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On Flusser's Struggle with Nihilism

“It cannot all be meaningless.”¹

Vilém Flusser

”True human acts, real human freedom, would require overcoming death.”²

Vilém Flusser

Whilst the early reception of Vilém Flusser centred around his communication theory (*Kommunikologie*) and tended to emphasise the media theorist in him, later focuses were either the Jewish tradition he often was considered part of, the philosophy of dialogue, or phenomenology. Each of these interpretations, as fruitful as they may have seemed then, did its own kind of injustice to Flusser.

In my text, *Flusser und der Dialog. Negentropische Klimmzüge über der Bodenlosigkeit*³, I argued against the then popular tendency to portray Flusser as a religious thinker. In my dissertation, *Die Geste Mensch. Vilém Flussers Kulturtheorie als kommunikationsphilosophischer Zukunftsentwurf*⁴ as well as in my monograph on Flusser, *Vilém Flusser (1920 - 1991). Phänomenologie der Kommunikation*⁵, I made the point that reducing Flusser to a media theorist was inadequate. Rather, he should be regarded as a phenomenologically inspired cultural theorist. And in my essay, *Flusser's Quasi-Phenomenology*⁶, I tried to show that Flusser used only part of the phenomenological method and should not be considered a phenomenologist in the strict sense. So, who is Flusser after all? What remains of his thinking, if you subtract religion, media theory and phenomenology from it?

Then again: Does Flusser not show a way, indeed several ways, out of the human misery he called *Bodenlosigkeit* (*bottomlessness, ungroundedness, or uprootedness*)? I will shortly describe these

¹ „Es kann ja nicht alles sinnlos sein.“ Flusser, Vilém: Sprache, Technik, Kunst. <http://hjlenger.de/flusser.htm>, 9 (February 2024), (transl.: AS).

² „Echt handeln könnte der Mensch erst, tatsächlich frei wäre er erst, wäre der Tod überwunden.“ Flusser, Vilém: Tod. In: Flusser, Vilém: Nachgeschichte. Eine korrigierte Geschichtsschreibung. Ed. Stefan Bollmann and Edith Flusser. Bollmann, Bensheim und Düsseldorf 1993, 246, (transl.: AS).

³ Ströhl, Andreas: Flusser und der Dialog. Negentropische Klimmzüge über der Bodenlosigkeit (*Flusser and Dialogue. Negentropic Pull-ups Above Bottomlessness*). In: Flusser Studies 01, 2005, <https://www.flusserstudies.net/sites/www.flusserstudies.net/files/media/attachments/strohl-flusser-dialog01.pdf> (February 2024).

⁴ Ströhl, Andreas: Die Geste Mensch. Vilém Flussers Kulturtheorie als kommunikationsphilosophischer Zukunftsentwurf. (*The Gesture Human Being. Cultural Theory as a Draft of the Future in Communications Philosophy*) Ed. Universitätsbibliothek Marburg, <https://archiv.ub.uni-marburg.de/diss/z2009/0786/pdf/das.pdf> (February 2024), Marburg 2009.

⁵ Ströhl, Andreas: Vilém Flusser (1920 - 1991). Phänomenologie der Kommunikation (*Vilém Flusser [1920 – 1991]. Phenomenology of Communication*). Böhlau, Weimar 2013.

⁶ Ströhl, Andreas: Flusser's Quasi-Phenomenology. In: Aaron Jaffe, Michael Miller and Rodrigo Martini (eds.): Understanding Flusser, Understanding Modernism. Bloomsbury, New York 2021.

strategies here, but I also believe Flusser was fully aware they did not really solve the problem of the human condition, that is of being sentenced to death and oblivion.

I do not perceive these contradictions in Flusser's work and life as shortcomings. Quite the opposite: They have always fascinated me. On one level of consciousness Flusser's existence, his freedom, must have been rather desperate.

Flusser personally experienced the total collapse of his world, the German occupation of Prague, his last-minute escape from his hometown to England, the murder of most of his relatives, and the exile in Brazil, as a total breakdown from which he derived and later abstracted the notion of *bottomlessness* as the *conditio humana per se*:

Everybody knows bottomlessness from their own experience. If they pretend not to know it, then only because they have managed to repress it again and again: a very dubious success in multiple respects. But there are people to whom bottomlessness is the disposition they are in objectively. People who have lost all ground beneath their feet, be it because they were expelled from the sheltering bosom of reality by external factors or be it because they deliberately quit this reality they have discerned as a delusion.⁷

We shall later pick up on the motive of repression here introduced by Flusser himself.

