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Ever since the compulsory school system was introduced, everybody knows how to write, and produces some texts or similar writings. This implies that everybody knows how to read, and can decipher easy texts like newspapers or novels. Ever since photo cameras have become cheap and automated, almost everybody owns one, and produces photos of one sort or another. This does not imply, however, that everybody knows how to decipher photos. What is here in cause is not only photo illiteracy, but the whole idea of "democratisation".

People buy cameras, (or get them for a present), because publicity has programmed them to do so. The camera acquired will tend to be of the "latest model", (cheaper, smaller, more automated and more efficient than the previous model), because the program of photo industry improves as it advances. It improves thanks to the feed-back with which it is fed by the behavior of the camera consumers. Very efficient channels exist to provide the industry with this feed-back: specialized magazines, market research, public opinion polls, and so forth. This is "democracy" in the post-industrial situation: society functions as a feed-back for automatic program improvements. The feed-back channels must be seen as the reverse of the distribution channels, and together they channel what may be called "social metabolism".

Cameras are structurally complex toys, but they are easy to play with. In this they are the opposite of games like chess or the French language, which are structurally rather simple, (few rules), but functionally complex, (it is difficult to play chess well or to speak good French). The snap shooter can make excellent photographs, without being aware of the complex processes he is provoking while pressing on the releaser. And he does not wish to be aware of them. The more the camera is automated, the less he is obliged to bother about camera function, the better. The automated structural complexity of the camera inebriates some snap shooters, and clubs for photo amateurs are opium dens of post-industrial society, where people drug themselves with automation.

In fact, to snap photos is very like drug addiction. People end up feeling naked without a camera, and they cannot look at the world except throu the camera structure, even when the camera is absent. The camera seduces its "owner", (the one who is possessed by it), to constantly press upon the releasers. A steady flow of photos is the result, and this stream innundates albums and other stores of "private" photos. He who inspects such an album, however, (one that registers a trip to Italy, for instance), will find that there is nothing "private" about it. It shows the places in Italy where the camera was, and how it seduced its owner there to press the button. The album is in fact a camera memory, where the photographer is an extended automatic releaser. The album shows the victory of apparatus over human intention. Except in "bad" pictures, where human intervention has changed the program.

The history of photography may be seen as a process of emancipation from this drug addiction. In its beginnings, people aimed at photographing ever new situations, (the Florence cathedral, trees, cows, other people), with always the same methods as they are inscribed within the camera program. They wanted to "doc-

ument" the world. In the end of photo history, people became aware that documentation is better achieved by fully automatized cameras, (like in satellites), and that human intervention disturbes documentation. What they now aim at is at photographing ever the same situations with always new methods which are somehow not inscribed in the camera program. They aim at "informative" photos, "information" being what is surprising, not seen before, unexpected. Photo history is a process of becoming aware of the meaning of "information". This is the difference between a snap shooter and a true photographer: the one loves automation, the other one struggles aginst it.

Since the snap shooter knows how to make excellent photos, (by just pressing the releaser), he is convinced that there is nothing in them to have to be deciphered. They are images which have been produced automatically, presumably because the world "out there" has impressed itself automatically into the picture. Since he does not know anything about what goes on within the black box, he is convinced that there is no need for photo criticism. Thus the more people snap photos, the more photo illiteracy is common. But this is not all to the illiterate "democratic" reception of photos. People do not try to decipher photos, because they despise them. Not only because anybody can make them, but also because they are cheap leaflets. A photo in a newspaper can be thrown away, crumpled, or one may wrap a sandwich in it. It is of no value. Now this illiteracy of photo reception is a danger.

Take the newspaper photo as an example, and suppose it is one of a scene in the Lebanon war. What one sees is a situation where each element gives a meaning to each other element and receives its own meaning from all the others. A "magical" situation charged with mythical meanings. The tanks are "bad", the children are "good", Beirut in flames is hell, the doctors clad in white are angels. Superhuman "powers" circulate within the situation, some of them with names like "imperialism", "zionism" "terrorism", and others are nameless. Now the photo has a linear text capture, and i is inserted in a newspaper text which has a linear structure. Which means that in th se texts the war scene is being "explained" by an enumeration of causes and effects. The scene there is not "magical", (neither "good" nor "bad"), but it is a historical event. However, the text does not really explain the photo, it is on the contrary illustrated by the photo. It serves the photo and it sustains it, (and need not be read at all). This inversion of the relation "photo-text", this dominance of image over text, is characteristic of our situation. The text is a photo pre-text. Therefore we are no longer interested in causal explanations: we can see what the war is like, and we can see that it is a magico-mythical situation.

