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Bazin, Flusser and the Aesthetics of Photography

The goal of this text is to briefly explore the relationships between Bazin's and Flusser's concept of photography both at an aesthetic and ontological level. With regard to photography both the film theoretician Bazin and the philosopher of photography Flusser follow a well-known tradition according to which aesthetic experience belongs to the realm of the extraordinary. This way, what makes of a photograph an aesthetic object is the fact that a photograph is always somehow linked to the extraordinary. Nevertheless, Flusser thinks of photography within the frame of a general theory of technical images, and such images have, according to him a quantifiable structure or nature. Consequently, the extraordinary character of photography varies in a quantifiable way. Furthermore, again according to Flusser, the very nature of technical images has to do with a reversal of meaning: the technical image is existentially meaningful in itself and not in what it represents. In the case of photography the meaning vector does not point to the world but to the photograph itself: the photograph is real, not its object. Of course, the last idea implies a radical break with Bazin's ontology of the photographic image, an ontology according to which the photograph and its object not only share a common being – after the fashion of a fingerprint – it is the photograph itself that awakens admiration for the object.

Art and the Extraordinary

The Russian formalist school of aesthetics pointed to the distinction between prosaic and poetic language postulating that art has to do with the extraordinary whereas non-art has to do with the ordinary. As a matter of fact, poetry uses language in an unusual way if compared with prose.¹ From this almost banal observation the formalist school develops a far-reaching and sophisticated aesthetics. A real champion of this aesthetics is, of course, the famous linguist Roman

¹ See the references to “[...] the contrast ... between the laws of poetic language and the laws of practical language” (Harrison / Wood 1996: 276).

Jakobson.² But for the sake of clarity we prefer to refer to Viktor Shklovsky who says that “[i]f we start to examine the general laws of perception, we see that as perception becomes habitual, it becomes automatic.” (Harrison / Wood 1996:276) In this way, “[...] all of our habits retreat into the area of the unconsciously automatic [...]” (Harrison / Wood 1996: 276). Of course, the habitual is the ordinary, and as such that which escapes perception. According to Shklovsky, “[...] habitualization devours works, clothes, furniture, one’s wife [...]” (Harrison / Wood 1996: 277). In fact, within this realm of unawareness, “[...] lives are as if they had never been. And art exists that one may recover the sensation of life; it exists to make one feel things, to make the stone *stony*.” (Harrison / Wood 1996: 277)³ The conclusion is, thus, clear: “The technique of art is to make objects ‘*unfamiliar*,’ to make forms difficult, to increase the difficulty and length of perception because the process of perception is an aesthetic end in itself and must be prolonged.” (Harrison / Wood 1996: 277) In this sense, “art removes objects from the automatism of perception [...]” (Harrison / Wood 1996: 277). Shklovsky calls this breaking up of perceptive automatisms concerning an object “defamiliarization” (Harrison / Wood 1996: 277). We can paraphrase this idea by saying that art takes things out from the realm of the ordinary by putting them in the realm of the extraordinary.⁴

Flusser and Art as the Improbable

For Vilém Flusser art can be defined as *any* kind of “human activity that aims at producing *improbable situations*, and it is the more artful (artistic) the less probable the situation is that it produces.” (Flusser 2002: 52) From this Flusser deduces the opposition between art and habit: “‘Art’ is that which opposes *habit* [...]” (Flusser 2002: 53). Almost following Shklovsky, Flusser says: “‘Aesthetic’ means ‘capable of being experienced’ and ‘habit’ implies anesthetics: that which has becomes habitual is no longer experienced at all.” (Flusser 2002: 53) Complementarily, “[...] the less habitual, the more it may be experienced (perceived) [...]” (Flusser 2002: 53). Of course, “[...] the great mass of habitual ordinary products that surrounds us day and night and that we hardly perceive [...]” (Flusser 2002: 53) are common objects and, thus, non-art. One finds in Flusser Shklovsky’s idea of art as that which makes perception difficult: ordinary products are perceived “without any effort [...]. Such products ‘anesthetize’ [...]. Those products plunge [...]

² See above all Jakobson’s pathbreaking essay *What is Poetry?* (Jakobson 1979) and *Das Kunstwerk*, part IX of *Ein Blick auf die Entwicklung der Semiotik* (Jakobson 1988).

