteenth century and virtually disappeared by the latter part of the sixteenth in favor of instruction in the academies of art."<sup>24</sup>

Whatever the causes, this represented yet another shift in the production context of art. The establishment of artists' workshops had meant a transfer of power, from the church as a controlling force to the guild or union. Next there occurred a "transition from the guild-controlled arts sanctioned by the Church to an academic system sponsored by the state."<sup>25</sup>

This evolution began in Italy, where the guilds "metamorphosed into schools and the concept of an academy emerged. The academy reasserted the equality of the plastic arts with the liberal arts, a principle it now declared by virtue of its theoretical instruction."<sup>26</sup> In effect, the art academy thus declared itself to be of equal stature to the university. This symbolized a change in the cultural status of art, an increased respect for art and artists; it also dictated that certified artists would thenceforth more likely be drawn from the upper classes and the emerging bourgeoisie than from the working class that had, to a considerable extent, made up the artisanal cadre of the workshops.

From its genesis in Italy, "this advanced state of art instruction was transplanted on to French soil by the Valois kings whose Italian conquests had brought them into close contact with this aspect of Italian culture."<sup>27</sup> However, unlike its Italian counterpart, "The original [French] Academy . . . never wholly relinquished ties with the old corporations [*i.e.*, guilds] from which it borrowed the formal structure. . . . The Academy added to this formal structure the theoretical foundation for the arts that it had borrowed from the Italian system and the School of Fontainebleau."<sup>28</sup>

State sponsorship of the arts, then as now, always had its price; and art education was not exempted from that toll. Indeed, the increasing presence of visual art throughout European culture, on all class levels — for inexpensive woodblock prints and other images in multiple were already circulating widely among the population at large

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<sup>23</sup> Gardner, *op. cit.*, pp. 369-370.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 290-91.

<sup>25</sup> Boime, *op. cit.*, p. 1.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 2.

<sup>27</sup> Boime, *op. cit.*, p. 2.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 4-5.

— made state control over visual art imperative. Direct authoritarian censorship is the most obvious form of such control, but more subtle, insidious methods were available, and quickly put to use:

. . . a common-sense principle was invoked by the Academy over and over again until deep in the nineteenth century: *Control instruction and you will control style*. The Academy retained the institution of apprenticeship as a preliminary stage in the artist's education. The pupil neither painted nor carved at the Academy; he received his practical instruction in the atelier of his master, with whom he lived and worked, as formerly in the corporation. Drawing alone was taught at the Academy and the Academy emphasized it as the theoretical element uniting all the branches of art (*dessin*). This separation of the artist's instruction into the practical and the theoretical was retained intact until 1863. . . . The Academy was made-to-order for Louis (XIV) and Colbert (his minister); the prestige of belonging to it lured artists into giving up their independence and the King could impose his desires more easily upon a body of Royal Academicians than upon a private group or corporation.<sup>29</sup>

When the Academy — identified with the aristocracy — fell with the French Revolution, it was replaced with the Institut de France, no less conservative.<sup>30</sup> Universities in France suffered a similar fate. Both art academies and universities continued to flourish elsewhere, of course, and eventually re-established themselves in France. However, in the wake of the Revolution a new form of educational system arose: the *polytechnic institute*.

In the new schools that arose after the Revolution had established itself, the studies that had been pursued by the aristocracy were discarded. Purely speculative subjects were forbidden, as were all archaic subjects (dead languages, religion); history, literature, even grammar received short shrift. The emphasis was on science, particularly hard or applied science. This led to the development of that attitude which the French would later dub *scientism* or *the scientific* — a way of thought that seeks to

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<sup>29</sup> Boime, *op. cit.*, pp. 4-5.

<sup>30</sup> Boime, *op. cit.*, p. 5.

minimize human individuality by emphasizing the collective and quantifiable aspects of social behavior, its supposed "rules" and "laws."

The thrust of the polytechnic posture was *practical* rather than *pragmatic* (to use William James's distinction); its tendency was instrumentalist. For the polytechnic student, *engineering* was the fundamental model, blueprint-making the basic skill. Not surprisingly, these schools were hotbeds of socialism, with that political philosophy's commitment to social engineering.<sup>31</sup>

The making of things, useful, functional things, was a primary goal of all polytechnic education. In the arts, this meant the emphasis on architecture, industrial design, and other forms of applied art. The Bauhaus in Germany's Weimar Republic (subsequently transplanted to the United States as Chicago's Institute of Design) was the archetype of the *école polytechnique* as a training ground for artists.<sup>32</sup> (Our best-known version of the latter, in photography, is the Rochester Institute of Technology — which, far from being a hotbed of socialism, is umbilically tied to the Eastman Kodak Corporation.)

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These, then, are the three principal contexts in which photography today is taught to the putatively adult: the college or university, the art academy, and the polytechnic institute. To these we might add several ancillary forms: the vocational training program — a diluted version of polytechnic education — offered by the Germain School in New York and the Brooks Institute in California; the "community" or "junior" college, whose function is largely introductory; the "adult/continuing education" program, with its tendency toward the social, the entertaining, and the therapeutic; and the "alternative" workshop, which is prone to the problems endemic to community college and adult education.

