Photography as the
Aesthetic Determination of Difference

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'I certify that this work has not been accepted in substance for any degree other than that of Doctorate of Philosophy being studied at The Birmingham Institute for Art & Design (BIAD), Birmingham City University. I also declare that this work is the result of my own investigations except where otherwise identified by references and that I have not plagiarised another's work.'

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Acknowledgments

Abstract

The original contribution of this thesis is the insight that photography is better served through the philosophy of difference than through the metaphysics of identity. This thesis takes seriously the mechanically produced image in order to claim that its technologies can be considered as the method that allows access to the subjective modes within difference and develops them in relation to the specifically photographic conditions of production: repetition, simulacra and the latent image. This thesis proposes that considering photography from the point of view of the content of the image is a false move as it necessarily brings in the question of the subject (a key concern for philosophy), narrowly understood as the immobile centre for which the world is represented as meaning. Rather than pursuing photography as text, which brings in the problem of language, this thesis suggests that visuality – understood as fragmentary and recursive self-replication – is nothing other than photography's pull away from representation and pointing to the way difference, as multiplicity of open-ended possibilities, could be approached as the sine-qua-non for photography.

This thesis not only shows that visuality can never be fully understood as representation and requires the untamed environment of difference, but that in so doing one realises that philosophy of visuality is nothing other than photography. This has the additional outcome inasmuch as it also begins to pull away at the whole edifice of metaphysics itself, which opens up another avenue of research that leads not only out of thinking metaphysically, but also out of thinking humanly. These are wildly creative paths, and this thesis is pointing in the direction that can be taken without however solving these questions.

1 Introduction

Everything straight deceives.[1]

This thesis began from an observation that there is something

noncomunicable about photography that escapes all attempts to theorise it from

the converging perspectives of visuality and the content of the image.[2] That

which escapes because it cannot be subsumed under the aspect of identity is not

an accident or aberration but constitutes the key to photographic expressivity that

both exceeds and dissolves representation as the stencilling of pre-existing

reality.[3] There is, in other words something about photography that cannot be

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[1] Martin Heidegger, *Nietzsche; The Eternal Recurrence of the Same.* Trans. by David Farrell Krell (San Francisco: Harper, 1991), 41.

[2] See Walter Benjamin's suggestion that "language is in every case not only communication of the communicable but also, at the same time, a symbol of the noncomunicable." W. Benjamin, "On Language as Such". Trans. Edmund Jephcott, in *Selected Writings Vol. 2. Pt. 2. 1931 - 1934.* (Cambridge, Mass; London, England: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2005), 74. As will be discussed later in this section, visuality and content converge around the problem of subjectivity as the implied ground of signification.

[3] This thesis takes issue with the long tradition that considers the photographic image as mechanical and accurate imprint of a pre-existing reality, not because this tradition is wrong but because it is immune to the paradoxes of subjectivity and representation. Before the invention of photography, it was considered that the *camera obscura* produces an exact and automatic copy of the real. It is evident for instance in the notes for the *Confessions* by Jean Jacques Rousseau: 'It is a question of my portrait and not of a book. I am going to work, so to speak, in a *camera obscura*, and will need no other art but that of exactly tracing what I see'. Quoted in: Tracy B. Strong, *Jean Jacques Rousseau: The Politics of the Ordinary.* (Oxford UK: Rowman & Littlefield, 2002), 16. While exploring the role of camera obscura as a philosophical metaphor is beyond the scope of this thesis, it is worthy to note that Rousseau was alert to the paradox of representation in his critique of the bourgeoisie, as he saw that representative power tends necessarily to dominate and distort the civil society that it claims to represent. Pierre Manent, *An Intellectual History of Liberalism* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1996). 63-67. And yet, as evident from the above quotation, Rousseau did not extend this understanding to representation by means of a mechanical apparatus. One of the key concerns of this research is to argue that visual representation and political representation are not disconnected entities but belong to one conceptual consistency that is grounded in the enlightenment project of rationality. See Infra Chapter 3, *The Impasse of Representation* for an in-depth analysis of representation. On

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captured through the discourses of verisimilitude and indexicality precisely

because these two approaches are ultimately anthropological, which is to say

they begin by placing the (human) subject and subjectivity at the centre of their

investigations. Theoretical investigations that consider photography to be 'a type

of icon or a form of visual likeness, which bear an indexical relationship to its

object' take it as a given that the photographic image is a description of a pre-

existing reality, independent from the image and unaffected by it.[4] In contrast,

this thesis will propose that photography is not only a description of an object,

but is itself an object which, as the product of specific technological processes,

erases and creates subjectivity: It erases a static, anthropocentric subjectivity and

replaces it with multiple and divergent notion of the subject which emerges not

out of representation but out of repetition, reproduction and difference.[5]

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camera obscura as an ideological metaphor see: Sarah Kofman, *Camera Obscura: Of Ideology*. Translated by Will Straw. (London: Athlone Press, 1998).

[4] Rosalind E. Krauss, *The Originality of the Avant-garde and Other Modernist Myths* (Cambridge, Mass, London: MIT Press, 1985), 203. She continues: 'Every photograph is the result of a physical imprint transferred by light reflections onto a sensitive surface.' Ibid.

[5] This understanding of technology is drawing on Heidegger: 'Technology is a mode of revealing. Technology comes to presence [*West*] in the realm where revealing and unconcealment take place, where *alētheia*, truth happens.' Martin Heidegger, *The Question Concerning Technology, and Other Essays*. Trans. by William Lovitt. (New York: Harper and Row, 1977), 13. Accordingly the technology of photography is not considered here as processes with a predetermined outcome but as a way by which 'truth happens' i.e. certain knowledge is being revealed. However, this knowledge is not about the objects represented in a photograph but about the very process by which representation happens. This understanding of technology as a site where subjectivity is formed (and deformed) is essential for the thought of the key thinkers engaged in this thesis. See for instance Deleuze's books on cinema. Gilles Deleuze, *Cinema 1: The Movement-image*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Barbara Habberjam (London: Athlone, 1992). And Gilles Deleuze. *Cinema 2: The Time-Image*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Robert Galeta (London: Athlone Press, 1989). Trans. by Hugh Tomlinson and Robert Galeta (London: Athlone Press, 1989). See also: 'Here lies the vanity of the well-meaning discourse on technology, which asserts that the problem with apparatuses can be reduced to the question of their correct use. Those who make such claims seem to ignore a simple fact: if a certain process of subjectification

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Difference here means nothing more to begin with than that there is always an excess to the visual that is expressive, singular, dynamic, a-radical and non-identical.[6] This excess cannot be accounted for from within those theories that begin from the notion that photographs are meaningful surfaces and proceed by situating them within linear space and chronological time. It is the original contribution of this thesis to suggest that all theories that consider photographs as visible pictures begin from taking something for granted: namely their starting point is an implicit acceptance of the logic of representation as the founding framework within which photographs acquire meaning as images of pre-existing reality; that is of things and events that happened in the past. For this reason, one of the central arguments of this thesis is that there is something else present in photography that transcends and exceeds visibility and representation. On the pages of this research photography is put forward not as a regime of representation, but as the specific interlacing of technology of repetition and

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[...] corresponds to every apparatus, then it is impossible for the subject of an apparatus to use it "in the right way." Giorgio Agamben, *What Is An Apparatus? And Other Essays*, trans. David Kishik and Stephan Pedatella (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2009), 21.

[6] The notion of a-radicality is developed by Golding as a shift away from 'base-superstructure picture of power' towards a singular multiplicity that she names as 'electro-digital-acoustic-curved-space-repetitive projection-screen-metonymy-of-our-wired-times'. Sue Golding, "Singular Multiplicity: The A-radicality Lecture – Second Meditation on Identity, Ethics, and Aesthetics [or What Does It Mean to 'inhabit' Technology?]," *Issues in Contemporary Culture and Aesthetics*. no. 10/11 (2000): 291. The concept of 'difference' is key for this thesis and it is taken up in detail infra Chapter 4, *Archive, Apparatus, Event* and Chapter 6, *Simulacra and the Latent Image.*

visuality which produces an image of difference that is central to an ontological

account of the way thought comes into being.[7]

The way of getting to difference is twofold: first it is necessary to establish

the dyad of the philosophical and the photographic discourse through the

question of representation (this is the task of the Chapters 2 and 3). While the

starting point of this undertaking is within the traditional opposition between

iconoclastic/iconophiliac approaches to the image, the intention is to demonstrate

that there is, in fact, ontological connection between visual representation and the

concept of representation in philosophy in which the visual is the foundation of

the philosophical and not, as it is usually thought, the other way around.[8]

However, the reversal of this relationship is not sufficient and will amount to

nothing more than a simple reversal of metaphysical values in which iconophilia

triumphs over iconoclasm but leaving the opposition itself intact.[9] Therefore, a

second step is necessary in which the notion of the visual – reconstructed as a

multiplicity of expressive, dynamic and singular fragments - is expanded and

diversified to become the constellation / pattern / diagram for a fragmentary and

dis-jointed philosophy or at least for a glimpse of what philosophy could become

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[7] This point is developed in the following section, and infra Chapter 6.

[8] For Marie-José Mondzain the 'humanizing necessity of image-producing operations' places the possibility of image making as the origin of the possibility of thought: 'seeing an image is a condition for vision in the constitution of the speaking subject. [...] [I]mage producing operations [are] a way of discovering the conditions of possibility for a relation between our gaze and the visible world.' Marie-José Mondzain, "What Does Seeing An Image Mean?" *Journal of Visual Culture* 9, no. 3 (2010): 308.

[9] For a discussion of iconoclasm in in French theory see Martin Jay, *Downcast Eyes: The Denigration of Vision in Twentieth-century French Thought.* (Berkeley USA: Univ. of California Press, 2004). Also see infra Chapter 3.1, *Representation: Setting the Problem.*

if it was unwelded from metaphysical homogeneity and ontological certainty (This is undertaken in chapters 4, 5 and 6). In this way, photography is being re-inscribed into philosophy not as an offshoot or rationalism, not as a philosophical toy or an illustration, but as the lightning rod that exposes philosophy to a-radical, a-hierarchical, surface-structured and recursive fragments that make philosophy visible, expressive and fractal.[10]

It is the claim of this thesis that through its particular amalgam of technologies of repetition and fragmentality photography allows for a different form of logic and for a logic of difference that is not bound to the restraints of dialectical thought on the one hand and to the expressivity / mimesis / sublime of art on the other.

1.1 Becoming Invisible

In western philosophy and western art, it is very difficult to think outside the paradigm of representation and posit a non-representational principle.[11]

This thesis suggests that the challenge set out by photography is to abandon the familiar model of thought based on perception and looking (*theoria* means to look in Greek) because this model relies on a sharp distinction between the viewer/theorist and the subject of contemplation. This separation is the ground of all theory (photographic or otherwise) and it is figured on the basis of the demand of metaphysical thought to separate models from copies and thought

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[10] This understanding of the fractal as an opening towards post-metaphysical philosophy is developed by Johnny Golding in "The Assassination of Time: (or the Birth of Zeta-physics)," *Writing History/Deleuzian Events.* Ed. Haferkamp and Berressem. Koln: DAAD, 2009.

[11] Barbara Bolt. "Shedding Light for the Matter," *Hypatia* 15, no. 2 (2000) 208.

from being.[12] The *becoming invisible* of photography involves, to begin with,

abandoning the distinction between subject and object, between the image and

the thing and rejecting the notion of *seeing* as the determining factor of the image.

Once seeing is taken out of the equation, it becomes possible to conceive of

photography as a non-visual practice that foregrounds repetition before the

determination of the subject.[13]

This allows the conceiving of photography not as an image of something

but as a rhythm of repetition in which photography is the name of the ability to

reproduce.[14] As an example of the shift from representation to repetition consider

the case of a-tonal music where each sound is not part of a pre-determined

sequence or a known-in-advance scale, but rather a sending-off point that propels

towards another sound. Here the perspective of the human ear is abandoned in

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[12] Platonism and the origin of metaphysics is discussed in detail infra Chapter 6.

[13] As John Rajchman points out, Deleuze's project is concerned with identifying the 'im-personal' which precedes identity and reason: 'There is, in short, an element of experience that comes before the determination of subject and sense' John Rajchman, "Introduction," In Gilles Deleuze, *Pure Immanence: Essays on a Life*, trans. Anne Boyman (New York; Cambridge, Mass., London: Zone Books, 2005), 15.

[14] Johnny Golding elaborates the notion of reproduction as a way to overcome the negativity inherent in dialectical reasoning: 'All metaphysical systems that start from rationality must begin from evacuating the "present" which can never be inhabited or grasped by means of philosophy that takes reflection as its main analytical tool.' Johnny Golding. "Ana-materialism and the Pineal Eye: Becoming Mouth-breast (or Visual Arts After Descartes, Bataille, Butler, Deleuze and Synthia with An 's')" *Philosophy of Photography* 3, no. 1 (2012), 114. Golding puts forward 'fractal philosophy' as a way to inhabit the present not by abandoning rationality but situating rationality within multiplicity: '[...] the present emerges as the paradigmatic iteration of the "Zeta". It is posed as the unsayable-something-of-whatever-that-is replicating "herself" via an infinite feedback sequencing loop of $Z \rightleftharpoons Z^2 + C$. This sequence-ing creates pattern; the pattern re-loops to create "synthetic unity"; the process is repeated. It is a process found throughout nature; it is in every pattern of growth; it is at the basis of artificial intelligence, and how robots "learn".' Ibid. The notion of sequencing allows grasping rationality not as it is usually expressed in representation but through self-replicating repetition. Golding reiterates Heidegger's claim that representation is blinding to truth, and true thinking is a move towards non-representational dwelling. Martin Heidegger, *What Is Called Thinking?* trans. J. Gray Glenn (New York: Harper Collins, 2004), 3-19, 39.

favour of the pure becoming of sounds.[15] Considered as 'pure sonorous material',

photographs are not only copies of actual events or things but also the cadence of

mechanical reproduction. This allows one to conceive of the photographic image

as the visual form assumed by multiplicity and by the power of becoming.[16]

This research takes issue with the conjecture that considers photographs to

be indexical traces.[17] For instance Rosalind Krauss states that:

[15] See Theodor W. Adorno, *Essays on Music*, trans. Susan Gillespie and Richard Leppert (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 2002). See also Deleuze and Guattari: 'It is certainly not a systematized music, a musical form, that interests Kafka [...] but rather a pure sonorous material [...] a sonority that ruptures in order to break away from a chain that is still all to signifying. In sound, intensity alone matters, and such sound is generally monotone and always nonsignifying [...]' Gilles Deleuze, and Felix Guattari, *Kafka; Toward a Minor Literature*, trans. Dana Polan (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press), 5-6. It is however significant that in the same text Deleuze and Guattari contrast the intensity of music with the signifying and oppressive power of the photograph. Where sonority/pure sound creates possibilities of becoming through the power of desire, photography is 'a blocked, oppressed or oppressing, neutralized desire, with a minimum of connection, childhood memory, territoriality or reterritorialization'. *Ibid.* 5 This thesis suggests that photography is much more complex then Deleuze and Guattari's text seems to suggest and it is precisely this framing of it through representational schemas that this thesis seeks to unpack and unravel. Infra Chapter 6.5, *Photography: Difference at a Standstill.*

[16] Lyotard says: 'this book takes the side of the eye' Jean-François Lyotard, *Discourse, Figure*, trans. Antony Hudek and Mary Lydon (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2011), 5. He then goes on to say: '[...] it is not a question here of letting the figure insinuate itself into words according to its own rules, but rather of insisting on the words' capacity to *utter* the preeminence of the figure. The ambition is to *signify* the other of signification.' (Emphasis in the original) Ibid., 13. Following Lyotard, this thesis seeks to 'take the side of the eye' by arguing that difference, becoming and intensity are brought to the eye as photography.

[17] The concept of the index is drawing on the writings of C.S. Peirce who says 'Photographs, especially instantaneous photographs, are very instructive, because we know that they are in certain respects exactly like the objects they represent. But this resemblance is due to the photographs having been produced under such circumstances that they were physically forced to correspond point by point to nature. In that aspect, then, they belong to the second class of signs [indices], those by physical connection.' Charles S Peirce, *Philosophical Writings of Peirce* (New York: Courier Dover Publications, 2011), 106. Following Peirce, Krauss defines the index thus: 'As distinct from symbols, indexes establish their meaning along the axis of a physical relationship to their referents. They are marks or traces of a particular cause, and that cause is the thing to which they refer, the object they signify. Into the category of the index, we would place physical traces (like footprints), medical symptoms, or the actual referents of the shifters. Cast shadows could also serve as the indexical signs of objects...' *The Originality of the Avant-garde*, 198. See also: Roland Barthes, *Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography*. Trans. Richard Howard (London: Vintage, 1981), and Roland Barthes, *Image, Music, Text*, trans. Stephen Heath (London: Fontana, 1977). See also: J Elkins, *Photography Theory* (Routledge New York, NY,

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Every photograph is the result of a physical imprint transferred by light reflections onto a sensitive surface. The photograph is thus a type of icon, or visual likeness, which bears an indexical relationship to its object. Its separation from true icons is felt through the absoluteness of this physical genesis, one that seem to short-circuit or disallow those process of schematization of symbolic intervention that operate within the graphic representations of most paintings.[18]

The claim Krauss is making here is closely linked to Roland Barthes's famous definition of photography as 'That-has-been' which is based on a similar assertion: 'The photograph is literally an emanation of the referent. From a real body, which was there, proceed radiations which ultimately touch me, who am here [...].'[19] One of the difficulties with this argument is that the 'physical imprint transferred by light' is actually absolutely unknowable, for it is contained within the sealed film canister or the dark slide.[20] It can only become visible through a rigorous adherence to a protocol of prescribed actions required to develop the 'physical imprint'. Even the smallest error by the laboratory technician – in the constitution of chemical solutions for instance, or in the temperature of the developer – will result in something that has no 'visual likeness'. In this context it is remarkable that at the start of *Camera Lucida* Barthes declares that his project of discovering the 'genius' of photography does

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2007). For a critique of photographic indexicality from the position of dialectical materialism see: Peter Osborne. "Infinite Exchange: The Social Ontology of the Photographic Image," *Philosophy of Photography* 1, no. 1 (2010): 59-68.

[18] Krauss, *The Originality of the Avant-garde*, 203.

[19] Barthes, *Camera Lucida*, 80.

[20] The unknowability of the photographic image is discussed in relation to Derrida's notion of the *arche-trace* in Chapter 6.4, *Latent Image and Subjectivity*.

not include an examination of the photographic process: 'One of these practices was barred to me and I was not to investigate it: I am not a photographer, not even an amateur photographer: too impatient for that: I must see right away what I have produced [...]'[21] For that reason, Barthes' analysis of photography in *Camera Lucida* is focused on connoisseurship as it proceeds only from the perspectives of the subject and the viewer of photographs. Barthes's refusal to consider the conditions of production of the photograph allows him to assume an uninterrupted transition of light from 'a real body': 'a sort of umbilical cord links the body of the photographed thing to my gaze[..]'[22] What is being excluded from Barthes' analysis is precisely the conditions, operations and processes required to produce the image. For this reason he is unable to consider the photograph as a commodity and so he is impervious to questions of process, reproduction, multiplication and duplication. Barthes most famous statement about photography, 'message without a code' is perhaps the clearest sign of his refusal to acknowledge the materiality of the photographic process.[23] As Lyotard says: 'Where there is a message, there is no material'.[24]

It is due to the evacuation of the question of production from photography that Barthes and Krauss (among many others) see photography as transcendent

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[21] Ibid., 3.

[22] Ibid. 81.

[23] 'Certainly the image is not the reality but at least it is its perfect *analogon* and it is exactly this analogical perfection which, to common sense, defines the photograph. Thus can be seen the special status of the photographic image: *it is a message without a code*; from which proposition and important corollary must immediately be drawn: the photographic message is a continuous message.' (Emphasis in original) Barthes, *Image, Music, Text.* 17.

[24] Jean-Francois Lyotard, *Libidinal Economy.* Trans. Iain Hamilton Grant (Continuum International Publishing Group, 2004), 43.

and photographs as images of external things.[25] Against such understandings this thesis suggests that the interlacing of reproduction and visuality allows photography to make difference in itself available as an image.[26] Photography is uniquely positioned in relation to difference precisely because it is, as the title of Walter Benjamin's essay suggests: 'A work of art in the age of mechanical reproduction'.[27]

However, it is the assertion of this thesis that 'mechanical reproduction' should not be understood as a simple duplication that produces identical results, but as a creative force capable of creating difference through repetition. The quality that makes photography highly conductive for a discourse on difference

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[25] Photography can become ontology only if it is considered as a process of production because the process brings questions of repetition and of difference between copies into the theoretical frame. Considered purely in terms of content, photography can only be an epistemology, because the focus here is on the meaning of the image to a human subject. On ontology of production see Nishida, Kitarō, *Ontology of Production: Three Essays.* Trans. William Wendell Haver (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2012).

[26] Deleuze names the possibility of an experience of difference as 'being of the sensible', *Difference and Repetition,* 68.

[27] Walter Benjamin, *Illuminations,* ed. Hannah Arendt, trans. Harry Zorn (London: Pimlico, 1999), 211-244. While other works of Walter Benjamin are major inspirations for this research, the *Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction* essay does not play an important role here. Despite being one of the most often-quoted texts in photographic literature, it is also one of the crudest in setting a binary opposition between the aura of the work of art and the reproducibility of the photograph. The aim of this thesis is to overcome such binaries in favor of finding something of an aura in reproduction and something of spirit in technology. One of the most damning criticisms of the *Work of Art* essay comes from Adorno: 'Benjamin's theory of the artwork in the age of its technical reproduction may have failed to do full justice to this [locating the irrational within the rational – DR]. The simple antithesis between the auratic and the mass-reproduced work, which for the sake of simplicity neglected the dialectic of the two types, became the booty of the view of art that takes photography as its model and is not less barbaric then the view of the artist as creator.' Theodor W. Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory,* ed. Rolf Tiedemann and Gretel Adorno. Trans. Robert Kentor-Hullot (London: Continuum, 1997), 72. It is however worthy of note that Benjamin authored a second version of the same article, translated to English as *The Work of Art in the Age of Its Technological Reproducibility,* in which some inroads are laid for solving the problem in the way this thesis attempts to solve it. Walter Benjamin, *The Work of Art in the Age of Its Technological Reproducibility, and Other Writings on Media,* trans. B. Doherty and M. W. Jennings (Belknap Press, 2008).

is its ability to repeat through mechanical means that which happened only

once.[28] However, it is important to underscore that photographic repetition has

two dimensions to it: there is the repetition of an event or a thing that

photography repeats by making it into an image and there is the repetition

inherent in the photographic process itself which allows the photograph to be

endlessly repeated through duplication and dissemination. There are therefore

two regimes of the image: regime of organic representation and regime of serial

reproduction.[29]

While the former expresses that which already happened, the later is an

expression of photography's ability to disrupt linearity and of its power to throw

into confusion notions of identity and coherence by generating difference

through repetition.[30] The ability of photography to create images of *objects* could

be seen as related to the linearity of chronological time and to the rationality of

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[28] Roland Barthes famously says: '[T]he Photograph mechanically repeats what could not be repeated existentially.' *Camera Lucida,* 4. However, as this thesis goes on to argue 'mechanical repetition' does not need to mean sameness, rather repetition is taken up here as the condition of difference for it never repeats the same thing (infra Chapter 6). One of the aims of this thesis is to criticize the idea that repetition is connected to identity and to propose (following Deleuze's understanding of the productive force of difference) that repetition is the creative force of photography that prevents it from mechanically stencilling already-given and external reality. 'It is because nothing is equal, because everything bathes in its difference, its dissimilarity and its inequality, even with itself, that everything returns—or rather, everything does not return.' Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition,* 304.

[29] In his books on cinema Deleuze draws a distinction between two regimes of the cinematic image: 'Two regimes of the image can be contrasted point by point; an organic regime and a crystalline regime, or more generally a kinetic regime and a chronic regime.' *Cinema 2,* 126. One of the key differences between the two regimes is that with the organic regime 'the real that is assumed is recognizable by its continuity' while in the crystalline regime 'the virtual [...] detaches itself from its actualisations, starts to be valid for itself.' Ibid., 127. The methodology proposed by Deleuze is to distinguish between an 'image of' and 'image in itself' is discussed infra Chapter 6, *Simulacra and the Latent Image.*

[30] See infra Chapter 6.1, *Positioning Simulacra within Philosophical Framework,* where the question of representation is discussed in connection with the notion of the eternal return and difference.

representation, but its ability to reproduce *itself* through dissemination implies a

possibility of time that is not restricted to a linear progression from past to future

but is a kind of becoming in which repetition takes the place of chronology.[31]

What photography endlessly repeats is the power of difference.[32] These two

modes of representation define what will be called here the 'double articulation'

of photography.[33] This double action, towards the world on the one hand and

towards its own mode of production on the other, allows conceiving of

photography not as a form of representation of some immutable and pre-

determined origin, but as a recurring process of transformation in which the very

force of reproduction is being imaged.[34] To look at life photographically does not

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[31] The concept of becoming is inherited from pre-Socratic philosophy, specifically from Heraclitus of Ephesus who argued that identity is established by change. (Graham, Daniel W., 'Heraclitus', *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (Summer 2011 Edition)*, Edward N. Zalta (ed.), URL = <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/sum2011/entries/heraclitus/>.) In *Logic of Sense* Deleuze speaks of the immanence of becoming as destructive to the order of representation: 'The pure and measureless becoming of qualities threatens the order of qualified bodies from within. Bodies have lost their measure and are now but simulacra.' Gilles Deleuze, *The Logic of Sense*, ed. Constantin Boundas, trans. Mark Lester and Charles Stivale (London: Continuum, 1990), 187. The important point to bear in mind is that becoming is not an opposition to representation but it is undermining oppositional thinking (such as subject/object, content/form): while representation depends on causality and reason as its ground, becoming has no ground for it is the movement from one point to the next. Photography can be considered as becoming when it is grasped not as a image with a certain legible content but as a reproductive force. Considered in this way, photographs are not images organized according to the perspective and the sensibility of a certain observer but are the experience of production in itself.

[32] Deleuze draws a distinction between major and minor literature. Major literature appeals to universal values and truths, it strives to express timeless values by repeating the past and by setting up clear and distinct identities. Minor literature, on the other hand, repeats the power of becoming. It stutters and stammers in order to draw attention to the power of language to disrupt and fracture identities and coherent narratives. Gilles Deleuze, *Essays Critical and Clinical*, trans. W Smith Daniel and Michael A Greco (London, New York: Verso, 1998). Deleuze and Guattari, *Kafka*. On the concept of minor photography see also Mieke Bleyen, *Minor Photography. Connecting Deleuze and Guattari to Photography Theory*. (Leuven: Leuven UP, 2012).

[33] Infra chapter 2.2, *Double Articulation*.

[34] See infra Chapter 6.

mean to see it as a collection of decisive moments frozen and framed as black

and white or colour snapshots, rather it means to see the process of repetition as a

perpetual becoming through reproduction. This allows the thinking of

photography as becoming *invisible*.[35]

Theory that takes as its starting point the assumption that the image is there

to be looked at, and that it is by means of vision that the image can be 'read' falls

immediately under the auspice of the western eye. The problem is that whenever

the eve is evoked as the means of comprehension, the image becomes managed

by vision and ceases to exist outside the visible spectrum and it becomes

impossible to apprehend the image as anything other than a legible sign. As

Barbara Bolt explains, a number of contemporary philosophers took issue with

the way light and vision are being considered within the Western philosophical

cannon, most notably Merleau-Ponty, Levinas and Irigaray.[36] Specifically in the

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[35] While the concern with *becoming* is most readily associated with the work of Gilles Deleuze and of Deleuze and Guattari, it should be noted that theirs was only the most detailed and sustained explication of a critique that has a long history. See for instance Walter Benjamin's elaboration of 'intoxication' as precursor to 'becoming': 'Intoxication, of course, is the sole experience in which we grasp the utterly immediate and the utterly remote, and never the one without the other. That means however that communicating ecstatically with the cosmos is something man can only do communally'. Walter Benjamin, *One-way Street and Other Writings*, trans. J. A. Underwood (London; New York: Penguin, 2009), 113. This experience of ecstatic communion resonates with this: 'The Pink Panther imitates nothing, it reproduces nothing, it paints the world its colour, pink on pink; this is its becoming-world, carried out in such a way that it becomes imperceptible itself, asignifying, makes its rupture, its own line of flight, follows its 'aparallel evolution' through to the end.' Gilles Deleuze, and Felix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, trans. Brian Massumi (London: Continuum, 2003), 11. Deleuze and Guattari offer multiple examples of situations where representation is overcome in favour of a state of becoming, however they do not consider photography as capable of transcending representation. This apparent aporia will be discussed Infra chapter 6, *Simulacra and The Latent Image*.

[36] Bolt, "Shedding Light for the Matter," 203-4. Bolt draws on a number of sources including her own experience of painting in the Australian dessert and the example of Aboriginal art to suggest that light and vision are historically determined and form the basis of subjectivity within the western philosophical tradition. Within this tradition representation is the transformation of matter into something the mind can comprehend. Bolt mentions two strategies to overcome the
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work of Irigaray the question of vision is connected with movement and with doing, rather than with the mental processes of comprehension and representation.[37] Irigaray's emphasis on performance and action allows Bolt to conceive of the markings on canvas as traces of physical movement, which constitute reality not through representation but through rhythmic repetition. As will be argued later in this chapter, within photography repetition is not concerned with the recurring marks on the surface of the image, but with the dissemination that is inherent to the photographic process.

The question of dissemination is important not simply because it plays a role in the politics of identity as an archive of past events and as a disciplinary and ideological apparatus, but because it allows one to glimpse the way meanings emerge not only out of significations, representations and totalising systems of signs but from the effects of repetition and from the affects of marks,

representational paradigm, the first drawn from the work of Irigaray is taking account of sexual difference to propose that it is difference, rather than identity that forms the foundation of vision. The second strategy is drawing on Deleuze and Deleuze and Guattari's concepts of faciality (visagéité) and deterritorialisation. 'These mappings are not representations, but trace the trajectory of the body in movement through space and time and in relation to space. These mappings are performative'. Ibid., 208. The performative element of photography that this thesis attempts to excavate and situate in relation to seriality and duration is located in the dual trajectories of the unknowability of the image on the one hand and repetition (and difference) on the other. It is further significant that Bolt says that in the desert 'One always kept one's eyes to the ground in order to be sensitive to and aware of the folds, the contours, the inclines, and the mess of the landscape' this suggests that vision ceases to be connected with the consumption of the horizon line, with the surveillance of the territory and with the translation of the idea of a landscape into legible form, rather, vision becomes connected with a different way of mapping the world through 'attention to the patterns and rhythms of the ground.' Ibid., 208, 209.

[37] Recent studies of photography in the context of online environments such as Google Street Maps also point to the prevalence of movement and the role of the body in the production and experience of images. See for instance: Sarah Pink. " Sensory Digital Photography: Re-thinking 'moving 'and the Image," Visual Studies 26, no. 1 (2011): 4-13.

impressions and imprints that bodies make when they come in contact with other bodies.[38] By drawing attention to repetition and dissemination as the founding photographic operations, this thesis seeks to argue that there is no underlying identity which gives meaning to images as representations of objects, rather identity is a false effect of representation and photographic repetition is a non-signifying mark that does not point to anything outside of itself.[39] It is only when identity becomes the foundational worldview and the basic ideological presumption of aesthetics that photographs acquire meaning as representations of ideas, as signifying surfaces and as signs that stand in for the absent presence of an object or a thing.

As Cathryn Vasseleu suggests, western metaphysical tradition is grounded in representation as the model of knowledge.[40] It posits a human subject – like *The Thinker* by Rodin – as an observer who surveys the world, comprehends it with the power of the intellect and then inscribes it in images. Photography is

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[38] See infra Chapter 6.

[39] One of the key concepts that allow grasping the 'becoming invisible' of photography is the notion of the latent image. As will be explained infra Chapter 3.8 and Chapter 6, the latent image is the impression of light on the light-sensitive material which persists only for as long as it is kept in complete darkness. The imprint of the real on the light sensitive surface is therefore invisible; it is neither form nor figure. For that reason, this thesis makes the argument that in its original form the photographic image is not a legible mark, rather, it is unknowable and impervious to interpretation. It is nevertheless a mark that is expressive of the dimension of sense because it is made when 'one body makes an impression on another body'. Peter Geimer, "'Self-Generated' Images," In *Releasing the Image: From Literature to New Media.* Edited by Jacques Khalip and Robert Mitchell (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2011), 36.

[40] Following Irigaray, Vasseleu suggests a number of strategies to overcome the subject/object split inherent in philosophies of reflection: 'An elaboration of light in terms of texture stands as a challenge to the representation of sight as a sense which guarantees the subject of vision and independence, or sense in which the seer is distanced from an object.' Cathryn Vasseleu, *Textures of Light: Vision and Touch in Irigaray, Levinas, and Merleau-Ponty.* (London: New York: Routledge, 1998), 12.

used by this conceptual model as part of the overarching formula of identity

A=A.[41] Here objects are described as having certain properties. For instance, a

photograph of a house suggests that a house is of a certain shape and colour. It

further suggests that there is a temporal relation between the photo and the house

that places both on a single chronological line with the image referring to a point

in the past, archiving it for the present. The photograph and the house are bound

together by the logic of representation that presupposes the existence of discrete

entitites that can be represented.[42]

However, following recent research into the nature of light it is possible to

contest the approach outlined in the above paragraph. First, as Vasseleu

observes: '[t]he shift from emission and corpuscular optics to the wave theory of

light. [...] The most significant changes claimed for the wave theory of light are,

first, that linear perspectival modes of representation no longer have a basis in

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[41] Identity is a significant point made throughout philosophy. One of the key statements on this subject is by Heidegger who says: 'The usual formulation of the principle of identity reads: A=A. The principle of identity is considered the highest principle of thought' Martin Heidegger, *Identity and Difference*, trans. Joan Stambaugh (New York, Evanston, and London: University of Chicago Press, 2002), 23. Heidegger's critique of the principle of identity hinges on substituting the '=' with 'belonging'. This allows Heidegger to claim that belonging has to precede identity as the sphere of 'experiencing this together in the terms of belonging' ibid. 29. The problem of identity and difference will be discussed in relation to Heidegger and within the broader context of Western metaphysics infra Chapter 3.6, *Heidegger: Representation and Identity.*

[42] For instance Rosalind Krauss writes: 'Every photograph is the result of a physical imprint transferred by light reflections onto a sensitive surface. The photograph is thus a type of icon, or visual likeness, which bears an indexical relationship to its subject.' *The Originality of the Avant-garde,* 203. It is further important that this way of thinking requires considering photography within a linear temporal schema, as shown by Barthes: 'photography set up, in effect, not a perception of the *being-there* of an object (which all copies are able to provoke), but a perception of its *having-been-there.* It is a question therefore of a new category of space-time: spatial immediacy and temporal anteriority.' *Image, Music, Text.* 44. Barthes is right in saying that the lived experience of photography is temporally determined, but his insistence on the linear temporality is only possible because he brackets out the *process* by which the photographic image acquires spatial immediacy. See infra Chapter 6.

optical verisimilitude and, second, the 'action at a distance' world view is

drastically altered.'[43] This suggests that 'light looses its ontological privilege'

which allows one to contest the logic of representation.[44]

Second, it is possible to employ photography in another way, by

emphasising its potential for creating difference through reproduction, so that

each image becomes a collection of non-representational singularities that are

sustained not by the way they reflect an ideal original but by the way they are

different in every instance.[45] Considered from the perspective of dissemination,

photography becomes the potential to replicate, the possibility of a rhythm that

emerges out of the process of mechanical reproduction.[46] Instead of considering

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[43] Vasseleu, *Textures of Light*, 42.

[44] Ibid., 42.

[45] In 'Immanence: A life' Deleuze uses the example of small children to explain how singularity operates through aberration, noise, stutter and stammer:"[V]ery small children all resemble one another and have hardly any individuality, but they have singularities: a smile, a gesture, a funny face – not subjective qualities." Gilles Deleuze, *Pure Immanence*, 30. Here Deleuze points to the pre-individual state of being that is not determined by memory and personal identity. The small child has no 'selfdom', rather it has singularities, 'and so requires a "wider" sort of empiricism–a transcendental empiricism.' Rajchman, "Introduction," In Gilles Deleuze, *Pure Immanence*, 8-9.

[46] 'Dissemination' is a concept developed by Derrida to point towards the undefinable, never-to-be-pinned down multiplicity of meanings which escape representational thinking that he names 'metaphysics of presence'. When the rule of identity between signs and objects is overcome in favor of a proliferation, language ceases to be and expression of some external truth and becomes pure expression with no relation to any external realities. This allows for an emergence of a non-signifying sign: 'the rule according to which every concept necessarily receives two similar marks–a repetition without identity–one mark inside and the other outside the deconstructed system, should give rise to a double reading and a double writing. And as will appear in due course, *a double science.*' Jacques Derrida, *Dissemination*, trans. Johnson Barbara (London: Continuum International Publishing Group, 2004), 4. While in *Dissemination* Derrida explores the movement of deconstruction specifically in relation to language, in *The Truth in Painting* he address the condition of the visual image, pointing out that any theory of the image that chooses to focus on content – that which is framed – will run into irresolvable internal contradictions. 'one must know – this is a fundamental presupposition, presupposing what is fundamental – how to determine the intrinsic – what is framed – and know what one is excluding as frame and outside-the-frame.' What is excluded by representational theory is precisely the dissemination of the image: its ability to create meaning not through the connection with external reality but

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photography as the power to represent objects, it allows one to conceive of the (virtual) potential to move from surface to surface. For instance, when one is looking for a certain image through a search engine like Google, one is faced with a screen-full of images that do not all emerge from a single origin rather, what one sees is an event of difference:
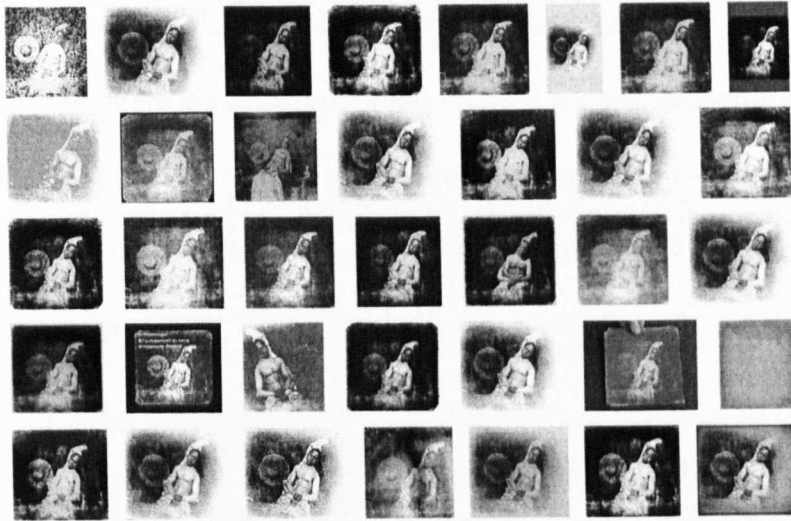
'Self-portrait as a drowned man' by Hippolyte Bayard. Image by: Katrina Sluis.

Here photography is not so much a mode of representation but an expression of the possibility of variation and difference that happens through repetition. It is significant that in the above example difference between the images is not 'analytically decomposable', it is not representable in any other way as the tension, or the noise between the images.[47] The difference that arose

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through forming its own materiality. Jacques Derrida, *The Truth in Painting*, trans. Geoff Bennington and Ian McLeod (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987), 63

[47] Alphonso Lingis wrote at length on the noise in the message and on the message of the noise: 'Is it not also false to suppose that only the meaning attached to words by a code, fixed or evolving, communicates? The rhythm, the tone, the periodicity, the stammerings and the silences ...

out of repetition in this example is the result of an interaction between images

that does not depend on any underlying representation or 'ground'. Yet it is not

'nothing', it is not meaningless but it suggests a kind of vision that is freed from

the ocularcentric Cartesian perspective and from the point of view of *The*

Thinker. This multiplicity of repetitions suggests not a hierarchy of

representations – with some closer to the original than the others – rather, it

suggests that there are only repetitions without ground and without foundation.[48]

As the product of mechanical reproduction, photography is considered here as a

process of differentiation that creates a visible image of that which can be

otherwise only sensed.[49]

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communicate.[...] This noise is not analytically decomposable, as communication theory would have it, into a multiplicity of signals, information-bits, that are irrelevant or that conflict [...]. Alphonso Lingis, "The Murmur of the World," In *American Continental Philosophy: A Reader*, ed. by Walter Brogan and James Risser (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2000), 105. Specifically on noise as the aesthetic determination of networked, non-Euclidian environments see Joseph Nechvatal, *Immersion Into Noise*. (Ann Arbor: Open Humanities Press, 2011), and Joseph Nechvatal, *Towards An Immersive Intelligence: Essays on the Work of Art in the Age of Computer Technology and Virtual Reality 1993-2006*. (New York: Edgewise Press, 2009).

[48] Deleuze discusses the difference between representation and simulacra in *The Logic of Sense*, 291-302. See infra chapter 6, *Simulacra and the Latent Image*.

[49] For an example of the way logic of difference can augment rational, representational logic, consider for instance the popular TV show 'Masterchef'. For the viewer of the show, the food cooked by the participants does not fit within binary categories of hunger-satiation, tasty-not tasty, good-bad. Rather, each dish is an event of sense which has nothing to do with the familiar logic of food either as nourishment or as pleasure. Instead there are peaks of excitement, morsels of joy or of hope, offerings of titillation and seduction. Each dish is only the point from which another dish is launched. Each meal is pure sensation without taste or value. 'This is no longer, or no longer only, the *indiscernible becoming* of distinct images; it is *undecidable alternatives* between circles of past, *inextricable differences* between peaks of present' Deleuze, *Cinema 2*, 104-5.

1.2 Method: philosophical influences

To speak about photography from the standpoint of philosophy, [...] it is also necessary to speak about philosophy from the standpoint of photography.[50]

As this research attempts to examine photography from the standpoint of praxis and not from the standpoint of formal reasoning, representation and the index, the methodology of this research could be said to be identical with its aim. In the first instance this research sides with those philosophers for whom the rationality of thought and the self-consciousness of reason are key philosophical problems that go to the heart of questions about the nature, the limits and the possibilities of philosophy. For thinkers like Deleuze, Lyotard, Adorno and Shestov philosophy that takes its own rationality as a given risks sliding into simple validation of common-sense ideas about the nature of truth, thought and reason. Deleuze is very direct in condemning thought that takes reason as a given when he says: 'We see to what degree the Kantian Critique is ultimately respectful: Knowledge, morality, reflection and faith are supposed to correspond to natural interests of reason, and are never themselves called into question[...]'[51] As Deleuze explains, the dangers of such 'respect' are grave as they threaten the very autonomy reason attempts to defend: 'we have not advanced a single step, but remain imprisoned by the same cave of ideas of the times which we only flatter ourselves with having "rediscovered", by blessing

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[50] Osborne, "Infinite Exchange", 60.

[51] Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition,* 173.

them with the sign of philosophy.'[52] In a similar vein Lyotard warns against the rationalisation of the philosophical discourse because, in attempting to avoid contradictions it leads to the loss of the 'now' or of 'present' that has been destroyed by representation:

> Within the tradition of the subject, which comes from Augustine and Descartes and which Kant does not radically challenge, this contradiction, which some would call neurosis of masochism, develops as a conflict between the faculties of a subject, the faculty to conceive of something and the faculty to 'present' something.[53]

While lesser known in the West than Deleuze and Lyotard, the Russian thinker Lev Shestov is remarkable for the sustained attack on reason and representational logic in philosophy not because they are flawed but because they are too perfect and unable to cope with the ephemeral and inimitable phenomena of life.[54] The ultimate failure of rationalism is demonstrated by asserting that from the perspective of logical thought the statement 'Socrates was poisoned' and 'A mad dog was poisoned' are identical in their logical validity.[55] In this way Shestov points to the failure of semiotic signification to account for the

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[52] Ibid., 170.

[53] Jean–Francois Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*, trans. Geoff Bennington and Brian Massumi (Manchester University Press, 1984), 77.

[54] B. Horowitz. "The Demolition of Reason in Lev Shestov's Athens and Jerusalem," Poetics Today (1998): 225.

[55] 'Whether it be a question of the poisoning of Socrates or the poisoning of a mad dog is of no importance. The eternal truth, just like the necessity of which it was born, does not listen and does not allow itself to be persuaded. And, just as it does not hear or listen to anything, it does not make any distinctions: that Socrates should have been poisoned or that a mad dog should have been poisoned is absolutely indifferent to it. It automatically affixes the seal of eternity on both events and thus forever paralyses the seeker's will. Once Necessity has intervened, man no longer dares to doubt, to be indignant, to contradict, to struggle and say, for example ,"Yet it is not a dog but Socrates, the best and the wisest of men, a saint, who has been poisoned!"' Lev Shestov, *Athens and Jerusalem*, trans. Bernard Martin (London: Simon and Schuster, 1968), 34.

multiplicity and dynamism of meanings that are present in life. Only a

multiversal, fractal environment can allow for the *difference* between the

poisoning of Socrates and the poisoning of a mad dog to be sustained.

Representation, dialectics and rational logic eliminate the difference to achieve

an absolute value (true/false), therefore representation is capable of determining

the truth of a statement but it is unable to explain why the two statements are not

equivalent because it is unable to recognise singularities: here the 'wisest of

men' and a mad dog are the same.[56]

To say that photography is the way by which difference is imaged might

seem counter intuitive or event contrary, for photographic image is the accepted

face of representation everywhere, not only within the critical discourse but also

within the sciences, medicine, law enforcement, governance – wherever evidence,

scientific proof and indexical certainty are required.[57] However it will be

proposed here that an image that represents and an image of representation are

two different things. Photography can function successfully as representation

precisely because the qualities that account for the dimension of sense are

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[56] Brian Massumi uses the example of the statement 'I do' pointing to the difference between saying 'I do' at a wedding ceremony and saying 'I do' in response to the question 'who has the salt?': 'The same words, two entirely different meanings. Or to use Foucault's terminology, two entirely different "statements." What makes them different is not of a grammatical or logical nature. On those levels they are identical. The determining factor is most immediately the state of things within which the words are spoken." Brian Massumi, *A User's Guide to Capitalism and Schizophrenia: Deviations From Deleuze and Guattari.* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1992), 28-9. See also Sheena Calvert, "[Un]disciplined Gestures and [Un]common Sense: The Sensual, Acoustic Logic[s] of Paradox and Art," (PhD, Greenwich University, 2009), 140n438.

[57] See for instance Osborne: '[T]he photographic is not best understood as a particular art; it is currently the dominant form of the image in general. '"Infinite Exchange", 62.

generally disregarded. The creative power of photography is in that it allows one to read all previous image-making systems – including philosophy – according to their true logic of repetition. It is precisely because photography is an image produced through the means of modern technology that it is at one and the same time an event in the history of image-making systems and an event in the logic of thought.[58]

As will be developed in Chapter 3, *The Impasse of Representation*, in order to understand representation we must conceive of it as a conceptual totality rather than a collection of disconnected facts of perception. This is a challenging claim because the existence of this totality is not immediately apparent, and indeed, following Adorno, it can be argued that there are ideological investments in making sure that representation remains invisible.[59] It is precisely because the totality of representation is concealed that we tend to look at photography as a mediation of an objectively given reality by means of chemical or digital processing which delivers accurate likeness. For photographs to acquire their status as accurate and fateful impressions, representation has to make itself invisible and recede from view. Conversely, for representation to cease being imperceptible and to come into view, requires reconsidering photographs not as accurate and fateful impressions but as sites of social interaction in which

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[58] The connection between modern technology and the formation of subjectivity and metaphysics will be discussed infra Chapters 2 and 3. Some of the key texts in this context are the chapter 'Image of Thought' in Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 164-213, and 'The Power of the False' in Deleuze, *Cinema 2*, 126-146

[59] Theodor W. Adorno, *Negative Dialectics,* trans. E.B Ashton (New York: Continuum International Publishing Group, 1983), 6-8, 265-269.

representation is making itself visible in a form of an image. For as long as

photographs are considered as imprints of reality (whether true or false) it is

impossible to grasp representation as the totality that holds social reality together.

This totality is however a case of false consciousness as this way of thinking

about photography as a rational and objective imprint reflects the way we tend to

think about society as rational and objective. Considered naively, each

photograph seems to reaffirm the rationality and the innocuous transparency of

representation.[60]

1.3 Technology formerly known as life

*We shall be questioning concerning technology, and in so doing we should like to prepare
a free relationship to it. The relationship will be free if it opens our human existence to the
essence of technology.*[61]

As mentioned earlier, the suggestion advanced on the pages of this thesis is

that theory that grounds photography either in subjective experience

(phenomenology) or structuralism (semiotics) does not fully account for

photography as a process because both approaches presuppose the subject as the

immobile centre for whom the image is a representation.[62] In both cases

something has to be taken for granted as the foundation of discourse. Either

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[60] Brian O'Connor, *Adorno.* (Abingdon, Oxon. New York: Routledge, 2012), 27-8. Infra Chapter 3.

[61] Heidegger, *The Question Concerning Technology,* 3.

[62] Roland Barthes expressed the phenomenological position in Camera Lucida: 'So I make myself the measure of photographic 'knowledge.' What does my body know of Photography?' *Camera Lucida,* 9. For structuralist approaches to photography see for instance: Victor Burgin, *Thinking Photography.* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 1987), and John Tagg, *The Burden of Representation: Essays on Photographies and Histories.* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993).

photography is discussed as a distortion of the real, as an inauthentic copy or as

confused reproduction – which presupposes a theory of the subject, or it is

theorised as a direct imprint, laminated to the referent and analogous with it.

These two approaches can be seen as opposed to each other, but they share an

agreement about photography as a legible image. Because of the emphasis on

legibility both traditions are incapable of allowing photography to be

unknowable, nonidentitarian, singular and dynamic. Both are unable to

accommodate the possibility that 'seeing' relates not only to the image but also –

and for essential reasons – to something ungraspable, invisible and yet strangely

present. Theory that takes human vision as its ground assumes that everyone

knows what it means to look at a photograph, that everyone knows what it means

to see.[63] The apparent immediacy of vision is never questioned and the

phenomenological certainty of seeing ('I see a tree') is transposed to the image

('I see a tree in a photograph'). This certainty towards the visible overwhelms

theory to such an extent that the visible becomes the only determining factor in a

photograph.[64]

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[63] For Deleuze the question that is never asked is what does it mean to think: 'it is presumed that everyone knows, independently of concepts, what is meant by self, thinking, and being.' *Difference and Repetition,* 164. This thesis suggests that it is also presumed that everyone knows what does it mean to look and to see. On the question of the metaphysics of light and seeing consider Barbara Bolt's argument that vision – understood as the perspectival mapping of space – is historically situated and anchored in specific ideological investments. Bolt, "Shedding Light for the Matter," 202-216. Deleuze mentions that the questioning of representation can only be done by someone who 'neither allows himself to be represented nor wishes to represent anything' *Difference and Repetition,* 165. Following Bolt and Deleuze this thesis suggests that theory of photography that wishes to free itself from presuppositions will take as its point of departure radical critique of the visible. This task is undertaken infra Chapter 6, *Simulacra and The Latent Image.*

[64] As will be discussed throughout this thesis, visibility should not be confused with materiality. Photography can only become an 'image of a thing' at the price of annihilating its own

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Whether considered as fateful representation or as illusionistic spectacle the underpinning assumption is that the photographic image is a representation of an external reality. As Dalia Judovitz explains, in Descartes visuality operates as guarantor of knowledge and rationality and to the extent that this model still underwrites the position of theory towards the photographic image it is bound to fit with the conceptual model that posits the subject as defined by rational visuality.[65] The emphasis on the visuality of photography, on its legibility, transparency and clarity causes the evacuation from the discourse of all references to the image as something that happens besides and outside visibility.[66] Both the phenomenological and the structuralist approaches start with the idea of photography as representation precisely because representation

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materiality. (On the loss of materiality of the figural see: Lyotard, *Discourse, Figure*, 3-19.) In becoming a signifier photography accepts the conditions of lack (absence of the signified) and of distance (between the two parts of the sign). This thesis suggests that these conditions form the 'thought of image' / 'image of thought' and must be overcome in order to discover the other-then-visual value of photography. See infra Chapters 5 and 6 where the pre-visual is discussed in relation to *Augenblick* and the 'arche-trace'.

