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CULTURAL PRACTICE OF PHOTOGRAPHY

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Introduction

Relevance of the research

Photography is the oldest of the technical ways of creating images. Since its inception, it has been widespread in society, and today, as part of the digital revolution, it has moved away from the chemical mode of image creation in mass use. Throughout its history, photography as a form of media has been deeply embedded in social relations and cultural practices. Going from being treated as a kind of document to a genre of contemporary art, it has always remained a part of culture. Like other media, photography reflects the society and culture that created and embraced it. It can be a powerful source of social and personal change, acting both overtly and subtly. Notwithstanding the multitude of approaches, photography has achieved a paradoxical credibility as a subjective and meaningful medium that is both credible and ultimately useful as a social and personal judge.

The philosophical reflection on photography and the critique of automatic images, since the very beginning of this medium, emerged stem from the ontologically considered function of objective evidence inherent in photography. On the basis of this premise, theories of the photographic image, such as index theory, have been constructed, and critiques of contemporary society as an image society that privileges its images over the world around it has developed. This approach allows us to examine the changes that photography has brought to culture, but it does not take into account the organisation of the practice of photography itself as a way of realising culture. Thus, the thematisation of photography in the philosophy of culture is linked to its consideration as a cultural practice.

Understood as a cultural practice, photography becomes a site of mediation between culture and personal experience. This takes it out of the realm of technology. The view that digital technology intensifies the practice of photography says nothing about that practice, and the assumption that the credibility of photography is undermined only by the ease of manipulation of digital file does not imply changes in the very procedure of establishing truth. The ways of seeing, the aesthetic and ethical views that

are part of culture can be analysed as they are realised through the practice of photography. These and other questions move the study of photography towards considering it as cultural practice. The main thesis of this study is that the practice of photography is a way of realising culture.

The study of photography as a cultural practice is therefore relevant in the following contexts:

First, in the context of using the practice of photography as a theoretical tool for the analysing culture. In other words, seeing the cultural conditioning of images and photographic practices in order to explicate from them normative structures that represent patterns of perception with are realised in society.

Secondly, within the context of the traditional metaphysical attitude of European philosophical thinking, namely optocentrism, the philosophy of the image, including the photographic image, represents a natural stage in the understanding of the world and self-knowledge.

Thirdly, in the context of image criticism. The existing concept, which addresses the potential for the image to cease functioning as a signifier of the existing order and to become inaccessible to the viewer, must be revised in a context where the capacity of representation is diminished. It becomes relevant to analyse the visual codes and normative systems responsible for organising the practice of photography, in which only images with a certain subject and referent are photographed and distributed, while places such, for example, as prisons are forbidden to be photographed.

Fourth, in the context of the development of such fields of thought as the philosophy of media and the philosophy of technology. Within this framework, it is important to analyse photography as a cultural practice that corresponds with the theoretical and practical demands of modernity.

Fifth, in the context of new cultural practices of photography. Today, the increase in the number of photographs, witch at first glance can be easily explained by the advent of digital photography, suggests not only that it has become easier to take photographs, but also that there is a reason to take more of them. It is essential to study these reasons

from the perspective philosophy of culture, as they are related to changes in the way culture is realised in the practice of individuals.

Sixth, in the context of cultural philosophy itself, the consideration of photography as a cultural practice expands the field of cultural philosophy and introduces additional tools of analysis to the discipline.

The object of the current study is the philosophical reflection on the practice of photography. **The subject** of the study is the mode of existence of photography as a cultural practice.

Current research of the subject

The study of the role of photography in culture and society has been presented in different aspects and on the basis of different approaches. Today, the concepts of photography by W. Benjamin, R. Barthes, S. Sontag, W. Flusser, R. Krauss, and A. van Lier, who study the ontology of the photographic image, are used.

Another context related to photography is the theory of the image. It is developed in the works of M. Merleau–Ponty, J.–L. Marion, J. Derrida, J. Didi–Huberman, and P. Virillo. In the field of semiotics, the theory of sign, as developed by C. Peirce and further elaborated upon by R. Barthes, constitutes a significant contribution to the discipline.

An important aspect in the interpretation of photography is the significance of the image for visual perception plays. This raises the question: what does the observer see when looking at the image? In this regard, research was conducted within the field of perception psychology by notable figures such as J. Gibson (ecological approach), R. Arnheim (psychology of art and perception of works of art), and V. M. Rozin (evolution of visual perception).

The study of the social use of photography, summarising a great deal of statistical material, is presented in a collective monograph by P. Bourdieu, L. Boltanski, R. Castel and J.–K. Chamboredon. Amateur photography was examined in the work of R. Chalfen. A. Rouillet developed a holistic concept that traces the genealogy of photography from the document to modern art.

The political significance of photography is explored in the works of A. Azulei and F. Ritchin. The connection between photography and memory is presented in the work of S. A. Lishaev. The understanding of photography within the framework of media theory is studied in the works of M. McLuhan and F. Kitler. The history of photography is presented in the works of V. Levashov, M. Friso and J. Heking. The aesthetics of the Soviet photographic avantgarde is the subject of studies by A. N. Fomenko.

Among the Russian speaking authors who have dealt with the phenomenon of photography, we can mention V. V. Savchuk, N. N. Sosna, E. V. Petrovskaya, A. K. Sekatsky, O. V. Gavrishina, M. Rylkin, V. A. Podoroga, O. Y. Boytsova, E. V. Vasilieva.

The role of photography in the conceptualisation of reality is examined by E. B. Karbasova, while D. A. Kolesnikova investigates the process of constructing social experience. The cultural significance of everyday photography is revealed by M. M. Gurieva, and amateur photography as part of the culture of everyday life is revealed by O. Y. Boytsova. Psychological aspects of the practice of photography are described by V.V. Nurkova.

It is also necessary to note the variety of institutional journals dedicated to the philosophical understanding of photography. Among them are "Philosophy of Photography", "History of Photography", "Photographies". Many international conferences which take place around the world, such as 'The Photographic Universe' (NYC), 'What do we talk about when we talk about photography' (Moscow), 'After (Post) Photography' (St Petersburg), etc., are devoted to the phenomenon of photography

The aim of the study is to understand the phenomenon of photography as a type of cultural practice.

The aim of the research implies the solution of the following **tasks:**

1. To clarify the concept of cultural practice and determine the specificity of photography as a cultural practice.

2. To determine the specificity of the perception of the photographic image.

3. To analyse the essence of the photographic image in connection with the transition from analogue to digital technology of its production.

4. To highlight the essential characteristics of the photographic image.

5. To reveal the cultural prerequisites for the formation of the normativity of photography.

6. To describe the most common cultural practices of photography.

Scientific novelty

The scientific novelty of the results of the doctoral thesis consists of the following:

1. The characteristics of photographic temporality are described, combining the process of realisation (epiphenomenon of technological functioning) and the process of actualisation (linking memory, the present of objects and future of the image).

2. The concept of photography is clarified, on the one hand, as enculturation, i.e. the involvement of a person in the world of visual culture, mastering of cultural norms and values, and on the other hand, as the objectification of the inner culture of a person.

3. The main dimensions of the normativity of photography are analysed in order to demonstrate the subordination of photography to cultural norms.

4. The point is put forward and substantiated: the reality amplified by the digital environment requires creation of photographs for the photoconstruction of online life, leading to the intensification of the practice of photography.

5. The main functions of the cultural practice of photography are identified: firstly, deceleration (the process of actualising the virtual state of things and events), and secondly, repetition (replacing articulated complex forms of protection based on rituals).

6. A concept is suggested, according to which three dimensions of the photographic are linked: the technique of photography, the practice of photography and the essence of the photographic image. The concept makes it possible to describe the cultural practice of photography as a method of the philosophy of culture.

The theoretical and practical significance of the obtained results

The theoretical significance of the results of the thesis research is to demonstrate the need of expanding the problematic field of the philosophy of culture by including the sphere of photography, in all its practices and manifestations. The findings of this research can be used for further studies of the role of photography in culture, in both synchronistic and diachronic contexts. The conclusions of the study can also contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of change in culture and the factors that cause them.

The practical findings of the study can be applied as a theoretical basis for understanding the ways in which the image impact individuals, for example, in the field of advertising or public relations, political control and agitation. Furthermore, they can provide a more holistic perception of photography for students in photography and photojournalism programs. The results of the thesis can be used to develop a lecture course on philosophy of culture, as well as in special courses on the philosophy of photography and the image theory.

The methodology and methods of the research are determined by the scientific speciality (5.7.8 Philosophical anthropology, philosophy of culture), as well as the object and subject of the research. The following approaches and methods were primary used:

— The ontological approach was used to define the essence and most important characteristics of the photographic image.

— The essentialist approach was applied to explain the cultural practice of photography, based on the formulated principles of the essence of photographic images.

— The phenomenological approach was used to describe the main cultural practices of photography.

— The systemic approach was applied to determine the plase of cultural practices of photography within the overall system of culture.

At different stages of the research employed a variety of analytical techniques, including typology, modelling, comparative analysis and the comparative method. Additionally, the sociological methods, as evidenced by system analysis and statistical

approaches, were used to describe some everyday practices of photography. The socio-critical method was also applied to analyse the impact of photography on society.

The results obtained allow us to formulate the following **statements to be defended**:

1. Photography is a cultural phenomenon, playing a dual role in this regard, combining cultural normativity and individual memory. Consequently, the cultural practice of photography encompasses the processes of interiorising of existing culture and objectifying of subjectivity.

2. The quality of documentality ascribed to photography is a construct, as it reflects the ways of seeing shaped by the cultural values and norms of the corresponding epoch.

3. An ambivalent interpretation of the nature of photography enables us to perceive it as a privileged mode of cultural reflection.

4. The examination of the cultural conditioning of photography provides a basis for highlighting its fundamental functions, namely deceleration and repetition. These functions are responsible for creating historicity and identity at the individual level.

5. The analysis of photographic temporality emphasises two key aspects: firstly, the fixation of the object in the image (the realisation of matter), and secondly, the movement from the virtual to the actual (the actualisation of memory). The realisation occurs at the level of the matter and is constituted by a series of rules: the rule of the imprint (which establishes a transition from the matter of things to the matter of images in a linear, mechanistic manner); the rule of framing (which involves cropping, selection of the shooting point, line of sight and shutter speed); and the rule of optics and perspective (which produces similarity). The actualisation of memory occurs as a result of the correlation between perception and the virtual image stored in memory, at the boundary between memory, the surrounding world and the future image.

6. Amateur practice of photography serves four functions: socialisation in culture, symbolic communication, construction of identity, and actualisation of memory. It reflects the system of collective values, norms, and ideals. In viewing other photographs and creating their own, there is unconscious expression and recreation of cultural normativity, demonstrating group affiliation. Amateur photography practice, basing on the documentary nature of the photographic image on the one hand, and the ability of actualise personal or collective memory on the other, creates a generalised image that unites the personal, social, cultural and historical.

Validity and approbation of the results of research

The main ideas and results of the thesis research were used in publications and reports at scientific conferences, such us 'After (Post)photography' (2015, 2016), Furthermore, the subject of the thesis has been discussed in lectures and seminars within the educational programmes 'PhotoDepartment. Institute' and 'Space of Photography' at the State Museum and Exhibition Centre ROSPHOTO, as well as in pedagogical practice.

On the subject of the thesis six articles, in which the theoretical principles and the results of the work are reflected, were published.

Papers published in the leading peer-reviewed journals (mentioned in the list of Higher Attestation Commission of the Russian Federation):

1. Khoroshilov, A. A. The normativity of photography: modelling visibility and education of the eye / A. A. Khoroshilov // Uchyonye zapiski Krymskogo federal'nogo universiteta im. V. I. Vernadskogo. Filosofiya. Kul'turologiya. Politologiya. — 2024. — T. 10. № 1. — Pp. 18–29. *(In Russian)*.
2. Khoroshilov, A. A. Photographic temporality. / A. A. Khoroshilov // Vestnik Russkoj hristianskoj gumanitarnoj akademii. — 2024. — Vol. 25, vol. 1. — Pp. 292–302. *(In Russian)*.

3. Khoroshilov, A. A. Revolution in media: Photography in the digital environment / A. A. Khoroshilov // Vestnik Russkoj hristianskoj gumanitarnoj akademii. — 2015. — Vol. 15, vol. 1. — Pp. 354–361. *(In Russian).*

4. Khoroshilov, A. A. Photography and visual perception / A. A. Khoroshilov // Vestnik Adygejskogo gosudarstvennogo universiteta, seriya Regionovedenie. — 2015. — vol. 1. — Pp. 33–40. *(In Russian).*

5. Khoroshilov, A. A. A. Real and digital space of social experience: photo— design of life / A. A. Khoroshilov // Istoricheskie, filosofskie, politicheskie i yuridicheskie nauki, kul'turologiya i iskusstvovedenie. Voprosy teorii i praktiki. — 2015. — № 4. PART 2. — Pp. 179–182. *(In Russian).*

Other scholarly publications in scientific journals RSCI (Russian Science Citation Index):

6. Khoroshilov, A. A. Delay and repetition: photography as a way of defense against the chaos of the social world / A. A. Khoroshilov // Studia Culturae — 2015. — vol. 1 (23). — Pp. 188–200. *(In Russian).*

The structure of the thesis

The thesis consists of an introduction, two chapters, a conclusion and a list of references used.

The principal scientific results are reflected in the relevant published scientific articles presented by the author of thesis in the list of publications and reflected in the list of references.

1. Two characteristics of the temporal perception of the photographic image are formulated: the realisation of matter and the actualisation of memory. These characteristics give the photograph objectivity through registration and subjectivity through memory, incorporating the past into the present. The moment of taking a photograph is always both a mechanical registration, an automatic action, objectivity, and

a subjective process of actualisation, carried out through the similarity of perception and the virtual image of memory[1].

2.   The normative processes behind the cultural practice of photography are analysed. The normativity of photography manifests in three main aspects: the authoritative control over the creation and distribution of images; the cultural code that determines the preferred type and subject of images; and the aesthetic principle that regulates the sphere of the photogenic. From this we can conclude that photography is a constructed image that obscures reality with images. Consequently, the idea of photography as a way of transparently representing the world should be adjusted to consider its essence as an expression of a certain cultural code and a way of seeing. Within society, the cultural practice of photography reproduces visual orders through the education of the gaze[2].

3.   Two functions of the cultural practice of photography, based on its relationship to science and its industrial origins, are formulated: deceleration and repetition. Industrialisation created a situation in which society, by abandoning any ethos in favour of mechanical repetition, on the one hand, freed itself from the substantive side of the ritual that limited and restrained development, while on the other hand, abandoned the predictable order that ensured stability. This double cancellation determined the further development of society, which was manifested in an ever-increasing speed of life. Deceleration and repetition are related to the modern way of perception and are a way of adapting to the increasing speed of the socio-cultural world. The practice of photography acts as a kind of ritual activity, liberated meaning, from presenting itself as a grandiose deceleration, fixation in the image of the virtual state of the world and the repetition of this image in photography. The ability to capture and see again, to attain a certain stable form and confirm identity, becomes fundamental functions of the cultural practice of photography, aimed at overcoming the speed of social changes[3].

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[1] Khoroshilov, A. A. Photographic temporality. / A. A. Khoroshilov // Vestnik Russkoj hristianskoj gumanitarnoj akademii. 2024. Vol. 25, vol. 1. Pp. 292–302. (*In Russian*).

[2] Khoroshilov, A. A. The normativity of photography: modelling visibility and education of the eye / A. A. Khoroshilov // Uchyonye zapiski Krymskogo federal'nogo universiteta im. V. I. Vernadskogo. Filosofiya. Kul'turologiya. Politologiya. — 2024. T. 10. № 1. Pp. 18–29. *(In Russian)*.

[3] Khoroshilov, A. A. Slowdown and repetition: photography as a way of defence against the chaos of the social world / A. A. Khoroshilov // Studia Culturae. 2015. vol. 1 (23). Pp. 188–200. *(In Russian)*.

4.   Based on an ecological approach to visual perception, the fundamental principles of image perception have been formulated. It is demonstrated that photographs do not have a projective relationship with the subjects depicted and can be constructed according to a culturally fixed mode of perception. Thus, it can be concluded that photography can be used as a theoretical tool for analysing culture[4].

5. Based on an analysis of the main essential differences between digital and analogue media, using photography as an example, the consequences of the transition from analogue to digital media are described. The profound changes in both cultural practices and ways of perceiving the world, organising memory and structuring human experience are demonstrated[5].

6.   The phenomenon of photoconstructing life — a way of demonstrating one's online presence — is described. Presence in online life requires constant updating of a person's 'profile', which creates a demand for the practice of photography. The expansion of the digital environment into human life leads to specific changes in the entire complex of elements involved in the formation of the subject. In order to be present in the digital environment, it is necessary to constantly digitised everything, and in order to reduce the amount of 'insoluble residue' of the surrounding world, the latter must be maximally adapted in advance to the possibilities of the digital world. The process of photoconstructing life is not only aimed at presenting one's image online, but also, conversely, at structuring one's life in such a way that it can be captured in photographs with the least amount of insoluble residue[6].

[4] Khoroshilov, A. A. Photography and visual perception / A. A. Khoroshilov // Vestnik Adygejskogo gosudarstvennogo universiteta, seriya Regionovedenie. 2015. vol. 1. Pp. 33–40. *(In Russian).*

[5] Khoroshilov, A. A. Revolution in media: Photography in the digital environment / A. A. Khoroshilov // Vestnik Russkoj hristianskoj gumanitarnoj akademii. 2015. Vol. 15, vol. 1. Pp. 354–361. *(In Russian).*

[6] Khoroshilov, A. A. A. Real and digital space of social experience: photo—design of life / A. A. Khoroshilov // Istoricheskie, filosofskie, politicheskie i yuridicheskie nauki, kul'turologiya i iskusstvovedenie. Voprosy teorii i praktiki. 2015. № 4. PART 2. Pp. 179–182. *(In Russian).*

Chapter 1. Photography's place in visual culture

1.1 The concept of cultural practice

The subject of this study is the cultural practice of photography. However, before considering the subject of this study, it is necessary to define a more general concept of cultural practice. An analysis of the literature reveals that, although it is in common use, it remains undefined. In order to define the meaning of the concept of cultural practice, it is first necessary to consider each of its terms separately.

Practice as a philosophical concept has a history that almost coincides with the history of Western philosophy. For example, the article devoted to this concept in the 'New Encyclopaedia of Philosophy'[7] lists approaches to the consideration of practice from Plato to the middle of the 20th century (J. P. Sartre, M. Foucault, M. Heidegger). Separate disciplines, such as praxeology, were created to study the phenomenon of practice. Since our task is not a historical and philosophical analysis of the concept of practice, and since the subject of this study relates to photography, a widespread phenomenon, it will be appropriate to rely on the generally accepted ideas present in social and humanitarian disciplines. In this respect, the generic term for practice is activity. On this basis, it is possible to formulate several elements of the concept of practice. Practice has an expedient character, is aimed at achieving a goal and presupposes the presence of will. The next element, related to the first, is the presence of a motive that leads to practice. The third element is related to the course of a certain process, combining actions and means, through which the practice is realised and has a transformative character. The fourth element of the content defined by the generic concept is the connection, correlation or pairing with a person, i.e. a person always practices. The last necessary element of the content of the concept of practice can be formulated on the basis of the opposite concept of theory. If the latter is a system of views, perceptions and ideas, the former is an act

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[7] Ogurtsov A. P. Practice // Novaja filosofskaja jenciklopedija: v 4 t. / Institut filosofii RAN; Nacional'nyj obshhestvenno-nauchnyj fond. URL: https://iphlib.ru/library/collection/newphilenc/document/HASH01fe0f0c925aa0b3a12b1bfd (accessed: 16.10.2024). *(In Russian).*

capable of combining ethical, aesthetic and cognitive aspects (practice as a criterion of truth).

On the basis of the use of the word practice in language, we can define several contexts of its meaning: practice as a certain type of subject, transformative activity, directed both outwardly and towards a person; practice as training, assimilation or preparation; practice as the implementation of theory; practice as a systematic, repeated activity; practice as a set of experiences, techniques and skills in any field of activity; practice as the application and consolidation of knowledge in practice; practice as an activity that produces nothing; practice as an activity that produces nothing. Such a number of contexts does not allow us to strictly limit the scope of the concept of practice. What all these meanings have in common, however, is a transformative attitude towards the world and man, repetition and intentionality. Practice, then, is a purposeful activity aimed at transforming the world and man. And let us stress once again that such an understanding of practice makes it possible to evaluate it aesthetically and ethically, and to use it for cognitive purposes.

The history of the concept of culture is no less long. The first use of the concept of 'culture' in written sources is found in Marcus Porcius Cato treatise 'De Agri Cultura' (Latin for 'Farming'), which is a practical guide to agriculture. Cato the Elder introduces the idea of distinguishing between cultivated and wild plants and animals. Farming is a cultural activity because it is based on the work of selection carried out by man to breed the necessary characteristics in plants. The use of the term culture, in a sense close to the modern one, was made by Cicero in the 'Tusculan Disputations'. In this work he used the concept of culture, which in everyday language meant the cultivation of the land, in a figurative sense, speaking of the development of the human mind in the process of learning and education. Cicero believed that a deep mind is formed through philosophical reflection and called philosophy the culture of the mind. So, the history of the term is more than two thousand years. And in that time, it has been defined many times. A common place is a reference to the work of Kroeber and Kluckhohn[8], published in 1952,

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[8] Kroeber, A. L., Kluckhohn, C. Culture: A Critical Review of Concepts and Definitions. New York: Vintage Books, 1952. 172 p.

where the authors attempted to collect in one place all the definitions of the concept of culture found in the literature. The result was a list indexed in groups from A to G with sub-groups, totalling over 200 definitions.

As in the case of the concept of practice, let us limit our consideration of the concept of culture to its logical content. Society is the generalising concept for culture. Culture always exists in society, it permeates and accompanies all elements and phenomena of social life. The concept that is opposite to culture in terms of its content is nature. Culture is artificial, created by man, and is the opposite of nature. It is the most important aspect of social life, directly involved in human activity, which distinguishes human existence from animal existence. A certain regularity can be traced in the process of evolution of the concept of 'culture'. At first, culture was considered to be everything created by man. Then attention began to be paid to the analysis of human activity, behaviour and communication, which create a special sphere of human existence, opposite to nature. At the same time, man himself belongs to each of these worlds, which is usually referred to as his biosocial nature. This definition will allow us to point out the general position of culture in society.

Man, as a living being, emerged as a result of biological evolution. The most detailed and reliable description of this process today is the modern synthesis, based on the combination of Darwinism and genetics. The three main pillars of this theory are variability, inheritance and natural selection. Parental genes are discretely passed on to offspring, and mutations can occur, the optimality of which is determined in the process of interaction between the organism and the environment. It is important to note that only those genes are passed on to offspring that the parents themselves received from their parents, and that the genes themselves do not change in any way during the life of the organism. In other words, acquired characteristics are not inherited. This means that skills, knowledge, experiences and traumas acquired during life are not passed on to the next generation.

However, at the turn of the 18th and 19th centuries, before the emergence of the theory of natural selection, the idea of direct adaptation, directed mutation or inheritance of acquired traits - Lamarckism - was formulated in science. Despite the repeated

refutations of this theory in 19th and 20th century science[9] as a description of the process of biological evolution, the explanatory power of this theory gives a fruitful result if we transfer it to the socio-cultural sphere. If man evolves as a biological species according to Darwin, he evolves as a social being according to Lamarck. The human body is not as deeply specialised as that of other creatures. In natural conditions, man is inferior to other animals in terms of adaptation. However, the lack of specialisation is compensated by high versatility and ability to adapt to the surrounding conditions with the help of external objects (instead of wool - clothes, claws and fangs - weapons, etc.). But the accumulated experience, knowledge and skills that ensure successful adaptation to natural conditions would never be preserved (i.e. each new generation would start all over again) if there were no other than genetic, supra-biological way of transmitting them from generation to generation.

Algorithms of activity, communication and behaviour are embedded in a variety of knowledge, experience, skills, abilities, practices, norms, ideas, values, beliefs, etc. They form a supra-biological field of social experience. The form in which this experience is fixed and transmitted is culture. Acquired experience is formalised or encoded in the form of cultural phenomena, which makes it possible to transfer experience from one person to another in a supra-biological, supra-natural way, ensuring the reproduction and transformation of social life and society as a whole. As Y.N. Solonin wrote: "In his cultural activity, man creates values, defines them, fixes them, and thus provides the possibility of their accumulation and transmission to subsequent generations"[10].

In other words, sociocultural evolution is Lamarckian, i.e. the acquired traits - the totality of social experience - are inherited in the form of culture, without being fixed in the genotype. This ensures an unprecedented speed of development of society. If we take the period from the Neolithic Revolution to the present time, it took approximately ten thousand years from the first sedentary and nomadic communities engaged in the simplest productive economy to the exploration of the Earth orbit. Whereas in that time, humans as a species have not changed. On the other hand, this carries risks of the same rapid

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[9] See Zhukov B. Darwinism in the XXI century. Moscow: AST Publishing House, 2020. Chapter 4. Lamarckism. *(In Russian)*.
[10] Cultural studies: textbook / ed. by Y.N. Solonin, M.S. Kagan. Moscow: Higher Education, 2008. P. 18. *(In Russian)*.

degradation of society in case of loss of culture that preserved and transmitted social experience. For example, the Dark Ages in Ancient Greece, characterised by the decline of culture, including the loss of writing. Or the economic decline of Ancient Russia after the beginning of the Tatar-Mongol yoke, associated, among other things, with the loss of craft technologies transmitted orally. It is important to emphasise that even such a basic skill as upright posture is culturally mediated and is formed only in society.

Culture is not only retrospective and conservative. No fundamental, major social change is possible without a change in culture. The simplest example is the productive function of science, which ensures the integration of acquired knowledge into the production process, which in turn leads to the emergence of new types of technology and media, leading to significant changes in social reality, corporeality and culture. Art, religion and architecture can work in a similar way. Phenomena such as language, mythology, religion, science, technology, norms (morality, law, customs, etc.), values, fashion, art, politics, economics, architecture, etc. become the result of the consolidation of social experience in the form of culture. As an element of social reality, these phenomena are realised in a certain way, have their own meaning and therefore become cultural.