In Flusser's eyes, the terrible existential catastrophe, the fall into the bottomless abyss, becomes a prerequisite of freedom, a precondition of what it really means to be human in a full, emphatic sense:

When I was expelled from Prague (or, when I made the courageous decision to flee), I experienced the collapse of the universe. I mistook my inside for the world out there. [...] But then, in London during the first war years and the foreshadowing of the horrors of the camps, I began to realise that those were not the pains of a surgical operation but of childbirth. [...] I was seized by the vertigo of freedom. It turned the question of "free of what?" into the question of "free for what?"⁸

However, this hard-earned freedom comes at enormous cost, payable in emotions and responsibilities. Consequently, Flusser was flirting with suicide during his first years in Brazil – and

⁷ „Jeder kennt die Bodenlosigkeit aus eigener Erfahrung. Wenn er vorgibt, sie nicht zu kennen, dann nur, weil es ihm gelungen ist, sie immer wieder zu verdrängen: ein Erfolg, der in vieler Hinsicht sehr zweifelhaft ist. Aber es gibt Menschen, für die die Bodenlosigkeit die Stimmung ist, in der sie sich sozusagen objektiv befinden. Menschen, die jeden Boden unter den Füßen verloren haben, entweder weil sie durch äußere Faktoren aus dem Schoß der sie bergenden Wirklichkeit verstoßen wurden oder weil sie bewußt diese als Trug erkannte Wirklichkeit verließen.“ Flusser, Vilém: Einleitung. In: Flusser, Vilém: *Bodenlos. Eine philosophische Autobiographie*. Bollmann, Düsseldorf and Bensheim 1992, 11 (transl.: AS).

⁸ „Als ich aus Prag vertrieben wurde (oder als ich die mutige Entscheidung traf zu fliehen), durchlebte ich den Zusammenbruch des Universums. Ich verwechselte mein Inneres mit der Welt da draußen. [...] Aber dann, im London der ersten Kriegsjahre und beim Vorahnen der Schrecken der Lager, begann ich, mir darüber klar zu werden, daß es nicht die Schmerzen eines chirurgischen Eingriffs waren, sondern die einer Entbindung. [...] Ich wurde vom Schwindel der Freiheit erfaßt, der sich darin zeigt, daß sich die Frage nach ‚frei wovon?‘ in die Frage ‚frei wozu?‘ verkehrt.“ Flusser, Vilém in: Rapsch, Volker (ed.): *über flusser. Die Fest-Schrift zum 70*. Bollmann, Düsseldorf 1990, 242, (transl.: AS).

also with converting to Catholicism, which may seem absurd in the light of his philosophy. But that just shines an even brighter light on the extent of his desperation, despite his dedication to interpersonal dialogue as a path to a meaningful life.

Dialogue allows for moments in which we experience meaning. Although even in those moments we are not able to change the futility of human existence unto death. But they might help us forget it briefly.

The alternative is to function instead of live, and to give up on human communication as a means to create meaning and as a method for the survival in the Other. In the face of such an alternative, the risk we are called to take in our crisis looks less desperate.⁹

Within a short period of a few thousand years this approach seems to make sense. An attempt at creating meaning, virtual as it may be initially, is realised, when a new partner in the dialogue picks up on a thought that has been engraved in the cultural memory and processes it to a new information. Then, perhaps across generations and civilisations, a new act of the creation of meaning has succeeded and makes us forget the fundamental meaninglessness in the face of entropy. Then, the long bygone author's effort of passing on information in a discourse seems justified in retrospect, because it did lead to a dialogue (and thus, new information) after all.

According to Flusser, dialogical communication about the world is the only option open to human freedom, a chance to design meaning, to discard or to share it. Paradoxically, this way of acting presupposes a state of freedom – a freedom that in turn presupposes the catastrophe of the fall into bottomlessness.

In the face of death, the life that precedes it seems absurd. But there are certain strategies for making life liveable by attempting to either overcome death or help make us forget that we are finite. In different passages of his writings, Flusser names them, one after the other: contemplation, celebration, ritual/orthopraxis, translation, and dialogue. In the end, all these strategies amount to the question of the obedience under rules and of freedom. However, no hint pointing to a belief in eternal life can be found anywhere in Flusser's work.

