Photography and Cinema

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50 Years of Chris Marker's *La Jetée*

Edited by

Margarida Medeiros,
Teresa Mendes Flores
and Joana Cunha Leal

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INTRODUCTION

FROM *LA JETÉE* TO CONTEMPORARY HYBRID VISUAL CULTURES[1]

MARGARIDA MEDEIROS,
TERESA MENDES FLORES
AND JOANA CUNHA LEAL

Photography and cinema have been under scrutiny ever since they were invented. These two completely new modes and techniques of representing the world appeared within the space of 50 years of one another and their impact on modern culture has changed society's profile in every way.

André Bazin argued that cinema had been an *imagined* or *idealized* phenomenon long before it became technically possible (Bazin 1961). Peter Galassi had much the same idea about photography (Galassi 1981) when he claimed that painting had already embodied the focus of observational realism, as well as the cropping of time and space, and he explained how perspective quality had prompted the success of photography. Both authors highlighted the fact that the history of these media overlaps the history of their technical developments. Yet in the early 1990s, after almost 160 years of photography and 100 years of cinema, the arrival of digital technology led to a flood of ontological questioning as to the specificity or common ground of both these media.

Studies on photography have been particularly indebted to Roland Barthes' *Camera Lucida* (1979), André Bazin's "The Ontology of the Photographic Image" (1945/1961), and Susan Sontag's *On Photography* (1978). The main point made by these texts regarding the ontology of photography was its *indexical* quality, the idea that photography would

[1] The English revision of this chapter was funded by FCT - the Portuguese Foundation for Science and Technology.

always be a kind of testimony of the presence of things facing the camera: "This *was*" is the celebrated expression that Barthes used to refer to this quality in *Camera Lucida*, while Bazin frequently asserted that "nothing could eradicate the irrational belief in photography's objectivity". As such, photography was related to *stillness*, to the freezing of time and the presence of the object as a past occurrence.

Walter Benjamin also identified the cemetery as the home of photography.[2] He did so because he associated photography with the representation of death and the uncanny. Roland Barthes in his attempt to write on the ontology of photography added key concepts such as the *Operator* (the one who *takes* the photograph), the *Spectator* (the one who *sees* the photograph) and the *Spectrum* (which refers both to something *spectacular* in photography and a kind of the return of the dead) (Barthes 1980).

As far as film theorists are concerned, the capture of real movement and the achievement of radical realist illusionism (both in feature film and documentary) would be pervasively considered as key features of cinema. Bazin, for instance, argues that true realism is the goal of cinema. He concurrently despised montage as a perversion, while stating the virtues of the sequence-plan. He also took the latter to be the complete tool of cinema (Bazin 1993). The main point differencing photography and cinema would then be, Bazin argued, the opposition between movement and stillness, for cinema is a "language" and photography is just a crop in space and time.[3]

Post-modern culture, or rather what we could call, using Philippe Dubois' terms, the *postphotography* and *postcinema* condition, tends to blur the ontological frontiers of photography and cinema. Territories that once stood on their own no longer have easy-to-define boundaries. Instead, photography and cinema are dissolving the grounds of their formerly assumed differences by systematically evoking the effects of the other. As such, cinema is often experienced as if it were a still image (Mulvey 2006) whenever artists and directors choose to fix the camera and stop the image (using new media technologies). Likewise, photography tends to evoke movement by recovering some of the aesthetic features that had been explored by the Futurists in the 1910s (the stroboscopic photography used

[2] *Apud* Eduard Cadava, *Words of Light, Thesis on the photography of history*. Princeton, NJ, Princeton University Press, 1998, p. 8

[3] See also Metz, Christian. "Photography and Fetish" October 34 (1985) 81-90. Also republished in this volume.

by Antonio Giulio Bragaglia is a key example of this tendency). Examples of working on *move* by alternating the movement within the still image can be seen in the works of artists such as David Clarebout, Thierry Kuntzel and Sam Taylor-Wood.