[65] See Judovitz: 'in Descartes's work, representation takes on the objective character of truth as certitude based on the extension of the epistemological principles of philosophy.' Dalia Judovitz, "Representation and Its Limits in Descartes," *Postmodernism and Continental Philosophy*. Edited by Hugh J. Silverman. (New York: State University of New York Press, 1988), 6. This argument is further influenced by Lyotard's concept of 'thickness': 'is there not a thickness of the signified, in the very existence of words; for example, in the possibility of breaking them down into monems?' and 'every object constitutes its object in depth' Lyotard, *Discourse, Figure*, 90. See infra Chapter 2, *The Thickness of the Image*.

[66] Adorno points out that the demand for clarity is symptomatic of positivist thinking that is unable to account for change and is therefore politically suspect (conservative): 'Clarity can be demanded of all knowledge only when it has been determined that the objects under investigation are free of all dynamic qualities that would cause them to elude the gaze that tries to capture and hold them unambiguously.' T W Adorno, *Hegel. Three Studies*, trans. Shierry Weber Nicholsen and Jeremy J. Shapiro (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 1993), 98.

is the backbone of their own methodologies.[67] For that reason theory is always

pertaining to the content of the image but not to the is-ness of the image.[68] It is

always asking about what the image is, and what is its significance, putting the

'what happens' before the *'is it happening'*.[69] As Lyotard says:

> It is a known fact that the strictest axiomatic requires the use of a common language [*langue*] through which to comment on its elaboration. This is the ground that remains when all scaffolding is removed and the axiomatic appears suspended at its apex.[70]

Because the discourse and the theory seek to address its subject as the

visible, as that which is brought to the eye, as that which is legible and has a

meaning, by dint of the same logic is also bound to obscure precisely that which

is invisible, a-rational, illegible and belonging to sense rather than to logos.[71]

Barthes famously rejected the iconisity of photography as its ontological

basis by saying that even if the photograph does not resemble the thing it depicts,

there is still the certainty that the thing was in front of the camera at some point

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[67] '[...]signification, in the end, can appear simultaneously to manifest and conceal a signified, and can signify it according to this relation of depth, of figure on ground, that belongs to our experience of the visible.' Lyotard, *Discourse, Figure*, 97-8.

[68] the 'is' stands for the event of something happening. As will be discussed further, it is the event of being, or the 'event of appropriation' (*ein Ereignis*) that precedes the event of meaning yet is connected to it. See discussion of Lyotard's "The Sublime and the Avant-garde" and Heidegger, *Identity and Difference* infra Chapters 4 and 5.

[69] Lyotard, *Discourse, Figure*, 99-100. Lyotard adds: 'But if one thinks about the plane of language [langue] in and through which this 'clarification' takes place, and if one takes a closer look at the torsions and rotations provoked in this plane by the linguist's activity, one observes the opposite effect: this work, which like any scientific work consists first in obscuring clarity in dispelling the obvious, in transgressing limits, can occur only in the immediate clarity of language [langue] in which it operates. Ibid., 99-100. See infra Chapter 5 where the question on the sublime is taken up in some detail.

[70] Ibid., 100.

[71] 'Linguistics marks that moment when language takes itself as object. So long as it positions itself at the tip of the aim [*vise*], it obscures itself as designated: linguistic discourse is thus a discourse that draws the night over discourse. This night is the depth of designation.' Ibid., 100.

in the past.[72] In summarising Barthes' position, Batchen has this to say: '[W]hat makes photographs distinctive is that they depend on this original presence, a referent in the material world that at some time really did exist to imprint itself on a sheet of light-sensitive paper.'[73]

A photograph therefore is not only an image of the referent but also of time as such, as it establishes the 'original presence' of something that took place in the past. However by focusing on the referent and on its relationship to the past Batchen overlooks the small matter of the presence of photographs themselves, not so much as physical objects of paper, glass etc. but as the presence of the process that produces the photograph. Because unlike most other mass produced objects, photographs do not conceal their bio-techno-political mode of production that brought them into being, rather they make this process into an image and hide it in plane view.[74]

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[72] Barthes, *Camera Lucida,* 4-7, 88.

[73] Geoffrey Batchen, *Burning with Desire: The Conception of Photography.* (Cambridge Mass.: MIT Press, 1999), 212-3.

[74] According to Marx, in a capitalist system the unrepresentable is defined as the mode of production: 'Let us therefore [...] leave this noisy sphere, where everything takes place on the surface and in full view of everyone, and follow into the hidden abode of production on whose threshold hangs the notice 'No admittance except on business'. Here we shall see, not only how capital produces, but how capital itself is produced. The secret of profit making must at last be laid bare.' Karl Marx, *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy*, trans. David Fernbach and Ben Fowkes (London. New York, N.Y.: Penguin Books, 1990), 279-80. The visible aspect of capitalism is the free exchange of commodities and services, this aspect is taking place in the broad light of day and is available for everyone's scrutiny. The sphere of bio-political production on the other hand is inaccessible to the eye, veiled in secrecy, hidden from view. Marx is making the point that the truth about capital cannot be discovered by observation of its surface effects. [As Robert Wolff observed, the literary style of *The Capital* is Marx's response to the invisibility of production. Robert Paul Wolff, *Moneybags Must Be So Lucky: On the Literary Structure of Capital.* (Amherst: Univ. of Massachusetts Press, 1988]. It is easy to draw a parallel with photography: Capital cannot fail but produce profit and photography cannot fail but produce an image. The production of the profit/image is however hidden from view, yet it is not located elsewhere, but is to be found within the sphere of profit/image by focusing on its invisible aspects. See also Cesare Casarino, "Three Theses on the Life-Image (Deleuze, Cinema, Bio-

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Nevertheless, care must be taken not to fall prey to the temptation of stepping out of semiology and structuralism and of seeking the truth in photography outside of the image. Photographs are images; they cannot be anything else (but these images do not have to be visual). Any attempt to leave the image behind and to focus, for instance, on the materiality of photographs as objects, is bound to invite back the structuralist and the semiologist who will now claim that by attempting to escape signification all that was achieved is that a new signifying regime was being established.[75] The methodology of this thesis is taking its bearings from Lyotard's insistence that intensities, the libidinal band and tension are to be found not outside the sign but within it:

> Are we talking about another sort of sign? Not in the slightest, *they are the same* as those with which the semiotician carries out his theory and textual practice. The first thing to avoid, comrades, is to claim that we have taken up a position somewhere else. We're not moving out of anywhere, we're staying right here, we occupy the terrain of signs [...].[76]

The stubborn refusal to evacuate the domain of the sign is key to the political agency of Lyotard's project as it is the linguistic / semiotic sign which is the site of the battle for non-dialectical materialism. Something of this stubbornness can be discerned in Deleuze's insistence that the Image of Thought

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politics)," In *Releasing the Image: From Literature to New Media.* Edited by Jacques Khalip and Robert Mitchell. (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2011), 156-7.

[75] The main studies on the objecthood of photographs are G. Batchen, *Each Wild Idea: Writing, Photography, History.* (Cambridge Mass: MIT Press, 2002), and E. Edwards, and J. Hart, *Photographs Objects Histories: On the Materiality of Images.* (New York, London: Routledge, 2004).

[76] Jean-Francois Lyotard, *Libidinal Economy*, 49. See also 'Glossary: The Tensor', Ibid., xiv-xv.

can be questioned only by 'an individual full of ill will who does not manage to think either naturally or conceptually.'[77] Ill will is required to exorcize representation not because it is negative but because it is a humour, an affectation. Ill will is not the opposition of representation; it is what happens to representation when it gets into the hands of the alien, the misfit, and the nomad. Deleuze emphasises ill will rather than non-representational theory because he is concerned not to fall back into representation by way of its negation.

In the context of photography, a certain amount of ill will is required to turn the gaze away from the visible without however negating the image. To think about photographs non-dialectically does not mean to renounce the image in favour of the 'objecthood' of photographs, nor does it mean to suggest that the image acquires meaning only within disciplinary or institutional frameworks.[78] Rather, as this thesis will go on to suggest, both the 'objecthood' of photographs and their disciplinary functions are drawn out of a position that privileges the clarity and intelligibility of the image. What theories of photography tend to ignore is that visibility and clarity are offshoots of a conceptual framework that is centred on the human subject (i.e. it is an anthropological thinking) and is

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[77] For Deleuze, this 'individual' is the Russian Jewish philosopher Leo Shestov: 'Ah, Shestov, with the questions he poses, the ill will he manifests, the powerlessness to think he puts into thought and the double dimension he develops in these demanding questions concerning at once both the most radical beginning and the most stubborn repetition.' Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 166. As this thesis will go on to suggest, radical beginning and stubborn repetition are qualities that can be identified as key conceptual consistencies of photography. See infra Chapter 3.7, *Perdurance: Heidegger's Move Beyond Dialectics.*

[78] On photographs as objects see: Edwards and Hart, *Photographs Objects Histories* and Batchen, *Each Wild Idea.* For examples of texts that deal with photographs as agents of ideological and disciplinary apparatus see: Richard Bolton, *The Contest of Meaning: Critical Histories of Photography.* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1992) and Tagg, *The Burden of Representation.*

anchored in a dialectical system. The observation that animates this thesis is that alongside lucidity and transparency photography is also inarticulate, affective, non-signifying, a-radical and yet, it is precisely these non-hierarchical qualities of the image that give it force, singularity and tension. For this reason this research draws extensively on the work of those philosophers who seek to go beyond signification in their attempt to locate the origin of visibility (and of thought) in the non-visible affect-phrase.[79]

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[79] Walter Benjamin was not the first but he was the most persistent critic of the image as rational and representational. For instance in the short text 'Doctrine of the Similar' he rejects Platonic notions of representation in favor of resemblance, a move which allows him to challenge the Cartesian perspectival view of the world with a model that makes room for intuition. Walter Benjamin, "Doctrine of the Similar," In *Selected Writings Vol. 2. Pt. 2. 1931 - 1934.* (Cambridge, Mass; London, England: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2005), 694-698. See also Carol Jacobs, *In the Language of Walter Benjamin.* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999), 91-114. Echoes of Benjamin's critique of rationality can be found in Deleuze's work on Simulacra in *The Logic of Sense.* and in Lyotard's *Discourse, Figure.*

2   The Thickness of the Image.

What the semioticians retain by way of hypothesis beneath their discourse is that the thing they speak of can always be treated as a sign; and this sign in turn is indeed thought of in the network of concepts of the theory of communication, it is 'what replaces something for someone' as Peirce and later Lévi-Strauss both said, which means that the thing is posited as a message, that is a physical medium equipped with a sequence of coded elements which its addressee, himself in possession of this code, is capable of decoding, in order to retrieve the information which the sender aims at him.[1]

As Anne Tomiche observed, In *Discourse, Figure* Lyotard locates a phenomenological link within designation: 'There is therefore an "eye" within discourse. Discourse is thus both surrounded and undercut by the figural [...] Topographically, the relation of simultaneous exteriority and interiority of the figural to discourse is thus not dialectical.'[2] As Tomiche goes on to point out, Lyotard's strategy in exposing the phenomenological foundation of language is by way of showing that the distance between sign and referent should not be thought of as negation but as a form of expression. Instead of the dialectical relation between the image and the object, Lyotard proposes radical heterogeneity that he names 'thickness'.

The problem for any opposition to representation is that by placing itself in opposition it immediately replicates the conditions of representation. For that reason both Lyotard and Deleuze seek strategies to situate the opposition to

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[1] Lyotard, *Libidinal Economy*, 42.

[2] Anne Tomiche, "Lyotard's 'Defense of the Eye' From Figure to Inarticulate Phrase," In *Panorama: Philosophies of the Visible.* Edited by Wilhelm S. Wurzer. (New York: Continuum, 2002), 9.

representation not outside but within representation itself.[3] The methodologies

for opposing representation as developed separately by Deleuze and Lyotard are

key for this thesis, as it too attempts to locate difference not outside the image (as

in the difference between the image and the thing), but within it. For this reason

it is important to look at the details of this method by examining the key

strategies employed by Lyotard in *Discourse, Figure.*

For Lyotard, the discourse of the Western philosophical tradition is

something of an unacknowledged paradox because it describes at one and the

same time the possibility of knowledge and its limit.[4] To know something means

to be able to take it up and represent it in a discourse, and conversely, the ability

to engage in a logical discourse is a sign of a sound and rational mind. For this

reason discourse is able to take concepts like 'truth' and 'thought' as its ground:

the subject of discourse is rational because rationality is the technique of the

discourse. On the other hand, discourse is also the limit of knowledge and the

mark of finitude because the subject has to be taken up and re-presented in a

discourse, so anything that cannot be re-presented becomes non-existent.

Therefore, discourse can be understood as the distillation of ideas from

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[3] For Heidegger, thinking difference, which is the task of philosophy, ultimately leads to the outside of metaphysics. See the concluding paragraphs of *Identity and Difference*, 70-74. For Deleuze difference and representation are linked through the figure of the eternal return: 'The eternal return eliminates precisely all those instances which strangle difference and prevent its transport by subjecting it to the quadruple yoke of representation' Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 361. See infra Chapter 6, where this aspect of Deleuze's thought is discussed in relation to simulacra.

[4] Claire Colebrook, *Ethics and Representation: From Kant to Post-structuralism* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1999), 2-3. On the link between representation and rationality within the context of political theory see also Sue Golding, *Gramsci's Democratic Theory: Contributions to a Post-liberal Democracy.* (Toronto. Buffalo: University of Toronto Press, 1992), 4-9.

experience. Experience however is not made of ideas but of a mixture of ideas and sensations and while ideas can be represented, sensations can be only sensed.[5]

Lyotard addresses the paradox of the discourse by arguing that the rethinking of the discourse as having 'thickness' requires nothing less than a revolution in language and philosophy, and that it demands the recognition of multiplicity and of parallelism of logos and sense and the dissolution of subjectivity as the product of the false privileging of rationality/logos.[6] The recognition of difference is required to prevent logos from dominating and managing sense, to prevent the triumph of idealism. However, this recognition of difference must not be a conceptual recognition, as this would bring logos back into the fold. This is the role of the figural: to guard from the imperialism of the logos. Writing sense back into thought is the rediscovery of the figure in the discourse. It is about restoring to the discourse its materiality by showing that a sign cannot fail to be a figure because it has depth (thickness).[7] Depth is established by the parallelism of sense and logos: sense and logos are not

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[5] 'The idea is a mode of thought defined by its representational character. [...] Every mode of thought insofar as it is non- representational will be termed affect. A volition, a will implies, in all rigor, that I will something, and what I will is an object of representation, what I will is given in an idea, but the fact of willing is not an idea, it is an affect because it is a non- representational mode of thought.' "Lectures by Gilles Deleuze on Spinoza." [http://deleuzelectures.blogspot.co.uk/2007/02/on-spinoza.html (accessed July 16, 2012)].

[6] See *The Bias of the Figural* in Lyotard, *Discourse, Figure*, 3-19.

[7] 'Signification, we argued, is translucent, marked by the immediate presence of the signified and the transparency of the signifier; we opposed it to the thickness of designation, to that distance that makes what one speaks of something on which we have our sights, something on which to keep one's eye, something to be looked at, something one seeks to approach.' Ibid., 93.

separate as in metaphysical thought but in Heidegger's phrase *belonging together.*[8]

A sign without depth is a sign that demands representation as it posits itself as detached from its surroundings, sufficiently isolated and framed to appear as an object, already formed as a picture, plucked out of the temporal flow. Restoring thickness necessitates re-evaluation of the notion of the subject as the 'author' of the discourse. If the 'thickness' of the sign is forgotten about, it becomes all to easy to claim that the problem of the sign is the problem of representation, that representation is the site of ideological battles without however ever questioning the presumption of logos that lies at the basis of all representation.[9]

Understood semiologically or from the positions of structuralism the sign is a legible image that already presumes the intention of the mind to attribute meaning, to decipher, to read and to analyse. This is what Bergson calls 'the utilitarian work of the mind'.[10] Discourse conceived as a sign obscures the immediate knowledge we have of its thickness/sense. However, before there can be a signifying sign there has to be the possibility of knowledge which is not the

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[8] '[B]elonging together can also be thought of as *belonging* together This means: the "together" is now determined by the belonging.' Heidegger, *Identity and Difference,* p. 29. Infra Chapter 3.6 where Heidegger's notion of the 'belonging together of thought and being' is discussed in some detail.

[9] For an approach that considers representation as the site of ideological battles see Louis Althusser: 'Ideology is a "representation" of the imaginary relationship of individuals to their real conditions of existence.' Louis Althusser, *On Ideology.* (London. New York: Verso, 2008), 36.

[10] Henri Bergson, *Matter and Memory,* trans. Nancy Margaret Paul and Scott Palmer (N.Y.: Zone books, 2005), 185. quoted in Dorothea Olkowski, *Gilles Deleuze and the Ruin of Representation.* (Berkeley. Los Angeles. Oxford: University of California. 1999), 79.

same as saying that there have to be categories and logos. In structuralism thickness performs the double function of being the unrecognised foundation of reason and its inseparable shadow.

By identifying duplicity, or a folding, within the discourse, Lyotard is able to claim that difference is a quality internal to the sign (meaning/thickness). According to structuralism difference is expressed as the gap between the discourse (sign) and the object of discourse (referent) – note in passing that this is the Hegelian negation (the sign differs from what it is not).[11] The sign and the referent cannot occupy the same place at the same time. Note that this external difference presumes temporal and spatial linearity and abides by the exclusion principle.[12] For Lyotard difference is not external to the sign but it is what makes the sign as the tension between meaning and thickness. Difference here does not mean separateness but the condition of collaboration between discourse and sense. Sense is always on the verge of becoming discourse, discourse always requires thickness. Lyotard seems to say that what is wrong with linguistics is not its tools or methods but that it takes language as its subject:

> Linguistics marks the moment when language takes itself as object. So long as it positions itself at the tip of the aim [visée], it obscures itself as designated: linguistic discourse is thus a discourse that draws the night over discourse.[13]

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[11] Hegelian negation will be discussed infra chapter 3.4, *Hegel: Reflection, Sublation, Speculation*.

[12] See infra chapter 3.3 for a discussion of the exclusion principle (principle of non-contradiction) in relation to Aristotelian logic.

[13] Lyotard, *Discourse, Figure*, 100.

Therefore a study of language worthy of its name must take account of difference as the productive and creative force that holds discourse and figure in suspended animation. Language is precisely the product of difference between discourse and figure. For that reason the ',' (coma) in the title of the book is, figurally speaking, the key to the book.[14] The comma is a punctuation sign, it indicates a pause. A pause suggests a certain 'play': within the pause some choice is possible. The choice is to continue with one series or with another, in this way the comma complicates the sign introducing 'thickness' into it.[15]

To sum up: Lyotard suggests that a sign is a site of affect as well as of signification. Designation always involves split, distance and pause that cannot be limited neither to dialectical negation nor to phenomenological description. The figural is not limited to the visual but it is intimately linked to desire.[16] The relevance of this explication of the sign to photography is in allowing one to consider the image not as a stand-alone visual object but as a part of a series produced through replication. While this might not seem a major shift, since photographs are known to be easily reproduced, it does allow for a conceptual re-calibration of the photograph from an image of a thing to an event of fragmentation. The change of focus from representation to the mode of production (technology) allows one to conceive of the image not in terms of

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[14] Ibid., 100-1.

[15] 'The fact that signification itself passes as sign only serves to indicate that there is a power of the sign, a power of the being-sign capable of investing the object with any referential relation.' Ibid., 102.

[16] Tomiche, "Lyotard's 'Defence of the Eye'" 12. On the sign as 'tensor' see Lyotard, *Libidinal Economy*, 42-90.

identity with a thing, but in terms of difference. As the next section will go on to explain, the technology of photo-mechanical reproduction provides the conditions for this 'step back' from representation and metaphysics towards difference and being in the field of the image.[17]

2.1   Heidegger Technology and Thickness

For the essence of technology is above all not anything technological. The essence of technology lies in what from the beginning and before all else gives food for thought.[18]

As the following chapter will explain, photography is generally conceptualised as representational and visual cultural form, a product of the technological age and the outcome of repeatable and predictable operations, and yet it is rooted in something much less lucid, rational and coherent.[19] As a result of this perceived clarity, whether in the context of art history, sociology, cultural studies or structuralism, the concern is generally with the ways by which the image can be traced, interpreted, analysed, classified and categorised.[20] Being a

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[17] 'Step back' is Heidegger's way of describing the leap out of representation which he sees as connected with Cartesian optical and perspectival world view. While the 'Step back' is described in 'Identity and Difference', (*Identity and Difference*, 64-65), the question of representation is taken up by Heidegger in 'The Age of the World Picture' and 'The Question Concerning Technology'. As this thesis will argue, The 'step back' out of metaphysics is accomplished in the field of photography through paying attention to the latent image, to mechanical reproduction and to the temporality of the photographic image.

[18] Martin Heidegger, *What Is Called Thinking?* trans. J Gray Glenn (New York: Harper Collins, 2004), 22.

[19] See infra Chapter 3.

[20] Photography literature is constantly expanding into new areas. The key classic texts include Pierre Bourdieu, *Photography: A Middle-Brow Art*, trans. Shaun Whiteside (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1996), André Bazin, *What Is Cinema?* trans. Hugh Gray (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University Of California Press, 2004), Batchen, *Burning with Desire.* Tagg, *The Burden of Representation.* Victor Burgin, *In/Different Spaces.* (Berkeley: University of California Press,

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privileged object of critical research in the field of cultural studies, photography

gave rise to a large number of studies concerned with the ways by which identity,

subjectivity, gender, society, art and the real are constructed through a

photographic system of representation. In all those cases, the underpinning

assumption is that the photographic image has some affinity with the object it

represents; that the result of the photographic procedure is an image that relates

in some way to an object, an event, a concept or an occurrence that is part of life.

This thesis suggests that such approaches have one thing in common: they all

consider photography as a rational invention in the service of men, they discuss it

from the position of separation between the image and the object, a separation

that is bridged by representation and by the representing subject. The result of

this anthropocentric position is that they take as a given the observation that

photography is a technology that produces an image and that the image is one of

resemblance. One of the clearest statements of this position comes from André

Bazin:

> Only a photographic lens can give us the kind of image of the object
> that is capable of satisfying the deep need man has to substitute for
> it something more than a mere approximation... The photographic

1996), Burgin, *Thinking Photography*. More recent research includes: *The Photographic Image in Digital Culture*. 2nd ed. Edited by Martin Lister. (London: Routledge, 2013), John Elkins, *Photography Theory*. Sarah Pink, "Sensory Digital Photography: Re-thinking 'moving 'and the Image," William Uricchio. "The Algorithmic Turn: Photosynth, Augmented Reality and the Changing Implications of the Image," *Visual Studies* 26, no. 1 (2011).

image is the object itself, the object freed from the conditions of time and space that govern it.[21]

For Bazin, technology is there to satisfy the 'deep needs' of men, it is a means to an end: Everybody knows how photographs are made, everyone knows what does it mean to be photographed and how to take a photograph. What everyone knows is known as common sense.[22] However, what will happen if we apply to the photographic image the understanding of technology that Heidegger outlined in the two essays *The Question Concerning Technology* and *The Age of the World Picture*? In these works Heidegger repeatedly emphasises that technology is nothing technological, it is not made by humans and for humans, rather it is the way by which the human subject is constituted through the process of creation.[23] The rejection of the instrumental definition of technology allows Heidegger to claim that subjectivity, rather than being a fixed and stable entity, is formed through the process of creation that for the human being always takes the form of *technē*.[24] However, Heidegger adds a caveat to indicate that it is only in

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[21] André bazin, *What is Cinema?*, (trans, Hugh Gray, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1967, p. 14.) Quoted in: Krauss, *The Originality of the Avant-garde*, 203.

[22] As Deleuze explains, common sense is that which remains unquestioned. 'The image of thought is only the figure in which *doxa* is universalised by being elevated to the rational level' *Difference and Repetition*, 134.

[23] 'we are questioning concerning technology, and we have arrived at *alethea*, at revealing.' 'What is modern technology? it too is a revealing. Only when we allow our attention to rest on this fundamental characteristic does that which is new in modern technology show itself to us.' Heidegger, *The Question Concerning Technology*, 12.

[24] Everywhere everything is ordered to stand by, to be immediately on hand, indeed to stand there just so that it may be on call for further ordering Ibid., 17.

the modern age that technology becomes so aligned with representation that it turns the human into a resource, a standing reserve and a subject.[25]

According to Heidegger, the human being acquires a sense of identity through the process of acting in the world. The self is formed in and through technology because human acting and doing is the process of *technē*.[26] Therefore Heidegger says that it is wrong to assume that one is using technology to achieve certain goals, rather, one *becomes* through technology and it is this becoming that constitutes what we later name 'identity', 'ego', 'subjectivity' or 'sovereignty'.[27]

In *The Question Concerning Technology* Heidegger performs a de-reification of the concept of 'representation'. He proposes a path to the unthought, to that which is yet to be thought: that representation is culturally and historically specific to the Western tradition. He achieves this by connecting representation

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[25] As Martha Helfer observes: 'In his famous essay *The Age of the World Picture* (1938) Martin Heidegger argues that the modern age is characterized by the interweaving of two events: the world becomes a picture and the human being becomes a subject.' Martha Helfer, *The Retreat of Representation: The Concept of Darstellung in German Critical Discourse*. (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1996), xii. See also: 'representation is in question not in its traditional sense as rendering or presenting as an image, but rather as the index of the reduction of the world to a set of standards or norms, to a prototype. [...] The concept of representation is thus symptomatic of a crisis: the reduction and dephenomenologization of the visual image, in favor of its interpretation as a rational symbolic form.' Judovitz, *Representation and Its Limits in Descartes*, 68.

[26] 'The person is not a Thing, not a substance, not an object [...]Essentially the person exists only in the performance of intentional acts, and is therefore essentially *not* an object. Any psychical Objectification of acts, and hence any way of taking them as something psychical, is tantamount to depersonalization. A person is in any case given as a performer of intentional acts which are bound together by the unity of a meaning.' Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. Edward Robinson and John Macquarrie (Malden, MA; Oxford: Blackwell, 1962), 73, (§4). (References to *Being and Time* are given by page number followed by paragraph in brackets.)

[27] Martin Heidegger, *Bremen and Freiburg Lectures: Insight Into That Which Is and Basic Principles of Thinking,* trans. Andrew J. Mitchell (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2012), 23-5, 38.

to the notion of the rational subject.[28] Rationality and representation are thus shown to be drawn out of the same historical trajectory. In this way representation comes to define the way by which the world is given to the rational subject. Technology for Heidegger comes to mean the *stimmung* of the age, the mood according to which the experience of the world is constituted. This is because no matter what one does, one is always *already in* technology. There is no opting out. This also means that the familiar notion of technology as 'means to an end' does not hold. But in addition it means that technology cannot be grasped as an object because technology is the grasping mechanism. What makes technology so elusive is that it is the surface of everything else that is taking place. It is the framework, the diagram, the armature through which experience acquires coherence. Technology does not like to show itself. For that reason, as Heidegger says, the river Rhine still looks like a river and not like the standing reserve that it is: 'The distance of that which is remains outstanding'.[29] A power-plant on the banks of the river is a reminder of technology but it appears to the eye as an isolated object, separate from the landscape. Unlike the power-plant in Heidegger's famous example, photography has the advantage that here the landscape cannot be separated from technology, because in the photograph technology of production is inseparable from the technology of representation. Photography grasps what is ungraspable and produces it in the form of an image.

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[28] See infra chapter 3, *The Impasse of Representation.*

[29] Martin Heidegger, *Bremen and Freiburg Lectures: Insight Into That Which Is and Basic Principles of Thinking*, trans. Andrew J Mitchell (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2012), 4. See also: Heidegger, *The Question Concerning Technology*, 16.

Connecting Lyotard's notion of thickness with Heidegger's notion of technology, it is possible to suggest that photography is an imaging system that creates 'thickness' because it is a technology that works in series.[30] That photographic images are serial, i.e. each 'individual' image is part of a series, is hardly an original statement. And yet, it is surprising how little attention is devoted to precisely this aspect of photography. Everywhere we look we see photographs, millions of them, yet ordinarily it is the singular image that appears to us and the fact that this image is part of a series is over-looked. Over-looked is the operative word here, for a series is not something that can be represented in an image. Seriality is not visual; it cannot be shown, brought to the eye, figured. It is dynamic, singular and non-identical. The *techne* of photography is both a *techne* of the accurate copy and of seriality and the two cannot be separated or disentangled. And while the former is manifest in the photograph being an image of a thing, and for that reason also static, the latter is manifest in the photograph being a recursive fragment, an instance in a chain of successive executions. As will be discussed later in this thesis, this duality is on the one hand the technological condition that makes the photographic image possible and on the other it opens up a rupture within the photograph. For while it is true that the serial aspect of photography is in-visible because it is not part of the image, it is also true that in some way it is inseparable from the image as it speaks to the mode of production of photography.

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[30] See supra Chapter 2, *The Thickness of the Image.*

A brief analogy might help to clarify the last point and to explain why seriality is central to photography. If we take written text as an example, whether it is a parking ticket or a poem there is a clear sense that the text is both content and expression. It speaks to us with an intonation that implies the (deferred) presence of a voice. Even if the text is anonymous, unsigned, manifestly impersonal, exaggeratedly plane, still someone's voice can be discerned in the choice of phrases.[31] Even if the voice is not of an individual but of an institution, the text announces not only its meaning but also the correspondent, her/his epoch, social status, intentions, aptitudes, proclivities.[32] It is impossible to subtract or eliminate the voice from the text, for the text is not just words from a dictionary but also the way these words are put together, the way they are arranged in one way and not in another. In reading the text we not only assign meaning to every word but also absorb the choices made by the absent creator of the text. These choices, which are manifest at every sentence, give the text its timbre, its coloration for through them we create in our mind the figure of the speaker, their intention, their seriousness or their maliciousness, their explicit and implicit intent. However, it is precisely this presence of the speaker in the text that cannot be extracted from the text because formally it is nowhere. The text is words on paper. Intonation is in the way the words are arranged (like music is arranged) but it is not the words. To demand to see the intonation of the text

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[31] On the interconnectivity of authorial voice and authority see Jacques Derrida, *Limited Inc*, trans. Jeffery Mehelman and Samuel Webber (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1988), 1-24.

[32] See Ronald Barthes 'The Grain of the Voice' in, *Image, Music, Text, 179-189*.

without the words, is absurd and yet, it is the intonation that gives the words the possibility of meaning.[33]

In parallel to language there is an aspect of the photographic image that gives it its meaning and yet this aspect cannot be in itself made visible. However, this aspect is not the authorial voice in the sense of the artist or the photographer who 'made' the picture, but in the sense of the *techne* that made the image. The *techne* that is manifest in photography in the seriality of the image. Each photographic image, even when considered in complete isolation from any other images, still carries within it its seriality. It is imbued with it because it is permeated with the technology of mechanical reproduction. For instance, Henri Cartier-Bresson's photograph of the three prostitutes in Alicante is no doubt saturated with HCB's readily recognisable intonation, with the mannerism evident in his 'hyper-geometric' style and with the precise timing of the exposure. Considered as a representation, this image is a synthesis of time and space that confirms to our own experience of time as continuous and linear. Yet at the same time this image is infused with fragmentary repetition that is un-rooted, a-hierarchical and non-representational. Between the two determinations of the photograph, the representation and the fragment, there is a rift, a fissure that keeps both sides incomplete, contingent, mutually unresolved. In the first

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[33] The concept of 'intonation' was developed by Valentin Nikolaevich Voloshinov, "Discourse in Life and Discourse in Poetry," In *Bakhtin School Papers,* ed. A Shukman, trans. John Richmond (RPT Publications in association with Dept. of Literature, University of Essex, 1983), 5-30. The concept of 'intonation' (or 'vocalisation') allowed Voloshinov to claim that meaning in discourse is not derived from the formal definitions of words but from the real life contexts that frame and define it. Ideas developed by Voloshinov (and other members of the Bakhtin Circle during the 1920's-1930's) were taken up in a number of post-structuralist texts, specifically in Lyotard, *Discourse, Figure.* and Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus.*

instance we have an image which fits with our understanding of life as linear and basically unchanging. This understanding is reinforced through linear perspective and monocular point of view. In the second instance, there is a multiplicity of proliferating singularities, multiplicity of perspectives, infinitely bifurcating rhythm and a conception of life as a differencing flow. Representation here does not describe a static figure but contours and maps a procedure, or a principle of becoming. Neither system is sufficient without the other for the fragment is embodied in the image and the image is mimetic only thanks to the repetition of the fragment. Photography is the site of conflation between two irreconcilable temporalities: transcendental and immanent. The frame of the photograph with its clear freeze-dry stillness is complicated or even ruptured by the invasion of the fluid space of repetition that disposes with a point of origin, with hierarchical understanding of time and with static, unchanging subjectivity.[34]

From the point of view of representation the recursive fragment is 'nothing'. As representation is a kind of logic that operates through pursuing similarity and assigning identity, it sees only identical copies. Because representation operates dialectically it assigns identity to everything that it finds similar and non-identity to everything that is dissimilar. The thing that always escapes representation is that which is neither identity nor non-identity.[35] What

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[34] This understanding of the photograph as containing two temporal series is based on Deleuze's books on cinema, particularly *Cinema 2* where he says: 'The movement-image has two sides, one in relation to objects whose relative position varies, the other in relation to a whole – of which it expresses an absolute change.' Deleuze, *Cinema 2*, 34.

[35] 'It is supposed that representation is valid, exists and is thinkable only under an Identical which in turn posits it as a difference without concept and explains it negatively.' Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 375.

cannot be represented delineates and demarcates the systematic and orderly representational space, however, the demarcation itself cannot be represented, as it is – from the point of view of representation – nothing. From the point of view of the fragment on the other hand, the image is nothing but the potential to differ.[36]

The reproductive process is what makes this image and any other photograph possible. And to the extent that this image announces itself as a photograph, it also announces itself as being a fragment, an object the meaning of which is incomplete because, as part of a series, it belongs to a larger whole and yet it is also a finite entity in itself. Photography therefore situated between two polarities, two articulations: there is the photographic image, a product of the technology of representation, and there is the photographic series comprised of recursive fragments.

Photography is a technology, it cannot be anything else, but technology implies the ability to repeat something, to make something come again. For this reason photographic technology has the dual capacity: it can either be the etalon of stagnation, endlessly bringing to the eye past events, distant sights, remote happenings in a succession of images that hardly even shudder the retina anymore, or the same technology can be perceived as a way of making visible a force for constant renewal, a possibility of different temporality in which things

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[36] 'Repetition in the eternal return appears under all these aspects as the peculiar power of difference, and the displacement and disguise of that which repeats only reproduce the divergence and the decentering of the different in a single movement of *diaphora* or transport.' Ibid., 373.

don't have to be the same over and over again. In other words, photography has the capacity to radical territorialisation and to radical deterritorialisation: it can be both the eternal return of the same and/or the eternal return of the return. It is precisely because photography is the standard bearer of memory as a succession of frozen moments that it also has the capacity to picture time not as a progression of homogenised measured units but as non-chronological, inhuman, singular time, as expressive potential for difference.

To look at the world photographically means to take up the point of view of the *dispositif*, of the apparatus, of the process[37]. It means giving up on the eye as the organon of vision; it means an ability to see that is not reduced to the human eye. To see like the camera is to abandon the human perception of events as given in time, as part of a linear and continuous flow. It means to draw on the forces of repetition and to flow with the return. Vision here is experienced as pure vision, not the vision of something but visibility itself. It is as if photography absorbed visuality into itself. To say, as Deleuze says that the frame is the genetic condition of the photograph means that reproduction is the gene of photography, not representation.[38]

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[37] See infra Chapter 4 for a more detailed account of the connection between the *dispositif* and the archive. See also Giorgio Agamben, *What Is An Apparatus?*

[38] 'For, in Vertov's view, the frame is not simply a return to the photo: if it belongs to the cinema, this is because it is the genetic element of the image[...]' Deleuze, *Cinema 1*, 85. For Deleuze however, photograph is a 'mould', i.e. it belongs to the disciplinary narrative of enclosures and confined spaces where stasis dominates: 'The difference between the cinematographic image and the photographic image follows from this. Photography is a kind of 'moulding': the mould organises the internal forces of the thing in such a way that they reach a state of equilibrium at a certain instant (immobile section)'. Ibid., 25.

The frame is the condition of reproducibility. The anomaly of the photograph is that the frame is visual. An image has a frame. The frame however is not human doing. The edge does not mark the place where the image ends. The edge-frame it is the time-stamp that signals the presence of a series. The frame of a photograph is an abnormality: it is a photographic image in which all references to representation were surgically removed. What is left is not a signifier or a reflection but photography's own means of production made visible.[39] The frame is the disclosure of the rhythm of the photograph. The frame resists the separation between form and content and rejects the image as an idea or a representation. The edge is transgressive because it is sensorial and unrepresentable: not an image but the source of the image as a reflection of reality. The frame is not the limit but the condition of possibility of making visible. In the frame the image comes closer to being what it is not, to the 'nothing' of the image, but – and this is precisely what makes the photographic limit special – the 'nothing' is visible. The frame of the image frames also the rationality of the image, setting a limit to the rationality of the photographic

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[39] According to Lyotard one has to study the 'work of dreams' to get to the point of hyper-reflection in which the figural shows itself in the discourse. 'But one notes that this reflection is a hyper-reflection insofar as it does not consist in reflecting the designated in signified, but that one the contrary some element of the space of reference, as it comes to lodge itself in discourse, produces anomalies there, thereby making itself visible. One can get to the bottom of this operation only after having studies the work of dreams, for it is important to separate the regression of direct expression mobilized in the latter work and the *recessus* or doubly inverted expression that alone produces the art work.' Lyotard, *Discourse, Figure*, 71. On hyper-reflection in the context of deconstruction see Rodolphe Gasché,"Deconstruction As Criticism," In *Glyph: Textual Studies 6*. Edited by Carol Jacobs and Henry Sussman. (Baltimore; London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1979), 183-189.

discourse while at the same time suggesting that the image extends and supersedes this discourse.

With everyday objects such as trees it is hard to notice that they are not really there.[40] In other words it requires colossal effort to overcome the certainty of self-certainty. However, by virtue of having a frame the image preserves the gap between itself and the world. The frame is a reminder that the image has thickness. As Lyotard says in 'Discourse, Figure', between the 'here' and the 'now', between the 'thesis' and the 'antithesis' there is a gap, a distance required for the differentiation. The gap is not a concept, it is that what makes concept possible. The unique position of the photograph is in carrying the gap within it by means of its *techne*.

2.2 Double articulation

> *'All methods for the trascendentalization of language, all methods for endowing language with universals, from Russell's logic to Chomsky's grammar, have fallen into the worst kind of abstraction, in the sense that they validate a level that is both too abstract and not abstract enough. Regimes of signs are not based on language, and language alone does not constitute an abstract machine, whether structural or generative. The opposite is the case. It is language that is based on regimes of signs, and regimes of signs on abstract machines, diagrammatic functions, and machinic assemblages that go beyond any system of semiology, linguistics or logic. There is no universal propositional logic, nor is there grammaticality in itself, any more than there is signifier for itself. 'Behind' statements and semioticizations there are only machines, assemblages, and movements of deteritorialization that cut across the stratification of the various systems and elude both the coordinates of language and of existence.[41]'*

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[40] 'What we see and accept is properly not a tree but in reality a void, thinly sprinkled with electric charges here and there that race hither and yon at enormous speeds. 'Heidegger, *What Is Called Thinking?*, 45. See also infra Chapter 4.2, *The Archive and its discontents*, where the 'leap out' of the realm of science is discussed in relation to Heidegger's essay *The Thing*.

[41] Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 148.

It is generally acknowledged that the photographic image draws its authoritative and mimetic force from its affirmation of the real, its verisimilitude and its authenticity, however, following Deleuze and Guattari's analysis in the above quotation, to be truly creative photography must free itself from predetermined notions of what the photographic image is capable of and not to be constrained by the universals of logic, semiology, regimes of signs and representation.[42] The way to embrace the kind of multiplicity that Deleuze and Guattari are calling for is by evacuating photography from the discourse of representation and by sketching out an approach to the image that is based on difference and that is irreducible to either identity or dialectics and negation. Of course, the notion of representation already problematizes identity which is evident in Plato's distinction between *eikon* and *eidos* as the idea of an image (eikon) ipso facto presupposes the notion of the other, of that which is different from the reality of the thing (eidos).[43] An image is therefore different from a thing and this difference is a necessary requirement for the image to have similarity to the thing and to be able to stand-in for it.[44] For Derrida for instance,

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[42] 'no art and no sensation have ever been representational' Gilles Deleuze, and Felix Guattari, *What Is Philosophy?* trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Graham Burchill (London, New York: Verso, 1994), 193.

[43] 'We say that a maker of an image knows nothing about that which is but only about its appearance.' Plato, "The Republic," In *Complete Works*. Edited by D S Hutchinson and John M Cooper, trans. G.M.A. Grube (Indianapolis, Ind.: Hackett Pub, 1997), 1205 (601 b-c). Also see: John Lechte, "Some Fallacies and Truths Concerning the Image in Old and New Media," *Journal of Visual Culture* 10, no. 3 (2011): 354-371.

[44] This basic distinction between the image and the 'real' already points towards the fundamental challenge the image presents to the notions of materiality and perception. Even the most truthful reproduction points towards something that is not given and which is present only virtually, pushing material perception beyond itself towards the actualisation of virtuality. Khalip and

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this notion of difference as the condition of identity is at the basis of the concept

of the *différance*, and it marks the impossibility to attain completion, to be truly

present, for it always carries with it the mark of deferred / differing non-identity

of the image with the thing.[45] However the notion of *différance* as developed by

Derrida (and the notion of difference in Heidegger's 'Identity and Difference')

does not escape essentialist rhetoric and remains deeply metaphysical. Not only

because, as Sean Burke demonstrated, it forces Derrida to return to the author

and in this way to posit a sovereign authority that administers the meaning of the

image, but also because Derrida positions *différance* between the signifier

(image) and the signified (thing) in a hierarchical order that subordinates the

present (image) to the absent (thing).[46] The signifier is standing in for the

signified, which is truant, forever deferred and pushed back through an endless

chain of signifiers that mimic each other yet have no final cause in a thing. This

deferral of the signified creates not only a notion of absence, lack and negation,

but also a linear temporality in which the thing is pushed further and further into

the past.

Photo-graphia is the case in point because it is a system that produces an

image. To link a thing with an image through a technical operation that

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Mitchell, "Introduction," in In *Releasing the Image: From Literature to New Media* (Edited by Jacques Khalip and Robert Mitchell), 7.

[45] Jacques Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, trans. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998), 23.

[46] Sean Burke, *The Death and Return of the Author: Criticism and Subjectivity in Barthes, Foucault and Derrida.* (Edinburgh UP, 1998), 138-149.

guaranties the certainty of verisimilitude is the photographic operation. The question however is what is the underpinning diagram, what are the rules, the regimes and the discourses that allow for the linking of the image and the thing. And to sharpen this point even more, what ethical, epistemological, political, ontological, conceptual stakes are involved in the representational link between the image and the thing. Photography matters not because it is the accepted face of representation (one could immediately name a number of other representational systems, for instance the philosophy of Descartes, the linguistics of Saussure) but because it always produces an image, the indubitable ground of photography.[47] An image is set-up according to a set of rules: specific conditions are required for a photographic image to occur. These rules are not unchangeable, not eternal, but while the rules can change, the requirement for the interval between the image and the thing, the interval in which rules are being applied, is the certainty of the photographic image. This certainty of an interval is the *technē* of photography.[48] A photograph is an image that is separated from a thing by an interval. If there was no interval the image would be purely a reflection.[49] There is difference (interval) between the thing and the image, and yet there is also a necessary connection: the image is never arbitrary, accidental or random.

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[47] On representation in Descartes see: Judovitz, "Representation and Its Limits in Descartes," 68-84. See supra Chapter 2.1, *Technology and Thickness* for a discussion of linguistics as representation.

[48] As will be discussed infra Chapter 5.2, *The Sublime and the Interval*, it is the interval, rather than identity which constitutes the sense of the photographic image.

[49] Rodolphe Gasché, The Tain of the Mirror: Derrida and the Philosophy of Reflection. (Harvard University Press, 1986), 13-24

However, due to the interval it is also a-radical, non-hierarchical and can be thought of as a surface without depth.

Photography must neither be fixed to one notion of meaning or to one representational system, nor should it be totally indeterminate, relativist and chaotic. The challenge for photography is to be able to produce an image - rather than pure meaningless noise - but without becoming trapped in the common-sense notion of the image as a copy or a reflection. Thinking photography through the prism of image-thing dualism is bound to deliver one or the other: either a representation or meaningless signal. In either case photography is understood as a rigid system that is rooted metaphysically in the binary opposition between form and content. An alternative will be for photography to maintain some kind of dynamism, not the dialectics of either/or but the multiversity of both/and, and contain within it both noise and image, image as noise.[50] This will allow sustaining both resemblance with and the rejection of the real and in this way to underwrite the domain of sensation. The turn away from iconic and indexical resemblance and the dualist metaphysics of form-matter suggests not only a new philosophy of the image but also a new image of philosophy, one that is dialogical rather than dialectical, open to the alien and the subordinated and thus ultimately repellent to authority.[51]

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[50] Noise is the a-personal, a-radical part of the image which cannot be represented, yet it is manifested through rhythms and patterns. Noise is that which cannot be grasped through representation because it is constructed out of non-identical singularities. This way of thinking about noise is influenced by Nechvatal, *Immersion Into Noise.*

[51] Alphonso Lingis critiques post-Socratic theory of communication that privileges commonality, shared knowledge and agreement on the use of language as the basic conditions for a well functioning society. Lingis points out that the emphasis on common language creates a zone of

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The double articulation of photography can be approached in a number of ways.[52] The most direct is to note that there is an evident interval between the simplicity of the technical procedure that results in an image being formed and the 'reflective split that gives the photographic discourse its characteristic and uncomfortable appearance, and which, at the same time, results in the representation being questioned.'[53] In other words, photography has both technological and a symbolic dimensions which sets it apart from other technological inventions.[54] This interval suggests that photography operates in

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exclusion for those who do not want or are unable to share the same language: 'The Socratic effort to communicate with strangers is, in reality, the effort not to rationally certify the existing Athenian republic but to found and ideal republic of universal communication–a city maximally purged of noise.' Alphonso Lingis, "The Murmur of the World," In *American Continental Philosophy: A Reader.* Edited by Walter Brogan and James Risser. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2000), 101. Dialogical theory of communication is not based on assigning common, accepted meanings to words, but on attunement to the 'key' in which words are spoken: 'Is it not also false to suppose that only the meaning attached to words by a code, fixed or evolving, communicates? The rhythm, the tone, the periodicity, the stammerings, and the silences communicate.' Ibid., 105.

[52] This is how Deleuze and Guattari explain double articulation: 'The first articulation chooses or deducts, from unstable particle-flows, metastable molecular or quasi-molecular units (*substances*) upon which it imposes a statistical order of connections and successions (*forms*). The second articulation establishes functional, compact, stable structures (*forms*), and constructs the molar compounds in which these structures are simultaneously actualized (*substances*).' *A Thousand Plateaus*, 40-41.

[53] Victor Ieronim Stoichiță, *A Short History of the Shadow*. (London: Reaktion Books, 1997), 193. To explain the questioning of representation Stoichiță borrows from Nietzsche the concept of 'Platonic Reversal' [*The Gay Science* trans. W. Kaufmann (New York: Random House, 1974), pp. 273-4]. 'It is a kind of Platonic reversal, where the shadow takes on the role of the paradigm .... The photo is not just a shot, it is an archetypal re-production of the work, it is the form in which the work presents itself by re-producing itself in the infinity of its possible replicas.' Stoichiță, *A Short History of the Shadow*, 193. On the notion of the reversal see 'Plato and the Simulacrum' in Deleuze, *The Logic of Sense*, 291-303.

[54] Tearing up a photograph, or even deleting a digital image from a smartphone feels like a violation. This indicates that there is a certain excess to the photographic image. Giorgio Agamben describes it thus: 'The photograph is always more than an image: it is the site of a gap, a sublime breach between the sensible and the intelligible, between copy and reality, between a memory and a hope.' Giorgio Agamben, *Profanations*, trans. Jeff Fort (Zone Books New York, 2007), 26. For Agamben the revelatory and the ethical potential of photography is that which is

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two registers: the register of representation and the register of dynamic excess established through repetition. This thesis considers photography as 'double articulation' in which the mechanical process of fixing the image is accompanied by an 'exposure of becoming' (Lyotard).[55] Double articulation requires one to re-think materiality as related to the questions of the sensual, agency and difference. The ability of the photographic image to be copied brings forward notions of recursivity that in turn offer a way of thinking about photography as a mimeto-acoustic structure.[56] Viewed as a disseminating – rather then representational – apparatus, photography has less purchase in identity and subjectivity and more investments in repetition and recursively.[57]

2.3   Dynamism, difference, chaos

It was suggested in the previous section that photography has an affinity with difference, fractality and recursive reiteration. However this fragmentation of the photographic is not an aberration or accident nor does it render the

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being represented in the image, for this thesis however the ethical is in the ability to represent representation.

[55] '[W]e–the painter and we beholders–miss this secret (manifestation, depth – DR) precisely because we see it, and because this exposure of becoming, this constitution of the seeing and the seen would be pointless and fall flat if there weren't a sharp eye to register it, expose it, and constitute it in turn.' Lyotard, *Discourse, Figure,* 24.

[56] The concept of the acoustic as a-radical refrain is a structure that allows the emergence of law (nomos) and the ethical without suggesting closure and hierarchy. See '1837: Of The Refrain', Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus,* 310-350. On the acoustic as a point of entry into the question of art see Johnny Golding," Fractal Philosophy, Trembling a Plane of Immanence and the Small Matter of Learning How to Listen: Attunement As the Task of Art," In *Deleuze and Contemporary Art.* Ed. Stephen Zepke and Simon O'Sullivan (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2010).

[57] See infra Chapter 6.5, *Photography: Difference at a Standstill.*

photographic image meaningless, but it is an essential quality that defines the

structure of the visual field as partaking in a form of logic that is non-linear, a-

rational (chaotic), dynamic, sensual and rhyzomatic.[58] Photography is taken as a

point of entry into the question of the way representation operates because in

photography representation is immanent to the process of image-making which

sets it apart from other forms of visuality – such as painting – where

representation is the product of human agency.[59] The advantage offered by

photography is that it is a representation in which what is being represented is the

techne of representation itself.[60]

In other words, photography affords insights about representation precisely

because no matter what is its subject, it also automatically produces a reflexive

image of representation itself. As a form of imaging in which the problem of

representation is welded to the subject of representation, photography is an

image for which its own imageness is a problem. In the words of Lyotard, it is

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[58] On the a-radical and rhyzomatic structure of the visual see Johnny Golding, "Fractal Philosophy".

[59] This point is made by Lyotard when he says that the unconscious negativity of seeing – as the possibility of perception bought at the price of the impossibility of self-perception is engendered by the power of the artist: 'Even if the picture resembles nothing ... the eye takes back from it the right it had given up in order to allow the picture to be: the right to believe itself the place from which the world ... is seen manifesting itself, manifests its manifestation. It is up to the painter, therefore, to bring this unconsciousness of the negativity of seeing to light, in a kind of chthonic upheaval. But nothing doing: there is no such thing a painting for the blind, and it is in the eye of the beholder, or at the least in its co-action with the artwork, that this power seeks cover the power Cézanne or Picasso revealed, or thought to have revealed to it.' Lyotard, *Discourse, Figure*, 14-5.