Flusser's dialogical thinking is based on the "fact that we absurdly are in an absurd world, that this fact does not allow for any guessing and that there is nothing we can do but to lend meaning to this mystery of meaninglessness"¹⁰. Man is called to lead a self-determined, purposeless

⁹ „Die Alternative ist, zu funktionieren anstatt zu leben, das heißt, die menschliche Kommunikation als Sinngebung und als Methode des Überlebens im Anderen aufzugeben. Angesichts einer solchen Alternative erscheint das Wagnis, zu dem uns unsere Krise auffordert, weniger verzweifelt.“ Flusser, Vilém in: Klinger, Claudia: Wer ist Vilém Flusser? Die Krise der Codes. <http://www.claudiaklinger.de/flusser/seite2.htm> (February 2024), 4 (transl.: AS).

¹⁰ „der Tatsache, daß wir absurderweise in einer absurden Welt da sind, daß es an dieser Tatsache nichts herumzuraten gibt und daß wir nichts anderes tun können, als diesem Geheimnis des Sinnlosen einen Sinn zu verleihen“ Flusser, Vilém: Hintergründe. In: Flusser, Vilém: Lob der Oberflächlichkeit. Für eine Phänomenologie der Medien. ed. Stefan Bollmann and Edith Flusser. Bollmann, Bensheim und Düsseldorf 1993, 331, (transl.: AS).

– and therefore *sacred* – life dedicated to contemplation, to *θεωρία*, to dialogue, celebration, and play. “We have learned again that the meaning of life is idleness, the weekend, leisure, the holidays. [...] Idleness is the attitude of trying to give meaning to life.”¹¹

Flusser devotes lengthy discussions to three strategies for overcoming death as meaninglessness:

1) While playing, celebrating, or contemplating we can forget the threat of death and live up to our dignity as existences void of any external purpose beyond ourselves.

2) It “can be said, man tries to overcome his loneliness by a dialogical recognition of the Other, and that this was the existential motive of all communication”¹².

3) Although every human being dies one day, he or she can leave traces behind that last a lot longer than whoever caused them. In this sense, those signs allow for an almost permanent effect. From a certain perspective, this may seem like the equivalent of eternal life: “In his futile struggle against death, [man] carves information into objects and stores them in cultural memory. Culture is a memory in which human beings hide from oblivion.”¹³

Dialogue is the means of choice for both the creation of new information and the recognition of the Other. Flusser’s most important philosophical achievement may well be his way of fusing radical, bottomless nihilism with a Judaeo-Christian notion, exemplified in Martin Buber’s *dialogical life*, of finding God by recognizing the Other. In this way, he develops a concept for a self-determined life devoted to the creation of meaning.

In the light of existential bottomlessness and the hopeless human struggle against entropy dialogue is the only possible act of lending meaning to life, be it in a rather playful or in a more desperate way. However, no matter how much effort goes into the dialogical process of giving meaning, the awareness of its limited durability will always linger on.

¹¹ „Wir wissen wieder, dass der Sinn des Lebens die Muße ist, das Weekend, die Freizeit, die Ferien. [...] Muße ist die Einstellung, in der man versucht, dem Leben einen Sinn zu geben.“ Flusser, Vilém: *Zur Zukunft der Werkstatt*. In: Flusser: absolute Vilém Flusser. orange press, Freiburg 2003 (transl.: AS).

¹² Es „läßt sich sagen, der Mensch versuche, seine Einsamkeit durch dialogische Erkenntnis des anderen zu überwinden, und dies sei das existenzielle Motiv aller Kommunikationen“. Flusser, Vilém: *Dialogische Medien*. in: Flusser, Vilém: *Kommunikologie*. Ed. Stefan Bollmann and Edith Flusser. Bollmann, Mannheim 1996, 299 (transl.: AS).

¹³ „In seinem vergeblichen Kampf gegen den Tod gräbt er Informationen in Gegenstände, um sie im Kulturspeicher zu lagern. Kultur ist ein Gedächtnis, worin sich der Mensch vor dem Vergessen verbirgt.“ Flusser, Vilém: *Gespräch, Gerede, Kitsch*. in: Flusser: *Nachgeschichte*, 226f. (transl.: AS).