It is also worth recalling that, since the Nouvelle Vague, directors have regularly published stills of their movies, both in picture-books entirely devoted to the film, or in smaller brochures equally destined to be sold autonomously. Jean-Luc Godard, Alain Tanner, Jean-Marie Straub, Chris Marker, made "cinema on paper" (Campany 2009) allowing people to get in contact with movies by way of their stills. These books were not merely promotional. They appeared because cinema also involved photographs (as was shown in its early stage by Dziga Vertov's "The man with the movie camera", from 1929) and words (some screenplays were published as texts destined to be read as well). After all, the Nouvelle Vague was looking for a kind of 'engagé' cinema, where discourse and discussion, as well as the plot, had key political significance. As such, 'to publish' movies by taking scenarios and scripts and presenting them on a sheet of paper was a way of expanding their substance while, at the same time, it provided an opportunity to create a new object: a film transformed into something that one could read, stop, go back and go forward. In a word, something that one could keep in the hand once the movie theatre's ephemeral projection had ended.

Chris Marker was key to this shifting process. He was an artist who always looked for new combinations of sound, image and text, both as a director and as a publisher. His seminal film *La Jetée* (1962, released in 1963) was made up of photographs separately glued on to different sheets of paper, and filmed afterwards. If we try to look at *La Jetée's* archives – as Philippe Dubois did in Belgium at the Film Institute's library – we will be able to track this shifting towards the recognition of the visual significance of film stills. Dubois' analysis of those stills focuses not only on their structure, but also on the different layers of meaning associated with each image.

The most famous unknown filmmaker

Eclecticism seems to be one of the most recognized features of Chris Marker's work. He is often presented as both a filmmaker and a photographer, a poet, a translator, a cartoonist, a visual artist, an editor, a software designer and a television and video director. This is not only due to the fact that he worked in all those media, but also because each of his works has an *intermedial* indeterminacy, something he intensely pursued

himself and acknowledged in other artists. In 1978, writing about William Klein, he stated:

> "The trouble (…) is that we tend to cut them [the works] into pieces and to leave each piece to the specialists: a film to the film critic, a photograph to the photographic expert, a picture to the art pundit ... Whereas the really interesting phenomenon is the totality of these forms of expression, their obvious or secret correspondences, and their interdependencies. The painter does not really turn to photography, then to the cinema, he starts from a single preoccupation ... and modulates it through all the media" (*apud* Lupton 2005:10).

La Jetée is an iconic example of such an approach, questioning the bounded and pure ontologies of film, photography and "photo-magazines".

Marker challenges the historical conditions that produced each media identity and their frontiers: he shows us how books – such as his *Petit Planète* book series or *Les Coréennes* – can have cinematographic qualities in the unfolding of pages, in the layout of images and words throughout the pages, in their indexicality and referentiality; he makes us wonder about the poetic quality of films and the narrative possibilities of photography, as in *Si j'avais quatre dromadaires* (1966); he challenges genre rules when he documents reality while filming a fictional letter in *Sans Soleil* (1983). Always working and reworking his personal archive of images and sounds, it is not surprising that he became interested in the digital condition of images in *Level 5* (1997) and other later projects (*Immemory*, 1997).

In *La Jetée* Marker films photographs and reveals their emblematic stillness, at the same time highlighting the cinematographic in its continuous flickering sensation. This sensation becomes more striking when images are still, thus revealing the cinematographic apparatus and expanding the definition of cinema beyond that of a machine that produces the illusion of movement. Cinema is shown as an apparatus undeniably connected to the ontology of the "shot" ("le plan") in Gilles Deleuze 's sense (1983; 1985): like a ventilator or a continuously burning flame produced by the projecting system, independently of realist movement illusions. In other words, cinema becomes instead a conceptual device, an instance of (audiovisual) thought.

In fact, Gilles Deleuze's approach underlines the philosophical condition of cinema. He declares great filmmakers are just like great thinkers, except that they build cinematically what the latter build linguistically. This is Marker's case. Deleuze states that the cinematic apparatus expands light and matter, shapes time and space, therefore

giving us a different approach to both perception and reality. Whenever images become reflexive and/or challenge common space-time perception, they acquire this philosophical dimension. This is something undoubtedly present in Chris Marker's work when he explores various possibilities for reproducing reality through recorded sounds and images, from which there eventually arises a kind of unfolding of the world. Such an unfolding – a Deleuzian theme – is mostly dependent on the indexical nature of these images and sounds, which nevertheless acquire an autonomous and ubiquitous statute, cross-mediating frontiers in an almost unceasing convertibility.

For a whole generation of theorists of language, communication and film which appeared from the 1960s onward, Marker's work is of key significance for it has deepened Nouvelle Vague's debate on "montage" as an ideological construction, and their key ideological and ethical questions: How can historical consciousness be grounded in a "découpage" and dematerialization mechanism? How can a fair viewpoint rely on image and sound records that tend to be taken as pure reality, as reality itself? How do these "remains" of reality become instead the actual producers of reality?