[60] However, as Lyotard says there is a problem: 'We–the painter and we beholders miss this secret precisely because we see it, and because this exposure of becoming, this constitution of the seeing and the seen would be pointless and fall flat if there weren't a sharp eye to register it, expose it, and constitute it in turn.' Ibid., 14. It is the submission of this thesis that in the case of photography 'the secret' is of an entirely different order, not because it is less visible but because the visible is not deferred to the hand and the eye of the painter but constituted by technology.

the 'aesthetics of the memory of the forgotten.'[61] By arguing that in photography

representation has to be understood as double articulation, which is to say as a

dynamic system that presupposes both order and chaos, both rational and sensual

logics, this thesis seeks to propose that difference, rather than identity is the

immanent condition of visuality. This however implies that photography is not a

stable representational system – as the theory of photography would have it – but

the very space of the inscription of the philosophical discourse.[62]

To come at the same thing from another angle, the subject of this thesis is

the materiality of photography, understood here not as identity between object

and image and not as the material support of photography but as resistance to the

transparency, reflexivity and transcendence of representation that manifests itself

as sensual and recursive difference.[63] Through exploring the limits of discrete

representation this thesis seeks to find alternatives to semiotic / art-historical

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[61] David Carroll "Foreword", In *Heidegger and "the Jews"*, by Jean-François Lyotard, trans. Mark Roberts and Andreas Michel (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1990), xxii. The 'forgotten' is discussed infra Chapter 6.4, *Latent Image and Subjectivity*.

[62] The theme of the reciprocal relationship between photography and philosophy will be developed infra Chapter 3.1, *Representation; Setting the Problem*.

[63] There are in fact three approaches to the materiality of photography. First, there is the dialectical materialist model exemplified by the work of Victor Burgin. According to this approach photography has the ability to act as a political agent due to its ability to produce accurate representations of social relations. This is the underpinning premise of the seminal collection 'Thinking Photography'. Second approach to the materiality of photography is phenomenological - it takes as the starting point the question 'What my body knows of photography' Barthes, *Camera Lucida*, Hansen, *New Philosophy for New Media*. The third approach seeks to locate materiality within the physical dimensions of the photograph, focusing on framing devices, physical qualities of prints and rituals of use that evolve around these materials. See Batchen, *Each Wild Idea*, Edwards and Hart, *Photographs Objects Histories*. This thesis takes a different approach informed by post-structuralist philosophy and research into incorporeal materiality. As will be discussed infra Chapter 6.5, *Photography, Difference at a Standstill*, photographic materiality can be understood as modality of translation between states which allows for fragmentary multiplicity.

analysis through articulating photography as a mode of translation between fragmentary and always incomplete states.[64]

This thesis takes as its guiding constellation the work of those philosophers, writers and artists who refuse to consider representation as friction-less conduit between matter and form or objects and thoughts. Adorno, Bakhtin, Benjamin, Bolt, Deleuze, Golding, Kafka, Lyotard, Olkowski and Shestov are among the thinkers for whom representation is both the form that their thought takes and the concern of this thought. It is not an accident that there are no photography theorists in this list. With few notable exceptions, photography theory has little to say about representation itself.[65] In this respect photography theory is lagging behind philosophy that aims to expose the ways by which language conditions and confronts thought. Thought that attempts to overcome the limits of thought does not find a counterpart in photographic theory mainly because photography appears so straightforwardly visual.

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[64] This approach is informed by the proliferation over the last twenty years of non-representational theories within the fields on psycho-geography, ethnography, affect studies and post-structuralist criticality, however, despite considerable amount of research into the application of non-representational theories to architecture, sociology, forensics and anthropology there is currently no text that that maps these concerns onto the landscape of the photographic image. See for instance: Nigel Thrift, *Non-representational Theory: Space, Politics, Affect.* (Abingdon, Oxton: Routledge, 2008), and Tim Ingold, *The Perception of the Environment: Essays on Livelihood, Dwelling and Skill.* (London: Routledge, 2011). It is worth noting that in May 2011 I organised a two day international conference at London South Bank University on the subject of the non-representational image titled 'Beyond Representation; Photography, Humans and Computers' that explored the application of non-representational theories to the fate of the photographic image.

[65] The notable exceptions are: Henri Van Lier, *Philosophy of Photography*, trans. Aarnoud Rommens (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2008), and Vilém Flusser, *Towards a Philosophy of Photography*, trans. Martin Chalmers (London: Reaktion Books, 2000).

2.4 Technology, history, representation

The difficulty with photography is its apparent simplicity and triviality.

Histories of photography conveniently start from a fixed moment in time, and the

first photographic image is just as easily identified as the first steam-train or the

first gramophone.[66] The notion that photography is nothing more than an

invention of the industrial age is further supported by the fact that Daguerre

patented it in 1836. Since its invention the photographic process has been

continually refined and improved upon which further reinforces the notion that

photography is nothing but a technological process. As a product of the industrial

revolution photography is just one among a long list of devices that were

designed to replace human labour and skill with a mechanical contraption. In the

same way that the steam-powered loom of Edmund Cartwright made the labour

of hand-weavers redundant by replacing them with a machine, and in so doing

contributed to the emergence of industrial capitalism, Daguerre's invention was a

form of mechanized image-making that revolutionized painting by rapidly

making redundant and unnecessary a whole industry of portraiture that flourished

in Europe during the early 19th century, and in so doing contributed to the

emergence of aesthetic modernism.[67] However, the linearity of this account is

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[66] The first surviving photograph is 'View from the window at Le Gras' 1826, by Joseph Nicéphore Niépce. In *Burning with Desire* Batchen proposed a revisionist theory of photography which challenged the accepted notion of the invention by Daguerre in 1836. He identified a number of 'proto-photographers' who were working on various aspects of fixing a light-image during the second half of the 18th Century. Batchen identifies the birth of photography with the emergence of Western rationalism and with the reaction to it by the romantic poets and artists. The invention of photography is thus detached from its official announcement and redrawn to take account of the crisis on subjectivity.

[67] See: Tagg, *The Burden of Representation.*

misleading for two reasons. First, the understanding of photography as

technology is far from straightforward, for technology is not a simple 'means to

an end', but the way by which the modern age is revealing its destiny in the sense

of uncovering what 'does not yet lie here before us'.[68] For Heidegger it is

precisely modern technology that marks the threshold of modernity as an era in

which man is establishing himself as the subject, the driving force and the

guarantor of his world. Because technology is a way of bringing-forth of truth it

is establishing the horizon of being and its internal limit. Technology is the way

by which man detaches himself from being and constitutes an autonomy that is

founded on finitude.[69] For this reason technology is the way by which reality is

categorised, homogenised, ordered, controlled and manipulated. It is in this sense

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[68] Heidegger, *The Question Concerning Technology,* 13. See supra chapter 3.6, *Heidegger, Representation and Identity.*

[69] According to Heidegger, finitude is the condition of all knowledge that is based on logic and reason: 'The ground for the source *[Quellgrund]* for laying the ground for metaphysics is human pure reason, so that it is precisely the humanness of reason, i.e., its finitude, which will be essential for the core of this problematic of groundlaying. Hence, it is worthwhile for the characterization of the field of origin to concentrate on the clarification of the essence of the finitude of human knowledge. This finitude of reason, however, in no way consists only or primarily in the fact that human knowing demonstrates many sorts of deficiencies such as instability, imprecision, and [the potential for making errors. Rather, this finitude lies in the essential structure of knowledge itself. The tactical limitedness of knowledge is first and foremost a consequence of this essence.' Martin Heidegger, *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics,* trans. Richard Taft (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1997), 15. The connection between finitude and representation is elaborated in Claire Colebrook's comments on Heidegger's reading of Kant emphasizing the critique of representation contained within the notion of 'finitude': 'For Heidegger, however, the logic that Kant takes to be transcendental is really the projection of a particular (representational) way of relating to the world. Kant's categories are transcendental forms of the Aristotelian categories of judgments. For Heidegger this means that Kant's grounding of the world is derived from the way in which the world has been represented in propositions' Colebrook, *Ethics and Representation,* 57. The idea that finitude is the condition of modernity which distinguishes it from previous epochs is also taken up by Foucault: 'A complete enumeration will now be possible: whether in the form of exhaustive census of all the elements constituting the envisaged whole, or in the form of a categorical arrangement that will articulate the field of study in tis totality [...] Complete enumeration, and the possibility of assigning at each point the necessary connection with the next, permit an absolutely certain knowledge of identities and differences.' Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences,* trans. Routledge Tavistock (London: Routledge, 1989), 61.

that Heidegger can speak about the experience of modernity as technological.[70]

Second, the age of technology is at the same time the age of representation

because representation relates to that which is outside of man, that which is not

immediately present and must be brought in and re-presented.[71] Technology of

representation is therefore essential to the very means by which modernity as

autonomy from external forces is being established. For that reason photography

has to be recognized as the fulfilment of the liberal-democratic demand for the

self-determination of the human subject established through representation.

2.5   Politics in the field of vision

A multitude of men are made one *person when they are by one man, or one person, represented; so that it be done with the consent of every one of that multitude in particular. For it is the* unity *of the representer, nor the* unity *of the represented, that maketh the person* one.[72]

Photography as a visual practice has been often situated within political

and ideological battles as it is habitually linked to questions of identity politics

and ethics. However, considering photography in representational terms almost

always leaves something out that cannot be contained within representation.

Paraphrasing Adorno it is tempting to say that an object does not go into an

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[70] 'In this regard, it is useful to recall Heidegger's remarks about the danger of technology. "What is dangerous,' he claims, 'is not *Technik*. There is no demonry of *Technik*, but rather there is the mystery of its essence"(Martin Heidegger, 'Platons Lehre von der Wahrheit,' in *Wegmarken* (Frankfurt: Klostermann, 1967). Quoted in Wilhelm S. Wurzer, *Panorama: Philosophies of the Visible.* (New York: Continuum, 2002), 86.

[71] 'Man could *represent* reality to himself, that is, he could set it up over against himself, as it *appeared* to him, as an *object* of thought. Lovitt, "Introduction," in Heidegger, In *The Question Concerning Technology*, xxv. See also Colebrook, *Ethics and Representation*, 1-3.

[72] Hobbes, Thomas. *Leviathan* ed. Michael Oakeshott, (Oxford, Basil Blackwell. 1947). Quoted in: Jen Webb, *Understanding Representation.* (Los Angeles. London: Sage, 2009).

image without leaving a remainder: there is always something that escapes the image no matter how true to life it is. This 'indisolvable something' cannot be captured by those conceptual schemas that are themselves originated in the distinction between matter and form. For that reason dialectical or metaphysical reasoning is unable to address the 'something' that is left out of representation, for doing so will undermine the representational foundation of metaphysical thinking itself. This 'something' has different names in different philosophical contexts. For Adorno it is the remainder (negative dialectics), for Heidegger it is *aletheia* (truth), for Deleuze it is immanence (difference), for Derrida differance (writing), for Lyotard it is the figural (libidinal), for photography it is the frame and the latent image.[73] In their different ways and for different political motives Adorno, Heidegger, Deleuze, Derrida and Lyotard are concerned with exposing the fallacy of identity by drawing attention to that which escapes rational, identitarian logic. It is the assertion of this thesis and its original contribution to demonstrate that photography has a unique stake in the challenge to normative logic by exposing the instability of identity in the field of the visual image. The argument elaborated on these pages is that the metaphysics of representation are configured by technology (understood through Heidegger as forgetting) and that this particular fusion of *techne* and mimesis allows one to define photography as an abyssal logic that can underwrite and reconfigure the understanding of critical thought in general.

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[73] See infra Chapter 4.4, *Event-Image and the Sublime* and Chapter 6.4, *Latent Image and Subjectivity*.

For all the above thinkers the challenge to identity involves a confrontation with the all-encompassing rational logic that achieved its fullest expression in the philosophy of Hegel. In every case this confrontation involves speaking in the name of the unsayable, thinking the unthinkable, the 'I know not what'[74] of which Heidegger says in 'What is metaphysics':

> 'But what is remarkable is that, precisely in the way scientific man secures to himself what is most properly his, he speaks of something different. What should be examined are beings only, and besides that – nothing; beings alone, and further – nothing; solely beings, and beyond that – nothing. What about this nothing? Is it an accident that we talk this way so automatically? [...] If science is right, then only one thing is sure: science wishes to know nothing of the nothing. Ultimately this is the scientifically rigorous conception of the nothing. We know it, the nothing, in that we wish to know nothing about it.[75]

While the discourse of identity proclaims transparency and makes it its explicit aim to establish a field of universal communication, in reality this kind of universalism excludes all particularities and empirical realities in favour of abstract ideals. Whoever does not speak the 'universal language' or simply does not want (or is unable) to communicate finds themselves beyond the threshold of the 'ideal city'.[76]

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[74] 'It is not by chance that the 'I know not what,' another name for the secret affection, unsettles what the rhetorical tradition (Greek and Latin) thought it knew...' Lyotard, *Heidegger and "the Jews"*, 34.

[75] Martin Heidegger, *Basic Writings: From Being and Time to the Task of Thinking.* Edited by David Farrell Krell. (Wiltshire: Taylor & Francis, 1978), 95-6.

[76] 'The Socratic effort to communicate with strangers is, in reality, the effort not to rationally certify the existing Athenian republic but to found an ideal republic of universal communication – a city maximally purged of noise.' Lingis, "The Murmur of the World," 101. In this essay Lingis suggests that the effort to eliminate 'nothing', 'noise' or 'stuttering' in the name of rational communication results in the exclusion of those aspects of human existence that are not analytically decomposable.

The difficulty faced by anyone who attempts to 'talk about nothing' is that in the words of Adorno 'to think is to identify'.[77] Thought - and language as the organon of thought - dispels 'nothing' and renders it into something. Because philosophy has no means at its disposal other than language, philosophy of non-identity, of difference and of nothing has to devise ways of producing a discourse that circumvents the natural tendency of language to posit identity between subject and predicate.[78] For Heidegger for instance, poetic language escapes and dissolves the positive, identifying structures of scientific language. For Adorno, it is art - particularly high modernist art - that escapes reification and identity with the world and for that reason it is able to 'constitute its own essence'.[79] For Derrida it is the originary trace that shows that every sign refers to other signs – rather than to a notion of presence – dismantling the central premise of logo-centrism by suggesting that there is no unmediated 'real', just an infinite succession of signs reflecting each other in an endless hall of mirrors.[80] For Deleuze and Guattari it is the passing from one signification to another that

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[77] Adorno, *Negative Dialectics*, 5.

[78] Infra chapter 3.3, *Establishing Representation as the Basis of Rationality*.

[79] Calvert,"[Un]disciplined Gestures and [Un]common Sense", 5. For Adorno, the critical distinction is between identity and mimesis, where mimesis stands for the ability to resist the reification endemic in conceptual thought through the pre-conceptual impulse to mimic and replicate. Mimesis suggests an alternative to representation as a way of knowing the world by pointing towards primordial human capacity to seek the similar. 'The mimetic apprehension was a process of human beings somehow likening themselves, through imitation, to mysterious parts of nature.' O'Connor, *Adorno*, 151. See also Benjamin, "Doctrine of the Similar" in *Selected Writings Vol. 2*, 694-698, and Jacobs, *In the Language of Walter Benjamin*.

[80] 'The concept of arche-trace must comply with both that necessity and that erasure. It is in fact contradictory and not acceptable within the logic of identity. The trace is not only the disappearance of origin–within the discourse that we sustain and according to the path that we follow it means that the origin did not even disappear, that it was never constituted except reciprocally by a nonorgin, the trace, which thus becomes the origin of the origin. 'Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, 61-62.

creates a kind of rhythmic structure of self-replication, which while lacking any 'presence' is still present as the sensation of the rhythm.[81] This thesis suggests that for photography, the challenge of non-identity is not in overcoming the limitations of language but in overcoming the limits of vision, which in turn establishes a rhythmic surface that allows thought to become more like the non-representational image. Nevertheless it is still about finding a way of getting out of the linguistic turn.[82]

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[81] Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 310-350.

[82] For Lyotard (following Derrida) 'West's madness is to believe the trace effaceable as such, and that what traces showable.' Lyotard, *Discourse, Figure*, 74. Lyotard says that language has a visible dimension that can be accessed outside of the semiotic signifying structures. What is visible in language is that which is present, the present. Lyotard wants to return language to its hieroglyphic roots, and also to recover the dialogue, the commonality, the intonation, timbre. This visibility of language cannot be itself known because knowledge is already a kind of semiotic structure, but it can be sensed (experienced) as an expression. For a discussion of the trace in relation to photography see infra Chapter 6.4, *Latent Image and Subjectivity*.

3   The Impasse of representation

Re-presentation can render visible what seeing is.[1]

3.1   *Representation: Setting the Problem*

This chapter begins to trace the dual genealogies of representation as a

philosophical concept on the one hand and as a technological process of

reproduction on the other. This move is required in order to establish rhythm,

recurrence and fragment as key operational concepts in this thesis' attempt to

steal photography away from the hierarchy of the archive and the heteronomous

law of representation and to offer it as an 'event of appropriation' rather than a

sight for sore eyes.[2]

In order to delineate what is at stake in the question of representation this

chapter situates photography at the intersection of a number of philosophical

trajectories that have in common a confrontation with systemic and totalising

models of thought, sometimes referred to as 'state philosophy' or

'representational thinking' which dominated western philosophy since the

Enlightenment at least and perhaps since the Greeks.[3] Thought that operates with

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[1] Lyotard, *Discourse, Figure,* 49.

[2] On the 'event of appropriation' see infra Chapter 3.7, *Perdurance, Heidegger's Move Beyond Dialectics.*

[3] Brian Massumi says: 'State philosophy is grounded in a double identity: of the thinking subject, and of the concepts it creates and to which it lends its own presumed attributes of sameness and constancy. The subject, its concepts, and the "external" objects to which the concepts are applied have a shared, internal essence: the self-resemblance at the basis of identity.' *A User's Guide to Capitalism and Schizophrenia,* 4. Chapters 3 and 6 of this thesis will situate representation within the context of Greek thought and aesthetic practices.

categorical determinations of entities is representational because it predicates

substances based on their component parts and it functions by establishing

analogies and parallels between particular entities and by situating the human

subject as the arbiter and judge of resemblances.[4] It is also hierarchical, as it

labels objects according to their adherence to standards and ideals.[5] The most

fundamental and thorough criticism of this philosophical tradition has been

linked since Heidegger to the observation that the categories themselves are of

little help if their own coming into being is not dealt with:

> *Basically, all ontology, no matter how rich and firmly compacted as*
> *system of categories it has at its disposal, remains blind and*
> *perverted from its own most aim, if it has not first adequately*
> *clarified the meaning of Being, and conceived this clarification as*
> *its fundamental task.*[6]

In their different ways and for different philosophical motivations a

number of thinkers followed in Heidegger's footsteps and continued to 'clarify

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[4] Olkowski identifies representational thought with the Cartesian plane: 'This "I", as well as this object, thing, place, person, emotion or thought all have taken their cue from the Cartesian plane which attributes to every person an independent existence as a subject, an individually-wrapped ego or atom [...]Dorothea Olkowski, *The Universal (in the Realm of the Sensible): Beyond Continental Philosophy.* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007), 40.

[5] Massumi, "Translator's Foreword," in Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, xi-xii.

[6] (Italics in the original) Heidegger, *Being and Time,* 31.As will be shown infra chapter 3.6, *Heidegger: Representation and Identity,* the meaning of being for Heidegger is inseparable from the experience of production and of technology. See *The Question Concerning Technology,* 3-35. and *Bremen and Freiburg Lectures,* 5-22. Worth noting in this context that Adorno sees Heidegger's greatest weakness precisely in the notion of the pre-metaphysical being: 'Heidegger's Being must be neither entity not concept. The price it has to pay for thus becoming unimpeachable is its nihility—the fact that it defies fulfilment by any thought and any visuality, leaving us empty-handed but for the self-sameness of the mere name.' Adorno, *Negative Dialectics,* 115. While it is tempting to say that looking from the vantage point of modernity it seems that Heidegger won the argument, this would be in fact a Hegelian justification of the past on the basis of the present which, paradoxically, empowers Adorno's assertion that all pre-metaphysical claims are null and void. This thesis's position is that the image, and specifically the technological image (which includes by now the web and the internetwork), offers another, non-subjective and non-metaphysical route to the knowledge of being.

the meaning of Being' by opposing it to the tradition that imposes the subject-object model upon thought. Following the critique of systemic thought by Foucault, Lyotard, Derrida, Deleuze and other post-structuralist authors this thesis is having truck with anthropological approaches to photography which begin from setting the human subject as an arbiter of likeness and verisimilitude. The pre-discursive will to define thought as rational is endemic to systemic, representational thought and it also persists in theory of photography because of its premise of the pre-discursive subject for whom the world is known as representation.[7] As long as the representational model is allowed to dominate, it will not be possible to consider photography not as a replica of an already given and differentiated world but as a being in its own right. Only by dislodging photography from the discourse of reflection it is possible to consider it not as the truthful (or the deceptive) image, but as an event that carries within it certain truth that has nothing to do with the likeness of the image.[8] The task therefore is to inquire not after the visible content of the image but after the particular form of visuality that is being exposed in photography.

In *The Society of Dismembered Body Parts* Alphonso Lingis points to a time when images were not read as signs that refer to concepts. Before signs became subjected to the laws of identity and legitimated by an externally given ground there was a possibility of images operating not as symbols to be read but

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[7] The relationship between identity and representation will be discussed infra Chapter 3.1, *Representation: Setting the Problem.*

[8] On the difference between the 'event of appropriation' and the content of the image see supra Chapter 3.8, *Latent Image as the Event of Photography.*

as a force in their own right: 'Savage inscriptions are not signs that refer to concepts; they are diagrams and paths for the hand.'[9] The eye did not decipher the message according to a pre-given code, it did not read the sign but took in the direct experience of the pain.[10] Before the eye became trained on decoding ideograms it knew how to understand meaning without reading. In a similar vein to Lingis, but writing about language rather than images, Foucault asserts that there was a time when language did not represent but constituted a force in the world: '[language] prophesied the future, not merely announcing what was going to occur, but contributing to its actual event, carrying men along with it and thus weaving itself into the fabric of fate.'[11]

Both Lingis and Foucault identify a pre-representational origin of an image that operates not through signification but as a force in the world. This allows them to speculate that representation is the product of western metaphysics and not the general form by which all knowledge is given.[12] As Dalia Judovitz shows in her analysis of representation in the work of Descartes, representation

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[9] Alphonso Lingis, "The Society of Dismembered Body Parts," In *Gilles Deleuze and the Theater of Philosophy*. Edited by Dorothea Olkowski. (New York: Routledge, 1994), 296.

[10] 'The eye does not read the meaning in a sign; it *jumps* from the mark to the pain and the burning cigarette, and then jumps to the fraternity signalled by the burning cigarettes.' Ibid., 296.

[11] Foucault, "The Discourse on Language," 150. quoted in Colebrook, *Ethics and Representation*, 163-4. Colebrook comments on this statement by Foucault: 'Before Plato [...] language was force and ritual; its authority derived from its act of enunciation and not what was being said. Language avowed its own being as effective, rather than meaningful or representational. Language becomes *reactive*, however, when seen as the mere replica, mirror or representation of some 'outside' (and when power is seen as something that might corrupt language, rather than enabling the very being of language).' Ibid., 164.

[12] 'As described by Foucault, representation is a specifically modern modality of knowledge but it is also a mode of a priori that intensifies the reactivism of the Western episteme. Representation ultimately locates thought within a grounding condition of logic - such as history, structure, culture or the unconscious—and in so doing denies the active event of thought.' Ibid., 171.

becomes the central modality by which knowledge is established when knowledge itself becomes equated with mathematical certitude.[13] Prior to Descartes, notions of representation were based on resemblance and mimesis and therefore proceeded by way of establishing affinity on the basis of the Platonic conception of the image as an imitation of the actual thing.[14] Descartes however doubts the accuracy of representation that is based in resemblance and strives to ground it in logical principles that are based on *universal mathematics.*[15]

> Descartes's denunciation of visual resemblance (tied to illusion and appearance) is accompanied by his positing a new concept of representation based on figurality. He rejects knowledge based on ocular vision in favor of a formal system that schematizes the visible according to logical and rhetorical paradigms.[16]

For this reason, since Descartes the visual is placed in an ambiguous relationship to the real: On the one hand, it is criticized as optical trickery and an illusion that does not withstand the test of rational doubt. Yet on the other hand, vision is construed as a logical schema capable of producing axiomatically accurate knowledge.[17]

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[13] 'The formal and normative character of representation is based in Descartes's mathematization of knowledge, on his upholding mathematical certitude as the model for all other knowledge.' However, she adds; 'Unlike Michel Foucault, who, in *The Order of Things*, echoing Heidegger, suggests that Descartes inaugurates the age of representation, I suggest that Descartes's particular foundational interpretation of representation involves the culmination and also exhaustion of the Neoplatoinc and Baroque philosophical and literary traditions.' Judovitz, "Representation and Its Limits in Descartes," 69.

[14] Infra Chapter 6.1, *Positioning Simulacra within Philosophical Framework.*

[15] Judovitz, "Representation and Its Limits in Descartes," 71.

[16] Ibid., 73.

[17] Ibid., 71-74.

What this means for photography is that representation is not a pre-discursive, externally given law of verisimilitude but historically and socially constructed formula that is based on placing the will to schematise according to a logical structure as the dead centre of theory. However, it is not enough to displace representation from the photographic image, it is also essential to attend to the technology of photography in a way that does not take it as a given that technology is the result of human operations. In *What is Called Thinking* Heidegger attacks the view that sees technology as 'merely a phenomenon of human civilisation':

> For the essence of technology is not anything human. The essence
> of technology is above all not anything technological. The essence
> of technology lies in what from the beginning and before all else
> gives food for thought.[18]

In saying that technology is not anything human, Heidegger suggests that technology is not a means to an end or a tool, rather, it is the way by which the human comes to pass as an entity and as an autonomous being. For Heidegger there is no being human without technology because it is through actions, travails and labour that the human being discovers his/her destiny which is to be the guardian of being.[19] In placing technology as the ground of human existence Heidegger is coming close Marx's central claim that labour – and not ideas –

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[18] Heidegger, *What Is Called Thinking?*, 22.

[19] These aspects of Heidegger's philosophy are discussed infra Chapter 3.6, *Heidegger: Representation and Identity*.

define the ground of history.[20] However, while Heidegger draws on Marx's

notion of labour as the foundation of the human condition he also distorts it by

asserting that labour always already contains within it the beginnings of the

poetic and the spiritual.[21] To do so Heidegger introduces the notion of *poiēsis*

into the notion of *technē* and claims that labour, praxis and production already

contain within them the seeds of the poetic.[22] If Marx seeks to 'correct' Hegel by

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[20] Karl Marx, *Grundrisse: Foundations of the Critique of Political Economy*, trans. Martin Nicolaus (London: Penguin Classics, 1993), 100-108. Golding, *Gramsci's Democratic Theory*, 9.

[21] Heidegger's insistence on technology and *poesis* as internally and inseparably connected is reminiscent of Gramsci who, similarly, strives to overcome the distinction between base and superstructure posited by Marx in *Preface to the Critique of Political Economy*, Karl Marx, *Selected Writings*, ed. by David McLellan. (Oxford. New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 424-428. As Sue Golding explains: 'Gramsci substantially reworked the notion of *structure-as-economic* and, in so doing, *incorporated within the concept of economics not only the political moment and, therewith, historicized immanence, but the very notion of the will*. Moreover, this conceptual reworking attempted to locate change and, more importantly, the process around forging a new or progressive civil society (and the state the would become its expression) as an *integral* process of the structural moment itself, a process that could not be separated from, or understood 'outside' of, its superstructural counterpoint.' (emphasis mine) Golding, *Gramsci's Democratic Theory*, 90. However, it is also interesting to note the difference between Gramsci and Heidegger in this context, for as Golding observes, Gramsci was not entirely successful in overcoming the base-superstructure binary, as he could only achieve it by relying on a pre-given universal ethical order (*ibid.*). In other words, he had to accept some form of rationality as the basis from which to merge base and superstructure. Heidegger on the other hand avoids such pitfalls because he posits pre-ontic being or the moment of ontological difference rather than rationality as the basis from which he is able to overcome the separation between poesis and technology. That is to say, where Gramsci is forced to accept heteronomous rational order Heidegger establishes the *undecidable* as a metaphysical foundation. This thesis seeks to propose that by considering photography as both undecidable and rational it is possible to suggest a move beyond metaphysical thinking. See infra 7.1, *Immanence; a Photograph*.

[22] The connection between technology and *poesis* is one of the fundamental tenets of Heidegger's late work. For instance, in *The Thing* he writes: 'The potter grasps first and constantly what is ungraspable in the empty and produces it as what holds in the form of a vessel.' Heidegger, *Bremen and Freiburg Lectures*, 8. Scientific rationality, on the other hand, is oblivious to the *poesis* grasped by the potter and transmitted through his/her *technē* to the jug: '[S]cience represents something actual, according to which it objectively judges. But—is this actual something the jug? No. Science only ever encounters that which its manner of representation has previously admitted as possible object for itself.' Ibid., 8. and 'There was a time when it was not technology alone that bore the name *technē*. Once that revealing that brings forth truth into the splendour of radiant appearing also was called *technē*. Once there was a time when the bringing-forth of the true into the beautiful was called *technē*. And the *poiēsis* of the fine arts was also called *technē*. Because the essence of technology is nothing technological, essential reflection upon technology and decisive confrontation with it must happen in a realm that is, on the one

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delineating the opposition between thought and labour and by placing labour

(rather than thought) as the foundation of his metaphysics, Heidegger seeks to

'deconstruct' Marx by rejecting the dialectics of thought and labour through

establishing a non-dialectical order in which labour and *poiēsis* are conceived not

as dialectically opposed entities, but as the mutual gathering under the auspice of

technology.[23] This insight into technology as being inseparable from thought is

fundamental for the enterprise of this thesis as it allows it to claim that the

poiēsis of photography is to be found not in the content of the image but in the

technology that makes the photographic image possible.

While Heidegger never wrote about photography, the extent to which his

insight into technology applies to photography is remarkable: There is no

photography without technology; it is impossible to subtract the process from the

photographic image as the image is welded to the technology that produced it

like two sides of a sheet of paper. However, it is also the case that technology,

whilst being inseparable from photography, is also constantly withdrawing from

view: what we see in the photograph is the ideogram, the message, the

representation while the technological essence of the image is turning away from

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hand, akin to the essence of technology, and on the other, fundamentally different from it. Such a realm is art'. Heidegger, *The Question Concerning Technology*, 34-35.

[23] Deleuze and Guattari develop Heidegger's notion of technology specifically within the context of art. *The Thousand Plateaus*, 314-319. See Golding's commentary in "Fractal Philosophy", 147-8.

us.[24] According to Heidegger, this withdrawing of the essence is key to understanding technology and it is also the most 'thought provoking' aspect of it.[25] This is particularly the case with photography, where the withdrawing of the essence does not cause essence to disappear completely but leaves its mark in the image. However, as will be discussed in Chapter 3, this mark is not derived from likeness or representation, but emanates solely from the force of repetition that is immanent to photography as a dynamic process.

We have seen earlier that in discussing representation as specifically western affliction both Lingis and Foucault engage in nostalgic anti-representationalism when they point to an earlier period when the eye could see signs not for the meanings vested in them by representation but for the force contained within the signs themselves.[26] There is however a problem with their accounts because they depend on a notion of historicity which is itself linear and chronological. In other words, both Foucault and Lingis resort to *representation* in order to argue for a pre-representational way of seeing.[27] However, as this

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[24] 'The reason is never exclusively or primarily that we men do not sufficiently reach out and turn toward what properly gives food for thought; the reason is that this most thought-provoking thing turns away from us, in fact has long since turned away from man.' Heidegger, *What Is Called Thinking?*, 17.

[25] '[W]hat is to be thought about, what properly gives food for thought, has long been withdrawing. Because this withdrawal prevails, that for which the craft of technological manipulation reaches out remains hidden.' Ibid., 25.

[26] See also Bolt, "Shedding Light for the Matter," and Vasseleu, *Textures of Light*, and supra Chapter 1.1, *Becoming Invisible*. On nostalgic anti-representationalism see Claire Colebrook, "Questioning Representation," *SubStance* 29, no. 2 (2000): 3-4, 10-13.

[27] This is the essence of Derrida's critique of Foucault's book *Madness and Civilization: A History of Insanity in the Age of Reason*, in *Cogito and the History of Madness:* 'A history, that is, an archaeology against reason doubtless cannot be written, for, despite all appearances to the contrary, the concept of history has always been a rational one.' Jacques Derrida, *Writing and Difference*, trans. Alan Bass (London, New York: Routledge, 2001), 36-76. For a commentary on
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thesis seeks to propose, in the case of photography it is possible to engage in a pre-representational discourse without having to evoke 'primitive' tribes or Greek culture circa 6th century BC, because the pre-representational, the 'outside' of the image is contained within the originary undecidability of the photographic image itself.[28] This means that the pre-representational state of photography is not to be found in this medium's remote past, but in the processes that constitute its present.

As will be developed throughout this thesis, the photographic 'arche-sign' is not historically removed; rather it is inaccessible to consciousness because it is unknowable. The primal photographic mark is not the sign of a transaction between a given entity (the world) and an image, but the way by which the pain and ecstasy of repetition comes into being. When photography is understood not as representation but as a mark of technology *as it withdraws from view*, the eye does not take-in the meaning of the image; rather, it *jumps* to the unknowable, traversing from the symbolic content to the repetition signalled by the *technē* of the image.

Derrida's critique of Foucault see: A. Bradley. "Thinking the Outside: Foucault, Derrida and Negative Theology," *Textual Practice* 16, no. 1 (2002): 57-74. For Derrida's critique of Heidegger's representationalism see Jacques Derrida. "Sending: On Representation," *Social Research* 49, no. 2 (1982): 294-326.

[28] 'Derrida goes on to substitute Foucault's historicist account of the relationship between reason and madness for a *quasi*-transcendental one based on the famous logic of originary undecidability which he elsewhere names '*difference*' or '*archi-écriture*'. If Foucault tries to trace a historical point when the difference between reason and madness first arose, Derrida goes back even further to trace a point *before* the historical difference between the two comes into being.' Bradley, "Thinking the Outside" 62-3. See also supra Chapter 2.2, *Double Articulation*.

3.2   Ontology of Reproduction

As was discussed in the previous section, technologies inherent in the production of the photographic image align it with those philosophies that challenge representation in order to establish a relational ontology based not on the separation of items according to a dualist paradigm but on their interconnectedness. Significant in this regard is the work of Benjamin and Adorno who developed the notion of constellation, Deleuze and Guattari notion of the rhizome and Nancy's concept of singular-plural.[29]

The ability to be re-produced sets photography apart from other forms of visuality and places it within the realm of repetition as the aesthetic form of the recurrence of the fragment. Nietzsche's notion of the eternal return will be fundamental in articulating this form of aesthetics, in which the Will to Power

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[29] In *Theses on the Philosophy of History* Benjamin offers the concept of constellation as a critique of Kantian understanding of causation as transcendental category by pointing to the way causality is always established *ex post facto*: 'Historicism contents itself with establishing a causal connection between various moments in history. But no fact that is a cause is for that reason very historical. It became historical posthumously, as it were, through events that may be separated form it by thousands of years. A historian who takes this as his point of departure stops telling the sequence of events like the beads of rosary. Instead, he grasps the constellation which his own era has formed [...]' Benjamin, *Illuminations*, 255. For Adorno, constellation names the ability of language not to signify objects but to create a network of non-conceptual relations which escapes representation: 'The constellation illuminates the specific side of the object, the side which to a classifying procedure is either a matter of indifference or a burden.' *Negative Dialectics*, 162. In *Being Singular Plural*, Jean-Luc-Nancy argues for the need for a relational ontology based on connections between concepts rather than on their individualization: 'Being singular plural: in a single stroke, without punctuation, without a mark of equivalence, implication, or sequence. A single, continuous-discontinuous mark tracing out the entirety of the ontological domain, being-with-itself designated as the "with" of being, of the singular and plural, and dealing a blow to ontology— not only another signification but also another syntax. The "meaning of Being": not only as the "meaning of with," but also, and above all, as the "with" of meaning. Because none of these three terms precedes or grounds the other, each designates the co-essence of the others. This co-essence puts essence itself in the hyphenation —"being-singular-plural"—which is a mark of union and also a mark of division, a mark of sharing that effaces itself, leaving each term to its isolation and its being-with-the-others.' Jean-Luc Nancy, *Being Singular Plural*, trans. Robert Richardson and Anne O'Brian (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2000), 37.

becomes the will to create a discourse, whereas the eternal return is the process of representation.[30] This understanding of the aesthetics of photography as drawn out of repetition allows to think of the image not through the prism of aesthetics as the study of the retinal / visual / beautiful but as a techno-poetic repetition of a fragment. The significance of this theoretical move away from the aesthetics of mimesis and representation also allows to consider critically the notion of photographic time and to question the centrality of the archive to photography.[31] However, it is the contention of this thesis that photography as a *technē* of reproduction and of the recurrence of the fragment is essentially pre-visual and a-chronological. Photographic time understood as exposure or perdurance suggests that it is framed by non-metaphysical, a-radical and a-archival discourse.[32]

While the notions of vision and seeing cannot account fully for the way photography operates, and while the archive is not the essence of the photographic, there is still something about seeing a photograph that makes it true. In other words, jettisoning the formal and normative character of representation based on the visual image and the archive does not automatically mean that photography has no ethical dimension to it, but it does mean that the

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[30] On Nietzsche's will to power see Heidegger, *Nietzsche; The Will to Power As Art*. On the eternal return as representation see Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 370-378. These topics will be discussed in the context of simulacra infra Chapter 6.2, *Between Representation and Simulacra*.

[31] photographic time is the subject of Chapter 5, *Ecstatic Temporality of the "is"* and the archive is discussed in Chapter 4, *Archive, Apparatus, Event*.

[32] See infra Chapter 5.4, *Heidegger and 'photography'*. See infra Chapter 4.2 *The Archive and its Discontents* for a discussion of the archive through Deleuze and Foucault.

ethics of photography must be understood not as a form of archiving the past but as a mode of presencing, as a mode of the 'now' of which Lyotard says:

> [This] *now* is a stranger to consciousness and cannot be constituted by it. Rather, it is what dismantles consciousness, what deposits consciousness, it is what consciousness cannot formulate, and even what consciousness forgets in order to constitute itself. What we do not manage to formulate is that something happens...[33]

Following Lyotard's distinction between the chronological *now* as the phenomenological experience of the subject and the *now* described by Barnett Baruch Newman as '[not] a manipulation of space nor with the image, but with the sensation of time',[34] this chapter suggests that the distinct advantage of locating difference on the aesthetic plane (within the image) is that it allows to get out of the 'linguistic turn' not through language but by the very specific way by which photography operates with categories of rhythm, intuition, event and fragment.[35]

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[33] Jean-François, Lyotard, "The Sublime and The Avant-Garde" *The Lyotard Reader* (Oxford, UK; Cambridge, Mass.: Blackwell, 1989), 197.

[34] Lyotard draws a distinction between the 'now' of the 'present instant' and the *now* that is determined by the concept of difference. For Husserl, the origin of the world cannot be explained by the Kantian categories; it can only be found in the mental image of consciousness as it appears to itself as an intuited self-image Ibid., 197. For Lyotard and for Merleau-Ponty this model is rooted in the philosophy of reflection and in the assumption of perception as the basis of subjectivity. Merleau-Ponty explains it thus: ''If my left hand is touching my right hand, and if I wish to suddenly apprehend with my right hand the work of my left hand as it touches, this reflection of the body upon itself always miscarries at the last moment: the moment I feel my left hand with my right hand, I correspondingly cease touching my right hand with my left hand' Hence there is a unbridgeable rupture between perception and self-perception that cancel each other out. For this reason all reflexive movements in general are impossible.' Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *The Visible and the Invisible* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1968). p. 9, quoted in Gasché, "Deconstruction As Criticism," 185. By rejecting the notion of the subject who intuits the present instant, Lyotard asserts that it is the 'now' understood as the event of appropriation that is inaccessible for consciousness.

[35] There have been numerous attempts to situate difference as the 'groundless ground' and to move away from grounding thought in dialectical reasoning. However, as Adorno observed, it is

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However, it is not the intention of this research to suggest that representation has no place in photography or that photography does not create images which are in some sense identical with objects in the world. As Adorno states: 'to think is to identify', and to photograph is to identify and to represent.[36] The problem is not with representation and identity but with theory that takes them as a given because it starts from the presumption of identity and proceeds to ignore those swaths of the visual landscape that do not fit within the indexical paradigm.

To say that the theory of photography is characterised by the primacy of representation, is also to imply that this theory is posited on the primacy of the concept. In order to depart from these metaphysical foundations it will be necessary to demonstrate that the intelligibility of photography is founded not in the domain of conceptual (representational) thought, but in the specific aesthetic of the photographic image that this research locates not in the 'photograph' but in the 'latent image' and in the differentials of perception.[37]

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not easy to get out of the linguistic turn by means of language: 'Dialectics–literally: language as the organon of thought–would mean to attempt a critical rescue of the rhetorical element, a mutual approximation of a thing and expression, to the point where the difference fades.' *Negative Dialectics,* 56. For Adorno, philosophy that attempts to abolish language in an attempt to reach beyond identity is bound to fail because 'to think is to identify' Ibid., 56.

[36] Ibid., 5.

[37] Infra Chapter 6.4 *Latent Image and Subjectivity.* In chapter 5 the aesthetic of the photographic will be located not in the image but in the specific temporality of the photographic event. Also see infra Chapter 6 for an explanation of the way metaphysical thought is grounded in rational visuality.

By attempting to wrest photography away from the transcendent notions of light and vision this research asserts that multiplicity and not identity is the underpinning principle of the self-replicating photographic image. The key to exploring this move is in considering the role of difference in the photographic process.[38] Stated briefly, the thesis advanced in this chapter is that rather than affording access to knowledge as a form of totalising rationality or scientific truth, photography is doing something of a completely different order, namely it shows (i.e. it brings to the surface) the fallacy of vision as the source of truth. Against the abstract geometric certainty of converging lines of sight and monocular point of view promoted by Cartesian perspectival schema, this research proposes that photography inhabits a relation to truth that partakes in blindness, darkness and rupture. It is through considering photography away from visuality and sight that difference is beginning to emerge as the ontological condition of photography. The prospect of a non-subjective aesthetic experience, combined with the immersive and boundless fractality afforded by the photographic image within networked and self-replicating ecologies suggests a

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[38] Infra Chapter 6.4, *Latent Image and Subjectivity*. Here it is significant to point out that the latent image is part of the 'analogue' (chemical) photographic process which offers a way of thinking about photography and difference, photography and time and a form of photographic truth that is hidden (latent) for as long as metaphysics of vision and presence govern the photographic discourse. While the concept of the latent image does not persist into the digital image, the last chapter of this research will engage with the specific understanding of temporality afforded by the digital image and it will be suggested that latency forms the invisible basis of all visuality.

form of political commitment based on univocity and affect and not on identity

and knowledge.[39]

In order to begin teasing out the foundations of this move, the following

section will outline the theoretical foundations that allow moving away from

representational thinking.

3.3   Aristotle: Establishing representation as the basis of rationality

*Necessity is held to be something that cannot be persuaded— and rightly, for it is contrary
to the movement which accords with choice and with reasoning.*[40]

According to Lev Shestov it was Aristotle, to much greater degree than

Plato, who wanted to posit an identity between Necessity and Truth and between

Necessity and the real. Aristotle saw great danger in Plato's refusal to submit to

necessity and to hold fast to the idea of freedom even though, this freedom leads

to the domain of the mystical, imaginary and illusory.[41]

Aristotle's *Metaphysics* is significant to the understanding of

representation because of two specific conceptual moves he initiates in order to

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[39] The notion of art as opposed to normative, objective knowledge is developed by Adorno in
Aesthetic Theory. and in Lyotard, *Discourse, Figure.* Also see Simon O'Sullivan. "The Aesthetics
of Affect; Thinking Art Beyond Representation," *Angelaki* 6, no. 3 (2001): 125-135.

[40] Aristotle, "Metaphysics," In *The Complete Works of Aristotle. The Revised Oxford
Translation.(Bollingen Series, 71: 2),* trans. J Barnes 2 vols. (Princeton: Princeton University
Press, 1984), Aristotle, "Metaphysics," 64 (1015a20-1015b9). (References for Aristotle are given
by title of work and page number followed by line numbers in brackets.)

[41] 'All who have read the famous Twelfth Book, especially the last chapter, of the Metaphysics
and the Ninth and Tenth Books of the Ethics know with what fervour Aristotle supplicated
Necessity which does not allow itself to be persuaded and which he had not the power to
overcome. What irritated him or, perhaps, disturbed him most in Plato was the latter's courage or
rather, to use his own expressions, Plato's audacity and shamelessness, which suggested to him
that those who adore Necessity only dream of reality but are powerless to see it in the waking
state.' Shestov, *Athens and Jerusalem,* 24.

contest Plato's theory of forms and undermine the notion of univocity of being.

As will be discussed in some detail below, Aristotle's aim is to replace these

notions with the concepts of individual identity and the principle of telos. As

these Aristotelian concepts constitute the foundation of much of the later

representational and scientific thought it is important to show how they get

established and what is being lost or compromised along the way.[42] The first of

these is aimed at correcting what Aristotle perceived as a logical flaw in Plato's

theory of forms. Aristotle argued that forms are unable to account for the

diversity of entities that forms purported to define.[43] Forms cannot capture

diversity because they are universals that are common to all the members of a

class. For instance, the universal 'whiteness' is the predicate that is common to

all the white objects; however, 'white' does not exist outside of the objects

whose colour is white. Similarly, gold is yellow, but yellow does not exist

outside of gold.[44] The second conceptual move is derived from the first and is

directed against Plato's conception of the univocity of being. Aristotle already

established that forms do not exist as separate entitles but are predicates of

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[42] Dorothea Olkowski provides a detailed account of the way representation is being established as the foundational principle of Aristotelian logic in *Gilles Deleuze and the Ruin of Representation*, 18-31. Her analysis expands on the exposition of representational thought in Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 36-89.

[43] 'Again, of the ways in which it is proved that the Forms exist, none is convincing; for from some no inference necessarily follows, and from some it follows that there are Forms even of things of which they think there are no Forms. For according to the arguments from the sciences there will be Forms of all things of which there are sciences, and according to the argument that there is one attribute common to many things there will be Forms even of negations, and according to the argument that thought has an object when the individual object has perished, there will be Forms of perishable things; for we can have an image of these.' Aristotle, "Metaphysics," 190 (1079a6-1706, 1079a18-1706).

[44] W.T. Stace, *The Philosophy of Hegel.* (Dover, USA: Dover, 1955), 18.

objects and matter. Matter is therefore a bundle of predicates such as quantity,

quality, time, position and relation, which is another way of saying that matter

too does not exist in isolation.[45] If we strip away all the predicates of gold there

will be nothing left, for without its predicates gold does not exist.[46]

The separation between objects and predicates distinguishes Aristotelian

philosophy from the earlier Eleatic. For the Eleatics being is one and there is no

gap between a concrete entity and predicates. For instance Parmenides says 'for

the same perceiving (thinking) as well as being'.[47] Heidegger comments on this

fragment:

> Man's distinctive feature lies in this, that he, as the being who thinks,
> is open to Being, face to face with Being; thus man remains referred
> to Being and so answers to it. Man *is* essentially this relationship of
> responding to Being, and he is only this.[48]

In Heidegger's characterisation, the thought of Parmenides asserts thought

itself as a productive and creative force that maintains direct relationship with

things in a way that thinking of being is at the same time the production of

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[45] see Nathan Widder, *Genealogies of Difference*. (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2002), 63.

[46] Stace, *The Philosophy of Hegel*, 18.

[47] Heidegger, *Identity and Difference*, 27.

[48] Ibid., 31. Aristotle critiques Parmenides specifically on the univocity of being: 'But if there is to be a being-itself and a unity-itself, there is much difficulty in seeing how there will be anything else besides these—I mean, how things will be more than one in number. For what is different from being does not exist, so that it necessarily follows, according to the argument of Parmenides, that all things that are one and this is being.— There are objections to both views. For whether unity is not a substance or there is a unity-itself, number cannot be a substance.' Aristotle, "Metaphysics," 38 (1001a3-1001b26).

being.[49] This is precisely the kind of reasoning that Aristotle finds unacceptable and he seeks to excrete any such tendencies towards univocity and establish knowledge on universal principles.[50]

However, to argue as Aristotle did that knowledge is universal is not enough in order to establish representation as the basis of knowledge. It was further essential to demonstrate that conceptual reasoning and orderly classification are also the basis for a political practice that ensures stability and continuity. As will be shown below, Aristotle's philosophy of finitude is being established and grounded in representation as the organic form of knowledge in which the possibility of change is both enshrined and restricted. As a concrete thing is a collection of predicates that can change over time, a thing can have some predicates one moment and some other predicates the next. However, while the predicates of the thing can change, the fundamental nature does not change when predicates change. The nature of the object remains unchanged regardless

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[49] Also see Levi R. Bryant, *Difference and Givenness: Deleuze's Transcendental Empiricism and the Ontology of Immanence.* (Northwestern Univ. Press, 2008), 8. This is similar to the way Deleuze understands language as productive force that actively creates the world rather than passively representing it: 'Denotation and manifestation do not found language, they are only made possible with it. They presuppose the expression. The expression is founded on the event, as an entity of the expressible or the expressed. What renders language possible is the event insofar as the event is confused neither with the proposition which expresses it, nor with the state of the one who pronounces it, nor with the state of affairs denoted by the proposition. And in truth, without the event, all of this would be only noise--and an indistinct noise. For not only does the event make possible and separate that which it renders possible, it also makes distinctions within what it renders possible (see, for example the proposition of denotation, manifestation, and signification.)' Deleuze, *The Logic of Sense,* 208-209.

[50] According to Shestov, Aristotle's positivism is derived from the belief in truth as fully formed and entirely separate from human existence: 'When no one had as yet begun to "think" or to "search," the truths which later revealed themselves to men already existed. And when men will have finally disappeared from the face of the earth, or will have lost the faculty of thinking, the truths will not suffer therefrom. It is from this that Aristotle set out in his philosophical researches.' Shestov, *Athens and Jerusalem,* 22.

of the change in predicates. In this way Aristotle is able to allow change to take place while maintaining unchanging identity at the core of the subject.[51]

Moreover, Aristotle reasoned that separation between subject and predicate creates plurality. When saying 'X is white there remains a conceptual distinction between the subject in which the whiteness is seated, and the qualification of 'being white'.[52] Splitting of the proposition into subject and predicate ensures on the one hand the stability of the subject and on the other accounts for the difference among predicates only *in relation* to the stable subject.[53] In this way identity is being established as the guiding principle of conceptual thinking as difference is only allowed to exist between predicates and between subjects but not as an autonomous force. In this way a static centre is established and maintained within each proposition:

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[51] It is worth noting the extent to which contemporary understanding of identity is still deeply Aristotelian. In his *Blue Notebook* Wittgenstein draws attention to the fact that Aristotelian model is one language game among many possible others and proposes radically different ways of establishing identity which do not imply an unchanging centre surrounded by changeable qualities but suggests a model where proper names are given to sets of characteristics rather than to individuals: 'Imagine, e.g., that all human bodies which exist looked alike, that on the other hand, different sets of characteristics seemed, as it were, to change their habitation among these bodies. Such a set of characteristics might be, say, mildness, together with a high pitched voice, and slow movements, or a choleric temperament, a deep voice, and jerky movements, and such like. Under such circumstances, although it would be possible to give the bodies names, we should perhaps be as little inclined to do so as we are to give names to the chairs of our dining-room set. On the other hand, it might be useful to give names to the sets of characteristics, and the use of these names would now roughly correspond to the personal names in our present language.' Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Notebooks, 1914-1916*. Ed. G. E. M. Anscombe and G. H. von Wright trans. G. E. M. Anscombe (Oxford: Blackwell, 1998), 61-62.