According to Flusser, death is the reason why human beings communicate. Taken for itself, communication is a rather unnatural activity. And indeed, its aim is to do away with meaningless nature and to turn it into the world of signifiers, of meaning, that is, culture:

The aim of human communication is to make us forget the meaningless context in which we are completely lonely and incommunicado, the world in which we are in solitary confinement and sentenced to death: the world of “nature”. Human communication is a trick intending to make us forget the brutal futility of a life sentenced to death.¹⁴

Flusser does not tire in varying this core thought of his philosophy: “Human communication [...] takes place with the intention of helping to forget the futility and solitude of a life unto death, thus making life liveable.”¹⁵

In an interview with Hans-Joachim Lenger, Flusser talks about an evidential experience illustrating this intentionality: “I remember a conversation I recently had with my friend Milton Vargas. [...] And we agreed more and more [...]. And suddenly Milton jumped up and said: There it is. It does happen. I believe the ancient called this hierophany. It does happen. And only with the Other. It cannot happen by itself. There is something that keeps us together. ”It is there” – no, that is wrong. But we “are coming to it”. Very rare. It has happened to you, too, hasn’t it? And then it stuns you. And perhaps that is the meaning of everything we do. It cannot all be meaningless.”¹⁶

This statement, of course, provokes a question: Why not? Why can’t everything be meaningless? Does Flusser fall prey to teleological thinking here?

I would like to argue that in this little anecdote, we find the key to a better understanding of Flusser’s personal needs and desires. There is, on the one hand, the strong, bold Flusser as he liked to present himself and as referenced at the beginning of this essay: the stoic, young nihilist who stares nothingness in the eye, dead face. The one that overcomes nihilism by consciously creating meaning in dialogue and by taking responsibility for the Other. But on the other hand, here is also the other Flusser, the one that clings to a belief of a given piece of meaning, an

¹⁴ „Der Zweck der menschlichen Kommunikation ist, uns den bedeutungslosen Kontext vergessen zu lassen, in dem wir vollständig einsam und incommunicado sind, nämlich jene Welt, in der wir in Einzelhaft und zum Tode verurteilt sitzen: die Welt der ‚Natur‘. Die menschliche Kommunikation ist ein Kunstgriff, dessen Absicht es ist, uns die brutale Sinnlosigkeit eines zum Tode verurteilten Lebens vergessen zu lassen.“ Flusser, Vilém: Umbruch der menschlichen Beziehungen? In: Flusser: Kommunikologie, 10. (transl.: AS).

¹⁵ „Die menschliche Kommunikation [...] geschieht in der Absicht, die Sinnlosigkeit und Einsamkeit eines Lebens zum Tod vergessen und damit das Leben lebbar zu machen.“ Flusser: Umbruch der menschlichen Beziehungen? In: Flusser: Kommunikologie, 10. (transl.: AS).

¹⁶ „Ich erinnere mich an ein Gespräch, das ich kürzlich mit meinem Freund Milton Vargas hatte. [...] Und wir sind zusehends einig geworden [...]. Und plötzlich sprang Milton auf und sagte: Es ist da. Das passiert. Es war da. Die Alten haben das, glaube ich, Hierophanie genannt. Es passiert. Und nur mit dem Anderen. Es kann nicht allein passieren. Es ist etwas da, was uns gemeinsam hält. ‚Es ist da‘ – nein, das ist falsch. Aber wir ‚kommen drauf‘. Sehr selten. Ist Ihnen doch auch schon passiert, nicht? Aber dann wird man eben sprachlos. Und vielleicht ist das der Sinn von allem, was wir machen. Es kann ja nicht alles sinnlos sein.“ Flusser: Sprache, Technik, Kunst, 9 (transl.: AS), my emphasis.

essentialist – or as Flusser used to paraphrase essentialism: a machismo – belief, unworthy of human beings who are supposed to uproot their own ties and become free in an existentialist way. Here, you can see the impossibility of complete and permanent repression of a strong personal need.

But is there really a discrepancy between the two Flussers? I would argue that the above instance, narrated by Flusser himself, is not sufficient proof of that. Quite the contrary: The emphatic exclamation at the end of the quote reconfirms that it is only dialogue, and nothing but dialogue, that can create moments of an experience of meaning. It is, after all, the result of a fruitful dialogue itself.

Culture, Flusser argues, is a technique for the production and preservation of meaning. It is a negentropic epicycle directed against the almighty current towards entropic homogeneity and absence of structure and differentiation that is dragging everything along with it.

To illustrate the power of entropy, Flusser implies the image of an all-consuming maelstrom. Small islands of information are drifting on it.¹⁷ ”Stored information drifts like islands in the general stream toward entropy”¹⁸.