³ Emphasis added by the authors, as in all following quotations.

⁴ Similar thoughts can be found, for instance, in McLuhan and in Heidegger, but for the sake of brevity we cannot deal with them here.

into the ocean of habit [...]” (Flusser 2002: 55).⁵ For Flusser art is not something extraordinary, the reversal is true: the extraordinary in and by itself is art – of course, related to “human activity” (Flusser 2002: 53).

In order to avoid misconceptions we must mention here that Flusser’s ideas are part of his theory of information, a theory that cannot be presented here in full but which conceives informing – that is giving “a unnatural, *improbable* form” (Flusser 1999a: 21)⁶ to something – as the very mark of the human.⁷ It is within the frame of such theory that “habit, [...] ordinariness, [...] vulgarity” (Flusser 2002: 56), fall on the side of “probability” (Flusser 2002: 56), whereas art falls on the side of “improbability” (Flusser 2002: 56).⁸

Bazin and the Aesthetics of Photography

The thesis that “[...] photography had freed the plastic arts from their obsession with likeness [...]” (Bazin 2005aa: 12) has become Bazin’s motto. In view of photography the pictorial “[...] form ceases to have any imitative value [...]” (Bazin 2005a: 16). It can be said that photography made it possible for painting to break free of the realm of the purely symbolic and conventional, of non-iconic signs. With the invention of technical images *likeness* – the obsession of plastic realism – seems to have been compelled into photography and cinema. In fact, the aesthetic dimension of photography is unavoidably entangled with realism, since a photograph is not only like the photographed object but *indexical* in the Peircean sense: “[t]he photographic image is the object itself [...]” (Bazin 2005a: 14) and possesses from the very beginning an “ontological identity” (Bazin 2005b: 98) with its object, with which it shares “a common being” (Bazin 2005a: 15).⁹ Painting has been freed from representing objects whereas photography has a real, material “kind of identity” (Bazin 2005a: 96) or, again in Peircean sense: a “physical connection” (Peirce 1998: 6)

⁵ See Shklovsky: “The language of poetry is [...] a difficult, roughened, impeded language.” (Harrison / Wood 1996: 277)

⁶ All the German passages from Flusser 1999a and 1999b have been translated by the authors.

⁷ See furthermore *What is Communication?* and *On the Theory of Communication*. In fact, “[...] the theory of communication, with the methods of the theory of information, may become one of the ‘sciences of the spirit’ [...]” (Flusser 2002: 10).

⁸ For a broader account of Flusser’s “philosophy of photography” see Carrillo Canán, Alberto J. L., *La fotografía y la libertad. La crítica cultural de Flusser*, A Parte Rei 51, May 2007, electronic magazine.

⁹ According to the famous Peircean definition, “indications, or indices” (Peirce 1998: 5), are signs “[...] which show something about things, on account of being *physically connected* with them.” (Peirce 1998: 5) For example, the track of a quail or the lights on the control panel of a railroad, are indices of the quail and of the trains in different parts of the railroad track. On the other hand, Bazin says that “[o]ne might consider photography [...] as a molding, the taking of an impression, by the manipulation of light.” (Bazin 2005a: 12fn.) Insofar as a photograph is an “impression” of some object or reality, it shows something of its object by being “physical connected” (Peirce) to it. A photograph is, thus, an index of the photographed object.

with the world of objects. Because of this, the aesthetic dimension of photography is of necessity tied to objects, to their indexical duplication, and, thus, to a *plastic realism* that does not have anything to do with *plastic illusion*.

Insofar as photography implies a kind of identity with the photographed objects, Bazin thesis is that, “[t]he aesthetic qualities of photography are to be sought in its power to lay bare the realities.” (Bazin 2005a: 15) Furthermore, “[o]nly the impassive lens, stripping its object of all those ways of seeing it, those piled-up preconceptions, that spiritual dust and grime with which my eyes have covered it, is able to present it in all its virginal purity to my attention and consequently to my *love*.” (Bazin 2005a: 15) Bazin does not explain this idea any further, yet there are at least two other passages conveying it. The first one implies that “the power of photography” (Bazin 2005a: 15) lies in giving us “[...] the *natural image* of a world that we neither know nor can see [...]” (Bazin 2005a: 15), namely, the world in what he just calls “its virginal purity” (Bazin 2005a: 15). In the same vein Bazin says that “[...] the photograph allows us [...] *to admire* in reproduction something that our eyes alone could not have taught us to love [...]” (Bazin 2005a: 16).¹⁰