The consideration of cultural phenomena is also informed by an understanding of their ideal and object dimension, which is typically conceptualised as a division of culture into material and spiritual realms. The relationship between these two levels of culture can be elucidated as follows: elements of material culture (which serve quite practical purposes) serve as a means of objectifying, storing, and transmitting spiritual culture. This process is mutually reinforcing, such that it is futile to debate the primacy of an idea or its material manifestation. Spiritual culture in its purest form is inextricably linked to material embodiment, both in terms of its consumption and transmission. There are various methods of materialisation of the spirit, including physical-bodily, material-technical, socio-organisational, sign-informational, and others. It is also important to note that there is a third level of culture, which is in addition to the material and spiritual levels. This is the level of artistic culture, in which the material and spiritual are combined in the process of artistic creation, resulting in a unique fusion of the two. Therefore, culture can

be defined as a way of organising, preserving, reproducing and changing social experience in the process of development and activity of man and society.

Let us try to formulate the concept of cultural practice, taking into account the content of the concepts considered. It becomes clear that cultural practice is a purposeful activity in the sphere of culture, connected with creation or recreation of its elements, either through subject, transforming activity, or through training, preparation, assimilation and repetition. In other words, cultural practice is the process of realising culture. Culture as a whole is in a virtual state, and in the process of cultural practice its transition to the actual state, i.e. realisation, takes place. The difference between the concept of practice and cultural practice is that the latter has an additional meaning that is not exhausted by the actions necessary in the process of practice. In cultural practice, man expresses ideas, goals, desires, ideals, etc. He puts into it something that objectively, outside the relationship with man and his consciousness, does not exist and cannot exist in it. Practice becomes cultural when it is accompanied by a person's spiritual activity. On this basis, practice is oriented towards the realisation of the material mechanism of culture, and cultural practice is associated with the realisation of the teleological-axiological, spiritual and moral potential of culture.

The preservation of cultural practices can affect a culture's ability to survive. Practices keep culture alive, and it is no coincidence that the international legalisation of this concept is linked to the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples[11]. We can use a naturalistic metaphor and think of culture as the blood of society and cultural practices as the heart that circulates it through the body, ultimately ensuring the life of the whole social body. Cultural practice accompanies the process of socialisation and iculturalisation. In this connection, it is noteworthy in Russian pedagogy that the methodology of cultural practices has been extensively developed in pre-school educational institutions[12], and that the FGOS stipulates the need to develop educational programs aimed at the development of various cultural practices[13]. For example, the

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[11] United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. URL: https://undocs.org/A/RES/61/295 (accessed: 16.10.2024).
[12] Korotkova N.A. Educational process in groups of children of senior preschool age. Moscow: Linka-Press, 2015. 208 p. *(In Russian).*
[13] Federal State Educational Standard. URL: https://fgos.ru/fgos/fgos-do/ (accessed: 16.10.2024). *(In Russian).*

following types of practices are distinguished: practices of cultural identification and interaction of the child with the surrounding society; communicative practices; cultural practices of healthy lifestyle; cultural practices of behaviour and attitude formation; cultural practices of cognition of the world and self-discovery, etc.

The classification of cultural practices can be done according to the identified spheres of culture (spiritual, material, artistic), their branches and ramifications, as well as by indicating universal types of practices as certain activities found in every sphere of culture. The concept of spiritual practices is quite broad and is often associated with different types of religious practices such as prayer, meditation, asceticism, etc. But they are also part of philosophy, which is understood as the art of living and includes practical aspects[14]. Inculturation, initiation, speech, thought and other cultural activities can be seen as types of spiritual practice through which a culture is transmitted, reproduced and realised when its ultimate goal is the realm of the ideal. Material practice is most often understood as sensual and material activity, realised through labour in the process of production, and aimed at the transformation of nature, man and society. Production practice is said to be a kind of training and teaching of future labour activity, which is also a practice of creating goods and services. Through the practice of reform, changes in social life are realised, and physical exercise is the practice of transforming the body. To generalise, we can say that material practice realises the sensually perceived part of culture: from the body to the factory. The basis of artistic practice is "the activity of artists, performers, managers, collectors, gallerists, auctioneers, curators, critics <...> the creation of works by the author is complemented and extended by the processes of promotion, interpretation, museum storage, auction and gallery sales, exhibition at biennials, distribution of images and texts on the Internet, concerts, films, which act as a sphere of circulation of works of art"[15]. In general, artistic practice is built around the work of art - its creation, exhibition and storage.

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[14] Ado P. Spiritual Exercises and Ancient Philosophy. Moscow; St. Petersburg: 'Stepnoy Vet'; ID 'Kolo', 2005. 448 p. *(In Russian).*

[15] Suvorov N.N. Practitioners in the field of artistic culture // Vestnik Sankt-Peterburgskogo gosudarstvennogo universiteta kul'tury i iskusstv. 2017. Issue 2 (31). P. 49. *(In Russian).*

Universal cultural practices can be found in every cultural sphere, and their general function is to create and recreate cultural phenomena. Exercise is one of these practices. The role of exercise can be found in Plato: "What is called exercise is caused by nothing other than the loss of knowledge, for forgetting is the loss of some knowledge, and exercise, which makes us remember what we have forgotten, preserves our knowledge to such an extent that it appears to be the same"[16]. And in another place: "Your zeal for reasoning, be assured, is excellent and divine, but while you are still young, try to exercise more in what most people consider and call idle talk, otherwise the truth will elude you"[17]. Practice is defined as a way of preserving, teaching and training. And while the above passages speak of knowledge and truth, which places exercise in the realm of spiritual practices, it would not be difficult to point out its equal role in the realm of material and artistic practices, and even their combination. For example, ballet exercises such as soté, arabesque, entr'acte, etc., which not only exercise the body but also have artistic expression as part of the choreography. Exercise can be eloquence, dexterity, thought, aesthetic taste, imagination, ritual - any manifestation of culture that needs to be preserved, reproduced and transmitted in a social environment. But exercise is not an end in itself; it is a tool or a means. Having achieved a certain goal through exercise, having learned the necessary baggage of culture, we move into the realm of creative, free and constructive cultural practice. Creativity, then, is another universal type of cultural practice. It implies the creation of new things, new meanings, and their materialisation in turn leads to the creation of higher cultural objects. The concept of cultural practice thus combines two tendencies inherent in every culture: self-reproduction and development.

The systemic approach to classification shows the complexity of the phenomenon of cultural practices, but attention should be paid to the interconnectedness both of cultural practices within individual cultural spheres and of these spheres themselves. The mode of material production leads to changes in the social, political and spiritual spheres. Religious values form the necessary qualities of personality that form the basis for a certain type of economic activity. The dominance of market relations leads to the

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[16] Plato. Symposium // Plato. Collected Works in 4 vol. Vol. 2. M.: Mysl, 1993. P. 118. *(In Russian).*
[17] Plato. Parmenides // Plato. Collected Works in 4 vol. Vol. 2. M.: Mysl, 1993. P. 358. *(In Russian).*

commercialisation of art. Concepts of art become instruments of ideological struggle and cultural domination[18]. Finally, works of art form and express values and lead to concrete changes in the life of society. For example, how Chekhov's "Sakhalin Island" led to changes in the penal system of the Russian Empire. Culture as a whole exists as a result of the interaction of its parts and is greater than its sum. Since culture exists in society and all social phenomena are accompanied and formalised in the form of culture, it makes sense to correlate the often-highlighted spheres of society with the above-mentioned spheres of culture in order to expand the classification of cultural practices.

The social sphere of society, which is based on social stratification and the process of interaction between social groups and individuals, is formed in the form of material and spiritual culture as a certain set of features of social strata (classes, estates, etc.), the system of their values and norms, ways of socialisation and communication. Thus, the social sphere is realised through cultural practices of communication, education, identification, etc. The economic sphere of society, which is linked to the production of economic goods, is also formalised in the form of material and spiritual culture. Goods and services, economic and financial system - all these and other artefacts and phenomena of economic activity are realised as cultural practices of production, distribution, exchange, consumption. They are cultural because every economic good, norm or process has a certain meaning and value that is specific to each culture. The political sphere of society is associated with the exercise of power. It is represented in the form of institutional, normative, communicative, ideological and other subsystems. The political sphere is also formed in the form of material and spiritual culture and is realised as a cultural practice of elections, legislation and law enforcement, courts, recruitment of elites, etc. The spiritual sphere of society is most often associated with the concept of culture in general, as it is represented by activities directly related to the sphere of the ideal: art (aesthetics), science, philosophy, religion, morality (ethics), education. It is here that we encounter artistic cultural practices carried out by artists, curators and critics. It is here that spiritual values, considered to be of paramount importance and embodying

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[18] Aude de Kerros. Contemporary Art and Geopolitics. Chronicles of economic and cultural domination. Moscow, Kuchkovo Pole: 2022. 352 p. *(In Russian).*

creativity as such, become central, and the connection between spiritual and material cultural artefacts is most evident. The practices of ritual, learning, experimenting, thinking, acting - all these and more make up the diversity of cultural practices realised within the spiritual sphere of society.

The characteristics listed show that culture is closely related to society and formalises social life. However, society and culture cannot be identified, because a certain element of culture, depending on the place and time, can be realised in different social forms and, conversely, one and the same social phenomenon can be fixed in different cultural phenomena. It should be noted that the existence of all the above-mentioned spheres of society is realised through the functioning of social institutions, which are their constituent parts. And since each social institution is a set of norms, values and sanctions, institutions, signs and symbols, a system of statuses and roles, united to fulfil some social function, its activity can be understood as a cultural practice. The activity of social institutions presupposes intentionality, very specific tasks, the realisation of which is linked to the repeated repetition of the same thing, necessary for the recreation of social reality. The institute of the family carries out the primary socialisation of children, the institute of production creates economic benefits, the institute of the state maintains social order, the institute of education carries out the transmission of accumulated knowledge - all this is not only represented by a certain algorithm of action, but is also loaded with meaning and significance, which speaks of the connection with culture and cultural certainty. And therefore, the activities of social institutions can be considered as cultural practices, because they are related to the creation or recreation of culture.

Thus, cultural practices reproduce culture and contribute to its recreation, preservation, assimilation and development. Or, if culture is a way of consolidating social experience, then cultural practices are a way for individuals, social groups or whole nations to internalise it. But what is the social experience that underlies culture?

The problem of experience has been discussed at length in the philosophical tradition, especially in relation to the question of the justification of knowledge. It is central to two philosophical concepts: the philosophical system of I. Kant and the transcendental phenomenology of E. Husserl. Within the framework of the discussion of

the problem of experience in the history of philosophy, philosophy of science, theory of knowledge and cognitive science, several general conclusions can be formulated. First, that experience has traditionally been identified with sense knowledge. Secondly, that there are different types of experience: everyday experience, recorded in natural language and in the rules of 'common sense', the results of everyday practice; systematic observation applied in science; scientific experiment, etc.

In his article 'Experience as Knowledge of Diversity', Ilya Theodorovich Kasavin shows how experience can be understood as a process of apprehending sensory diversity, and contrasts this formulation of experience with Kant's definition of experience as the unity of sensory diversity. Kasavin begins by considering how we ascribe to objects and states of things a particular predicate that must express the essence of the matter, i.e. be true. For example, the expression 'snow is white', which is true if snow is indeed white in colour. But the conjunction 'if', which links colour to a particular substance, is a soft-modal condition of truth, because it allows the concept of truth to be easily applied to expressions of a meta-language, whereas such an application to the reality of the environment may be too simplistic. The attempt to define snow as only white is confronted with the data of experience, when the former can take on an indescribable number of shades from white to black. Yet we have no difficulty in distinguishing snow from grass, or from what is not snow, on the basis of its white colour. Kasavin writes: "We fix this whiteness not even in spite of, but thanks to, the numerous conventions we adopt, which are nothing more than coiled descriptions of situations of snow observation in which snow had to be distinguished from other substances in one way or another"[19]. It is only in such a situation that whiteness becomes an essential characteristic of snow and acquires the status of truth. The duration of observations has a direct effect on this status, which may explain why for a mid-latitude inhabitant the predicate 'white' is quite acceptable for snow, whereas for a Chukchi or Eskimo it will be incomplete and careless.

The perception of the world around us is subject to certain historically formed socio-cultural perceptions. For a child, who has not adopted linguistic and sensory prescriptions, the world around him or her appears differently than for an adult, in whom

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[19] Kasavin I. T. Experience as knowledge of diversity // Filosofskie nauki. 1996. №1. Vol. 2. p. 50. *(In Russian).*

there is a Kantian who ascribes laws to nature. The complexity of the situation also lies in the fact that not only is there a difference in perception between children and adults, but even among adults the perceptual structuring of the world is different and changes depending on the environment or historical period[20]. Other examples are occupations that involve intensive work with sensory qualities. They show how difficult it is to express in language sensations which are available to perception through purposeful work and which are not represented in language. The musician, the artist, the wine taster express their perceptions by means of metaphorically extended everyday language, in which terms such as 'floral bouquet' for wine express, in part or in full, certain qualifications that cannot be reduced to the meaning of the expression in everyday language. Such an evaluation, which can only be understood and read by the same experts, does not contain a logical distinction of sensory quality, but only speaks of this distinction. The structuring of sensory data and the possibility of distinguishing them is based on the example of jurisprudence. It is not a universal law, but previous experience that determines the quality of a sensation. This is true both for narrow specialists, as a reference to authority or a generally shared position, and for ordinary experience.

There is an opinion that the perception of the world is always associated with a limited variety of sensations. In the first few months of life a child is, if we can say so, deprived of experience and therefore does not really see and control its movements, although at the same time it sees more and moves more freely than an adult. The adult's perceptual structure, in turn, excludes familiar or trivial features of objects that are not considered in everyday actions. He sees more than the infant, but only in the sense that his perception is loaded with meanings that contain non-empirical components. The paradoxical nature of this situation is pointed out by Kasavin: "The development of sensuality is a process of constant reduction of sensual content, and the progress of empirical sciences represents their transformation into non-empirical (a priori?) sciences"[21]. This paradox makes it possible to suggest that the experience of perception does not consist in an increasing degree of ordering of the surrounding world by means

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[20] On the evolution of vision and the development of visual perception see: Rozin V. M. Visual Culture and Perception. How Man Sees and Understands the World. Moscow: Editorial URSS, 2004. 224 p. *(In Russian).*
[21] Kasavin I. T. Experience as knowledge of diversity // Filosofskie nauki. 1996. №1. Vol. 2. Pp. 53-54. *(In Russian).*

of sensual prescriptions, but in increasing differences in the ways of perceiving the surrounding world. Thus, we can conclude that the concept of experience in general does not refer to the reasoned unity of sensual diversity, but to the process of apprehending sensual diversity as such, its essence in a situation of increasing types of its reasoned ordering. Thus, we contrast the idea of universal experience and its unity with the idea of local experience and its heterogeneity. Starting from the position of experience as knowledge of the diversity of sensory data, which cannot be reduced to unity, we take into account its possible universal and local existence. Living experience is always linked to specific conditions and local particularities. At the same time, the experience accumulated in culture has a greater universality, but it is also capable of acquiring local features and becoming the basis for the formation of living experience.

The sphere of experience thus implies both its homogeneity, universality, and its heterogeneity, locality. Moving on to the concept of social experience, let us ask ourselves: is there a clear division of experience into personal-local, not related to the acquisition of knowledge mediated by society, and social-universal, formed in the process of social interaction and learning; a division into subjective and objective experience? This opposition between personal and social experience seems far-fetched and contradictory, as Bourdieu points out: "Subjective intuitionism, which seeks to find meaning in the immediacy of experience, would not be worthy of attention for a moment if it did not play the role of an alibi for objectivism, which confines itself to establishing regular relations and perceiving their statistical significance without deciphering their real meaning"[22]. The concept of social experience involves overcoming this opposition between local and universal experience. If social experience is possible, it is because there are external, independent of individual will, necessary, often unconscious and unexplainable relations. Since individuals do not have a fully exhaustive sense of their behaviour as a direct given of their consciousness, their actions have more meaning than they are aware of and than they desire. Social experience, therefore, presupposes both reflection on subjective experience and objective experience of objective relations. This concept must necessarily

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[22] Bourdieu P., Boltanski L., Castel R., Chamboredon J.-C. Public Art: Experience on the Social Use of Photography. Moscow: Izdatel'skaja i konsaltingovaja gruppa «Praksis», 2014. P. 16. *(In Russian).*

reveal an objectified meaning, the result of the objectification of subjectivity, which is not directly accessible either to the actors or to an outside observer.

In other words, the concept of social experience, to use Bourdieu's terms, describes objectified subjectivity, which refers to the interiorisation of objectivity. The concept of social experience thus presupposes the following points: lived experience, personal and local, which refers to objective meanings; universal experience; and the social conditions of the possibility of this experience, between which the relations of the individual and the objective meaning of his action are built. Social experience, as knowledge of objective social practice, remains abstract as long as we do not include the process of actualising objectivity in the activity of subjects. The consideration of social experience should be based on the analysis of the process of rooting objectivity in subjective experience, i.e. interiorisation, and the process of assimilation and reproduction of social experience through culture and cultural practice, i.e. exteriorisation. Social experience, based on social norms or objective regularities, requires consideration of how this objectivity, through its assimilation as external social activity, shapes the internal structures of human experience, leading to the formation of unconscious systems and dispositions such as social habitus and ethos. The concept of social experience must include the knowledge of how the multiplicity of local experiences, this multiplicity of perceptions, economic and social sanctions, throughout life from childhood, constantly reminding us of ourselves, form that unconscious which is paradoxically defined as common sense and objective conditions; and conversely, the knowledge of how objective relations exist and are realised through a process of interiorisation which results in a set of personal dispositions. The gap between universal and local experience is bridged by the concept of social experience, which mediates the location of the objective and the subjective. In general, social experience, which serves as the basis for the possibility of social action, is a process of interiorisation of exteriority and objectification of subjectivity. It is the condition of all perception, action and thought, which, although not its direct product, can only be understood on the basis of its principle. The question remains: *can the practice of photography realise social experience in the form of culture?*

Photography is the sum of the following three practices: making or taking photographs; perceiving the finished photographic images and using them in the process of communication; and posing in front of the camera while taking photographs. To use Roland Barthes' terminology, these three practices can be given the following names: Operator, the photographer, the one who takes the pictures; Spectator, the one who looks at the pictures; Spectrum, the one who is photographed, the referent[23].

A photographer uses a camera to take pictures. The process is trivial, familiar to everyone in one way or another, but essential to what we photograph and how we photograph it. In essence, the photographer is in a triple frame, his actions guided firstly by motivation, both the desire and the external requirement to take photographs, secondly by the choice of what is worthy of being filmed and what is not, and thirdly by the technical possibilities of the equipment used. The photographer's action is thus determined by social norms, psychology, aesthetics and technique. Incidentally, it should be noted that the photographic process is not generally recognised as being determined by such a variety of conditions, and the concept of a 'good' or 'successful' photograph is often identified with the degree of perfection and automaticity of the technique used. More sophisticated amateurs, who have moved beyond the argument of technical perfection and are aware of the role of the photographer, his skills and abilities in the process of creating photographs, even use the phrase 'masterpiece button'. This is an ironic reference to the constant urge to buy a new camera that will take the best photos, regardless of the circumstances, simply by pressing the shutter button. Meanwhile, even if the production of the photographs is entirely dependent on the camera, the photographs themselves speak of choices involving aesthetic values and the concept of normality. While from a theoretical point of view the process of photographic development tends to make the whole world truly photogenic out of a theoretically infinite variety of photographs, the practice of photography tends to isolate and produce only a finite and definite field of genres, subjects and compositions.

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[23] Barthes R. Camera Lucida. Commentary on Photography. Moscow: Ad Marginem Press LLC, 2011. Pp. 24-26. *(In Russian).*

The process of perceiving finished images is related to vision. This in turn raises the question: what do we see when we look at photographs? This practice of photography comes closest to the question of visual perception. The necessary parts to consider this practice are both the process of perception itself and the meaning of the perceived image. The latter is key to the process of communication through photographs and implies a certain visual language. And despite the apparent similarity between the photograph and the scene depicted, the perception of photographs depends on culturally developed systems of knowledge transmission and is not exhausted by mimesis. Finally, the third element of photographic practice, posing or submitting to the process of being photographed, consists of assuming a certain pose or capturing an arbitrary moment of movement in front of the camera. The pose taken in front of the lens, in one way or another, raises the question of corporeality, which, from the point of view of philosophical anthropology, can be seen as a sign and a certain kind of photographic hieratism.

If the practice of photography is both technically and economically accessible and is not defined by systems of explicit and codified norms, then for the subjects who practice it, normativity is defined by the subject, its occurrence and modality. In this context, the analysis of the meaning that subjects give to the practice of photography, in its three aspects, is a unique means of exploring, in the most authentic expression, questions of technique, psychology, aesthetics, social normativity, anthropology and visual perception.

But behind this multiplicity of discourses, is there not a common ground that defines the meaning of photography in all these practices? The scope of what is culturally defined as photogenic, i.e. what can and should be photographed, as opposed to the actual possible multiplicity of images, is defined by implicit models that are made possible by the practice of photography and its result, because they objectively demonstrate the meaning that each social group assigns to the act of photography, ontologically elevating the perceived object to the status of an object that deserves to be photographed, i.e. fixed, preserved, demonstrated. The normativity that defines the practice of photography through the opposition between the photogenic and the non-photogenic is rooted in a system of implicit values specific to a society, culture, group, profession or school, and

is always only part of a more general norm, even if it seeks autonomy. In this sense, to adequately perceive a photograph - no matter who took it: a housewife, an office manager, a keen amateur, a commercial photographer or a photographic artist - means not only to grasp the meanings it conveys, i.e. the author's intentions, but also to decipher the surplus of significance it contains as a result of its belonging to a certain era, a certain culture. If, at first glance, the practice of photography seems to fall into the realm of individual improvisation, freedom in the choice of subject, composition and pose, due to the diversity of images and the lack of tradition, a closer look reveals that there is no practice more regulated and conventional than the practice of photography.

It is now possible to talk about the correlation between the concept of social experience and the practice of photography. It turns out that the listed practices of photography are part of the system of values and normativity, i.e. they are part of social experience, understood in the sense described above. Photography, this product of conditionality, and its study necessarily involve a consideration of society and the process of social experience of which photography is a part. But just as a particular element of culture can be realised in different social forms, so a particular social institution can be represented in different forms of culture and cultural practice. And this means that the practice of photography is cultural, i.e. it aims to realise culture by creating and recreating artefacts and sign systems that contain meaning and significance and frame socio-cultural experience. The practice of photography - the process of taking pictures, perceiving images and posing in front of the camera - is cultural when it undergoes a spiritual processing that gives it additional meaning. This means that the shot, the pose, the subject expresses more than it represents. The practice of photography contains a meaning that can only be accessed through cultural knowledge. Investigating the cultural practice of photography means considering the functions it fulfils in culture in relation to its realisation in individual practice, in local experience. It also involves answering the question of why it is predisposed to perform these functions, i.e. combining an empirical description of the cultural practice of photography with an ontology of the photographic image.

1.2 Visual experience and photography[24]

There is nothing special or unique, unusual or unfamiliar about photographs today; they do not evoke wonder as they did almost two centuries ago. The task of perceiving and understanding them is one that everyone manages quite successfully, and the increase in the number of photographs produced every day is easily explained by digital technology and the spread of computers. What is the purpose of a photographer? What is the function of a photograph? What does a photograph show us? The naive viewer will say that photographs represent the world itself. "Such a viewer tacitly assumes that he sees the outside world through the photograph, and that therefore the universe of the photograph coincides with the outside world "[25]. Consequently, photography makes it easy to show the world what the author has chosen to photograph. But we encounter different images: colour or black and white, on paper or digital. After all, photography itself is always a composition, since the frame cannot contain the entire optical structure. Is there anything like the black and white or digital order of things in the world? Is the photographed subject exhausted by the single point of view from which it is depicted? All in all, a series of questions arise that question the existence of photography as an imprint of reality, representing and verifying it. The following discussion aims to show additional functions of the cultural practice of photography that exist on a par with documentary registration.

There is a central, one might even say traditional, thread in the history of thinking about photography, which is the ontological approach to thinking about the photographic image. At the heart of this approach is the task of defining the essence of photography for what it really is. In order to answer this question, one has usually resorted to a description of the photographic mode of image production itself and drawn conclusions from this procedure. The task was to define photography as a certain kind of technique and the result of its work through a single essential expression: "Photography is...". And since the search was based on the consideration of the craft part of the process of producing

[24] Khoroshilov, A. A. Photography and visual perception / A. A. Khoroshilov // Vestnik Adygejskogo gosudarstvennogo universiteta, seriya Regionovedenie. 2015. vol. 1. Pp. 33-40. *(In Russian).*
[25] Flusser W. For the Philosophy of Photography. SPb.: Izd-vo S.-Peterb. un-ta, 2008. P. 46. *(In Russian).*

photographic images and their visual similarity to the objects of the surrounding world, the answer to the question of the essence of photography was usually built around the following: it is an automatic - without human participation - technique of creating images with the help of light reflected from objects; due to its automatism and the peculiarity of the chemical process of image manifestation, photography can be considered a document and a reliable fact about its referent. In general terms, this movement is most fully expressed in the famous noema of photography formulated by Roland Barthes - "it was there". "In the case of photography, unlike other forms of imitation, one cannot deny that the thing was there"[26].

However, as researcher André Rouille points out, "Barthes's 'it is' is nothing but a represented material thing that is assumed to exist before the image and is registered in an image that is quite transparent. The concept of "it was" locks photography into the nook of the metaphysical problematics of being and beingness, it presses things always invisible images and completely neglects photographic forms"[27]. This approach to the study of photography aims at defining its essence and is reduced to the consideration of its visual characteristics. That is, it does not provide any basis for the study of photography's influence on contemporary society and culture, it does not allow to investigate the phenomenon as a theoretical tool, i.e. as a means to analyse cultural processes, largely subordinating photography to the authority of the original from which the image originates. But is the constant growth in the number of photographs produced behind the mute need for documentation, the need for the constant presence of the fact of 'it was' in relation to the passing moment, life, epoch? Or are there reasons that necessitate the creation of photographs more than a mere desire for documentation of the order of things in the world around us? In other words, are there any other possibilities that photographs, each one he encounters and each one he makes, offer to man?

To answer this question, it is necessary to show how it is possible to move from the theory of photography, the ontology of the photographic image, to the philosophy of photography. To do this, it is necessary to describe the main features of human visual

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[26] Barthes R. Camera Lucida. Commentary on Photography. Moscow: Ad Marginem Press LLC, 2011. P. 135. *(In Russian)*.