[52] Aristotle "Physics", 6. (86a22-186a32) Compare with the alternative taxonomy offered by Deleuze: 'We distinguish between green as a sensible color or quality and "to green" as a noematic color or attribute. "The three greens"–is this not finally the sense of the of the color of the tree; and is not "the tree greens" its global meaning?' Deleuze, *The Logic of Sense*, 24.

[53] 'that which is different from anything is different in some respect, so that there must be something identical whereby they differ.' Aristotle, "Metaphysics," 141 (1055a3-1666). quoted in: Olkowski, *Gilles Deleuze and the Ruin of Representation*, 18.

Those things are said to be other in kind whose ultimate substratum is different, and which are not analysed the one into the other nor both into the same thing (e.g. form and matter are different in kind); and things which belong to different categories of being; for some of the things that are said to be signify essence, others a quality, others the other categories we have before distinguished; these also are not analysed either into one another or into some one thing.[54]

This logic denies the possibility of considering qualities (predicates) as powers in their own right through which being itself is produced and it allows Aristotle to claim that different categories do not share a single origin and that being exists only as a predicate in a proposition.[55] This split of the proposition into subject and predicates not only eliminates the need for a univocal being, it also establishes an opposition between being and thinking, experience and thought, one and the many, aesthetic and intellectual perception.

However, as will be shown below this logic runs into internal contradictions, or as Olkowski says:

> While this approach provides coherence and indelibility through the hierarchy imposed by identical generic concepts and their specific differences, it restricts difference to the status of a predicate of concepts. But the restriction is not absolute, for precisely at this point something happens that amounts to a 'crack' in thought through which another notion of difference will emerge.[56]

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[54] Aristotle, "Metaphysics," 82 (1024b10-1024b17).

[55] Deleuze proposes an alternative, non-representational model that draws on the Stoics: 'For the Stoics, on the other hand, states of affairs, quantities, and qualities are no less beings (or bodies) than substance is; they are a part of substance, and in this sense they are contrasted with an *extra-Being* which constitutes the incorporeal as a nonexisting entity. [...] The Stoics discovered surface effects, Simulacra cease to be subterranean rebels and make the most of their effects. Deleuze, *The Logic of Sense*, 8-10.

[56] Olkowski, *Gilles Deleuze and the Ruin of Representation*, 19.

Problems with this logic appear when a statement that is logically or syntactically correct is experientially wrong. The most basic form of this reasoning can be expressed in the judgement all M are P, all S are M, therefore all S are P. On the face of it this is an uncomplicated statement of the kind:

"All humans are mortal. Socrates is human. Socrates is mortal."[57]

However, internal contradictions and logical inconsistencies arise when the analytical content of this statement is contrasted with the experiential or existential content. For instance the minor premise of the above syllogism (Socrates is human) leads to a false identity as it suggests an equivalence between the terms 'Socrates' and 'human'. The identity, expressed by the conjuncture 'is' proves problematic because it establishes a relation of equivalence between the two parts of the statement, however, the two parts do not appear to be identical. 'Human' is one of the predicates of 'Socrates' but not the only or the necessary one. We could just as well say that Socrates is Greek, or man etc. which are predicates that are independent of 'Human'. There seems to be a break or a chasm between the essence of human and the singular instance of 'Socrates'.[58]

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[57] Bryant, *Difference and Giveness*, 6

[58] Ibid., 6-7. see also Calvert,"[Un]disciplined Gestures and [Un]common Sense: 112. Olkowski approaches the inconsistency Aristotelian taxonomy by highlighting the internal contradiction between the demand for Genera (categories) as un-conditioned by higher level concepts on the one hand, and on the other by Aristotle's refusal to position difference above Genera in order to ensure their difference from each other: 'Difference is only allowed to exist in terms of identity with regard to a generic concept. What gets constituted in Aristotle is thus the very ruin of difference itself. [...] Aristotle insists: "But it is not possible that either unity or being should be a single genus of things; *for the differentiae of any genus must be each of them both have being and be one.*" Aristotle, "Metaphysics," 34 (998b14-999a23). Differences *have being*; differences

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The contradiction lies in the relationship between the essence and the particular (or subject and predicate) and can be conceived as arising from the assumption that the relationship between predicates and concrete entitles is posited on logical reason.[59] Socrates is a real and concrete entity whose existence is independent for the predicate 'human'. Being human is only one of the predicates that define Socrates. When not attached to any concrete reality, the predicate 'human' has no existence of its own, it is just an abstraction. However, a concrete entity such as Socrates is a bundle of such abstractions (predicates). Predicates are said to be the source of all concrete things and logically prior to them.

W.T. Stace is clear on this point:

> The world-purpose is immanent in the world itself. It is not a psychic event which happens in a mind. *It is a logical reason*. What happens happens for a reason. This reason is the purpose of what happens. The events are the consequents of the reason, of the purpose. The purpose or end, then, is prior to the world, not as its cause in time, but as its reason. The principle of form, the universal,

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themselves *are*, they are not merely predicates or concepts. Yet, in the same breath Aristotle also maintains that no genus can be predicated of its differential.' Olkowski, *Gilles Deleuze and the Ruin of Representation*, 19.

[59] The inescapable paradox of logical reasoning is most clearly demonstrated in the 'Paradox of the Cretan'. Writing about Walter Benjamin's commentary regarding the paradox of the Cretan Sheena Calvert observes: 'The unavoidable chain of contradictions is circular: language is thrown back on itself, in an infinitely recursive move which forms an inescapable abyss. True is false, and false is true, at one and the same time, in an abyssal form of logic, where each possibility sits temporally on top of, or under, or inside/enfolded in the other, coexisting; comingling; coterminous; in any event, not adjacent to one another, or in a linear movement, but mutually exposed.' Calvert,"[Un]disciplined Gestures and [Un]common Sense,105.

is the reason, and the world is the consequent. The universal is therefore logically prior to things, not prior to them in time.[60]

As Stace explains, Aristotle places logical reason that unfolds towards its purpose as the basis of his metaphysical system. The separation between concrete entities and predicates does not occur in practice, but it is taking place in thought. Predicates are factually inseparable from objects but logically they are independent and can be considered separately in the mind.

Reason is inaugurated to account for the relation between the sensible intuition of concrete entities and the intellectual comprehension of abstract predicates. Because both the particular and the abstract cannot be known 'in themselves' as their knowledge presupposes that something is already 'at hand' Aristotle has to introduce reason as the *de facto* ground of all knowledge.[61] In regard to concrete things Aristotle says that they cannot be defined but they are known by the aid of thought or perception, this is because matter is unknowable in itself.[62]

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[60] (Emphasis mine) Stace, *The Philosophy of Hegel*, 21.

[61] Heidegger clarifies this point: 'We can say negatively: finite knowledge is noncreative intuition. What has to be presented immediately in its particularity must already have been 'at hand' in advance. Finite intuition sees that it is dependent upon the intuitable as a being which exists in its own right... Finite intuition of the being cannot give the object from out of itself.' *Kant and the Problem of metaphysics*, 18.

[62] Aristotle, "Metaphysics," 101 (1035b32-1036a13). 'But when we come to the concrete thing, e.g. this circle, i.e. one of the individual circles, whether sensible or intelligible (I mean by intelligible circles the mathematical, and by sensible circles those of bronze and of wood), of these there is no definition, but they are known by the aid of thought or perception; and when they go out of our actual consciousness it is not clear whether they exist or not; but they are always stated and cognized by means of the universal formula' Ibid., 101-2 (1035b32-1036a13). Also see Widder, *Genealogies of Difference*. 74.

This is therefore the way by which representation enters Western metaphysics.[63] Its function is to address the ostensible impossibility of knowing a concrete, individual entity. Aristotle inaugurated the notion of individual entity in order to deny the existence of the Platonic forms, but by refusing the independent existence of ideas he was forced to conclude that objects couldn't be known in themselves.[64] Representation is therefore linked to the will to mastery over all things but is bought at the price of the loss of immediate knowledge or things in themselves. This is how representation shows itself as way of thinking that posits the world as objective reality that can be comprehended through rational deduction and logical reasoning. The desire to categorise, identify and classify is expressed through the impetus to give names to entitles and in that way to achieve a measure of control over the world. The concrete is designated through its predicates, which allows the grouping of the concrete under categories. But predicates are disconnected from the concrete entity, they can only represent it as an image, and for that reason unmediated access to the material, the non-conceptual or the factual is not possible under this system.

The power of Aristotle's model cannot be denied. By means of the distinction between subjects and predicates he gave the human mind mastery

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[63] This is the point Deleuze makes in *Difference and Repetition* 'It is strange that aesthetics (as the science of the sensible) could be founded on what *can* be represented in the sensible... Empiricism truly becomes transcendental, and aesthetics an apodictic discipline, only when we apprehend directly in the sensible that which can only be sensed, the very being *of* the sensible: difference, potential difference and difference in intensity as the reason behind qualitative diversity.' Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 68.

[64] Infra Chapter 6.4, *Latent Image and Subjectivity*, for a discussion of the unknowability of the photographic image.

over the forces of nature, providing it with the tools to systematically classify

and methodically order the world. But in so doing Aristotle established another

force: the force of the system that is just as powerful, if not more so, than the

forces of nature it commands.[65]

As Dorothy Olkowski indicates, Deleuze locates the origins of

representation in the Western tradition within the parameters of the hierarchical

Aristotelian framework of genera and species.[66] For Aristotle a concept is

categorised according to the way it is divided by specific differences. For

instance, the predicate 'rational' divides the genus 'animal' into 'human' and

'non-human' species.[67] For Aristotle difference is only possible where there is

underpinning identity, as he does not recognise difference in itself.[68] Difference

between species is instrumental in sorting them into Genera but difference itself

is restricted to the status of a predicate of concepts.[69] In other words, difference

is the linchpin of the categorical project because it lacks independence and is

conceived as negation.[70] However, the pluralism ensured by negation is

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[65] Simone Weil, *Oppression and Liberty*, trans. Arthur Wills and John Petrie (London: Ark, 1988), 19-20.

[66] Olkowski, *Gilles Deleuze and the Ruin of Representation*, 15.

[67] Melissa McMahon, "Difference, Repetition," In *Gilles Deleuze: Key Concepts*. (Stocksfield: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2005), 43.

[68] 'For... that which is different is different from some particular thing in some particular respect, so that there must be something identical whereby they differ.' Aristotle, "Metaphysics" 140 (1054b25), quoted in Olkowski, *Gilles Deleuze and the Ruin of Representation*, 18.

[69] Ibid., 18.

[70] There are two ways in which Aristotle understands difference. One of difference in kind and the other difference in degree. Difference in kind refers to irreconcilable difference between genus, for instance the difference between animate and inanimate being. The other kind of difference is difference between two things that have something in common. For instance human being and a cow have in common that both are animals. In both cases difference is understood

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ultimately grounded in identity as the basic ontological proposition, making identity the ultimate object and aim of this logic.

The instrumentlisaton of difference and its subordination to identity allows for an all-encompassing system of knowledge governed by one form of logic that unites all parts of the physical, ethical and sensual world.[71] However, the consequences of privileging identity over difference go beyond issues of nomenclature and have direct influence on the way being is conceived. This is because at the limit of the hierarchical system, at the top level of classification, there is difference between the genera but these genera themselves are not subsumed under a meta-genera or a higher-level concept. What all the genera have in common is their difference from each other but Aristotle refuses to recognise difference as the meta-genus common to all the genera.[72] The plurality of being is that which is making change possible for Aristotle and allows a thing to have certain qualities at one time and others qualities another time while remaining fundamentally the same.[73]

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through identity. Aristotle, "Metaphysics" 69 (1018a14-15). See: Jeffery A. Bell, *Philosophy at the Edge of Chaos*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2006), 115. Deleuze suggests that Aristotle's metaphysics has no room for another kind of difference: difference that is not managed by identity, i.e. difference in itself. Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 30-55. In terms of the photographic image 'difference in itself' suggests that a photograph can be understood not in terms of its identity with an object or a thing in the world, but as pure difference which allows the identity to be given.

[71] Widder, *Genealogies of Difference*. 60.

[72] 'But it is not possible that either unity or being should be a single genus of things; for the differentiae of any genus must each of them both have being and be one' Aristotle, "Metaphysics", 33 (998b20) quoted in Olkowski, *Gilles Deleuze and the Ruin of Representation*, 19.

[73] Widder, *Genealogies of Difference*. 62.

Subordination of difference to identity ensures the plurality of the

Aristotelian system, but this plurality is fundamentally teleological, founded on

differences and divisions between species and precluding the production of

meaning that is not based on the concept of identity. As Deleuze points out,

Aristotelian conception of difference is entirely relativist, which precludes it

from becoming a universal concept (eidos).

> 'Here we find a confusion disastrous for the entire philosophy of
> difference: assigning a distinctive concept of difference is confused
> with the inscription of difference within concepts in general–the
> determination of the concept of difference is confused with the
> inscription of difference in the identity of an undetermined
> concept.'[74]

3.4 Hegel: Reflection, sublation, speculation

> *Western epistemology is based on the Cartesian premise that to think means to follow the*
> *written line, and it does not give the photograph its due as a way of thinking.*[75]

In *Downcast Eyes: Denigration of Vision in 20th Century French Thought*

Martin Jay maps out the centrality of vision to critical thought since Descartes to

explain why post-modern philosophies begin their critical projects with the eye.[76]

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[74] Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 40.

[75] Flusser, Vilém, *Writings*, trans. Andreas Ströhl (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2002) 26.

[76] Jay, *Downcast Eyes*. Metaphors of vision and reflection are prevalent concerns within a number of critical traditions. For instance, Rodolphe Gasché places the optical at the heart of philosophy: '*Re-flectere* means "to bend" or "to turn back" or backward, as well as "to bring back." Yet this turning back is significant for understanding reflection only if one recalls that in both Greek and Latin philosophy the term has optic connotations, in that it refers to the action by mirroring surfaces of throwing back light[...]. As a consequence of this optic metaphoricity, reflection, when designating the mode and operation by which the mind has knowledge of itself

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According to Martin Jay, contemporary continental philosophy's principal

project is the critique of the tendency to favour ocularcentric theories of

knowledge.[77] Historicaly vision has played a central role in the construction of

philosophical concepts: From Plato's allegory of the cave to Brunelleschi's

perspective to Descartes' optical experiments, sight was the privileged sense of

identity and rationality for enlightenment thinking.[78] For that reason the positive

connection between vision and rationality is one of the foundational principles of

philosophy. For Descartes for instance, vision is directly related to *logos* because

it is an extension of the mathematical principles that govern the behaviour of

light.[79] However, there is a problem: despite being rational, vision produces

likenesses that are spontaneous and subjective and so they pose a threat for

logical reasoning.[80] It is due to this paradoxical duality of vision that Descartes

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and its operations, becomes analogous to the process whereby physical light is thrown back on a reflecting surface.' Gasché, *The Tain of the Mirror*, 16. On the other hand, Richard Rorty sees great danger in philosophy's reliance on vision: 'The picture which holds traditional philosophy captive is that of the mind as a great mirror, containing various representations-some accurate, some not-and capable of being studied by pure, nonempirical methods. Without the notion of the mind as mirror, the notion of knowledge as accuracy of representation would not have suggested itself.' Richard Rorty, *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature*. (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2009), 12.

[77] Jay enlists Bruno Latour's concept of 'hybridity' to suggest that the figural cannot be reduced entirely to the discursive. His criticism is aimed specifically at Lyotard to whom he assigns a 'discursive' approach to the visual:" Can we say, as Lyotard famously did with language games, that there are unbridgeable 'differends' separating the visual equivalents of 'phrases in dispute"?" Martin Jay. "Cultural Relativism and the Visual Turn," *Journal of visual culture* 1, no. 3 (2002): 267-278. 268, 274. See also: Jay, *Downcast Eyes*.

[78] René Descartes, *Discourse on Method, Optics, Geometry, and Meteorology*, trans. Paul J Olscamp (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Publishing, 2001), Plato, *The Republic*, 1132-1135.

[79] This was discussed supra Chapter 3.1, *Representation: Setting the Problem*.

[80] Descartes returns to this point several time in *Dioptrics*: 'We must not think that it is by means of this resemblance that the picture makes us aware of the objects-as though we had another pair

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strives to separate likeness from representation. What becomes clear through

Descartes' discussion of painting in *Optics* is that there is a contradiction

between likeness (which Descartes calls *resemblance*) and representation that for

Descartes is 'an extension of vision which in itself a masked form of

mathematical thought'.[81] Vision is therefore a site of tension between the eye as

an accurate and rational instrument on the one hand and on the other of the eye

as one of the five senses which can be easily deceived by trompe l'oeils,

likenesses and appearances. The paradox of vision is that it can claim privilege

as being uniquely rational and yet, it cannot detach itself from the perpetuation of

illusion that all senses partake in.[82] As will be demonstrated in this section, this

tension is an on-going concern for metaphysical thought, which comes to a head

with the invention of photographic technology in the 19th century. This

technology seems to confirm the rationality of vision and to draw together both

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of eyes to see it, inside our brain [...] rather, we must hold that the movements by which the image is formed act directly on our soul *qua* united to the body, and are ordained by nature to give us such sensations' René Descartes. *Philosophical Writings*, trans. Elizabeth Anscombe and Peter T. Geach (Great Britain: Thomas nelson and Sons Limited, 1970), 246.

[81] 'In Descartes' theory of 'lumen naturale', or natural light, natural light has its source in God and possesses a perfect symmetry with the mind: "For I have certainly no cause to complain that God has not given me an intelligence which is more powerful, or a natural light which is stronger than that which I have received from Him." With the notion of 'lumen naturale' Descartes hopes to bypass the vagaries of the senses. His study of dioptrics is based on the claim that a lux of non-sensory divine origin is the cause of movements of the lumen, or the light of the mind.' Vasseleu, *Textures of Light*, 4. [quoted from: Descartes, René. *The Philosophical Works of Descartes*, Vol. 1, trans. Elizabeth Haldane and G. R. T. Ross, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. (1931)] See also: Veronique M. Foti, "Representation Represented: Foucault, Velázquez, Descartes." *Postmodern Culture* 7, no. 1 (1996): 12. And Dalia Judovitz, *Subjectivity and Representation in Descartes*. (Cambridge UK: Cambridge University Press, 1988).

[82] See Vasseleu, *Textures of Light*. 6, 32.

aesthetic mimesis and mathematical representation under the auspice of *ratio*

manifest in the scientifically validated image making process.[83]

Considered through a representational paradigm, photography can be seen

as the culmination of the philosophy of reflection as it is developed from Plato to

Hegel.[84] Dialectics, at least in its Hegelian form, is the triumph of rational

representation over conventional pictorial resemblance.[85] For Hegel, the

dialectical move starts from a sensorial input: a human subject encounters an

object, this encounter is sensual and immediate, it is taking place in the *now*.[86]

The *now* is a moment of totality. It is, as Hegel says, 'the most abstract and

purest truth'.[87] Yet, this moment does not last and is immediately exposed as

false because pure being appears to co-exist with pure not-being.[88] It can be said

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[83] This view is upheld by Vilém Flusser who considers photography as the pivotal moment of merging between aesthetic and rational principles and the overcoming of the traditional divisions between science and art: 'Based on science, photography is a technical gesture toward the production of aesthetic phenomena. [...] in photography, the epistemological, ethical, and aesthetic parameters fuse together after having experienced their fateful division in modernity.' Flusser, *Writings*, 45.

[84] What follows is not an exhaustive account of Hegel's logic, rather it is an attempt to show how this logic is mirrored in photography. For a detailed account of representation in Hegel and a comparison between Hegel and Deleuze see: Henry Somers-Hall, *Hegel, Deleuze, and the Critique of Representation: Dialectics of Negation and Difference*. (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2012).

[85] The speculative goes beyond simple rationality, for it sublates the opposition between rationality and reflection. Not only subjectivity and objectivity, but all other oppositions are sublated (preserved and destroyed) in the movement of speculative thought. 'The paradigm of reflection [...] requires, in addition to the two moments outlined in the minimal definition, a third element, which triggers the unifying dialectic between the mirror and its object, as well as between the mirror and itself' Gasché, *The Tain of the Mirror*, 21. Stace, *The Philosophy of Hegel*, 3-31.See supra Chapter 3.1, *Representation: Setting the Problem*.

[86] Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*. Ed. J.N. Findlay trans. A. V. Miller (Oxford University Press, 1998), 58-9, (§90-94) (References for *Phenomenology of Spirit* are given by page number followed by paragraph numbers in brackets.)

[87] Ibid., 58.(§91)

[88] 'The Now is pointed to, *this* Now. 'Now'; it has already ceased to be in the act of pointing to it. The Now that *is*, is another Now than the one pointed to, and we see that the Now is just this: to

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that the whole trajectory of the Hegelian dialectical move is drawn out of the addition of non-being to being.[89] The non-being, or negation, is not a conceptual abstraction but the concrete knowledge of death as death.[90] Pure being and pure not-being are co-present at the founding moment of sense-certainty in which sense is the knowledge of being and certainty is sureness of death.[91] The inability of the mind to reconcile the two by holding them together as one creates dynamic oscillation in which being *necessarily* becomes non-being and non-being *necessarily* becomes being. This movement extracts being and non-being from

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be no more just when it is. The Now, as it is pointed out to us, is Now that *has been*, and this is its truth; it has not the truth of *being*.' Ibid., 63 (§105).

[89] Golding explains this move in the following way: 'At the very moment one might point or attempt to grasp (both intellectually and practically) the present-tense Real in all its glorious manifestations – this "Now" will always-already disappear into a Before or an After or a Somewhere Else. This is because the present – as present, i.e. as a 'not-mediated' entity, can never itself become embodied or 'fully realised', precisely because *ipso facto* it is "im-mediate"'. "Fractal Philosophy," 136.

[90] On this point see: 'Our starting point is finite existence which is first in the order of discovery'. Charles Taylor, *Hegel and Modern Society.* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1979), 37. In *The Thing* Heidegger addresses the question of nothing (non-being) in order to extract it from the dialectical formula set up by Hegel: 'Death is the shrine of nothing, namely of that which in all respects is never some mere being, but nonetheless essences, namely as being itself. Death, as the shrine of nothing, harbours in itself what essences of being. As the shrine of the nothing, death is the refuge of being.'. *Bremen and Freiburg Lectures*, 17. In treating being and nothing not as dialectically opposed entities but as the 'belonging together' of being and nothing Heidegger overcomes Hegel's key dictum that 'what is rational is real'. Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *Philosophy of Right*, trans. S W Dyde (Mineloa, N.Y.: Dover Publications, 2005), xix. In Heidegger's hands the irrational becomes the guarantor and the guardian of the real. See supra Chapter 3.1, *Representation, Setting the Problem*, where similar move in the realm of technology was discussed.

[91] '*Pure being* and *pure nothing* are, therefore, the same. What is the truth is neither being nor nothing, but that being – does not pass over but has passed over – into nothing, and nothing into being. But it is equally true that they are not undistinguished from each other, that on the contrary, they are not the same, that they are absolutely distinct, and yet that they are unseparated and inseparable and that each immediately *vanishes in its opposite*. The truth is therefore, this movement of immediate vanishing of the one in the other' Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *The Hegel Reader*. Ed. Stephen Houlgate (Oxford, UK. Malden, Mass.: Blackwell Publishers, 1998), 188.On the role of negation in Hegel's philosophy see: Taylor, *Hegel*, 127-147.

their own stasis and merges them into a dynamic new entity that is the sublation

of being and not-being: Becoming.[92] Becoming then forms the ground and the

foundational principle that gives new meaning to being and not-being as parts of

a dynamic whole. This is the basis of the entirety of the Hegelian dialectical

move. The process repeats itself through progressive sublation of opposites that

leads the spirit through a sequence of repetitions that ultimately results in

Knowledge.[93] This sublation of subject and object is for Hegel the ultimate

truth.[94] By way of repeated dialectical negation the spirit moves towards the goal

of Absolute Knowing.[95]

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[92] Jean-Luc Nancy identifies restlessness (dynamism) as the very key characteristic of Hegel's thought: 'The world is therefore not a simple result, nor does it have a result. It is the world that itself results *in* its own movement, and the thought of this its own truth is itself, in turn, a movement and a restlessness–the very same, in fact, to the extent that it is restlessness of self, for itself, and uneasy about itself; and because it reveals itself as other, infinitely in the other.' Nancy, *Hegel: The Restlessness of the Negative*, 6. However, as will be discussed in the following chapter (infra Chapter 4), the dynamism and movement of a dialectical system is facilitated by the complete stillness of its center. In other words, while the Hegelian system is dynamic, the law that makes it move is externally given, fixed and sovereign. See also infra Chapter 3.5, *What does not Work in Hegel and how it impacts Photography.*

[93] For thinkers such as Nietzsche and Deleuze it is precisely the sequence of repetitions required by the Hegelian move which promises a way out of dialectics. Nietzsche spells it out in *Gay Science*: 'The eternal hourglass of existence is turned over again and again, and you with it, speck of dust!' Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*. Ed. Bernard Arthur Owen Williams trans. Josefine Nauckhoff and Adrian Del Caro (Cambridge, U.K. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 194 (§341). For Deleuze too, the repetition of the movement is more significant then the content that is being moved because repetition produces difference which is the restless and dynamic force of the negative, but without the dead center of dialectical negation at its core. Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 36-83.

[94] Sublation (*Aufheben*) for Hegel means to preserve in the dual sense of removing the thing from its immediacy and from its exposure to external influences. M. J. Inwood, *A Heidegger Dictionary*. (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 1999), 284. see infra this section.

[95] Spirit, however, has shown itself to us to be neither merely the withdrawal of self-consciousness into its pure inwardness, nor the mere submergence of self-consciousness into substance, and the non-being of its [moment of] difference; but Spirit is *this moment* of the Self which empties itself of itself and sinks itself into its substance, and also, as Subject, has gone out of that substance into itself, making the substance into an object and a content at the same time as it cancels this difference between objectivity and content.' Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, 490 (§804).

According to Hegel, being is the knowledge of the senses ('Here is a tree') while non-being is supersensory.[96] The sublation of being and non-being produces the totality/unity that equals truth. Dialectics is drawn out of the certainty of death, of non-being.[97] At first, being and non-being are seen as completely separate, self-contained, homogenous and absolute. Understanding attempts to hold onto being as a totality by excluding non-being. Yet, this proves to be impossible for being is meaning-less without non-being: one is implicated in the other's actuality. Understanding attempts to separate being from non-being but paradoxically produces a kind of osmosis by introducing a time element that destabilizes the structure.[98]

For Hegel then, the ultimate goal of the dialectic is the discovery of identity of subject and object - their oneness is revealed through a process of continuous negation. In the preface to the Phenomenology of Spirit Hegel explains:

> 'The truth is the whole, but the whole is nothing other than the essence consummating itself through its development. Of the Absolute it must be said that it is essentially a *result*, that only in the

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[96] 'there now opens up above the *sensuous* world, which is the world of *appearance*, a *supersensible* world which henceforth is the *true* world, above the vanishing *present* world there opens up a permanent *beyond*[...]' Ibid., 87 (§144)

[97] 'Death, if that is what we want to call this non-actuality, is of all things the most dreadful, and to hold fast what is dead requires the greatest strength. [...] But the life of Spirit is not the life that shrinks for death and keeps itself untouched by devastation, but rather the life that endures it and maintains itself in it. It wins the truth only when, in utter dismemberment, it finds itself.' Ibid., 19 (§32).

[98] '"The world is the mirror in which we rediscover ourselves." The point is not to contrapose knowledge of knowledge to knowledge of the other but to discover their identity.' Hyppolite, *Genesis and Structure of Hegel's 'Phenomenology of Spirit'*, 60. See also Widder, *Genealogies of Difference*. 20-59.

end is it what it truly is; and that precisely in this consists its nature, viz. to be actual, subject, the spontaneous becoming of itself.'[99]

For Hegel, identity is located in the relation to other, already and always mediated through the sublation of opposites. 'The truth' or absolute knowledge is the identity of identity and non-identity. In this way reflection and representation are exposed as one and the same. Truth is not in the one or the other but in their passing over - have already passed over - into each other. The move of the Hegelian dialectic echoes the fusion of the *icon* (*imitation*) and *logos* (*understanding*) in the photo-mechanical image.

> But light as such exists only as *one* side of what is implicit in the principle of subjectivity, i.e. as this more ideal [self-]identity. In this respect light only manifests, in the sense that it proves in nature to be simply what makes things *in general* visible; but the *particular* character of what it reveals remains outside it as an object which is not light but the opposite of light and so is dark.[100]

Light makes things *visible* because light itself is the immediate manifestation of nature qua nature, and while the particular objects revealed by light have to be considered dialectically as the sublation of light and dark, light itself is simply the absolute condition of visibility. Light here is the absolute spirit as it is being manifest in nature: 'The knowledge or knowing cannot be anything else but immediate knowledge itself, it must be knowledge of the immediate or of what simply *is*. Our approach to the object must also be

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[99] Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit,* 11 (§20)

[100] Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *Aesthetics: Lectures on Fine Art,* trans. T. M. Knox (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975), 808-9.

immediate or *receptive*; we must alter nothing in the object as it presents itself. In

*a*prehending it, we must refrain from trying to *com*prehend it.'[101]

For Hegel, truth is not in the immediacy of knowledge but in the mediation

of substance by subject. The way things appear to the senses does not lead to

truth and concepts created by the mind are equally unreliable. Any attempt to

hold perception and cognition as separate will not lead to the true nature of

things. For this reason, According to Hegel, both Descartes and Spinoza fall

short of reaching the truth.[102] Both perception and cognition lack an awareness of

themselves, a self-consciousness that must be preserved in the apprehension of

the subject. Only in this way will the subject appear as pure negativity.

In coming to discuss the implications of the Hegelian dialectical negation

to the understanding of photography as the merging of the visible and the logical

it is significant to underline Hegel's critique of Plato's theory of forms: 'Only

this *self-restoring* sameness, or this reflection in otherness within itself – not an

original or *immediate* unity as such – is the True.'[103] Here it can be seen that

Hegel's response to Platonism which places the knowledge of the essence above

the form (eidos) is that this is not serious, for all it can grasp is the abstract

universality of the subject. Taken in this way, as separate from the form, the

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[101] Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, 58, (§90) also see: '"Now" is day because I see it; "Here" is a tree for the same reason.' Ibid., 61, (§101). The 'is' is the subject of Chapter 5 of this thesis *Time: Ecstatic Temporality of the 'is'*

[102] ''To lay down that the true shape of truth is scientific–or, what is the same thing, to maintain that truth has only the Notion as the element of its existence–seems, I know, to contradict a view which is in our time as prevalent as it is pretentious, and to go against what that view implies.' Ibid., 4 (§6).

[103] Ibid., 10 (§18).

essence is dead. On the other hand it will be equally a mistake to subsume form in the substance by saying that they are one. In order to achieve its full potential form has to be assimilated in substance in such a way that preserves it as form, and substance has to be reflected in the form and find its self-consciousness within it. This conception of truth as a process of mutual reflection between substance and form or between cognition and reflection sees the separation of *logos* and *icon* as misleading and artificial. The visual and the logical are only fully formed once they are fused with each other in a way that keeps them fully separate and fully co-dependent at the same time.[104]

The double meaning of the German expression '*aufheben*' captures perfectly the relationship of the dialectic to photography.[105] On the one hand, we understand it to mean 'clear away' or 'cancel', as in the expression that a law or regulation is cancelled (*aufgehoben*). But the word also means 'to preserve', in the sense that something is well taken care of (*wohl aufgehoben*).[106] This ambiguity in linguistic usage through which the same word has both a negative and a positive meaning is put to a great use by Hegel as an illustration of the way

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[104] A recurring theme throughout Hegel's writing is the sublation of nature and spirit and the error of conceiving either one without the other: 'The distinction between nature and spirit has been interpreted quite correctly as meaning that we must trace nature back to 'reality' as its basic determination, and spirit to 'ideality'. But nature is not just something fixed and complete on its own account, which could therefore subsist even without spirit; rather, it is only in spirit that nature attains to its goal and its truth. Similarly, spirit, for its part, is not just an abstract word beyond nature; on the contrary, it only genuinely is, and proves to be spirit, insofar as it contains nature sublated within itself.' Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *The Encyclopaedia Logic, with the Zusätze: Part I of the Encyclopaedia of Philosophical Sciences with the Zusätze*, trans. T.F. Geraets, W.A. Suchting and H.S. Harris (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1991), 153.

[105] This idea is researched and developed by Ignaz Cassar. "The Image Of, or In, Sublation," *Philosophy of Photography* 1, no. 2 (2010): 201-215.

[106] Inwood, *A Heidegger Dictionary*, 284.

sublation itself operates: the two meanings of the word 'sublation' are sublated to create the restless, never-to-be-pinned-down concept of sublation. The movement of the Hegelian *Aufhebung* finds its counterpart in the gesture of photography in which reflection is sublated with understanding, resulting in a truly speculative form of truth that simultaneously preserves and alters while inscribing the object in the space of its own negation.[107]

The reason why so many theories of photography approach it from a dialectical standpoint of the sublation of light or alternatively as an archive which simultaneously preserves and destroys the archived object, could be down to a problem with the dialectical negation itself.[108] As Nathan Widder demonstrates, Hegel fails to show the Notion's actualization in history:

> [T]he only way to redeem the historical dialectic is to excuse it from having to provide a causal chain wherein the Notion becomes actual in human history by demonstrating this realization to be an already established fact. In other words, history must already have terminated, so that the historical dialectic simply recounts its fulfilment, bypassing the need to explain it.[109]

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[107] For an example of an artistic practice that interrogates the dual meaning of sublation see: Cassar, "The Image Of, or In, Sublation."

[108] 'Sekula regards the photograph as a mobile, contingent, and inherently social entity, an entity caught between the twin ideological demands of aestheticism (or subjectivism) and scientism (or objectivism) [...] This crisis is produced by the "threat and promise of the machine," a dialectic that bourgeois culture "continues to both resist and embrace."' Batchen, *Burning with Desire*, 8. On the dialectic of preservation and annihilation (through the Freudian notion of fetish) see Christian Metz, "Photography and Fetish," in *The Photography Reader*. Ed. Liz Wells (London: Routledge, 2003), 138-147. See also: Burgin, *Thinking Photography*, and John Roberts, *The Art of Interruption: Realism, Photography, and the Everyday*. (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1998).

[109] Widder, *Genealogies of Difference*, 32. A similar point was made earlier by Charles Taylor 'Our ascending movement thus starts with a postulate and proceeds by necessary inference. But what it infers to is ontological necessity, the proposition that everything which exists is posited by Geist according to a formula of rational necessity.' *Hegel and Modern Society*, 37. (But see next footnote). It is worth noting that the reason Hegelian ontology runs into difficulties is

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The problem is one of 'bootstrapping': Hegelian logic of negation only makes sense if looked at from its end point that comes back and provides the ground for the whole of the dialectical movement.[110] Photography might be able to provide the starting point for the process at it establishes experientially the assimilation of nature by logic as it anchors the *logos* in the physical substance of light. In this context photography can be seen as the experiment that proves the truth of the dialectic by demonstrating that the Notion, (i.e. image) is produced through the process of sublation and negation.

We saw in the previous paragraphs that the conditions of a system based on dialectical negation are such that Hegel cannot accept the idea of an external force that created the world from outside of the system because the world then is an unessential addendum for the existence of such force (theism). Similarly, Hegel cannot accept the existence of a rational consciousness that just

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precisely because, being a unified system it requires sold foundations. On the other hand, a realist ontology such as that of Deleuze does not require a foundation but only demands a minimal amount of knowledge to begin a fermentation or to reproduce as a rhizome. '[A] realist ontology may be lifted by its own bootstraps by assuming a minimum of objective knowledge to get the process going and then accounting for the rest. The minimum of presupposed knowledge need not constitute a foundation at all. Whether the choice of minimum to start with is correct or not can be checked by the overall coherence of the resulting ontology and by verifying that it does indeed avoid the postulation of general entities (ideal types, eternal laws). Manuel DeLanda, "Philosophy As Intensive Science," in *What Philosophy Is: Contemporary Philosophy in Action.* Ed. Havi Carel (London; New York: Continuum, 2004), 55.

[110] With reference to the previous footnote, 'bootstrapping' is a computer science term the refers to the difficulty of starting up a computer: 'When a computer is turned on (or "booted up"), the software must be loaded into the hardware, but "loading" is a software function. This circularity is broken by hardwiring a little bit of software (a hardware mini-loader) which loads the software [...] Ibid., 55. In explaining the ontological difficulty of the Hegelian dialectic Taylor uses similar analogy: 'There is something in Hegel's philosophy which is irresistibly reminiscent of Baron Munchausen. The baron, it will be remembered, after falling from his horse in a swamp, extricated himself by seizing his own hair and heaving himself back on the horse. Hegel's God is a Munchausen God [...]' Taylor, *Hegel and Modern Society,* 39.

accidentally appeared in the world (naturalism). Photography, as the process by which nature records itself, confirms to Hegel's idea of god who eternally makes the conditions of his/her own existence.[111]

3.5 What does not work in Hegel and how it impacts photography

If we are to understand Hegel we must learn to think in the abstract, to move freely among pure thoughts, and to keep sensuous images out of our minds, or at least not to mistake them for pure thoughts.[112]

As the examination of the dialectic in the previous section showed, by dint of being a totalising system it requires a foundation that is external to it. Hegelian ontology can be said to be a form of representational thinking precisely because it posits negation as the driving force of the whole system without being able to account for the becoming of negation, or to explain why negation is necessary and not contingent.[113] Hegel established negation as the force that makes it possible to distinguish something from nothing through the continuous movement of becoming. In so doing Hegel was hoping to overcome the qualitative distinction inherited from Kant between the transcendental subject and the empirical manifold or multiplicity.[114] Hegel's aim was to create a total

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[111] Ibid., 39.

[112] Stace, *The Philosophy of Hegel*, 69.

[113] '[T]he dialectic fails to account for the motor force it demands, so that mediation remains incomplete insofar as the Notion does not account for its own becoming.' Widder, *Genealogies of Difference*. 31. For an opposite view that upholds the negative as a dynamic creative force see Nancy, *Hegel*, 11-12.

[114] In the *Critique of Pure Reason* Kant proposes to overcome metaphysical thinking through installing reason – rather than an externally given force – as the foundation of knowledge. He is able to do so by proposing a number of *a-priori* categories for all possible experiences. The transcendental subject is in possession of a logic that allows him to synthesize external reality. However, this logic can only account for possible experiences, not for the real or actual ones.
...

and all-encompassing system which never-the-less was capable of dynamism, creativity and change. To achieve this aim Hegel seeks to avoid presuppositions that would ground the system in an externally given law, and for that reason he does not start from the concept of man (therefore he rejects the Cartesian *Cogito*) or from *a-priori* categories (Kant), which are prior to the world. However, start somewhere he must in order to arrive at the ultimate realisation of spirit as Universal Consciousness. Hegel pirouettes out of this tight spot by taking as a foundation something that is necessarily real yet it does not depend on being externally given – this is Absolute Spirit, or logic.[115]

In his commentary to Hegel Stace goes as far as to say:

When we say that pure thought is the first principle and foundation of the world, there is no question of what *we* can or cannot think, but only of what objectively *is*.[116]

He then goes on to insist that:

It must be admitted, however that the inability to think purely, to think without an accompaniment of pictorial images, is grave

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'Kant's main preoccupation is [...] with the validity of propositions given in advance of our enquiry, rather than with a genuine description of subjective life.' Somers-Hall, *Hegel, Deleuze, and the Critique of Representation*, 25. See infra Chapter 5.3 for a discussion of representation in Kant.

[115] Stace gives particularly lucid explanation of this move: 'in a general way we have already seen that the system of categories constitutes reason, and that reason is its own reason, is self-explained and self-determined. And this means that it is dependent only upon itself. And this in turn means that it is real.' Stace, *The Philosophy of Hegel*, 66.

[116] Ibid., 68. Obviously, it is in direct response to such statements that Deleuze says: '[I]t is presumed that everyone knows, independently of concepts, what is meant by self, thinking, and being.' Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 164.

impediment to the understanding of philosophy, especially the philosophy of Hegel.[117]

As will be shown below, Hegel's attempt to 'think without images' relies on having a subjective image of what it means to think.[118] According to Deleuze, the problem with any attempt to start a philosophy without any presuppositions is that presuppositions are of two kinds: objective and subjective, and while it seems possible to evacuate philosophy of objective presuppositions, the subjective ones prove to be much harder to get rid of:

> [W]hile Hegel criticized Descartes for this, he does not seem, for his part, to proceed otherwise: pure being, in turn, is a being only by virtue of referring all its presuppositions back to sensible, concrete, empirical being.[119]

The problem therefore is that it is precisely 'pure non-sensuous thought' that begins from an *image* of what it means to think.[120] So while Hegel successfully located a starting point that does not depend on any objective presupposition, he did not succeed in avoiding a pre-philosophical presupposition of the empirical being of thought.[121] As Deleuze explains in the

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[117] Stace, *The Philosophy of Hegel*, 69.

[118] It is significant that for Hegel, images in general (both in the lay sense and as aesthetic creations or works of art) are one of the stages in the development of the Spirit which must be overcome on the way to the Absolute. '[A]rt is, and remains for us, on the side of its highest destiny, a thing of the past.' Hegel, *Introductory Lectures on Aesthetics*, 13. See also: J.M. Bernstein, "Freedom From Nature? Post-Hegelian Reflections of the End(s) of Art." In *Hegel and the Arts*. Ed. Stephen Houlgate (Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern University Press, 2007),

[119] Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 164.

[120] Ibid., 164. For a political critique the 'image of thought' see Boyer, "Ontological Materialism and the Problem of Politics." 174-177

[121] As Widder explains: 'Hegel draws the necessity of negation from the inability of being as a simple positivity to distinguish itself from nothingness. This creates a movement purporting to be autonomous. Given Hegel's inability to show the Notion's actualization in history, however, it

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chapter titled *The Image of Thought*, this pre-philosophical presupposition is the

way by which representation is smuggled into a system that purports to rid itself

of all representations:

> [The philosopher] can assume that the universality of his premises–
> namely, what it means to be and to think... –will be implicitly
> understood, and that no one can deny that to doubt is to think, and to
> think is to be... [...] When philosophy rests its beginning upon such
> implicit of subjective presuppositions, it can claim innocence, since
> it has kept nothing back–except, of course, the essential–namely, the
> form of this discourse.[122]

In this way, systemic philosophy is exposed as founded on the

presupposition of the natural capacity for thought. However, this capacity is

never acknowledged as such because it is nothing more than the common sense

of what does it mean to think.[123] This failure of systemic thought to account for

the subjective origins of its own system can be taken as a starting point for an a-

systemic philosophy, one that will necessarily embrace paradox, difference and

dissemination.[124]

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becomes clear that the dialectic itself rests on a final cause that remains external to it.'
Genealogies of Difference. 34.

[122] Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 165.

[123] It will be shown later that there is a significant parallel between systemic philosophy and
photography because here too the basis is the presupposition that everyone knows what it means
to look. However, the claim of this thesis goes further then to say that photography is a special
case of systemic thought, rather, the suggestion is that thought that wishes to be non-systemic and
to avoid the trap of subjective presupposition has to start from photography. Imageless thought
that wishes to avoid abstraction has to begin from the unknowable image. Infra Chapter 6.5
Photography: Difference at a Standstill.

[124] For Derrida, Dissemination is the ability of language to bring its own material conditions into
play with the way these materials are mobilized in the production of meaning. Writing here is a
'way' with words which undermines the very concept of language as a system by pointing at that
which is breaking away from language. Derrida, *Dissemination*. See also: Niall Lucy, *A Derrida*

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3.6   Heidegger: Representation and identity

As was established in previous sections of this chapter, identity, as a figure

of metaphysical thinking, always requires representation as the ground. In

Identity and Difference Heidegger states that there cannot be a ground that is not

externally given. His way of getting out of the requirement for a ground is to

replace the rational 'is' or the '=' (equal sign) with the notion of *belonging*

together.[125] In the two lectures *The Principle of Identity* and *The Onto-Theo-*

Logical constitution of Metaphysics Heidegger proposes a way of thinking that

attempts to overcome the limitations of Aristotelian, and subsequent Western

metaphysics by questioning the principle of identity.[126] Heidegger opposes a

logic of relation *as* relation of man and being to the logic of identity.[127] This sets

him apart from the kind of metaphysical thinking that considers thought and

being as prior to identity.[128] Even more suggestively, by shifting the problem

from the question of identity to the question of belonging Heidegger signals the

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Dictionary. (Oxford: Blackwell, 2004), 27-31. Paradox plays key part in Deleuze's *Logic of Sense*. The concept of difference is explored in a number of texts by Lyotard, *Heidegger and "the Jews"*, Jean-François Lyotard, *The Differend: Phrases in Dispute*, trans. Georges Van Den Abbeele (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1988). Difference is also central to Luce Irigaray, *An Ethics of Sexual Difference,* trans. Carolyn Burke and Gillian C. Gill (London: Continuum International Publishing Group, 2005). Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition,* and Heidegger, *Identity and Difference.*

[125] Stambaugh, "Introduction," in Heidegger, *Identity and Difference*, 10.

[126] Heidegger, *Identity and Difference,* 23-41.

[127] Stambaugh, "Introduction," in Heidegger, *Identity and Difference.* 8

[128] Heidegger takes as his point of departure a fragment from Parmenides 'for the same perceiving (thinking) as well as being'. For Heidegger, Parmenides does not divide the what-is into the realm of the illusory and the realm of what truly is. *Identity and Difference* 27-28.

possibility of a clean break with metaphysical reasoning.[129] Aristotelian

metaphysics of identity put forward a philosophy of finitude. Heidegger breaks

away from this form of thought by thinking of the encounter between thought

and being as taking place in space, not in time.[130]

Heidegger's lectures are important to the enterprise of this research

because they allow a way out of the vocabulary that dominates writing on

photography with such analytic concepts a the index, sign, ideology, lack,

division and identity.[131] What these diverse concepts have in common is that they

belong to systems of thought premised on rational logic, representation,

semiology and psychoanalysis and miss entirely the rupture and darkness

inherent to the photographic process. By focusing only on what can be

communicated through photography, photography criticism operates as a closed

system premised on the visibility of photographic representation[132]. These

systems are unable to account for that which is singular, obscure, hidden, latent,

non-communicative and timeless. The scientific concept of Photography as -

writing with light - is a reduction of the image to a permanent, objective, linear

and empirical truth. This research attempts to reveal the originally historical

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[129] A similar idea is expressed by Bakhtin in his analysis of Dostoevsky's poetics: 'Man is never coincident with himself. The equation of identity 'A is A' is inapplicable to him'. Michail Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, trans. M Rotsel (Michigan: Ann Arbor,1973), 48.

[130] Aristotelian notion of identity was discussed supra Chapter 3.3.

[131] Rosalind E Krauss, *The Optical Unconscious.* (MIT Press, 1994), and *The Originality of the Avant-garde.* Burgin, *Thinking Photography* and *In/Different Spaces.* Tagg, *The Burden of Representation.* Christian Metz, "Photography and Fetish".

[132] See supra Chapter 2.1, *Technology and Thickness.*

foundations of representational thinking that underpin every linear, timeless and identical understanding of photography as a form of presence and truth.

Heidegger's starting point is Aristotle's principle of identity also known as the principle of non-contradiction that states A=A.[133] It is such a basic assumption of rational thinking that it forms part of most theories of photography.[134] Heidegger says of the principle of identity that it is considered 'the highest principle of thought', by which he means metaphysical thought that takes *logos* as its ground.[135] The original formula A=A is an expression of the grounding of being in logic; it is the mediation of existence with the tools of thought that internalised the language of scientific reasoning. Heidegger's way of

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[133] 'But still, it is possible to demonstrate by refutation even that <the denial of PNC>[Principle of non-contradiction – DR) is impossible, if only the disputant speaks of something. If he speaks of nothing, it is ridiculous to look for a rational discourse (logos) with someone who has rational discourse about nothing, in so far as he does not have it; for in so far as he lacks rational discourse, such a person makes himself like a vegetable (1006a11-15cf. 1008b10-12) Terence Irwin, *Aristotle's First Principles.* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), 182. An important aspect of this principle is that it prefigures a notion of linear and chronological time: two different objects cannot be the same object because two objects cannot inhabit the same space at the same time. Aristotelian logic is situated within and based upon the physical world. However, once the laws of the physical world are challenged (through art, technology or science) this logic falters and the law of non-contradiction does not seem to apply. Non-representational art, Einstein's theory of relativity and the internet all offer well known scenarios that contradict this principle. This thesis submits that photography is another one of the scenarios where the law of non-contradiction does not apply because it suggests a form of logic based on repetition and self-replication.

[134] See for instance: 'new digital technologies, by dematerializing and reconfiguring the photograph before our eyes, by allowing for our absolute mastery over its every particle, disenchant photography just as photography disenchanted the visible world. In this process ... they extend the project of rational control to the very core of the image-making process.' Paul Frosh, *The Image Factory: Consumer Culture, Photography and the Visual Content Industry.* (London: Berg Publishers, 2003), 176. Frosh seems to imply that the photograph is an imprint of the real by force of it being the product of rational technology. The German Idealism iteration of A=A is found in Hegel's Philosophy of Right: 'What is rational is real and what is real is rational' Hegel, *Philosophy of Right,* xix.

[135] Heidegger, *Identity and Difference,* 23.

stepping out of metaphysics is by substituting the '=' with the belonging together

of A and A in which he stresses the *together* over the belonging:

> 'Principle of identity' means now: a spring demanded by the
> essence of identity because it needs that spring if the *belonging*
> together of man and Being is to attain the essential light of the
> appropriation.[136]

In the introduction to the text Joan Stambaugh comments on Heidegger's

move to emphasise its strategy to move beyond dialectics through the shift from

together to *belonging*:

> 'If the element of *together* in belonging-together is emphasized, we
> have the metaphysical concept of identity which orders the manifold
> into a unity mediated by synthesis. This unity forms a synthetic
> totality of the world with God or Being as the ground, as the first
> cause and as the highest being. But if the element of *belonging* in
> belonging together is emphasized, we have, thinking and Being held
> apart and at the same time held together (not fitted together) in the
> Same. To come to an understanding of the *belonging* together of
> man and Being, we must leave metaphysical thinking which thinks
> Being exclusively as the cause of beings and thinks beings primarily
> as what is caused. We must simply leap out of it. Thus the principle
> of (Satz) of identity becomes a leap (Satz) out of metaphysics.[137]

By stressing *together* over *belonging* Heidegger escapes the grounding in

identity (belonging is still to close to rational, dialectical thought rooted in

Aristotelian metaphysics). 'A' *together with* 'A' opens up a groundless surface

unframed by logical reasoning. In belonging *together* the emphasis is on a

relationship between things rather than on the dividing line between them. The

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[136] Ibid., 39.

[137] Joan Stambaugh, "Introduction," in Martin Heidegger *Identity and Difference*, 12-13.

binary logic of yes-no or true-false is replaced with a fuzzy logic concerned with degrees of belonging.[138] The evacuation of equivalence does not bring chaos and anarchy, but puts forward a different form of logic that does not reject identity but situates it as singularity within the realm of disjuncture and difference.

