

The Metaphor of a Photograph: The Relationship Between Philosophy, Art, and Digitisation in Photography

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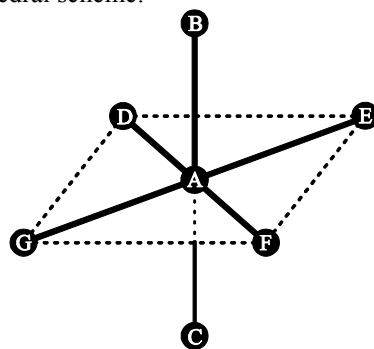
Abstract

What is discussed in this paper is about photography and photos from the point of view of philosophy and Art. This research uses the method of study of literature (library study) from a variety of sources such as journals, books, scientific articles and so on. Since the invention of photography, debate on the ontological status of the photo as an image of reality has become the center of attention of the experts of philosophy and theory of visual. On this occasion, the understanding of images and photography is discussed based on the views of Husserl with the concept of noëma and noësis, Heidegger, Sartre, Flusser and many others. On the other part, it is also explained about the influence of quantum theory on the development of photography which is related to the discourse of art and development of current digital technology, which leads to occurrence of psychosocial changes of the society in the form of "post human¹," "post industrial²," "post historical³," and "decontextualising⁴."

Keywords: Photography, Philosophy, Art, Photos, Digital.

1. Introduction

The course of human civilization until recently is colored by some important discoveries that affect the life of the world, one of which was the invention of photography. Literally, photography means painting with light. Without the presence of light, there is no photography, and photo is certainly not found. Since the invention of photography until today, photography affects many aspects of human life in social activities, covering the areas of philosophy, technology, arts and culture, education and social politics and business which are reflected in the following octahedral scheme:



Photography Octahedral Scheme:

- A: Photography
- B: Philosophy⁵
- C: Technology⁶
- D: Politics⁷
- E: Art & Culture⁸
- F: Education & Social⁹
- G: Business¹⁰

On this occasion, the influence of the philosophy and technology as well as art and culture against photography will be examined. Rene Descartes' teaching about deductive method, analytic, deterministic reductionist, logical reasoning, as well as the view of the nature of matter and science (science and technology), as well as the "determinism of Newton" regarded space and time as something static. It is worth to note that the Newtonian perspective which was formally used only for physical approach has expanded and rooted in other fields of science, among others in the field of humanities and continues to grow to dominate the realm of other science with its analytic method.

In the art world, the thoughts of Newtonian affect the activities of archives in the era of Modernism that ultimately produced the formalism approach giving priority to the principle of "art for the sake of art." Development of science suggests that determinism of Newton has to be corrected, Albert Einstein stated that time and space are not static, but rather relative and was reinforced by the findings of quantum physics that the core reality of the creature (being) was immeasurable indeed, uncertain and can only be determined on the basis of his being "occurrence" or "its" probability only. (J.P. McEvoy and Oscar Zarate, 1996)

Quantum theory argues that the core of the creatures is the duality of wave or particle of which status is interchangeable¹¹. When the particle turns into a wave and vice versa, it cannot be determined definitely. The paradigmatic shift from Newtonian classical physics into quantum physics as well as a change of modernism into Postmodernism and Contemporer, was made similar with this occurrence of a change from analogue photography towards digital photography. In this case, the artwork can be seen from its physical aspect and can be expressed as a metaphor of the particle while the creative ideas of the artist is a wave.

When the work is interpreted by an observer, the particle is converted into a wave and when the

meaning is written, the art article here is a wave that is converted into particles, and if the article of art is read and interpreted, then the particles turn back into waves, and so forth. (Dwi Marianto, 2015). Parallel to the above understanding, in the digital photography, duality of particles or waves occurs when the light (particles) are transformed into the image through the facilities of digital camera sensors.