While most of these questions had already been addressed by the first avant-garde artists of the late nineteen twenties, the degree of intertwining between media instances and reality has become far more effective since the nineteen sixties, dominated by television systems and "technicolour" movies. Critical strategies of both documenting reality and the documentation process itself - a strategy adopted by Dziga Vertov - or the refusing of typified narratives embracing art as an experimental field were strong and enduring influences on Chris Marker's artistic generation that kept on fighting against the "studio" mode of production in film industry. They added their critique against the commodification of/by television that has become the "first hand" experience of modern audiences. Mediation became a political issue for artists. If modernism was driven towards the representation of *the actual* reality that stood before the artist (often influenced or mediated through machine-like devices), against the "beau ideal", second wave postmodern artists led their creative impulses towards representation, revealing it as an eminent political matter.

This reasoning shaped Marker's themes and preferences for the documentary genre, considered not as a detached informative language but as a personal essay about the reality addressed through audiovisual records. As José Carlos Avelar put it, commenting on *Le fond de l'air est rouge* (A cat without a grin):

> "It is not about making the viewer experience the film shown on the screen as if the film was something invisible, something absent, and concentrate the viewer's attention on people, things and actions portrayed on the screen. It is not about making the viewer take the scenes represented as if they were right there, alive, or at least filmed in an absolutely objective and scientific way. Images are images. To understand the general issue that generated the film, Chris proposes images as a real presence in themselves. Let us say, this film is not about May 68, rather it is about the images created by May 68" (Avelar, 1986:26)[4].

If all reality is constructed by its representations (in cultural human terms), then producing *other* interpretations, showing unseen images and sounds hidden by mainstream political views, becomes a political as well as artistic imperative. The need to record what is before the objective, out in the streets, workplaces, cities, war scenarios; the need to interview people that do not appear on television news or that are not "good" characters in news stories, like Fidel Castro or Amílcar Cabral; the need to question established world views, all lie behind Marker's main themes: colonialism (*Les Statues Meurent Aussi* (with Resnais, 1953); *Le Jolie Mai* (1962); *Cuba Si* (1961), *Sans Soleil* (1982)); wars (*Loin de Vietnam* (1966), which is a collective movie) as well as everyday routines; the division of the world into two blocks (*Dimanche à Pekin* (1956); *Lettre de Sibérie* (1957)) or the labour working conditions under capitalism are permanent themes, making our list of examples suitable for almost every category.

Marker often mixed archive images with his own recorded images, arranged scenes (like the telephone call to Santa Claus by Cuban children, in *Cuba Si*) with snapshots as well as prepared interviews with improvised ones, all serving the same purpose of questioning reality and its images, of questioning established views and accepted politics. Marker's personal style is in itself a critical apparatus: documental and often abstract and elliptic; image-driven, yet detached from them as a result of the voice-over discursive resource; his films are narratives in their historical references, but always poetic in their style and tone.

The general question on the ontology of sounds and images thereby embodies, in Marker's work, questions on their relation to historical time, perceptive duration and memory. In other words, Marker's photographic and cinematic images challenge us precisely because while depending on reality, they eventually detach themselves from it and produce a potential

[4] Our emphases.

never-ending archive of significations meant to challenge preferred readings. This is why Marker takes these captured signs as "found images" and "found sounds", i.e., pieces of autonomous space-time that often reappear in different films making us aware of their image nature while at the same time not losing their power to testify. Through this intertextuality, we understand images function like active memories, the meanings of which are everything but fixed. Though recalling the Barthesian "this was" – an image and sound of what "has been there" –, these images and sounds go much further, for they also rely on the meaning Marker attributes to them the moment he is editing, the meaning we attribute to them the moment we see or hear them, as well as on a future "this will be" – the active permanence of these images and sounds projected towards the future and its performative construction.

As such, Chris Marker's artistic practice cannot be subsumed to Roland Barthes' and André Bazin's photographic theories, as they tend to take the index as a straightforward vestige of the past. Although departing from their conceptions, Marker eventually proposes a much more complex approach in the relation between images and sounds and their referents.[5]

La Jetée: a fictional "photo-roman" genre movie

In 1962, the year of *La Jetée*'s production, new French cinema of the Nouvelle Vague had already produced some of its most emblematic films. Some had been released three years previously, in 1959: *Les 400 Coups* by François Truffaut, film-symbol of the movement; *À Bout de Souffle* and *Charlotte et son Jules* both by Jean-Luc Godard; *Hiroshima, Mon Amour* by Alain Resnais; *À Double Tour* by Claude Chabrol and *Moi, un noir*, a documentary by Jean Rouch.