(While, at its best, the alternative workshop represents an attempt to preserve/restore the master-apprentice experience, its effectiveness is reduced by its

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<sup>31</sup> Hayek, F.A., *The Counter-Revolution of Science: Studies on the Abuse of Reason* (Indianapolis: Liberty Press, 1979).

<sup>32</sup> The literature on the Bauhaus, and its photography curriculum, is enormous. For more on the Institute of Design, see Traub, Charles, ed., *The New Vision: Forty Years of Photography at the Institute of Design* (Millerton, New York: Aperture, 1982).

usually short-term nature, and its integrity often compromised by a liaison with the vacation impulse. A few photographers — Sid Grossman and Harold Feinstein, for example — have regularly offered private workshops, with no institutional superstructure; some have proven extremely influential. The option of apprenticeship remains widely available, of course; to some extent, it finds an institutional form in the sometimes voluntary, sometimes mandatory "internships" built into many accredited educational programs.)

After almost twenty years of observation of and involvement in various approaches to photography education, I think it is safe to say that there is no formal course of study of photography today that offers the experiential intensity and craft grounding of the long-term master-apprentice relation, as it was manifested in the Renaissance workshop and the academician's atelier, or the formal rigor and theoretical exploration of the fine-arts academy, or the intellectual breadth and scholarly depth of the university. Even institutions that can measure up to the stringent technicism of the polytechnic institute have become rare.

I will grant you, without argument, any single institution you care to name as an exception in any category; I will challenge you to name five more like it in that same category if you would disprove my contention — which is that we have grievously confused the function of these various forms of education, to the point where neither we nor our students are clear about their destinations. Are they en route to becoming amateur artists, professional artists, professional teaching artists, professional applied photographers, or professionals in other fields (the observational disciplines such as sociology and anthropology, for example) to which photography is somehow pertinent? What appropriate role(s), if any, do the particular educational institutions in which each of us is involved have to play in those processes?

As a result of this confusion, the state of photography education seems to me bad, and rapidly getting worse. This is not to say that none of today's young photographers are genuinely educated; rather, it's to suggest that — notwithstanding the much-celebrated spread of photo education — those few who are truly educated in photography actually *earned* their education by piecing it together themselves, achieving it not because of but despite the institutions they attended.

The shambles of the field is reflected, appropriately, in the rapid deterioration and imminent collapse, at least on the national level, of the Society for Photographic Education. The organization is so befuddled on even the most basic issues that it sponsored a national survey of MFA programs written and conducted by a graduate student — who, predictably, was so inexperienced that she didn't know what questions were essential to ask. (Such as: Do you accept your own undergraduates as graduates? And do you hire your own graduates as faculty? Both of these practices being infallible signs of terminally corrupt and inbred programs.) Next year's national conference, to be organized by the SPE's Board of Directors in their spare time, will be merely an adjunct of Houston FotoFest. The only hope for the organization, in my opinion, lies in its regional divisions, which fortunately have been gaining in strength and stability over the past few years.

As you have probably guessed by now, I am not optimistic about the immediate future of photography education. Most of the worst-case predictions that I made to my colleagues in the field in my 1978 keynote address to the National SPE Conference have either come to pass or are hard upon us.<sup>33</sup> Moreover, the demands of vocational training are increasingly being put upon university, art-academy, even junior-college and adult-education programs. This is to the benefit of none of those involved.

When such confusion reigns, the only possible path out of the welter is to re-examine the context and the operative definitions. If faculties and administrations were to scrutinize their institutions in light of the distinctions I've made above, they might be able to come to some clearer idea of the historical precedents and mandates of their institutional forms: where they came from, what they are, what they are not, and what they can't expect to become. As Dirty Harry is fond of saying, "Man's got to know his limitations."

A photographer I know who taught at one of the nation's oldest (and once most respected) art schools was barred by his administration from attending departmental recruitment events a few years ago because, whenever asked by anxious parents whether their offspring would be assured of a job upon leaving the institute, he invariably responded, "Not as a direct result of anything they'll learn from me." That

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<sup>33</sup> "No Future for You: Speculations on the Next Decade in Photography Education," in *Light Readings*.

answer is both honest and appropriate; but, in that context, the question should never have occurred — and, if asked, should have received that very answer from the department chair himself.

So, even if it did not provide any immediate solution to the complex dilemmas in which the field of photography education is immersed, a reconsideration of the origins of our various educational institutions would at least spare a great many people a good deal of embarrassment. If such a reconsideration had begun a decade ago, my colleague's chairman would not be mortified by his faculty member's forthright articulation of what should be a given in a photography program in an art institute. The California Board of Higher Education would not look ridiculous for permitting an institution under its control to take on the self-contradictory title of "polytechnic university." And my former student would not feel foolish when he eventually realizes (as I hope he will) that his parents spent more than forty thousand dollars to buy him a degree from New York University but he never bothered to find out what a university was.

The best summation I can offer of the field at present is that none of these people who have thus embarrassed themselves feel any embarrassment whatsoever.

Now that's *dumb*.

(This is an expanded and revised version of a speech delivered at the Second Annual Photography Congress of the Maine Photographic Workshops in Rockport, Maine, Monday, August 17, 1987.)

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