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## INTRODUCTION

The digital provided us with technological novelties to record, store and display images in significantly new ways and forms. The shift from analogue to digital contributed to a theoretical and practical uncertainty in regards to image-capture media and provided a background for fruitful discussions in relevant academic fields. Cinema studies were no exception and scholars turned their attention to the challenges the digital poses for the field. One of them is the shift from a material to the binary brought by the new technologies. Due to complex and far-reaching implications of the changes, shift to digital was dubbed a “revolution”, which, presumably, changed much of the way we interact with images and, ultimately, see our world. Fred Ritchin summed it up : “If the world is mediated differently then the world is different<sup>1</sup>.”

Photography - a culturally established mediator of the world - was strongly affected. No longer were analogical photographs developed photochemically in darkrooms, with a slowly forming image on a light-sensitive paper revealing an indexical and material - so it was argued - link to its referent. The medium's culturally established position,

<sup>1</sup> Fred Ritchin, *After Photography* (New York: W.W.Norton & Company, 2009), 9.

which developed in a social context over a period of time, was now enmeshed with a state of instability brought by the digital. Brian Winston observed the momentum: “What the chemist bestowed 150 years ago, the computer scientists are now removing.”<sup>2</sup> Sebastian Smee echoed this claim: “Thanks to the digital revolution, there is virtually nothing that can’t be done to a photograph to alter its once unique relationship to reality.”<sup>3</sup>

Thus we are facing a fundamental, or in the words of Martin Lister, epochal change.<sup>4</sup> Yet, what is really happening with the photographic image and how much of its social identity is transformed by the move to the binary is contestable. Damian Sutton, Susan Brind and Ray McKenzie argue that embracement of the digital is often seen “through the simple binary dialectic of old and new (old/new methods, old/new ontologies, old/new subjectivities, old/newpolitics) that has characterized the adoption of new media technologies in aesthetic practice.”<sup>5</sup> Not uncommonly, such dichotomist dialectic simplifies nuances by willingness to discard the old for the sake of the new. Old/new rhetoric has undoubtedly affected discourses on photography. In this thesis I will be discussing photographic images as, first and foremost, products of culture rather than technology – an understanding which, as Lister notes, complicates “the assumption that its meanings and values will simply change, in fundamental and inevitable ways [...]”<sup>6</sup>

I will look into the digital shift through the inter-relationship of photographic and filmic media. Both are strongly affected by the new digital technologies, not least due to the shared photochemical basis in form of a 35 (most often) mm photosensitive strip with all its 150 years of theoretical baggage. The relationship is longstanding; the same year cinema is born, we already have the first display of photo-taking in film – what David Company calls “the first meeting of photography and cinema” – filmed by Louis Lumière himself at Neuville sur Saône in France in 1895.<sup>7</sup> Thus portrayal of photography and explicit use

of photographs in films appears the very first years of the medium and plays an integral role throughout its history. By tracing the roles photographic images play from the photochemical to the digital, I will analyse the general shift from a specific, rarely-discussed point of view.

In the first chapter, I will discuss theoretical premises which form the basis of my study such as key concepts, literature review and research materials. The following chapter will present an in-depth discussion of the roles photographic images play in films and how these roles are transplanted into recent digital films.

<sup>2</sup> Brian Winston, “The Documentary Film as Scientific Inscription,”

in *Theorizing Documentary*, ed. Michael Renov (London: Routledge, 1993), 56.

<sup>3</sup> Sebastian Smee, “Image Fatigue,” *The Weekend Australian*, April 29, 2006, 18.

<sup>4</sup> Martin Lister, “Introductory Essay,” in *The Photographic Image in Digital Culture*, ed. Martin Lister (London and New York: Routledge, 1995), 1.

<sup>5</sup> Damian Sutton, Susan Brind and Ray McKenzie, “Introduction: How Real is the Real,” in *The State of the Real: Aesthetics in the Digital Age*, ed. Damian Sutton, Susan Brind and Ray McKenzie (London and New York: I.B. Tauris, 2007), 137.

<sup>6</sup> Lister, 7.

<sup>7</sup> David Company, *Photography and Cinema* (London: Reaktion Books, 2008), 8.