At this time, the French intellectual milieu was oscillating between an "end-of-times" feeling boosted by the war and the quick decay of colonial empires, and new expectations arising from urban youth, sexual liberation and the overcoming of the many barriers imposed by bourgeois morality. This led Godard to state that he wanted to make movies where girls and boys were like the ones he knew from the streets. A truer cinema was on the way, abandoning studios and old illusionist protocols.

[5] His work is therefore much closer to Siegfried Kracauer's photographic thesis, and to Walter Benjamin's thesis about the Philosophy of History. For a discussion of this relationship see Warner, 2009.

Gilles Deleuze related these changes in the collective historical consciousness to the changes of post-war cinema: the cinema of "action-image" gave way to the "time-image" cinema and its self-conscious-camera (Deleuze, 1983; 1985). It was no longer possible to maintain that those past heroes were able to solve any kind of trouble. Totalizing narratives determined to explain everything seemed inconsistently false. Literature had been providing a significant response to this inconsistency, as the Nouveau Roman emerged through the hand of Alain Robbe-Grillet at Minuit Press, along with the writings of Marguerite Duras, Georges Perec and many others. These authors proposed a poetic personal style, an intimate while also political viewpoint, announcing both the complexity of the real and a refusal of intrigue-based novels and omniscient narrators. Moreover, characters themselves became questioned as the central feature of the novel. These trends contaminated film aesthetics.

However, Marker's work viewed from the present seems, from its very beginning, a bit 'beyond' the Nouvelle Vague. Perhaps this explains why he turned out to be Nouvelle Vague's "most famous unknown filmmaker", an expression referring to his refusal to be photographed or to give interviews, but which may be extended to the lesser popularity of his own work when compared to that of his colleagues. The fact that he had embraced documentary film may partially explain his longstanding marginal condition.[6]

That said, the documentary feature of filmic images was largely acknowledged by the majority of the movement's French filmmakers. Not only would they all claim their indebtedness towards neorealism, particularly in Roberto Rosselini's films, but they would choose Dziga Vertov's "Ciné-Pravda" – the film journal directed by the Ukrainian filmmaker – as the slogan of the movement: "le cinéma-vérité", the true cinema – a decisive statement on the documentary quality of their own cinema. Yet, for most of these artists such documentary quality depended mainly on fiction: fiction films were in fact considered more "real", as they "unfolded the world" and enabled the development of a personal view in terms that were apparently not so easily shared by documentary. Something Marker would not agree with at all. He preferred the formula

[6] Flipping through a catalogue of a 1999 Nouvelle Vague retrospective organized by the Portuguese Film Museum in Lisbon, Chris Marker's absence is notable. Nevertheless, Jean Rouch - another important documentary filmmaker - is present with two films, making clear the insufficiency of the genre argument. It is also worth noticing that among 46 films shown on that occasion, only two were documentaries ("Moi, un noir" (1959) and "La pyramide humaine" (1960)).

"Ciné, ma vérité".[7] This expression states Marker's defence of "author cinema" in any genre, and at the same time it indicates that this "kinetic" feature is extensible to different materialities and media[8]. Marker's singularity is very much associated with the fact that his "ciné" – the kinematic – goes way beyond the cinematographic: it not only encompasses other media, but also avoids the essentialist credo or purist ontologies characteristic of various modernisms.[9]

However, it is a fact that Marker's most famous film is a fiction. In fact, *La Jetée* is not only a fiction but also a genre film: a science fiction film. In its 29 minutes, *La Jetée* frustrates its viewers' main expectations about "movies" – for except for a tiny moment, everything stays rigidly still in *La Jetée.* The use of photography does not so much stress the materiality of film and its dialectic condition - as was the case with Vertov's *The man with the movie camera* (1929) - but it is used as a dramatic resource to methaphorise time as a traumatic experience. One that never goes forward, that interrupts the flux of life, which symbolizes death. Raymond Bellour (1997) has stated that this film is a "documentary of time" precisely because time is its central theme: the present search within a man's mental archive for a past image about his own future death. Marker shows how cinema functions like an extension of our thought that freely associates images, all of which are but memories. The use of photography within the cinematographic apparatus is a complex procedure that reveals the gaze of the movie camera as a mental effort to scan through photographs as stock-memories which themselves have a partial viewpoint and an original absent camera. Photographs more than other images emphasize the gaps between reality and their images, revealing, contrary to traditional discourse on photography, the subjectivity of all

[7] "Ciné, my truth" a word game with the official slogan "cinéma-vérité" (truth-cinema).