[27] Rouille A. Photography. Between Document and Contemporary Art. SPb.: Cloudberry, 2014. P. 11. *(In Russian)*.

perception and, through them, to show how we perceive images in general and photographs in particular. This means answering the following questions: What makes an image (photograph) visible? What do we see when we look at a picture (photograph)? What possibilities does the image (photograph) offer to its viewer and author? The answer to these questions will show that photographic images are not limited to their conventional understanding and can serve as a means of analysing culture and society. Let us start with the question of how we perceive the world through sight, since photographs and objects of the world around us are perceived visually by us. Photographs, if we can put it that way, are made to be seen, and it is only in the context of visual perception that we can talk about the perception of a photograph. Starting from the general concept of visual perception, we need to consider the specific type of perception we are interested in - the perception of images - and determine what makes a photograph visible, or how we define an image as a snapshot. Ultimately, this will help to articulate the possibilities that photography offers to human beings, both as a technique and as a finished image. This will serve as a basis for interpreting it as a theoretical tool for analysing and investigating the culture in which it is realised as a cultural practice.

In order to answer the above questions, we will use the concept of the psychologist J. Gibson, presented in the monograph "Ecological Approach to Visual Perception"[28]. This concept was chosen for its originality. Within its framework, the author solves a number of problems that are unsolved both for the theory of the retinal image and for the phenomenological approach to visual perception. Also important in Gibson's ecological approach are the author's theory of information extraction and possibility theory. The former shows that the process of perceiving the surrounding world is inseparable from one's own cognition, and that the difference between perception and cognition lies in the quantitative scale. The second theory shows that the process of perception is related to the discovery of the possibilities offered by the world around the observer. Using Gibson's research as a tool to analyse the perception of photographs, we can answer the question: what do we see when we look at photographs?

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[28] Gibson J. Ecological approach to visual perception. Moscow: Progress, 1988. 446 p. *(In Russian).*

In general terms, the process of perception, according to Gibson, is a psychosomatic act of the living observer. It is a process of direct contact with the external world, a process of experiencing impressions of objects. Perception, presented as an act of the living observer, means that it is an active process for which the mere irritation of the senses by the external environment is not sufficient. The process of perception is a flow, i.e. it is not a series of stimuli separated in time, it is neither interrupted nor terminated. In this approach to perception, Gibson converges with Bergson, who also insisted on the continuity of mental life as a whole. "My existence, according to Bergson, is an endless stream on which, like fireflies on the side of the road at night, my consciousness fixes my most vivid states. Mental life is a whole (despite its apparent discontinuity, its discontinuity) in which the next state includes the previous and presupposes the next"[29]. In addition to continuity, the process of perception, according to Gibson, involves a process of co-perception or proprioception. The process of perception is impossible without an awareness of the self and its place in the world around it.

The observer can perceive the following: places, attached and isolated objects, stable substances (solid, liquid, gaseous), events. Also perceived are the possibilities that these elements offer to the observer. The elements of perception and their quality are determined by the information we perceive. To illustrate the above, consider a place such as a cliff. A cliff is a very important detail of the terrain. It is possible to fall off it. The perception of such a place must include, in addition to the layout and texture of its surfaces, a perception of its possibilities, and negative ones at that. Every surface or object has a certain relationship to the viewer. A cliff is a large difference in height relative to the animal, while a step is quite small. The observer must perceive the possibilities of objects or events in the surrounding world, not just the layout of its surfaces, for this is crucial. To support this conclusion, Gibson cites the results of an experiment on the perception of a reference surface. In the glass floor experiment, when a sheet of transparent glass replaced the reference surface, animals and children moved freely on this floor when they could both see and touch the surface. In this case, textured paper was placed directly under

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[29] Bergson A. Creative evolution // Bergson A. Creative evolution. Matter and Memory. Mn.: Harvest, 1999. Pp. 16-17. *(In Russian).*

the glass. However, when the animals could only touch the supporting surface of the floor (this was achieved by placing the paper well below the glass), they shrank, showed signs of discomfort and some animals adopted a posture corresponding to their fall. On the basis of the given example, we can agree that information about elements of the surrounding world contains their quality and possibilities. The process of information extraction, i.e. perception, is related to the observer's self-perception. In the glass floor experiment, participants pay attention to the relationship between the floor and their bodies. Perception and proprioception in space complement each other.

According to Gibson, the process of perception is not the responsibility of individual sensory organs (sight-eye, smell-nose), but of entire perceptual systems. They are active, i.e. the observer's eye is not simply irritated by the stream of light, but the observer himself is actively thinking, listening. It is important to note that the fact that vision is a phenomenon of activity is also insisted on by other researchers, for example V.M. Rozin[30], J. Berger[31]. According to Gibson, the perceptive visual system consists of the following elements: lens, pupil, two eyes, head, body. In other words, a person's whole body is involved in the process of visual perception. "The quality of the data with which the individual senses deal is determined by the types of receptors stimulated, while the perceptual system, its functioning, is determined by the quality of the objects of the external world and the possibilities they offer"[32]. Information about the world around us is not specialised in relation to our senses, there is no separate information for photoreceptors, mechanoreceptors, etc. There are receptor responses - sensations - and they are immaterial in terms of perception. There is information for perceptual systems and the observer directly experiences the quality of things in the surrounding world.

The visual system is capable of recognising constants and changes. A person perceiving information distinguishes stable elements from the flow of stimuli, while remaining aware of the flow itself. Certain invariants of the optical structure, which themselves have no form, correspond to unchanging objects. Any movement of an object

[30] Rozin V. M. Visual Culture and Perception. How Man Sees and Understands the World. Moscow: Editorial URSS, 2004. Pp. 40-46. *(In Russian).*
[31] Berger J. The Art of Seeing. SPb.: Cloudberry, 2012. P. 11. *(In Russian).*
[32] Gibson J. Ecological approach to visual perception. Moscow: Progress, 1988. P. 348. *(In Russian).*

corresponds to its disturbance of the optical structure - perspective transformation. To perceive, taking into account the above parameters, means to fix certain parameters of invariance in the stimulus stream together with certain parameters of perturbation. This has important consequences: invariants determine the constancy of the environment and the constancy of the observer; if they are not perceived, perception is impossible; if the parameters of the optical structure are distinguishable, events are perceived, i.e. events are determined by the perturbation of the optical structure.

By developing the theory of information extraction, Gibson shows that there is no gap between perception and knowledge. The same processes occur in perception and cognition - extraction and abstraction of invariants. The difference between perception and cognition is quantitative, not qualitative. Perception is inseparable from cognition. Visual perception is associated with the realisation of the stable structure of the surrounding world. Cognition is an extension of this perceptual process. Gibson relates all the above statements to direct perception of the surrounding world. He calls the perception of images mediated perception. And to perceive an image is to perceive an optical system with a certain structure. The first characteristic of this structure is that it does not change in time and is determined from a single fixed point of observation. That is to say, no matter how many times we look at the image from any point of observation that reveals it to us during any interval of time, the same structure of the optical system will be perceived.

Another important feature of image perception is that it shows invariants, not just shapes and their arrangement. The basis for this statement is that the perception of an isolated object does not consist of a set of its individual shapes, but depends on the time-invariant properties of this family of shapes. This means that individual members of this family share at least some of these invariants. This is why we can recognise objects in photographs or paintings. Behind an object such as an apple is the whole family of possible forms of that fruit, to which all existing and possible apples correspond. The number of forms is directly related to the number of apples that exist. In this situation, in order to determine that there is an apple in the picture, we must first know the whole family of forms corresponding to apples. This is obviously impossible. "If the perception

of objects depends on the detection of invariants rather than on the perception of shape, then the detection of some invariants must be a consequence of the fact of shape perception itself"[33]. Thus, among the objects of the surrounding world, images represent a specially treated surface that provides a kind of frozen structures with their underlying invariants. And it is always such a surface that represents something other than what it is.

Images are always processed surfaces, and we always see them surrounded by other surfaces that are not images. In addition to the invariants of the arrangement of surfaces that the image shows, there are invariants of the surface of the image itself. It can be a canvas, paper, screen, wall, etc. An image is both a scene and a surface. And we see the scene behind the surface. An image is a surface that exists in itself, but at the same time it is an object to be shown, providing information about another object. The viewer cannot see both at the same time. This is the paradox: one perceived content contradicts the other. We are able to distinguish the surface of the image itself from the surface in the image. So, the objects of the image are not perceived and are perceived. The image implies two modes of perception: direct and indirect. In addition to the perception of the surface of the image, there is the indirect perception of the surfaces depicted. Both are necessary to understand an image.

The image does not offer form to the gaze. Of course, it can, but the purpose of an image is to manifest the invariants that alone can make it visible, to show what it represents. We can identify an object as a photograph by its features: a paper or other surface, rectangular in shape, delineated by patches of colour. But we can't see anything behind those patches, so we have a photographic image, but it's really just a coloured surface. This can happen when we cannot perceive invariants.

Gibson proposes to distinguish two groups of images based on the methods of their creation: photographic and chirographic. The first involves a lens-eye system, some kind of equipment - some kind of camera - and a chemical or physical process to create the image. The second method of image making involves an eye-hand system, a particular material - any surface on which to draw, including a canvas - and a tool for representing the movement of the hand that reproduces the distinctive features of the object being

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[33] Gibson J. Ecological approach to visual perception. Moscow: Progress, 1988. P. 382. *(In Russian)*.

depicted. What each group of pictures has in common is that they are created, they have an author. And because images have to be created, they can be seen, like text, as a kind of writing. This comparison is suggested by language and expressions such as: painting a picture, light painting.

Images are similar to text in that they can be viewed multiple times, they enable communication between their viewers. Images also allow the accumulation, storage, deletion or replacement of information extracted by the viewer. However, only a certain kind of information can be communicated through text. Every piece of information expressed in language has been previously embedded in it. Knowledge expressed in language is explicit knowledge. It is therefore different from implicit knowledge. People can express in language what they know, thus making it available for transmission. However, perception precedes expression and cannot be exhausted in language. We will always see more than what we are able to tell. What we can name from the data of our perception are concepts (abstractions) and they do not exhaust what we can see. The knowledge conveyed by images is implicit, it cannot be expressed in words. In principle, it is impossible to describe in words the vast majority of invariants contained in the visibility produced by an image. The author (artist or photographer) can grasp them, but cannot put them into words. The creation of a series of paintings or photographs as an attempt at a kind of storytelling seems to be based on this principle.

By means of an image it is possible to convey information without transforming it into another form. Images capture and convey invariants by means of an optical structure in which these invariants more or less coincide with the invariants available in direct perception. Natural invariants begin to be identified with graphic invariants. This is the basis of any perception of images. However, as in the case of text, in the process of image perception it is impossible to be sure of the reality of the perceived content. What is asserted may correspond to reality, but it may also turn out to be fiction. A judgement can be true or false. An image cannot be true in the same sense that a statement is true, but it may or may not reflect reality.

Creating images is never copying. Not even a tiny part of the world around you can be copied. Only another image can be copied. Therefore, the copy-original relationship

does not work when comparing the real world and an image. An image is not just a representation or imitation of the original. It contains some information about what it represents, but this does not mean that it is in projective correspondence with what it represents. A real scene cannot be completely reconstructed with the help of an image. It is possible to preserve some of its invariants, but no more. A photograph cannot preserve all the information available at a given point of observation in the natural environment, because this information is inexhaustible. A image is not an imitation of what has been seen before. Nor can it be seen as a means of going back and looking again. It is information that is registered, captured and stored, not sensory data. The perception of an image is not like the perception of the world around us.

A child drawing a person, an animal or a table for the first time captures the invariants he has learned to identify. We start drawing with sensations and gradually move on to concepts. With images we can extract invariants. But much of the information about the world around us is lost in an image. What is lost is what can only be seen when the observer moves away from the changing perspective of the visible world. In the optical structure created by the image at the point of observation, it is not the shape and colour but the invariants that are informative.

An image, then, is an imprint that allows others to see what its creator has seen. However, in the gap between the image and the thing from which it emerges, which arises because the image is not in projective correspondence with what it represents, worlds emerge, it allows them to emerge. These worlds are based, on the one hand, on the properties of real objects and, on the other, attribute to real objects the quality of images. Or, as Susan Sontag writes: "The primordial notion of the duality of images is based on the idea that an image has the properties of a real object; we tend to attribute to real things the properties of images. Images have turned their weapons against reality; they have gone from being copies to being models of reality. This leads to the extension of the theory of photography into social theory"[34].

On the basis of the above provisions, photography offers the possibility of fixing invariants of the optical structure with the help of technology, in order to demonstrate

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[34] Sontag S. On Photography. Moscow: Ad Marginem Press LLC, 2013. P. 207. *(In Russian)*.

them later on the surface. At the same time, there is no reason to claim that any photograph fully represents the subject or event it depicts. The perception of photographs depends on culturally developed systems of knowledge transmission. It is within these coordinates that the difference between reality and fiction in a photograph is defined. But whose image does the photograph offer? From which original is it derived? The image has no original other than itself. It is free from the demands of an original other than itself. In the words of Jean-Luc Marion: "The liberation of the image consists in the fact that it has freed itself from the original, the image has value in itself and for itself, because it has value because of itself. The image has no other original than itself, and it produces itself in order to present itself as the only original"[35]. For example, a 'beautiful' photograph of an object does not add value to the object it depicts. A photograph, as Garry Winogrand aptly puts it, does not show what the photographed objects look like, it shows how those objects look in the photograph. In other words, it is the image itself, the way it looks, that has value. This is why photographs can be used to explore culture. The world of photographs, independent of their originals, is governed by the criteria of the perceiver. By creating images, I will make them as the gaze of another wants them to be. In asserting my identity in the world of digital communication, I will discover and communicate myself as an image. Therefore, the analysis of images - their composition and subject matter, etc. - that exist in a culture can be used as a way of thinking about that culture, and the practice of creating and circulating them as a way of reproducing it, i.e. as a cultural practice.

1.3 Deceleration and repetition[36]

Today we are witnessing a new way of being in society, at the intersection of the real world and the digital environment. This intersection is creating a new socio-cultural reality, changing ways of living and creating new ways of being and communicating.

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[35] Marion J.-L. Crossroads of the Visible. Moscow: Progress- Tradizia, 2010. Pp. 93-94. *(In Russian).*
[36] Khoroshilov, A. A. Delay and repetition: photography as a way of defence against the chaos of the social world / A. A. Khoroshilov // Studia Culturae. 2015. vol. 1 (23). Pp. 188–200. *(In Russian).*

What is significant for this study in this new form of existence is the fact of a sharp increase in the number of photographs produced. According to the statistics of a large Russian social network, 34 billion photos were uploaded to its servers in 2014, and the total number of photos uploaded in the entire history of the service (from 2006 to 2014) exceeds 88 billion[37]. According to another social network, one of the largest in the world, the total number of photos uploaded to its servers exceeds 90 billion. Even if we do not take into account specialised photo blogs and other sites where photos can be posted, the sum of photos uploaded over time on these two social networks in 2014 represents about 15% of all photos taken in almost two centuries of the existence of this medium[38].

However, the ever-increasing number of photographs produced in the noughties and tens of the 21st century is not a unique situation in the entire history of photography. Such leaps in image production have occurred throughout the entire existence of photography. The one we are witnessing now is undoubtedly the most impressive in terms of quantity, but fundamentally, like all the others, it is not just due to a change in technology or in the way photographs are distributed.

At its inception in the 1830s, photography was embodied in two materials: metal and paper. The first material, silver-plated copper plate, was used by Daguerre in Paris. Paper, on the other hand, was the material for the colotype invented by Talbot in London. However, the daguerreotype was more widely used. This was due to the patent restrictions that Talbot placed on the use of his technology. The daguerreotype, on the other hand, was purchased from its inventor by the French government and placed in the public domain. The daguerreotype was thus the first technology through which photography began to spread. However, its major limitations were the complexity of the process, the cost per image and its uniqueness, i.e. the impossibility of copying. All these difficulties were overcome by the new technology of wet collodion, proposed by Scott Archer in 1852. Two years later, a new technique - Adolf Dizdery's four-lens apparatus - made it possible to reduce the price of a photograph by a factor of four. Thus the wet collodion

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[37] VKontakte statistics for 2014. URL: https://vk.com/page-2158488_49214544 (accessed: 06.08.2024). The year 2014 is given because it is the last year of publication of such statistics.
[38] The date of the first photograph is generally accepted to be 1826. The first photograph in history was taken by Nicéphore Niépce.

process, without the disadvantages of the daguerreotype and aided by the cheapness of the final image, was the first leap in the growth of photographic production.

Despite this, photography remained the preserve of professionals or keen amateurs, as it still required the use of large-format cameras and a personal laboratory for developing and printing. The next step that overcame these difficulties and made photography a truly mainstream practice was taken by Kodak in 1888. By combining their invention - roll film - with a relatively compact, 100-picture automatic camera, Kodak revolutionised photography. The first cameras, called Kodak No. 1, cost $25 and were fully automatic. Once all the pictures had been taken, the owner simply mailed the camera back to the factory and, for an extra $10, received 100 printed pictures and a camera with a new 100-frame roll. "You push the button, we do the rest" was Kodak's motto. "It clearly expressed the company's strategy to make photography so simple that it would be accessible not just to professionals or sophisticated amateurs, but literally to everyone"[39]. It's easy to imagine how quickly the number of images produced grew.

Further changes came after the First World War. Firstly, photography was combined with the printing press, giving rise to the illustrated press. Second, the Leica camera was introduced in 1925. It was the first mass-produced small-format camera (24 x 36 mm). Together, these two events marked the beginning of the photojournalistic era and a new leap forward in the production and distribution of photographs. Subsequently, the expansion of the photographic image into all areas of life and the increase in the number of photographs produced was based on improvements in technology and the cheapening of the process of producing finished prints. Finally, today's situation has been made possible by an event called the digital revolution, namely the concrete intersection of three inventions of the last quarter of the twentieth century: the personal computer, the Internet and the digital camera. Together they have transformed the world in the first decade of the 21st century.

The sequence of leaps in the growth of photographic production described above demonstrates only the technical component of the process of the development of

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[39] Levashov V. Lectures on the History of Photography. Second edition. M.: LLC "Trimedia Content", 2012. P. 34. *(In Russian).*

photography as an imaging practice. On the other hand, if "all social change is the introduction of new technologies"[40], then the increase in the number of images produced serves as a marker by which we can judge the strength of the changes they have brought about. By considering the practice of photography as a response to the constant development of technology and the changes that have accompanied it, it is possible, by highlighting the functions of photography, to use it as a tool for identifying the main, major currents that have transformed culture over the last two centuries.

Photography emerged in the first half of the nineteenth century. Almost simultaneously and independently, Daguerre in Paris and Talbot in London succeeded in obtaining an automatic image from the camera obscura. And if we take a step back from the events surrounding the birth of photography and look more generally at the time and place in which it appears, we see the birth of industrial society and the two first industrial centres, Paris and London. In the mid-nineteenth century, the space between London and Paris witnessed the rapid development of everyday life and culture, a revolution in production and an unprecedented growth in trade, as well as the active processes of industrialisation, urbanisation and the spread of the market economy. This was the beginning of the modern world, born on the wave of industrial capitalism.

The Industrial Revolution brought about a series of socio-cultural changes affecting all aspects of human life. Changes in production, economy, social sphere, religion, psyche, perception, etc. Photography is embedded in many of these changes and is also a reaction to them and, as will become clear later, a way of defending oneself against them. Industrial society is characterised not only by the transition to machine production, but also by many other features. However, the idea of mechanisation, of the machine and the scientific knowledge associated with it, remains central and significant. The belief in the machine, supported by scientific knowledge, creates the idea of progress, of progressive development towards a better world and society. But the flipside of the idea of progress, and in many ways its embodiment, is the ever-increasing speed of change and transformation in the lives of countries caught up in the industrial flow. Freud pointed to the increasing speed of life as a problem for society, predicting in connection with it an

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[40] McLuhan M. War and Peace in the Global Village. Moscow: AST: Astrel, 2012. P. 7. *(In Russian).*

increase in the number of neuroses. The ever-increasing speed of change in production, in the economy, in public and private life, in travel, etc. is something that people in industrial and information societies have to deal with on a daily basis. Looking at the role of photographic practices in the context of the increasing speed of change will make it possible to examine the functions through which society adapts to the changes brought about by new technologies.

The expression "as old as yesterday's newspaper", paradoxically no longer relevant in our time, nevertheless shows the deep metaphorical meaning of the speed achieved by society in the twentieth century. Not only is yesterday's newspaper literally worthless, but many things may one day be consigned to the dustbin of history. The profound disregard for obsolete technology, such as yesterday's news, is now taken to an extreme. The digital environment offers events that are no longer mediated by the morning paper, rendering the phrase "as old as yesterday's paper" irrelevant. It gives us the opportunity to be in direct contact, or live, with what is happening, to follow the slightest development of events. To disconnect from this flow, even for a day, is to fall behind, to become irrelevant. The outside world flashes behind the screen, becoming increasingly distant and irrelevant as you move at the high speed of modern media. It is more like chaos, for "the defining characteristic of chaos is not so much the absence of order as the infinite speed with which any hint of form dissolves in it"[41]. The practice of photography provides the means by which this chaos of the world and socio-cultural environment can be countered. These possibilities of the photographic image lie in its most studied part, the ontology of the photographic image. The ontological approach to photography developed in the 19th and 20th centuries, which attempted to formulate the essence of photography, reduced it to technical devices and chemical processes. This was enough to conclude, on the basis of the workings of the photographic apparatus, that photographic images are a representation of the objects of the real world and proof of their existence. Photography is thus trapped in a binary relationship with the world, combining the discourse of mimesis, appearing as a mirror, resemblance and representation, and the theory of the index, as registration, as certification of the existence of the things photographed.

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[41] Deleuze J., Guattari F. What is Philosophy? M.: Institute of Experimental Sociology, 1998. P. 150. *(In Russian).*

However, Deleuze and Guattari, considering the difference between philosophy and science, see its beginning in the position towards chaos. Considering chaos as a constant change, as "a virtuality containing all possible particles and taking all possible forms, which, as soon as they appear, immediately disappear... <...> ...as an infinite speed of birth and disappearance"[42], the authors point out the two different approaches to it used by philosophy and science. The method of science, different from that of philosophy, is to reject infinite speed. In the realm of science there is a kind of fixation on the image or deceleration. Photography can act in the same way. Originally supported by science, and an application of the scientific text[43], it approaches chaos through deceleration. It acts more as an actualisation of the virtual through reference than as a reproduction of a given reality, i.e. registration.

Photography, like science, strives to move from the infinite to the finite, to actualise the virtual in the state of things. It is this transition from the infinite-virtual to the finite-actual that characterises the reference plan of science and photography. The concept of the virtual here does not coincide with the common understanding of the term; it is not opposed to reality understood as the material world. It means what exists as a possibility, but not as a completed act. For all possible forms of the virtual, the actual offers completed forms. This division is vividly illustrated by two Greek words: βίος and ζωή. Both share the same root with the Latin word vita, but each had its own particular 'sound': one meant life without any characteristics, the other life characterised[44]. Infinite, indefinite life, or the virtual, is embodied in finite life, or the actual. Thus the actual bears no resemblance to the virtual, and they are not opposed to the actual, but are two of its modalities.

In this context, photography appears as a concrete actualisation of possible, i.e. virtual, points of view on a subject or scene. The photographer interacts with objects solely through the system of geometric perspective. His aim is not to capture the objects themselves, but their position in space. Images are both a representation of things and a way of seeing them photographically. The photographic image updates the virtual state

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[42] Ibid.

[43] Flusser W. For the Philosophy of Photography. SPb.: Izd-vo S.-Peterb. un-ta, 2008. 146 p. *(In Russian)*.

[44] Kerenyi K. Dionysus: The prototype of inexhaustible life. Moscow: Ladomir, 2007. P. 21. *(In Russian)*.

of things and the photographer's gaze, working not as a registration but as a deceleration. It makes the transition from the infinite-virtual to the finite-actual. The photographic act is then inseparable from creation. And a person in the situation of modernity, seized by the endless flow of transformations, decelerates this flow by taking photographs, creates his vision, himself and his environment through the practice of photography. Photography thus acts as a means of defence against the outside world. By acting through deceleration rather than representation, the photographic process actualises the world. In addition to deceleration, another effective way of establishing order inherent in photography is through the practice of repetition.

The question of how to protect ourselves from the chaos of the world leads to a more general question about the constructs that society uses to construct ways of acting within the dialectic of fear and defence. It is with this question that the philosopher Paolo Virno begins his book "A Grammar of the Multitude". He proposes to think of contemporary society not in terms of identities such as 'people', 'class' and 'state', but through the category of 'multitude'. For Virno, the main reason for this shift is that "it is no longer possible to talk seriously about traditional communities"[45]. The philosopher sees the need for a new conceptual apparatus in approaching modern society in the blurring of boundaries between concepts such as: private/public, public/private, collective/individual, or, more generally, internal/external. This blurring can be clearly seen in the fact that today we cannot distinguish between two forms of fear and their corresponding forms of defence that used to exist.

There is a clear bifurcation in the dialectic of fear/defence: on the one hand, the danger is definite, related to a specific cause, and on the other hand, the danger is absolute, related to the fact that we are in the world. Unlike relative danger, which can be identified and described, absolute danger has no definite image and no clear content. It is precisely this division of fear into relative and absolute that the concept of man is based on. And for each of these types of fear, people develop their own ways of defending themselves. Relative fear is within society, it is part of the culture, and its alternative is confidence,

[45] Virno P. A Grammar of the Multitude: Towards an Analysis of the Forms of Modern Life. Moscow: Ad Marginem Press LLC, 2013. P. 24. *(In Russian).*

created by the same society. Absolute fear comes from outside, is outside the boundaries of society, it comes from the very danger of being in the world, and its alternative is the realm of the spirit, such as religion. "The concept of the multitude is based precisely on the disappearance of such a division"[46].

The situation in the socio-cultural environment, which we characterise as chaos or constant change of forms, serves Virno as a cause that renders traditional and repetitive forms of life irrelevant. In this situation, any change has a direct impact on each individual. This is why it has become problematic to divide social experience into an 'internal', stable, social experience and an 'external' experience related to being in the world. The constant changes associated with the way of life of the information society lead to a direct relationship with the world. The two forms of anxiety merge and a new form of being society as a multitude emerges.

According to Lewis Mumford, culture was born and developed out of ritual, a cultural practice which in turn was formed by the first humans as a constant repetition of the same thing, associated with the urge to gather in groups and imitate each other. Ritual preceded all other forms of culture. Society, with this practice at its foundation, creates the richness of its cultural manifestations. But this is only possible because the very nature of repetition, of ritual, gives the idea of a predictable order, and this in turn is reinforced by the strictness of taboo. "My assumption, Mumford writes, is that the strict discipline inherent in ritual and the severe moral constraints attributed to taboo have proved extremely important in shaping human self-control and have therefore contributed to its cultured activity in all spheres"[47]. This is what makes culture and society possible.