By positing 'belonging *together*' as the primordial relation, Heidegger shifts the focus of identity from '*I*' to 'we' in which identity is understood as a movement of difference oscillating between the two, not belonging to the one. In this way Heidegger breaks away from dialectical thinking that aims to unite opposites through negation.[139] The relation of belonging takes precedence over that which is related: 'no longer representing belonging in terms of the unity of the together, but rather of experiencing this together in terms of belonging'.[140] Heidegger's shift is a move away from representation that finds its truth in rationality to a form of truth that is discovered in the original oneness in which

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[138] In both *The Logic of Sense* and *Difference and Repetition* Deleuze aims to move beyond the rationality of language by exploring modalities of becoming and the production of relations that fall outside of yes-no and true-false binaries. In these works Deleuze rejects the idea that experience is constructed *through* language because the rejects the ontological primacy of a structure over experience. As Colebrook comments: '[I]f we were to see the world as 'socially constructed' through language, culture or concepts, we could then ask who or what is doing the structuring, and who or what is structured. No structure or set of relations can be closed, can account for relationality as such. Instead of arguing for a set of relations or structure that determines life and difference in advance, Deleuze looks at the production of relations.' Claire Colebrook, *Deleuze: A Guide for the Perplexed* (London, New York: Continuum, 2006), 61.

[139] This is how Deleuze illustrates the forming of an identity through difference: 'Lightning, for example, distinguishes itself from the black sky but must also trail it behind, as though it were distinguishing itself from that which does not distinguish itself from it. It is as if the ground rose to the surface without ceasing to be ground.' Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 36. The 'identity' of the lightning is not found in its separation from the sky but in it its belonging to that from which it is separate. 'the distinguished opposes something which cannot distinguish itself from it but continues to espouse that which divorces it.' Ibid., 36.

[140] Heidegger, *Identity and Difference*, 29.

thinking and being are held apart and held together in the event of appropriation,

which is the belonging together and the immediacy of the *is*.

The belonging *together* shifts the focus from individual entities and fixed

identities towards impersonal and pre-individual relation of belonging.[141] This

move allows Heidegger to leap away from Kant's transcendental idealism and

Hegel's speculative logic by destroying the subject-object dualism and producing

knowledge and experience not from the external difference between subject and

object but from the internal difference of the subject from itself.[142] Central to this

manoeuvre is the understanding of truth not as a logical certainty but as

unconcealement.[143] The *technē* of unconcealement is in the belonging together of

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[141] For Deleuze relation of belonging is defined as 'impersonal and pre-individual singularity 'Deleuze, *The Logic of Sense*, 122. While for Heidegger 'belonging together' contains an 'ontic' relation to being, Deleuze seeks to overcome the finitude of both metaphysics and transcendental philosophy by means of a 'Dionysian sense-producing machine in which nonsense and sense are combined.' (ibid.)

[142] Bryant, *Difference and Givenness*, 35. Heidegger, *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics*.

[143] The Greek word for unconcealment is αλήθεια (*alethiea*). Heidegger explains the etymology as the 'un-covering' (of truth): '*un*-concealedness indicates that truth is wrenched from concealment and is in conflict with it. The primordial essence of truth is conflictual.' Martin Heidegger, *Parmenides*, trans. Andre Schuwer and Richard Rojcewicz (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1998), 26. Heidegger is concerned here to signal that *alethiea* is not the truth of a logical argument nor can it be translated as the Latin *veritas*: 'For the main feature of the essence of truth in the modern metaphysics of Schelling and Hegel is never αλήθεια in the sense of unconcealedness but is certainty in the sense of *certitudo*, which, since Descartes, stamps the essence of *veritas*.' Ibid. The understanding of αλήθεια for Heidegger is connected with *technē* and with *poesis* as the processes of differentiation through which the truth of belonging of beings and being is being uncovered. In *Being and Time* Heidegger elaborates: "To translate this word as 'truth' and, above all, to define the expression conceptually in theoretical ways, is to cover up the meaning of what the Greeks made 'self-evidently' basic for the terminological use of αλήθεια as a pre-philosophical way of understanding it.' Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 262 (§219). As several commentators observed, Heidegger's understanding of αλήθεια depends on unusual translation: 'What then does Heidegger mean by "the truth of Being?" [...] Abstractly, the truth of being is thought as the opening or clearing which allow Being as presencing to appear and manifest itself. In order to think this it is necessary to explicate the sense in which Heidegger uses the term "truth." [...]Heidegger interprets "truth" with the aid of an idiosyncratic and etymological translation of the Greek aletheia. Etymologically "aletheia" is a privative of "Lethe," it is the not-hidden, the uncovered." 'Being-true' ('truth') means Being-uncovering." Yet equally essential to

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beings and being as a process of making, constructing and building.[144] However this togetherness should not be understood as a consistency, resemblance or similarity for all of the above require a prior condition or arbitration and in any case judgements of resemblance can only be conducted in the light of day, under the auspice of logical procedure. Togetherness in Heidegger's sense is pre-individual, necessarily phenomenological relation that makes the realisation of being possible through providing a space for action.[145]

The double movement folded in unconcealment creates a feedback loop that alternates hiding and uncovering in an infinite motion that defies the finitude and certainty of truth. This self-referential circuitry of unconcealment allows Heidegger to question the presuppositions of value-driven reasoning and the validity of teleological unfolding of knowledge. The fundamental questions that unconcealment aims to collapse while simultaneously drawing them into focus are concerned with the ontological distinctions between space and body, the

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Heidegger's thinking on truth is the claim that unconcealment also involves concealment, hiddenness.' Mark B. Okrent, "Truth of Being and History of Philosophy," In *A Companion to Heidegger.* Ed. Hubert L. Dreyfus and M. A. Wrathall (Blackwell Malden, MA, 2005), 470.

[144] Some English translations of Heidegger capitalize the word "being", this however is unnatural in English and in this thesis being is written with lower-case 'b' (unless in direct quotation from a translation that uses capitalization.) See William D. Blattner, *Heidegger's Being and Time: A Reader's Guide.* (London ; New York: Continuum, 2006), 14.

[145] Ibid., 471. An example of the togetherness that realises being: 'We stand outside of science. Instead we stand before a tree in bloom, for example–and the tree stands before us. The tree faces us. The tree and we meet one another, as the tree stands there and we stand face to face with it. As we are in this relation of one to the other and before the other the three and we *are*. This face-to-face meeting is not, then, one of these "ideas" buzzing about in our heads.' Heidegger, *What Is Called Thinking?*, 41.

ability of language to represent and the nature of the world as a knowable

substance.[146]

The reframing of truth in a way that brings representation into question,

allows considering photography not as a rational representation and signification

but as a modality of truth that is being unconcealed in difference and through

rhythmic recurrence of intensities. 'Read' in this way, photography's claim to

truth is not to be found in the identity between an object and an image but in

something that prefigures this correspondence by creating the conditions that

make representation possible. [147] According to this (Heideggerian) interpretation

the being of photography is not in the exposure to light, but in the concealment

that contains a relation. No doubt, light has a complex role to play in

photography as it relates all images back to the notions of trace, imprint and

representation.[148] However, what gets lost in the privileging of light as the

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[146] Dreyfus and Wrathall, *A Companion to Heidegger*, 10. Shestov formulated the problem of truth in a way that resonates with Heidegger: 'Everyone has been convinced that man needs knowledge more than anything else in the world, that knowledge is the only source of truth, and especially – I emphasise this particularly and insist upon it – that knowledge furnishes us with universal and necessary truths which embrace all being, truths from which man cannot escape and from which there is consequently no need to escape.' Shestov, *Athens and Jerusalem*, 7.

[147] For the opposite view see Charles Peirce on photography: 'Photographs, especially instantaneous photographs, are very instructive because we know that they are in certain respects exactly like the objects they represent.' Peirce, *Philosophical Writings of Peirce*, 106.

[148] In François Laruelle's recently translated to English work on photography he makes the point to distinguish between light as 'flash of logos' and light of 'Heideggerian arrival': 'The flash of Logos, of the event or axiomatic decision is the Greek model of thought, its circularity, merely differed, effectively its two strips crossed in the interior form of a figure eight and even if the topology arrives in order to form the whole of the subject of the circle of philosophy [...] A deconstruction of the philosophical flash is necessary as well as the deconstruction of the absolute fact of reason of the factum, because the flash of logos and the rational factum are the same structure. Yet these doublets are at worst, these "arrivals" (Heidegger) at best, are philosophically considered as completed and closed by Being or metaphysics, they are negatively and not positively thought as effects of onto-vectorial insurrection.' Francois Laruelle, *Photo-fiction, a Non-standard Aesthetics*, trans. Drew S. Burk (Minneapolis: Univocal, 2012), 37-8.

expression of rational mediation is the ontological difference as the essence of photography. For Heidegger truth (being, aletheia) is the first casualty of metaphysics. Scientific methods and logical reasoning cannot discover truth because the law of identity is being taken as the ground of inquiry. Truth cannot be discovered because it withdraws into darkness, difference and nothingness. Deleuze helps to clarify this point: 'Difference is not diversity. Diversity is given, but difference is that by which the given is given, that by which the given is given as diverse'.[149] Diversity is that which appears in the photograph, it is the pluralism of the Aristotelian categories, the variations in quantities, qualities, position, genus and species. Difference is that which makes all this diversity manifest itself. In a photographic schema diversity is equal to content, but difference could be thought of as a framing device, as an enframing that allows diversity to emerge. For Heidegger, as for Deleuze the deconstruction of representation is necessary because it allows one to get beyond identity and equivalence.[150] Heidegger argues that before an image of a thing can be made, before identity can be established there has to be an enframing that makes it possible to make a statement that coincides with reality.[151] In photography, this 'enframing' is the mode of production that creates self-replicating repetitions.

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[149] Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 280.

[150] Deleuze says: 'we are faced with the alternative between undifferentiated groundlessness and imprisoned singularities'. Deleuze, *The Logic of Sense*, 122.

[151] In *The Question Concerning Technology* Ge-stell is translated as 'enframing' - the overwhelming arrival of technology of the modern age. 'But where have we strayed to? We are questioning concerning technology, and we have arrived now at *Aletheia*, at revealing. What has the essence of technology to do with revealing? The answer: everything.' Heidegger, *The Question Concerning Technology*, 12.

This precondition for veridical statements is for Heidegger the essential task of thinking.[152] Logical reason as manifested in modern technology is the ground from which thought must leap backwards to the original relation of beings and being. This primordial truth is for Heidegger to be revealed in the technology of the modern age, however, this truth is camouflaged and concealed. In other words, truth is at the same time revealed and concealed. The ambivalent status of truth is mirrored in the ambiguity of technology itself: on the one hand technology 'challenges forth into the frenziedness of ordering that blocks every view into the coming-to-pass of revealing and so radically endangers the relation to the essence of truth', but on the other hand technology is a mode of revealing the truth of being 'the coming to presence of technology harbours in itself what we least suspect, the possible arising of the saving power'.[153]

This recursive ambiguity that causes technology to oscillate between the greatest danger and the saving grace is drawn out of the changeability of being itself through history. Early Greek thought experienced being as unconcealment that is not only a statement about the world but also a *techne;* a method for knowing things. *Techne* is different from the know-how and the craftsmanship of material production; it embodies the poetics of uncovering:

> What is decisive in *techne* does not lie at all in making and manipulating nor in the using of means, but rather in the

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[152] Heidegger, *What Is Called Thinking?*, 3-18, 37-47.

[153] Heidegger, *The Question Concerning Technology*, 32-33. & 'technology is a mode of revealing. Technology comes to presence {West} in the realm where revealing and unconcealement take place, where αλήθεια, truth, happens.' Heidegger, *The Question Concerning Technology, and Other Essays*, 13.

aforementioned revealing. It is as revealing, and not as manufacturing, that *techne* is bringing-forth.[154]

This complex understanding of technology as combining skill and *poiesis* is fundamental for the rethinking of photography not as an image but as en event of coming together of self-replication and expression that accomplishes the step out of metaphysics within the realm of the visual.

3.7   Perdurance: Heidegger's move beyond dialectics

> *What is novel about the position we take toward philosophy is a conviction that no prior age shared:* that we do not possess the truth. *All earlier men 'possessed the truth,' even the skeptics.*[155]

This section will lay down the foundations for a non-dialectical understanding of the photographic by first exploring the philosophical underpinnings of the role of representation and its relationship with the '*is*'. This will be accomplished through Heidegger's concept of difference as 'the differentiation of overwhelming and arrival ..., the perdurance (Austag) of the two in *unconcealing keeping in concealment*.'[156] Contrary to Hegel who sets up a dialectical relation of sublation between being and nothing, Heidegger defines the '*is*' as the simultaneous holding together and the keeping apart of being and

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[154] Ibid., 13. While technology requires logic, *techne* requires something more visceral, more poetic while at the same time more down-to-earth. In this regard, Kierkegaard is illuminating in the discussion of the *movements* of the knight of faith. 'this man has made and is at every moment making the movement of infinity... *this requires passion. Every movement of infinity occurs with passion, and no reflection can bring about a movement. That's the perpetual leap in life which explains the movement, while mediation is a chimera which in Hegel is supposed to explain everything and besides is the only thing he has never tried to explain.*' Kierkegaard, Søren, *Fear and Trembling*. (Middlesex, England: Penguin Books, 1985), 69-71.

[155] Nietzsche, (note XI, 159). quoted in: Heidegger, *Nietzsche; The Eternal Recurrence of the Same*, 38.

[156] Heidegger, *Identity and Difference*, 65.

beings.[157] As will be explained in the following sections, perdurance for

Heidegger is the event of exposure in which beings are distinguished from Being

while at the same time espoused by it. It is an event of separateness and

togetherness that defies logical expression as it sustains both identity ($A=A$) and

difference ($A \neq A$). In this way Heidegger overcomes the dialectical imperative of

sublating the one in the other. However, it will be inaccurate to understand

perdurance as the co-existence of opposites, as opposition itself is a formal

category that is dissolved by difference. Heidegger's challenge is to take a step

back out of thought that operates through categories in order to get closer to

'thinking' where all categories are dissolved:

> In our attempt to think of the difference as such, we do not make it
> disappear; rather, we follow it to its essential origin. On our way
> there we think of the perdurance of overwhelming and arrival. This
> is the matter of thinking, thought closer to rigorous thinking–closer
> by the distance of one step back: Being thought in terms of the
> difference.[158]

One of the difficulties in comprehending Heidegger's notion of difference

is in the way Heidegger disposes of the static conception of logic and substitutes

it with something altogether more fuzzy and yet not less productive, as this step

out of rationality allows for movement, noise, irregularity and chaos to enter the

'picture'. In this context, Heidegger's 'step out' of thinking can be usefully

compared to Benoit Mandelbrot taking a 'step out' of Euclidian geometry in

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[157] Infra Chapter 3.4 on Hegelian dialectics and supra Chapter 5.3 on Heidegger's notion of 'perdurance'.

[158] Ibid., 65.

order to get away from the perfection of ideal geometric shapes and closer to

those forms that classical geometry leaves aside as formless:[159]

> I claim that many patterns of Nature are so irregular and fragmented,
> that, compared to *Euclid*... Nature exhibits not simply a higher
> degree but an altogether different level of complexity.... The
> existence of these patterns challenges us to study those forms that
> Euclid leaves aside as being 'formless,'... Mathematicians have
> disdained this challenge, however, and have increasingly chosen to
> flee from nature by devising theories unrelated to anything we can
> see or feel.[160]

According to Mandelbrot, the aim of geometry should not be the pursuit of

pure and abstract truth (identity between shapes), but the mapping of the

irregular topographies and fragmented patterns that make the actual shapes of

trees, clouds, mountains and coastlines. Mandelbrot's geometry is not a

refinement of the standard Euclidian geometry but a radical departure from

rational logic in order to make room for infinite or undefinable values and for

'statistical self-similarity':[161] 'The most useful fractals involve *chance* and both

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[159] In *The Concept of Non-Photography* François Laruelle suggests that photography is a
'Generalised Fractality' François Laruelle, *Le Concept De Non-photographie = the Concept of
Non-photography*, trans. Robin Mackay (Falmouth, UK; New York: Urbanomic. Sequence Press,
2011), 79-84. See infra Chapter 4.

[160] Benoit B. Mandelbrot, *The Fractal Geometry of Nature*. (San Francisco: W.H. Freeman,
1982), 1. It is further illuminating that the way Mandelbrot defines his project as the study of that
which Euclid leaves aside as 'formless' is directly reminiscent of the way Heidegger defines his
project as the study of that which science considers to be 'nothing'. 'If science is right, then only
one thing is sure: science wishes to know nothing of the nothing... In our asking we posit the
nothing in advance as something that 'is' such and such; we posit it as being.'. *What is
metaphysics* Heidegger, *Basic Writings*, 96.

[161] 'Geographical curves are so involved in their detail that their lengths are often infinite or more
accurately, undefinable. [...] Seacoast shapes are examples of highly involved curves with the
property that – in a statistical sense – each portion can be considered a reduced-scale image of the
whole' Benoit B. Mandelbrot. "How Long Is the Coast of Britain," *Science* 156, no. 3775 (1967),
636.

their regularities and their irregularities are statistical.'[162] An image based on the

principles of classical geometry is orderly and hierarchical, representing

idealised objects in a state of perfect symmetry and harmony. Fractal geometry

on the other hand uses chance and statistical distribution and disregards entirely

the laws of perspectival representation, proportion and regularity. It is the

destruction of form, symmetry and hierarchical order that brought these new

structures into the sphere of 'pathology' and 'monstrosity'.[163] For Deleuze too,

difference is always monstrous precisely because it destroys forms, relations and

hierarchies:

> It is as if ground rose to the surface, without ceasing to be ground.
> There is cruelty, even monstrosity, on both sides of this struggle
> against an elusive adversary, in which the distinguished opposes
> something which cannot distinguish itself from it but continues to
> espouse that which divorces it.[164]

Difference is produced in the rising of the ground to the surface without

loosing the ground; it is the same gesture that Heidegger describes simply as

'Being thought in terms of the difference.'[165] On the face of it a paradoxical

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[162] Mandelbrot, *The Fractal Geometry of Nature*, 1.

[163] 'classical mathematics had its roots in the regular geometric structures of Euclid and the continuously evolving dynamics of Newton. Modern mathematics began with Cantor's set theory and Peano's space-filling curve. Historically, the revolution was forced by the discovery of mathematical structures that did not fit the patterns of Euclid and Newton. These new structures were regarded as 'pathological,' ... as a 'gallery of monsters,' kin to the cubist painting and atonal music that were upsetting established standards of taste in the arts about the same time.' Emphasis mine, ibid., 3.

[164] Emphasis mine, Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 36. Olkowski makes a detailed analysis of this statement by Deleuze in the context of both feminist politics and visual art. The analysis presented here is partly based on the understandings afforded by her work. Olkowski, *Gilles Deleuze and the Ruin of Representation.*

[165] Heidegger, *Identity and Difference*, 65.

thought, for being is the 'is' and not difference, but for Heidegger the 'is' is a construct of the mathematically oriented scientific consciousness that represents being as the 'is' and in so doing seeing nothing but its own rules of representation. Like Euclidian geometry, the 'is' operates with rules that represent reality as an idealised, symmetrical and hierarchical form. Getting to being in Heidegger's sense requires stepping out of the 'is' into the untamed territory of presence and belonging together. However, the destruction of the 'is' does not imply that irrationality and chaos writ large, rather, it means that being unfolds as an event that grounds itself in appropriation:

> Being transits [that], comes unconcealingly over [that] which arrives as something of itself unconcealed only by that coming-over. Arrival means: to keep concealed in unconcealedness–to abide present in this keeping–to be a being.[166]

Heidegger suggests that the way out of the 'is' passes through the event of appropriation that lies not only outside of representation but also outside of normative, scientific certainty. Language is the mode of appropriation that pushes beyond knowledge, through which being (Dasein) can overcome representation and discover its active being in the voice of being that speaks through language.[167] However, it is not easy to hear the self-vibrating voice of being that speaks in language. As Heidegger explains it requires going beyond the 'is' into the domain of the poetic:

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[166] Ibid., 64.

[167] 'The event of appropriation is that realm, vibrating within itself, through which man and Being reach each other in their nature, achieve their active nature by losing those qualities with which metaphysics has endowed them.' Ibid., 37.

'Neither the 'is' nor the word attain to thinghood, to Being, nor does the relation between 'is' and the word, the word whose task it is to give an 'is' in each given instance.[168]

Therefore:

What the poetic experience with language says of the world implies the relation between the 'is' which itself is not, and the world which is in the same case of not being and being.[169]

Heidegger proposes a reversal of the normative relation between 'man' as the speaking subject and speech as the spoken object. In this reversal language cesses to be a technology in the hands of man and its poetic essence as 'the house of being' is coming to the fore.[170]

A similar reversal in relation to photography will require the re-evaluation of the photographic '*is*' as the indexicality and the adherence of the referent to the object.[171] Following Heidegger's methodology it will require suggesting that the verisimilitude and the credibility of the photographic image conceals an 'event of appropriation' in which the photographic is released from its everydayness, and difference – rather than identity – is able to rise to the surface. Instead of thinking of the photographic image as something 'given' to perception, a 'step out' of the '*is*' of representation betokens that there is an 'unseen' image

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[168] Martin Heidegger, *On the Way to Language*, trans. Peter Hertz (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1982), 87. As was discussed earlier, supra Chapter 3.1 *Representation: Setting the Problem*, for Heidegger the poetic is inseparable from technology and is framed by it and speaking through it.

[169] Ibid., 87.

[170] 'As language itself bears the secret of its beginning and continued development, it is language that has to be questioned about the force of its evolution. For Heidegger this force, source and origin is being itself.' Joachim L. Oberst, *Heidegger on Language and Death: The Intrinsic Connection in Human Existence.* (London: Continuum international Publishing Group, 2009), 4.

[171] Indexicality, as a key term of Piercian semiotics was discussed supra Chapter 1.

that suggests that an image is not solely the subject of 'viewing', that the image

reveals the essential origin of difference as the ground of representation. It also

suggests that the *poiēsis* of photography is directly linked to exposure as the

repeatable and unrepresentable action in which image and being belong together.

In the context of photography, the 'unseen image' can be specifically and

concretely located in the notion of the latent image. As will be discussed below

in Chapter 3.8 and in Chapter 6, the latent image is the invisible image left on the

light-sensitive surface by exposure:

> No impression can be seen, not even the slightest beginning of the
> picture, And yet the picture already exists there in all its perfection,
> but in a perfectly invisible state...'[172]

The invisible (latent) state of the photographic image is generally

overlooked in photographic theory, it is its 'blind spot', however for this thesis it

is an indication that exposure pushes material perception beyond itself, into its

origin as difference, as the unconcealment kept in concealment.[173] By using the

photographic process against itself, the latent image allows to leap out of the '*is*'

of representation towards an event of appropriation. The latent image permits to

rethink photography as a step-back out of the visual image into the event of

difference that underwrites representation. The overwhelming and arrival of the

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[172] Michel Frizot, *New History of Photography*, trans. Susan Bennett, Liz Clegg, John Crook and Caroline Higgitt (Paris: Könemann, 1998), 61

[173] As a rule, the latent image is mentioned very briefly in a number of histories of photography in the context of Henry Fox Talbot' discovery of the calotype process. Beaumont Newhall, *The History of Photography: From 1839 to the Present.* (New York: Museum of Modern Art. Boston. 1982), Beaumont Newhall, *Latent Image: The Discovery of Photography.* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1983), Vered Maimon, "Displaced Origins: William Henry Fox Talbot's the Pencil of Nature," *History of Photography* 32, no. 4 (2008): 314-325. Frizot, *New History of Photography.*

photographic exposure is the photographic '*is*' in which presence is exposed as hidden. However, this leap into the 'hidden' or latent event that precedes representation is not enough to establish photography as fractal and mimetic surface, as the latent image is still the transcendent reversal of the visible.

If the latent image is considered as the *is* of photography, it suggests that there are two temporal registers involved in the production of the image: the first is the chronological time in which the image is marked by its connection to past events or situations. It is the biological time of decaying bodies in which the image carries a time-stamp of the past that marks its place along the infinite straight line that stretches between the past and the future; and second, it is the time of the latent image. Time of the event, the 'now' which is outside of subjectivity, (the event that must be bracketed out by subjectivity in order to constitute itself). It is the present that is constantly divided into past and future and is outside linear time, immeasurable and inhuman.[174] Two regimes of the image therefore: the visible image which is, as Nancy says, 'disputes the

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[174] In *Logic of Sense* Deleuze defines two temporal series: Chronos and Aion: 'Inside Chronos, the present is in some manner corporeal. [...] The present measures out the action of bodies and causes among themselves. [...] [Anion is] [t]he pure and measureless becoming of qualities threatens the order of qualified bodies from within. Bodies have lost their measure and are now but simulacra. The past and the future, as unleashed forces, take their revenge, in one and the same abyss which threatens the present and everything that exists.' Deleuze, *The Logic of Sense*, 186-7. These two regimes of temporality appear first in Nietzsche's *Thus spoke Zarathustra* where the time of Aion is linked to the eternal return: 'See this moment!' I continued. "From this gateway Moment a long eternal lane stretches *backward*: behind us lies an eternity. Must not whatever *can* already have passed this way before? Must not whatever *can* happen, already have happened, been done, passed by before?' [...] And this slow spider that creeps in the moonlight, and this moonlight itself, and I and you in the gateway whispering together, whispering of eternal things—must not all of us have been here before?' Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra: A Book for All and None.* Ed. Adrian Del Caro and Robert Pippin trans. Adrian Del Caro (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 126. See also Heidegger, *Nietzsche; The Eternal Recurrence of the Same*, 37-44.

presence of the thing' or in other words a monstration, an eruption, a revolution.[175] And the invisible, latent image which is motionless, where nothing ever happens, time of stasis and of surfaces without depth. The latent image is pre-individual because it is located in the temporal space of the event, before the emergence of subjectivity and the concomitant distinction between subject and object.[176]

As will be discussed infra Chapter 5.3, *Heidegger and 'photography'*, for Heidegger the event of arrival is grounded in language as the mode of appropriation through which the nature of life itself is organised as *poiēsis and aletheia*. However it is the submission of this thesis that in the age of technology and instaneity the *'is'* finds its political and ethical articulation not only in language but crucially in the technical image, and particularly in the image of the mobile multimedia.[177]

3.8   Latent image as the event of translation

> Exposure of many minutes in the camera produced no visible image,
> but Daguerre discovered that a 'latent' image formed in the silver

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[175] 'The image is what takes the thing out of its simple presence and brings it to pres-ence, to *praes-entia*, to being-out-in-front-of-itself, turned toward the outside [...] Thus the image is, essentially,"monstrative" or "monstrant." Jean-Luc Nancy, *The Ground of the Image*, trans. Jeff Fort (New York: Fordham University Press, 2005), 21.

[176] Jean-Jacques Lecercle, *Deleuze and Language*. (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), 117.

[177] 'The question of the order of the image is also and more importantly a question about the nature of life itself as politics and perception come, to a greater and greater degree, to be organized by technicity, an organization which functions so as to eliminate pleasure and pain by abandoning affective, temporal life.' Dorothea Olkowski, "Time Lost, Instaneity and the Image." *Parlax* 9, no. 1 (2003): 36.

iodide layer by the action of light could be revealed by treating the plate with the fumes of heated mercury.[178]

When photography is thought of in the context of 'visual culture' it is unavoidably considered either as the figure of critique, as content or as an image of something, as a mimesis, which is one of the oldest definitions of the image in the Western tradition.[179] In each case it is the visual that is the focus of theory and the invisible, the latent is summarily absent. As was indicated in the previous section, the latent image is the hidden image of photography, which by evading visuality and representation allows access to the 'unseen' of the image. The usual description of the latent image as 'an invisible image produced by the exposure of the film to light'[180] suggests that it is an image that cannot be understood in representational terms as verisimilitude. While the question of the latent image will be taken up and developed in a later chapter of this thesis, here the concern

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[178] Brian Coe, *The Birth of Photography: The Story of the Formative Years, 1800-1900.* (London: Ash & Grant, 1976), 16.

[179] As will be discussed infra Chapter 6, *Simulacra and the Latent Image*, there is a more productive understanding of mimesis as 're-enactment', which is more in line with the meaning of the word in Greek philosophy and accords with Adorno's use of the term, see: Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory*, 120, 147,158. In brief: Adorno juxtaposes mimesis to reified representation. Mimesis for him is figured by recognition of the other which transcends binary opposition between subject and object, while representation is the entrenchment of such opposition. There is therefore a parallel between Adorno's conception of mimesis and Benjamin's "Doctrine of the Similar" *Selected Writings Vol. 2*, 694-698. It is worthy of note that Eva Keuls examined all occurrences of the term *mimesis* in the Platonic dialogues and concluded that the common translation of mimesis as "imitation" is incorrect as the ancient Greek meaning of the term is closer to "enactment". The notion of *mimesis* as verisimilitude or 'photographic likeness' was introduced by Plato as an illustration of his theory of forms. It is also significant that before Plato the meaning of *mimesis* was essentially dynamic and dramatic, with direct links to such notions as impersonation, re-embodiment, disguise or miming. *Mimesis* is therefore first and foremost a gesture or a movement of mimicry. Common contemporary translations of *mimesis* as "representation" completely miss the gestural dynamism of the original, pre-Platonic meaning. Eva Keuls, *Plato and Greek Painting.* (Leiden: Brill, 1978), 2.

[180] Wikipedia, s.v. "Latent Image" accessed: January 21, 2013. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Latent_image

is with an image that has no appearance, that is, strictly speaking, nothing. It is indeed regarded as 'nothing' by photography theory inasmuch as it has nothing to say about it. While this 'nothing' also functions as a kind of erasure of the border between presence and absence, between the image and the thing it should not be understood as the transcendental condition of all art.[181] Rather, the latent image has to be understood as the site where the transition between the thing and the image is taking place. The latent image is therefore not the object nor is it the image but the 'third space' where the encounter between the thing and the image is taking place.[182] The necessity of the latent image for the production of the photograph indicates that the kinship between the thing and the image must pass through radical difference.

As the latent image is distinctly under-theorised in photographic literature it is important to listen to those authors who seek to challenge and explicate the common understanding of mimesis. This is because the latent image is the middle point between thing and image and its subtraction from the discourse of photography not only makes it doubly hidden but also reinforces the belief in

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[181] 'To us, art remains 'constantly invisible [constamment invisible], hidden, *en deçà*, and *autre nuit*. But we are drawn to it nonetheless. When the object is doubled and neutralized in the image, when the image withdraws the object from the world, and when the object disappears into its own imagen–then it exercises its fascination, its 'powerless power.'' T. C. Wall, *Radical Passivity: Levinas, Blanchot, and Agamben*. (New York: State University of New York Press, 1999), 112.

[182] 'For the *motivation* of the three-sided property with regard to the figure implies that we have slipped under language, so to speak, and that we have acknowledged that if the figure and the signified property share a community, this community takes place in order representing the sensory in the intelligible, as well as the intelligible in the sensory, precisely the order Kant refers to as schematism. In fact we need to resort to the schema of the ternary, so something like the sequence −U− (every schema being temporal), to a dance, to what is sensory-sensible, to a poly-esthetic body capable of making the triangle's visible form, the rhythm of the tracing hand, and geometrical signification overlap.' Lyotard, *Discourse, Figure*, 44. Also see infra Chapter 6.4, *Latent Image and Subjectivity*, where it will be suggested that photography escapes the binary object-image by establishing the ternary object-unknowable-image.

identity, a belief which this thesis seeks to challenge by contrasting it with the event of difference.

Walter Benjamin considers this difference between the original and the image as the materiality of translation:

> To grasp the genuine relationship between an original and a translation requires an investigation analogous to the argumentation by which a critique of cognition would have to prove the impossibility of an image theory. There is a matter of showing that in cognition there could be no objectivity, not even a claim for it, if it dealt with images of reality; here it can be demonstrated that no translation would be possible if in its ultimate essence it strove for likeness to the original.[183]

Benjamin here complicates the notion of translation by showing that translation as such has no objectivity, as translation itself cannot be revealed. There is no language in which translation can speak, it has no properties of its own, for that reason it is numb. While languages are imbued with the ability to represent things, ideas and concepts, translation itself must remain invisible and selfless. However this is not to say that it is immaterial. Translation is not an object but communication in its 'embryonic or intensive form'.[184]

Following Benjamin's explication, the latent image is neither a visual image, nor is it an object. It is the manifestation of kinship between the object and the image in its intensive form. However, this kinship (Benjamin) or belonging *together* (Heidegger) is hidden, so the only thing that is shown in the

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[183] Benjamin, *Illuminations*, 73.
[184] Ibid., 73.

latent image is what is concealed. The latent image reveals only its own latency but this latency is the possibility and the condition of communication.[185]

Following Benjamin's thought on translation it is possible to suggest that the encounter between the object and the image in the liminal space of the latent image points toward a very different type of mimesis to the one associated with imitation and copy. In the latent image the subject (the thing) is present only as a withdrawal, it is lost to vision and unavailable to the eye as even the shortest exposure to light destroys it. However the thing is not absent from the latent image, it is present as the delay or the interval.[186] The latent image is the kind of immanent present from which both past and present emanate yet it remains singular and undivided. It is non-identical in relation to the object and to the thing, and yet it maintains some kind of cohesion in the form of an encounter that is taking place within the invisible space of the latent image. This encounter as Benjamin says is 'intensive', it is an interplay between two languages: the language of things and the language of images. The latent image is the dynamic interrelation between objects and images manifest as absence or 'nonrelation'.[187]

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[185] There is however a form of photography that does not rely on the latent image. In the so called 'direct positive' processes such as the Daguerreotype (technically a direct positive/negative process), and in 'printing-out' processes the image is formed directly on the light sensitive surface. However, Derrida's assertion that the invisible is the condition of the visible still holds true for those processes, as the image has to be preserved in total darkness prior to development. Jacques Derrida, *Memoirs of the Blind: The Self-portrait and Other Ruins*, trans. Pascale-Anne Brault and Michael Naas (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993), 45.

[186] See supra Chapter 2.2, *Double Articulation.*

[187] 'If meaning is a process of translation from one substance to another of a different order and back again, what it moves across is an unbridgeable abyss of fracturing. If meaning is the in-between of content and expression, it is nothing more (nor less) than the being of their "nonrelation".' Massumi, *A User's Guide to Capitalism and Schizophrenia,* 16.

The problem of linking a thing with an image is not limited to photography. Lyotard teaches that: 'thought, cognition, ethics, politics, history or being, depending on the case, are in play when one phrase is linked onto another.'[188] What Lyotard has in his sights are the doctrines of Western metaphysics that privilege linear, stable and fixed relationship between concepts and forms of expression. These philosophies tend to be hierarchical and tend to posit a clear relationship between meaning and truth by taking representation as the ontological basis of thought: Lyotard exemplifies these by Leibniz's 'Charactersitica Universalis' on the one hand and by Russell's logic on the other.[189] Both these systems are unable to account for situations in which two entities are linked not through identity but through irresolvable difference. Contra these metaphysical models Lyotard enlists two alternatives which he considers to be 'epilogues to modernity and prologues to an honourable postmodernity'[190], these are the upshots of the unrepresentable that resist the foreclosure of difference by technologies of information and commodification. The first is the Kantian 'sublime' as developed in the 'Critique of Judgment', the second is Wittgenstein's 'Philosophical Investigations' and the posthumous writings. It is significant that both Kant and Wittgenstein are proponents of representational thinking in their earlier texts. (Wittgenstein's Tractatus is a work

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[188] Lyotard, The Differend, xii-xiii.

[189] Russell's logic asserts that there is a direct correlation between a unit of meaning and corresponding reality. Calvert,"[Un]disciplined Gestures and [Un]common Sense", 38. Leibniz invented a formal symbolic language aimed at eliminating ambiguity, vagueness and inconsistency from discourse by assigning a symbolic figure to each idea. Jolley, *The Cambridge Companion to Leibniz*. 9-10.

[190] Lyotard, The Differend, xiii.

of logical positivism that continues with the tradition of Russell's logic, and

Kant's Critique of Pure Reason' institutes representation as the intermediary

between sensation and reason.)

4 <u>Archive, Apparatus, Event</u>

> *To experience an event as image is not to free oneself of that event, to dissociate oneself*
> *from it, as is asserted by the esthetic version of the image and the serene ideal of classical*
> *art, but neither is it to engage oneself with it through a free decision: it is to let oneself be*
> *taken by it, to go from the region of the real, where we hold ourselves at a distance from*
> *things the better to use them, to that other region where distance holds us, this distance*
> *which is now unloving, unavailable depth, an inappreciable remoteness become in some*
> *sense the sovereign and last power of things.*[1]

4.1 <u>Introduction</u>

This Chapter takes as its point of departure the observation that the ability

of photography to picture something is usually connected with representational

schemas and ocular regimes of visibility on the one hand and with stillness and

linearity in relation to time on the other. Corollary to this is the insistence on the

subject as the ground of the photogenic operation. Because this is the case, very

few veer from talking about photography outside of the framework of

subjectivity.[2]

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[1] Maurice Blanchot, *The Gaze of Orpheus, and Other Literary Essays.* Ed. Adams Sitney, trans. L. Davis (Barrytown, N.Y. Station Hill Press, 1981), 87.

[2] In his early texts on photography Barthes looked at it through a semiological schema famously saying that photography is 'message without a code' Barthes, *Image, Music, Text.* 17. This structuralist reading was later taken up and developed by Victor Burgin in 'Thinking Photography'. However, at a later stage Barthes was speaking of awakening from 'the dream of scentificity' quoted in: David Macey, *The Penguin Dictionary of Critical Theory.* (London. New York: Penguin Books, 2001), 309. And in *Camera Lucida* (his last work) he turns his back on structuralism and develops a phenomenological approach to photography: 'So I make myself the measure of photographic "knowledge." What does my body knows of Photography?' Barthes, *Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography,* 9. In *Camera Lucida* Barthes offers the *Punctum* as replacement to the earlier notions of denotation and connotation which belong to cultural production. Punctum describes the personal experience of being touched, or wounded by a detail in a photograph. Ibid., 53. The punctum is a detail that appears in the image not through the intention of the photographer but due to the indiscriminate recording of the apparatus. While this

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Against this background this research proposes to rethink photography not as a visual image but as a visible event by exploring how assumptions regarding representation, visibility and subjectivity are challenged in the work of several theorists in relation to language. This is not to suggest that photography has to return to semiology but precisely the opposite: to argue that in becoming aligned with semiotics in the first place, photography theory took the wrong linguistic turn and ended up in a place that makes it very difficult to think about photography as a plurality and multiplicity of meanings. With different emphasis and for different reasons Foucault, Lyotard and Lacoue-Labarthe (and many others) argue for the plurality of language by suggesting alternatives to the rigid semiotic schemas of Ferdinand de Saussure and Charles S. Peirce, and it is the suggestion raised on these pages that photography can learn from this effort.[3]

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aspect is not developed in *CL* it is possible to consider the punctum as a mark of the technology which undermines the centrality of the photographer. Ariella Azoulay explains: 'Barthes sought to use the notion of the punctum to undermine the centrality of the singular photographer, the uncontested ruler of what Barthes terms the "studium" of the photograph, where the punctum figures as a kind of residue neglected by the photographer. But even Barthes' "punctum" didn't undermine the centrality of the photographer as the one who stages the studium and creates the conditions for the emergence of the punctum.' Ariella Azoulay, "Photography", *Mafte'akh; Lexical Review of Political Thought.* Online journal. Tel-Aviv University: Minerva humanities center, 2010 http://mafteakh.tau.ac.il/2010-02/07-2/ (accessed August 6, 2010).

[3] One of the most sustained and influential alternatives to the Saussurean conception of language is proposed by the 'Bakhtin Circle' that was active in Russia in the 1920s-1930s. For instance Voloshinov writes 'Discourse ... arises from the non-verbal real-life situation and maintains a very intimate connection with it. Moreover, discourse is directly filled with that life and may not be detached from it without losing its sense.' Voloshinov, "*Bakhtin School Papers,*" 10. Deleuze and Guattari share Bakhtin's and Voloshinov's suspicion towards dialectical and signifying practices. For instance, like Voloshinov, Deleuze proposes that before language can become a signifying practice is must be an event, as in this passage: 'Denotation and manifestation do not found language, they are only made possible with it. They presuppose the expression. The expression is founded on the event, as an entity of the expressible or the expressed. What renders language possible is the event insofar as the event is confused neither with the proposition which expresses it, nor with the state of the one who pronounces it, nor with the state of affairs denoted

...

As Deleuze, Derrida and others argue, the plurality of language has
something to do with producing sense as well as producing meaning and it is
only because language is capable of sense that it is also capable of philosophy.[4]
This position is expressed most clearly in Deleuze's review of Jean Hyppolite's
Logique et Existence. Deleuze states:

> Philosophy must be ontology, it cannot be anything else; but there is
> no ontology of essence, there is only ontology of sense.[5]

The problem with semiotic and structuralist approaches to language is
their assumed essentialism that takes the form of a clear separation between the
speaking subject and the object that is being spoken of.[6] This opposition between
subject and object is the ground zero of all anthropocentric thought and it is not
difficult to see that theories that understand photography as a process of

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by the proposition. And in truth, without the event all of this would only be noise — and an
indistinct noise. For not only does the event make possible and separate that which it renders,
possible, it also makes distinctions within what it renders possible (see, for example, the triple
distinction in the proposition of denotation, manifestation, and signification).' Deleuze, *The
Logic of Sense*, 208-9.

[4] See Jacques Derrida, "Structure, Sign and Play in the Discourse of the Human Sciences," in
Writing and Difference, trans. Alan Bass (London, New York: Routledge, 2001), 351-370.

[5] Gilles Deleuze, "Review of Jean Hyppolite, *Logique et existence*," in Jean Hyppolite *Logic and
Existence*, trans. Amit Sen and Leonard Lawlor (Albany: State University of New York Press,
1997), 191. This point is taken up and developed by Nathan Widder, "Thought After Dialectics:
Deleuze's Ontology of Sense", *The Southern journal of philosophy* 41, no. 3 (2003): 451-476. As
Amalia Boyer explains, the demand for philosophy to be an ontology is a first and foremost a
political demand: 'Politics is inseparable from ontology. Every ontology is political and every
politics is itself and ontology' Amalia Boyer. "Ontological Materialism and the Problem of
Politics", *The Warwick Journal of Philosophy* 12 (2001): 175.

[6] According to Derrida the immunity to self-awareness stems from the need to have a centre or an
Archimedean point that is both within and outside the discourse: '[I]t has always been thought
that the center, which is by definition unique, constituted that very thing within a structure which
while governing the structure, escapes structurality. This is why classical thought concerning
structure could say that the center is, paradoxically, *within* the structure and *outside* it.' Derrida,
"Structure, Sign and Play in the Discourse of the Human Sciences," 352.

mediation between objective reality and reflective or mimetic images, (i.e. they place the image on one side and the object on the other) belong to the same discursive model. When language is understood from this essentialist, anthropocentric perspective what is being taken for granted is not only the separation between subject and object but also the affinity between thought and truth. This affinity becomes the static kernel of thought and of language.[7] Inside this kernel no movement is possible and while the system can procure new forms of knowledge through dialectical unfolding, and in this way to account for movement, this movement is bound to be external to the subject at the centre of the system.[8] This is also the situation with the theories that see the essence of photography in the image: photography is understood as the making of images from objects by means of representation. Representation is therefore considered as a fact, and photography as the science of this fact.[9]

Overcoming the certainty of representation and subjectivity in the context of photography requires looking beyond the image into the photographic event. It is for this reason that the work of Foucault on the archive is key for this section as Foucault steals the archive from the metaphysical certainty of mimesis and

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[7] '[I]t is presumed that everyone knows, independently of concepts, what is meant by self, thinking, and being.' Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 164. In her analysis of political ontology Amalia Boyer explains that the ontological bases of anthropological thought is its presumed rationality which also necessarily translates into a rational defense of political sovereignty. Boyer, "Ontological Materialism", 175.

[8] 'Knowledge understood in this way is a movement which is not a movement of the thing. It remains outside the object'. Deleuze, "Review of Logique Et Existence by Jean Hyppolite," 192. On dialectical logic and Hegelian negation see supra Chapter 3.4, *Hegel: Reflection, Sublation, Speculation.*

[9] 'Subjectivity will therefore be treated as a fact, and anthropology will be constituted as the science of this fact.' Deleuze, "Review of Logique Et Existence by Jean Hyppolite," 192.

representation and repurposes it as a constellation of discursive fragments that

defines the conditions for the inauguration of subjectivity and representation.[10]

However, there is also additional reason for paying close attention to Foucault in

the context of photography, as Foucault has been a point of reference for a

number of photography studies, most well known of which is perhaps *The*

Burden of Representation by John Tagg.[11] Tagg's text is symptomatic of the way

by which photography theory is making use of Foucault to establish conceptual

consistency of photography as a meaning producing apparatus while oblivious to

the emphasis Foucault places on dismantling precisely such essentialist

understandings.[12] As will be shown in this section, Foucault – like Deleuze –

rejects the ontology of essence that places the subject at the centre of the archival

structure (either in the role of the archivist or as the docile, surveyed body).

Instead, Foucault maintains that the archive archives the difference of discourses

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[10] Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, trans. A.M. Sheridan Smith (London; New York: Routledge, 1989).

[11] Tagg, *The Burden of Representation.*

[12] In his later writings John Tagg reflects on his earlier work by saying: 'In the *Burden of Representation*, I examined the conditions under which the dangerously prolific field of photographic meanings came, in the course of the nineteenth century, to be marked out and segmented, so that a plurality of locally specified, adjacent, but contradictory *photographies* could be institutionalized— each claiming to ground its status on the fundamental character of the medium. It was, however precisely the term, 'the medium' that came under pressure.'… 'The medium' of photography was not given and unified. It was always a local outcome, and effect of a particular closure of the discursive field, a function of a specific *apparatus* or *machine*, in the sense in which Foucault used these terms. The 'medium' had to be constituted and it was multiply defined.' John Tagg, *The Disciplinary Frame: Photographic Truths and the Capture of Meaning.* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2009), xxviii. Here it is clear exactly to what extent Tagg is prepared to follow Foucault and at what point he turns back towards essentialism. Namely: For Tagg, Foucault is useful inasmuch as he explains the production of multiplicity of meanings within a fixed hierarchical structure but he does not take seriously Foucault's criticism of essentialist constructions such as: 'prolific field of photographic meanings'. See Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, 126-131. On the range of methodological problems in applying Foucault to the field of cultural studies see Gavin Kendall, and Gary Wickham, *Using Foucault's Methods.* (London: Sage Publications, 1999), 116-121.

and that subjectivity and reason are produced through this difference.[13] By

evacuating essentialism from the (photographic) archive and restoring to it a play

of distinctions – as Foucault intended – it becomes possible to rethink

photography away from the abstraction of representation. It is at this point that

the work of Lyotard becomes complimentary to this effort as the event that

Foucault considers in terms of discursive practices becomes in the hands of

Lyotard a way of rethinking time away from its linear and chronological

unfolding.[14] By turning finally to Lacoue-Labarthe it will be suggested that the

paradoxical structure of a-logical, a-radical surface establishes the conditions for

non-dialectical, hyperbolic photography that engages not with the representation

of objects but with the materiality of time.

4.2   The Archive and its Discontents

Nothing is less reliable, nothing is less clear today than the word 'archive'.[15]

Photography's realism is often attributed to the technical ability of the

photographic apparatus to capture not only an image of the thing but also

something of the thing itself.[16] The reason photography can be seen as sharing

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[13] Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge,* 126-131.

[14] See infra Chapter 5, *Time: Ecstatic Temporality of the 'is'.*

[15] Jacques Derrida, *Archive Fever: A Freudian Impression,* trans. Eric Prenowitz (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), 90.

[16] A classic example of this approach is the often quoted chapter 'The Ontology of the Photographic Image' from André Bazin's 'What is Cinema': No matter how fuzzy, distorted, or discolored, no matter how lacking in documentary value the image may be, it shares, by virtue of the very process of its becoming, the being of the model of which it is the reproduction; it *is* the

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the existence of the object it represents is because the photographic exposure inscribes not only the physical presence of the object but also a moment in time.[17] This, again, is clear in Bazin: 'photography does not create eternity as art does, it embalms time, rescuing it simply from its own proper corruption.'[18] The notions of photography as a placeholder of memories, memento-mori and an archive of time are derived from this connection between the indexicality of the photograph and its ability to 'embalm' time.[19] However, this way of thinking about the photographic is deeply ocularcentric and metaphysical because it is based on assumptions about human agency as reduced to the perception of logic-driven, chronological continuity. When photography is considered as rational and (implicitly) linked to the rational psychology of the human subject it is difficult to rid it of the dualisms of presence-absence, matter-form and a subject-object.[20] The overarching presumption is that of a human being whose psychological

model.' (emphasis in the original) André Bazin, *What Is Cinema?* trans. Hugh Gray 2 vols. (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University Of California Press, 2004), 14. Similarly in Peter Wollen: 'Photographs... are very instructive, because ... they are exactly like the objects they represent. But this resemblance is due to the photographs having been produced under such circumstances that they were physically forced to correspond point by point to nature.' Quoted in Laura Mulvey, *Death 24 X a Second: Stillness and the Moving Image.* (London: Reaktion, 2009), 55.

[17] On this point see Barthes, *Camera Lucida,* and the discussion of it in Chapter 1, *Introduction.*

[18] Bazin, *What Is Cinema?,* 14.

[19] 'If the archive is constituted by the present itself, it is therefore necessary that the present, in its structure, be divisible even while remaining unique, irreplaceable and self-identical. The structure of the present must be divided so that, even as the present is lost, the archive remains and refers to it as to a non-reproductive referent, and irreplaceable place.' Jacques Derrida, and Hubertus von Amelunxen, *Copy, Archive, Signature: A Conversation on Photography.* Ed. Gerhard Richter trans. Jeff Fort (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2010), 3.

[20] For a discussion of dialectical negation see supra Chapter 3.4, *Hegel: Reflection, Sublation, Speculation,*

continuity is sustained over time, which allows for photographs to act as

windows onto chronologically prior events. It is this separation between the

subject – considered as a constant entity – and the object, which allows

photography to function as a reflection.[21] This understanding of photography

foregrounds a process of archiving by which the object is sublated with the

agency of light to produce an image. The resulting photo-graph is the outcome of

a dialectical negation by which the object is both removed and preserved.[22] As

Dag Petersson observes, this kind of idealistic understanding of photography 'as

a process whereby a purely informal idea (the world as it is) mediates itself

through light and shapes the unstable matter of the chemical emulsion into an

analogical imprint'[23] leads itself all to naturally to identifying parallels with other

disciplines. The example he quotes is taken from Benjamin's 'The Arcades

Project':

> 'The past has left images of itself in literary texts, images
> comparable to those which are imprinted by light on a
> photosensitive plate. The future alone possesses developers active
> enough to scan such surfaces perfectly. Many pages in Marivaux or

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[21] In other words, if photography is defined by the identity it institutes between the image and the subject, there are always implicit assumptions about what does it mean to be (or not to be) an image, and these assumptions are concerned with such essences as lack, absence and negation. See supra Chapter 3.

[22] 'To *archive* is to put away, to shelter, to keep. The German idiom would be *aufheben*. The modality of *Aufhebung*, conventionally translated into English as 'sublation' ushers us into the spaces of the archive. The polysemic meaning of *Aufhebung* implies both preservation and cancellation. Thus, what is *aufgehoben* is also altered through its cancelation. *Aufhebung*, then, provides us with an itinerary to theorizing the modality of the archive.' Cassar, "The Image Of, or In, Sublation," 202. See supra Chapter 3.

[23] Dag Petersson, "Transformations of Readability and Time; A Case of Reproducibility and Cloning," in *Actualities of Aura: Twelve Studies of Walter Benjamin*. Ed. Erik Steinskog and Dag Petersson (Sweden: Nordisk Sommeruniversitet, 2005), 67.

Rousseau contain a mysterious meaning which the first readers of these texts could not fully have deciphered. (André Monglond)[24]

As this quotation demonstrates it is precisely this ability to extract from photography something transcendent and essential that can be applied in equal measure to literature, art or history, which draws the understanding of the image out of a sense of continuity, unity and truth. Viewed through an idealist lens, photography can appear as an eternal and unchanging model of teleological unfolding of truth by means of uncovering or developing. In other words, to pose the discourse of photography as the *a priori* condition of textuality (as Monglond suggests) is to take for granted that there is essential truth to be found both in statements and in images.