The former sentences remind us immediately of Shklovsky: “to create a *special* perception of the object” (Harrison / Wood 1996: 277) or “*deautomatized* perception” (Harrison / Wood 1996: 277). We propose, thus, to interpret these passages in the sense of the principle of Russian formalist aesthetic theory. As a matter of fact, photography breaks down the perceptual automatisms of the habitual, that is, of everyday life. In cutting off the photographed object from its actual context and presenting it on the well-known rectangular surface of a photograph, that is, as “[...] *the object* freed from the conditions of time and space that govern it [...]” (Bazin 2005a: 14), the object becomes strange, *unfamiliar*. In our eyes it assumes a “virginal purity,”¹¹ a purity which we would not have known or seen without the help of the photograph. In this sense, the photographed object becomes something new, never seen before. In its newness the object becomes improbable and, thus, according to Flusser’s criterion, something aesthetic.¹²

The proposed interpretation permits us to understand Bazin’s thesis according to which “[o]riginality in photography as distinct from originality in painting lies in the essentially *objective character* of photography.” (Bazin 2005a: 13) As opposed to painting, photography does rely neither on pure imagination nor on the subjective interplay between the eye and the hand in order to

¹⁰ See also: “[...] a man is walking along the street and the onlooker is *amazed* at the beauty of the man walking.” (Bazin 2005b: 67) Bazin says this referring to a cinematographic shot, but it is well known that according to him “[...] the cinema is objectivity in time [...]” (Bazin 2005a: 14), namely on the basis of “the essentially objective character of photography” (Bazin 2005a: 13). For this reason *realist* cinema has the same defamiliarizing (Shklovsky) potential related to *events* as photography in relation to *objects*.

¹¹ The strangeness of the object amounts to “its virginal purity” because the photograph *de-alienates* the photographed object. See below.

¹² As we will see below, Flusser does not think of the photographed object but rather of its photograph. What counts for Flusser is not the improbability of the photographed object but the improbability of its photograph.

generate a *mere illusion*. The photograph is by no means the *artful image* of some object but its *veritable* “*impression* by the manipulation of light” (Bazin 2005a: 12). When we look at a photograph we are not transposed into the realm of illusion but we do see the object by means of its indexical reproduction. And it is in its very objectivity – in its originality – that photography lays bare reality – it *des-alienates* them from their insertion in everyday reality. When looking at a photograph one is not dealing with an illusion, but with a de-alienated reality: de-alienated by means of its *indexical* duplication through the physical connection between the object and its photograph generated by light. In other words, Bazin’s thesis that “[t]he aesthetic qualities of photography are to be sought in its power to lay bare the realities [...]” (Bazin 2005a: 15), the thesis that photography gives us the photographed object in its virginal purity, implies in this connection that the aesthetic character of photography lies in its *objectivity* as well as in its *de-alienating* power. In principle a photograph de-alienates the photographed reality – creating, thus, its virginal purity. Shklovsky would have said in this connection that photography defamiliarizes the photographed object. We would like to add that in *indexically* transferring the object to the photographed image, photography rescues the photographed object from its pragmatic insertion in everyday reality and transfers it into the realm of estrangement in which the object is able to arrest our attention making us admire something that we have never seen before. In such a way, the object is presented “to my love” (Bazin 2005a: 15), that is, to our admiration. *Admiration* is, therefore, the adequate aesthetic category linked with the realism proper to photography, that is, with its *objectivity*. Because of its objectivity, photography enables us to admire things in their duplications as if we had never seen them before.

Bazin and Flusser on Photography

Despite the theoretical connection between Flusser and Bazin outlined so far – Flusser’s idea of the artistic as something extraordinary (improbable) and Bazin’s idea of photography as something aesthetic insofar as it is de-alienating –, there are many profound differences between Flusser’s and Bazin’s aesthetics of photography. For the sake of brevity we shall consider only four of such differences.