This starting point in the genealogy of culture explains the above division of fear into two types. In the socio-cultural world, the dangers that can arise are predictable, and the forms of defence against them are also clear. The latter are developed by the society itself and their fulfilment is guaranteed by it. This thread of self-organisation and order based on repetition can be traced in the doctrines of the state, beginning with the idea of the polis and ending with the idea associated with the transfer of power from the people

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[46] Ibid. P. 24.
[47] Mumford L. The Myth of the Machine. Technics and the Development of Mankind. Moscow: Logos, 2001. P. 100. *(In Russian)*.

to the sovereign. Culture in such a society will inevitably become more complex through specific practices or, to use Aristotle's terminology, topoi idoi, 'special places'. In such a situation, everything that opposes the society can be seen as external and, in this respect, uncertain and unpredictable, against which there are no ready-made forms of defence. Faced with this 'outside', or the world as such, man is always alone, as he was at the beginning of his existence. But it is precisely the destruction of this mode of existence, which presupposes a dialectic of inner/outer, that Virno points to. For him, this means the disappearance of certainty, predictability and order. "This is why it is no longer possible to effectively divide into the stable 'inside' and the unknown, foundation-shaking 'outside'. The constant change of life forms, as well as the routine of encountering endless types of risk, lead to a direct relationship with the world as it is, in the uncertain context of our existence"[48]. This is the modern multitude. It is devoid of rituals, a cultural practice adopted by traditional societies and repeated over and over again.

Modern forms of life are therefore characterised by the transition from the people, the traditional community, to the multitude. This transition is characterised by the blurring of boundaries between collective/individual, internal/external, society/world. Also, specific rituals aimed at maintaining order and controlling one's own and the community's behaviour cease to function. In such a situation, when there are no fixed habits of traditional communities, what becomes a form of defence against the chaos of the world? Obviously, the very moment of repetition of the same thing that "belongs to the childhood of humanity", i.e. "a return to a mechanical ritual in which repetition is devoid of important meaning and purpose"[49]. Young children love repetition. The same story, the same tune, the same game. The principle of repetition is a protective behavioural strategy against any shock caused by the new and unexpected. The childhood experience of repetition carries over into adulthood, in a society that lacks "articulate and complex forms of defence: namely, ethos, the mores, customs and habits that form the basis of

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[48] Virno P. A Grammar of the Multitude: Towards an Analysis of the Forms of Modern Life. Moscow: Ad Marginem Press LLC, 2013. P. 25. *(In Russian).*
[49] Mumford L. The Myth of the Machine. Technics and the Development of Mankind. Moscow: Logos, 2001. P. 92. *(In Russian).*

stable communities"[50]. The demand for 'one more time', reinforced by technical reproducibility, creates a new perception, as Benjamin explicitly states[51]. The practice of photography perpetuates the desire for mechanical repetition as a defence.

Repetition and technical reproducibility, although not originally inherent to its technology, are directly linked to photography. In this way, socio-cultural reality, responding to the mechanisation associated with the industrial mode of production, restructures itself according to the logic of the machine. The profound changes in perception and the destruction of the ethos urge the invention of a new type of image, also subject to the logic of mechanical production. Photography responded to the challenge of the age. Supported by science[52], it responds to modernity's demand to see again, to repeat, to represent. It creates unchanging images of a changing world that has expanded to planetary proportions.

We have thus considered two modes of action of photography, based on its connection with science and its industrial origins, namely deceleration or reference plan and mechanical repetition. These two possibilities are closely linked to the way we perceive contemporary culture. They offer a safe way of adapting to the increasing speed of the social world. Photography, as a regular practice of the multitude linked to the information society, a practice that is individual but collectively shared, functions as a kind of ritual activity devoid of meaning, appearing as a 'grand deceleration', a 'fixation in an image' of the virtual state of the world and a repetition of this image in the photograph. In this way, pressing the shutter and looking at the captured images appear as two metaphysical procedures responsible for the presence of historicity and connectedness in human life. The possibility of capturing and seeing again, of acquiring a certain stable form and confirming identity, become fundamental functions of the cultural practice of photography, aimed at overcoming the speed of change of the social world.

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[50] Virno P. A Grammar of the Multitude: Towards an Analysis of the Forms of Modern Life. Moscow: Ad Marginem Press LLC, 2013. P. 35. *(In Russian)*.

[51] Benjamin W. The Work of Art in the Age of its Technical Reproducibility // Benjamin V. The Doctrine of Similarity. Media-aesthetic works. M., 2012. 288 p. *(In Russian)*.

[52] It was as an instrument of science that Dominique-François Agaro first presented the new technology at a meeting of the Paris Academy of Sciences, on 7 January 1839.

Deceleration and repetition are two incredibly serious functions of the cultural practice of photography. This allows us to reinterpret the need for photography and the ever-increasing number of images. It has already been said above that the number of photographic images produced can indirectly serve as a marker by which we can assess the extent to which society is changing, in this case the disappearance of traditional complex forms of defence and tradition. Industrialisation created a situation in which society, by abandoning any ethos in favour of mechanical repetition, freed itself on the one hand from the content of rituals that limited and constrained development, and on the other hand from the predictable order that ensured stability. This double cancellation determined the further development of culture, which was expressed in the ever-increasing speed of change. Today, a year of earthly life can be metaphorically compared to a light year of a networked society. The comparison is not time measured in hours, but distance travelled.

So the culture is such that in order to update the world around us, it is necessary to create images, and the more images, the higher the speed of life. In this way, not only does the individual create a certain plan of reference that actualises his or her existence, but also society, which combines the photographic practice of all its participants, creates its own image that introduces the principle of difference into its existence. In this mode, the cultural practice of photography functions as a means of deceleration and repetition. These functions, the tools of photography, are necessary for the ordering of social experience and, more radically, for the possibility of its existence. They become all the more necessary as points of reference, habits and traditions become fewer and fewer in a society linked to today's high-speed electronic media. At the same time, it is obvious that the general plan of the cultural practice of photography is not exhausted by these two functions.

1.4 Photographic temporality[53]

The functions of deceleration and repetition lead us to question how photographs relate to the current situation of the person who owns them. How is the photographic construction of life historically constructed? Does the photograph refer directly to the event it depicts? How does photographic time work? How are photographs embedded in the memory of life events? If I use a photograph as a reference plan and take the opportunity to look at it again and again, what meaning does the photograph gain for me? How can images overcome the limitations imposed by the chronological time of technology and reveal their content outside the linear time of life and events? This raises the question of photographic temporality. At first glance, it is clear that the time of the photographer, who encountered the event he or she observes in the photograph, and the time of the viewer, who perceives an arbitrary image not made by him or her, are not the same.

When we start talking about the photographer, his actions of producing and viewing images must include several heterogeneous temporalities. The first is the present in which the photographer is located and acts while shooting. It is a concrete, definite present that has duration, involves action in the surrounding world, and requires bodily participation. The ongoing event in which the photographer is involved is actualised by the release of the shutter. Hence the second temporality, the temporality of the mechanical descent that slows down the experienced present, through an infinitesimal point in time, to an indivisible present. As the point at which the time of the present is actualised in the unchanging form of the image, the release of the shutter delimits the past and the future. This is the third temporality: "past-future", the past of things and bodies, the future of the image. Paradoxically, the moment the shutter is released is itself empty. It does nothing more than divide the present of the moment of filming into two opposing currents. One, which refers to the bodies and things at the time of filming, can be called "still here, but already past". This means that changes in the present are irreversible, and by

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[53] Khoroshilov, A. A. Photographic temporality. / A. A. Khoroshilov // Vestnik Russkoj hristianskoj gumanitarnoj akademii. 2024. Vol. 25, vol. 1. Pp. 292–302. *(In Russian).*

photographing we only confirm this. The second stream is directed towards the future and is connected with the fact that the moment of taking the picture and the moment of viewing the finished picture are separated in time. The photographer cannot directly examine the result of his choice at the moment of taking the picture. In reality, he has to act blindly, even with digital equipment that reduces the time between releasing the shutter and seeing the image to a few moments. "Not yet here, but already here" is how the temporality of the photographic image is expressed after the shutter has been released. That is, the image has already been received, but it is not yet available for perception. Thus, the snapshot does not 'freeze' time, but divides it into the future of the image (not yet here, but already here) and the past of things and bodies (still here, but already past).

When the shooting is finished and the images are ready to be viewed, the photographer turns from being the author to being the viewer of his work. This is the fourth temporality, which combines the two roles of photographer and viewer. A photograph in this mode functions as a double image. According to Rouillet, it is "the inseparable unity of the present and its contemporary past, of perception and memory, the inseparability of the actual and the virtual"[54]. For the photographer, as viewer and operator, the perception of his images in the present is linked to his memories of the events that preceded the perception of the image. This means that images do not, as is commonly thought, refer directly to the completed past state of the things depicted in the photograph, since this past is mixed with memories of events, thoughts and encounters that are somehow related to the image, both before and after it was taken. The images that their photographer looks at are thus at the intersection of two temporalities: the here-and-now perception of the image and the memory of the past. Memory and perception intermingle, or as Bergson wrote: "Memory, almost inseparable from perception, incorporates the past into the present, compresses the multiplicity of moments in time into a single intuition"[55]. The memory of the photographer as spectator is linked to the memory of the photographer as cameraman. This is what distinguishes him from the spectator who looks at photographs taken by someone else.

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[54] Rouille A. Photography. Between Document and Contemporary Art. SPb.: Cloudberry, 2014. P. 257. *(In Russian)*.
[55] Bergson A. Matter and Memory // Bergson A. Creative Evolution. Matter and Memory. Mn.: Harvest, 1999. P. 476. *(In Russian)*.

Looking at the relationship between arbitrary photographs and their viewers, we can conclude that the perception of these images is constructed around the metaphysical belief that there is a straight line leading from the present image to its pre-existing source. This presupposes that nothing stands between the image and the thing. Not time or memory, not space or image. Generally speaking, we do not see the image, we see only the referent. R. Barthes writes: "What I see is not a memory, a fantasy, a re-creation, a fragment of maya, which art supplies in abundance, but reality in its past state, at once past and actual"[56]. Elsewhere he continues: "Whatever it depicts, however it is executed, the photograph itself is never visible, or rather, it is not the photograph that is looked at"[57]. The photograph gives direct access to the thing of which it is the referent. The perception of a photograph is thus reduced to a direct projection: from the present photograph to the thing in the past; it connects in a linear way the 'now' of the image with the reality of the thing in the past. This irrevocable movement, freed from memory, is directed further and further away from the image, to which it will never return, towards the thing that is always former. However, at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries, A. Bergson opposed this approach to memory and perception: "When placed in the actual, it is vain to try to discover in the state of the realised and the present a sign of its origin in the past, to distinguish memory from perception"[58]. The unity of perception and memory makes it possible to associate images not only directly with their referent, but also with other images that have their origin in memories, in mental images. This leads to a fundamentally different conception of image perception. Bergson contrasts the linear relationship between the present image and the past thing described above with a closed circle "in which image-perception, directed to the mind, and image-memory, thrown back into space, chase each other"[59].

Bergson describes perception as a circuit in which all the elements are under a certain voltage, as in a closed electric circuit, so that every state of the perceived object

[56] Barthes R. Camera Lucida. Commentary on Photography. Moscow: Ad Marginem Press LLC, 2011. P. 147. *(In Russian)*.
[57] Ibid, p. 19.
[58] Bergson A. Matter and Memory // Bergson A. Creative Evolution. Matter and Memory. Mn.: Harvest, 1999. P. 548. *(In Russian)*.
[59] Ibid, p. 512.

has to return to the object. Each new level of perception and attention creates a new circuit that includes the original circuit but has nothing to do with it except the perceived object. Bergson calls these circuits circles of memory. The very first circle, closest to immediate perception, consists of the object itself and the secondary image constructed by that object. Beyond this, there will be ever larger circles, the growth of which will correspond to the growth of attention to the perceived object. It turns out that the same object is included in different memory circles, the only thing they have in common being the object itself. Each of these circles includes the object in ever increasing chains of details, memories, thoughts. Thus, as we reconstruct in memory the image of the object as something integral and independent, we simultaneously reconstruct in memory more and more distant circumstances that are related to it and form a system with it. Increasing attention to the object means that it is created anew in a new circle of memory each time and is not identical to itself. Its successive inclusion in several memory and perception circuits, each of which produces a secondary image that tends to replace the object, means that it is always presented in a fragmentary way, depending on the circuit. One circuit retains only some features of the object, while other circuits, linked to other orders of memories, associations and details, retain other features of the object. The perception of an actual object is constructed on the basis of its association with a virtual, secondary image that represents it. The actual object is included in memory circuits that place it between perception and memory, the real and the imaginary, the physical and the mental. The perception of a photograph in front of the viewer is also accompanied by the creation of a virtual image or reflection with which it forms a unity. In this unity, the actual and the virtual, the real and the imaginary, the present and the past alternate and converge.

Bergson's concept makes it possible to clarify the process of perception of the photographic image, to see beyond the simple plan of reference to the workings of memory. This makes it possible to correct one of the widespread warnings of many 20th-century theorists about the danger of the omnipresence of images: that they will eventually cease to refer to external things, but will turn in on themselves, creating an impenetrable world of images that will shut out the world around them. The way of

perceiving images that we have discussed above shows that the threat itself is not understood, since only the referential plan and linear time are seen behind the images.

The idea that photography offers direct access to its subject also implies a certain concept of time. It is based on the idea that time flows continuously and is made up of successive independent moments. The past, in this sense, becomes the old present, receding as new moments are added to the lived present. However, if we accept that the perception of an object involves the creation of circuits of memory that include not only what is perceived but also the various details, knowledge, experiences that are part of the chains that are built between perception and memory, mixing present perception and past memory, we must recognise that any photograph cannot be reduced to its referent - neither to the thing it represents nor to a past event, something that was. The perception of a photograph is not in the realm of temporal sequence, nor is it in the realm of resemblance. Photography is not memory, nor is it the opposite of memory, which threatens to replace the memory of experience with the memory of the snapshot. The photograph "is rather an 'swith' of memory, since the perception of the snapshot triggers a real process of actualisation, an encounter between the past and the present"[60]. Snapshots have the capacity to revive memories stored in the memory, to lift them up and give them a body in the present, i.e. to actualise them by acting on the situation, just like a souvenir, a memorable place, a sound, a smell. The blockade survivor Nikolai Viktorovich (name changed) gives an astonishing account of such a 'switching on' of memory, not only at the level of memory, but also at the level of the experience of physical trauma: "And so I was standing at a bus stop, right next to this corner grocery, waiting for a tram. Here I see the tram coming from Zagorodniy, approaching the stop, and the stop was right in the middle of the square. So I took a step towards the tram, and at that moment, I didn't even realise what was happening, some force threw me back, I fell, hit my head on the pavement, and when I got up I saw that instead of the tram there was just a huge cloud of black smoke. And when the smoke cleared, it was a terrible sight. Because all that was left of the tram was this bogie. Everything else was a mess - fragments of wood and human bodies. And I wonder what kind of memory the body apparently has. Many years later I saw a

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[60] Rouille A. Photography. Between Document and Contemporary Art. SPb.: Cloudberry, 2014. P. 267. *(In Russian).*

photograph of this incident. One of the photographers was nearby and he took this picture. And when I saw it, I immediately got a headache in the place where I had bumped"[61].

The work of perception, which is inseparable from memory, incorporates the past into the present, placing the viewer of a photograph in a situation where any photograph, taken by himself or someone else, of a loved one or an unfamiliar landscape, takes him back in time. "We are conscious, writes Bergson, that a *sui generis* act is being performed by which we are separated from the present and become first in the past in general, then in some region of the past"[62]. The act of perception-remembrance begins with an appeal to the past, to the heterogeneous present, and proceeds in search of the region that best relates to our actual actions. Based on the needs of the present, the memories of these areas move from the virtual to the actual state, transforming themselves into image-memories and striving for similarity with perception. At the same time, the unity of perception and memory is marked by their incomplete fusion, because memory, existing in the present, bears the imprint of the original virtuality, different from the present. The perception of images, to use A. Rouillet's terms, is thus linked in the temporal sense to two directions: stereoscopic (towards the present and the past) and orientated (from the past to the present). Actual perception is always linked to the past, to memory.

Contrary to the widespread understanding of photographic time as a sequence, it is possible, drawing on Bergson's work, to understand it as a coexistence. If photography stops, freezes the moment, and the metaphor of time itself becomes a succession of snapshots on film, then the past is just the old present, which shares the same nature as the present and to which photography allows us to pass unhindered. Barthes's noema of photography 'it was' is the common denominator of much of the discourse on photographic temporality, describing a particular conception of photographic time rather than the essence of photography. 'It was' expresses the idea that the thing in the photograph was inevitably in contact with the material of the image. The photographic

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[61] Memory of the Blockade. Eyewitness Testimonies and Historical Consciousness of Society: Materials and Studies. Moscow: Novoye Izdatel'stvo, 2006. P. 40. *(In Russian)*.

[62] Bergson A. Matter and Memory // Bergson A. Creative Evolution. Matter and Memory. Mn.: Harvest, 1999. P. 545. *(In Russian)*.

image is physically connected to things and finds its full expression in the verification of the material existence and past presence of the thing.

The present, which becomes the past or the old present expressed by the concept of 'it was', is defined as ' that which is', whereas for Bergson the present is 'what is being accomplished'. The transition from 'what is' to 'what is being accomplished' or 'what is happening' corresponds to a change in the concept of time, especially the present. And this cannot leave the concept of photography unchanged. 'It is being accomplished' contradicts 'it was'. Such a transition corresponds to a change from a concept in which photography is only a confirmation of existence to a concept in which photography can express events. This event of what has happened is located both outside the sphere of photography, in the reality of things and the state of things, and in the midst of the photographic process, so that events arise from the conjunction of the world and the photograph. This takes the photograph out of the realm of passive registration and makes it an aesthetic product with expression. With its 'it was' component, the photograph nevertheless seeks to evoke the question 'what happened?', i.e. the photograph contains events alongside verification. This creates the paradoxical character of photography, where the affirmation and statement of presence coexist with news. In this way, we can take the consideration of photography out of the sphere of referentiality that limits its comprehension. From this it becomes clear that the warning about the dangers of images that seek to replace the world around us is marking the wrong territory. There is nothing dangerous about photography replacing things, unless of course it becomes pathological, because it is not limited to things. Strictly speaking, it is incapable of representing anything other than itself.

The assertion that a thing must necessarily be present, that it has necessarily been in front of the camera, is perfectly true. But it does not necessarily follow that it is the essence of photography. The thing is the material basis of the image, the thing on which it is built and in which it is rooted. But the base of the image, like the foundation of a building, is only the support on which the building is built, not the building itself. "The photographic image does not coincide with the thing, either materially, spatially or

temporally"[63]. Whether the photograph becomes something greater than the thing or, on the contrary, is a powerless attempt to betray it, in any case it both testifies and raises questions.

The photographic image combines two plans: the affirmative and the interrogative. The plan of the thing (which necessarily existed; authentication) and the plan of the event ("what happened?"; memory; related to questions about the state of things). Both are inevitably part of the process of perception, in the course of which the viewer establishes a connection between the givenness of the image and the elements of his or her memory, creates a tension between them, circles of memory. This means that to perceive is not to passively stimulate one's senses or to receive, but to actively question and update one's memory. Reference, verification, 'it was' and memory, event, 'it happened' are the two foundations of photography. While the first has been honoured with detailed study and conceptualisation, the second has remained in the shadows. But it is now necessary to turn to the second foundation, to examine how the immaterial is embodied in the image. This is important because today, as faith in the objectivity of photography wanes, the question increasingly arises: can the image be trusted?

Photographs are thus both affirmative and questioning, actual and virtual, reference and event, matter and memory, ancient present and past as such. Photographic time is not only a sequence of present events, not an earlier present, it is also the past in general. The perception of the image combines the present and the past. The past as such, which lives in us, is not a passing past, but an existing, pure past, a past of memory, it influences our perceptions and actions. Bergson's thought allowed us to see the practice of photography, from taking the picture to perceiving it, as a duality: on the one hand it is located in the experienced present of matter, on the other hand it is inscribed in the pure past of memory. These two parts, although distinct, are inseparable. They give the photograph objectivity through registration, and subjectivity through memory, which incorporates the past into the present. The moment of taking a photograph is always both a mechanical registration, an automatic action, an objectivity, and a subjective process of actualisation through the similarity between perception and the virtual image of memory.

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[63] Rouille A. Photography. Between Document and Contemporary Art. SPb.: Cloudberry, 2014. P. 272. *(In Russian).*

The approach described above requires that both dimensions of photography be recognised as important for the theoretical consideration of photography, one related to the virtual past of memory, the other to the actual present of things. It is the work of the photographer that helps us approach the distinction between these two dimensions of photography. His practice, like that of any human being, develops at the intersection of two realities: the reality of the material world and the reality of immaterial memory. Perception, which is rooted in memory, is simultaneously bound to things and to the past, and is therefore deeply subjective. "The subjectivity of our perception, — writes Bergson, "is due to the appearance of memory"[64]. This is also true of photographic images, which are also located at the intersection of two paths: the objective, direct path of automatic, material printing and the subjective return path of memory. This allows us to clarify the functions of photography already described: deceleration and repetition. The path of the material print corresponds to the function of repetition, doubling, once again, and is realisation. On the other hand, the path of memory, which corresponds to the function of deceleration, consists of difference and creativity and is actualisation. The first is objective, the second subjective.

Realisation takes place at the level of matter and consists of several rules of the image: the rule of the print (makes the transition from the matter of things to the matter of images, in a linear, mechanistic way), the rule of the frame (makes the framing, the choice of the point of view, the foreshortening and the shutter speed), the rule of optics and perspective (creates similarity). The implementation, supported by science, based on the idea of mechanism and the exclusion of the human hand from the creation of images, is an ideal way of repetition, a response to the demands of one more time, which, as has been said, is required by individuals in a state of multiplicity and without the complex forms of protection characteristic of traditional societies. But photography is never limited to mere repetition, doubling and registering a pre-existing reality.

The function of realisation, going from things to images, is inseparable from the function of actualisation, going from the virtual to the actual. The virtual, being a pure

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[64] Bergson A. Matter and Memory // Bergson A. Creative Evolution. Matter and Memory. Mn.: Harvest, 1999. P. 472. *(In Russian)*.

possibility, exists in potency, assumes a variety of forms and situations that are never finalised. However, through actualisation, the virtual finds concrete and final embodiment here and now. And the embodiment is unique, never like another. Photography is the actualisation of the virtual, which corresponds to memory, to the 'past in general' in which we live and which lives in us. It is precisely because photography combines these two planes of realisation and actualisation that it is so much in demand. Being, on the one hand, a means of protection from the chaos of the world through the function of repetition-realisation, on the other hand, it allows us to build subjective identity through the function of deceleration-actualisation.

Actualisation is a complex process because perception is not a simple transmission of information through sensory channels. This is consistent with Gibson's theory of information retrieval: "The qualities of the data with which the individual senses deal are determined by the types of receptors stimulated, while the specificity of the perceptual system[65] is determined by the qualities of the objects of the external world"[66]. This is reinforced by Bergson: "Actual 'pure' perception, i.e. instantaneous perception, is only an ideal.... Every perception occupies a certain thickness of time, continues the past in the present and is thus involved in memory"[67]. Immediate perception is not a real moment of things, on the contrary, it activates memory and has a duration, combines different moments. It is determined by our actions, our needs and, above all, our memory. By taking a photograph, one triggers the mechanism of memory, which contains all the events of a past life and tries to fit into perception. In this way, photography becomes an intersection of past and present, a place where they meet. In this sense, the practice of photography communicates a profound identity, because it does not go from the present to the past, but from the past to the present, moving from memory to perception rather than from perception to memory. Isn't this the basis of the categorisation we apply to our photographs, considering them successful or unsuccessful? It is the ability of photographs

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[65] For Gibson, the perceptual system is the whole body of the observer, associated with the active position of the latter in relation to the surrounding world. The observer actively listens, looks, etc., using the whole body in the process of perception, while the reactions of the receptors are sensations and are immaterial in relation to perception.

[66] Gibson J. Ecological approach to visual perception. Moscow: Progress, 1988 P. 348.

[67] Bergson A. Matter and Memory // Bergson A. Creative Evolution. Matter and Memory. Mn.: Harvest, 1999. P. 663. *(In Russian)*.

to update memory, to fit into a concept of our own identity that has been formed over a lifetime.

Memory determines the process of shooting, limits perception, which in theory should include everything, but in reality is limited to what interests the photographer. The view is limited by the photographer's immediate interest and memory, by his life. These, in turn, are based on culture and visual habits that depend on the way of seeing and the visual mode of the time. Visual culture influences what the photographer sees and the distance and pose he or she adopts in relation to things and events. Memory determines the range of possibilities that guide the photographer's perception and how he or she sees the world. The photographer's gaze and pose are determined by his or her current interest and the elements of memory, i.e. they are included in the circles of memory. The final image will be as much an actualisation of formal aesthetic schemes existing in culture and personal memory as it will be a realisation, an imprint, a reference. The practice of photography seeks to combine three heterogeneous temporalities: the past of the operator, both personal and collective; the present of things; and the future of the image. Each time the shutter is released, all three of these heterogeneous temporalities converge. The result - the image - is always an update of the moment when virtual memory, the surrounding world and the future of the image meet at the same point but do not mix. This intersection can be described as a photographic event. The release of the shutter divides time into two temporal currents, one directed towards the past of things, the other towards the future of the image, whose point of convergence is memory. The release of the shutter, which is either going to happen or has already happened, is a figure of irreversibility that encapsulates the reality of the event and the singular individuality of the author.

On the basis of what has been described, it is possible to reformulate a critical stance towards photographic images and their escalation of the gaze. What deserves attention and caution is not the nature of the simulacrum attributed to photography, nor the loss of connection with the things of the world, but the process that can be called the education of the gaze. This is what P. Bourdieu says: "Class habitus, understood as a system of organic and mental predispositions and unconscious schemes of thought, perception and action, is what enables agents — in the well-founded illusion of creating

unforeseen novelty and free improvisation — to generate all kinds of thoughts, perceptions and actions that correspond to objective regularities, because this habitus itself has been generated under conditions objectively determined by these regularities, and through such conditions <.... > This habitus, this product of conditionality, is a condition for the production of thoughts, perceptions and actions which are not themselves the direct product of conditionality, although these thoughts, perceptions and actions — being constituted — are comprehensible only on the basis of knowledge of this conditionality, or, more precisely, of the productive principle produced by it"[68].