For Foucault, this kind of totalising logic is deeply problematic as it proposes metaphysical continuity and identity between regimes and disciplines in place of attention to the 'rules that characterize a discursive practice'.[25] In other words, the challenge for the discourse of photography is to identify its pre-rational singularity, or those qualities that differentiate it from the totalising logic of representation without ever completely detaching it from this logic. One possibility of achieving this is indicated by Heidegger in the essay *The Thing*, where he uses the example of a jug to say that an object cannot be understood scientifically through the analysis of its chemical composition or its physical properties. Rather, an object must be understood within the manifold of human practices, rituals and behaviours that crystallise in the

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[24] André Monglond, *Le Préromantisme français* (Grenoble: Editions B. Arthaud, 1930), vol. 1, quoted in Walter Benjamin, Arcades Project, 482 (N15a,1). Quoted in: Petersson, "Transformations of Readability and Time", 49

[25] Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, 127. These rules are the subject of the following section: *Fractality and Immanence*.

object's essence.[26] In Heidegger's example of the jug its essence is holding and

outpouring.[27] It is significant that the essence of the jug does not depend on whether it

is empty or full because essence is not determined by the content, rather it is

established through the notion of nearness:

> When we think the thing as thing, then we protect the essence of the
> thing in the region from where it essences. Thinging is the essence
> of the thing in the region from where it essences. Thinging is the
> nearing of the world. Nearing is the essence of nearness. Insofar as
> we protect the thing as thing, we dwell in nearness. The nearing of
> nearness is the authentic and sole dimension of the mirror-play of
> the world.[28]

Only by going beyond representation, that in the case of the jug is its

content, it is possible to approach the essence of the thing. This suspension of

representation is absolutely necessary for the mirror play of the world to uncover itself

in the thing. By applying the same approach to photography a path opens that leads

beyond the content of the image into that which constitutes its nearness. It is only in

this nearness and not in the content that world is reflected.[29] However, just as the

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[26] 'The suppositions of physics are correct. By means of them science representation something
actual, according to which, according to which it objectively judges. But is this actual something
the jug? No. Science only ever encounters that which its manner of representation has previously
admitted as a possible object of itself. [...] The jughood of the jug essences in the gift of the pour.
Even the empty jug retains its essence from out of the gift, even if an empty jug is not capable of
an outpouring. But this "not capable" is appropriate to the jug and to the jug alone.' Heidegger,
Bremen and Freiburg Lectures, 8-10.

[27] 'How does the empty of the jug hold? It takes up what is poured in, in order to preserve it for
an outpouring.' Ibid., 10.

[28] Ibid., 19.

[29] The nearness of photography, as that which holds and pours might be found in the verge, or the
frame of the image. This understanding is supported by Derrida is *The Truth in Painting*, for
instance: 'This requirement [to distinguish between the content and the essence of an object]
presupposes a discourse on the limit between the inside and the outside of the art object, here a
discourse on the frame. Derrida, *The Truth in Painting*, 45. And, with a direct reference to
Heidegger's essay: 'this pleasure which draws me toward a nonexistence or at least toward a
thing (but what is a thing? Need here to graft on the Heideggerian question) the existence of

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essence of the jug has nothing to do with the substance it holds, so the essence of photography has nothing to do with light.

As Barbara Bolt comments '[l]ight is the source of universal knowledge, which serves as an objective to be universally achieved. Here light provides the metaphor for rational intelligibility that underpins western understandings of human subjectivity.'[30] Due to the perceived rationality of light, photography provides extremely convincing and convenient site for the grounding of 'truth' as transcendental value, as it seems to be opposed to any kind of arbitrariness; it takes something (object, event) that was part of the flow of time and makes it visual and static by means of light. This is a gesture that presupposes a universal singular unity revealed through the process of reflection and sublation.[31] Situated within the paradigms of bringing to light and revealing the truth photography emerges as the paragon of the way representation operates and as such it is also always linked to the question of ethics and liberal

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which is indifferent to me, such a pleasure determines the judgment of taste and the enigma of the bereaved [endeuillé] relation-labor of mourning broached in advance-to beauty. Like a sort of transcendental reduction, the ēpochē of a thesis of existence the suspension of which liberates, in certain formal conditions, the pure feeling of pleasure.' Ibid., 44. However, the frame should not be understood as the key-line, or the edge of an image, rather it is the visible mark of the fractality of the image which marks the movement of repetition and self-replication as the essence of photography in which, as Heidegger says, can be glimpsed 'the mirror play of the world'.

[30] 'Given the nexus between light and vision, it is not surprising that the photological tenets of western philosophy also underpin its forms of visual representation' Barbara Bolt, *Art Beyond Representation: The Performative Power of the Image*. (London. New York: I.B. Tauris, 2004), 128.

[31] The most comprehensive explanation of dialectics is in Hegel's preface to the 'Phenomenology of Sprit', and in particular in sections §1-10 and §32-6. See supra chapter 3.4 *Hegel: Reflection, Sublation, Speculation*.

democracy.[32] For that reason the investment in the truth-value of photography is not only aesthetic but also political. The notion of photography as the archive of time, the index of truth and guarantor of memory is pervasive and omnipresent. But to consider photography solely as an image and a representation is to suggest that it can be exhaustively described as an archive which, as Foucault warns, is not possible:

> [I]t is not possible for us to describe our own archive, since it is from within these rules that we speak, since it is that which gives to what we can say – and to itself, the object of our discourse – its modes of appearance, its forms of existence and coexistence, its system of accumulation, historicity, and disappearance.[33]

This is to say that the identity of the archive cannot be apprehended by a methodology that is based on representation because representation as a concept and an idea is premised on the notions of totality and finitude.[34] The notion of a society formed by or through representation implies transcendent and universal law on the one hand and the individual and autonomous subjects capable of rational representation on the other.

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[32] '[W]e might conclude that both contemporary identity politics and communitarism regard individual self-identity as fully formed only through representation, as ideally *at one* with manifestation. Any gap, separation of distance between the self and its representation would be the error of political exclusion where a self is belied by stereotypes (for identity politics) or an alienated State (for communitarians). This is why there is an implicit (an occasionally explicit) criticism of modernity, both in contemporary identity politics and communitarianism.' Colebrook, *Ethics and Representation*, 11.

[33] Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, 130.

[34] For Colebrook, the essential quality of representation is that it marks a limit to knowledge: 'Modern philosophy situates itself within the representational limits of the subject. Representation is a condition of finitude. Because knowledge is received from without it must be taken up and re-presented. What can be known is therefore determined and delimited by the representational powers of the subject... Representation marks a limit, a point beyond which knowledge cannot go: a recognition of the point of view of knowledge.' Colebrook, *Ethics and Representation*, 1-2.

However, this is not an indication that the archive is unknown in the Kantian sense of the *noumenum,* or the thing-itself, but rather, that representation cannot account for or grasp a system that is not a static totality.[35] Only common denominators, identities and transcendental statements can be captured by representation, while events and singularities escape it. Representation cannot deal with the 'now' understood as the intuited, authentic present because the gesture of representation, of archiving or sublation creates regularity, distance or preservation in which the subject is suspended, delayed and mothballed. However, what the image fails to capture because it can only deal with lack, absence and finitude is the present space-time, the singularity of non-identity, the production of meaning through the diversity of fragments, the production of subjectivity through the dispersion of surfaces without depth. Considered as an event, the photographic archive is never closed, never completed, never achieving the totalising and universal state of 'truth', and yet it is productive of a form of existence that reclaims difference from representation, a surface out of depth and singularity out of homogeneity:

> '[I]t dissipates that temporal identity in which we are pleased to look
> at ourselves when we wish to exorcise the discontinuities of history:
> it breaks the thread of transcendental teleologies; and where
> anthropological thought once questioned man's being or subjectivity,
> it now bursts open the other, and the outside. In this sense, the
> diagnosis does not establish the fact of our identity by the play of
> distinctions. It establishes that we are difference, that our reason is
> the difference of discourses, our history the difference of times, our
> selves the difference of masks. That difference, far from being the

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[35] Infra Chapter 3.1, *Representation: Setting the Problem.*

forgotten and recovered origin, is this dispersion that we are and make.[36]

The photographic archive is not exhausted by the visible, indeed, as Foucault explains in the above quotation, the archive cannot be confined to the transcendental teleologies (representation being prime example). The archive must remain singular and open, neither to be subsumed under the cloak of metaphysics nor to become an accident and dissipate into the void. Only by being singular and non-individualistic can the archive overcome the entrapments of desire, lack, negation and visuality, which in every case maintain rational cohesiveness by being anchored in pre-discursive notions of time, space and movement.[37] The existence of logic, structure, chronology and subjectivity cannot be simply presupposed because it begs the question of the origin of this logic, of that chronology. The non-archival archive Foucault demands in the above quotation is the answer to the question of origins, as it is the medium through which difference takes place.[38]

Foucault's strategy in overcoming the representational force of the archive is by considering the archive not as a container of some pre-archival knowledge,

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[36] Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge,* 131.

[37] On this point see Nathan Widder: 'the understanding of groundlessness as a Lack that denotes both the incompleteness of any structure of differences as well as an excess that escapes structuration is... inadequate... because of its reliance on an understanding of difference as being in the fist instance a negation, this thinking continues to carry with it metaphysical baggage that it purports to overcome. It retains notions of space, time and movement that are precisely put into question by the very difference it has explicated, and which are insufficient in a 'postmodern' world increasingly characterized by a multiplication of spatial and temporal dimensions, and not simply spatial and temporal sites.' Nathan Widder, "What's Lacking in the Lack: A Comment on the Virtual". *Angelaki* 5, no. 3 (2000): 118-9.

[38] See Colebrook, *Ethics and Representation,* 167-8.

but as a force that is inseparable from any knowledge, utterance or statement. By detaching the archive from its foundations in metaphysics Foucault can make the claim that it is not the subject who produces the archive but it is the archive that produces the subject.[39] For photography it means that neither indexicality nor representation nor mummification of time succeed in exhaustively describing photography because in each case the question of the genesis of these operations remains unresolved. The positivity of the photographic discourse, its conceptual consistency as *apparatus* is expressed through the plurality of fragments that forms the *a priori* difference of the image. Difference is the condition that allows the creation of the photographic fragment as surface without depth but with the ability to self-replicate as copy-of-copy-of-copy. This is not a question of discovering what the image is of, but of allowing the image to have certain expressivity (that does not express a *something*), certain eventness, a way of

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[39] Georgio Agamben points out that at the time of writing *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, Foucault did not yet use the term 'apparatus', using the term 'positivity' instead. By tracing the genealogy of positivity through Hyppolite's writings on Hegel, Agamben establishes that 'positivity' is the historical element by which Foucault overcomes Hegelian universals such as 'State, Sovereignty, Law and Power ... an apparatus is the network [*le réseau*] that can be established between these elements'. Giorgio Agamben, *What Is An Apparatus? And Other Essays*, trans. David Kishik and Stephan Pedatella Meridian. (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2009), 7. Agamben concludes that 'apparatuses must always imply a process of subjectification, that is to say, they must produce their subject.' Ibid., 11. This genealogy allows to establish a correspondence between two key moments of Foucaultian terminology: the apparatus and the archive. In *The Archaeology of Knowledge* the chapter titled: 'The Historical *a priori* and the Archive' opens with the following sentence: 'The positivity of a discourse – like that of Natural History, political economy or clinical medicine – characterizes its unity throughout time, and well beyond individual *œuvres*, books, and texts.' It goes on to situate the archive not as a discourse, but as that by which the discoursivity comes into being: the event that escapes totality and which is 'at once close to us and different from our present existence, it is the border of time that surrounds our presence, which overhangs it, and which indicates it in its otherness...' Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, 131.

inhabiting a 'now' which is non-visual, non-identical, non-discursive but dynamic and a-temporal.

By re-configuring the archive as apparatus Foucault is concerned to point out that the purpose of the archive is not to be a placeholder of memories, a copy or a replica. At the same time Foucault does not seek to destroy the mimetic quality of the archive, rather his aim is to propose an archival model that does not rely on the original-copy paradigm in which the archive is the imperfect copy of an original:

> The archive is not that which, despite its immediate escape, safeguards the event of the statement ...[n]or is the archive that which collects the dust of statements that have become inert once more, and which may make possible the miracle of their resurrection; it is that which defines the mode of occurrence of the statement-thing; it is the system of its functioning.[40]

There is an underlying structure to the archive that does not speak to the relationship of the archive to the world but to the self-identical relationship of the archive to itself. Rather than a form of mummified time or a memory prosthetic that warrants identity and continuity by demarcating and ordering time, the archive is a multiplicity of self-identical fragments that preserves the possibility of diversity, multiplicity and difference:

> Far from being that which unifies everything that has been said in the great confused murmur of a discourse, far from being only that which ensures that we exist in the midst of preserved discourse, it is

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[40] Ibid., 129.

that which differentiates discourses in their multiple existence and specifies them in their own duration.[41]

The photographic archive (if we can still use this term) is not an archive of images, of past moments, events and situations, rather it is the archive of a form of duration that is specific to photography and related to its *techne* of fragment and copy. The photographic archive does not archive images but the specific durationality that preserves the fractal, fragmented time of the photographic exposure.

Following Foucault (and Heidegger) it becomes possible to argue that photography is not a form of representational knowledge, it cannot be grounded in light, logic or vision, as these are pre-determined through specific historical narratives.[42] Rather, photography has its own plurality; its own 'other' that is disclosed in the way photography makes itself present, or manifests itself in the world through reproduction. This manifestation is contained within its mode of production and reproduction that suggests a form of non-chronological temporality that can accommodate fractal and fragmented surface events.

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[41] Ibid., 129.

[42] Rodolphe Gasché comments on plurality (or equiprimordiality) in Heidegger: 'The plurally structured origins are thus characterized not only by the fact that they cannot be derived from one another. Equiprimordial structural phenomena are therefore heterogeneous.' Gasché, *The Tain of the Mirror,* 182. Gasché quotes from Heidegger's lectures of 1925-6 entitled *Logic: The Question of Truth*: 'In a general mode we say that the so-called structures that show a plurality are equiprimordial. In this way, we have already warded off the possibility of deriving one from the other, of constructing one on top of the other [...].' Ibid., 181.

4.3   Fractality and Immanence

The reason photography is able to claim purchase in the domain of fractal multiplicity is because it is possible to consider it not as a representation that is pointing to an external and chronologically removed event outside of it, but as an event in its own right which contains certain power by way of it being an event of repetition. Overcoming representation cannot be achieved by replacing it with another kind of essence. [43] What is required is a theory that can liberate photography from the representational paradigm without however installing another externally given rule. By considering photography not as an image but as an event it becomes possible to initiate another series that does not collude in representation, rather it is a way by which representation itself can be disseminated. The event of photography is not related to the content of the image, it is not describable in pictorial terms and it cannot be aligned with events that are external to it. Photography as event is derived entirely from the power to reproduce, which generates self-replicating copies. However, this power to replicate should not be understood as photo-copy, but as the production of difference. Difference here is not the difference between representations, but difference in its pure form: an autonomous difference which allows moving

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[43] As Foucault says in his review of Deleuze's *Difference and Repetition* and *Logic of Sense*: 'Overturn Platonism: What philosophy has not tried? [...] Plato is said to have opposed essence to appearance, a higher world to this world below, the sun of truth to the shadows of the cave [...]. But Deleuze locates Plato's singularity in the delicate sorting, in the fine operation that precedes the discovery precisely because it calls upon it, and tries to separate malign simulacra fro the masses [*people*] of appearance. Thus *it is useless to attempt the reversal of Platonism by reinstating the rights of appearances, ascribing to them solidity and meaning* [...].' Emphasis mine. Michel Foucault,"Theatrum Philosophicum", *The Essential Works of Michel Foucault, 1954-1984. Vol. 2, Aesthetics*, 343-345.

beyond representation.[44] The ability of photography to be re-produced through self-replication suggests the presence of a force that has no signifying power, yet it is the site of the creation of sense.[45] The question of content, of the subject and the way the world is represented to the subject is superseded in favour of an incorporeal sense that allows moving beyond ontology.

It will be remembered that Heidegger posited a pre-ontic being as the event of ontological difference that precedes representation.[46] However, this move was severely criticised by Adorno who claims:

> The term 'ontological difference' permits his [Heidegger's – DR] philosophy to lay hands even on the insoluble moment of entity. What we are to understand by such a 'being' alleged to be quite independent of the ontical sphere–this, of course, has to remain unsettled. Definition would involve it in the dialectics of subject and object, in the very thing from which it is to be exempt. [...] Talk of the 'ontological difference' comes down to the tautology that Being is not entity because it is Being.[47]

Heidegger is accused of tautology because he posits something as the basis of the discourse that cannot be the subject of the discourse, in this way – according to Adorno – subjectivity is brought back as contraband. However, it is still possible that that which cannot be discoursed can be pointed at in silence.

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[44] 'To consider a pure event, it must be given a metaphysical basis. But we must be agreed that it cannot be the metaphysics of substances, which can serve as a foundation for accidents; nor can it be a metaphysics of coherence, which situates these accidents in the entangled nexus of causes and effects. The event–a wound, a victory-defeat, death–is always an effect produced entirely by bodies colliding mingling, or separating, but this effect is never of a corporeal nature it is the intangible, inaccessible battle that turns and repeats itself a thousand times' [...]. See also: Deleuze, *The Logic of Sense*, 169-175, 241-249, 291-302.

[45] See Supra Chapter 3.2

[46] Supra Chapter 3.6

[47] Adorno, *Negative Dialectics*, 115-6.

The event of photography presents just such a possibility because here difference is produced not discursively but by means of mechanical reproduction and self-replication. Drawing upon Heidegger's definition of technology as pre-subjective it is possible to claim that photography establishes the event of ontological difference without lapsing into subjectivity.

The time of the photographic event is opposed to the linear chronological time of the photographic image that presupposes cohesiveness and uninterrupted continuity. The instaneity of the photographic exposure is not a blip on the linear continuum but a point set outside of it which however allows taking account of the fact that the linear continuum is itself historical construction. In other words, the expressivity of the photographic event which expresses nothing but its own expressivity and constitutes its own essence is at the same time inseparable from the visible image and is in direct opposition to its representational and communicative codes.

While the photographic image always assumes the discourse of representation as its ground and mimesis as its ontological foundation, the photographic event has a different dynamic that institutes multiversal and fractal ontology that establishes its own form of logic that is a- representational, a-individual, non-identical and a-rational. According to Lyotard, this form of logic is associated with anxiety and privation[48], while for Lacoue-Labarthe this logic

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[48] Lyotard, *The Lyotard Reader*, 197-8. Foucault too emphasises the 'cruelty' of this logic: 'Physics concerns causes, but events, which arise as its effects, no longer belong to it. Let us imagine a stitched causality: as bodies collide, mingle and suffer they create events on their surfaces, events that are without thickness mixture, or passion; for this reason they can no longer be causes.' *The Essential Works of Michel Foucault, Vol. 2*, 349.

of the event is a product of the irresolvable internal paradox of representation by which representation always strives to make the subject present yet only has artificial substitutes at its disposal (words and pictures). This rupture at the heart of representation splits and disintegrates subjectivity and identity and in so doing is establishes a sensual logic that Lacoue-Labarthe names 'mimetology'.[49]

Foucault, Lyotard and Lacoue-Labarthe institute something they name respectively *archive,* or *sublime* or *mimetology* in order to make it possible to discard or supersede rational logic not because this logic does not work but because it works all too well by describing states of affairs, events and situations. However, like Euclidian geometry this logic only captures idealised forms and perfect, static shapes and has nothing to say about movement and change.[50] For Foucault, the political problem of the archive, which is to say the problem of its power, is not to explain the hierarchical structure of knowledge and the sovereignty of the archivist, but to account for 'points of contact, places of insertion, irruption, or emergence, domains or occasions of operation'[51] – not to expose the operation or representation in the hospital or in the prison but to explore the conditions of mutation, the mechanisms of re-shaping and the levers of amendment that both produce and delimit notions of self and subjectivity. For Lyotard, the sublime is the 'now' that allows one to ask 'is it happening', that is

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[49] Phillippe Lacoue-Labarthe, *Typography: Mimesis, Philosophy, Politics.* Ed. Werner Hamacher and David E. Wellbery (Stanford University Press, 1998). See Chapter 6.2, *Between Representation and Simulacra, or How to Make Yourself a Quasi-Representation.*

[50] See supra Chapter 3. On non-Euclidian science and implications for ontology see Golding, "The Assassination of Time".

[51] Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge,* 128.

to say, to witness the inexpressible, that which 'cannot be presented and which remains to be presented' and so to undo the presumption of static, linear and chronological time.[52] For Lacoue-Labarthe, the internal paradox of the logic of representation is symptomatic of the subjectal loss (desistance) which suggests the possibility of an 'abyssal' logic and a return to a more paradoxical, undecidable subject that manifests his/herself by self-absence.[53] Foucault, Lyotard and Lacoue-Labarthe do not advocate the liquidation of systemic thought, but they are in pains to point out that a system does not need to be homogenous, unified and unmoving in order to work. In each case rational, representational, totalising logic is rejected in favour of system that is a-logical, fragmented, non-linear, paradoxical and yet effective in explaining how change operates and in getting to grips with some kind of incorporeal materiality that escapes all forms of dialectical thought.

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[52] Lyotard, *The Lyotard Reader*, 208-11. The way the undecidable operates was developed by Jacques Derrida in *Limited Inc.*: '[U]ndecidability is always a *determinate* oscillation between possibilities (for example, of meaning, but also of acts). These possibilities are themselves highly *determined* in a strictly *defined* situations... they are *pragmatically* determined. [...] I say "undecidability" rather than "indeterminacy" because I am interested more in relations of force, in differences of force, in everything that allows, precisely, determinations in given situation to be stabilized through a decision of writing (in the broad sense I give to this word, which also includes political action and experience in general)' Derrida, *Limited Inc*, 148. When Derrida describes the political significance of undecidability, he is concerned to emphasize that it is not a question of total indeterminacy or some kind of abrogation of responsibility. To the contrary, that the object of undecidability is to assert the radical freedom and struggle involved in making a decision. Without an element of undecidability, the main precondition for an ethical decision is not being met. What Derrida helps to delineate is the way by which an image maintains within itself a heterogeneity that does not reach a limit or an end, preventing it from becoming pre-determined, or conditioned on some kind of moral imperative, logical necessity or instrumental indexicality. The question of undecidability is examined in depth infra Chapter 6, *Simulacra and The Latent Image.*

[53] Lacoue-Labarthe, *Typography*. see also John Martis, *Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe: Representation and the Loss of the Subject.* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2005), 48-52.

All three approaches converge on the subject of photography as taken up by this thesis and allow conceiving of it not as a form of identity but as a form of irreducible difference. Traditional approaches that allow representation to take over, do not consider photography as something to do with change as it is generally seen as a way of freezing, mummifying or fixing. Both in its theoretical and in its lay sense photography is seen as a communication of a past moment at all points in time. The photograph once taken is available anywhere, anytime; it is always producing the past by re-establishing it somewhere else. In this way photography is always seen as insisting on linear, chronological time. But, as the work of Foucault, Lyotard, Deleuze and Lacoue-Labarthe demonstrates, this linearity is at best misleading, at worst politically dangerous and in any case it does not help to understand how sense is being established in the case of the visual image. Incorporeal materiality can be understood as a kind of environment around which the visual gets mapped without imposing representation, and that can only be thought through fully with the notion of the archive, the sublime, the event and the abyssal/mimetic logic that deals with questions of time as the 'now' rather than with the notions of linearity which depend on the chronological conception of time.[54]

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[54] Incorporeal materiality, or 'ana-materialism', is a concept developed by Johnny Golding across a number of texts, see: Golding, "Fractal Philosophy" and "Ana-materialism and the Pineal Eye".

4.4   Event-image and the Sublime

In the previous section a move was initiated to detach photography from

the idea of the image (with all its metaphysical/semiological/ representational

baggage) and to suggest that as long as photography is considered in visual terms

something remains unaccountable for. The evocations of Foucault's

understanding of the archive, Lyotard's treatment of the sublime and Lacoue-

Labarthe's reworking of mimesis were designed to delineate the kind of

operation required to produce logic that can account for change and movement.

As Foucault in particular is making abundantly clear, it is not representation that

accounts for the way power operates but movement and change. For that reason,

logic that has no way of addressing change has no political radicality of its own.

As was pointed out earlier, it is exactly because language is capable of both

change and stasis that it is tantamount to philosophy. Language already implies

plurality.[55] On the other hand, photography traditionally implies exactly the

opposite: a static, fossilised moment in time, frozen and immobile. Numerous

accounts, whether concerned with the history, the meaning or the culture of

photography consider its essence as the ability to fix an image that is in some

ways identical to the thing.[56] In all these (representational) accounts the visible of

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[55] As Deleuze discusses in *Difference and repetition*, the plurality of language is due to it containing both meaning (which can be true or false) and sense (which can be thought of as intonation, timbre or style): 'Two dimensions may be distinguished in a proposition: *expression*, in which a proposition says or expresses some idea; and *designation*, in which it indicates or designates the objects to which what is said or expressed applies. One of these would then be a dimension of sense, the other the dimension of truth and falsity.' *Difference and Repetition*, 191.

[56] consider for instance Barthes famous dictum: 'photography repeats to infinity that which can never be existentially repeated' Barthes, *Camera Lucida*, 6.

photography is taking precedence over the invisible. This is not only because photography is considered as the discourse of the visible, but also because these theories are themselves representational in the sense that they seek to find meaning and identity in photography.

However, as was discussed earlier, considered as the paragon of identity photography remains immune to movement, change and difference.[57] This section will move the argument forward by suggesting that to fully account for both the visual image and a visible and expressive dynamic that lies outside of identity, photography has to be considered as an ontology.[58] This is not in order to strip photography of its representational and aesthetic functions but to suggest that the *techně* of representation and the image produced with this *techně* already involve the concept of difference.[59] As Heidegger explains in *The Question Concerning Technology*, technology is the discourse of the impersonal and pre-subjectival:

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[57] Supra Chapter 4.2, *The Archive and its discontents.*

[58] For Bergson the image is an ontology as it mediates between consciousness and the mater. Here Bergson uses photography metaphorically yet he insists on the ontological primacy of the image. Bergson rejects representation by insisting that the image is not the given but that by which the given is given, i.e. sense and not essence: 'The whole difficulty of the problem that occupies us comes from the fact that we imagine perception to be a kind of photographic view of things... – a photograph which would then be developed in the brain matter by some unknown chemical and psychical process of elaboration. But is it not obvious that the photograph, if photograph there be, is already taken, already developed in the very heart of things and at all the points of space? No metaphysics, no physics even, can escape this conclusion.' Bergson, *Matter and Memory*. 38.

[59] Heidegger in "The Age of the World Picture" uses the notion of picturing something specifically as the essential quality of modernity: 'Where the world becomes picture, what is, in its entirety, is juxtaposed as that for which man is prepared and which correspondingly, he therefore intends to bring before himself and have before himself, and consequently intends in a decisive sense to set in place before himself. Hence world picture, when understood essentially, does not mean a picture of the world but the world conceived and grasped as picture.' Heidegger, *The Question Concerning Technology*, 129.

Technology is therefore no mere means. Technology is a way of revealing. If we give heed to this, then another whole realm for the essence of technology will open itself up to us. It is the realm of revealing, i.e. of truth.[60]

For Heidegger, technology is not (only) means to an end; it is also an ontology because truth reveals itself in the technology of the age. This however requires careful unpacking, as it will be a mistake to think of truth here in the sense of essence or as something that can be represented. Truth for Heidegger is always out of reach, it makes thought possible by being the un-thought. Being on the outside of thought, truth cannot be represented for it is the continuous process of revealing and concealing understood not dialectically as opposites that cancel each other out and merge into each other but as a univocity in which the belonging together of revealing and concealing is required to form the event, the now, the exposure of perdurance.[61]

According to this non-dialectical understanding of truth, the visible photographic image is not opposed to, or separate from that which is invisible and absent, rather, the visible and the invisible are co-present in the realm of the

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[60] Ibid., 12. Lovitt explains the nuanced meaning of the word 'truth' (*Wahrheit*) in this context; it points not only to the usual for Heidegger notion of 'unconcealement' but also 'to keep safe, to preserve' by making manifest. Uncovering (αλήθεια) is for Heidegger a-personal and pre-individual notion of truth that cannot be captured metaphysically, yet it is being translated in the technology of the age. The notion of truth as the uncovering positions it before chronological / calculable time as the time of eternity. The truth of technology therefore is unconcealement and safekeeping by way of making manifest. This connection between technology and truth allows to conceive of photography as the technological safekeeping of non-chronological time understood as perdurance or exposure. William Lovitt, "Introduction," in *The Question Concerning Technology*. Supra: Chapter 5.4: *Heidegger and 'photography'*.

[61] 'The α in α-λήθεια in no way means simply an undetermined universal 'un-' and 'not.' Rather, the saving and conserving of the un-concealed is necessary in relation to concealment, understood as the withdrawal of what appears in its appearing. The conserving is grounded in a perpetual saving and preserving.' Heidegger, *Parmenides*, 124. On the subject of dialectical thought see supra Chapter 3.4, *Hegel, Reflection, Sublation, Speculation*.

technological unfolding in which what is coming to presence is the event of non-chronological, immeasurable time. It is precisely because photography is generally considered as the technology that archives (chronological) time that it has a privileged relationship with the 'event of appropriation' (*Ereignis*) in which the ontological, non-chronological time is revealing itself as independent from past, present and future.[62] The difference between the image of photography and the event of photography is therefore connected with a conception of time: The photographic image, by force of its technology presupposes the existence of reality outside itself and of a past of which it is an image. The photographic event, on the other hand, is the reality of technology itself as the revealing and concealing the way by which the actual reveals itself as the force of reproduction.

The notion of the photographic event is in close proximity to the notion of the event as developed by Lyotard across a number of texts, particularly 'The Sublime and the Avant-Garde' and 'Lessons on the analytic of the Sublime'.[63] Lyotard's notion of the event is drawn out of Heidegger's 'event of appropriation' inasmuch as it points towards the present-unrepresentable, (naming the unnameable) 'now'. But Lyotard is also using Heidegger against

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[62] See infra Chapter 5, *Time: Ecstatic temporality of the 'is'*.

[63] Jean-François, Lyotard, *Lessons on the Analytic of the Sublime: Kant's Critique of Judgment*. Ed. Werner Hamacher and David E Wellbery trans. Elizabeth Rottenberg (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1994). Lyotard, *The Lyotard Reader*, 197-211.

Heidegger to complicate the event as the unnameable of Heidegger's own thought.[64]

Following Lyotard's notion of the event it becomes possible to suggest that there is more to photography than an image-based approach would suggest. Lyotard is using Kant's distinction between the beautiful and the sublime to propose that there is an additional dimension to the correspondence between images and things that evades any form of representation.[65] Furthermore, this dimension cannot be comprehended by consciousness and it dismantles subjectivity as the immobile and totalising centre of the essentialist worldview. However, this inscrutable and largely unknowable dimension grounds the notion of the 'event' as placed outside of chronological time, being essentially timeless as well as accounting for the reversal by which the invisible and the unknown becomes the basis for the possibility of the visible. For Lyotard the event goes to the heart of that which cannot be spoken of:

> What we do not manage to formulate is that something happens, *dass etwas geschieht*. Or rather, and more simply, that it happens ... *dass es geschieht*. Not a major event in the media sense, not even a small event. Just an occurrence.[66]

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[64] This is the subject of 'Heidegger and the "Jews"': 'From *Führer*, the thinker changes into *Hüter*, guardian: guardian of the memory of forgetting. Here, as in Wiesel, the only narrative that remains to be told is that of the impossibility of narrative. Here, I would say, is the 'moment' in Heidegger's thought where it approaches, indeed, touches, the thought of 'the jews'. Jean-François Lyotard, *Heidegger and "the Jews"*, trans. Mark Roberts and Andreas Michel (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1990), 80.

[65] Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Judgement*, trans. Nicholas Walker (Oxford. New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 75-77.

[66] Lyotard, "Lyotard Reader," 197.

It is the reminder that there is something that is not yet absorbed,

assimilated or processed by consciousness, and that this something is the

moment of consciousness's own disappearance. This stuttering of consciousness,

the failure to grasp and to account for the now-event is the moment of the

sublime. In this moment of malfunctioning, consciousness becomes exposed to a

different temporal order in which the causal link between cause and effect is

broken and the chronological sequence becoming damaged.[67] Lyotard

demonstrates how Kant understood the sublime as both pleasure and pain, as

'conflict between the faculties of a subject, the faculty to conceive of something

and the faculty to 'present' something.'[68] In the case of a (visual) image, the

sense of pleasure from the work of art testifies to causal connection between

sensory perception and conceptual cognition; the aesthetic experience is nothing

other than the confirmation that representational conduit between the mind and

the body is uninterrupted and proceeds within the allocated chronological

framework. The sublime however operates in a different way:

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[67] Lyotard here draws on a line of argumentation put forward by Adorno. In the section of Negative Dialectics titled 'The Crisis of Causality' Adorno speculatively suggests that: 'Even Kant would have to admit that an awareness of all the causal sequences that intersect in every phenomenon—instead of it being unequivocally determined by causality in the sequence of time—is essential to the category itself.' Adorno here indicates the internal contradiction of Kantian causality for if causality is taken seriously, as Kant intended, it will have to be extended indefinitely contradicting the finitude of Kantian conception of historical time. Adorno, *Negative Dialectics*, 266. For Adorno, society (as well as consciousness) cannot be explained away with the tools of causality. See also: O'Connor, *Adorno*, 28-9.

[68] Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition*, 77.

It takes place, on the contrary, when the imagination fails to present an object which might, if only in principle, come to match a concept.[69]

Lyotard draws further subtle distinction between the Kantian (modern) sublime and the 'postmodern' sublime whereby in Kant the sublime exposes the failure of representation to reach out to ideas that cannot be represented, such as 'the idea of the world' and 'the idea of a simple (that which cannot be broken-down and decomposed)',[70] the postmodern sublime on the other hand 'puts forward the unpresentable in presentation itself'.[71] Lyotard's postmodern sublime suggests that the event is an encounter with the immeasurable and the irrational in which subjectivity is dissolved. Neither language nor visual representation can encompass these moments of the total dissolution of identity, which for Lyotard makes the sublime into a political problem, for it raises the question of accounting for the non-identical, minoritarian, culturally or politically unrepresented.[72]

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[69] Ibid., 78. Here Lyotard is almost paraphrasing Adorno. Compare with: 'The name of dialectics says no more, to begin with, that the objects do not go into their concepts without leaving a remainder...' Adorno, *Negative Dialectics*, 5. The 'remainder' is precisely the failure of representation to create a perfect match between an object and a concept. For Adorno, this failure of representation to reify a concept to such an extent that it becomes identical with the object is the very possibility of thought that can think its own condition as transformative of the world rather than descriptive. Lyotard goes beyond Adorno when he gets hold of the same moment when representation / reification fails, as a possibility of stepping not only outside of language but also outside of subjectivity.

[70] Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition*, 78.

[71] Ibid., 81.

[72] The political implications of the non- representational are developed by Lyotard in relation to questions of law and language-based schemas in *The Differend*, and in relation to the politics of the other in *Heidegger and 'the Jews'*.

Positioning of representation as both aesthetic and political problem stems

from the understanding of representation as grounded in a logic that is externally

given and chronologically prior to the objects or entities mediated by it. The

double helix of representation is already discernible in this simple definition, as

on the one hand representation contains within it an appeal to reason as the

guarantor of the truth-value of representation, and on the other hand this appeal

is projected into a time frame of causal and chronological relations.

However, Lyotard's distinction between the 'modern' and the

'postmodern' sublime should not be understood as a temporal sequence in which

the postmodern comes after the modern. The modern sublime is contaminated by

the unholy alliance of subjectivity and representation that treats the image as a

copy or a mimetic surface. The postmodern sublime aims to restore to the image

the ability to inspire respect and terror, being not a mirror of reality but an active

force weaved into the fabric of the real.[73] Lyotard's postmodern sublime has

strong parallels with Heidegger's notion of αλήθεια as was discussed in the

begging of this section.[74] Following Heidegger, the sublime is 'rescued' from its

association with subjectivity, and the image from its association with

representation in order to establish it as pre-visual and pre-signifying event.

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[73] Cf. Foucault, "The Discourse on Language": 'true discourse – in the meaningful sense – inspiring respect and terror, to which all were obliged to submit, because it held sway over all and was pronounced by men who spoke as of right, according to ritual, meted out justice and attributed to each his rightful share; it prophesied the future... contributing to its actual event...' Michel Foucault, "The Discourse on Language," In *Critical Theory Since 1965.* Ed. L. Searle and H Adams, trans. Rupert Swyer (Florida State University Press, 1986), 150.

[74] See also Heidegger, *Parmenides,* 19-59 passim.

Tellingly, the example Lyotard uses for the 'unrepresentable' is the Hebraic *Makom* which is both the word for *place* and one of the names of the Jewish god. Through this idiom Lyotard develops the notion of a 'now' that is not the 'present-instant' but more like an instant-present. The link with Judaism here serves the dual purpose of connecting the image-event with the notion of the non-representable god (and the ban on visual representation) on the one hand and with the impossibility of foreclosure of the image by the power of reason on the other. Additionally, the link with Judaism suggests that the '*is*' is not in space but in time. This is precisely the paradoxical meaning of *makom* in the Hebraic tradition: the word *place* can be used to name god because being omnipresent and eternal god is in no place.[75] Witnessing is not visual, as the iconoclastic tradition forbids making images, the *makom* (place) is the witness. For this reason, as will be shown below, for Lyotard the sublime is not related to space but to time.

To sum up: Lyotard differentiates the image-event from the Kantian sublime in the *Critique of Judgement*. For Kant the sublime is an aesthetic judgement and while it is suprasensible it remains within the framework of subjective mediation of reason and nature.[76] The image-event that Lyotard is talking about in *The Sublime and the Avant-Garde* is removed from the discourse

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[75] See infra Chapter 5.4: *Heidegger and 'photography'* where Heidegger's relationship to the Hebraic tradition is discussed in some detail.

[76] In the *Critique of Judgment* Kant revisits the question of representation that was central to the *Critique of Pure Reason* but he figures it in terms of aesthetic judgment. The subject determines him/herself by claiming superiority over nature. The experience of the sublime, which for Kant marks the failure of the imagination, reaffirms human nature as rational in the ability to conceive of immeasurable formlessness. Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, 75-96.

of reason (and the associated ocularcentrism) and re-installed as an intensity and

trembling/desire provoked by the question 'is it happening?'[77]

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[77] Lyotard, *Lyotard Reader*, 197

5 Time: Ecstatic temporality of the 'is'

5.1 Introduction

The previous chapter laid down the foundations for thinking about
photography not as an image but as an event. Drawing on the work of Foucault,
Deleuze and Lyotard, (underpinned by Heidegger) it was suggested that the step-
back from an image to an event is required in order to see in photography
something that has not yet been seen and in order to think this 'something' not
through the metaphysics of identity but as ontological difference.

The shift from an image to an event is a strategy put forward by this thesis
in order to avoid the circular reasoning that takes representation as the ground of
the image because in this kind of reasoning representation is already written into
the discourse, taken as given and manifested in the formula A=A which, as was
shown Chapter 2 is already representational. Instead, this thesis suggests that the
primary feature of photography is its fractal self-replication.[1] Accordingly, it was

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[1] François Laruelle has written about the fractality of photography. He puts forward the claim that
photography is fractal because it satisfies the three fundamental demands of fractality: 1.
Condition of irregularity: 'A photo, once no longer interpreted by perception of intuition, by the
'intuitive gaze' (Husserl) and the (semiological, economic, stylistic, etc.) codes which derive
from it, is a phenomenon irreducible to the "whole" dimensions of representation.' 2. *Condition
of self-similarity or identity*: 'a photo contains a moment of infinite identical self-reproduction
that is totally different from a specular reproduction or an abyssal reproduction. [...] It is an
absolute reflection, without mirror, unique each time but capable of an infinite power ceaselessly
to secrete multiple identities.' 3. *Conditions of regulatiry*: 'Being-in-photo, in its identity without
becoming, in its unilaterality more powerful than mere fractality, exceeds the geometrical as
much as the philosophical space.' François Laruelle, *the Concept of Non-photography*, trans.
Robin Mackay (Falmouth, UK; New York: Urbanomic. Sequence Press, 2011), 79-84 passim.

suggested that the representation of reality that photography is capable of is secondary to the fractured and fractal a-radicality that precedes representation and gives photography its particular non-linear and a-hierarchical structure. Photography, understood as a slice, as a repeatable and replicable fractal allows one to move beyond the binaries of subject and object, reality and image, form and content because it provides a way to achieve a double fit: to get out of representation as the totalising picture of reality on the one hand while on the other not to loose the ability to talk about the peculiar truth of the photograph.[2] In other words, understood as fragment or fractal, photography is a site of expressive, dynamic, singular and non-individual events that do not require falling back on the totalising diagram of representation and metaphysics.[3]

This thesis does not wish to deny the truth of photography, but its claim and originality lies in situating truth not in the discourse of visual resemblance

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[2] 'truth' here means not a faithful reproduction of something that is pre-given, but the movement of self-replication, or the force of translation between fragments. This form of truth allows to preserve ethicality without dependence on heteronomous law. For Foucault the breaking away from transcendental teleologies of representation is necessary for the constitution of an ethical self: '[I]t deprives us of our continuities; it dissipates that temporal identity in which to exorcise the discontinuities of history; it breaks the thread of transcendental teleologies; and where anthropological thought once questioned man's being or subjectivity, it now bursts open the other, and the outside. In this sense, the diagnosis does not establish the fact of our identity by the play of distinctions. It establishes that we are difference, that our reason is the difference of discourses, our history the difference of times, our selves the difference of masks. That difference, far from being the forgotten and recovered origin, is this dispersion that we are and make.' Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge,* 131.

[3] Golding describes the move out of representational philosophy as a gathering of a number of influences by Deleuze and Guattari. These influences include Spinoza, Hume, Nietzsche, Leibniz, Heidegger, the Stoics, Carroll, Bacon and Foucault. 'What they had in common was an analytic accounting for cultural reinvention beyond the usual binaries of good and evil... a way to account for the truth of culture as that which must emerge from ungrounded "difference", a "difference" that was something to be grasped, invented – that is to say, *inhabited* – in all its inglorious manifestations, productions, changes without recourse to a totalising picture of reality.' Golding, "Fractal Philosophy," 141.

and not in the 'old categories of the Negative (law, limit, castration, lack, lacuna),

which Western thought has so long held sacred as a form of power and an access

to reality', but in the way the photographic image operates as a fragment.[4] As

will be discussed in the current section, this understanding of the fragment as a

plurality of a-radical events is different from the way fragment is understood in

normative, rational logic where the identity of the fragment is determined by its

relation to the whole.

The understanding of photography as self-replicating fragment allows one

to revisit the question of photographic time. In this section it will be suggested

that event-image is not an archive of time but it *is* time. This is the understanding

of the event that Lyotard develops by highlighting the difference between the

'post-modern sublime and Kantian sublime. However, this thesis seeks to engage

Lyotard's understanding of the event with the aid of the *techne* of photography

and explore how the photographic image is not only the 'ecstatic temporality of

the is' but also an entirely different conception of time, one that embraces

indeterminacy and fractality.[5]

For Lyotard, the '*is*' is not a description or an event but the event-ness of

the event: 'Before asking questions about what it is and about its significance,

before the *quid*, it must 'first' so to speak 'happen', *quod*. That it happens

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[4] Michel Foucault, "Preface: Introduction to the Non-Fascist Life," In Gilles Deleuze, and Félix Guattari *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. Robert Hurley, Mark Seem and Helen R Lane (London: The Athlone Press, 1996).

[5] Heidegger, *Nietzsche; The Eternal Recurrence of the Same*, 41. See also Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 334 (§365). See supra Chapter 4.3, *Fractality and Immanence*.

'precedes', so to speak, the question pertaining to what happens.'[6] In the context of the photographic image-event, putting the *quod* before the *quid* means deferring the content of the image and getting to grips instead with the event of the image happening. Conceived as an event, photography is both *quid* and *quod* as it is both the 'what is happening' (representation) and the 'it is happening' (exposure, the *now*). Furthermore, the *what* and the *is* are not co-present but suspended in a state of undecidability that is incompatible with permanence, fixity and stable identity.

5.2   The sublime and the interval

The visibility of the visible cannot, by definition, be seen.[7]

Edmund Burke conceived of the distinction between the sublime and the beautiful in 'A philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful'.[8] For Burke, the sublime is a bodily and spiritual experience of horror that is being sublated by the sense of one's safety. The drive for self-preservation clashes with fear that results from encountering something dark, confusing and threatening and is mitigated through the feeling of physical security. Kant, in 'Critique of Judgment' distinguishes between mathematically sublime and dynamically sublime but asserts that in both cases it is the power of reason as the supersensible force that triumphs over nature:

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[6] Lyotard, *The Lyotard Reader*, 197.The image as event (*quod*) rather than as depiction (*quid*) is the subject of Chapter 6, *Simulacra and The Latent Image*.

[7] Derrida, *Memoirs of the Blind*, 18.

[8] Edmund Burke, *A Philosophical Enquiry Into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful*, trans. Adam Phillips (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008).

'...found in our own faculty of reason another, nonsensible standard, which has that very infinity under itself as a unit against which everything in nature is small, and thus found in our own mind a superiority over nature itself even in its immeasurability.'[9]

As will be shown below, in the *Critique of Judgment* Kant attempts to bridge the gap between theoretical and practical reason by placing the aesthetic experience of the sublime as a mediating mechanism between the sensible and the analytical.[10] This characteristic of the Kantian system is addressed by Lyotard in 'Lessons on the Analytic of the Sublime' where the demand for a representational mechanism between the two parts of the transcendental subject is exposed as inadequate to account for the 'now' (which Lyotard names zero).[11]

In *The Post-Modern Condition: A report on Knowledge*, Lyotard identifies a delicate shift that is taking place at the site of the transition between the modern and the postmodern sublime: in modernist aesthetics the non-identical is explored at the level of content leaving the form of the work intact: 'It allows the unpresentable to be put forward only as the missing contents; but the form, because of its recognizable consistency, continues to offer to the reader or viewer matter for solace and pleasure'.[12] In postmodernism however, the denial of solace is precisely the political point of the sublime, as it is the identity -

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[9] Kant, *Critique of Judgement*, 145.

[10] Infra Chapter 5.3, *Heidegger: Augenblick. Time of the Event*.

[11] 'The resolution of the conflict constitutive of the sublime judgement requires a "dynamical" synthesis because of the heterogeneity of imagination and reason. [...] In this respect, the situation is similar to that of the antinomies of the first *Critique*. The imagination [...]was supposed to present a beginning or a limit (a temporal or spatial zero) [but is incapable of doing so] for the imagination can only present phenomena and the absolute is not a phenomenon. [...] Thus a union is established between understanding and the imagination, which is very different from that required by knowledge.' Lyotard, *Lessons on the Analytic of the Sublime*, 99-100.

[12] Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition*, 81.

manifest through representation - that is being shattered through the operation of

the postmodern image:

> The postmodern [sublime] would be that which, in the modern, puts
> forward the unpresentable in presentation itself; that which denies
> itself the solace of good forms, the consensus of a taste which would
> make it possible to share collectively the nostalgia for the
> unattainable; that which searches for new presentations, not in order
> to enjoy them but in order to impart a stronger sense of the
> unpresentable. A postmodern artist or writer is in the position of a
> philosopher: the text he writes, the work he produces are not in
> principle governed by preestablished rules, and they cannot be
> judged according to a determining judgment, by applying familiar
> categories to the text or to the work[13]

This undoubtedly romantic view of postmodernity highlights the fractal

nature of the unrepresentable experience that refuses to become part of a system

or be subjected to the operations of rational logic that establishes some kind of

reciprocity between reason and experience. Lyotard seems to imagine a work of

art that is constantly striving to expose the diagram of its own foundation and

push through its limits by perpetually using the work against itself and by

undermining its own mode of production.[14] While the modernist sublime still

holds on to the certainty and clarity of form, it is this very clarity that is not self-

evident and problematised in the postmodern discourse.[15] The sublime operates

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[13] Ibid., 81.

[14] Derrida echoes Lyotard's notion of the postmodern artist as a philosopher when he says '[T]o attempt a breakthrough toward the beyond of philosophical discourse, you cannot possibly succeed within language except by formally and thematically positing the question of the relations between belonging and breaking out...' Derrida, "Violence and Metaphysics", *Writing and Difference,* 110.

[15] Photography has a long history of being associated with clarity and transparency which distinguish it from other modes of image production that depend on the talent, aptitude and skill of an individual artist. As early as 1844, Henry Fox Talbot pointed to the ability of photography to produce images without human intervention. The evacuation of human agent from the image

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by maintaining the tension between experience and reason in a way that resists

the velocity and the instaneity of mobile multimedia. This idea of the sublime as

the manifestation of the unrepresentable appears in Kant's 'Critique of

Judgment' where he says:

> One can describe the sublime thus: it is an object (of nature) the
> representation of which determines the mind to think of the
> unattainability of nature as a presentation of ideas.[16]

In the sublime reason is reaching its limit and entering a domain of the

incomprehensible, or monstrous and colossal.[17] Lyotard expands the Kantian

sublime and explains that the sublime has nothing to do with the 'now' as the

ecstatic notion of presence or as the unmediated experience in the spirit of the

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undermined the role of the author or creator and pointed to the possibility of images produces solely by means of technology. W H F Talbot, *The Pencil of Nature*. Ed. L. J. Schaaf (Da Capo Press New York, 1969). However, Talbot's position regarding the question of transparency of the photographic image is a complex one. For instance, Maimon suggests that Talbot text neither supports the view of photography as a mechanised copy nor as 'authentic' index but has to be understood as part of the discursive framework of the romantic historical tradition which recognises that any claims for truth are undermined by the constant change and the inevitable passage of time. Vered Maimon. "Displaced 'Origins': William Henry Fox Talbot's the Pencil of Nature," *History of Photography* 32, no. 4 (2008): 314-325. Azoulay draws attention to the title of Talbot's book 'Pencil of Nature' as an indicator of his desire to free photography from the burden of authorship by 'elimination of the human agent and [the] presentation of photography as a medium for the production of images without human intervention.' Azoulay, "Photography", *Mafte'akh*. There is of course an opposite view that emphasises the manipulation of the image by the artist. See for instance: Pierre Taminiaux, *The Paradox of Photography*. (Amsterdam; New York, NY: Rodopi, 2009). See infra Chapter 6.3, *The Latent Image*.

[16] Kant, *Critique of Judgement*, 151. (5:268)

[17] 'An object is monstrous if by its magnitude it annihilates the end which its concept constitutes. The mere presentation of a concept, however, which is almost too great for all presentation (which is borders on the relatively monstrous) is called colossal, because the end of the presentation is made more difficult if the intuition of the object is almost too great for our faculty of apprehension.' Ibid., 136. (5:253)

ecstasy of medieval saints.[18] On the contrary, the sublime dismantles individual

experience, for it is antinomy to consciousness: 'it is what consciousness cannot

formulate, and even what consciousness forgets in order to compose itself.'[19]

A situation that engenders difference is marked by an interval between two

parts of the system. Olkowski echoes Lyotard's concern with the limiting and

paralysing power of the metaphysics of identity when she says:

> it [is] all the more important to pay attention to what the image is
> displacing and disqualifying as well as to the consequences of its
> instantaneity, insofar as one of the principle repercussions of the
> intensive-interactive image is the cancellation of the interval
> between our perception of the world and our response to it.[20]

The problem of the photographic image becomes a question about the

order of life itself in an age in which both political representation and perception

are managed through technologies of speed, always-on immersive media and

modes of expression that privilege instaneity, rapid response retina displays and

snap decisions. Instant multimedia environments tend to close the 'gap between

the pathos of objectivity and the passion of meaning'[21]

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[18] Lyotard, *The Lyotard Reader*, 96-7.