2. Theoretical Basis

According to Vilém Flusser, the invention of photography was man's second important history after the discovery of writing. Photo as 'picture' dominates almost all human discourse, so that it can be said as "Inhabitants of the Photographic Universe." (Flusser, 2000) Liz Wells in "The Photography Reader," (2003) defines the image as something that describes objects, people and certain places through specific camera operation that freezes a moment in time. Photography contributes in the dislocation of space and time. Since the invention of photography, debates of the ontological status of the photo as an image of the reality have become the center of attention of the experts of philosophy and theory of the visual.

Edmund Husserl, stated that a photo is a picture that represents the imagination and representation of something that is not present, meaning the content of the photo is like images which are presented from the original object. Talking about the subject and object, Edmund Husserl argues in "Ideas Pertaining to a Pure Phenomenology and to a Phenomenology for Philosophy" (1982), that there must be the existence of consciousness regarding the subject-object referred to by the term 'epochè'¹². This awareness consists of two axis, first is 'Noësis,' i.e. the axis of I of subject that generates a value and a verdicts while the second is 'Noëma' i.e. the consciousness of a subject to an object or subject which see the objects as what they are (perceived as perceived).

Axis of 'Noësis' works related to how the subject gives meaning to the object, while the axis of 'Noëma' correlates with sensory device which is understood as inherent, as immanent in the mental processes, such as perception, verdict, like something, and the like. The perception of noematic according to Husserl indicates that the subject has an intuitive capture tools or immanent objects. According to Husserl, the state of the subject and object must have distance, in order there is a relationship between the subject-object, it is required a provision that allows the subject to reach object and the object is capable of opening himself to be known. What is meant by completeness here is the existence of 'transmitter' and 'receiver' i.e., the sender of the signal and the signal receiver.

The relation between 'Noësis' and 'Noëma' happens when the 'intentionality' occur i.e., when the subject experiences sensitively to understand the object, and the object is open to be known. The concept of 'Noësis' and 'Noëma' of Husserl can be applied in the field of photography, with subjects analogy here as a photographer who sees an object on a picture and check its attributes. After the analysis of the quality of the image object, then there will be subjective sentiment and it can only be understood by the photographer, such a sense of love towards the object. The process of shooting will happen if the events of 'Intentionality' arises i.e. the combination of 'Noësis' and 'Noëma' happens to the photographer with the help of 'Transmitter' or 'Receiver'; 'Camera' with all its capabilities.

Personality and experience dominate and affect the quality of the photographer in seeing the object of a photo. Photographers have a relationship with the object through three stages: First, 'Projection,' the photographers try to understand and feel the presence of an object. Secondly, 'Introjection,' the photographers try to understand the essence of quality or the object of a photo. Third, 'Confluence,' the photographer and the object unite, and then take the photograph. (Zakia, 2002)

Borrowing the term from Merleau-Ponty, that the process of photo shoot was 'the unity' between the photographer with the object of the photo so that the resulting photo has meaning. Therefore in this case, Husserl did not discuss the image difference in photography with image in painting, whereas the difference problem between photography and painting become a long debate in the history of photography (Scharf, 1974). In painting, the painter can make pictures based on the imagination or fantasy of his own with or without the reference of the physical world (real), on the contrary in a photo, the photo object is the real objects. Therefore there will never be a photo that is completely false.

Back on the ontological difference between paintings with photos, in "The Ontology of the Photographic Image" (1967), André Bazin clearly states: "Originality in Photography as distinct in painting lies in the essentially objective character of photography. In photography, for the first time this process of reproduction is without the intervention of a non-living agent and produced an image in an automatic way without the creative intervention of human being." Photographers are not like painters. They never create an object. According to Crimp, the development of photographic technique led to "the Death of Painting" because almost all of the painters in painting experience a "Contaminated with Photography." (Danto, 1977)