The modern development of photographic equipment tends to make the whole world, all objects, 'photogenic', but this movement is opposed by the finite practice of photography, which limits the theoretical infinity of photographs to the choice of specific, finite subjects, genres and compositions. Photography is subject to collective rules, so that every photograph taken within the habitus of a certain culture expresses the system of all perceptions, thoughts and evaluations corresponding to that culture. The danger of the total diffusion of photography can therefore be formulated as follows: photography educates the gaze, confines it within the framework of a visual code, shows one thing, while the other, which does not correspond to this ethos, renders it invisible. The world is not closed to the gaze, but through general laws we perceive some events and ignore others. This raises the question of photographic normativity and its political impact.

Anything that is illuminated can be photographed. This makes it possible to extend the boundaries of the visible and the gaze. Whether it is the optical unconsciousness associated with the ultra-short shutter speeds that Benjamin speaks of, or the technologically possible images in the invisible spectrum, such as infrared or ultraviolet photography, or astrophotography, which presents us with cosmic objects that are inaccessible to the eye because of their remoteness, all of this extends the boundaries of reality, of what is already understood and organised in systems of signs. In this sense, reality is opposed to 'what is real. "It is everything that is before, after and below the surface of reality, it is everything that has not yet been cultured by our technical, scientific

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[68] Bourdieu P., Boltanski L., Castel R., Chamboredon J.-C. Public Art: Experience on the Social Use of Photography. Moscow: Izdatel'skaja i konsaltingovaja gruppa «Praksis», 2014. Pp. 21-22. *(In Russian).*

and social relations..."[69]. The cultural practice of photography expands reality, translating, to use the terms of the Greeks, chaos into cosmos. However, in the situation of the iconic turn, in which the world or reality becomes represented for the most part through its image, including the photographic image, the boundaries of the cosmos are reduced. Only what is represented by the image becomes real, everything else returns to the sphere of 'what is real'. The latter does not disappear anywhere, but the construction of the gaze renders it invisible. Thus, photography consolidates and, as V. Savchuk writes, "certifies the dominance of certain ideas about reality"[70]. The construction of the gaze and the image coincide.

1.5 The normativity of photography: modelling visibility and education of the eye[71]

The importance of the question of the normativity of photography becomes clear in a situation where the world is largely represented through photographic, video or television images. No matter how many pictures we take, no matter how many hours of video we film, we cannot reproduce the world in its entirety. The main thing that remains on the other side of the image is the possibility of interacting with the place where the viewer is: to look, to move objects, to move as one wish. This is true even if we ignore the special role of visibility, in which the information available in a photograph or video is exhausted. A person looking at a photograph is always dealing with the point of view, the gesture of the author of this image. The latter is subject to the creator's desire to show something or, on the contrary, to hide something. The conditionality and limitation of automatic images that try to represent the world for us remains a common and shared situation in society. Despite the described incompleteness, the media in question are successfully embedded in a variety of cultural practices.

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[69] van Lier. A. Philosophy of photography. H.: "Humanitarian Centre", 2019. P.55. *(In Russian).*
[70] Savchuk V. V. Philosophy of Photography. SPb.: Izdatel'stvo «Akademija issledovanija kul'tury», 2015. P. 55. *(In Russian).*
[71] Khoroshilov, A. A. The normativity of photography: modelling visibility and education of the eye / A. A. Khoroshilov // Uchyonye zapiski Krymskogo federal'nogo universiteta im. V. I. Vernadskogo. Filosofiya. Kul'turologiya. Politologiya. — 2024. — T. 10. № 1. — Pp. 18–29. *(In Russian).*

Our findings show that photography as a personal practice offers a range of possibilities, acting as a defence against the chaos of the world and as a way of constructing identity. Operating in society, it is capable of expressing relationships, demonstrating events, informing, authenticating and creating public opinion. And because of these wide-ranging possibilities, the presentation of photographic images comes under the control of power. In its hands, photography participates in the process of identification, cataloguing, appearance, visibility modelling and other processes of ordering and control. The results of this process are: photographs for identity cards, bans on photographing certain places, control of the content of images in the media, and other normative processes. Since the presence of photography in culture serves different purposes and can lead to specific actions and changes, controlling both the display and production of images can be seen as a way of controlling society.

The first fact of state intervention in the production of photographs, which relates to the British government's decision during the Crimean War of 1853-1856, is described by Susan Sontag: "During the previous year (1854), the press had published alarming accounts of the unforeseen dangers and hardships faced by British soldiers, and in an attempt to neutralise them, the government invited a well-known professional photographer to create a more favourable impression of the unpopular war"[72]. That official photojournalist was Roger Fenton. Before being sent to Crimea, he was given explicit instructions not to photograph the dead, maimed or sick. In addition, his photographs were limited by the cumbersome technology and photographic process he was using, which was the most advanced at the time, but no less labour-intensive. The subjects of his photographs were therefore views of Sevastopol and Balaklava, ships of the British fleet, tent camps, fortifications, cemeteries. To photograph soldiers going about their daily business, he had to arrange them in the best possible way and ask them not to move for 15 seconds - the minimum exposure time under the best conditions. The photographer's first government-sponsored war assignment served as a starting point for modelling how citizens of warring states view armed conflict. The normativity of war

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[72] Sontag S. Regarding the Pain of Others. Moscow: Ad Marginem Press LLC, 2014. P. 38. *(In Russian).*

photography defines the perception of conflict events and is used to regulate public opinion and maintain order.

Control over the production and distribution of photographic images is also a current practice of the establishment. Each leader has a staff of photographers who take official pictures of events, meetings and leisure activities. Together they are supposed to create an image that, for example, satisfies voters and gives them an idea of a strong, honourable and confident political leader. At the same time, all other photographs that photographers are allowed to take will be carefully controlled as far as possible. Unless the event is closed, photographers are assigned a specific location from which they can only take pictures, and the space they can photograph is specified. The normativity introduced today for images of war and politicians illustrates how the political education of the gaze can be constructed.

The next level of control over the production of images is a total ban on photography in a particular area or the need to obtain permission. For example, on the territory of the Russian Federation the use of film equipment in court sessions or in places of detention requires permission from the court or the head of a penitentiary institution. The very problem of the openness of public, private and special places for images is clearly demonstrated by the number of legal and regulatory documents[73].

However, control over images is not only exercised in the realm of power. Normativity can manifest itself in the preference of one type of image over another, in the choice of pose, location or event to be photographed, in the aesthetic characteristics of photography, etc. - in short, constructed on the basis of habitus and cultural practices. In certain cases, the introduction of normativity in the production of photographs can be the initiative of a public organisation or group of people. For example, in February 2015, the Russian Union of Youth launched a "campaign against dangerous selfies". As justification, the authors cite the following: "People tend to ignore danger if it is hidden behind something innocuous and unimportant. But believe me, we are not talking about a mythical threat, dangerous selfies are a problem that should have been solved yesterday

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[73] For example see: Protasov P.V. Collection of frequently asked questions about the right to photography (version 2.0). Electronic version. URL: https://disk.yandex.ru/i/YpFK0asNdrMPWw (accessed: 18.01.2024). *(In Russian)*.

[...] teenagers are increasingly killed and maimed by taking risky selfies and extreme photos of each other. Russian Union of Youth calls for fighting the epidemic of selfies!"[74]

The other side of photography's normativity is related to what Pierre Bourdieu, in his analysis of the social uses of photography, calls popular aesthetics. It is expressed in the form of photographic products or in judgments about photography based on public taste, which in turn is subordinated to "the categories and canons of traditional world views"[75]. The latter subordinates photography to the logic of representation and the exact reproduction of the real. In this case, as Bourdieu shows, the real is not what exists objectively and corresponds to the reality of things, but what corresponds to the rules of the social definition of objectivity. Thus, society determines for itself that the image of the real that corresponds to the mode of representation in that society is objective. Popular aesthetics' brings its own modification of normativity to the creation of photographic images, and does so rigidly according to its mode of perception.

Photography takes on another dimension of normativity in the practice of creative photography. This term describes the aesthetic features of images rather than attributing them to the choice of a particular subject. For example, the book of the same name[76] consists of two parts: 'creative techniques' and 'creative subjects'. They discuss in detail how the camera should be set up and how to shoot a particular subject in order to get 'great pictures'. Creative photography aims to break with the commonplace, philistine, use of photography without leaving the field of photography and using only photographic means. This transition from the philistine to the creative practice of photography is accompanied primarily by a deepening of knowledge in the use of equipment, frame construction, composition; it is associated with an improvement in the quality of images. In many ways, these images remain in the realm of the same 'popular aesthetics', simply acquiring a quality, from the point of view of the craft of photography, look. Advancing in the skills of creative photography, a photographer is likely to determine the value of

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[74] VKontakte: website. URL: https://vk.com/wall-27486_9114?ysclid=lsozs323ew400164176 (accessed: 16.02.2024). *(In Russian).*

[75] Bourdieu P., Boltanski L., Castel R., Chamboredon J.-C. Public Art: Experience on the Social Use of Photography. Moscow: Izdatel'skaja i konsaltingovaja gruppa «Praksis», 2014. P. 124. *(In Russian).*

[76] Frost L. The Creative Photography Handbook. A sourcebook of techniques and ideas. M.: ART-RODNIK. 2003. 160 p. *(In Russian).*

his or her images according to the presence of 'surprises' in them, certain themes aptly described by Roland Barthes. These include: the rarity of the subject being photographed, capturing the action at its decisive stage, the 'daring trick', multiple exposures, optical distortions, the accidental or unusual find. The creative photographer must train himself to find such subjects, "like an acrobat, must disregard the laws of the probable and even the merely possible"[77].

Finally, normativity can come from photographic unions, agencies and organisations. For example, reportage photography as we know it in the twentieth century was in many ways shaped by the work of the Magnum Photos photographers. Another society that emerged in the early 90s of the twentieth century and is widely spread in the world is the 'Lomography Society'[78], the development and spread of which is connected with a special kind of images obtained with the help of LOMO camera. They are distinguished by saturated colours, high contrast, blurriness. That is, they are completely opposite in their pictorial aesthetics to the images that prevail both in the media environment and among photographs made on the basis of public taste. In addition to the images, the internal protest against the common practice of photography is also expressed in the 10 rules of Lomography: 1. Always take your camera with you wherever you go; 2. Use your camera at any time of the day or night; 3. Lomography is not an intrusion into your life, it is part of it; 4. Shoot from the hip; 5. Get as close as possible to your chosen lomographic subjects; 6. Don't think; 7. Act quickly; 8. You don't have to know in advance what you will get on film; 9. And after the shoot too; 10. Don't think about the rules[79]. Consistently, these rules break with the points of 'popular aesthetics'. They are the constant availability of the camera, and the extension of photographic practice from an occupation with a particular time and place to life itself. And the disregard for traditional ideas of framing, composition, framing the shot, predicting the outcome. And the abolition of any kind of conventions regarding the practice of photography. While proclaiming absolute freedom regarding the method of photography, Lomography still

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[77] Bart R. Camera Lucida. Commentary on Photography. Moscow: Ad Marginem Press LLC, 2011. Pp. 65-67. *(In Russian).*

[78] It got its name because of the Soviet LOMO COMPACT-AUTOMAT (LK-A) camera.

[79] Lomography// Photojournal HE: website. URL: http://photo-element.ru/ps/lomo/lomo.html (accessed: 16.02.2024). *(In Russian).*

establishes the normativity of images through their aesthetic characteristics, which largely depend on the apparatus and the machine base (the method of processing). Thus, the practice of Lomography produces images that are the opposite of mainstream photography, but in order to remain defined, adheres to aesthetic norms established by both the technique used and the way it is handled.

The normativity of photography that we have described is thus situated between three aspects. Firstly, it is a discourse of power, control and restriction on shooting. Second, social norms conditioned by public taste. Thirdly, photographic practices that have developed around a particular aesthetic principle. Several conclusions can be drawn.

The first thing that comes to mind when looking at photographic practice in this way is the construction of images and the closure of the world to them, the surrounding world, its events, remain on the other side of the photograph. Paradoxically, photography, which in the nineteenth century was supposed to have a future of opening up the world to the gaze, of showing inaccessible places, of taking a census of things, etc., has become something that closes off the world to the gaze, that has little to do with representing the outside world, but is rather confined to a series of types and subjects that reproduce the same. It seems that today it is hardly possible to find or make photographs that simply speak of what is, of what is happening, of what returns every day in the banal, the already seen. A paradox emerges: the latest technologies expand the horizons of perception, the media show us ever more distant and unexplored corners of the world, synthetic images are confronted with real ones, and in a fierce competition for attention, the cultural industry strives to outdo itself in visual sophistication. At the same time, we are beginning to see less, to ignore the mundane and the ordinary that we have already seen. Perhaps the only place in contemporary culture where we can come face to face with the mundane and the banal is in contemporary art.

Perhaps the only place in contemporary culture where we can come face to face with the mundane and the banal is in contemporary art. In an attempt to resolve the paradox described above, artists depict the everyday and the familiar, creating inventories of things using photography as a medium. The emancipation of photography from public taste, discourses of power and the aesthetics of 'surprise' that has occurred in art leads it

to function on a level of cultural practice that we have described as deceleration and repetition. Artists working with the everyday use photography as a means of resisting the increasing flow of information, visual images, the speed of life, as a means of creating wholeness, of reconnecting with the concrete, the tangible, the experienced, the familiar.

The practice of photography thus combines two opposing functions: the dematerialisation of the world, hiding it behind visual images, and the reverse movement, reopening the everyday and actualising the world. The awareness of normative orders applied to photography in certain socio-cultural spheres plays an important role in understanding the limits of perception and knowledge of the world around us.

The second conclusion, directly related to the first, concerning the normativity structuring the cultural practice of photography, can be expressed as follows: the judgement of the essence of photography as a way of transparently representing things and certifying their existence must be accepted with a significant limitation. When considering photography as a document, the process of image-making and the aesthetic habits of the author and viewer of the image must be taken into account. This can be illustrated by looking at the images of photographers working in St. Petersburg in the second half of the 19th century. In almost all pictures of the city we will not see details of the sky (it will correspond to a uniform light surface), people and poles with wires, which were installed everywhere in the city at that time. If the situation regarding the image of the sky is easily explained by the peculiarity of the photographic material of the time, where do the people and the poles disappear? If you look at the original negatives, you can see that all this is on them. The aesthetic principle of the time forced photographers to remove poles, wires, people who had inadvertently entered the frame, and sometimes even entire carriages from the final prints by means of retouching. The public welcomed the austere and quiet images of the city - in contrast to the excessive detail associated with industrialisation and overcrowding. Photographs of St. Petersburg in the second half of the nineteenth century are therefore of greater interest to research as a mode of vision appropriate to the period, rather than as a document or testimony describing the city. In a more categorical form, this situation can be summarised as

follows: the photographic image lies, it does not speak of reality but of cultural codes. This is the third possible conclusion regarding the normativity of photography.

Understanding photographic images as cultural evidence opens up a wide horizon for the study of the socio-cultural reality that photography expands. It becomes all the more relevant and meaningful the greater the role visibility begins to play in culture. More generally, the study of images can serve as the main tool for reconstructing the evolution of human vision from prehistory to the present. As V. M. Rozin shows, the historical consideration of the relationship between images and social reality can serve as a basis for justifying the modern way of perception, describing the cultural models underlying the vision of the world and the production of images[80]. Here, normativity appears as a mass taste on the basis of which choices are made about the place, pose, time and situation to be photographed. This taste is extremely conservative and reveals itself through the 'countless' number of identical images available on social media. Portraits, children, holidays, meetings, vacations and other life events, if they are to be photographed, then only in a certain way, with the expectation of certain images at the end.

The significance of such observations lies in the fact that the choice of perspective on the scene to be photographed is rarely made consciously, but rather in a fleeting grasp of the most 'beautiful' frame layout for the eye. The unconscious choice of direction and moment of shooting, common to many casual and amateur photographers, speaks for itself. This preference is related to the general outline of public taste, which generates a way of looking, choosing, thinking, evaluating. The common type of sensibility in the contemporary world transcends the boundaries of a particular state, nation or society and is massively shared by all participants in the Internet environment on a planetary scale, as can be seen in the geography of photographic images.

The global cultural code, which is largely rooted in the visual, leads people to see some events and ignore others, regardless of where they live, their wealth, education, historical heritage, and so on. This means that in the process of unification, the boundaries between the distant and the near are blurred and the visible becomes elusive due to the

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[80] Rozin V. M. Visual Culture and Perception. How Man Sees and Understands the World. Moscow: Editorial URSS, 2004. 224 p. *(In Russian).*

abundance of visual clichés. In such a situation, being aware of what guides our perception and cognition of the world around us becomes particularly important, given the conclusion we have just drawn. Visibility, subordinated to the discourse of power, can function as a means of control. It is much more dangerous than coercion because it acts implicitly, subtly imposing a particular point of view, both in terms of how we think and in the direction in which we look. This brings us to the concept of 'soft power', which "suggests that it is possible to influence and change the behaviour of others in the desired direction by using one's own attractiveness, likability, authoritative and influential image while shaping the preferences of other participants in the relationship. Soft power is based on the use of intangible resources such as culture, ideology and institutions"[81].

When we give our photographic images a certain desirable appearance, we use photography as a Procrustean bed for our perception. Sensuality organised according to the photographic principle leads to a situation in which we consider it legitimate to judge the value of a place, an object, an event or even a person on the basis of a photograph alone. Sergey Lishaev describes in detail one of the manifestations of this kind of perception, calling it the "photo-construction of a journey". "Since then," Lishaev writes, "as tourism has become mass market and photography has become the leitmotif of our wanderings around the world, its nature has changed. Travellers' attention used to be focused on the road and what it revealed: another world, other people, unprecedented customs and manners. Being on the road was full of events and encounters, it gave a person a new experience and expanded the boundaries of consciousness. Today, the tourist's attention has shifted from people and landscapes to technical images. Accordingly, travelling has become different"[82]. When a tourist goes on a journey, he looks at photographs of the place (mainly sights) he is going to; when he arrives, he takes photographs of these sights, already seen in other photographs, but his own; and when he returns home, he looks at these photographs. McLuhan comments caustically on this

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[81] Yakoba I.A. 'Soft power' in modern politics and discursive technology // Sociological Studies. 2014. Number 12. P. 67. *(In Russian)*.
[82] Lishaev S.A. Remembering through photography. SPb.: Aleteia, 2012. P. 50-51. *(In Russian)*.

situation: "You can bet that such people never really leave their well-trodden paths of receptivity, nor do they ever arrive at a new place"[83].

Thus, the normativity the practice of photography that we have examined is characterised, on the one hand, by a preferred type of image that depends on the cultural codes, habits and norms of visual perception adopted in a given society. On the other hand, normativity comes from the discourse of power, which acts as an explicit prohibition of photography, as a regulation of the content of photographs displayed in the media or in public, as the formation of public opinion through the presentation of photographs that conform to people's visual standards, do not create contradictions with their meaning and do not distort the meaning of the photographed event through the way it is photographed. Culture produces the education of the gaze, and photography is as much a part of this process as television, film and the Internet.

The dialectic of present/hidden, emergence/disappearance permeates the contemporary cultural practice of photography. Photography, which emerged with the development of metropolises, monetary economies and industrialisation, corresponded perfectly to the new modern society because it was perfectly capable of documenting it and updating its values. It was believed to be a tool to open up the world, to make it representable, to unite disparate territories. Then came the belief in photography as a document whose authenticity could not be challenged because it was machine-based and excluded the human hand from the image-making process.

Today, photography has become the ultimate image-making machine. By completely changing its technology, it has been able to mimic the appearance of its former mode of existence. But in doing so, the role of the images themselves that its practice offers has changed. The function of showing, presenting, representing, registering the world, inherent to photography in its initial stage, has been replaced by the function of replacing, modelling, presenting, hiding the world for the eye. On the one hand, this movement freed photography from the documentary paradigm and opened the way for it to enter contemporary art as a material. On the other hand, it requires a more attentive

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[83] McLuhan M. Understanding Media: External Extensions of Man. Moscow: Kuchkovo Pole, 2011. P. 224. *(In Russian)*.

attitude towards the photographic images themselves, which acquire a series of new meanings different from the original documentary one.

If photography today claims to control our vision, to hide what should not be seen and to show what should be shown, this requires a close examination of the normative orders involved in both the choice of subjects to be photographed and the decision to show or not show certain images. In general terms, all this leads to the idea of a specific dimension of the existence of photography: the political. The political dimension of the existence of photographic practice is understood here in the broadest possible sense and includes both the already described intervention of power in the sphere of image production and distribution and the functioning of this procedure within the social environment when my photographs are involved in the process of showing them to others.

By combining plasticity with documentary characterisation, photography can, deliberately or unconsciously, mislead in relation to the world around it. This obscuring of the world occurs when plasticity is confused or dissolved in documentary. The cultural code responsible for normativity imposes a monotonous, banal appearance on expression, designed to repeat itself from time to time in every choice of subject, angle and frame for a particular photograph. Without accepting the concept of the normativity of photography and its close connection to the way of perception accepted in a particular society, it is difficult to go beyond the notion of photography as representation and as a completely transparent image capable of representing the referent without distortion. And by remaining within this notion, it is impossible to see the political dimension of photographic images. It is tantamount to remaining unprotected against the modelling of reality, limiting one's perception of the world, loading one's gaze with more and more blind spots. The cultural practice of photography is inextricably linked to a normativity that prescribes and restricts the creation of new images and the dissemination of existing ones.

Chapter 2. Cultural practices of photography

2.1 Amateur practices of photography

The constant presence of photographs in our everyday lives (press, posters, social networks, media, advertising, etc.) shifts attention from analysing the cultural practice of photography to talking about photography as such. The role of photographic practice as a kind of cultural practice — the process of realising culture, i.e. purposeful activity in the sphere of culture related to the creation and recreation of its elements through subject, transformative activity, as well as training, preparation and assimilation — is lost.

When one starts a conversation about photography, one does not immediately think of one's own pictures. Holidays, meetings with friends, birthdays, graduations, weddings, family reunions, selfies, children's photos — in a word, personal or amateur photographs - are often not on the researchers' minds. It seems that they are too familiar and personal to be treated as phenomena that reflect and clarify the phenomenon of the cultural practice of photography. Instead, one is reminded of the images of famous photographers, their famous photographs. At first glance, the sphere of personal images seems unsuitable for consideration as a subject of discourse on photography. However, this perception is deceptive, and research interest in the practice of amateur photography emerged in Russian scholarship in the 2000s, while in the West this subject was actively researched in the last third of the 20th century[84]. What is striking about these studies is their multidisciplinary nature, represented by various social and human sciences: culturology, sociology, ethnography, anthropology, psychology. What remains common is the explicit or implicit reliance on the philosophical analysis of the photographic image and the determination of its ontological status. Despite this, the number of theoretical works devoted to the phenomenon of amateur photography is incomparably smaller than the

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[84] Central studies devoted to the phenomenon of amateur and everyday photography conducted in Russia see: Gurieva M.M. Everyday photography in the modern cultural context: dissertation of the candidate of philosophical sciences: 24.00.01. SPb, 2009. 167 p. *(In Russian)*; Boitsova O.Y. Amateur photography in Russian urban culture of the end of XX century: visual and anthropological analysis: dissertation of the candidate of historical sciences: 07.00.07. SPb, 2010. 249 c. *(In Russian).* Foreign studies: Bourdieu P., Boltanski L., Castel R., Chamboredon J.-C. Public Art: Experience on the Social Use of Photography. Moscow: Izdatel'skaja i konsaltingovaja gruppa «Praksis», 2014. 456 p. *(In Russian)*; Chalfen R. Snapshot Versions of Life. Popular Press 2, 2008. 222 p.

number of texts on the theory and philosophy of photography, as well as critical articles on artistic photography.

The attempt to explicate the meaning of the cultural practice of photography is based on images perceived in the space of shops, offices, magazines, exhibitions, social networks, i.e. other people's photographs. This obscures the meaning of the cultural practice of photography as much as it reduces the conversation about it to pure voyeurism. Most of the result of photographic practice, which is the amateur or personal activity of each camera owner, disappears from view. The personal, family or group need for photography and its result, considered in close relation to the social action that causes it, directs the study from photography as such to its everyday, amateur practice.

The first question we need to ask is: why has the practice of amateur photography become so widespread that, even before the mass availability of camera-equipped smartphones, few people did not own a camera? Perhaps we should not be misled by the obvious view that photography is easily disseminated because of its economic and technical accessibility (a camera is cheap and anyone can use one). The accessibility of photography and the existence of places where one can display one's photographs (e.g. personal pages on social media) do not reveal the reasons for such a significant diffusion of photography, they mistake the effect for the cause, just as the assumption that the increase in the number of photographs produced after the digital revolution is only due to the change in technology and the associated ease of production of photographs. As Bourdieu writes: "...by taking the effect as the cause, we explain the photographic practice, which is subject to social rules, charged with social functions and, on this basis, experienced as a need, by what is its effect"[85].

The fact that photography spread very quickly — in St. Petersburg, for example, there were some 30 photographic studios on Nevsky Prospekt alone at the end of the 19th century[86] — can be explained by the fact that from the very beginning it began to fulfil the functions that had preceded its emergence. And this is why, despite the inspiring

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[85] Bourdieu P., Boltanski L., Castel R., Chamboredon J.-C. Public Art: Experience on the Social Use of Photography. Moscow: Izdatel'skaja i konsaltingovaja gruppa «Praksis», 2014. P. 34. *(In Russian)*.

[86] Photo salons of St. Petersburg: 1880-1917. Alphabetical list of photographers, photographs, owners of photographs with addresses, as well as samples of passepartout of some photo shops of the capital city of St. Petersburg for different years. URL: http://rod.meller.su/FotoSalonSPb/FotoSalon_0.htm (accessed: 10.05.2024). *(In Russian)*.

variety of photographic processes, shooting techniques, editing tools and the flexibility of photography as an artistic tool in general, amateur photographic practice is based on strict regularities and, as research shows, is a stereotyped and strict system of conventions and rules. To describe this system, Richard Chalfen introduces the concept of 'Kodak Culture', the first term referring to the economic and technical history of the emergence of amateur photography[87], and the second constituting it as a part of culture and a particular kind of cultural practice, since "Kodak Culture will refer to whatever it is that one has to learn, know, or do in order to participate appropriately in what has been outlined as the home mode of pictorial communication"[88]. Olga Boytsova concludes: "Amateur photography is a symbolic system. Pictures with accompanying words are visual 'statements', and the system of unwritten rules and conventions behind such 'statements' can be called 'the language of amateur photography"[89]. In turn, Maria Gurieva's study[90] reveals in detail the historical process of the realisation of this symbolic system from the mid-nineteenth century to the present day.