The Artistic Value of Photography

The *first* difference has to do with Flusser's idea that the aesthetic value of any artifact diminishes with time: "[...] it grows more habitual ('redundant') [...]" (Flusser 2002: 53), consequently, "[...] the value of works of art is not 'eternal,' but [...] all works tend to slide in the direction of habit." (Flusser 2002: 53) Naturally, photography is also affected by redundancy. Certainly, photographers "[...] seek for [...] never before seen, improbably, images [...]" (Flusser 1999a: 34), as Flusser points out. Nevertheless, by the sole fact of its existence, each new photograph necessarily becomes an already realized photographic possibility and as such an already seen photograph: it plunges into the habitual. This is not surprising since "[...] even the most improbable situation created by art will in the long run become habitual." (Flusser 2002: 52) Bazin does not say anything about this. His idea seems to be rather that whenever we contemplate a photograph its content becomes like something never seen before, because the photograph possesses the sustained power of de-alienating such content by cutting it off from its pragmatic, ordinary context. In other words, insofar as photography duplicates the object, it is an "aesthetic 'transformer'" (cfr. Bazin 2005a: 26), indexically *transposing* things from everyday reality or ordinariness into the extraordinary, and that is true of any photograph of some object and true of each look we take at that photograph.

In this respect, we agree with Bazin and disagree with Flusser. Flusser is right only with regard to the fact that we actually become used to each photograph as a *plain thing* but not as photograph; we never become used to the photograph of an object, that is, we never become used to the photographically duplicated *object*. For this reason, *we do behold photographs again and again but we do not do the same with their corresponding objects*. That is: in seeing its photograph we *never* see the object as we see it in its pragmatic context, photography is of necessity an aesthetic transformer. To the extent to which we are involved in a pragmatic context the object as such is imperceptible (Shklovsky), for it always remains within the network of relationships to the whole of a pragmatic context. But as soon as we see the object on the photograph the pragmatic context is gone, it does not exist anymore, what remains is only the object by the force of its technological duplication.

In other words, the photographed reality remains in the realm of the ordinary, whereas the photographic duplication of that reality, in its new, photographic, existence is always out of time and space, in a purely extraordinary realm, which in its extraordinariness is not a sacred, nor a political, or existential, but a purely aesthetic one. As aesthetic transformer, photography indexically duplicates a reality de-alienating it. It is the de-alienated *duplication* of a reality, which permits us again and again to admire it as something never seen before, as unknown and extraor-

dinary. Photography is the permanent link between the object in its alienated ordinariness and the same object in its extraordinariness, between its reality as pragmatic object and its reality as aesthetic object. For Bazin, thus, what matters is not if the photograph is new or redundant. Photography is always an aesthetic transformer insofar as by duplicating things they get situated in an extraordinary realm becoming admirable – presented to my love – *again and again*. We become used to photographs only if we do not use them as photographs, but as soon as we are concerned with them *as photographs*, they necessarily present the photographed object to my love.

Shklovsky points out that “[a]rt is a way of experiencing the artfulness of an object; the object is not important.” (Harrison / Wood 1996: 277) Applying this to photography, we can say that the photograph as an object “[...] is not important.” (Harrison / Wood 1996: 277) What is important is its “artfulness” (Harrison / Wood 1996: 277), namely, its capacity for de-alienating the photographed object.

Photography, the Extraordinary and the Improbable

At this point a *second*, crucial, difference between Flusser and Bazin as to the aesthetics of photography appears. For Flusser the photograph is aesthetic by the sole fact of being something improbable and extraordinary. Furthermore, as we have already pointed out before, every man-made product is artistic to the extent that it is improbable. As far as human products are concerned – according to Flusser – there is no basically difference between their being improbable and their being artistic. On the contrary, for Bazin, the extraordinariness of photography stems from its being something aesthetic, more precisely, from the fact that it is an aesthetic transformer. It is not the photograph that is extraordinary but its content. This crucial difference between Flusser and Bazin is associated with the fourth one that we will discuss later on: the possibility of stressing either the photograph or its content.