In his book "Kant and the Metaphysics (1990), Heidegger uses the photograph as a differentiator illustration regarding the imagination that is understood by Immanuel Kant. In this case, what is different with Kant is that Heidegger uses "Phenomenological Critique" to understand the concept of "imagination." Sartre

argues that there is a problem that concerns with the relationship between the object and the melody, where a "photograph" can explain how and why regarding the perception of the reality of an object, whereas "the image shown is in or on the photograph." (Sartre, 2004) Cheung Chan Fai in the *Hanbook of Phenomenological Aesthetics* (2010) on the section "Photography" stated that Husserl, Heidegger and Sartre uses the approach of phenomenology to distinguish between photograph by painting or by expression of other images. In his book, "Five Notes for a Phenomenology of Photographic Image" (1967), Hubert Damisch argues that a "photograph" is not just an image, but a "cultural object" which contains the meaning of history. How sophisticated the camera and program are, they would not necessarily produce a good photo because there are still many other factors outside the photo tools, but that the photographs are indeed phenomena in the phenomenological sense." In the world of photography we are unlikely to break away from the field of art, politics, economy and culture as well as the photographer itself

"The photographic image does not belong to the natural world. It is in a product of human labor, a cultural object... cannot be dissociated from its historical meaning precisely and necessarily datable from the project in the which it originates." (Trachtenberg, 1980)

Ardorno argues that thinking about photography of course involves a combination of "apparatus" and the program that involves the concept of freedom. In this case, the freedom in question is the freedom to use the camera, in which the melody as a creative process which is served by the programs contained in the well-known "apparatuses." On the progress of information technology nowadays, which became a problem was distributing information and making the program. Distribution of information is so fast and and so is the development of the programs as if the world is unlimited and can be folded according to your needs which result a state of "post history". As a result of the above circumstances, the result is a state of "post industry," which marked by a decline in production and manufacturing of goods as the main forms of economic activity and replaces by services that are affected by technology and new classes. Regarding the field of photography, Flusser argues that:

"Any such teleological model has now been transformed into the circular model of self reflexive, auto poietic apparatus. The US long as the photograph is not yet electromagnetic, it remains the fist of post-industrial object." (Flusser, 2000)

At the time that the photograph was Walter Benjamin might not lie, that photo icon is representative of the actual objects. Now the digital age, photos can lie but that never lie is a Digital camera. The process of creation and interpretation of the analog era with digital photos is already different. The photo is not only seen from the "Aura" of him, according to Walter Benjamin, but now the photos are already experiencing "Metamorphosis" become part of the "Service" of Art, science, economy and politics in the advancement of digital propaganda. The progress of digitization, then produced a State of "Post Human" which involves the field of "Science Fiction," "Futurology", "Contemporary Art" and "Post Philosophy."

3. Method

This Research uses the method of the study of literature. The study of literature or documentation is gathering data obtained from various documents both in the form of books, articles, journals, papers, previous research that relate to the problem that become the object of research. The research is qualitative descriptive, via diachronic-synchronic on the development of photography in the realm of philosophy, quantum theory and advance in digital technology. The study tries to find relation between philosophy, art, and digital by incorporating the understanding of quantum theory in the world of photography.

4. Discussion

In the era of Analog cameras (Film), there is a motto that says "photos never lie," but in this contemporary era, it can be said that it is "Digital camera," that never lies as what was stated by Donovan Wylie as follows :

"Digital photography has cleared away a misconception that should have been cleared away at the very beginning of Photography-the camera doesn't lie. Actually, the camera lies, photographers do. But photographers can also tell the truth, and that's what we should be concentrating on." (Badger, 2007)

Photographic representation is used as the medium of record or visual communication tools (Dennet, 2001) and on the one sides, photography is also regarded as a work of art, (O'Brien, 1995). Photography communicates a message in the form of expression of ideas, thoughts, and emotions that are a fact of presence. (Hildebrand, 2011). Photographers say something using the language of photos which give short hinted through photo objects. In the era of Modernism, photography functioned as artist "assistant", but in the era of Postmodernism, the artist is the photography itself and on this contemporary era, a photographer is an artist. In the Twenty First Century, Photography of the digital kind – wired, instantaneous; Automatic, malleable, a component of a larger multimedia-may eventually turn out to have a more distant relationship with the film and chemicals variety that came before it.