In order to systematise the significance of amateur photographic practice in the process of cultural realisation, it will help to identify four main interrelated aspects of amateur practice: socialisation and enculturation, symbolic communication, identity construction and memory actualisation. Socialisation in culture, which takes place in the context of amateur practice, is based on two functions: the transmission and reproduction of cultural information, values and norms; the cohesion of social groups and the legitimation of the inclusion of new participants in them.

Photography appears as a symbolic system in socialisation, as a process of learning behavioural patterns, social roles and norms, as well as spiritual values. Strictly normative and oriented towards a finite set of photogenic subjects and scenes, it is designed to record the milestones of life's journey, situations of success, celebrations, major material acquisitions, changes in status and roles, etc. By photographing what should and must be

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[87] For more information about Kodak's role in the creation of the amateur photography market, see: Levashov V. Lectures on the History of Photography. Second edition. Moscow: LLC 'Trimedia Content', 2012. P. 34. *(In Russian).*
[88] Chalfen R. Snapshot Versions of Life. Popular Press 2, 2008. P. 10.
[89] Boytsova O. Yu. Amateur photo: visual culture of everyday life. St. Petersburg: Publishing House of the European University in St. Petersburg, 2013. P. 242. *(In Russian).*
[90] Gurieva M.M. Everyday photography in the modern cultural context: dissertation of the candidate of philosophical sciences: 24.00.01. SPb, 2009. 167 p. *(In Russian).*

photographed, the bearers of culture communicate how to live. It is appropriate to describe this situation in terms of the dialectical process of socialisation formulated by Peter Berger and Thomas Lukman, which includes three moments: externalisation, objectification and internalisation [91]. Since we are already in a situation of mass dissemination of photography, cultural socialisation and enculturation through amateur practice begins when a person, within a particular culture, perceives certain photographs or becomes a participant in the photographed scene. This cultural practice is objectification, that is, it manifests itself as the result of an activity that is available to me and to another as an element of the external world. This objectification is internalised, that is, it is internalised and becomes part of the person and his internal structures. Subsequently, the person reproduces this practice in his/her activity — externalises it. We look at other people's photos, and then we take the same photos ourselves under suitable conditions, which we then show to others, and so on. It is important that the subjective meaning of objectification coincides in externalisation and internalisation. And the mutual knowledge of this coincidence implies signification (labelling). This is how the possibility of understanding and communication is ensured.

Symbolically loaded, amateur photography functions as a kind of visual textbook of social life, providing information about the stages of life a person should go through and how he/she should look, the emotions he/she should feel, the external manifestations of social success he/she should possess, the ideal holiday of a happy family, and so on. In this way, cultural information, values and norms are expressed, transmitted and reproduced through the amateur practice of photography.

The second aspect of socialisation and enculturation through amateur practice relates to the cohesion of the social group and the legitimacy of the inclusion of new members. The importance of photography here is manifested in the inclusion of photography in key stages of life. One can compile an amateur photobiography: a photo in the maternity hospital, a matinee in the kindergarten, September 1, the last call, the initiation into the first year, a graduate with a diploma in his hand, a wedding, New Year's

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[91] Berger P., Luckmann T. The Social Construction of Reality. A Treatise on the Sociology of Knowledge. Moscow: "Medium", 1995. P. 210. *(In Russian).*

Eve, a work team, an anniversary, a holiday, a photo near the house and the car, a photo in a ritual hall. The meaning and role of photography in different stages of life depends on the cultural significance of that stage. Photography can be interpreted in relation to the cultural practices in which it participates: photographs taken at a wedding are taken to sanctify the union of two people by recording the exchange of rings and to preserve the solemnity; the birth of a child strengthens family ties and creates a need for photographs to record the child's appearance at different stages of childhood; on holiday, amateur photography seeks to preserve the unique encounter between the individual and the place, between the particularities of the individual and the place, and between the particularities of the individual and the place.

The process of enculturation is linked to signification, which involves giving amateur images a meaning that goes beyond mere referentiality, which brings us to the second aspect of amateur photographic practice - symbolic communication. Amateur images are meant to be shared and displayed. They are posted on social networks and sent by messenger, accompanied by comments, collected in albums, placed in interiors. In this way, they are both used in personal/intimate communication situations and displayed on a potentially infinite number of screens. Amateur photographs are cultural signs whose meaning is shared by all participants who use amateur photography for communication. They convey information about social status and levels of consumption, leisure activities, relationships, places visited, highlight achievements — in short, they express everything that is the façade of a successful life and an element of the right life path. Their function as an instrument of symbolic communication is to inform the other person and to receive confirmation of conformity to abstract norms. By showing a typical photograph, I expect a typical reaction. That is why the photographs themselves are limited to a certain set of photogenic subjects and scenes that conform to a certain aesthetic.

The third aspect of amateur practice arises in the process of symbolic communication, as images are used to communicate information about oneself to others and to oneself, i.e. to construct an identity. It is a matter of creating an image of oneself, to which objectivity is ascribed through the technical aspect of photography. It is important that the image in the photograph corresponds to the internalised cultural and

personal aesthetic principles. In this way, the photograph is both constructed and objective, 'authentically' representing a subjective representation of the self. The photograph acts as clothing and cosmetics, emphasising the necessary details and concealing the superfluous. It is no coincidence that in Russian 'mascara' and 'retouch' are homonyms. When a person is photographed, he or she tries to come out in the photograph, so that the resulting image corresponds to the inner image and can be used as a substitute object. This is why photography is so well-suited to digital media and has become widely used as a tool for creating online images. And photo editors have become popular and ubiquitous.

The construction of identity, which is closely linked to the process of symbolic communication through amateur practice, cannot be based solely on a person's subjective representations of the self. For a photographic message to be read, as the context of amateur practice suggests, it must be constructed on the basis of typical scenes and accepted clichés in accordance with the general system of normativity of amateur photography. Olga Boytsova writes: "This is the peculiar paradox of amateur photography: designed, as it seems to the bearers of culture, to record the facts of a particular person's biography and used for this purpose, it actually registers the general and serves to fit the individual's life path into the norm"[92]. In this sense, we can speak of constructed identity as a photographic hieratism peculiar to amateur practice: looking into the lens; frontal portrayal of people; centring the frame around the main subject; choosing the point, angle and scale of the shot according to the "natural" gaze; placing all objects on a (more often than not common) plane; avoiding details that are superfluous to the message to be conveyed.

The final aspect of amateur practice as a way of realising culture is the process of actualising memory. In everyday discourse, this task is associated with the preservation of memory and recollection, which implicitly means that the photographic image provides direct access to the event it depicts, i.e. it is its direct referent. A closer look, however, reveals that in the process of perception, the photograph is rather a "switch" of memory,

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[92] Boytsova O. Yu. Amateur photo: visual culture of everyday life. St. Petersburg: Publishing House of the European University in St. Petersburg, 2013. P. 244. *(In Russian).*

carrying out a process of actualisation, i.e. reviving the memory and incorporating it into the present. In terms of time, the perception of photography is linked to two directions: stereoscopic (towards the present and the past) and oriented (from the past to the present). Perception updates memory, incorporating the past into the present and transporting the viewer of a photograph into his or her past. This means that photographs do not fully reflect the past state of the things they depict. The past is mixed with memories of events, thoughts and encounters associated with the image, both before and after its creation. The link between perception and memory makes it possible to associate images not only directly with their referent, but also with other images that have their origin in memory and the psyche.

The process of updating memory is quite complex because perception is not just the transmission of information through the senses. It is not a direct reflection of reality, but involves memory and has a duration. Perception is determined by our actions, our needs and, above all, our memory. When we take a photograph or look at a picture, we trigger a memory mechanism that stores all the events of our lives and tries to fit them into our current perception. In this way, the photograph becomes a meeting point between the past and the present. It reflects a deep identity, because it does not go from the present to the past, but from the past to the present, from memory to perception. The deliberate motive for taking the photograph, expressed in the phrase "a photo to remember", is rather the desire to create an object of perception that can actualise memory and fit into the concept of personal or group identity.

As we can see, the aspects of the cultural practice of amateur photography are closely interrelated. Realised as a process of socialisation in culture, it assumes both personal and sub-individual levels and successfully combines the task of expressing the system of social norms, values and prescriptions with the need to build personal and group identity, remaining intimate in the process of communication and updating memory. All this makes amateur photography a valuable tool for analysis. Unchanged in its technical basis, it is a kind of test case that can be used to understand the cultural peculiarities of a given society. Conservative in nature, it can reveal significant and subtle cultural changes and be an expression of dynamic processes in the visual and social spheres.

Amateur photography is therefore a special kind of cultural practice that allows culture to be transmitted and preserved through visual images. It expresses the system of group values, norms and ideals realised through the aspect of socialisation and symbolic communication. By looking at other people's photographs and creating one's own amateur photographs, cultural normativity is expressed and recreated, and group membership is demonstrated. Another feature of amateur photography is related to the construction of subjectivity. Based on the documentary nature of the photographic image on the one hand, and the possibility of updating personal or collective memory on the other, amateur photography creates a virtual image that combines the personal, social, cultural and objective.

Over the last few decades we have seen several significant changes in the practice of amateur photography. The first is the digital revolution, which has seen the abandonment of analogue photography in favour of digital photography. Behind the outward similarities between film and digital photography lies a qualitative shift in the ontological status of the photographic image. Social media, which initially captured the younger generation but later connected the vast majority of the population, became a legitimate extension of virtual reality, necessitating the creation of an online image. Photography, given a digital dimension, became a tool for photoconstructing life in order to demonstrate presence in the digital environment. Without changing its basic functions, the amateur practice has intensified. A photo album or a feed on a personal page in a social network, on the one hand, was addressed to an anonymous multitude of users rather than to a close circle of socialising; on the other hand, images were given universal tools of feedback and a form of approval — like, comment, repost.

Another significant change in amateur practice has been the expansion of the scope of the photogenic, that is, the range of subjects and scenes to be photographed and photographed, as opposed to all possible photographs. Selfies, food, scenes from everyday life, and virtually any object that would be of interest to a person with a camera in one way or another have become subjects for capture and display. This is not to say that these subjects have been ignored throughout the history of photography. But today they have become an everyday element of communication and identity construction for

participants in amateur practice. Another change taking place before our eyes is the introduction of artificial intelligence. We are talking about both the creation of an image from scratch with the help of generative artificial intelligence according to a pre-formulated request, and the introduction of this technology into photo editors and camera software. In the latter case, the image is automatically processed to conform to a particular aesthetic shared by participants in the practice of amateur photography. An analysis of these and other changes in amateur photography practice shows how it can be used as a tool for analysing changing culture. Although rooted in society, stable and changeable, it is an expression of culture, a way of realising it. To illustrate these conclusions, let us analyse some specific types of amateur practice: family practice (holiday and vacation photography) and selfies.

A major sociological study on the social use of photography, carried out by a group of researchers led by Pierre Bourdieu in the first half of the 1960s[93], provides a wealth of statistical data and is one of the first analyses of amateur photographic practice. The vast majority of photographers, whom Bourdieu calls 'seasonal conformists', practise photography mainly on the occasion of family celebrations and ceremonies, meetings with friends or during holidays. The amateur practice is largely maintained and practised solely because of its familial function. Namely, because of the role that the family assigns to it, which is to capture and preserve significant moments of family life. The practice of photography strengthens family bonds by periodically reaffirming a sense of belonging and family unity. Family photography expresses a sense of celebration and presents the family as both subject and object. And in such a situation, the need for photographs and the need to be photographed seem all the stronger the more united the family or group is. The practice of photography creates sameness and immortalises a time of celebration of collective life. Wedding photography has spread rapidly and is now an indispensable part of the celebration, as it is linked to the very cultural conditions of the celebration - waste and motoring. Hiring a photographer for the occasion is an extravagance that, on the one

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[93] Bourdieu P., Boltanski L., Castel R., Chamboredon J.-C. Public Art: Experience on the Social Use of Photography. Moscow: Izdatel'skaja i konsaltingovaja gruppa «Praksis», 2014. 456 p. *(In Russian)*

hand, increases the solemnity of the event and, on the other, increases the availability of the photographs. That is why today there is no wedding without photos.

According to Durkheim, the function of the holiday is to enliven and recreate the group. This explains why photography is associated with celebration. Because it provides an opportunity to magnify the solemnity of important moments in life when the group reaffirms and recreates its unity. Solemnity dictates the behaviour and mode of representation in front of the photographer's lens. No one ignores his instructions - they look into the lens when they have to look, jump when they are told to jump, smile when they are told to smile. Only what is to be photographed is photographed, and nothing else. A solemn event can be photographed because it has nothing to do with everyday life, and it should be photographed because photographs update the image that people and groups want to present of themselves. Generally speaking, what is photographed and what is communicated through the photographic language is not the individual in its unique concreteness, but social roles and relationships: the schoolboy at the first bell, the newlyweds, the military, the graduates, the father with his child in the maternity hospital, the relatives. Thus, all events that represent an intensification of family life, associated with a holiday or with milestones, contribute to the increase of the cultural practice of photography.

Because of photography's ability to become an object of collective contemplation, and especially in the age of social media, it becomes a way of prolonging the celebration it depicts and the importance it signals. In a particular way, the practice of photography has a predisposition to serve as a technique of celebration and its repetition, because of its ability to capture the most uplifting and joy-promoting moments. Its ability to capture exceptional moments makes it exceptional, photographs of ‘successful’ or ‘good’ moments will later turn into a ‘warm’ memory. By associating itself with a holiday, a meeting of friends or a family event, the photograph magnifies and intensifies the festivity as the ultimate experience, or even, in Bourdieu's words, "gives it the exclusivity of a sacrifice"[94]. At the same time, the photograph itself more often than not becomes a pure

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[94] Ibid, p. 50.

sign that only those with the key can decipher. This is because the feast itself is constructed out of minutiae, there is something created, and so often only the memories of being present at the feast, the ʻgood memoryʼ, are preserved. The photograph actualises this memory, and if it cannot tell us what these people were laughing at in this holiday photo, it certainly testifies to the fact that they were indeed laughing. It turns out that the image, which communicates almost nothing about the event, nevertheless evokes the memory of the holiday in general, a ʻgood memoryʼ, opposes oblivion not through the plan of mimesis, but through the creation of circles of memory, in which the image of the photograph is included as one of many images associated with the actualisation of the memory.

It should not be thought that photography as a tool of celebration only focuses on 'correct' images, it can also present the mockery of sacralisation as a symbolic sacrilege. A wiggle, or a guest photographed in a funny or indecent pose, encourages laughter, performs a kind of reverse solemnity, breaking all the rules. This does not contradict the festivity, but expresses and reinforces the regulated disorder of the holiday. Consequently, there is no reason to see in wiggling and gyrating in front of the camera, as in the photographs of wiggling, the effect of denying solemnity.

The need for the practice of photography, or, as Bourdieu calls it, "the technique of enhancing solemnity or the technique of enhancing festivity and always the technique of festive solemnity"[95], becomes greater the more conventional the celebrations become and the fewer public signs of festivity are left to give presence at them an objective basis. The more contingent the celebrations become and the fewer public signs of celebration are left to give presence an objective basis. Family celebrations such as birthdays, anniversaries and christenings can now be perceived as arbitrary and optional, largely because of the isolation of the modern family. Celebration photography will be truly celebratory if the photographer, chosen from among the people involved in the celebration, takes care to forget (as everyone else does) that a celebration is only created and only happens when it is made and only because it is decided to be made. Society acquires a

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[95] Ibid, p. 51.

high rate of change, which prevents it from having sufficient continuity to create its own history that unites its members. In such a situation, it seems natural that the practice of photography, for the family as the only small group that continues to maintain continuity, in the absence of other ways of preserving identity, becomes a site of memory and accumulation of heritage. Thus, the family practice of photography increases solemnity, recreates unity and preserves memory — in short, it ensures its socio-cultural existence.

Today, the development of photographic technology offers a truly wide range of possibilities in terms of image making. But does the use of the modern camera have an impact on the family practice of photography, does it provide an opportunity to reach a different level of practice? In fact, the intensification of practice facilitated by modern technology, which increases the number of convenient occasions for photography, cannot in itself cause a change in family practice and provide access to a qualitatively different photographic practice. The purchase of a new camera is driven more by consumer needs and the need to buy a quality product than by a desire to change the practice of photography. In other words, the improvement of technique does not come from a need to change the practice itself, i.e. from within, but from without, in the form of a concern to conform to an unformed group norm. The camera, its possibilities and limitations, cannot serve as a basis for determining the modality of practice, the aesthetic or even the technical quality of the image, just as the technical limitations of the camera and the illiteracy of the conformist photographer cannot explain the conservative and exemplary production of images. By remaining within the confines of the family practice of photography, the technique is condemned to be used only for the purposes of the latter. It is not even necessary to make full use of the camera's possibilities, since it was not purchased for its technical capabilities. If normativity defines what should and can be photographed, then the field of the photogenic cannot expand indefinitely, and the practice of photography cannot continue in the absence of suitable moments. It turns out that the photogenic cannot be photographed indefinitely, and beyond that there is nothing to photograph.

For example, consider a photography practice related to holidays or tourism. Can it be explained in terms of family practice? As it seems that the rarity of the species that

the traveller discovers in the places he visits creates an objective opportunity for photography, it may be the case that the intensity of the practice does not increase despite this. This is not due to a lack of stimuli, such as beautiful scenery or the diversity and colourfulness of the places visited, but to a lack of culturally defined photographic opportunities. Holidays contribute to an increase in photographic practice only insofar as they are associated with intensified family relationships or frequent meetings with friends. Photography in this situation clearly expresses the function of immortalising significant moments. In other words, a practice that is so strongly linked to non-daily events that we can speak of it as a technique of celebration is naturally intensified during periods of separation from everyday life and the environment.

The photograph, by slowing down the multiplicity of shifting experiences through the actualised image, is predestined to become a trophy. The tourist practice of photography seeks to preserve the unique encounter between the individual and the sacralised place, between a singular moment of existence and a singular object of high symbolic efficiency. The two objects depicted, the individual and the place, positioned in the centre of the frame and strictly frontal, are photographed so that one perpetuates the other. Such photographs are nothing less than allegories or ideograms, because it is not the individual features and events that are important, but the symbolic meaning. Photographed against the background of a place with a high symbolic efficiency, one tries to reproduce a sign that will not have a purely indexical meaning. On the other hand, photographs that associate a sign with an object that has no meaning at all are common. Photographs taken in the street or in an obscure place against a background of indifferent or anonymous decoration. However, like photographs taken against iconic backdrops, these images are informative because they express the moment of the individual's encounter with a place. The process of mutual immortalisation of the individual and the background tends to turn the photograph into an allegory. In this case, it is not the details, circumstances and events that are important, but the meaning that the photograph refers to as something external.

Although holidays contribute to the expansion of the field of the photogenic, photographic practice remains subordinated to normativity, because what is to be

photographed is photographed, just as there are sights to be visited. This practice remains stereotypical in the choice of subjects and objects to be photographed. Once we are in the territory of the family practice of photography, we cannot overcome it from within. The practice may increase in volume, but it still leaves no room for the search for the aesthetic. In fact, the realm of the 'other' photography does not go beyond a simple increase in the number of photographs, but is something different in relation to family photography, its difference not in quantity but in nature. In this respect, consider the practice of selfies.

What has kept the photographer's hand from turning the lens of his camera from the objects, situations and people in front of him to his own face and taking self-portraits? Why didn't this become common practice 100 years ago, when the first truly compact and automatic cameras appeared? And why, now that the practice of self-portraiture has become ubiquitous and easily recognisable, has it generated so much discussion, controversy, condemnation and even attempted regulation? The ambiguity and relevance of the question of the meaning of the selfie phenomenon and how to deal with it is confirmed, on the one hand, by its popularity — the Oxford Dictionary chose selfie as the word of the year in 2013 — and, on the other, by the results of the first study on the selfie phenomenon, carried out in 2014 by researchers from the City University of New York and the California Institute of Communication — *Selfiecity* — which, in the words of the authors, combines "theoretical, artistic and quantitative methods"[96]. This is accompanied by the first publications and critical articles in online presses and institutional journals, such as "Art at arm's length" by Jeri Saltz[97]; "Selfies are not inspirational. They are a cry for help" by Erin Ryan[98]; the fourth issue of Logos magazine for 2014 published three articles dealing with the phenomenon of selfies[99]. The latter can be considered the beginning of the Russian-language discussion on this genre of photography.

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[96] Selfiecity. Investigating the style of self-portraits (selfies) in five cities across the world. URL: http://selfiecity.net (accessed: 10.05.2024).
[97] Saltz J. Art at Arm's Length: A History of the Selfie // Vulture. January 27, 2014. URL: http://www.vulture.com/2014/01/history-of-the-selfie.html (accessed: 10.05.2024).
[98] Ryan E. G. Selfies Aren't Empowering. They're a Cry for Help // Jezebel. November 21, 2013. URL: https://www.jezebel.com/selfies-arent-empowering-theyre-a-cry-for-help-1468965365 (accessed: 10.05.2024).
[99] Logos. no. 4 (100), 2014. *(In Russian)*.

Examining the practice of self-portraiture, as suggested by selfies, is important not only because it touches on classic issues — identity, self and other, corporeality — but also because it represents a new way of cultural practice of photography, the analysis of which will help to explain changes in culture and the way of being in society. Paradoxically, the result of the photographer's simple gesture of pointing the camera lens at herself invokes political and economic discourses, the discourse of the ontology of the self and feminism. Here, in pursuit of the overall aim of the paper, we will attempt to reveal the role of the selfie as a cultural practice on the basis of statistical data.

First of all, it is necessary to define what the practice of selfies is and who practices it. The first is necessary so that there are no misunderstandings about this type of self-portrait, which easily fits into the pictorial tradition, but which already differs in certain aspects from photographic self-portraits taken with a tripod and a self-timer camera, and even more from ordinary portraits taken by someone other than the portraitist. Secondly, it is important due to the fact that, unlike the practice of photography in general, as a need to take photographs to which most people resort, selfies are practised mainly by one age group and represent a rather small part (3-5% of the total number of photographs taken[100]) of the total number of photographs taken. A selfie is a self-portrait taken with a digital camera from an arm's length, including a reflection in a mirror and the use of a monopod. Another important and necessary feature is the speed and ease of production. Self-portraits are taken with a smartphone camera and posted on a social network. So, when we talk about selfies, we are mainly talking about digital self-portraits posted on the internet.

The Selfiecity study is based on a sample of one hundred and twenty thousand photos uploaded to the social network in one week in five cities: Moscow, New York, Berlin, São Paulo and Bangkok. The result of the sampling was 3200 photos. The average age of the people in the pictures was 23.7 years, with the average age of women being two years younger than the average age of men in all cities, and 23.3 and 25.7 years respectively in Moscow. The graph also shows that the number of self-portraits decreases

[100] Selfiecity survey data, URL: http://selfiecity.net. In the following all statistical data are given according to the mentioned survey.

in direct proportion to the distance from the average age, in both directions. An important finding is the gender ratio of the people in the pictures. In all cities, there are more selfies with women than with men, but the difference is most pronounced in Moscow, where there are 4.6 times more selfies with women than with men[101]. From the above, it can be concluded that selfies are an unusual genre of photography, practised mainly by people between the ages of 23 and 25. Given this situation, it is at least unclear why this practice causes so much discussion and such contradictory reactions?

We seem to be faced with the situation described by Pierre Bourdieu, in which the definition of the value of photographic practice is mediated by the relations between different social groups. Bourdieu shows how attitudes towards the practice of photography are shaped by the peasant, middle and upper classes. For each class, the value of photography is created mainly through negative attitudes towards the practices of the other class. For example, peasants do not practice photography because they see it as a sign of urbanity and a threat to their values. The upper class may refrain from photography because it is too common and therefore vulgar. But can we find a similar process mediating the practice of selfies? Answering this question in the affirmative would mean, firstly, that we can draw class distinctions within a group of digitally connected people and, secondly, that the affirmation of the practice of photography occurs through negative attitudes towards the practice by a certain age group and mostly one sex, i.e. on the basis of gender and age discrimination.

But if we assume that the networked community, despite its vast geographical and multinational composition, is still characterised by a unity based on the agreement to use the same type of equipment, then it would not be unique for individuals connected to a single digital environment to have a similar concept of the photogenic. This is possible if we consider that the practice of photography, more than any other cultural practice, corresponds to a certain natural need arising from its widespread use and from the absence of institutionalisation and, therefore, of a certain explicit and hierarchical system of cultural values, norms, meanings, and so on. In a situation of openness to everyone's practice, the formation of the sphere of the photogenic takes place through a socio-cultural

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[101] Of the Moscow sample of snapshots, 82% of selfies feature women.

need that is served by the practice of photography. It turns out that selfies are an inappropriate extension of the photogenic. The unexpected expansion of the sphere of the photogenic, which is not perceived as justified from a normative point of view, is criticised.

Thus, conservative aspects of social life do not find legitimacy in the practice of selfies. But for a certain group of people aged between 23 and 25, mostly women, this genre of self-portrait is widespread and legitimate. It follows that we will not understand the essence of the phenomenon described if we limit ourselves to pointing out the marginality of selfies and ignore the internal reasons for producing self-portraits for display on the Internet. What is obvious is the relationship of selfies to the construction of one's online presence. As a photograph, they are embedded in the photographic construction of life. And with the medium of their posting in mind, we can apply the concepts of realisation and actualisation to recognise the changing functions of these images in relation to culture.

The realisation side of photography, i.e. the dimension of mimesis and imprint, works in a standard way, as a confirmation and authentication of what 'it was'. By pointing the lens at myself, I fulfil the intention of photographing a certain pose and a certain facial expression, generally to show, through the documentary function of photography, how I look. This view is typical because it is limited by the way I shoot - the distance from my face to the camera on an outstretched arm or monopod, and the frontal positioning of the lens. So it's not surprising to see a mosaic of thousands of faces captured in selfies, showing the uniformity of features and looks of people from different continents. Perhaps nowhere is the pose of the subject and the overall composition of the photograph constructed with such monotony and banality as in the practice of selfies, where the photographer and the subject are one face. Even the moment of encounter with the extraordinary, the ultimate experience - events that automatically trigger the need for photography - are presented in self-portraits as a more or less standardised face against the background of the event. Examples include the self-portrait of a surviving passenger in a plane crash, or the self-portrait of a Palestinian fleeing the Israeli police. The same faces can be found in many other self-portraits already associated with everyday life.