Aesthetics of Quantification

A *third* important difference between Flusser and Bazin regarding photography is Flusser’s idea of what he calls the “quantifiable character of photographing” (Flusser 1999a: 35). This idea refers to the “categories of the photo apparatus” (Flusser 1999a: 32), that is, to “the categories of the photographic space-time” (Flusser 1999a: 32). In photography, in fact, “[...] the space-time is

divided into quite clear separate zones.” (Flusser 1999a: 32) There is, for instance, “[...] one spatial zone for great proximity, one for middle proximity, one for great distance; one spatial zone for bird’s eye view, one for worm’s eye view, one for little boy’s eye view; one for archaic direct view with completely open eyes, one for squinting from the side.” (Flusser 1999a: 32) In the same way there is “[...] a time zone (shutter speed) for a view as fast as a bolt, one for a rapid glimpse, one for unhurried beholding, one for a closer look.” (Flusser 1999a: 32) Clearly, Flusser refers to the different photographic lenses, exposure times, aperture, photographic angles and distances. Obviously, following Flusser’s logic, the more improbable the choice of some of these photographic possibilities, the more extraordinary and, thus, the more artistic the photograph would be. The extraordinariness and thus the artistic value of the photograph would vary in a quantifiable way according to the mentioned photographic “categories” (Flusser 1999a: 32). The idea of this set of quantifiable photographic possibilities is an important difference with regard to Bazin.

Bazin clearly tends to reject style, that is, any look at the photographic object that departs from presenting it in its virginal purity. In connection with the *cinema* Bazin discards the “use of close-ups and unusual angles” (Bazin 2005a: 109), for “[t]he result is a loss of realism.” (Bazin 2005b: 28n.) What matters in *cinema* is the “raising of the reality coefficient” (Bazin 2005b: 28) and in fact “[o]ne might group, if *not classify in order of importance*, the various styles of cinematography in terms of the added measure of reality.” (Bazin 2005b: 27) On the other hand, cinema is made of photographic frames, thus photographs have to be checked in the same way as cinematographic shots. In fact, photographs departing from the vision that theoreticians call the *canonical perspective* at the object – the point of view on the object resulting in the greatest information for its *recognition*¹³ – seem to be for Bazin a kind of revival of “the conflict between style and likeness” (Bazin 2005a: 13) characteristic of *painting*. In cinema style must be, according to Bazin, considered “[u]nder the heading ‘plastics’” (Bazin 2005a: 12), that is, as a specifically *pictorial category*. The only style Bazin approves of is that which is “essentially a form of self-effacement before reality” (Bazin 2005a: 29). In cinema as well as in photography such style means that the image of the object tends to disappear *as an image* allowing the onlooker to focus on the object, that is, the content of the image. The idea behind this is clear: unusual perspectives, deforming lenses, artificial lighting, and the like, make the onlooker aware of the photograph at the cost of its object or content.

Flusser considers different possibilities for photographing an object, and the more uncommon they are, the better, that is, the more aesthetic – improbable – the result. Thus, in consider-

¹³ See, for instance, Palmer 1999: 421-3.

ing the spectrum of photographic possibilities, Flusser mentions discrete – quantifiable – ways of looking at the photographic object, and the canonical perspective is, obviously, the most probable, habitual or ordinary. For this reason, a photograph corresponding to the canonical perspective is for Flusser the least aesthetic one.¹⁴ For Bazin, however, the *canonical perspective* is the best possible indexical duplication of the object, presenting it in its virginal purity.¹⁵ Obviously the most effective way of de-alienating the object and presenting it to “my love” (Bazin 2005a: 15) is its photographic image from the canonical perspective: it presents the ordinary object as one encounters it. By removing it from time and space the ordinary object becomes something extraordinary – never seen before.

The Photograph or the Photographed Object? The World or the Image?

We would now like to discuss the *fourth* fundamental difference between Flusser’s and Bazin’s aesthetics of photography. Clearly, what matters for Flusser is the photograph, whereas what matters for Bazin is the photographed object: what we *admire* is not the photograph but the object; it is that which appears in the photographic *reproduction* that arrests our attention; that is the consequence of “the essentially *objective* character of photography.”¹⁶ It is not the skill of the photographer we admire, but the photographed object itself since it has been indexically transferred to the photograph. For this reason the “quantifiable [...] structure of the photographical as such” (Flusser 1999a: 36) is present in Bazin’s photographic aesthetics only negatively, as a matter of style, whereas in Flusser’s photographic aesthetics it actually occupies the central place. Flusser is

¹⁴ Certainly he does never say this explicitly, but it is the logical consequence of his point of view on the relationship between probability and aesthetics.