Like a digitally based photography, quantum physics in many ways is counter intuitive. One of the best. Known experiments in physics, the "double slit experiment," indicates that light is not just a wave, as was

previously thought, but simultaneously has both wave and particle qualities. In quantum physics, measurement results are versatile and not deterministic. Quantum theory is more than likely wrestled with certainty (Polkinghorne, 2002). Einstein says that quantum theory reminds him of "imaginary system of madness intelligence comprising the elements of thought which have no unity."¹³ The adjectives which are usually associated with quantum reality is absurd, odd, distracting, difficult to believe, and so on, thus it can be said that there is no description that really can fully describe reality at the sub-atomic level, both in the aspect of the particle and the wave aspects. Both aspects should be taken into account when we want to describe in one unified whole, therefore the basis for understanding the quantum reality is duality. (Zohar, 1990)

The reality of quantum is constantly moving and always in the process of being, so is in creating art. It is not just the activity to understand the phenomenon nor intellectual activity that explains how the phenomenon occurs, but it opens up a new territory, creating new expression or creating a new form or a new product in order to meet the need in the new situation or circumstances as well, with the initial consequence that what is produced is still considered to be foreign or cannot be digested and understood. (M. Dwi Maryanto, 2015). Light, the stuff of photography, concurrently manifests both the wave like the continuity of the analog photograph and the particle like discrete pixels of the digital image. Photography, analogue and digital, play with light but depicts the universe with Differing Assumptions. Photography Also has been taken to collapse multiple states into a singular state of affairs ("the camera never lies") in fact a close reading would suggest that photographic observation is given too much credit for clarity, and instead Often argues for multiple, overlapping states of being-not only physical, but also cultural and political.

Digitisation is not simply a transliteration of times or a simple technological process. With not only its changes in physical state but also the concomitant changes in meaning, digitising as essentially a cultural process. While digitising gives the illusion of enhanced access of collections, the process raises serious questions relating to the aesthetically driven selection of photographs, the potential cropping of images, the fidelity of the content and the authenticity of the digital photograph as evidence. Thus, while the digitising process has the potential to enliven the trajectories of individual photographs as image beyond current institutional boundaries, the process also realigns the concept of the collection and in going so undermines the nature of the archive. Institutions are not only framing understandings of the past through the selection of images, but framing the very way we understand historical source materials through shifting the styles of documentation from contextual to content.

The opportunity to manipulate both the subtle balance within and between archival collection and the image of the past that is presented through the digital collection as retained by those who control the means of production: the 'cultural institutions.' By amalgamating the aesthetic content of photographs with the contemporary politics of the market place economy, custodial institutions are complicit in creating new discursive systems that may obliterate previous meaning while lending their authority to a registering of the truth of the image in the new digital context. Digitising can at times be justified on the grounds of preserving the original by reducing handling while facilitating access to the image content. However, any short-term investment afforded in pursuit of current trend towards commercialisation of photograph collections should not be at the expense of long-term preservation of the provenance of the collection or the physical object from which the digital source originates with the new discursive space of the market place actively contributing to the dematerialising, dehistoricising and decontextualising of the photograph.

In photography's case ambiguity's collapse is usually aided-and often inappropriately forced-by captions that attempt to resolve the uncertainty by tell us, correctly or incorrectly, the caption is made to constrain the photograph into a single state rather than open it up to amplification. If a photograph is said to be worth a thousand words, very few of those words generally come to mind after a caption tells the reader what the photo is supposed to be about. The digital quantum photograph reinstates some of the uncertainty that surrounded the first photographs. It's not that photograph "never lies," but that in some ways it always does. Now the grandfather can be passed along side the grandson, each the same age; the ambiguities of two lovers' relationship (s) can be resolved, tentatively, imparallel universes. The photography of the future can explore and delineate universes where multiple principles are at work, and where existence is both solid and illusory. Photography will not so much stop or capture time acknowledge its space-time plasticity and track its meandering evolution.