[8] This is a reference to André Bazin's article "On the Author Theory" (Cahier # 70, 1957), that discusses Truffaut's first proposition in his 1954 article "A Certain Tendency of the French Cinema" (Cahiers 31, 1954) where he first argued that the director should be the author of a film instead of the studios. "The authors' politics" is also the title of a series of interviews to film authors made by Bazin, Truffaut and other contributors to Cahiers, and published in a 1972 book by Cahiers du Cinema editions.

[9] As in the famous 1961 essay by Clement Greenberg, "Modernist Painting". Upon photography this idea has been related to John Sarkowsky in his exhibition "The Photographer's Eye" at the Museum of Modern Art in 1964 (Cf. Sarkowsky, 2007).

images and all experiences. Experience in itself is conveyed, in *La Jetée,* as a variable of the perception of time: from the photographic instance to the perceptive movement of cinema. All films are thinking efforts through the gaps of memory they help to construct. The strength of *La Jetée* lies in its ability to think cinematographically not only about the ontology of images but also about the ontology of human nature.

Given the 50 years since its release, we decided to organize a conference on Photography and Cinema, recalling the memory of *La Jetée* and the issues this celebrated film ended up disseminating.

In the last ten years many books have been published on the subject of Photography and Cinema, discussing research made into the history of both media but also discussing the transformations they have undergone through the digital revolution that came to blur, as we have already pointed out, the frontiers between photography and cinema. Mary Ann Doane (Doane 2002), Laura Mulvey (Mulvey 2006), Damion Sutton (Sutton 2008), as well as the many articles of Tom Gunning (Gunning 1997 and 2008) have tried to explore differences and complementarities. Furthermore, the theory of photography has been raised to a new level, presenting new and fresh thinking about philosophical, historical and cultural issues concerning photography (Stimson 2011; Batchen 1997; 2001; 2008), showing the complexity of the issues photography raises within theory, and, overall, showing the ties between photography as a popular cultural tool and the impact of photography in the field of contemporary art.

The major intention of the organizers of this Lisbon Conference, which has been fully accomplished with this book, was to verify recent research on photography and cinema, given that the digital has brought new ways of working as well as new theoretical issues; but, at the same time, there was also the desire to verify how Marker's heritage, his movies, *La Jetée* in particular, have been a source of inspiration to future generations of directors as well as critics.

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CHAPTER ONE

RELATING ONTOLOGIES OF PHOTOGRAPHY AND FILM

1. PHOTOGRAPHY AND FETISH

CHRISTIAN METZ[1]

To begin I will briefly recall some of the basic differences between film and photography. Although these differences may be well known, they must be, as far as possible, precisely defined, since they have a determinant influence on the respective status of both forms of expression in relation to the fetish and fetishism.

First difference: the spatio-temporal size of the *lexis*, according to that term's definition as proposed by the Danish semiotician Louis Hjelmslev. The lexis is the socialized unit of reading, of reception: in sculpture, the statue; in music, the "piece." Obviously the photographic *lexis*, a silent rectangle of paper, is much smaller than the cinematic lexis. Even when the film is only two minutes long, these two minutes are *enlarged*, so to speak, by sounds, movements, and so forth to say nothing of the average surface of the screen and of the very fact of projection. In addition, the photographic lexis has no fixed duration (= temporal size): it depends, rather, on the spectator, who is the master of the look, whereas the timing of the cinematic lexis is determined in advance by the filmmaker. Thus on the one side, "a free rewriting time"; on the other, "an imposed reading time," as Peter Wollen has pointed out[2]. Thanks to these two features (smallness, possibility of a lingering look), photography is better fit, or more likely, to work as a fetish.