And all information, be it of accidental origin – as in nature – or produced purposefully – as in culture – must decompose in the end. [...] Every single human being but also all of mankind and the entire biosphere must decompose in the end, just like the earth, the solar system, the galaxy, cosmos.¹⁹

On the one hand: in the course of this whole stupid history new information will emerge again and again by coincidence. This is how the human brain originated as well. But overall, all this information that has accidentally surfaced will have to re-submerge in the torrent towards forgetting and disintegrating, including the human brains and everything they have produced.²⁰

Despite the projection of meaning, despite all engagement for culture, we are back to square one, the meaningless bottomlessness of human existence: There is no way out of entropy, and “all that comes into existence, deserves that it should perish”²¹.

¹⁷ It is obvious that the origin of this metaphor is Brazilian: European rivers do not carry drifting islands of grass. This is, however, a phenomenon well known in Africa or South America.

¹⁸ „Gespeicherte Informationen schweben wie Inseln im allgemeinen Strom zur Entropie hin“. Flusser, Vilém: *Gedächtnisse*. in: *Ars Electronica* (ed.): *Philosophien der neuen Technologie*. Merve, Berlin 1989, 42. (transl.: AS).

¹⁹ „alle Informationen, seien sie zufällig entstanden – wie in der Natur – oder absichtlich erzeugt worden – wie in der Kultur –, müssen letzten Endes zerfallen. [...] Nicht nur jeder einzelne Mensch, auch die ganze Menschheit und die ganze Biosphäre müssen letzten Endes zerfallen, ebenso wie die Erde, das Sonnensystem, die Galaxie, der Kosmos.“ Flusser: *Gespräch, Gerede*, 225 (transl.: AS).

²⁰ „Zwar: im Verlauf dieser ganzen dummen Geschichte entstehen zufällig immer wieder neue Informationen, und so ist vor allem auch das Menschengehirn entstanden. Aber im großen und ganzen werden alle diese zufällig emporgetauchten Informationen in den Strom in Richtung Vergessen und Auflösen wieder untertauchen müssen, auch die Menschengehirne und alles, was sie hergestellt haben.“ Flusser, Vilém: *Schöpflöffel und Suppe*. In: Flusser, Vilém: *Dinge und Undinge. Phänomenologische Skizzen*. ed. Michael Krüger. Carl Hanser, Munich and Vienna 1993, 138 (transl.: AS).

²¹ „alles, was entsteht, ist wert, daß es zugrunde geht“ Goethe, Johann Wolfgang: *Faust*, V. 1339f.

Of course, such an assessment of cultural circulation must arouse the feeling that it is absurd to engage in culture – everything valuable is worthless. And we can indeed confirm that the so-called absurd attitude to life is becoming rampant everywhere.²²

Despite all our efforts of projecting meaning, despite all our engagement for culture, we have hit rock bottom again. However we look at it, whichever way we twist and turn it, we have been turned back to where we started, to the meaninglessness and bottomlessness of human existence. There is no "way to get out of here"²³, no bypass for entropy, and we will "never get out of this world alive"²⁴.

So, Flusser concedes that each and every engagement, each human attempt to create meaning, happens with the awareness and against the backdrop of a complete transience that at long last leaves no trace – neither of the acting person nor of the meaning he or she has created. In the end, it must be clear to everybody, and it was certainly clear to Flusser, that nothing at all will be left of any human endeavour. No matter how much cultural value we produce, it is, along with us, condemned to extinction in the long run. Our fate is oblivion.

Still, in the face of the total futility of human endeavour Flusser keeps clinging to recognition in the Other as his last resort to make life liveable: "I am mortal, you are mortal, we are immortal. This would be an acceptable phrasing of the negative entropic engagement"²⁵. The use of the conjunctive signifies awareness of the hopeless ultimate omnipotence of entropy.

But is this nihilism? No. Usually, the belief in voidness of meaning in the universe is considered a necessary but not a sufficient definition of nihilism. The other necessary qualifier is the negation of all norms and values. And clearly, Flusser, both in his writing and his private life, was far from that.

Whoever met Flusser personally²⁶ can testify to an encounter with a happy man, full of joy, curiosity, and lust of life. Of course, that in no way implies that there was not a core of sheer post-traumatic despair to his personality. But if you want to call this nihilism, you must call it a very happy and constructive kind of nihilism. And perhaps it is more closely related to the ancient school of *στοά*, of stoicism than with modern existentialism of a, say, Jean-Paul Sartre.