Selfies are a vivid example of the normativity of photography, built on the one hand on the particularities of practice and on the other on an indeterminate principle implicitly understood.

Actualisation, in turn, controls the process of positioning the self in the frame and the facial expression, relating the conventional norm that exists virtually to the final image. As in any photographic act, the release of the shutter signifies the alignment between the representation of the self-expressed in personal memory and the ethos expressed through a system of norms, traditions and conventions. By taking selfies, one turns the plan of actualisation on oneself, on one's image. Am I conforming to the view implicitly accepted by me and expressed in the way of being of society and culture? By carrying out the test of conformity to the mode of being given in the form of the image, the individual performs a ritual that confirms his identity within the framework of personal memory and the expression of the social norm. In the process, an encounter with something exceptional or important is demonstrated. The findings encourage us to consider the events that give rise to the practice of selfies and to look more closely at a core group of practitioners.

Kirill Martynov points to the ambivalent interpretations of the selfie in his article "Selfies: Between democratisation of media and self-commodification"[102]. The author cites two pairs of conflicting judgements about the nature of selfies. The first pair sees selfies as a manifestation of morbid narcissism, on the one hand, and as a form of emancipation from the need to have an image of oneself, appropriated by politicians and celebrities, on the other. This view has in mind the general "democratisation of media in the age of the Internet", combined with "an egalitarian attitude towards the right of every person to become a captured image, perceived by a potentially unlimited number of viewer-admirers"[103]. The second pair contrasts the latest consumer capitalism, expressed in teen-centric marketing offering a "smartphone for selfies" to take unrepeatable selfies, with a cultural critique that sees the practice of selfies as self-objectification and human self-announcement.

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[102] Martynov K. Selfies: between democratisation nof media and self-commodification // Logos. 2014. №4. Pp. 74-86. *(In Russian)*.
[103] Ibid, p. 75.

All four judgements can be seen in the context of the proliferation of the digital environment and the need to demonstrate one's presence in it. Before the new media era, selfies, if they were taken, were understandably not published. These images usually lacked artistic value, so before the proliferation of social media, they remained a purely personal endeavour. And so it is only with the spread of the digital environment and the increasing number of users connected to it that they have reached their potential. The genre of the selfie, as it is understood today, only emerges after the creation of a technological infrastructure — a smartphone or computer with a camera, the internet, social media. Selfies are defined by a decisive break with the tradition of the classical self-portrait. The photographer acts spontaneously rather than predictably, taking many shots and choosing the best one. Selfies become part of everyday life, changing notions of corporeality and redefining the relationship between the private and the public. It used to be rare to see pictures of people in toilets or bedrooms.

Narcissism existed in culture long before the invention of photography. But only the elite - rulers, politicians, actors, artists, etc. - could both have their own image and disseminate it. From the Renaissance to the end of the era of print media and glossy magazines, this rule was immutable. With the advent of photography, this hegemony came to an end, and the practice of selfies is not so much the flowering of global narcissism as the emancipation of the human face. Anyone can reproduce their image on a potentially infinite number of screens, and nothing - not classes, not editors, not lack of interest on the part of viewers, not professional skills - can stop this process. The lives of stars are presented to us in the form of images in magazines and on television, and are essentially separated from us by a gulf. They are on the other side of the camera lenses, we are on this side of the screens and magazines. Now everyone can be a star, in the sense of being presented as an image on the screen, with all the logic of television. This idea illustrates the age specificity of the authors of selfies, as shown by Selfiecity. Groups of people between the ages of 23 and 30 grew up with television and all the content of the youth channels, then saw their decline and moved into the digital environment. Today, the attitudes embedded in the sensibility of the individual as a result of the technological expansion of television are realised in the emancipation of one's own face and its

distribution as an image to an anonymous multitude of subscribers. This is probably how the unconscious, implicit desire to become a celebrity is realised.

Selfies clearly have an egalitarian potential. But we are not just taking a picture of ourselves, we are showing the image of a "normal girl", "normal guy", "tourist", "lovers", etc. The individual automatically brings his body and face to the necessary pose and expression, to produce a certain image. By placing it in the social media space, I construct my identity, which should evoke a certain attitude towards me on the part of the viewers.

The actualisation of the virtual face — existing as the constant appearance and disappearance of an expression created from the elements of the head in relation to the situation - through the photograph of selfies becomes the basis for its commodification and depersonalisation. In the classical understanding of portraiture, from the document photograph to the studio shot, the head and the face do not mix. "The head, with its forms, movements and organs, is part of the body; the face is not, because faces are products of the 'abstract personality machine' [...] The faces produced by this machine are not like it and are never identical"[104]. The face is not fixed once and for all in relation to its bearer, it is a fleeting and ephemeral reality, infinitely variable. The photographic portrait allowed everyone to decelerate virtuality, to update their face in the substance of the image, to bring their own visual image into the sphere of memory. In this way, uniqueness and resemblance were confirmed.

The practice of selfies supports this aspiration, but also introduces extreme standardisation. Watching selfies being taken and later comparing the final images, it becomes clear that the same positioning of the camera, the same pose and facial expressions, in short, the whole genre of selfies tends to make "everyone look the same". The desire for the most uniform, but in this sense also the most beautiful, appearance creates a demand, firstly, for software for smartphones that allows you to edit the shape of the face, the size of the eyes, the width of the smile on the already finished photo, and, secondly, for plastic surgery. Patients are turning to plastic surgery to get the perfect picture, to improve their appearance on social networks, and the clients of clinics are

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[104] Rouille A. Photography. Between Document and Contemporary Art. SPb.: Cloudberry, 2014. P. 247. *(In Russian).*

increasingly under the age of 30[105]. The fusion of these two strategies, digital and real plastic surgery, could lead to "the unification of all photos on social networks, an endless succession of identical faces"[106]. However, to see this hyperbolised unification as merely a personality-destroying principle would be to see only one side of the coin. Exploring the practice of selfies through the structure of motivation would inevitably lead to the concept of 'satisfaction', to a narrowing of the subject, and thus to a failure to see the cultural basis of this practice of self-portraiture.

The principle of deceleration described in the first chapter revealed an aspect of the ontology of the photographic image, which is used in the cultural practice of photography to give definition to events, things and situations by actualising the chaos of the world through a plan of reference. The practice of photography confronts the constant change of forms with the image, which slows down these rapid transformations of the world. We have not considered how this deceleration can be realised. Rooted in the photographic apparatus, linked to the machine side of photography's temporality, it is expressed in the concepts of the snapshot and the pose. The difference between the two is significant, as a snapshot is a snapshot not taken faster than posing, they are different in nature, not in measure. The essence of posing in photography is not to stop motion, it is to capture an established conventional form. Snapshot photography is a spatial and temporal carving. It only became possible some 70 years after the advent of photography, first in the chronophotography of Muybridge and Marey, and then thanks to the Kodak No. 1 camera. The impulse of photography is not only the fruit of years of technical and chemical research, but also the result of a revolution that changed the concept of the representation of movement.

In the practice of selfies, which seeks to unify the face represented in the photograph, posing is opposed to instantaneity. While posing subordinates the body to certain forms, snapshots reflect the world. Pictures of the first type, with a share of the eternal and transcendent, are serious. Pictures of the second type are open to the world

[105] Rikki Mitchell. Selfie craze draws more interest in plastic surgery. URL: http://www.jrn.com/kgun9/news/Selfie-craze-draws-more-interest-in-plastic-surgery--277137561.html (accessed: 10.05.2024).
[106] Martynov K. Selfies: between democratisation of media and self-commodification // Logos. 2014. №4. P. 82. *(In Russian).*

and the new. To strike a pose is, by definition, to confront the future, the changeable and the natural. Even the attempt to look natural is defined by the ideal to which one aspires as the most natural appearance. In general, in the practice of selfies, singular moments are confronted with unimportant moments, mechanically created and ripped out of the time continuum.

This conclusion further entrenches the practice of selfies as an expression of a conventional norm that demands self-representation in a clearly defined form. By learning and cultivating only one of the two modes of deceleration, one is not only practicing a particular way of photographing, but also cultivating a particular relationship to time. The realm of the optical unconscious, to which Walter Benjamin already referred in the case of photography, is completely ignored. Momentariness, which can dissolve the dense and compact reality of everyday perception, is banished. The practice of selfies excludes chance and the possibility of the unimportant moment. By always capturing specific moments (the banality of selfies should not mislead us in this respect), only that which resists the flow of time, perceiving only motionless figures in an unchanging pose, selfies are embodied in a fundamental gesture, frozen and detached from time. By adopting a certain pose for selfies, the photographer seeks to escape the derealising, constantly uncertain chaos of the world through the reference expressed in the pose, as opposed to snapshots that are not conventional, i.e. whatever.

Not a purely photographic act, but an extension of a socio-cultural need, the practice of selfies is designed to resist time as an endless series of changes, decelerating it through the conventionality of the pose, which simultaneously demonstrates the identity and solemnity of subject and circumstance. Selfies are meant to counter the ever-increasing speed of life, to affirm permanence and immutability through the implicitly internalised normativity of images that exists in culture.

The practice of self-portraiture, brought to the fore by the process of democratisation of the media, finds its place among a generation of young people who, on the one hand, have had time to adapt to the world of the television screen and screen stars, to assimilate its laws and values, and, on the other hand, because they were quite young and had a flexible sensibility at the time of the advent of the social media age, have

easily accepted the new technological extensions. Apparently, it is membership of the two technological extensions that creates the creative force that drives self-portraits. The first extension formed the desire to have an image of oneself (to become a star), the second extension allowed this image to be reproduced. This self-portrait image is a way of relating and communicating with the other, it carries out the objectification of the image of the self. And the latter, as we have seen, is rigidly regulated and imposes the rules of perception. Since the circle of possible viewers in social media is not defined, selfies should be clearly signified. Unlike photos of people in a close circle, whose faces are clearly readable in the images and the viewer knows who is who, selfies presented to a stranger - a 'friend' or a subscriber - must be universal and de-territorialised. Posted online, detached from the specific situation in which they were taken, the snapshots are included in a multitude of streams - tapes - in each of which they claim absolute significance. This is why so much effort is put into the pose, the facial expression - in general, into respecting the entire sphere of implicit normativity that accompanies the practice of selfies. The processes of democratisation and commodification of the image described, which even mobilise the resources of plastic surgery and computer programming, are intended to prove "the stability of the self-presentation and identity of the neurotic inhabitant of social networks"[107], hypersocial but not belonging to any social group.

2.2 Digital practices of photography[108]

We have witnessed the end of photography, but we have also witnessed its second birth. Like any means of communication, photography is a reflection of the society that has created and embraced it. It can act as a powerful stimulus for social and personal change, either overtly or subtly. This process is dialectical, evolutionary and largely unconscious, opening up new possibilities while blocking others. Digital photography has been constructed as a homogeneous, effective reproduction of the past, easily marketable

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[107] Martynov K. Selfies: between democratisation of media and self-commodification // Logos. 2014. №4. P. 84. *(In Russian)*.
[108] Khoroshilov, A. A. Revolution in media: Photography in the digital environment // Vestnik Russkoj hristianskoj gumanitarnoj akademii. 2015. Vol. 15, vol. 1. Pp. 354–361. *(In Russian)*.

to the consumer part of the 'digital revolution'. The name, digital photography, is meant to convey serious change, while paradoxically referring to a medium that belongs to the mechanical age. It is no coincidence that this ambiguity leads us to abdicate responsibility for what we have invented. The ambiguity is necessary to desensitise us to the real revolution that the word 'digital' only hints at. We are given terms from nature and everyday life - apple, mouse, web, windows, desktop, word, personal assistant - to describe a tasteless, odourless world in which touch is reduced to clicking and typing, and the gaze is constantly restricted to new and new rectangles.

Behind this, too, lies the remarkable self-restraint inherent in this new technological universe. The notional desktop, which is present in every modern operating system, has become more than just a friendly and clever device for selling computers to amateurs (as it was in the early days of personal computers). It has brought a new kind of thinking that emphasises surface manipulation, and working in complete ignorance of how the mechanism inside works. Personal computers position themselves as something in opposition to, and even hostile to, the traditional modernist notion that you can take technology, lift the lid, see and understand the contents. What is distinctive about the modern computer, is that it does not encourage such fantasies, it has turned the screen into a world in its own right. It is a world in which man often feels his inferiority, in which the machine is considered intelligent, and man can turn out to be stupid. The computer promises an earthly supernature in which reality is nothing more than a convenient measure of complexity, a complexity that can be simulated with computer graphics and later completely surpassed.

The deceptive appearance of the computer, with its 'drawing' and Web 'page' programs, minimises the main differences between digital media and their predecessors. Based on defined segments, calculated choices, binary strategies and bits instead of atoms, digital media operate on a representational model that, being able to simulate analogue media, will ultimately have a greater capacity for transformation than anything that came before it. The leverage of digital media is abstraction, alinearity, asynchrony, the prevalence of code over structure, multiauthoring, and most importantly the deception of nature as we know it by redefining space and time. They stimulate a different logic and

a completely new philosophy of life, moving from the authority of Newton to the probability of the quantum, and from the visualisation of the phenotype to the preference for the coded genotype.

Digital media translate everything into data, waiting for the author or the public (or a machine) to reconstruct it. Images can be turned into music and music into text, or images can be created by algorithm and edited by a vast network of anonymous users. A synthesiser can produce musical sounds that are almost indistinguishable from a flute, but it can also combine the sounds of a frog and a goose, adding a random function that results in the voices of entirely new creatures. Digital technology fills the world from within and without. Sections, segments and steps are what fills digital technology; analogue media refers to the same analogue continuity and flow. Digital is coded meaning, data abstracted from its source, data that can be easily played with; analogue comes from the wind and the trees, from the tangible world. The digital is based on an architecture of endlessly repeated passages in which the original and its copy are one and the same; the analogue ages, becomes decrepit and dwindles over generations, changing its sound, its look and its smell. In the analogue world, a photograph of a photograph leads to the loss of the previous generation, it becomes blurred, different from the original; a digital copy of a digital photograph is indistinguishable from the original to such an extent that the very concept of the original loses its meaning.

Like novels and our earthly lives, vinyl records were created with the intention that they could be understood by following the logic that everything that has a beginning has an end; a music streaming service is designed to switch and mix. In digital media, which are non-linear and interactive, two different people will not necessarily read the same words in a book, listen to the same music, or view a film and a photo album in the same order. Cause and effect, even life and death, flicker nostalgically in the rear-view mirror of the twentieth century. According to the story, when the world was created in seven days, the process did not begin on the fourth day, end on the seventh and then jump back to the second day. Light was separated from darkness before animals were created. But in a digital version of creation, not only can events be interspersed at will or in random order, but components of a story can be altered, linked, superimposed on many other

media, reacted to in 'real time', and all this translates into an infinite number of actions that have little to do with the everyday concepts of darkness, light, water, breath or God. Creation can be remade, linked to the speed of a butterfly's flight over Hong Kong or the temperature of the air in Saint Petersburg.

Similarly, digital clocks do not have hands that mimic the rising and setting of the sun, the movement from light to darkness (twilight is not a digital concept). But they are self-referential, referring to their own more abstract world of integers. In the digital space, every creation has to be remade to become flexible and human. Photography in digital space changes the structure of the image, turning it into a mosaic of millions of changeable pixels, not unlike the permanence of the image of the visible world. Rather than conveying an appearance, digital photography serves as a preliminary record, a preparatory text that can easily be remixed. The digital photographer, like the generative neural network, potentially fulfils the role of the postmodern DJ. In the next frontier, code triumphs over appearance. The phenotype, the content of the photograph, has already been trumped by the genotype. In the information age, DNA will become the decisive indicator of a person's essence. The day will come when we will ask a picture, "Where did those blue eyes come from?" and expect the answer to be expressed in code.

Digital photography presupposes very different cultural practices, a different relationship to the world and to things, a different mode of truth. The independent existence in the form of the paper print is replaced by a mediated existence expressed in the effects of the computer function. The change in the technical mode of operation allows the digital image to free itself from the function of representing reality assigned to analogue photography. For the latter, physical contact between the material of the image and the material of reality is a prerequisite. Each stage, from development to printing, is interdependent, and it is necessary to keep in mind the object originally photographed. In digital photography, the result of the shot, the digital file, is not connected to the material reality, it exists in a disembodied form as a record. In this form it can only be presented as an appearance on a screen. Developing, film, printing, chemicals and the darkroom have been replaced by computers with image viewing and editing software and access to the Internet. The process and place of image production has changed. A digital image is

recorded and displayed on a computer screen, which is essentially a file, made up entirely of logical and mathematical symbols controlled by a programming language. In general terms, the technical device of digital photography makes the transition from the chemical world of things and light to the logico-mathematical world of the file. This fundamental difference destroys the mode of truth of analogue photography - the set of procedures that gives it the status of a document and the function of a faithful representation of things. The referent is no longer in contact with the image. Valeriy Savchuk writes: "The digital image reveals the geometric construction of the world, its dense senseless extension. The digital image is not an image of a thing. It is the image of another image, referring to it, it is assembled in its pattern and, if I may say so, it expresses it. Images become our neighbourhood things, our 'immediate' objects, which clearly give orders that are rigorously executed as 'their own desires'"[109].

In the nineteenth century, painting, based on preparation and inspiration, was threatened by photography — the mechanical against the artificial. In the twenty-first century, the digital version of photography — part of multimedia, based on wires, immediacy, automation and flexibility - may end up being more distant from its film and chemical-based predecessor. It cannot be assumed that there has always been only one kind of photographic practice. From its inception, it has had many strategies, from the phantasmagorical capture of ghosts to the filming of criminals. It has been used as a utilitarian tool for documentation, as a material for art, and as a viable hybrid of the two. Despite its many approaches, photography has achieved a paradoxical role as a subjective and meaningful means of communication, both credible and ultimately useful as a social and personal judge. The fact that the photograph evoked trust, however broadly defined, was a useful function, especially when it was presented as evidence. Since the means of communication began to be used for political and commercial purposes, the credibility of the photograph has been used specifically to manipulate the public. The introduction of easily modifiable digital photography raises the question — can and should photography retain this evidential function?

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[109] Savchuk V. V. Mediaphilosophy. The seizure of reality. SPb.: RCHGA Publishing House, 2013. Pp. 22-23. *(In Russian)*.

Digital images are detached from their material source. The digital medium does not deal with a trace or a print, since all matter has disappeared, the image file, like a numerical record, lends itself to an infinite number of variations and transcends space and time: without a body, it does not age or change and can be located on any screen, or even on all screens at once, anywhere on the planet. The transition from analogue to digital photography corresponds, to use Gilbert Simondon's terminology, to the transition from a mode of moulding to a mode of modulation. The analogue process produces images by moulding, because there is a physical continuity and material connection between the thing and its photograph. In digital photography, where this process is destroyed, fixity gives way to constant variation. Moulding was followed by modulation: "To mould is to modulate in a definitive way: to modulate is to mould in a continuous and ever-changing way"[110]. From painting to photography, and from photography to the digital image, the materials of the image become lighter and lighter, the sites of its representation expand and the speed of its circulation increases.

For those who think that digital media simply gives us more effective tools, what is happening now is an evolution of media. This is a more convincing and natural viewpoint that most people share. And for those who believe that digital media contains a completely different nature to analogue media, what is happening is, at the very least, a revolution. And that's a more accurate view. All new media initially borrow a lot from their predecessors, mainly because they need time to accumulate energy and creative imagination before they can introduce decisive innovations. Marshall McLuhan argued that "the content of one medium of communication is always another medium of communication"[111]. Early films looked like a theatrical action captured on the screen. Early television looked like a simple visualisation of radio, with men in white shirts and ties, suddenly visible to the viewer, reading the news from behind a microphone. Early photographs timidly and tentatively imitated the specificity of artistic painting techniques, such as Pictorialism.

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[110] Simondon J. The individual and its physico-biological genesis. Moscow, IOI, 2022. P. 73. *(In Russian)*.
[111] McLuhan M. Understanding Media: External Extensions of Man. Moscow: Kuchkovo Pole, 2011. P. 10. *(In Russian)*.

We should be suspicious of the easy fusion of classical and digital photography, based on their inherent kinship. In essence, it is as if we continue to think of the automobile as a horseless carriage. Advertisements for modern cars - fast, climate-controlled, GPS, ABS, parktronic, gas-guzzling and computerised - tell us that they run at the expense of 'horsepower'. The metaphor of the horseless carriage, even a century later, minimises the variety of parameters in which the car outperformed its predecessors from the outset. Horses are limited by their biology, unable to go beyond certain limits; cars have no such limitations. A planet ringed by tarmac roads, suburban sprawl and the disappearance and decline of the extended family can all be largely attributed to the car. Sprawling shopping malls, countless deaths in speeding car crashes, the endless obsession with oil, all have nothing to do with horses. Would anyone invade Iraq for hay? And whatever problems horses cause, they are nothing compared to smog, lung disease and the immense destructive dangers of climate change.

Over time, the car has increased our sense of control and, perhaps more importantly, our sense of entitlement. The car and its motorised descendants have given rise to growing expectations of power and mobility. Everything - family, work, leisure and war - can be done at a distance, day or night, in all weathers. Round-the-clock mobility on a vast network of roads has become a semantic metaphor for what used to be called the 'information superhighway'[112]. Now another, more centralised term is used instead - the Web or Network. Just as the 'horseless carriage' contains a naturalistic reference that obscures its nature. The Internet can claim partial descent from the planetary road system. It embodies the dream of no traffic lights, no tolls and no need for petrol. Here, people can move instantly from one web address to another. Similarly, the car culture viewpoint has given rise to fast, semi-conscious TV channel switching, or zapping, and joystick control in video games. When you're driving at high speed, the world outside the windscreen becomes increasingly distant and insignificant.

Photography, like the automobile, creates a new reality. Part of the problem in distinguishing this reality is that, for many of us, the world is largely represented

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[112] Information superhighway - a term that became popular in the 1990s. It refers to the revolutionary development of information networks, particularly the Internet.

photographically, even in the absence of a camera. We have changed - we have become a potential image. Even before the ubiquity of camera phones, we were in a state of rehearsed posture, appearance and limited sense of privacy. In the world of video hosting, the home is no longer a place of privacy - it's just a container for a webcam. Wars, sporting events, weddings, graduations and even funerals are staged. Advertisements promise a holiday where great photos can be taken. Young people are constantly imagining how best to present themselves on their VKontakte accounts. A date can be described in terms of its photogenicity, which Pierre Bourdieu defines as "a set of 'feasible' photographs or photographs 'to be taken' in opposition to the world of realities"[113]. Photography transcends beauty in the sense that the entire diversity of existence is suppressed by a strict two-dimensional photographic currency. In his novel "White Noise", Don DeLillo describes the photographic rupture:

"Several days later Murray asked me about a tourist attraction known as the most photographed barn in America. We drove twenty-two miles into the country around Farmington. There were meadows and apple orchards. White fences trailed through the rolling fields. Soon the signs started appearing. THE MOST PHOTOGRAPHED BARN IN AMERICA. We counted five signs before we reached the site. There were forty cars and a tour bus in the makeshift lot. We walked along a cowpath to the slightly elevated spot set aside for viewing and photographing. All the people had cameras; some had tripods, telephoto lenses, filter kits. A man in a booth sold postcards and slides-pictures of the barn taken from the elevated spot. We stood near a grove of trees and watched the photographers. Murray maintained a prolonged silence, occasionally scrawling some notes in a little book.

"No one sees the barn," he said finally.

A long silence followed.

"Once you've seen the signs about the barn, it becomes impossible to see the barn."

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[113] Bourdieu P., Boltanski L., Castel R., Chamboredon J.-C. Public Art: Experience on the Social Use of Photography. Moscow: Izdatel'skaja i konsaltingovaja gruppa «Praksis», 2014. P. 23. *(In Russian).*

He fell silent once more. People with cameras left the elevated site, replaced at once by others.

"We're not here to capture an image, we're here to maintain one. Every photograph reinforces the aura. Can you feel it, Jack? An accumulation of nameless energies."

There was an extended silence. The man in the booth sold postcards and slides.

"Being here is a kind of spiritual surrender. We see only what the others see. The thousands who were here in the past, those who will come in the future. We've agreed to be part of a collective perception. This literally colors our vision. A religious experience in a way, like all tourism."

Another silence ensued.

"They are taking pictures of taking pictures," he said.

He did not speak for a while. We listened to the incessant clicking of shutter release buttons, the rustling crank of levers that advanced the film.

"What was the barn like before it was photographed?" he said. "What did it look like, how was it different from other barns, how was it similar to other barns? We can't answer these questions because we've read the signs, seen the people snapping the pictures. We can't get outside the aura. We're part of the aura. We're here, we're now."

He seemed immensely pleased by this"[114].

The aura that DeLillo describes is nothing more than the visual codes that define 'what and how' we see, our vision. The aura becomes ubiquitous because the main function of photography is not only to preserve the aura but also to extend it. The de-territorialisation of photography through the internet and the screen plays a crucial role in this. The speed with which the transition from analogue to digital photography took place at the beginning of the 21st century shows that the 'old' technology, born at the dawn of industrial society and successfully representing it for more than a century, has great limitations in meeting the criteria, needs and values of post-industrial society and network culture.

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[114] DeLillo D. White Noise. Moscow: Eksmo, 2003. P. 7. *(In Russian).*

2.3 The photoconstruction of life[115]

Earlier, in the section entitled "Deceleration and Repetition", figures were given for the number of photos posted on two popular social networks. And if these figures are fascinating in their magnitude, it is probably just as important to understand the reason that has led to such an explosion in the number of photos produced over the last two decades. The first answer to this question is very simple. The very basis of photography has changed - it has gone digital. It is no longer necessary to develop film and print images from it. Now all you have to do is press the shutter and you can see the image instantly. There are no delays in production and representation, and there is no material intermediary (film, paper). The very structure of digital photography as a technique makes the process of making and viewing images easier, more accessible and faster. And since we are not limited by material media, we are not limited by the number of photographs that can be taken. Digital images can be printed, but there is no compelling need to do so, as a thousand printed images of a wedding would take up a lot of space. It is easier and more practical to keep the pictures digital and show them to family, friends and colleagues on a screen. And the ability to view photos from any device connected to the Internet solves the problem of showing them even more effectively.