Take another example. Suppose you see a poster advertizing a tooth brush. It shows a magic situation where the mythical "power" cavities roams and lurks as a devilish danger. It invites you to buy a tooth brush and exorcise that evil god by ritually brushing your teeths. Now of course you may look up "cavities" in your encyclopedia, in order to "explain" the situation. But you shall buy the tooth brush whatever be written in the encyclopedia, because its text has become a pre-text for the poster. This is the programmed function of photos: to emancipated people from the necessity to "explain", to use reason, and to have them behave in a ritual manner.

Now of course we still know how to read and write, will still have a critical faculty which we can use to criticize photos. We can discover, in the Lebanon photo, the newspaper program, and we can find out that the "powers" called "imperialism","zionism" or "terrorism" are inscribed in the program of the political party which has elaborated the newspaper program. We can discover, in the tooth brush poster, the program of the publicity agency, and we can find out that the "power" called "cavities" is inscribed in the program of the brush industry which has elaborated the publicity program. Still: it would be inconvenient if we did critize the photos. How are we then to behave, hold opions about the Lebanon, buy tooth brushes, and in general, how are we to function? If we explained everything, how are we to file papers, go to work, watch TV, take holidays, retire, and perform all those absurd gestures? Photos, (and all the technical images), are precisely meant to suffocate our critical reason, and to program us for our absurd function within apparatus.

Which shows what is so uncanny about illiterate photo reception. If we despise the photos, because anybody can make them, and because they have no value, they will program our lives for the sake of apparatus function. And they will program not only our behavior, but our experiences, our knowledge and our values as well. An every growing part of our experiences is due to uncriticized photos, we know about the world and our position in it through photos, and we evaluate the world in function of photos. In fact, uncritical photo reception results in robotisation.

Although photos, (like every image), irradiate a magical fascination, they are clear and distinct surfaces. The photo universe, as it surrounds us, is a mosaic composed of clear and distinct little stones, ("calculi"), which constantly are replaced one by another. This chameleon-like character of the photo universe, (it changes constantly its appearance and color, without ever changing its structure), is what programs us. Every morning new photos appear on our breakfast table, every week new photos on building walls and shop windows. Now this constant programmed change is the opposite of information. We expect that change, it does not surprise us, and the thing that would really "inform" us, shock us, would be a sudden standstill: every morning the same photos. "Progress" has become redundant, uninforming, and there is nothing more reactionary than to be progressive. Now this flood of ever changing redundant photos is our program: each experience of ours may be analysed into a series of photos, and so may each knowledge, and each value of ours. And each act of ours may be analyzed into a series of "actomes" based on a series of photos. And this reduction of all the phenomena of life to "bits of information", be those phenomena physiological or mental, is of course characteristic of robots. The universe of uncritically received photos is about to change us into robots, and we may already observe the robotisation: in our gestures, (at bank counters, in dancing, in voting), and in the remotest corners of our consciousness, (in the way we think, we feel, we desire).

If it is true that we are being programmed by photos, (and by all the other technical images), that they hold power over us, then this question arises: what is there to be done, (if anything can indeed be done), to arouse a critical attitude in the photo receivers? This question has two sides to it: one that concerns photo production, the other one that concerns photo criticism. I shall be concerned with the second side in my next lecture, and shall concentrate here on the first side. Let me

recall what I said about photo production in my fist lecture. A true photographer
is one who handles his camera against camera automation. He does so in search of
unexpected images, in search for information. Therefore, in as far as he succeeds
in his purpose, his images will pose problems for illiterate receivers. They will
nor "recognize" them as the images they are accustomed to, they will have to try
and interpret them. They will have to assume a critical attitude towards them.
And if a receiver is led to say to himself, in the face of a given photo: "what
is this?", then one may suppose that he will extend this criticism of his to all
the photos in the photo universe that surround him. Thus a true photographer will
contribute to the awakening of a critical attitude towards photos in general, and
help to bring about a level of consciousness in the receivers, one that is approp-
riate to his own level of photo production.