Finally, will be "digital photography," synthesizing and analysing aspects of the universe in interesting and unusual ways, rather than beginning with a mythic wholeness and freezing small sections as two dimensional rectangles-the problem of the blind man befuddled by the elephant. The digital environments is a capable host for dealing with probabilities, complementary and essential dualisms, and connections over great distances as well as into future and past. In the digital quantum world, it might just be possible to be both, and more. To use an emerging Photography to delineate, document, and explore the Post Human. To dance with ambiguity. To introduce humility to the observer, as well as sense of belonging. To say yes and simultaneously, no. Photography may, as always, be seen as a confirmation. Or an exploration. A question or an answer. (Ritchin,

2009)

5. Conclusion

Light is an essential aspect in photography. Without light there will be no photography. Based on quantum theory, light can act as a particle or wave. In analog photography, light acts as a particle while in digital photography, light acts as a wave. By using a sophisticated digital camera, it is not an absolute requirement to produce a good photo. According to Vilem Flusser, to produce a good photo takes an interaction between "image, apparatus, program and information."

As a result of digital technology development, photography initiated the transition from the industrial and historical to the post industrial and post historical age. This was determined, by the shift or 'reduction' of power from the material to the symbolic and replaced matter and work with the twin pillars of information and play. Since the Nineteenth Century photography has been a means of self expression and an ambiguous social construct, a strategy of illuminate and certify as well as to distort and calcify. Based on quantum theory, the art of photography is an embodiment of the metaphor of a particle and a wave. Nowadays, photography has undergone a metamorphosis role from 'power' to 'style', from 'sacred' to 'trite'.

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Notes

1. Post human is derived from the concept that comes from the field of science fiction, futurology, contemporary art and philosophy. Literally it is interpreted as a human condition that can create different identities and

understand the world from different heterogeneous perspectives against intellectual rigor.

2. Post industry, first formulated in 1962 by Daniel Bell, later elaborated in "The Coming of Post-Industrial Society (1974)" to describe the social and economic changes in the late 20th century, marked by a decline in production and manufacturing of goods as the main forms of economic activity and replaced by services that are affected by technology and new classes.

3. Post history, in his book "Towards A Philosophy of Photography (2014)" Vilém Flusser defines as the translation of concepts back into ideas.

4. Decontextualising, is the result of advances in digital technology that are affected by the "Form of Commodity-based Politics" resulting in "The Loss of Contextually derived meaning" through digital manipulations.

5. See, Vilém Flusser (2000) in "Towards A Philosophy of Photography" pages 76-82.

6. See, Paul Virilio (1994) in "The Vision Machine" pages 47-56.

7. See, Ariella Azoulay (2012) in "Civil Imagination: A Political Ontology of Photography" pages 28-35.

8. See, Charlotte Cotton (2004) in "The Photograph as Contemporary Art, pages 8-19.

9. See, M. Derimann and J. Keller (2006) in the "Volitional Aspect of Multimedia Learning, Journal of Educational Multimedia and Hypermedia," 15 (2) 137-158.

10. See, Stephen Bull (2010) in "Photography," pages 62-78.

11. Quantum Theory based on the hypothesis of de Broglie that light has the properties which can be as a wave or as a particle.

12. The word epoche is the skeptic's brainchild of ancient Greek era. The sense was then used by Husserl as a technique to examine the essence of the phenomenon: "with regard to any positing we can quite freely exercise this peculiar epoche, A Certain refraining from judgment the which is compatible with the unshaken conviction of truth even with the Unshakeable conviction of evident truth . "(Edmund Husserl," Ideas pertaining to a Pure Phenomenology and to a Phenomenology of Philosophy, "Hague: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, 1982, 59-60).

13. Albert Einstein proved the truth of quantum theory through experimental research on "Photoelectric."