¹⁵ Our interpretation, according to which Bazin implicitly favors the *canonical perspective* insofar as it is the most adequate for *recognizing* the object shown on a photograph, is directly supported by Bazin’s text. So, Bazin says that it is possible to “[...] magnify or neutralize the effectiveness of the elements of reality that the camera captures. One might group, if not classify in order of importance, the various styles of cinematography in terms of added measure of reality [similar to Flusser’s “categories of photographing”]. We would define as ‘realist,’ then, all narrative means tending to bring an added measure of reality to the screen. [...] The same event, the same object, can be represented in various ways. Each representation discards or retains various of the qualities that permit us to *recognize* the object on the screen.” (Bazin 2005b: 27) Obviously, nothing that hampers *recognizing* objects on the cinematographic frames can be considered as raising the “measure of reality” (Bazin 2005b: 27). So, Bazin does really consider Flusser’s quantifiable “categories of photographing” but on the reverse scale: the more stylish – improbable –, the less realist, the lesser the “measure of reality.”

¹⁶ Up to this point it may be clear that for Flusser a photograph is nothing objective. For him a photograph is certainly a “*reproduction*” (Flusser 1999b: 48), but above all it is a “*projection*” of the concepts of the photographer (cfr. Flusser 1999b: 48, 54) – realized as the choice of some set of photographic categories. For this reason, the object cannot be the “cause” (Flusser 1999b: 48) of the photograph; rather the photograph is an image of the concepts (Flusser 1999a: 34) of the photographer. According to Flusser, what matters is not the object but these concepts, that is, the photograph resulting from them. See §3. *La fotografía y el “programa,”* in: Carrillo Canán, Alberto J. L., *La fotografía y la libertad. La crítica cultural de Flusser*, A Parte Rei 51, May 2007, electronic magazine.

interested in the extraordinary character of the *photograph* as such; Bazin is interested in the extraordinary character with which the photograph endows the photographed *object*.

What matters to Bazin is “[...] the *natural image* [canonical perspective] of a world that we neither know nor can see [...]”, not because we do not adopt *unfamiliar perspectives* to see it, but simply because we usually do not see the world before our eyes – namely to the extent to which we are involved in pragmatic contexts. Bazin considers photography as an aesthetic transformer because through it we look at the world with new eyes that permit us to admire it. Flusser, on the other hand, is not interested in the world but in photographs as technical images. As technical images photographs gives us the possibility of “imagining” (Flusser 1999b: 16) the world, that is, the possibility “to attribute sense” (Flusser 1999b: 34) to a world that has become senseless – deprived of its myths by the force of scientific theories and reduced to the abstract entity postulated by such theories (cfr. Flusser 1999b: 14, 34, 37). For this reason, photography from an existential and ontological point of view amounts to a “reversal of the vector of meaning” (Flusser 1999a: 35): it is not the world, “the signified, but the signifier, [...] the symbol” (Flusser 1999a: 35), that is “real” (Flusser 1999a: 35).

For Flusser the world is “only a presupposition for the image” (Flusser 1999a: 34), for Bazin the photography is there in behalf of the world. We recover the world thanks to a technologically based aesthetic transformer. Paraphrasing Shklovsky, photography makes both the “stone *stony*” (Harrison / Wood 1996: 277) and the world *worldly*. Based on its *objectivity*, which allows it to make the world unfamiliar, photography gives us the world back by presenting it to our love.¹⁷

Conclusion: Abstraction vs. Concretion

The most important difference between Flusser and Bazin as to the aesthetics of photography is, finally, Flusser’s general theory according to which the improbable as such is aesthetic in the sense of being *art*, whereas for Bazin photography has an aesthetic character that turns its content into something new, never seen before. True: etymologically the term aesthetic originally means perceivable, but being perceivable does not mean being art, as Flusser would put it. On the other hand, it may very well be that Bazin’s thesis according to which photography presents the photographed object to my admiration, to my love, as something never seen before, is insufficient to determine photography as art. Nevertheless, it is clear that in doing that, photography does really have an aesthetic character based on its concrete nature but not in the general determination consisting in being something improbable. Bazin’s aesthetics of photography seems to us nearer to

¹⁷ Whereas realist cinema, based on photographs lacking style conveys us *life* as it is.

the concrete artistic character of photography than Flusser's abstract idea of art as something improbable. In connection with a possible aesthetics of photography Flusser seems to dwell in a realm of abstraction, an *abstract* realm that does not really take photography as a specific, *concrete*, aesthetic phenomenon into account.

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