But this struggle of the photographer's against automation, (which is, as
I am trying to argue, a struggle for human freedom within an apparatus context),
requires a short consideration of the problem of automation. The following reason-
ing stands behind automation: The world is composed of pebble-like elements, (atoms
quanta, bits and the like), and these elements combine by chance to form structures
(objects, thoughts and the like). Thus, if left to chance, it takes an astronomic-
ally long time for a desired structure, (an information aimed at), to come about
spontaneously. For instance: it took billions of years for the human brain to come
about by chance, and if a chimpanzee ~~xxxxxxxxxxxx~~ were to type this typewriter by chance, it
would take him billions of years to type the text I am now writing. Now apparatus
accelerates enormously the rhythm of element combination, (of "computing). A word
processor is very much quicker than a chimpanzee is in typing. Therefore an appar-
atus may accelerate structure production, by reducing the astronomical time requir-
ed for it to human time dimensions. The problem is this: construct apparatus which
compute the elements fed into them with a very great speed, and have them stop the
moment the desired structure has come about. The rapid computation is "automation"
and the stopping at the desired moment is "program". In this way man is exempt
from "work", (from producing information), and he is free for stopping the autom-
aton at the desired moment, (he is free for "decisions").

However, something happened to the automatic apparatus which had not
been foreseen by its inventors. "Automation" of course means elimination of hum-
an intervention during the computing process. But computing goes on in such a
pace that it is impossible for humans to follow it, and therefore to have it stop
at the desired moment. The apparatus will roll on, autonomous of any human decis-
ion. A good example of such an automaton over which we have lost controll is the
nuclear war apparatus, but there are other examples. Apparatus tend to go on,
driven by their own inertia, and to produce structures which have not been desired
by the people who built them. As for human decision, it can no longer control
such apparatus, (have it stop at will), and it is now being taken as a function
of apparatus progress. Thus apparatus, meant to free men from work and for decis-
ion making, end up eliminating human decisions, and submitting society to the
inert, stupid chance combination of the elements fed into them.

If one looks at photo reception from this angle, the manipulation of society by the photos will be seen as a result of camera and distribution automation. Both cameras and distribution channels have escaped from human decision making, they just blindly realize all the virtualities fed into them, and there is no room left for decisions to be taken, for human freedom. This would be the "deeper" reason for the general illiteracy of society with regard to photos: there is no purpose in trying to control them. If you add to it, that people are inebriated by automation, and that the photos emanate a magical fascination, you will not be surprised at the power which photos, (and all the other technical images), hold over our acts experiences, knowledge and desires.

The true photographer may show us, however, that it is possible for us to emancipate ourselves from this domination. By showing us the sheer stupidity of apparatus. By showing us that it is possible to play against automation. To introduce human intention into the blind computing. Each photo which goes against automation, each "unexpected" photo, is a proof of human intelligence and imagination being superior to automatic computation. In this sense it is no exaggeration to say that the true photographer is one engaged in opening a space for human freedom within a context which is ever more automated. And that each photo produced in such an engagement is a window within our photo universe open toward freedom.

I shall resume what I tried to say in this lecture: The photo universe, as it surrounds us from all sides, is a mosaic of pictures produced automatically according to a program which has human origin, but which has become autonomous from human decisions. It is received by people who cannot decipher the individual images, nor the whole universe of pictures. The receivers despise the images, because they believe that they know how to make them by simply pressing on a releaser, and because the images are leaflets of no value. And this is why the images program society for a function which is in effect a feed-back for further automatic improvement of appparatus function. But true photographers show us that it is possible to outsmart this inert process of domination. Thus they may open up a new consciousness in the receivers of photos, one that permits them a critical reception. In short: freedom within an automatically programmed universe as is the photo universe is a game against automation. Once we have learned this strategy, we shall no longer be illiterate as far as photos are concerned.