[19] Ibid., 197.

[20] Dorothea Olkowski. "Time Lost, Instaneity and the Image," *Parlax* 9, no. 1 (2003): 31. For Olkowski the interval is the space where creative response to the environment is taking place: 'Between the received stimulus and the movement enacted in response to the call of the world for our attention, abides the interval in which matter and memory intersect and converge' Ibid., 29. Technologies of speed and instaneity harbour the danger of narrowing the interval, obliterating difference and squeezing out the possibility of affective life: 'Our fascination with technologies of speed can also then be at least partially explained by the tendency of perception to quickly, and without an interval for reflection upon affective life, make use of habitual familiar images in order to speed up the process by which we act.' Ibid., 35.

[21] Lyotard, *The Lyotard Reader*, 192.

For Lyotard the sublime silently points at the loss of unity between thought and being:

> What we do not manage to formulate is that something happens, *dass etwas geschieht.* Or rather, and more simply, that it happens ... *dass es geschieht.* Not a major event in the media sense, not even a small event. Just an occurrence.'[22]

The sublime therefore dismantles the causal chain of representational thought by introducing the notion of an event that stands in opposition to representation, accountability and countable [compatible] use of time.[23]

For Lyotard, the 'postmodern sublime' is symptomatic to the sense of crisis that envelops both the contents and the structures of knowledge, i.e. an epistemological crisis that prizes apart the foundations of rational knowledge models. For this reason the 'postmodern sublime' has to be understood as an event that transcends the dualism and the subjectivity of Cartesian thought. Theories of photography that emerge out of cultural studies and that confine their attentions to their own definition of the cultural sphere fail to address the question of representation as it is being exposed by photography. As Heidegger has shown in *The Age of the World Picture* the history of Western metaphysics is a history of the rise and the triumph of the subject which starts with the Greeks and achieves its full expression with Descartes who broke with the tradition of representation as mimesis and resemblance and instituted instead a model of

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[22] Lyotard, *The Lyotard Reader*, 197. Lacoue-Labarthe's concept 'typography' bears significant similarities with this understanding of the sublime, as the forgotten residue of pre-metaphysical and pre-subjective thought. See Chapter 6.2 for a discussion of this aspect of his work.

[23] Lyotard, *The Differend,* xvi.

representation based on formal logical principles.[24] However, as Judowitz

explains, the same principles are at the basis of Descartes notion of the subject,

which by implication means that philosophical thought as a whole is founded on

representational principles.

5.3 Heidegger: *Augenblick*. Time of the Event.

> *To see a world in a grain of sand,*
> *And a heaven in a wild flower,*
> *Hold infinity in the palm of your hand,*
> *And eternity in an hour.*[25]

As Heidegger's notion of the event is developed through resistance to the

conception of time in Kant, it will be helpful to begin by briefly outlining Kant's

epistemology.[26] The Copernican turn at its most simple means that objective

reality is constructed by consciousness by establishing causal relations between

events.[27] At the same time, the inner life of consciousness itself is not subject to

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[24] Heidegger, *The Question Concerning Technology*, 127.

[25] William Blake, *Collected Poems*, ed. W. B. Yeats (London; New York: Routledge, 2002), 88.

[26] The discussion of temporality in Kant is indebted to Robert Paul Wolff's reading of the *Transcendental Analytic*. Robert Paul Wolff. "Narrative Time: The Inherently Perspectival Structure of the Human World" in *Midwest Studies in Philosophy: The Philosophy of Human Sciences* 15, no. 1 (1990): 210-223. In this article Wolff argues that the structure of the human world corresponds to the structure of literary narratives rather than to the structure of the objective *a priori* categories of time and space. The concern of this thesis is to suggest that photographic time is not linear but fragmented and undecidable which corresponds to the conditions of the human world understood as a multiplicity.

[27] For instance 'However exaggerated and absurd it may sound to say that the understanding is itself the source of the laws of nature, and hence of its formal unity, such an assertion is nevertheless correct and in accordance with the object, namely, experience. ... all empirical laws are only particular determinations of the pure laws of the understanding...' Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, 167 (B167|A128).

the same laws of causality and therefore distinguishable from objective reality.[28]

In essence, Kant draws a sharp distinction between mental events and

empirically real events by maintaining that the later are organised according to

strict causal relations while the former are not:

> [T]he order and regularity in the appearances which we call **nature**
> are carried into them by ourselves; indeed, we could never find them
> in nature, if we ourselves, or the nature of our mind, had not
> originally placed them there.[29]

Kant's assertion is that the distinction between imagination and memory is

not to be located in the content of consciousness, as the content can be identical

whether the event is true or imagined, but in the structure of judgements about

the content of consciousness. The difference between real and imaginary

experiences cannot be determined on the basis of the content of consciousness

alone because imagined events and real events can appear identical to

consciousness. The criterion for differentiating between them is that real events

are part of a necessary causal chain that unfolds in time in a particular way, while

imaginary events do not have this quality:

> [I]f ...I perceive the freezing of water, I apprehend two states (that
> of fluidity and that of solidity), and these as standing to each other
> in a relation of time. But in time, which I use as the foundation of
> the appearance as inner **intuition**, I necessarily represent to myself
> synthetic **unity** of the manifold, without which that relation of time

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[28] As Kant explains, the sensible contents of the mind are independent from causality: 'We have representations within us, and can become conscious of them; but however far that consciousness may extend, and however accurate and exact it may be, yet the representations are always only representations, that is inner determinations of our mind in this or that relation to time.' Ibid., 218 (B242,243|A197,1987).

[29] emphasis in the original Ibid., 164 (A125).

could not be given **determinately** in an intuition (with respect to the succession of time).[30]

The experience of the freezing of water is not in the events of fluidity and solidity but in the necessary causal connection between them (fluid first, then solid), which is determined by the structure of judgements. According to Kant's approach, to determine the reality and the truth value of something that happened is to stand in a necessary temporal relation to the sequence of events. As Kant asserts in the above example, the hallmark of reality is not the events that take place, but the linear succession of the events as they follow each other in time.

Kant's understanding of time as universal and isotropic (measurement independent) is challenged by Heidegger's assertion that human time is perspectival and non-linear:

> In resolutness, the Present is not only brought back from distraction with the objects of one's closest concern, but it gets held in the future and in having been. That *Present* which is held in authentic temporality and which thus is *authentic* itself, we call the *'moment of vision'*. This term must be understood in the active sense as an ecstasis. It means the resolute rapture with which Dasein is carried away to whatever possibilities and circumstances are encountered in the Situation as possible object of concern, but a rapture which is *held* in resolutness. The moment of vision is a phenomenon which *in principle* can *not* be clarified in terms of the 'now'. The 'now' is a temporal phenomenon which belongs to time as within-time-ness: the 'now' 'in which' something arises, passes away, or is present-at-hand. 'In the moment of vision' nothing can occur; but as an authentic Present or waiting-towards, the moment of vision permits us *to encounter for the first time* what can be 'in a time' as ready-to-hand or present-at-hand.[31]

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[30] Emphasis in the original. Ibid. 162-3 (B162-3).

[31] Emphasis mine. Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 387-8. Cf. Dilthey: '[T]he parts of filled time are not only qualitatively different from each other but, quite apart from their content, have a

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For Kant understanding and time are inseparably linked as the cognitive ability to exercise judgement is premised on time being one of the categories of consciousness. Time is an *a priori* form of judgement, which shapes and enables the comprehension of objects qua objects[32]. For Kant, the objectivity of time, understood as its unified and idealised flow, is connected with the rationality of human reason and in this way warrants human autonomy from heteronomous forces such as god, eternity and the absolute. When photography is considered as superimposed on the flow of absolute time, with each image carrying a time-stamp that assigns to it a moment in the past, it too becomes part of the claim for autonomy, objectivity and rationality. However, as will be suggested later in this section the time of the photographic image is different from the time of the photographic event.[33]

Heidegger critiques Kant's conception of time, as for him it is not a linear progression from one moment to the next.[34] He rejects the idea that time is uniform 'measure of motion' (Aristotle); undeviating movement comprised of past moments which are no longer now, future moments which are not yet here and the present moment which is the in between point between the past and the

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different character according to whether we look from the present back to the past or forward to the future. ... When we look back at the past we are passive... in our attitude to the future we are active and free.' Wilhelm Dilthey, *Selected Writings*, edited, translated and introduced by H. P. Rickamn (Cambridge, 1976) 209-10. Quoted in Wolff, "Narrative Time", 212

[32] Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, 68-71. (A35-6|B52)

[33] See also Supra Chapter 4

[34] Heidegger, *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics*. See also Heidegger, *Nietzsche; The Eternal Recurrence of the Same*, 37-44.

present. Instead of the Aristotelian 'now' as the linking of past with the present,

Heidegger positions the 'now' as a radically different form of temporality that he

names 'the moment of vision' (Augenblick), literally 'blink of an eye'.[35] As

many commentators observed Augenblick is a term with both theological and

philosophical heritage, however what is important is not so much the implicit

reference to Luther and the explicit reference to Kierkegaard but that Heidegger

here splits time into two series.[36] The 'now' as a temporal phenomenon is

chronological and sequential; it is quantitative and belongs to time as within–

time–ness. On the other hand, Augenblick is a dual movement of oscillation

towards the future (death) and recoil from it. For Heidegger 'moment of vision'

is the temporality of Dasein in which it finds its authenticity, its paradox, its

essence of being futural.

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[35] On the connection between Augenblick and Nietzsche's conception of the eternal return see: '"Moment" unfortunately fails to capture the *dramatically* temporal nature of the German *Augenblick*, literally the glance of flash of an eye. The drama in question has everything to do with what Heidegger in *Being and Time* calls "ecstatic temporality," especially in its connection with the analysis of *death.* [...] The gateway "Glance of an eye" remains throughout Heidegger's lecture course the most compelling image of eternal return.' Ibid., 41n.

[36] 'In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.' (Corinthians 15:52). In footnote to §338 Heidegger attributes the term to Kierkegaard but maintains that for the latter it is the moment of deepest penetration into being but within 'ordinary conception of time' Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 497n. Dreyfus points to the difficulty of translating *Augenblick* as 'moment' because this can imply something like a blip on a otherwise unperturbed continuum, while for both Kierkegaard and Heidegger it is a momentous event of a total switch from one state to another. The knight of faith makes an unconditional commitment that redefines his whole life and Dasein changes from inauthentic being to authentic. Hubert L. Dreyfus, *Being-in-the-world: A Commentary on Heidegger's Being and Time, Division I.* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1990), 321. It is more productive to consider the way Greek mythology distinguished between two temporal regimes: chronos and kairos, with kairos being the time of the event, which later becomes Aion (intensive time) in Deleuze. In effect, Heidegger rejects both Aristotelian time as 'measure of movement' and Kierkegaard's eternity, and creates a time of revelation in which god is replaced with death. This moment of revelation is the conversion of Dasein to authenticity. On the proximity of Heidegger to Hebraic biblical tradition see infra Chapter 5.4, *Heidegger and 'photography'*.

While Heidegger does not discuss *Augenblick* (moment of vision) in relation to the key concept of his later philosophy: technology, this relation is nevertheless implicitly present in sections 338-9 of *Being and Time*.[37] After establishing that 'moment of vision' is in principle different from '*now*', because it does not belong to the flow of time and because in the 'moment of vision' nothing can occur besides an encounter with time,[38] Heidegger goes on to say that what makes the 'moment of vision' authentic is not its singularity, but on the contrary its ability to be repeated:

> In anticipating, Dasein *brings* itself *again forth* into its ownmost potentiality-for-being. If *Being*–as–having–been is authentic, we call it '*repetition*'.[39]

The inauthentic present, the 'now' corresponds to that which happened in the past in the mode of 'having been', this is the mode of representation that claims originality. As Heidegger says, originality can never be authentic because it is posited on the forgetting of the belonging together of Dasein and being. In this moment of forgetting, which Heidegger calls 'falling' the thing looses its thingness; the image looses its imageness and becomes 'means to an end'. When

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[37] It is further significant that, as Albert Borgman explains oblique references to the eternal return were present in earlier versions of the text: *The Question Concerning Technology* is based on the earlier lecture 'The Framework' (*das Ge-Stell*) delivered in Bremen on December 1, 1949. 'The Framework' Heidegger, *Bremen and Freiburg Lectures: Insight Into That Which Is and Basic Principles of Thinking*. contains such terms as *circulation* and *rotation* which were dropped from the later version because 'Heidegger must have been concerned to publish a measured and simplified analysis of technology… Distrusting his description of 'The Thing' he turned instead to art as a possible turning point…' Albert Borgman, "Technology," In *A Companion to Heidegger*. Ed. M A Wrathall and H L Dreyfus (Blackwell Malden, MA, 2005), 429-430.

[38] 'in the 'moment of vision' nothing can occur; but…the moment of vision permits us *to encounter for the first time* what can be 'in a time' as ready-to-hand or present at hand. Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 388 (§338).

[39] Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 388 (§339).

Allan Sekula says 'Nothing could be more natural than a newspaper photo, or a man pulling a snapshot from his wallet and saying, "This is my dog."'[40] He describes the state of falling in which the image manifests to an ecstatic unity of 'having been' by making the dog present through representation that was itself forgotten.[41] For Heidegger however, this mode of being is inauthentic because it accepts the totalising affect of representation in order to present coherent and sensible picture of being. It seeks stability and reassurance in the temporal continuity of biological time and in the mathematical and technological certainty of measured, pragmatic time of day-after-day.

In contradiction to the inauthentic and singular 'now', *Augenblick* is fragmentary, equivalent only to itself, a time of its own.[42] When Dasein stops hiding behind the security of representation it stops falling, awaiting and forgetting and changes to repetition and forerunning. Living authentically Dasein

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[40] Burgin, *Thinking Photography*, 86. He adds: 'But this particularly obstinate bit of bourgeois folklore – the claim for the intrinsic significance of the photograph – lies at the centre of the established myth of photographic truth.' However, while exposing the truth of the photograph as a myth, Sekula immediately sets up another myth: that photography must be understood as signification. He says: 'The problem at hand is one of *sign emergence*; only by developing a historical understanding of the emergence of photographic sign systems can we apprehend truly *conventional* nature of photographic communication.' Ibid., 86-7.

[41] 'But when one projects oneself inauthentically towards those possibilities which have been drawn only from the object of concern in making it present, this is possible only because Dasein has *forgotten* itself in its ownmost *thrown* potentiality–for–being.' Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 388 (§339)

[42] 'Authenitificaition – *Eigentlichkeit*–is the movement by which an existent is set for on its own (*eigen*), takes up its very being as its own. It disconnects from the anonymous and interchangeable modes of existence which it had contracted from others, passed on to others.' Alphonso Lingis. "Differance in the Eternal Recurrence of the Same," *Research in Phenomenology* 8, no. 1 (1978): 77-91.

is repeating the *Augenblick* in which its essence is revealed.[43] The way *technē* reveals itself is through re-production (*Wiederholen*).[44]

This ability to reveal its authentic essence as repetition is for Heidegger the *technē* of the 'moment of vision':

> The word *technē* denotes rather a mode of knowing. To know means to have seen, in the widest sense of seeing, which means to apprehend what is present, as such. For Greek thought the essence of knowing consists in *alētheia*, that is, in the revealing of beings.[45]

There are therefore two distinct temporal modalities or series at work: One is the series of chronological time that runs along a straight and narrow line stretched between the past and the future. The other is a series comprised of the repeated 'moments of vision' that create a field of intensity, rather than a liner progression from one moment to the next.

Both the metaphysical-ontological temporality and the recursive-fractal intensively are at work in the photographic image-event: on the one hand the photographic image is the manifestation of the analytical methodology that over the course of Western history perfected the ability to produce accurate, reliable

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[43] In this way Dasein embraces the 'hardest to bear' doctrine of eternal return: 'that eternity *is* in the Moment, that the Moment is not the fleeting "now," not an instant of time whizzing by a spectator, but the collision of future and past. Here the moment comes to itself. It determines how everything recurs.' Heidegger, *Nietzsche; The Eternal Recurrence of the Same*, 57.

[44] As the translators of Being and Time indicate, It is inadequate to translate Wiederholen as 'repeat' because the English word does not capture the kinetics (authenticity) of active re-making, as in 'to fetch, to collect, to bring back again'. While 'repeat' in English connotes redundancy and tiredness of the copy, Wiederholen means that Dasein repeats itself authentically through a complex move of throwing itself into the future by a critical relation to the past. Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 437 (§386). It is this authenticity of repetition which makes it relevant to the concept of simulacra. See infra Chapter 6.1 on the difference between mechanical and authentic copy.

[45] Heidegger, "Basic Writings," 184.

representations that benefit a broad range of discourses and disciplines. However,

no matter how accurate, evocative, abject, uncanny or scientific these

representations are, they necessarily fail to picture the present moment because

the present is occupied by representation itself and as Kant insisted,

representation itself cannot be represented:

> It may seem, no doubt, very evident that I cannot know as an object
> that which is presupposed by me in order to know an object, and
> that the determining self (the thought) is distinct from the
> determinable self (the thinking subject) in the same way as
> knowledge is distinct from its object.[46]

On the other hand, the self-replicating image, the fractal, is able to create

an authentic presence by way of a self-replicating feedback loop.[47] Is it possible

that instead of using representation as a model, one would say that there is a code

that is translatable, and therefore in that sense recognizable. And the fact that it is

recognizable does not invoke externally given and presupposed logic because its

recognition is figured by the repetition of fragments.[48]

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[46] Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, 374 (A402)

[47] It is possible to enlarge on Heidegger's notion of the 'blink of an eye' by drawing on Leibniz's monad: one way to visualize the monad is as a camera-obscura. However, another way is to think of it as something that names the agency of cohesion. This is very different from the Platonist move in which the cave is a representational mechanism. In Leibniz, one of the reasons he important to this kind of move initiated by Heidegger is that he is talking about how this entity gets established and then it is able to create a movement that augments itself. Gottfried Wilhelm, Freiherr von Leibniz, *Philosophical Texts*, trans. Richard Francks and Woolhouse (Oxford. New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 267-281. This understanding of *Monadology* as a form of 'reverse Platonism' is proposed and developed by Deleuze in *The Fold*. 'Singularities proper to each monad are extended as far as the singularities of others and in all senses. Every monad thus expresses the entire world, but obscurely and dimly because it is finite and the world is infinite. That is why the lower depths of the monad are so dark. Since it does not exist outside of the monads that convey it, the world is included in each one in the form of perceptions or "representatives," present and infinitely minute elements'. Gilles Deleuze, *The Fold: Leibniz and the Baroque*, trans. Tom Conley (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1992), 86.

[48] See infra Chapter 6.5, *Photography: Difference at a Standstill*.

5.4 Heidegger and 'photography'.

This man was no learned exegete, he knew no Hebrew; had he known Hebrew then perhaps it might have been easy for him to understand the story of Abraham.[49]

This section takes as its point of departure the observation made by Heidegger in the closing paragraphs of *Identity and Difference* that despite the efforts made by philosophy to discuss 'representation' and 'subjectivity', there is an inherent difficulty in attempting to do so from within metaphysical thought:

> 'It must remain an open question whether the nature of Western languages is in itself marked with the exclusive brand of metaphysics, and thus marked permanently by onto-theo-logic, or whether these languages offer other possibilities of utterance–and that means at the same time of telling silence.'[50]

The suggestion advanced below is that photography, understood as technology that makes legible images, is a privileged point of entry into the problem of ontological difference because it does not rely on the language of metaphysics and for this reason it does not get entangled in the tendency of language to operate through the implicit acceptance of the norms of representation. There are two main ways by which photography allows one to challenge the hegemony of representational paradigms. First, because in photography, unlike in language, representation is not implied, but it is the very surface of the image. In other words, while in language representation is

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[49] Kierkegaard, Søren, *Fear and Trembling.* (Middlesex, England: Penguin Books. New York, N.Y., U.S.A., 1985), 44.

[50] Heidegger, Identity and Difference, 73.

concealed behind forms of expression such as logic, rhetoric, metaphor and poetics in photography representation is explicit, empirically present, verifiable and unavoidably demonstrable. Second, in language representation is concealed behind the speaking subject, the intonation and the voice of the discourse.[51] Words are always spoken by someone, which means that subjectivity and representation are inseparable from an utterance. In photography however the image is the outcome of a technological process. If technology is understood through Heidegger as *poesis* it appears conceivable that the 'voice' of photography is that of technology itself, rather then of subjectivity. Even if for the time being it remains an open question whether the 'voice' of technology can be heard in the content of the image, or if this *poesis* undermines and dissolves the distinction between content and form.[52]

As Heidegger pointed out, key metaphysical concepts such as 'subjectivity', 'identity' and 'representation' are also the key onto-theo-logical principles by which language operates, which means that at the precise moment when philosophy attempts to perform an autopsy on one of these concepts, by the very fact of doing so it is forced into a representational mode that becomes the basis

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[51] See supra Chapter 1, *Introduction.*

[52] This understanding of poesis as an overcoming of subject-object dualism is drawing on Benjamin's notion of 'the poetized' as the expressive and pre-subjective essence of a poem. In '*Two Poems by Friedrich Hölderlin*' he says: 'As a category of aesthetic investigation, the poetized differs decisively from the form-content model by preserving within itself the fundamental aesthetic unity of form and content. Instead of separating them, it distinctively stamps in itself their immanent, necessary connection.' Benjamin, Walter. *Selected Writings Vol. 1. 1913 - 1926.* Cambridge, Mass; London, England: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2005, 19.

of the examination.[53] In other words, Heidegger is pointing out that while there is

a fundamental divergence within thought that allows it to study itself, this

divergence also ensures the impossibility of any thorough self-perception and

radical self-examination, as any explicit attempt to examine representation or

subjectivity is coming against the implicit reliance of language on representation

as its modus operandi. Heidegger further complicates the situation by suggesting

that this inability of language to represent representation to itself is also

connected with the forming of subjectivity, which means that as soon as one

posits oneself against representation to examine it, one is already taken over by

representation to an extent that no radical examination is possible.[54] The subject,

the 'I' that attempts to catch representation is itself formed by the process of

representation.[55] Therefore, it seems that representation and subjectivity are

destined to remain the black hole of Western philosophy because, as Judovitz

says: 'we must rely on the language of metaphysics, on its form, logic and

implicit postulations, precisely at the moment when we seek to contest them.'[56]

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[53] 'The little word "is," which speaks everywhere in our language, and tells of Being from the ἔστιν γάρ εἶναι of Parmenides to the "is" of Hegel's speculative sentence, and to the dissolution of the "is" in the positing of the Will to Power with Nietzsche.' Ibid., 73.

[54] This criticism of subjectivity and representation gets is fullest development in Heidegger's work on Kant. Heidegger, *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics*. See also Heidegger, *The Question Concerning Technology, and Other Essays*.

[55] This is particularly clear in "The Age of the World Picture", Ibid., 115-155.

[56] Judovitz, *Subjectivity and Representation in Descartes*, 3. Heidegger's ultimate failure to 'get out of metaphysics' is discussed by Golding: 'Heidegger's analysis still required a kind of ground (ontic) to knowledge; that is, a kind of "groundless ground", he was still brought face-to-face with the (quasi-) mystical onto-theo-logic Godhead haze itself. Toward the last of his days, a very disgruntled Heidegger claimed it was impossible, all things considered (and he had considered all things) to jump from the proverbial metaphysical ship.' Johnny Golding, "*Conversion on the Road to Damascus: Minority Report on Art,*" In *Gest: Laboratory of Synthesis. #1.* Ed. Robert
. . .

However, despite the entrapment of the subject by representation, Heidegger tentatively suggests that the possibility of questioning metaphysics 'must remain an open question'. The roadmap for this questioning is spelled out thus: 'The ground itself needs to be properly accounted for by that for which it accounts, that is, by the causation through the supremely original matter–and that is the cause as *causa sui.* '[57] The challenge therefore is to think the cause of philosophy, its non-philosophical beginning and origin that Heidegger ironically names 'the god of philosophy': 'Man can neither pray nor sacrifice to this god. Before *causa sui*, man can neither fall to his knees in awe nor can he play music and dance before this god.'[58] Getting out of metaphysics requires no less than abandoning the self-referential, self-causing way of thinking that is taking for granted what it is trying to prove. Accomplishing this task necessitates a 'step back... out of metaphysics'.[59] In what follows it will be suggested that stepping out of metaphysics into the *causa sui* of thought, requires the technology of stepping out of the visual. This step out of the visual opens a window onto the unexplored realm of the unknowable image, conceived here as the visual expression of the philosophical concept of difference.

Garnett and Andrew Hunt (London: BookWorks in collaboration with Kingston University, 2010)

[57] Heidegger, *Identity and Difference*, 72.

[58] Ibid., 72. Deleuze names the non-philosophical origin of philosophy as *Image of Thought* see Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 164-213.

[59] 'What is the origin of the onto-theological essential constitution of metaphysics? To accept this kind of question means to accomplish the step back' Heidegger, *Identity and Difference*, 56.

The crossing of the metaphysical threshold and the clearing of an alternative path for thought is however fraught with difficulties, for as Heidegger says, metaphysics are ingrained in modern technology which permeates all aspects of life and thought.[60] But even if this difficulty is somehow overcome, there remains the additional problem that 'Western languages are languages of metaphysical thinking.'[61] Stepping out of metaphysics therefore requires an altogether different way of doing philosophy, one that will not be bound to subjectivity and representation to the same extent as Western languages. As will be suggested below, this new way of doing philosophy might be facilitated by attunement to the photographic 'difference in itself'.[62]

What is required by Heidegger is a total recall of a pre-metaphysical past, yet this past is not chronologically prior, but logically preceding representation:

> We attain to the nearness of the historic only in that sudden moment
> of a recall in thinking. ... [this] holds true above all also for our
> attempt in the step back out of the oblivion of the difference as such,

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[60] 'No one can know whether and when and where and how this step of thinking will develop into a proper (needed in appropriation) path and way and road-building. Instead, the rule of metaphysics may rather entrench itself, in the shape of modern technology with its developments rushing along boundlessly.' Ibid., 72.

[61] Ibid., 73.

[62] 'In any case, difference in itself appears to exclude any relation between different and different which would allow it to be thought. It seems that it can become thinkable only when tamed in other words, when subject to the four iron collars of representation: identity in the concept, opposition in the predicate, analogy in judgement and resemblance in perception.' Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 330. As Deleuze here seems to suggest, 'difference in itself' cannot be thought through representational categories. The quest for non-representational thought however, is complicated by the need to remain within language as the mode of philosophy. As this thesis submits, photography allows 'difference in itself' to rise to the surface and come to the eye however it requires a 'step back' out of human vision. Infra Conclusion, *Immanence: a photograph*.

to think this difference as the perdurance of unconcealing overcoming and of self-keeping arrival.'[63]

Heidegger's diagnosis of the metaphysical malaise is the 'oblivion of the difference as such': in metaphysical thought difference is subsumed under the copula 'is' (as in 'A is A') and the remedy is to think this forgotten and untamed difference not as an opposition to identity (for an opposition is still part of the same logic of representation) but as the arrival of presence that 'assigns the difference of Being and beings to perdurance as the approach to their essence'.[64] The relation of being and beings must not be understood as identity but as movement of 'perdurance'. As Gillian Rose explains: "perdurance'... captures the idea of perfect duration, is a felicitous but strange translation of *austag* which means 'arrangement' or 'settlement' in the litigious sense of settling something in court.'[65] The requirement therefore is to think the relation of being and beings outside the linearity of chronological time as a kind of perfect duration that is not a strictly temporal relation but a spatio-temporal event the holds being and beings apart as well as bringing them together. This highly complex notion of time can be perhaps understood as the 'now' - not in the sense of the present instant, or the orgiastic immediacy of religious ecstasy, but as the 'now' that marks the occurrence of an event, of something that happens.[66] As Lyotard

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[63] Heidegger, *Identity and Difference*, 67. See supra 3.7, *Perdurance, Heidegger's move beyond dialectics.*

[64] Ibid., 67.

[65] Gillian Rose, *Dialectic of Nihilism: Post-structuralism and Law.* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1984), 78.

[66] See supra Chapter 3.7: *Perdurance: Heidegger's Move Beyond Dialectics.*

explains: 'An event, and occurrence – what Martin Heidegger called *ein Ereignis* – is infinitely simple, but this simplicity can only be approached through a state of privation.'[67] The event of perdurance dismantles thought because in it the subject and the object are held simultaneously together and apart. Deleuze explains it thus:

> 'Lightening, for example, distinguishes itself from the black sky but must also trail it behind, as through it were distinguishing itself from that which does not distinguish itself from it. It is as if the ground rose to the surface without ceasing to be ground.'[68]

It seems that Deleuze found a way of grasping the 'perdurance of unconcealing overcoming and of self-keeping arrival'[69] as the moment of exposure that creates an event through a flash of lightning. It is possible that unknown to himself Heidegger opened a way for philosophy to move into a sphere where meaning is established purely through perdurance understood as exposure.[70]

Heidegger suggests that the step out of metaphysics necessitates an event of presence and owning (*Ereignis*) that knows no chronological time because it is an instance of perfect duration: a direct, unmediated relation of Being and beings. With what is perhaps one of the greatest ironic statements of modern philosophy, Gillian Rose drily comments:

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[67] Lyotard, *The Lyotard Reader*, 197.

[68] Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 36.

[69] Heidegger, *Identity and Difference*, 67.

[70] See supra Chapter 3.6: *Heidegger: Representation and Identity*.

'It seems that unknown to himself, Heidegger has brought us into the orbit of Biblical Hebrew; a language which has imperfect and perfect tenses but no past, present and future tenses, and which has no possessive verb 'to have'; a language of the kind into which Heidegger attempts to transcribe German.'[71]

Rose points out the similarities between perdurance as 'the highest most significant event of all / a giving of presence that prevails in the present, in the past and in the future...'[72] and *Yahweh* (the god of Israel in the Hebrew Bible):

'In the Hebrew *Yahweh* speaks in the imperfect tense which announces His Perdurance: His presence in the future and past as well as present.'[73]

Rose further clarifies what exactly Heidegger is taking from the Jewish religion: 'Heidegger seems to give us *Yahweh* without *Torah*: the event seems to include advent and redemption, presence and owning...'[74] However, Rose leaves out what is perhaps the most significant attribute of *Yahweh* for the understanding of perdurance: the ban on depicting the god of Israel in an image.

Thou shalt have no other gods before me. Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven

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[71] Rose, *Dialectic of Nihilism*, 78. Rose's argument here is slightly unclear. Heidegger's problem is not with the verb 'to have' but with the verb 'to be' Heidegger, *Identity and Difference*, 73. The verb 'to have' is present in Hebrew, it is 'יש' [i'esh]. However, the verb 'to be' is not required in the construction of sentences. For instance a sentence such as 'the jug *is* on the table' will become in Hebrew 'the jug on the table' (הכד על השלחן) [h'a kad al' h'ashulhan]. The omission of the verb 'to be' is precisely what allows Rose to claim that Heidegger seeks to transcribe German into a non-metaphysical language such as Hebrew.

[72] Heidegger, 'Time and Being', in *Zur Sache des Denkens*, Tübingen, Niemeyer, 1969, trans. in *On Time and Being*, Joan Stanbaugh, New York, Harper and Row, 1972, pp.22,14 tr. pp.21,13. Rudolph Bultmann's *Theology of the New Testament*, 1948, trans. Kendrick Gabel, vols I and II, London SCM, 1978, is compared to Heidegger's *Sein und Zeit* (Being and Time trans. John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson. Oxford, Basil Balckwell, 1967) by John Macquarrie: *An existentialist Theology: A Comparison of Heidegger and Bultmann*, 1965, Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1973. Quoted in Rose, *Dialectic of Nihilism*, 78-79n8.

[73] Ibid., 79.

[74] Ibid., 80.

above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth.[75]

It is significant that in these verses the ban on representing god follows immediately after the ban on having other gods and must be understood as a separate prohibition: It is forbidden to worship other gods and it is forbidden to make images of god.[76] The two main justifications for the Hebraic ban on representation help to clarify the relevance of representation to the question of perdurance. The first is concerned with the use of predicates to describe god. Statements such as 'god exists' or 'god is one' create an impression of an object to which different predicates can apply, which contradicts the idea of god's unity.[77] Similarly, for Heidegger, the true nature of being understood as perdurance cannot be represented through predication:

> Someone wants to buy fruit in a store. He asks for fruit. He is offered apples and pears, he is offered peaches, cherries, grapes. But he rejects all that is offered. He absolutely wants to have fruit. What was offered to him in every instance *is* fruit and yet, it turns out, fruit cannot be bought. It is still infinitely more impossible to represent 'Being' as the general characteristic of beings.[78]

The second aspect of the ban on representation concerns the relationship of perdurance to time. According to Maimonides, who uses the Aristotelian

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[75] Exodus 20:3-4 (King James Bible)

[76] Moshe Halbertal, and Avishai Margalit, *Idolatry*, trans. Naomi Goldblum (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1992), 37. As Halbertal and Margalit indicate, the claim that god has no image is one of the foundations of the neo-Aristotelian teaching of Maimonides, however there are other traditions within Judaism, particularly the rabbinic tradition and the cabala that contain literary descriptions of god. Ibid., 46-47.

[77] Ibid., 58. For the question of predication within Aristotelian metaphysics see supra Chapter 3.3 *Aristotle: Establishing Representation as the basis of Rationality.*

[78] Heidegger, *Identity and Difference,* 66.

definition of time as dependent on motion, the concept of time does not apply to god.[79] The ban on representation is therefore not only the assertion of the invisibility of god, but it is meant to determine the absolute otherness of god and the essential categorical difference between god and all other forms of being.[80]

The ban on graven images seems to be connected to the perfect and transitive presence that is outside of time and constitutes the event of all events. Heidegger's notion of perdurance is therefore related not only to the presencing of Jehovah – as Gillian Rose suggests – but also to the ban on representation and the general iconoclasm of the Judaic tradition. It follows that Perdurance is a leap out of visual representation into the essence of visual representation: 'The step out of metaphysics is the step out of technology and technological description ... into the *essence* of modern technology...'[81] While Gillian Rose asserts that the step out of metaphysics takes Heidegger into Biblical Hebrew, it is the assertion of this thesis that this leap does not go far enough, as all languages – not only German – are misleading and limited in the description of perdurance because they necessarily evoke the speaking subject. In any case, there are two reasons for the unsuitability of language in the task of capturing perdurance. First the syntactic structure of language creates a duality between subject and predicate

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[79] 'It is quite clear that there is no relation between God and time or space. For time is an accident connected with motion, in so far as the latter includes the relation of anteriority and posteriority ... and since motion is one of the conditions to which only material bodies are subject, and God is immaterial, there can be no relation between him and time.' Moses Maimonides, *The Guide for the Perplexed.* 2 ed., trans. Michael Friedlander (London: Forgotten Books, 1904), (I,I.II). See also Halbertal and Margalit, *Idolatry,* 58.

[80] Ibid., 59.

[81] Heidegger, *Identity and Difference,* 52.

which makes it unsuitable to talk about oneness.[82] The second is that language

that is used for the description of familiar reality is unsuitable for the description

of the absolute other.[83] The normative linguistic categories of predication and

existence do not apply to perdurance.[84] For that reason, the leap advocated on

these pages is from the orbit of language into the orbit of photography. However,

photography must be understood not as a homogenous entity but as a

constellation of recursive and self-replicating exposures.[85]

Heidegger's leap out of German language takes him out of language

entirely, into the orbit of technology as the environment of

perdurance/exposure.[86] This orbit is taken by this thesis as photography. Rose's

suggestion to understand perdurance as *Yahweh* (the god of Israel) finds support

in Lyotard's understanding of *ein Ereignis* as:

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[82] cf. 'It is impossible to represent in language anything that 'contradicts logic' as it is in geometry to represent by its co-ordinates a figure that contradicts the laws of space, or to give the co-ordinates of a point that does not exist.' Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Tractatus Logico-philosophicus*, trans. Brian McGuinness and David Pears (London: New York: Routledge, 2001), 13 (3.032)

[83] Halbertal and Margalit, *Idolatry*, 59. In *What is Called Thinking* Heidegger suggests that overcoming the tendency of language to privilege logic can be achieved through poetry. Heidegger, *What Is Called Thinking?*, 3-18. In *The Logic of Sense* Deleuze emphasises the importance of paradoxes and portmanteau as a way of setting up new forms of rationality. Deleuze, *The Logic of Sense*, 3-6, 7-15. see also: Lecercle, *Deleuze and Language*.

[84] 'The difference of being and beings, as the differentiation of overwhelming and arrival, is the perdurance (Austrag) of the two in *unconcealing keeping in concealment*'. Heidegger, *Identity and Difference*, 65.

[85] The question of exposure was discussed in relation to Heidegger concept perdurance supra Chapter 3.7: *Perdurance: Heidegger's move beyond dialectics*.

[86] As Golding observes, Heidegger's failure to get out of metaphysical thinking is due to the fact that Heidegger based his analysis on the requirement for knowledge to have some kind of ontological ground. Golding, "*Conversion on the Road to Damascus: Minority Report on Art.*" For Heidegger, philosophy and language are inextricably bound together, and as Western languages make use of the verb 'to be' no radical questioning of being is possible from within those languages.

'*Makom* or the *Hamakom* of Hebraic tradition – the *there*, the site, the place, which is one of the names given by the Torah to the Lord, the Unnamable'[87]

It is significant that Rose leaves out the question of technology and omits its centrality to the understanding of perdurance as the notion of difference produced by the technological age. For Heidegger however, technology is the fundamental quality of the modern era:

'Technology is therefore no mere means. Technology is a way of revealing. If we give heed to this, then another whole realm for the essence of technology will open itself up to us. It is the realm of revealing, i.e. of truth.'[88]

Perdurance (exposure), difference and technology have this in common: in all three being manifests itself in the immediacy of that which arrives.[89] Technology, Heidegger explains, is not purely technological nor is it purely human. In modern technology being appears even though 'We fail to hear the

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[87] Lyotard, *The Lyotard Reader*, 196-7. For the multiple meanings of *Makom*, see Maimonides, *The Guide for the Perplexed*: 'Originally the Hebrew term makom (place) applied both to a particular spot and to space in general subsequently it received a wider signification and denoted' position,' or degree,' as regards the perfection of man in certain things. We say, e.g., this man occupies a certain place in such and such a subject. In this sense this term, as is well known, is frequently used by authors, e.g.,' He fills his ancestors' place (makom) in point of wisdom and piety':' the dispute still remains in its place' (makom), i.e., in statu quo [ante]. In the verse,' Blessed be the glory of the Lord from His place' (mekomo) (Ezek. iii. 12), makom has this figurative meaning, and the verse may be paraphrased' Blessed be the Lord according to the exalted nature of His existence,' and wherever makom is applied to God, it expresses the same idea, namely, the distinguished position of His existence, to which nothing is equal or comparable...' (I,VIII). See infra 4.4, *Event-image and the Sublime*.

[88] Heidegger, *The Question Concerning Technology*, 12.

[89] In the introduction to 'Identity and Difference' Joan Stambaugh explains perdurance as the difference between 'Overwhelming and Arrival': 'The difference grants a 'Between' in which the Overwhelming of Being and the arrival in beings are held toward each other and yet held apart. This between is perdurance. It is the most fundamental presupposition for anything to be or to happen at all.' Stambaugh, "Introduction," in Martin Heidegger *Identity and Difference*, 17.

claim of Being which speaks in the essence of technology'.[90] Technology therefore is not only the obstacle to the overcoming of metaphysics, but also the way by which this overcoming can be performed. For this reason, technology and representation are closely linked.[91] Modern technology is marked by its attachment to a regime of representation; the leap out of technology is therefore also a leap out of representation into the essence of representation. By thinking perdurance through photography as 'exposure' it is possible to suggest that the 'leap out' in photographic terms requires to move from content to mechanical repetition, placing the ability to reproduce above the ability to represent.

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[90] Heidegger, *Identity and Difference*, 35.

[91] Bolt points to the conceptual continuity between technology and representation: 'In *The Age of the Word Picture*, we are brought to an apprehension of Being as presencing. In 'The Question Concerning Technology', Heidegger develops the idea of *technē* as *poiēsis*.' Bolt, *Art Beyond Representation*, 59.

6 Simulacra and the Latent Image

It is a question of extending representation as far as the too large and the too small of difference; of adding a hitherto unsuspected perspective to representation – in other words, inventing theological, scientific and aesthetic techniques which allow it to integrate the depth of difference in itself; of allowing representation to conquer the obscure; of allowing it to include the vanishing of difference which is too small and the dismemberment of difference which is too large; of allowing it to capture the power of giddiness, intoxication and cruelty, and even of death. In short, it is a question of causing a little of Dionysus's blood to flow in the organic veins of Apollo.[1]

6.1 Positioning simulacra within philosophical framework

In an essay titled *Simulacra* Michael Camille states: 'At least since Plato

the theory and practice of the visual arts have been founded, almost exclusively,

upon the relationship between the real and its copy.'[2]

As several commentators observed, photography does not fit easily within

this framework, for instance in *A Note on Photography and the Simulacra*

Rosalind Krauss considers photography's destabilising effect by pointing to the

way identical copies from the same original undermine the very notion of

originality:

> By exposing that multiplicity, the facticity, the repetition and
> stereotype at the heart of *every* aesthetic gesture, photography
> deconstructs the possibility of differentiating between the original
> and the copy [...]. The practice of the multiple, whether one speaks

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[1] Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 331.

[2] Michael Camille, "Simulacrum," In *Critical Terms for Art History*. Ed. Robert S. Nelson and Richard Shiff (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), 31. This relationship, refigured as the inability of metaphysics to deal with figures of thought that refuse the separation of expression from vision and its consequent ignorance of the invisible is the subject of the current chapter and Chapter 6.

of the <u>hundreds of prints pulled from the same negative or the hundreds of fundamentally indistinguishable photographs</u> [...] – this practice has been understood by certain artists as not just a degraded or bad form of the aesthetic original. It has been taken to undermine the very distinction between original and copy.[3]

This observation is not new. It can be traced back to Walter Benjamin's essay *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction* where he suggests that the authority of the original is being undermined by the reproducibility of the photograph.[4] The loss of originality in the work of art considered to be the direct outcome of the technological process of mechanical reproduction, which are said to rob the work of art of its status as a unique authorial object.[5] This critical strategy asserts that photography's ability to create identical copies cuts across the aesthetics of originality and authorship. In Krauss' interpretation photographic artists who embrace simulacra (she cites Cindy Sherman as an example) operate with signs that do not refer to an external reality but produce regimes of signification that refer only to other signs and symbols.[6] This form of

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[3] Emphasis mine, R. Krauss. "A Note on Photography and the Simulacra," *October* 31 (1984): 59.

[4] '[T]hat which withers in the age of mechanical reproduction is the aura of the work of art [...]. The technique of reproduction detaches the reproduced object from the domain of tradition. By making many reproductions it substitutes a plurality of copies for a unique existence.' Benjamin, *Illuminations*, 215.It is interesting in this context that this text by Benjamin was severely criticised by Adorno for drawing simplistic opposition between technological reproducibility and aura. 'What slips through the wide mesh of this theory, which tends toward copyrealism, is the element opposed to cultic contexts that motivated Benjamin to introduce the concept of aura in the first place. That is, that which moves into the distance and is critical of the ideological superficies of life.' Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory*, 72.

[5] Krauss, "A Note on Photography and the Simulacra," 63.

[6] Brian Massumi. "Realer Than Real; The Simulacrum According to Deleuze and Guattari," *Copyright* (1987) doi: April 22, 2012. http://www.anu.edu.au/hrc/first_and_last/works/realer.htm (accessed April 22, 2012). As Massumi points out, this understanding of simulacra as a copy without an original, or as the substitution of signs of real for the real is most fully developed by

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simulacra suggests regressive and circular movement from sign to sign in an eternal return of the same.[7]

However, this section will explore another approach to simulacra, which does not consider photography as a signifier without a signified, but is taking its lead from Deleuze's understanding of simulacra as a meaning producing system that does not presuppose the original-copy paradigm but operates through the eternal return of difference.

As the above quotation suggested, the technological reproducibility of photography undermines authorship by creating a number of identical copies. It is however possible to think about photography not as the generation of *indistinguishable* copies, but as the production of difference by means of reproductive technology. In *The Arcades Project* Walter Benjamin proposes another way of thinking about reproduction, not as sameness but as the eternal return: 'The idea of eternal recurrence transforms the historical event itself into a mass-produced article. [...] The idea of *eternal* recurrence derived its lustre from the fact that it was across any interval of time shorter than that provided by

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Baudrillard: Jean Baudrillard. *Simulations*, trans. Paul Foss, Paul Patton, Philip Beitchman (New York: Semiotext(e), 1983).

[7] Nietzsche distinguishes between two forms of eternal return. The eternal return of the same which is described as a circle and the eternal return of difference in which the blink of an eye contains within it the whole of infinity. However the circle is the simplistic mode of return which fails to think the 'hardest thought': '[T]he thought of eternal recurrence of the same is not yet thought when one merely imagines "everything turning in a circle". Heidegger, *Nietzsche; The Eternal Recurrence of the Same*, 42. It is remarkable that the two contemporary interpretations of simulacra, that of Baudrillard and that of Deleuze develop along the distinction outlined by Nietzsche and Heidegger. See *Massumi, "Realer Than Real"*.

eternity.'[8] As Eduardo Cadava observes, for Benjamin of the *Arcades* the main effect of technology is not the production of identical copies but the creation of a world without identity, a world of perpetual becoming in which what is being produced through repetition is not sameness but radical, a-rooted difference formed through the interplay of singularity and repetition.[9]

The eternal return is the condition of modernity because modern technology establishes a regime that binds together the *logos* of production with the *Eros* of consumption: 'The dialectic of commodity production in advanced capitalism: the novelty of products–as stimulus to demand–is accorded an unprecedented importance. At the same time, eversame is manifest in mass production.'[10] According to this understanding of technology, photography is not one technology among others, but the privileged mode of production which creates an *image* of the logic of the eternal return out of its inherent ability to reproduce. Unlike other mass produced objects such as radios, jugs and light bulbs, every photo carries within it the mark of the reproductive process that never stops repeating itself. Which means that while jugs, radios and light bulbs are produced by the eternal return of mass production as *identical* readymades,

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[8] Benjamin, *The Arcades Project*, 340. quoted in Eduardo Cadava, *Words of Light: Theses on the Photography of History*. (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1997), 31.

[9] Ibid., 31. On the eternal return see also: Heidegger, *Nietzsche; The Eternal Recurrence of the Same*. And Deleuze, *Nietzsche and Philosophy*.

[10] Benjamin, *The Arcades Project*, 331. In Cadava's interpretation, the *eternal return* in Benjamin is directly related to photography. Drawing on Benjamin's reading of Auguste Blanqui's *L'eternite par les asters* (of which Benjamin says that it 'presents the idea of eternal return ten years before Zarathusrta' *Arcades* 25), Cadava argues that 'His discussion of the reproducibility of the universe is throughout cast in photographic language that focuses on the questions of repetition, reproduction, images, negatives, originals, copies, translations, death, and mourning.' Cadava, *Words of Light*, 35.

only the photo carries an indelible signature of repetition within it, which makes it an object of difference and not of identity. To say the same thing slightly differently: The reproduction of jugs, radios and light bulbs is given as part of a culture of mass production, but photographic reproduction is the way by which mass production itself is given, taken up and presented not as an image, but as the closest thing to an image.[11]

The technical process that allows infinite number of reproductions to be made can be conceived of as analogical and representational – if the emphasis is placed on the relationship between the original and the copy. However, this representational relationship can be overcome through the very same process if it is considered as the operation of displacement that produces eternal repetition. For Deleuze, the eternal return and representation are inextricably linked because representation is the first step of the return, yet afterwards repetition takes over from representation. The force of repetition is such that it can introduce chance elements, noise, imperfections and random patterns into the repeated copies that dissolve representation and allow difference to emerge.[12]

In principle, representation always creates ontological difference: either in the creation of identical copies from objects that differ or in creating difference

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[11] 'Difference is not diversity. Diversity is given, but difference is that by which the given is given, that by which the given is given as diverse. Difference is not phenomenon but the noumenon closest to the phenomenon' Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 280.

[12] 'The eternal return affirms difference, it affirms dissemblance and disparateness, chance, multiplicity and becoming. [...] The eternal return eliminates that which renders it impossible by rendering impossible the transport of difference. It eliminates the presuppositions of representation, namely the Same and the Similar, the Analogue and the Negative. For representation and its presuppositions return, but only once; they return no more than one time, once and for all, thereafter eliminated for all times.' Ibid., 373.

by repeating identical copies.[13] However within the context of the Western visual and philosophical traditions this difference tends to be supressed and managed by identity. This happens because representation operates within a framework of presuppositions that take as given such postulates as 'thought', 'idea' and 'being'. Because representation finds itself in the service of these concepts and for that reason grounded in identity, it seeks to locate similarities between disparate objects, suppressing difference and taking identity as its own true essence. In this way representation becomes the vehicle of identity:

> The simulated external resemblance finds itself interiorised in the system. The negative becomes principal and agent.[...] It is supposed that repetition is valid, exists and is thinkable only under an Identical which in turn posits it as a difference without concept and explains it negatively.[14]

Getting out of this transcendental illusion of representation requires revisiting the place where it was established as the iron law of nature. As Deleuze explains it is taking place in Platonism: 'The primary distinction which Plato rigorously establishes is the one between the model and the copy.'[15] Deleuze further explains that while distinguishing between the model and the copy, Plato also creates a relationship of identity between them in order to claim that the copy is the confirmation of the logic of identity. In order to maintain this identity Plato has to draw a sharp distinction between a true copy and a false one.

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[13] Ibid., 374.'identical' copies are always different both because the process introduces aberrations and 'noise' and because their place within the series of copies is different. This allows Deleuze to claim that 'identity' is the real simulacra. See also Heidegger, *Identity and Difference*.

[14] Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition,* 375.

[15] Ibid,, 333

As Deleuze says: 'The Platonic wish to exorcize simulacra is what entails the subjection of difference'.[16] Hence, representation understood as the eternal return of the different has no place in Plato's metaphysics. It is for this reason that photography has to find its place within simulacra in order to recover its essence as difference at a standstill.

6.2 Between representation and simulacra (or how to make yourself a quasi-representation)

> *VISITOR: One type of imitation I see is the art of likeness-making. That's the one we have whenever someone produces an imitation by keeping to the proportions of length, breadth, and depth of his model, and also by keeping to the appropriate colors of its parts.*
> *THEAETETUS: But don't all imitators try to do that?*
> *VISITOR: Not the ones who sculpt or draw very large works. If they reproduced the true proportions of their beautiful subjects, you see, the upper parts would appear smaller than they should, and the lower parts would appear larger, because we see the upper parts from farther away and the lower parts from closer.[17]*

The origin of optical realism is usually attributed to the Greeks, specifically quoting the passage in Pliny the Elder about the tracing of a shadow on the wall by a young woman 'who was in love with a young man; and she, when he was going abroad, drew in outline on the wall the shadow of his face thrown by the lamp.'[18] The story of the making of the first shadow image is said to constitute a break with the imaging tradition of the East and mark the beginning of rational

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[16] Ibid., 333.

[17] Plato, "Sophist", In *Complete Works*. Ed. D. S. Hutchinson and John M Cooper trans. G.M.A. Grube (Indianapolis, Ind.: Hackett Pub, 1997), 256 (235 d-e). (References to Plato are given by the title of the work, page number from *Complete Works* and by line numbers in brackets).