Looking at the issue in this way, it is not surprising that there has been such an increase in the number of photographs. Photographs are easy to produce and the internet makes it easy to share them, even with someone far away. In other words, the logic of the mass production of photographs is this: we take photographs because there is equipment and space to publish them. And the equipment and space are there because we are willing to take and display those pictures. By analogy, we might say that we wear boots because we have places to walk in them; and spaces are available because we want to walk in boots. The second answer, which may explain the mass production of photographs, is driven by the aforementioned boots. Boots are needed to protect the feet from wounds and dirt. Some boots keep feet from freezing in winter, others from getting wet in the rain,

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[115] Khoroshilov A. A. Real and digital space of social experience: photo—design of life // Istoricheskie, filosofskie, politicheskie i yuridicheskie nauki, kul'turologiya i iskusstvovedenie. Voprosy teorii i praktiki. 2015. № 4. PART 2. Pp. 179–182. *(In Russian).*

etc. In general, it is a utilitarian thing that helps to preserve health and create comfort in the environment where a person is. But boots are also subject to fashion, can be a status symbol or a means of self-expression. They act as a means of communication, an extension of my body to the outside world[116]. In extreme cases they can represent me to others. The utilitarian necessity of boots is accompanied by their loaded meaning. They not only protect my feet, they are necessary for me as a cultural being. That is, a certain socio-cultural reality requires one to have boots, just as it requires stones, water and mud. Does it require a person to produce photographs? We can tentatively say yes.

Like shoes, photography has a utilitarian function - the 'direct', accurate capture of the order of things. This is the source of its credibility as an unbiased witness. Photography began as an act of protocol. Presented as a primary semiological system - signifier, signified, sign — photography, in Barthes' terminology, enters the realm of myth, or secondary semiological system, where the visual image, which is a sign at the first level, begins to have a certain meaning for me. A photograph of a person, for example, tells me what that person looks like. But if the photograph does not have its own meaning for me (what the person looks like), it takes on a new meaning related to the culture to which I belong. Strictly speaking, a photograph almost never has its own meaning, because its perception is impossible without the meaning of the referents it represents.

Now we need to look at where this huge number of photos are being posted today. They are all uploaded to their users' social media accounts. And you probably won't see these photos anywhere else. Which is unnecessary, because they were probably created for that very purpose. Photos are posted on personal, password-protected web pages to be displayed, to demonstrate their meaning — what they show, who they refer to - and their cultural significance. They fill the world of digital communication that is part of contemporary socio-cultural reality. The question remains: why do we do this and how does this reason affect the number of images produced? The world of digital communication is an environment that requires human presence, just like the everyday world around us. This presence is, in the well-worn phrase, 'life online'. And for a certain

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[116] The quality of material culture as an extension of the body outwards has been addressed by many researchers. For a consideration of the city as an extension of society, see Lewis M. The City in History: Its Origins, Its Transformations, and Its Prospects. Mariner Books, 1968. 657 p.

number of people who have the opportunity to use digital media, it is indeed life. Meetings take place online, communication with family and friends, work is done, etc. Consider the relationship between the human being and the digital environment.

Man begins his existence by getting to know the external world, studying its laws, peculiarities and relationships. Human perception depends on the physical environment and society. It is formed in interaction with matter and changes according to culture and social reality. "During significant historical periods, man's sensory perception changes along with the general way of life of the human community"[117]. And every new invention or technology brings with it changes in perception. As McLuhan wrote in the introduction to Understanding Media: "Every enlargement, whether of the skin or of the hands or of the feet, has an effect on the whole mental and social complex"[118]. It cannot be said that when a person first encounters the world of digital communication, he can interact with it in any other way than by analogy with the outside world. He has no experience of being in a digital environment, and his current skills are rigidly specialised by the world and culture in which he has developed. In such a situation, one cannot hope to understand what he or she is facing. Therefore, the first step is to understand the rules and peculiarities of the digital environment and to learn how to use the device to access it.

In a new environment, a person cannot act by analogy with the already familiar reality, because we cannot find direct points of contact between them, and therefore there are no universal ways of acting for them. Of course, the influence of one environment on another within a culture cannot be denied. This influence occurs through the behaviour of the human being as an acting entity. But a change in the digital environment cannot in itself lead to a change in the surrounding world, and vice versa. In order to access the world of digital communication, we must use interpreters, such as a computer, which is capable of representing the order of things in the material world in the form of a code. By using a computer, a person is forced, and needs, to acquire new skills for online life and to change his or her perception. In this way, we are changing the socio-cultural reality by expanding it with the help of the digital environment. This changes the way society lives.

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[117] Benjamin W. The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction // Benjamin V. The Doctrine of Similarity. Media Aesthetic Works. M.: RGGU, 2012. P. 197. *(In Russian)*.

[118] McLuhan M. Understanding Media: External Extensions of Man. Moscow: Kuchkovo Pole, 2011. P. 5. *(In Russian)*.

Photography has forever changed our understanding of the past and our memory. At a minimum a person can always see themselves 10, 20 or more years ago by looking at photographs. At most we have access to authentic images of a world almost two centuries old. The digital environment has forever changed our understanding of communication and distance. We have access to real-time communication, 24/7, with anyone, anywhere in the world. Space and time remain on the other side of communication. Human perception is changing with the advent of the digital environment. The latter is becoming part of the socio-cultural reality and requires our presence. It requires it because it has become an extension of human sensuality, and the attempt to detach from it leads to phantom pains[119]. Photography becomes a way of demonstrating one's presence in the world of digital communications, a way of living online. Presence is confirmed by the seemingly objective nature of photography[120]. This is the reason why the digital environment is filled with photographs.

But why does the number of photographs produced increase year after year in a constant progression? In order to answer this question, it is necessary to look at the socio-cultural reality as a whole, rather than at the specifics of the change in the perception of man, whose sensuality has been extended outwards by the digital environment. A person participating in this reality has a stable necessity in the world of digital communication, both from within and imposed from outside. All those who share the same reality fall under this necessity. We have before us a multitude of subjects whose perception is organised by a single set of tools. They all take photos to demonstrate their presence and thus create a part of their online life. The more people are involved in the digital environment, the greater the number of possible communications between them. If we take into account that for digital communication space and time remain on the other side, the number of people who can be online with each other at the same time exceeds the number of people I can meet in the external environment many times over. Friends from all over the world can meet in one place and talk to each other regardless of the distance

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[119] In his book Understanding Media, McLuhan devotes a great deal of space to the phenomenon of phantom pain. Based on this medical fact and research, he says that every medium of communication (from the wheel and clothing to the computer and telephone) is an extension of the human being outwards. It becomes part of our sensuality, and if you try to perform 'surgery to remove it', it will inevitably lead to phantom pain, because the removed media is already part of us.
[120] Flusser W. For the Philosophy of Photography. SPb.: Izd-vo S.-Peterb. un-ta, 2008. P. 14. *(In Russian).*

between them. In such a situation, my social circle is limited to one city and one neighbourhood. It is much easier for me to find like-minded people. It is enough to find a relevant community in a social network.

A new society is emerging in which human interaction does not take into account the dimensionality of space and time of the outside world. And to participate in this society, I have to be online. This life in an online society requires my presence. I create this presence through my own images, united under one name and one web link. These are my photos, the messages I send, my favourite music, my films. By being online and interacting with others, I develop and change my image. I add new photos, write new messages, etc. In this context, photographs are created to convey the objective meaning of an event. Nothing has such immediate authenticity as a photo, so it is the best way to confirm my presence and authenticity[121]. The more snapshots I share, the more complete my online life becomes. I take more pictures of even one event, not to choose the best one, but to present my existence more fully. In this way, I photoconstruct my life. The latter means that I spend less time on the events themselves than on the process of photographing them. And I do this in order to present them later in a digital environment, to show them to everyone who is both my neighbour and in another country. If my social circle is limited to my backyard or my neighbourhood, and I already interact with these people on a daily basis, why would I want to duplicate the events in photographs? But if my social circle consists of people all over the world, then I need to take photos to present my online life to them. The more photos I provide, the more complete my presence will be.

In a summary, we can say the following. A reality that has a digital environment at its disposal requires its participants to produce photographs. This is necessary for the photoconstruction of online life. The latter is based on communication beyond the dimensionality of space and time. And it brings people together in larger groups than is possible in the outside world. Being present in an online life requires a constant updating of a person's 'profile', which requires the production of new photographs. It is worth

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[121] Bart R. Camera Lucida. Commentary on Photography. Moscow: Ad Marginem Press LLC, 2011. P. 152-153. *(In Russian).*

noting that the meaning of photographs is closely linked to their author. The two-level semiological system associated with photography allows for the demonstration of the 'objective' order of things - the meaning of the photograph - at the same time as its meaning. By posting photographs, a person on the one hand confirms the fact of an event and on the other hand conveys a certain meaning, which creates his image online and is a message.

So what has caused the number of photographs produced to increase many times over in recent decades? Undoubtedly, the main impetus has been the advent of digital photography and the increasing number of people involved in the world of digital communication. We have noticed that the first point removes the limitation of the number of possible images, because it frees photography from the material medium. The second point creates a need to practice photography as a way of creating one's image in online life. This need comes from a socio-cultural reality that includes the digital environment. But what are the implications of the process of constructing one's online image through photography? The expansion of the digital environment into human life leads to concrete changes in all the elements involved in the formation of the subject. Access to the world of digital communication requires a translator capable of representing the elements of the material world (expanded and linked to time) in the form of a code. Without this device, access to the digital environment is impossible. Consequently, my actions in constructing my online image will be related to my interaction with this technology. The language of the digital environment is code. The access device converts my words, my posture, my commands into it. We can now digitise sound, sight, smell, etc. using a range of associated devices such as a camera, microphone, etc.

In other words, in order to be present in the digital environment, I must constantly digitise everything - convert it into a form suitable for computer processing and storage. But the problem is that only a small part of the experience and world around me can be digitised; what is unnecessary and does not fit into the digital code is simply cut out. This raises the question of the accuracy of the transfer. Namely, how do I minimise the difference between an event that happens to me in the world around me and how that event is represented in my online life? This is important because I need to adhere to a

certain meaning, to conform to my image in the process of online communication, especially when it comes to photography. It is important that they convey as accurately as possible, as signifying surfaces, the meaning I invest in the situation being photographed.

And in order to reduce the amount of 'insoluble residue' of the surrounding world, it should be adapted as much as possible to the possibilities of the digital world. Ideally, the phenomena of the external world should be encoded in a photograph in such a way that when the meaning of the image is later read, there is nothing left that has not been captured. In this way, social reality and the digital environment contained within it change a person's sensual perception and lead to the photoconstruction of life. It is not a question of simulating the phenomena of the external world with digital media. The task is to first bring the external world, the social and sensual experience, into the communicative dimension of the digital world. The process of photoconstruction of life aims not only at presenting one's own image online, but also, conversely, at structuring one's own life in such a way that it fits better into the photograph, with as few insoluble residues as possible. The digital environment structures people in a new way. And in this system, the translator or input/output device acts as a Procrustean bed, stretching or trimming human sensibility into a shape that fits the world of digital communication. The digital environment claims a dominant role in human life by changing the entire cultural system.

2.4 The thematisation of the cultural practices of photography in pilosophy of culture

In order to summarise the above material, let us formulate a concept that will allow us to combine the cultural practice of photography with the ontology of the photographic image, i.e. to show how photography functions as part of culture and ensures its realisation. To denote this concept, we will use the concept of 'good photography' which, being at the intersection of three dimensions of the photographic, will make it possible to show how photographic technique, its cultural practice and the ontology of the photographic image are linked. A 'good' photograph is not only a photograph that has

come about by chance, but also one that is good, correct (e.g.: a successful [correct] solution has been found), that has ended well, that meets the requirements (e.g.: a successful translation).

When we begin to talk about the technique of photography, its physical and chemical processes, let us, for the sake of rigour and in order to avoid confusion, confine ourselves to the following statement: photography, as a specific type of technique, is an experiment with defined parameters, the purpose of which is to obtain an image on a material or digital medium. At the heart of photography is light. Anything that is illuminated can be photographed. But it is not the object or scene that is captured, but the light it reflects. The light creates an image on the film, matrix or retina of the eye. The basis of photographic technology is the ability to translate and capture reflected light, either in the form of a chemical reaction on the photographic material or in the form of digital data produced by a photodiode. Photography is thus the optical negation of the scene depicted, the fixation of the reflected electromagnetic spectrum. The whole essence of photography, from a technical point of view, boils down to light and a photosensitive element. If an image has been formed as a result of the experiment, then we have obtained a photograph; if no image has been formed, then there is no photograph, and the purpose of the experiment has not been achieved. Seen in this way, at the level of the functioning of the technique, a photograph cannot be evaluated qualitatively from any other point of view than that of the result of the experiment. A 'good or bad photograph' is nonsense. If an experiment has been carried out and the result is an image, it is a photograph. The concept of a good/bad photograph suggests that there are prior evaluation criteria from which aesthetic and ethical judgements are made about a photograph.

It turns out that we cannot find in the technique of photography itself the source of its qualitative evaluation, i.e. what makes a particular photograph 'good'. However, if there are such criteria of evaluation, then they directly influence the result of a photographic experiment, or a photograph cannot be any kind of photograph. In order for a photograph to be called successful or unsuccessful, it must conform to some degree to the norm. The technique of photography itself is on the other side of aesthetic and ethical evaluation, but the result of its functioning is still subject to requirements. Firstly, the

production of similarity between the image and the photographed object — mimesis. Secondly, to establish the existence of and contact with the object or scene depicted — registration. The qualities attributed to photography on the basis of its technique, which is considered objective, do not depend directly on the technique, but are given from outside. A photograph that is the result of an experiment can be any kind of photograph. The main thing is to respect the given parameters that ensure the creation of the image. But only certain experimental conditions, which are technically possible but not necessary for the formation of the image, produce photographs as we are used to them.

In 'What is a Sign?' Charles Peirce distinguishes three types of signs: icons (which have the function of conveying ideas and show things by merely imitating them), indexes (which speak of things because they are physically associated with them), and symbols (which are associated with their meanings by habit). For Peirce, the photograph is the second type of signifier, since the apparent similarity between the photograph and the object it represents is based on the physical connection between them. But this is true of a photograph as the result of an experiment, i.e. of any photograph. A "good" photograph, in its technical dimension, is not only an index, an indication, a registration, but also an image, an icon, a mimesis; it cannot register without producing an image. In this sense, the photograph is a double sign, like the map in Peirce's description. "Clearly, Peirce writes, a map is very useful for marking a place, and it is a kind of drawing. But if a map does not mark a known place, or indicate the scale and the sides of the world, it is [...] impossible to find any place by it"[122]. A map cannot be a mere image or symbol, but must also have the character of an index or a reference, otherwise it would simply be unreadable. The same is true of a "good photograph", which, as a blotting paper, must imitate what it depicts.

Thus, the technical side of photography, which fulfils the pre-existing criteria of what constitutes a 'good' photograph, must produce images that are double signs, that have the character of mimesis and registration. With these requirements in mind, we can move on to consider the cultural practice of photography and describe the photogenic

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[122] Peirce C. S. What is a sign? Bulletin of Tomsk State University. Philosophy. Sociology. Politology. 2009. № 3 (7). P. 92. *(In Russian).*

sphere of what can and should be photographed in order to produce a 'good' photograph, since, first and foremost, "a beautiful image is an image of a (socially defined) beautiful thing"[123].

The demands made on the technique of photography are nothing less than the demand for objectivity. The essence of this objectivity lies in the way the world is represented, in the representation of space according to the laws of direct perspective. The beginnings of this way of representing the world can be traced back to fifteenth-century Europe after the Quattrocento. If photography is objective, creating an image and registering the real world with a precision that no other way of representing the world before it had, it is because from the very beginning it has been attributed functions that are considered "objective" and "realistic". The perspectival way of representing the world, which has become automatic in photography, does not demonstrate natural vision, but precisely its systematic, artificial character. Photographs are taken on the basis of the average artistic vision formed by classicism and realism within the artistic tradition. The very fact of using a single lens in a camera refers back to the first experiments in perspective painting carried out in the camera obscura.

Above all, we don't take photos that don't correspond to a vision that is not natural, real, but average artistic. We don't photograph monuments and architecture from close up because such a view doesn't correspond to the traditional view, we try not to 'pile up' the horizon and only take what could be a 'good' photograph. This objectivity - which is ascribed to photography, given its inherent function - is selective and demonstrates a particular kind of vision that can be called 'normal' or artistic. Thus, the requirement of objectivity, as well as the possibility of being objective, is attributed to photography on the basis of a culturally defined objective view of the world. This viewpoint is based on art and attempts to imitate it at every moment of the composition of the image and the choice of the subject or object to be photographed. It participates in the formation of the sphere of the photogenic, as described in the first chapter of this work, and there is no reason to deny the connection between this vision and the everyday practice of

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[123] Bourdieu P., Boltanski L., Castel R., Chamboredon J.-C. Public Art: Experience on the Social Use of Photography. Moscow: Izdatel'skaja i konsaltingovaja gruppa «Praksis», 2014. P. 144. *(In Russian)*.

photography, since this practice is based on exceptional moments of life and the photographing of culturally approved, i.e. photogenic, subjects. Photography's cultural objectivity is the essence of its practice.

A "good photograph" in such a situation would be a photograph of a good thing or subject, taken from the sphere of the photogenic, represented according to the average artistic vision, i.e. culturally objective. So, to paraphrase Bourdieu, we can say that a 'good' image is an image of a (culturally defined) good thing, depicted according to an objective (culturally defined) vision. The statistics confirm this[124].

The third part of the model of "good" photography is related to the ontology of the photographic image and is expressed in the plan of realisation, in the work of personal memory. The paragraph "Photographic temporality" describes two plans or two sides of the ontology of the photographic image: the plan of realisation, which corresponds to the first point of the model described and comes from the technique of photography, and the plan of actualisation, which is linked to personal memory, which gives subjectivity to every perception of a photograph. The way in which the photograph acquires an individualised meaning for each viewer is the final point of the concept of a "good" photograph.

In this case, the personal judgement of a photograph as successful or unsuccessful will be based on whether its perception in the here and now is able to actualise the events of virtual memory, to fit into the broad circles of memory that capture the habits, thoughts and memories of an individual's actions that create the concept of his or her own identity. It is through the work of actualisation that personal, family snapshots are of value and interest to us, whereas looking at someone else's family album is boring. Indeed, it is difficult to look at a hundred or more pictures of a wedding if it is not your own. The same evaluation process applies to commercial, media or internet photos.

In many ways, this personal perception is similar to what Roland Barthes calls the punctum, a sharp, acute experience of the photograph that is extremely individual and

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[124] "The proof [...] is derived from the fact that when we name a number of objects, asking whether they might be the occasion for a beautiful, interesting [...] photograph, the same hierarchy (relatively independent of social class) is obtained with only very small differences when photographs of the same objects are shown (the numbers in brackets show the percentage of individuals who said that these objects would make a fine photograph): sunset (78), landscape (76), girl playing with a cat (56), [...] butcher's counter (9), wounded soldier (8)." Ibid. p. 144.

personal, so much so that "to give examples of punctum is to open one's soul in a certain way"[125]. This may be because the memory that the photograph revives may be involuntary, like the memory that Proust has after tasting a madeleine cake many years later. But punctum does not fully exhaust the personal side of a "good" photograph; generally speaking, it is enough to overcome the barrier of indifference towards the subject of the photograph and to include it in memory circles larger than the circle of immediate perception in order to evaluate the photograph qualitatively. Photography thus acquires the characteristics of the third type of sign, the symbol. Its symbolic nature is not based on habit but on personal memory.

Thus, the concept of 'good photograph' is situated between the socio-cultural objective requirement of a particular way of representing space and the photogenic, i.e. 'how and what' should be photographed, on the one hand, and the actualisation of personal memory, i.e. deeply individual perception, on the other. This means that the cultural practice of photography is deeply rooted in social experience and is essentially a realisation of culture. External normativity and internal meaning intersect in the practice of photography, it becomes a place of their mediation. External normativity is culture, internal meaning is experience. The cultural practice of photography becomes the objectification of culture, through which the dialectical process of interiorisation/exteriorisation of the spirit (spiritual sphere) is carried out, which includes the way of seeing and depicting the world around us, and value ideas about subjects worthy of being filmed, and ideas about objectivity, documentary and truthfulness, and the visual language that forms the communicative system, and aesthetic and ethical principles.

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[125] Bart R. Camera Lucida. Commentary on Photography. Moscow: Ad Marginem Press LLC, 2011. P. 82. *(In Russian).*

Conclusion

The aim of the thesis research was to describe the way in which photography functions as a cultural practice. In order to achieve this a number of tasks were undertaken. Firstly, it was necessary to establish the meaning of the term *cultural practice*, as although the term is commonly used, it is rarely defined. To this end, a working definition was formulated on the basis of the analysis of the content of the concepts of practice and culture, and the classification of types of cultural practices was made. Since it was formulated in the course of the review that one of the functions of culture is to consolidate social experience for the purpose of its reproduction in subsequent generations, this notion was also analysed. The result was a substantiated understanding of cultural practice as a process through which cultural norms are internalised and their objectification reversed. Through cultural practice the process of realisation of culture, occurs through practice a person assimilates and reproduces elements of culture that are shaped in the form of artefacts.

The practice of photography is cultural because traces of normativity, of aesthetic taste, can be found in everything — from the photographer's choice of the subject and the pose taken in front of the camera to the preference for certain photographs over others and the way they are presented. These are expressed in implicit rules about what should be photographed and how it should be photographed, which an individual can explain as personal preferences. However, such a conclusion does not explain the reason why the practice of photography can be cultural, and therefore why culture can be realised through photography. In order to uncover this reason, it is necessary to turn on the essence of photography, i. e., to consider its ontology. Within the tradition of the ontological definition of photography, a common understanding of its essence, based on the way its technique works, is presented. The main points of this understanding are: the objective registration of the surrounding world by the photograph, the confirmation of the existence of a referent, i.e. mimesis and the index theory. However, this understanding does not allow us to go beyond the documentary function and to consider photography anything other than, as representation. The analysis of Henri Bergson's concept of memory allows

us to discover an additional layer of the ontology of photography that exists alongside the one mentioned above.

For Bergson, all perception is inextricably linked to memory. The perceived object is included in what the philosopher calls memory circles, where it actualises elements of memory that are in a virtual state. Thus, the perception of a photograph is linked not only to the referent depicted in it, but also to the actualisation of virtual memory, in the form of elements that most closely correspond to the perceived situation. Thus, Bergson's philosophy allows us to see behind the photograph not only the process of realisation of matter, i.e. the index theory, but rather the process of actualisation of memory, which gives subjectivity to the perception of any image. As a result, realisation and actualisation become two coexisting dimensions of the ontology of photography. Consequently, the similarity created by photographic registration can be subject to the subject's system of predispositions and have more meaning for them than a mere proof of existence.

The next stage of the research involved examining the system of normativities that influence the practice of photography. As a result, the conclusion that photography is fundamentally subordinated to a predetermined system of norms and regulations, was formulated. At the same time, the sphere of normativity is heterogeneous and contains both specific legally enshrined directives, about what can and cannot be filmed, as well as unarticulated implicit rules. The latter are defined by the peculiarity of their realisation as objective external conditions or as a reference to common sense. This implicit normativity can be called the sphere of the photogenic, of what can and should be photographed in contrast to all possible shots.

At this point we can conclude that the realisation of culture through the practice of photography occurs through the plan of actualisation, i.e. memory, which imparts the subjectivity as well as the normativity of photography through the system of interiorised culturally objective prescriptions. By taking or viewing photographs, we not only create certificates of presence or verify the existence of a referent, but also determine whether the scene is a successful or unsuccessful photograph, and whether the subject is worthy of being photographed. In general, the practice of photography is a way of realising

culture because it can serve as a place of mediation between the subjective and the objective, overcoming the functioning of its technique with a plan of actualisation.

In order to demonstrate the general pattern by which photography functions as a cultural practice, the concept of the "good photograph" was proposed. It is based on three requirements, the fulfilment of which should ensure that a photograph presented to an observer is labelled "good". The first point is technique. First, it must create a likeness of what it depicts — mimesis. Second, it must confirm existence — registration. These two points are essential requirements of objectivity. It is important that they are not inherent in the technique of photography as it is, but are imposed on it from the outside. Photography must represent space in direct perspective, thus automating the mode of artistic vision that spread in Europe after the Quattrocento. This leads to the conclusion that the objectivity of representation inherent in photography is artificially established and culturally conditioned.

The second point is practice. A photograph is "good" if it represents an object from the realm of the photogenic according to the culturally objective vision described above, i.e. a "good photograph" is a photograph of a (culturally determined) good object represented according to an objective (culturally determined) vision. The third point is memory. For a photograph to be good, it must actualise the memory of the viewer, creating wide circles of memory. The scope of this actualisation ranges from the sphere of familiar and close faces to involuntary memory, when the photograph acts like the Madeleine cake for Proust. Thus, the concept of the "good photograph" shows the relationship between the culturally objective requirements and the subjective experience of memory. As a site of transition and mediation, the practice of photography expresses and recreates culture through people's individual practices. This justification makes it possible to state that the aims of the research of the thesis were fulfilled and the goal was achieved.

The study also examined certain types of cultural practices of photography. It described the functions demanded by society in a situation of ever-increasing speed of change and the absence of traditional forms of organising social life. These functions - deceleration and repetition - become the source of the historicity and connectedness of

the subject's life. In the same context, an attempt was made to understand the fact of an avalanche-like increase in the number of photographs produced. The phenomenon of the photoconstruction of life was described, based on the idea that cultural reality, supplemented by the digital environment, forces subjects to take photographs in order to create and maintain their online presence. This in turn led to an analysis of the most common practice — everyday or amateur practice of photography. Four main aspects of this practice were identified and examined: cultural socialisation, symbolic communication, identity construction and memory actualisation. Thus, amateur practice expresses a system of group values, norms and ideals that are realised through the aspect of socialisation and symbolic communication. By viewing other people's photographs and creating their own amateur photographs, individuals express and recreate cultural normativity, and demonstrate group membership. Another feature of amateur photography is related to the construction of subjectivity. Based on the documentary nature of photographic images on the one hand, and the ability to update personal or collective memory on the other, amateur photography creates a virtual image that combines the personal, social, cultural and historical.

Further research on the subject of the thesis could focus on the use of photography as a theoretical tool for analysing emerging cultural structures and identifying changes occurung in society. Examples could include politically engaged photography or contemporary changes in photojournalism. The results could also be used to shift the critique of the image from the thesis that the image obscures reality to an analysis of the normative spheres that prescribe photographing certain subjects while completely ignoring others. The practical results of the study could be used to develop specific courses on the philosophy of photography and the image theory. They can also be useful for professional fields related to photography.

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