Vilém Flusser used to sit in the passenger seat and sing arias from operas and operettas, literally full throat, while his wife Edith was driving them criss-cross all over Europe. He enjoyed singing,

²² „Eine derartige Wertung der Kulturzirkulation muß in uns selbstredend das Gefühl erwecken, daß es absurd ist, sich für Kultur zu engagieren – alles Wertvolle ist wertlos. Und tatsächlich können wir das Überhandnehmen des sogenannten 'absurden Lebensgefühls' überall konstatieren.“ Flusser: Gespräch, Gerede, Kitsch, 230 (transl.: AS).

²³ Dylan, Bob: *All Along the Watchtower*, 1967.

²⁴ Williams, Hank and Fred Rose: *I'll Never Get Out of This World Alive*, 1952.

²⁵ „Ich bin sterblich, du bist sterblich, wir sind unsterblich. Dies wäre eine annehmbare Formulierung des negativ entropischen Engagements.“ Flusser, Vilém: *Ins Universum der technischen Bilder. European Photography*, Göttingen 1990, 125 (transl.: AS). This is also Flusser's epitaph, engraved – in Portuguese – in his tombstone.

²⁶ I spent the last four days of his life, November 23-26, 1991, with him.

he also enjoyed traveling. He never wore a seat belt. In the morning of November 27, 1991, their car collided with a truck. Vilém was hurled out of the car and died instantly.

If you are swimming in the stream of events, catastrophes can happen. If you were hurled out of the stream of events, what do you care? I have been hurled out.²⁷

My favourite Flusser quote is not about nihilism. Nor is it about media, communication, design, religion, or phenomenology. Rather, it is taken from a letter Flusser wrote to his friend Alex Bloch in 1978 about the simple pleasures of life – pleasures and joys Flusser undoubtedly cherished very much:

Now that the cherry blossom is over and the apple trees are still pink, but the meadows are already not just yellow but also blue and partly red, now that the heaths are smelling of rosemary and buzzing with bumblebees, now that the air is still harsh, but midday temperatures already rise to 16 degrees, now that the incomparable Provençal light is not yet shimmering like van Gogh but rather like Cézanne, now that the stones of the ruins are abundant with the typical violet blossoms but not yet with snakes, now is the best time to wander through the region, hoping to find a restaurant that will offer a set menu of F 25.- that includes a good paté de grive and a plateau de fromages which will make the effort of walking worthwhile. [...] The concrete, smellable, visible, audible experience (reading, listening to music, sunbathing, but believe me, also writing) is life. And all attempts at “explaining” it are epiphenomena.²⁸

²⁷ „Wenn Sie im Fluß der Ereignisse schwimmen, dann können Katastrophen stattfinden. Wenn Sie aus dem Fluß der Ereignisse herausgeschleudert wurden, was geht Sie das an? Ich bin herausgeschleudert worden.“ Vilém Flusser in Nüchtern, Klaus: Vilém Flusser. Ein Gespräch. European Photography, Göttingen, 1991, 39 (transl.: AS).

²⁸ „Jetzt, da die Kirschblüte vorbei ist, die Apfelbäume immer noch rosa, aber die Wiesen schon nicht nur gelb, sondern auch blau und stellenweise rot sind, da die Heiden nach Rosmarin duften und von Hummeln summen, da die Luft zwar noch scharf, aber Mittagstemperaturen schon bis 16 Grad steigen, da das unvergleichliche provenzalische Licht noch nicht wie van Gogh, sondern wie Cézanne schimmert, da auf den Steinen der Ruinen zwar schon die violetten typischen Blüten, aber noch nicht Schlangen wimmeln, ist die beste Zeit, durch die Gegend zu ziehen, in der Hoffnung, man werde ein Restaurant erreichen, dessen Menü von F 25,– eine gute Paté de Grive und einen Plateau de fromages enthält, welche die Mühe des Spazierens lohnen. [...] Das konkrete, riechbare, sehbare, hörbare Erlebnis (Lesen, Musikhören, Gehen, SichSonnen, aber glauben Sie mir, auch Schreiben) ist Leben, und alle Versuche, es zu „erklären“, sind Epiphänomene.“ Flusser, Vilém: Briefe an Alex Bloch. ed.: Edith Flusser and Klaus Sander. European Photography, Göttingen 2000, 114f, letter of May 7, 1978. (transl.: AS).