Another important difference pertains to the social use, or more exactly (as film and photography both have many uses) to their principal legitimated use. Film is considered as collective entertainment or as art, according to the work and to the social group. This is probably due to the fact that its production is less accessible to "ordinary" people than that of photography. Equally, it is in most cases fictional, and our culture still has a strong tendency to confound art with fiction. Photography enjoys a high degree of social recognition in another domain: that of the presumed real,

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[1] A version of this essay was delivered at a conference on the theory of film and photography at the University of California, Santa Barbara, in May 1984.

[2] Peter Wollen, "Fire and Ice," *Photographies*, 4 (1984).

of life, mostly private and family life, birthplace of the Freudian fetish. This recognition is ambiguous. Up to a point, it does correspond to a real distribution of social practices: people do take photographs of their children, and when they want their feature film, they do go to the movies or watch TV. But on the other side, it happens that photographs are considered by society as works of art, presented in exhibitions or in albums accompanied by learned commentary. And the family is frequently celebrated, or self-celebrated, in private, with super-8 films or other nonprofessional productions, which *are* still cinema. Nevertheless, the kinship between film and collectivity, photography and privacy, remains alive and strong as a social myth, half true like all myths; it influences each of us, and most of all the stamp, the look of photography and cinema themselves. It is easy to observe—and the researches of the sociologist Pierre Bordieu[3], among others, confirm it—that photography very often primarily means souvenir, keepsake. It has replaced the portrait, thanks to the historical transition from the period when long exposure times were needed for true portraits. While the social reception of film is mainly oriented towards a show-business-like or imaginary referent, the real referent is felt to be dominant in photography.

There is something strange in this discrepancy, as both modes of expression are fundamentally *indexical*, in Charles Sanders Pierce's terms. (A recent, remarkable book on photography by Philippe Dubois is devoted to the elaboration of this idea and its implications.)[4] Pierce called indexical the process of signification (*semiosis*) in which the signifier is bound to the referent not by a social convention (= "symbol"), not necessarily by some similarity (= "icon"), but by an actual contiguity or connection in the world: the lightning is the index of the storm. In this sense, film and photography are close to each other, both are *prints* of real objects, prints left on a special surface by a combination of light and chemical action. This indexicality, of course, leaves room for iconic aspects, as the chemical image often looks like the object (Pierce considered photography as an index *and* an icon). It leaves much room for symbolic aspects as well, such as the more or less codified patterns of treatment of the image (framing, lighting, and so forth) and of choice or organization of its contents. What is indexical is the mode of production itself, the principle

[3] Pierre Bourdieu et al., *Un art moyen. Essai sur les usages sociaux de la photographie*, Paris, Editions de Minuit, 1965.
[4] Philippe Dubois, *L' acte photographique*, Paris and Brussels, Nathan and Labor, 1983.

of the *taking*. And at this point, after all, a film is only a series of photographs. But it is more precisely a series with supplementary components as well, so that the unfolding as such tends to become more important than the link of each image with its referent. This property is very often exploited by the narrative, the initially indexical power of the cinema turning frequently into a realist guarantee for the unreal. Photography, on the other hand, remains closer to the pure index, stubbornly pointing to the print of what *was*, but no longer is.

A third kind of difference concerns the physical nature of the respective signifiers. Lacan used to say that the only materialism he knew was the materialism of the signifier. Whether the only one or not, in all signifying practices the material definition is essential to their social and psychoanalytic inscription. In this respect—speaking in terms of set theory—film "includes" photography: cinema results from an addition of perceptive features to those of photography. In the visual sphere, the important addition is, of course, movement and the plurality of images, of shots. The latter is distinct from the former: even if each image is still, switching from one to the next creates a *second movement*, an ideal one, made out of successive and different immobilities. Movement and plurality both imply *time*, as opposed to the timelessness of photography which is comparable to the timelessness of the unconscious and of memory. In the auditory sphere—totally absent in photography—cinema adds phonic sound (spoken words), nonphonic sound (sound effects, noises, and so forth), and musical sound. One of the properties of sounds is their expansion, their development in time (in space they only irradiate), whereas images construct themselves in space. Thus film disposes of five more orders of perception (two visual and three auditory) than does photography, all of the five challenging the powers of silence and immobility which belong to and define all photography, immersing film in a stream of temporality where nothing can be *kept*, nothing stopped. The emergence of a fetish is thus made more difficult.

Cinema is the product of two distinct technological inventions: photography, and the mastering of stroboscopy, of the ϕ-effect. Each of these can be exploited separately: photography makes no use of stroboscopy, and animated cartoons are based on stroboscopy without photography.

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The importance of immobility and silence to photographic *authority*, the nonfilmic nature of this authority, leads me to some remarks on the relationship of photography with death. Immobility and silence are not

only two objective aspects of death, they are also its main symbols, they *figure* it. Photography's deeply rooted kinship with death has been noted by many different authors, including Dubois, who speaks of photography as a "thanatography", and, of course, Roland Barthes, whose *Camera Lucida*[5] bears witness to this relationship most poignantly. It is not only the book itself but also its position of enunciation which illustrates this kinship, since the work was written just after (and because of) the death of the mother, and just before the death of the writer.

Photography is linked with death in many *different* ways. The most immediate and explicit is the social practice of keeping photographs in memory of loved beings who are no longer alive. But there another real death which each of us undergoes every day, as each day we draw nearer our own death. Even when the person photographed is still living, that moment when she or he was has forever vanished. Strictly speaking, the person *who has been photographed*—not the total person, who is an effect of time—is dead: "dead for having been seen," as Dubois says in another context.[6] Photography is the mirror, more faithful than any actual mirror, in which we witness at every age, our own aging. The actual mirror accompanies us through time, thoughtfully and treacherously; it changes with us, so that we appear not to change.

Photography has a third character in common with death: the snapshot, like death, is an instantaneous abduction of the object out of the world into another world, into another kind of time-unlike cinema which replaces the object, after the act of appropriation, in an unfolding time similar to that of life. The photographic *take* is immediate and definitive, like death and like the constitution of the fetish in the unconscious, fixed by a glance in childhood, unchanged and always active later. Photography is a cut inside the referent, it cuts off a piece of it, a fragment, a part object, for a long immobile travel of no return. Dubois remarks that with each photograph, a tiny piece of time brutally and forever escapes its ordinary fate, and thus is protected against its own loss. I will add that in life, and to some extent in film, one piece of time is indefinitely pushed backwards by the next: this is what we call "forgetting." The fetish, too, means both loss (symbolic castration) and protection against loss. Peter Wollen states this in an apt simile: photography preserves fragments of the past "like flies in amber."[7]

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[5] Roland Barthes, *Camera Lucida* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1981).
[6] Dubois, p. 89.
[7] Wollen. *Ibid*.

Not by chance, the photographic act (or acting, who knows?) has been frequently compared with shooting, and the camera with a gun.

Against what I am saying, it could of course be objected that film as well is able to perpetuate the memory of dead persons, or of dead moments of their lives. Socially, the family film, the super-8, and so forth, to which I previously alluded, are often used for such a purpose. But this pseudosimilarity between film and photography leads me back, in a paradoxical way, to the selective kinship of photography (not film) with death, and to a fourth aspect of this link. The two modes of perpetuation are very different in their effects, and nearly opposed. Film gives back to the dead a semblance of life, a fragile semblance but one immediately strengthened by the wishful thinking of the viewer. Photography, on the contrary, by virtue of the objective suggestions of its signifier (stillness, again) maintains the memory of the dead *as being dead*.

Tenderness toward loved beings who have left us forever is a deeply ambiguous, split feeling, which Freud has remarkably analyzed in his famous study on *Mourning and Melancholia*.[8] The work of mourning is at the same time an attempt (not successful in all cases: see the suicides, the breakdowns) to survive. The object-libido, attached to the loved person, wishes to accompany her or him in death, and sometimes does. Yet the narcissistic, conservation instinct (ego-libido) claims the right to live. The compromise which normally concludes this inner struggle consists in transforming the very nature of the feeling for the object, in learning progressively to love this object *as dead*, instead of continuing to desire a living presence and ignoring the verdict of reality, hence prolonging the intensity of suffering.

Sociologists and anthropologists arrive by other means at similar conceptions. The funeral rites which exist in all societies have a double, dialectically articulated signification: a remembering of the dead, but a remembering as well *that they are dead*, and that life continues for others. Photography, much better than film, fits into this complex psycho-social operation, since it suppresses from its own appearance the primary marks of "livingness," and nevertheless conserves the convincing print of the object: a past presence.

All this does not concern only the photographs of loved ones. There are obviously many other kinds of photographs: landscapes, artistic compositions,

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[8] Sigmund Freud, "Mourning and Melancholia," *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, trans. James Strachey (London: The Hogarth Press and the Institute of Psycho-Analysis, 1953-1974), vol. 14.