[18] Pliny, *Natural History*, trans. Rackham Harris (Harvard: Harvard University Press, 1986), 43 On the tracing of the shadow as the 'origin' of photography see Derrida and Amelunxen, *Copy, Archive, Signature*.40, 55-56.

aesthetics.[19] But the representational image positioned itself in antagonism not only to the mythological Oriental image but also to simulacra and saw 'the other' in both: From its inception visual representation is in polemical opposition not only to the archaic, mythical and religious imagery but also to the optical illusion, deception, trompe-l'oeil and simulacra. This situation is addressed by Isabelle Stengers in the opening pages of *Cosmopolitics I* where she asks after the consequences of conceiving the world through a scientific framework. Her concern in posing the question is that the rational discourse of scientism is leading humanity down a 'narrow path', which prohibits taking into account any entities that might be unknowable or ambiguous. This does not only imply ruling out myth and rhetoric, but also the exclusion of complexities and multiplicities that accommodate the co-existence of incommensurable or contradictory entitles[20] As Stengers points out, the exclusion of everything which cannot be verified or rationally confirmed is not a recipe for avoiding being caught in ideological battles but exactly the opposite: scientific discourse is always susceptible to intolerance and arrogance whenever strands of scientific research find themselves in conflict with each other.[21] Stengers's diagnosis of scientism can extended include photography and not only by analogy, but also because photographic imaging (radiography, photomicrography, micro-imaging) plays

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[19] Gombrich, *The Story of Art*, 78-82. Victor Ieronim Stoichiță, *A Short History of the Shadow*. (London: Reaktion Books, 1997, 1-10.

[20] Isabelle Stengers, *Cosmopolitics I*, trans. Robert Bononno 3 vols. (Minneapolis, London: University of Minnesota Press), 1-3.

[21] Ibid., 3.

part in some of the key practices in a number of scientific disciplines.[22] Equally,

Stengers solution seems to be applicable to the problem of photography, as

Stengers proposes a methodology which, while resisting scientism also resists

reaffirming the metaphysical foundations of science. For instance, she argues

that 'To state that the physical brain must obviously explain thought' precludes

one from accepting the possibility of multiplicity in which the notion of thought

can have an immanence beyond being attributed to a pre-given process.[23] In the

case of photography, it can also be proposed that it is too static and too limiting

to suggest that photographs must obviously be explained by looking at them

because such explanations are blind to the fact that phenomena have an excess

that cannot be be rationally verified. As Stengers says: 'Because it *exists* nature

can bend to the requirements of the causal postulate only partially. It manifests

itself, therefore, in its "irrationality", in the resistance the effort at identification

always runs up against.'[24]

The rest of this chapter develops the question of the 'irrationality' of the

photographic image through examining the exclusion of irrationality (in the form

of sophism and the *pharmacon*) from the philosophical discourse in Plato and the

parallel exclusion of simulacra from the discourse of visuality.

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[22] On the use of photography in neurobiology see: Louise Kay. "Imaging Firing Synapses," *Philosophy of Photography* 1, no. 1 (2010): 55-57. On its use in physics see: Logan, P., and J. Higinbotham. "A Photography Course for Physics Students," Physics Education 25.6 (1990): 348–52.

[23] Stengers, *Cosmopolitics I,* 16.

[24] Ibid., 16.

In Book 10 of the *Republic* poets and artists are banned from the ideal city because their craft (*technē*) is simulacra that dupes the audience into thinking that it can bestow true knowledge while in fact it is nothing but empty rhetoric and optical illusions.[25] However, the banishment of painters and poets reveals an ambiguity with the Platonic discourse itself: the discourse within which the danger of images is most strongly presented is in turn based on a compelling image – the image of the cave.[26] How is it possible for Plato to use an image in order to warn against the perils of imitation? The answer seems to be directly connected to the overall aim of Platonism, which is to teach the 'idea of the good' by means of learning to distinguish between appearance and reality in all spheres of life.[27] To achieve this distinction, the so-called Socratic method contains two interconnected parts.[28] First is self-examination, for the search is ultimately for ethical or moral truth, second is the criticality of the self-examination, for the aim is to establish the truth, and not self-awareness.[29]

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[25] Plato, "The Republic," 1202 (597d-e). See also the dialogue *Ion* where the false knowledge of poetry is discussed in greater detail: Plato, "Ion," 938-949 (530-542)

[26] Plato, "The Republic," 1133-1136 (514-517). The ambiguity of Plato is the subject of Derrida's *Plato's Pharmacy* where it is said: 'In order for writing to produce [...] the opposite effect from what one might expect, in order for this *pharmakon* to show itself, with use, to be injurious, its effectiveness, its power, its *dynamis* must, of course, be ambiguous. [...] It is precisely this ambiguity that Plato [...] attempts to master[...]' Derrida, *Dissemination*, 103. Derrida here draws attention to the apparent contradiction within the Platonic method as the credentials of 'criticality' do not warrant it as the road to truth.

[27] Plato, "The Republic," 1124-1125 (504d-505b). See also Jeffery A. Bell, *Philosophy at the Edge of Chaos*. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2006), 69.

[28] Jeffrey Bell explains that the impossibility of approaching truth directly: 'And yet, the good itself, as Socrates makes explicit, exceeds his capacity to discuss it, it is out of his range [...]' Ibid., 69.

[29] I am grateful to Robert Paul Wolff for this interpretation of the Socratic method. Wolff, *Moneybags Must Be So Lucky*, 26-28.

According to Plato, distortions and errors of judgement befall both reason and

perception, however there is an important difference between them: Errors of

reason - once identified and exposed as fallacies - cease to reappear. For

instance, if one is shown that 2+2=4 they are not likely to make the mistake that

it is 5 ever again.[30] However, fallacies of perception are different, for no matter

how many times one is told that a figure in the distance appears smaller than it

really is, it still *appears* smaller every time. No amount of education in laws of

perspective is going to change this perception. As images are perceptions they

have the inherent tendency to deceive the senses, and even the most rational

reasoning cannot completely overcome this. Nevertheless, some images have the

ability to point towards truth, while others are inherently deceitful. The

difference between these two types is in their 'self awareness': those images that

declare their 'imageness' are able to point towards the truth of things because

they are capable of sustaining within themselves two forms of knowledge: the

phenomenological knowledge of the thing they represent and the rational

knowledge of themselves as representation. For instance, in using the simile of

the cave, Plato declares this to be an image by framing it as a fable within the

larger narrative of the dialogue. The fable is a powerful heuristic device that

allows one to grasp the truth precisely because at its ground there is the knowing

of knowing it as a fable. Similarly, a visual image can be effective in showing an

object as it is, only if as well as showing the object, the image also manifests

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[30] Ibid., 28.

itself as an image.[31] Plato's objection to the poets and painters is precisely that they disguise the imageness of their images.[32]

In *Aesthetics After Metaphysics* Miguel Beistegui comments that this kind of image lacks self-awareness of its own imageness because, being purely phenomenological (sensual) it seeks not to point towards some truth or idea but to replace it with a fake, without however acknowledging the fakeness of the fake. Simulacra is therefore an image that repudiates the basic postulate of Plato's doctrine about the distinction between truth and appearance, for the phantasm maintains that all is appearances and that all appearances are truths.[33]

In the context of the Platonic distinction between likeness and simulacra Beistegui stresses Plato's position as essentially ethical response to the political

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[31] To know a thing through its representation and to know representation *as* representation are two different forms of knowledge. As Nishida Kitarō explains: 'Knowledge of what actually exists is not born or the unity of the nonexistent and the nonexistent. We both know things and, knowing knowing, we know the thinking behind our thinking. These two knowledges have fundamentally different standpoints... these two knowleges must utterly differ in their secondary aspects. If to think the thing and to think thinking are of the same order, then something like the self-consciousness of our thinking necessarily disappears.' As Kitarō goes on to say, the knowing of representation as representation marks the possibility of change and brings into being the notion of chronological time. Nishida, Kitarō, *Ontology of Production*, 37-8.

[32] Plato, "The Republic," 1202 (598b-c).

[33] 'Once in the grip of such deceiving images, the souls are riveted to non-being, and oblivious to truth. But that is not all. Their danger and threat–to truth, and to the possibility of constructing a city that would be built on truth–consists in their ability to present themselves *as if* they were true, that is, as if beings were noting other than (their) appearance or *look*, as if there was no such truth beyond appearance.' Miguel Beistegui, *Aesthetics After Metaphysics*. (Oxon UK: Routlege, 2012), 14. Another danger, which Miguel Beistegui does not mention here is that the form of knowledge put forward by simulacra requires a very specific form of temporality, one that accommodates different things, but does not accommodate change between the states of a thing. Kitarō explains: 'However much a certain schema may be independent within itself, and however infinitely inexhaustible its content may be, it is not what changes' Nishida, Kitarō, *Ontology of Production*, 38.

situation in Athens.[34] What motivates Plato in drawing this distinction between

images is not an aesthetic consideration, not even a purely philosophical one,

rather he is driven by the desire to counterbalance the potential for anarchy and

nihilism that in his view threatened democratic Athens. Plato seeks to establish a

moral order that distinguishes between real claimants for truth and false

pretenders. Beistegui quotes Deleuze in support of his argument who says that

Plato's project was 'a matter of distinguishing the splendid and well-grounded

Apollonian appearances from the other, insinuative, malign and maleficent

appearances... the world of representation will more or less forget its moral

origin and presuppositions.'[35]

However, as will be discussed in some detail below, the distinction

between likeness and simulacra is more nuanced and subtle than saying that

likeness is Apollonian while simulacra Dionysian: An image can be both a

resemblance *and* simulacra, both copy and difference, both idea and affect.[36] The

reason for that is that likeness and simulacra are not simply two regimes of

visuality but also two technologies of production that relate to the way truth is

being perceived. In this sense simulacrum is not an opposition to a true likeness,

but it is a kind of image that exposes the fallacy of truth. By producing an image

economy that does not relate at all to the true-false opposition, simulacra exposes

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[34] Beistegui, "Aesthetics After Metaphysics," 12-14. See also Daniel Smith, "The Concept of the Simulacrum: Deleuze and the Overturning of Platonism," *Continental philosophy review* 38, no. 1 (2005): 91-2.

[35] Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 333.

[36] This is the subject of the following sections of this chapter, where unknowable images such as the photographic *latent image* will be discussed.

the opposition itself as untrue. In other words, simulacra threatens Platonism not with its 'other' but with exposing Platonism itself as simulacra.[37]

As will be discussed below, Simulacra is not a corrupt representation, rather it is the rejection of representation in favour of a regime of affirmation and of similitude that 'multiplies different affirmations, which dance together, tilting and tumbling over one another.'[38] Simulacra is interested in (re)producing undifferentiated doubling, repetition and noncomunicable dimensions of signs. Simulacra destroys the opposition truth-image not in order to substitute it with another opposition but in order to make all oppositions impossible and void. In place of the binary subject-object it puts forward repetition, transgression and rupture.[39]

This however does not imply that all meaning is being abandoned. For as Stengers suggests in her discussion of the pharmakon, simulacra is the embodiment of instability which does not hide its rhetorical and persuasive powers, it does not pretend to be 'scientifically demonstrable' or 'objectively correct'.[40] Even more crucially, Stengers declines to see the *pharmakon* in

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[37] Derrida, *Dissemination,* 168.

[38] Michel Foucault, *This Is Not a Pipe,* trans. James Harkness (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983), 46.

[39] 'we have disintegration [...] in the form of generalized *instability,* actually much more threatening because it is irreducible to a simple decline or fall.' Lacoue-Labarthe, "Typography," 120.

[40] Stengers, *Cosmopolitics I,* 28-30.

opposition to rationality: 'the *pharmakon* refuses to be excluded, it inhabits the heart of the fortress that are supposed to protect us from instability.'[41]

The reason simulacra can appear as convincing forgery is due to the technology that benefits from the scientific advances in perspective, and foreshortening:

> VISITOR: Now, what are we going to call something that appears to be like a beautiful thing, but only because it's seen from a viewpoint that's not beautiful, and would seem unlike the thing it claims to be like if you came to be able to see such large things adequately? If it appears the way the thing does but in fact isn't like it, isn't it an appearance? [42]

As this extract from the 'Sophist' suggests, simulacra is not just the mythological dance of Dionysus but also Euclidian geometry applied to the making of art. It is because simulacra is the way by which irrationality enters representation that images are ontologically significant to the development of philosophical thought, not as abstract aesthetic concepts but as specific technologies that articulate representation in the visual field. The distinction between truth and falsehood is not first established philosophically and then

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[41] Ibid., 30.

[42] Plato, "Sophist", 256 (236b). The distinction Plato makes in the *Sophist* is between artists who produce the exact dimensions of their model and those who make optical adjustments: 'VISITOR: So don't those craftsmen say goodbye to truth, and produce in their images the proportions that seem to be beautiful instead of the real ones?' Plato, "Sophist", 256 (236a). The view that simulacra is the result of scientific advances in technologies of representation is supported by Eva Keuls, *Plato and Greek Painting*, 14. Keuls speculates that during Plato's era painting became connected with the scientific understanding of the laws of perspective which can be partially deduced from the practices of the Sicyonian school of painting that was a more significant Centre of fine art the Athens. Pamphilus was Plato's contemporary and an established artist at Sicyon. Pliny had this to say about him: "he was the first in the art of painting who was learned in all disciplines but especially in arithmetic and geometry; he maintained that without these the art could not be brought to perfection." Pliny, *Natural History* 35, 76-77. Quoted in Keuls, 142.

applied to distinguish between types of images. Rather, it is articulated within the visual field in parallel to philosophical articulation. In order to begin teasing out this move it is essential to situate the problem of representation and simulacra in relation to the technologies of image production by outlining the way notions of subjectivity and identity are established through regimes of visual representation.

As the "Sophist" dialogue suggests, simulacra is an image that takes into account subject-object relations mediated by rational representation, and the theoretical understanding of vision and of laws of foreshortening and perspective that come into play in the design of 'very large works'.[43] The emphasis on the size of the work is significant as it hints at technological advances and scientific knowledge that makes these works possible. It further suggests that simulacra conceals the distortions caused by converging verticals and other optical effects associated with perspectival representation.[44] Jean Joseph Goux names the anthropocentrising that is taken place in pictorial representation as the transition from *aspective* to *perspective* regime of vision. The key characteristic of this transition is the cessation of attributing human qualities to the world (mythological thinking) and recognizing that deities, monsters and mythological

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[43] Plato, "Sophist" 256 (235 d-e) (see the epigraph to this section). For Heidegger, size plays crucial role in the formation of 'the age of the world picture' which he associates with the arrival of the gigantic and the incalculable: 'we experience the incalculable as that which, withdrawn from representation, is nevertheless manifest in whatever is, pointing to Being, which remains concealed.' *The Question Concerning Technology*, 154.

[44] For instance, it is well known that the columns of the Parthenon are not equidistant, but they are positioned so the arrangement will appear harmonious to an observer standing outside the building. All other parts of the Parthenon are marked by mathematical irregularity that seem to depart from the formal requirements of symmetry and proportions. Jerome Jordan Pollitt, *Art and Experience in Classical Greece*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1972), 74.

creatures are the products of human imagination.[45] The change of pictorial

aesthetics from an optical regime of the 'frontal' type to perspectival

representation articulates the new status of the subject and determines pictorial

representation as key terrain of the metaphysics of subjectivity.

In philosophical terms simulacra is closely aligned with the teachings of

the sophists who openly relied on rhetoric rather than on dialectical reasoning.

According to Isabelle Stengers the sophists:

> were treated with opprobrium by philosophers, and were referred to
> as the philosopher's other: they were the ones who bartered the truth,
> who claimed to heal the city's owes without first obtaining
> knowledge of good and evil, who exploited the shadows and
> appearances of the 'cave' rather than seeking the veridical light that
> reveals things in their proper guise.[46]

In Stengers analysis, the figure of the sophist suggests an alternative to the

rationalist thought that is drawn towards positivism, perpetually battling against

anything that cannot be factually demonstrated or experimentally proven.[47] The

question Stengers wants to pose, and to which the figure of the sophist is in part

the answer, is whether scientific thought that is concerned with nothing other

than facts is capable of addressing the presuppositions of its own logic, and what

are the ideological, political and psycho-social consequences of such logic

remaining unexamined.

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[45] Goux, Jean-Joseph, *Oedipus, Philosopher*, trans. Catherine Porter, (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1993), 119-121.

[46] Stengers, *Cosmopolitics I*, 28.

[47] Ibid., @4. See also Heidegger, "What is Metaphysics" in *Basic Writings*, 96.

By drawing on the concept of the *pharmakon* as substance that can both do damage and good, either cure or make ill, either strengthen or weaken, Stengers suggests that this kind of ambiguity is prevalent in most cultures, however the West is unique in attempting to exclude all ambiguity and to be left with either a cure or a poison, either strength or weakness.[48]

This is also the opinion of Derrida in the essay *Plato's Pharmacy*:

> The 'essence' of the *pharmakon* lies in the way in which, having no stable essence, no 'proper' characteristics, it is nor, in any sense (metaphysical, physical, chemical, alchemical) of the word, a *substance*. [...] It is rather the prior medium in which differentiation in general is produced, along with the opposition between the *eidos* and its other; this medium is *analogous* to the one [...] which belongs neither simply to the sensible nor simply to the intelligible, neither simply to passivity nor simply to activity.[49]

According to Derrida, it is precisely this ambiguity that Plato is unable to tolerate and for this reason decides to banish it from his own philosophy:

> Plato decides in favor of a logic that does not tolerate such passages between opposing senses of the same word [...] and yet [...] the pharmakon, if our reading confirms itself, constitutes the original medium of that decision, the element that precedes it, comprehends

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[48] On this point see Wilém Flusser: '[Western] tradition defines "matter" with regard to two other concepts namely 'spirit' and 'form'. But it does so "dialectically", meaning that the two concepts defined with regard to each other contradict each other. [...] Non-western cultures do not seem to be troubled with this sort of metaphysical scruple, as far as the concept of "matter" is concerned. For instance, they quite happily construct a grey zone between "matter" and "spirit", which they fill with thin matter or thick spirit of the type "ghost", or "angel", or "astral body", and they even photograph those phantoms.' V. Flusser. "Immaterialism," *Philosophy of Photography* 2, no. 2 (2012): 215-216.

[49] Derrida, *Dissemination*, 125-6. Also see: Bell, *Philosophy at the Edge of Chaos*, 73. Bell's reading of the pharmakon through Nietzsche helped me to clarify many of the points raised in this section.

it, goes beyond it, can never me reduced to it, and is not separated from it by a single word.[50]

In Derrida's reading, the exclusion of ambiguity or irrationality from the discourse of philosophy is itself an act of covert irrationality, which is brought back and installed within philosophy but only as contraband, without it being ever acknowledged as such.[51] The concept of the pharmakon allows one to identify the instant when representation enters into Plato's argument. For Socrates truth is not so much discovered but *recovered* through recollection as the dialogue *Meno* illustrates.[52] This however creates an additional problem, as even though truth is already known in advance and only needs to be recalled, direct contact with it is not possible because truth in itself prohibits perception.[53] Socrates's solution is to arrive at truth by 'discussions' and by 'means of words', i.e. though discursive reasoning.[54] This however begs the question: How can Socrates be sure that discussions will lead him to truth? It seems that here a tension arises which, as Bell says 'is central to Plato's thought: namely, there is both necessity of otherness, and the necessity to suppress and eliminate

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[50] Derrida, *Dissemination*, 98-9, and Bell, *Philosophy at the Edge of Chaos*, 73-4.

[51] Cf. 'Just as the capacity of representation is the measure of domination, and domination is the most powerful thing that can be represented [...], so the capacity of representation is the vehicle of progress and regression at one and the same time.' Adorno and Horkheimer, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, trans. John Cumming (London: Verso Editions, 1979), 43-5.

[52] *Meno* is concerned with the nature of learning. Socrates argues that people are born with innate knowledge, so all that is left for the educator to do is to remind one of things they already know on some level. Plato, "Meno," 881-882 (82b-89c). See also Bell, *Philosophy at the Edge of Chaos*, 69.

[53] In *Phaedo* Plato explains this 'I feared that my soul would be altogether blinded if I looked at things with my eyes and tried to grasp them with each of my senses. So I thought I must take refuge in discussions and investigate the truth of things by means of words.' Plato, "Phaedo," 86 (99d-e).

[54] Bell, *Philosophy at the Edge of Chaos*, 69.

otherness.'[55] In other words, discourse is Plato's chosen method to represent

truth, however this means that the truth of the discourse has to be accepted as a

given, as ipso facto grounded in truth. And yet, it was already shown that truth

cannot be experienced directly which means that the assumed connection

between discourse and truth is itself unfounded. In this way discourse is exposed

as laying a claim to something it claims cannot be claimed. It is this ambiguity

that allows Derrida to expose Plato's internal contradiction.[56]

According to Derrida, the denunciation of the pharmakon is the moment

when Western metaphysical thought is being established as the thought of

opposites that does not tolerate ambiguity, unknowability and undecidability, yet

it is also the moment when thought is being irreparably scarred by this act of

driving out uncertainty.[57] Nevertheless, it is significant that the metaphysical

foundations of Western theory of knowledge are founded on the distinction

between real and copy, or essence and appearance specifically within the context

of visual representation.[58] The requirement to purify thought from ambiguity by

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[55] Ibid., 70.

[56] Derrida, *Dissemination,* 125.

[57] See also: Jacques Derrida, "Desistance", in Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe, *Typography: Mimesis, Philosophy, Politics.* Ed. Werner Hamacher and David E. Wellbery trans. Christopher Fynsk (Stanford UP, 1998), 1-42.

[58] See Lacoue-Labarthe's *Typography* where it is demonstrated that the notion of representation (and of subjectivity) enters the Platonic dialogue through the discourse of the mirror image: 'The "paradigm of the mirror" is therefore–in fact–a paradigm of *Darstellung.*' Lacoue-Labarthe, *"Typography,"* 89. Towards the end of *Typography* Lacoue-Labarthe suggests that to the extent that it is possible to redeem ambiguity, intuition and immanence it can be achieved through abandoning the idea of the mirror as a reflection. Instead of considering the mirror as true likeness one will have to turn to the infinite and fractal repetition of images reflected between two mirrors. In this way representation is overcome in favour of a device that generates the effects of chaos; '[T]he ruse or trope in which the very will to capture the mimetic evasion simultaneously marks and betrays itself, is caught in its own device and recovers itself. This

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excluding the sophist and his remedy (pharmakon) from the philosophical

discourse, is paralleled by the demand that the visual image be emptied of its

own signs of otherness, undecidability and ambiguity.[59] In this way simulacra is

deemed unacceptable in the realm of the visual.[60] Yet, as will be shown below, it

is not more possible to drive ambiguity and undecidability from the visual image

than it is possible to exclude it from thought: in both instances the gesture of

exclusion itself brings back the undecidable.[61]

According to Lacoue-Labarthe, Plato's oversight is to consider 'truth'

(aletheia) as the be-all and end-all of knowledge. It is Plato's adherence to truth

as the highest value that makes him unable (or unwilling) to get out of

metaphysics. Plato's theory of knowledge is ultimately essentialist because it is

taking as absolute given the priority and the rational justification of reflection

(discourse) which is based in nothing else than doxa, i.e. the common

knowledge: the unverified beliefs that were so skilfully manipulated by the

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operation *already* has a mirror, a theoretical trap-a "thaumatic" machine - in it. An extra one. And because of this, everything is also lost and swallowed in an abyss. The machine is, as we know, a *mise-en-abyme.*' Ibid., 134. This understanding of the image not as a mimetic device but as the way immanence is becoming actualized through representation is central for the concern of this thesis with the immanence of photography.

[59] The sophist is accused of weaving together *that which is* with *that which is not.* [Y]ou can see that the many-headed sophist is still using interweaving to force us to agree unwilling that that which is not in a way is.' Plato, "Sophist", 261 (240c).

[60] Camille, "Simulacrum," 31.

[61] It is precisely because simulacra and pharmakon are excluded from metaphysical thought that Richard Rorty can summarise the trajectory of Western thought as representation: 'Philosophy's central concern is to be a general theory of representation, a theory which will divide culture up into the areas which represent reality well, those which represent it less well, and those which do not represent it at all (despite their pretence of doing so).' Richard Rorty, *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature.* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2009), 3.

rhetoricians and the sophists who explicitly reject the dialectical method and

have no regard for 'truth' (aletheia). Plato ends up having to rely on precisely the

same thing that he accuses the sophist of: the manipulation of common opinions

for his own ends and needs.[62]

One way out of this impasse is hinted at by Lacoue-Labarthe in

Typography, where he suggests that Plato's error is that he seeks to find truth

through the figure of the discourse, or – which is the same thing – to restore truth

by means of mimesis.[63] The problem that Plato is unable to overcome is that both

discourse and mimesis have this in common: they institute the "subject" at the

centre of the question of truth which has the consequence of reducing truth to

anthropology.[64] The solution to this problem, and the way to 'truth' is, in the

words of Lacoue-Labarthe 'certainly difficult to confront head on, but

nevertheless simple'.[65] What is required, in effect, is to disentangle the question

of truth from the question of the subject. Subjectivity necessarily brings with it

the problem of reflection which positions truth as abstract and gives reflection

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[62] According to Deleuze, Plato is driven to this internal contradiction because his implicit aim is
to oppose the forms of immanence established by the Greek society of his time. Plato ends up
reinstalling a form of transcendence i.e. bringing back an external rule in the form of 'truth' or
'thought' with the aim of restoring some form of hierarchical order. Gilles Deleuze, "Plato, the
Greeks," In Essays Critical and Clinical, trans. W Smith Daniel and Michael A. Greco (London,
New York: Verso, 1998).

[63] '[M]imesis resembles aletheia because aletheia does not resemble itself and cannot resemble
itself, but rather–as either unveiling or non-disinstallation–endlessly withdraws, masks itself, de-
sists.' And later: '[...] aletheia and mimesis resemble each other and are, literally, in homoiosis '
Lacoue-Labarthe, "Typography," 118, 121.

[64]"question of mimesis"[...] actually forces us to reintroduce the question of aletheia within that
of language [...] insofar as what is at play there is, in effect, nothing other then the question of
the "subject". Or rather, the obsession with the "subject."' Ibid., 121.

[65] LacoueLabarthe "Typography," 121

the power to mediate between truth and the subject.[66] Above all, to free truth

from subjectivity means to free truth from the representational image. Truth

cannot survive representation neither in a discourse nor in a painting because the

moment representation appears it takes subjectivity as a given and truth then

becomes the truth of the subject. The way out of the standstill of representation is

shown by Lacoue-Labarthe with remarkable clarity:

> [A]n unstable *homoiosis* that *circulates* endlessly between
> inadequate resemblance and resembling inadequation, confounding
> memory as well as sight, upsetting the play of *aletheia* and indeed
> carrying its breakdown right up to the very means of signifying its
> difference–so inapprehensible (imperceptible) is the agitation that
> this unstable *homoiosis* imparts to the Same.[67]

Instead of an image as the *reflection* of truth (as Plato would have it),

Lacoue-Labarthe proposes something altogether much less binary yet he is not

proposing to discard the image completely but, in a move that is reminiscent of

Deleuze he seeks to recover the eternal return from within representation.[68] In

this diagram the likeness (representation) is replaced with *endless circulation*

between likenesses suggesting an image economy that is based not on

representation but on *mise-en-abyme*: an abyssal logic that takes repetition as the

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[66] 'Knowledge understood [as anthropology] is a movement which is not the movement of the
thing. It remains outside the object. Knowledge is then a power of abstraction, and reflection is
an external and formal reflection.' Deleuze, "Review of *Logique Et Existence* by Jean
Hyppolite," 192. In this context notice Plato stating that looking at the sun (allegory of truth) is
only possible through reflection: 'After this, he said, when I had wearied of investigating things, I
thought that I must be careful to avoid the experience of those who watch an eclipse of the sun,
for some of them ruin their eyes unless they watch its reflection in water or some such material.'
Plato, "Phaedo", 86 (99d-e)

[67] Lacoue-Labarthe, "Typography," 121.

[68] See infra Chapter 6 where the eternal return is discussed in relation to the photographic image
and the work of Deleuze.

guiding principle rather than truth. This abyssal logic rejects the model of the mirror reflection with its cut-glass distinction between the reflection and the subject. Instead it installs two mirrors that face each other, endlessly reflecting reflections but without ever creating an identical copy. In this way the representational image is overcome in favour of something altogether much more fractal, self-referential, fragmented and unfinished. The image that 'circulates endlessly' creates a form of knowledge that has no purchase in either truth or mimesis. As it is a fractal process it does not create any finished states or any fixed images, yet at any point the process can be stopped, and at any point the result will be different without changing any of the elements of the set-up.[69] Instead of representation there is now a rhythm of reflections that establishes certain order and certain regularity or as Deleuze and Guattari say a 'plane of consistency' but without drawing on external authority for verification.[70]

For Lacoue-Labarthe, the genesis of the Platonic move that places truth as the ground of philosophy and establishes subjectivity as the guarantor of truth is in his desire to forget the mythological origin of his thought. Plato wants to make thought independent and self-sufficient, not reliant on either *doxa* or 'old wives tales'. For this reason Lacoue-Labarthe can claim a direct link between the *Republic* and the Lacanian "Mirror Stage": both share:

> a kind of virile stiffening and anxious clenching as well as a resentment against the original maternal domination and original feminine education, these being always the sign, for the subject, of

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[69] Massumi, *A User's Guide to Capitalism and Schizophrenia,* 37.

[70] Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus,* 70-73.

its constitutive incompleteness, of its belatedness (impossible to overcome) with respect to its "own" birth, and of its natural incapability of engendering itself (or at least assisting in or attending its own engenderment).[71]

Here, in the closing paragraphs of *Typography*, Lacoue-Labarthe identifies the one thing that 'truth', 'subjectivity' and 'mimesis' have in common: it is the forgetting of the pre-subjective without which there would be no subjective. Lacoue-Labarthe identifies this desire for autonomy (the forgetting of the forgotten) as the driving force of Western philosophy as a whole, up to Hegel: 'the subject theorizing its own conception and engendering itself in seeing itself do so'[72]

For Deleuze too, simulacra does not simply undermine the Platonic distinction between essence and appearance, but suggests a different logic, one that is not based on representation:

> If we say of the simulacrum that it is a copy of a copy, and infinitely degraded icon, and infinitely loose resemblance, we then miss the essential, that is, the difference in nature between simulacrum and copy [...]. The problem no longer has to do with the distinction Essence-Appearance or Model-Copy. This distinction operates completely within the world of representation. Rather, it has to do with undertaking the subversion of the world–the 'twilight of the idols'[73]

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[71] Lacoue-Labarthe, "Typography," 127.

[72] Ibid., 127. Lacoue-Labarthe is explicit about the hidden misogyny folded in the basic premises of idealism: to ground thought in nothing but itself is to deny that whatever exists has to come out of something. Luci Irigaray names this condition of idealism *forgotten vagina*: 'All oppositions that assume the *leap* from a worse to a better. An ascent, a displacement (?) upward, a progression along a line. Vertical. Phallic even? But what has been forgotten in all these oppositions, and with good reason, is how to pass through the passage, how to negotiate it the forgotten transition. The corridor, the narrow pass, the neck.' Luce Irigaray, *Speculum of the Other Woman*, trans. Gillian C. Gill (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1985), 247.

[73] Deleuze, *The Logic of Sense*, 295, 299.

Simulacra is not a hall of mirrors or a proliferation of copies without recourse to an original because such models are still based on a representational paradigm even if the relationship between original and copy is replaced by infinite number of identical copies without an original. Deleuze's aim is to use the concept of simulacrum in order to expose the pre-philosophical ground of Platonism and consequently of Western metaphysics as a whole: 'the poisoned gift of Platonism is to have introduced transcendence into philosophy.'[74] Transcendence snicks back in because Plato wants to have a method for telling apart a false pretender from a true one: He seeks to discover a criterion by which authority can be established and he finds it in the formally logical operation of division.[75] For Deleuze, this is the moment where transcendence is brought into philosophy in the guise of a criterion designed to eliminate paradoxes and aporias. The exclusion of simulacra is being justified because it cannot pass the test of telling the false from the true. This is because simulacra rejects the opposition between true and false judgements and by dint of refusing to participate in dialectical reasoning it calls logical reason into question.[76]

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[74] Deleuze, "Plato, the Greeks," 137. Deleuze's judgement is that Plato is caught between two political models, that of transcendence and that of immanence. On the one hand, Plato is concerned to escape the oppressive model of Eastern empires which prohibits free thinking and where knowledge is determined by the authority of the king or the appointed sage and philosophy cannot even get started. But on the other hand Plato is also weary of the free-for-all democracy of the Athenian polity where all external authority is eliminated in favour of a flat playing field and truth cannot be determined in advance but only fought for. 'What Plato criticizes in the Athenian democracy is the fact that anyone can lay claim to anything'. In effect, Plato is establishing a new transcendent order from within philosophy by situating a relationship between original and copy as the ground of the discourse and by excluding immanence (marked here by simulacra) from his ideal city. Deleuze, "Plato, the Greeks," 137.

[75] Deleuze, *The Logic of Sense*, 291-2.

[76] Smith, "The Concept of the Simulacrum", 98.

Immanence is non-oppositional, groundless, untimely and non-transcendent way of thinking that opposes dialectical reasoning. Immanence does not seek to attach itself to any notion of truth; rather it is the movement of transition between different states.[77] Through the figure of simulacra Deleuze shows that immanent thought cannot be grounded in dialectical reasoning. This allows him to articulate the mandate for a different kind of logic, one that is not bound to pre-given notions of truth while at the same time maintaining some kind of coherence that is required for the creation of philosophical concepts.

The purchase of photography in the question of simulacra is two-fold: on the one hand, photography can be understood as the movement of infinite repetition but not in the sense of Rosalind Krauss who speaks of repetition of identical copies but as continuous creation in which every new copy creates a moment of difference.[78] An image is not a repetition of a previous image but a moment of intensity that propels towards another moment. Viewed as intensity photography is not an accumulation of identical replicas but a force of difference that creates newness by means of mechanical reproduction. Considered in this way photography is not spreading out from a single point of origin, endlessly repeating the same gesture, rather it is forming a network of reproductive instances where technology, understood as the power to make copies, presents itself as an image.

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[77] 'It is only when immanence is no longer immanent to anything other than itself that we can speak of a plane of immanence. 'Deleuze, *Pure Immanence*, 27.

[78] Rosalind Krauss's essay on photography and simulacra is discussed supra chapter 6.1.

The other aspect of simulacra that is relevant to photography is drawn out of Lacoue-Labarthe final observation of the forgotten origin of subjectivity. Photography's forgotten origin is the unknowable and invisible latent image that is the subject of the next section.

6.3 The Latent Image

latent |'lātnt| adjective

(of a quality or state) existing but not yet developed or manifest; hidden; concealed: *discovering her latent talent for diplomacy.*

• Biology (of a bud, resting stage, etc.) lying dormant or hidden until circumstances are suitable for development or manifestation.

• (of a disease) in which the usual symptoms are not yet manifest.

• (of a microorganism, esp. a virus) present in the body without causing disease, but capable of doing so at a later stage or when transmitted to another body.

ORIGIN late Middle English: from Latin *latent- 'being hidden,'* from the verb *latere.*

While the latent image has very specific meaning in photographic chemistry and physics as the invisible image left on the light sensitive surface by exposure, this thesis expands the notion of the latent image to include the ability of the image to maintain a distinction between what the image *is* and what the image *is of* insofar as this distinction is charged with a certain embryonic content which is outside of the visible image and which is inaccessible to the forms of logic that are based in ocularcentrism.[1] It is the claim of this section that the forgetting of the latent image is symptomatic to an approach that deals with the image as a sign or a trace of an absent signifier, while taking for granted such conceptual entities as 'thought', 'idea' and 'being'.[2] This forgetting of presence

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[1] Supra Chapter 6.1, *Positioning Simulacra within Philosophical Framework.*

[2] This was also discussed above in Chapter 5. The notion of 'forgetting' is one of the key terms of post-metaphysical critique For instance in *Heidegger and "the jews"* Lyotard speaks at length on the danger of forgetting the unrepresentable. In *The forgetting of air in Martin Heidegger*

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is of course not limited to photography but is indicative of a way of thinking

which privileges visibility, rationality and representation.[3] As the paradoxical

structure that defies the principle of identity, the latent image is a linchpin

between the non-visible visual and post-metaphysical thought.

This section will explore the way by which photography can recover its

own materiality by putting a limit to the rights of visibility and recovering the

inscrutable space of the latent image. The suggestion advanced here is that in

order to recover the sense of immanence in photography, the image as a visible

surface has to be muted, and the latent image, as the invisible and the

unknowable *other* of representation has to be listened to.[4]

When photographic film or another light sensitive surface is exposed to

light the action of the charged light particles on the silver halide grains forms

sites of metallic silver on the film emulsion. The changes to the film as a result of

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Irigaray is concerned with the privileging of earth and the forgetting of the invisible 'air': 'Love has become mere material subjected to the objective of production, whether production of a limited or unconditional sort. With man losing within it that dim desire that makes him man. Becoming swallowed up in an infinite difference between the draw that deeply animates him and willing himself into self-assertion. Between these two choices there is no transition: the abyss of a reduction to nothingness that nothing saves. That opens into nothing.' Luce Irigaray, *The Forgetting of Air in Martin Heidegger*, trans. Mary Beth Mader (Austin USA: University of Texas Press, 1999), 15.

[3] See for instance Irigaray, *Speculum of the Other Woman*.

[4] In asking of photography to turn against itself it is to ask of it no more than what Adorno asks of thought and Lyotard and Lacoue-Labarthe of writing: 'If negative dialectics calls for self-reflection of thinking, the tangible implication is that if thinking is to be true- if it is to be true today, in any case–it must also be a thinking against itself.' Adorno, *Negative Dialectics*, 365. See also: 'The Forgotten is not to be remembered for what it has been and what it is, because it has not been anything and is nothing, but must be remembered as something that never ceases to be forgotten.' Lyotard, *Heidegger and "the Jews"*, 3.

the exposure are on a molecular level and require subsequent chemical

development in order to become visible to the eye. However, the latent image has

to remain invisible in order to avoid additional exposure to light that will ruin the

image by exposing the remaining silver in the emulsion. From the moment of

exposure and up to the subsequent chemical development the latent image has to

be in total darkness and protected from contact with heat and radiation (for

instance X-ray). In traditional photographic practice exposed film is kept in light-

tight film canisters or dark-slides until it is ready to be developed.[5] Developing

the film destroys the latent image since it converts silver halide crystals to

metallic silver grains and produces the film negative (or positive) from which

prints can be made. Given the fundamental importance of the latent image to the

process of making a photograph, it is thought provoking that it is habitually

omitted from the accepted narrative of photography.

While for Derrida, Lyotard, Lacoue-Labarthe and Jean-Luc Nancy the

unacknowledged foundations of Western metaphysics are a major concern,

histories of photography rarely devote more than a passing reference to the latent

image and while its importance to the photographic process is usually

acknowledged on a technical level, photographic theory has nothing to say about

it, making it doubly invisible. Michel Frizot's monumental 'New History of

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[5] As long as the latent image is preserved in total darkness it can persist for very long periods of time. For instance, photographs taken by Nils Strindberg during the 1897 attempt to reach the North Pole in a hydrogen balloon survived undeveloped for over 30 years and were found together with the remains of the expedition members in 1930. See: Tyrone Martinsson. "Recovering the Visual History of the Andrée Expedition: A Case Study in Photographic Research," *Research Issues in Art Design and Media.* no. 6 (2004): doi: January 1, 2013 and D. P. McCormack. "Remotely Sensing Affective Afterlives: The Spectral Geographies of Material Remains," *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 100, no. 3 (2010): 640-654.

Photography' states that that latent image 'remains fundamental to the

photographic process' yet it addresses it in a single paragraph:

> 'An image did not appear during the exposure in the *camera
> obscura* but the silver salts, on which the light had worked for a
> very short time, were darkened at a later stage during 'development'
> in gallic acid, which speeded up the reaction. Apart from the ease of
> obtaining a negative which could subsequently be used to produce
> as many positive images as one liked, the value of the process lay
> above all in the other characteristic linked to the use of an
> accelerating agent (gallic acid) – the concept of the latent image.
> This separated the two operations of taking a photograph and
> making the negative visible. <u>Today this remains fundamental to the
> photographic process. ... No impression can be seen, not even the
> slightest beginning of the picture</u>. And yet the picture already exists
> there in all its perfection, but in a perfectly invisible state...'[6]

Thus, the latent image is both 'fundamental' and there is nothing really to

say about it. It is the invisible image that has been forgotten. The reluctance of

theory to talk about this primordial state, or its insistence on not talking about it

can be considered symptomatic of the desire to focus on the visible and tangible

object-image and ignore the invisible without questioning the basic premise of

the distinction itself. We are required to judge the aesthetic, social, historical and

political aspects of the photograph, and yet we do not have the tools and the

systems to address the hidden image from which the photograph originates. It is

this ignorance of its own foundation, the inattentiveness to the conditions of its

own possibility, which makes the symptoms of photography so closely linked

with the symptoms of philosophy.[7]

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[6] my underline Frizot, *New History of Photography*, 61.

[7] See 'The philosopher as self-portrait of the photographer' in Laruelle, *The Concept of Non-
photography*, 1-7. Also see supra Chapter 6.3, *The Latent Image*.

If the essence of photography is a mark or a trace of an object that was at some point in front of the camera, then the original trace is the invisible latent image. This is the stage of the process when a mark is being made and it is being preserved only for as long as the latent image persists. All the subsequent operations performed on this inaccessible image are designed to make it available to the human eye. They anthropologise the image by turning it into something that can be looked at, but the very process that makes the image visible also destroys the original trace. As was discussed in the previous section (6.2), the forgetting of the passage from darkness to light, from false to true, from myth to logos is characteristic of Platonism's attempt to rid philosophy of the non-binary discourse of simulacra.[8] The same operation that makes the image visible destroys the latent image, removing its non-identical quasi-substance. Identities require an anthropology, they demand a criterion with which to distinguish between the essential and the non-essential, but in the latent image such metaphysical considerations are unavailable because it is prior to the construction of content. The "translation" that is taking place between the latent and the visible image is not the passage from one medium to another but the movement from non-identity to identity, or from the pre-philosophical to the philosophical.[9]

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[8] Supra Chapter 6. See also Lacoue-Labarthe, "Typography."

[9] 'It is a difficulty inherent in its very principle, situated less in the passage from one language to another, from one philosophical language to another, than already, as we shall see, in the tradition between Greek and Greek; a violent difficulty in the transference of a non-philosopheme into a philosopheme. With this problem of translation we will thus be dealing with nothing less than the problem of the very passage into philosophy' Derrida, *Dissemination*, 71-72.

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The characteristic description of the photographic process goes from light reflected of the object, to film being exposed in the camera and to the print being made of the developed negative. What is being left out of this description is not only that before a visible image can be made there has to be an invisible image, but much more significantly and tellingly that to the extent that it makes sense to talk about indexicality as the direct, unmediated connection between the object and the image, this connection is only maintained for as long as the image itself is invisible.[10] The light that is reflected from the object modifies the molecular structure of the film and in this way the object is *present* in the film, not as a re-presentation, not as mimesis, not as reflection but as (invisible) presence. However, none of this presence is left in the subsequent stages of processing and developing; the chemical developer destroys the silver halides in which the object maintained its physical existence and replaces them with a re-presentation in metallic silver. During the development stage a visible image is formed and the invisible image is being eradicated.

To describe briefly the difference between the latent image and the negative: the former has no substance, no information, no description of the object. It is impossible to question the latent image about its content, for the act of questioning itself destroys the content and turns it into something else: Opening the light tight container instantly destroys the image. In itself, it is unobservable. There is no way to sneak a quick look, to take a measurement, or access it in any other way, as any attempt to read it instantly destroys it. For this

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[10] See supra Chapter 1.1 *Becoming Invisible.*

reason, there is no knowing what the latent image *is of*, there is only the knowing

that it *is*. The undeveloped, latent image is not simply a 'hidden' image but

undecidable in the same sense that the Schrödinger's Cat experiment deems the

fate of the cat as undecidable; undecidability that is derived from the fact that the

act of measurement itself affects the measured situation.[11]

6.4   latent image and subjectivity (The Truth in Photography)

> *There has never been a time without the photograph, without the residue of writing with light.*[12]

As was discussed in the previous section, the latent image is a technical

term from the vocabulary of photographic chemistry and physics that never made

it into the philosophical or critical discourse of photography. However, this

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[11] The following explanation is based on Roger Penrose, *The Emperor's New Mind: Concerning Computers, Minds, and the Laws of Physics*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 375-6. See also: John R Gribbin, In Search of the Multiverse: Parallel Worlds, Hidden Dimensions, and the Ultimate Quest for the Frontiers of Reality. reprint ed. (Hoboken, N.J.: John Wiley & Sons, 2010), 170-2. The experiment places a cat inside a sealed room isolated from all possibility of outside interference. Inside the room there is a light source that emits a single photon which passes through a half-silvered mirror. When the photon hits the mirror its reflection is split into two. The photon has 50% chance to go through the mirror and hit the wall and 50% chance to be reflected down onto the light sensitive cell. Under normal circumstances, if the photo-cell registers a beam of light it records it as an image, however in this experiment, the wavefunction of the photon triggers the photo-cell to smash a phial of cyanide which kills the cat. If on the other hand the photon passes through the mirror to the other side without being reflected then the photo-cell does not register an exposure and the cat is saved. For someone who is witnessing the event from inside this sealed room, once the photon is fired the cat will be either dead or alive as we would expect, however – and this is the crux of the experiment – for an observer who is outside the room the photon particle is in both places at once and the cat is consequentially both dead and alive. The reason for this is that when the particle is not being observed, according to classical quantum physics - the so called Copenhagen Interpretation - it does not behave like a particle but like a mixture of waves that represent the various probabilities of finding the particle somewhere within the box. However, when an observer is making a measurement, the act of measuring itself forces the quantum entity to choose one or another of these states.

[12] Cadava, *Words of Light*, 5.

chapter seeks to propose that the evacuation of the latent image from the

theoretical and critical debate is symptomatic of the tendency to entrench the

discourse within oppositional and binary categories. As the invisible image and

the pre-condition for the visible, the latent image has the potential to subvert

representational equation A=A.[13] If taken seriously as the primordial state of the

photographic image, its ontological beginning and its pre-differentiated ground,

the latent image is a persistent reminder that it is the image that makes seeing

possible.[14] Because the latent image is invisible and unknowable it comes before

the subject for whom the image is a representation. Subjectivity only appears

when the image becomes a visible representation, but visibility also establishes

an interval between the human subject and the world, isolating him/her, keeping

at a distance.[15]

In the case of the latent image there is another structure at work, one that is

not built around vision and light and the associated discourses of ocularcentrism

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[13] See supra Chapter 3.6: *Heidegger, Representation and Identity* where the question of the identity formula A=A is taken up in detail. Deleuze writes about the 'monstrosity' of the non-representational thought in *Difference and Repetition*, 36.

[14] Marie Jose Mondzain suggests that subjectivity emerges at the site of the first paleontological cave images. Humanity, according to this account is inaugurated at the caves of Chauvet, France. 'Producing images means inscribing operators of alterity into the visible. [...] I would like to consider the inscription of cave images as the scenario that gives birth to man as a spectator. Making an image means putting man into the world as spectator.' [...] 'The first man invented the image made by a human hand, the image of a man who was a spectator of the work of his hands, a spectacle of human hands which will bring about the birth of the human gaze.' Mondzain, "What Does Seeing An Image Mean?" 313-314.

[15] As was discussed supra Chapter 3, representation has a duality about it: on the one hand it grants the subject autonomy because it allows to know the world without reliance on external Archimedean points such as god, absolute or myth, yet on the other hand representation also detaches the subject from the world because the world must be taken up and re-presentenced back to the subject. So while representation creates autonomy, at the same time it establishes alienation as the condition of subjectivity. See also: Colebrook, "Questioning Representation," 47-67.

and truth. Rather it is a discourse of the image in which the thing is not represented, but present as a refrain of the eternal circulation of unknowable resemblance and resembling the unknowable.[16] Considered in this way the latent image does not need to be the product of human hands.[17] As Peter Geimer observes, the minimal definition of photography is: 'a body inscribes its image onto another body'.[18] And this inscription does not even need to be a visual one: perhaps on an onto-photo-logical level the latent image is the rhythmic refrain of the image in general, of the will-to-image if such thing can be imagined. It is both a readymade and the expression of movement. Or, as Lacoue-Labarthe says:

> Perhaps at the very root of onto-steleo-logy, under the rhythms and melodic variations of the history of metaphysics, indeed under the quasi-permanence of "aletheic" withdrawal and forgetting, there is a kind of continuous or persistent bass in the insuperable formalism (or "figuralism") of the endless repetition of the typographical motif.[19]

What is so critical and a-radical about the latent image is that it precedes representation and what Derrida named as 'the metaphysics of presence.'[20] As

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[16] Lacoue-Labarthe, "Typography," 121.

[17] It can be considered simply as 'matter of expression' or 'art brut' see Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 316.

[18] Geimer, "'Self-Generated' Images", 36. Geimer cites a number of sources to suggest that photography is both a natural phenomenon and a human invention. He concludes that: 'Photography was neither brought into the world as an unexpected human invention, nor was it discovered one day in its natural, always existing latency.' Ibid., 40.

[19] Lacoue-Labarthe, "Typography," 128.

[20] 'Origin of experience of space and time, this writing of difference, this fabric of the trace, permits the difference between space and time to be articulated, to appear as such, in the unity of experience (of a 'same' lived out of a 'same' body proper [*corps propre*]). This articulation therefore permits a graphic ('visual' or 'tactile', 'spatial') chain to be adapted, on occasion in a linear fashion, to a spoken ('phonic', 'temporal') chain. It is from the primary possibility of this articulation that one must begin. Difference is articulation.' Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, 65-6.

the trace of the thing, the latent image is neither visible nor invisible, but it shares

conceptual consistency with the form of language that Derrida names 'arche-

writing': a form of language that appears before 'writing in the usual sense'.[21] In

Of Grammatology Derrida situates the 'originary trace' prior to metaphysical or

logocentric thought:

> The trace, where the relationship with the other is marked,
> articulates its possibility in the entire field of the entry [*étant*],
> which metaphysics has defined as the being-present starting from
> the occulted movement of the trace. The trace must be thought of
> before the entity.[22]

Philosophy becomes possible with the idea that an image is a reflection of

representation of truth. Similarly, as Lacoue-Labarthe shows in *Typography*, this

is also the unspoken assumption behind Plato's insistence that discourse can lead,

by way of dialectical reasoning, from *doxa* (common sense) to *aletheia* (truth).[23]

The importance of the 'originary trace' for Derrida is due to his conception

of representation as the necessary condition required for the emergence of

philosophy. Writing is not one act of creation among many but the essential

foundation that situates the idea of truth as the ground of thought.[24] In her

commentary on this aspect of Derrida's thought Colebrook says: 'The possibility

of metaphysics – as an idea of truth, meaning, law or right that precedes

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[21] Ibid., 128.

[22] Ibid., 47.

[23] Supra Chapter 6.1, *Positioning Simulacra within Philosophical Framework.*

[24] Colebrook, *Ethics and Representation,* 107., see Derrida, "Sending: On Representation," 71. However, Mondzain suggests *contra* Derrida that language originates from the image: 'The image is the native soil of speech. Seeing means becoming a spectator of the image our hands produce to signify the trace of our passing.' Mondzain, "What Does Seeing An Image Mean?" 314.

representation – does open thought to what lies beyond any of its present representations.'[25] The possibility of going beyond metaphysical thought hinges on the ability of thinking the origin of thought which necessarily means thinking the lack of origin. It means in other words allowing thought to become undecidable, neither true nor false, inhabiting a state of pre-identity and indeterminacy. Under such conditions thought becomes homeless: it looses its privileged and overarching relationship with truth.

However, metaphysical thought cannot get started without prior idea that constitutes some kind of ground, whether 'truth', god, absolute, or analytic reasoning, and each one of these concepts in turn depends on the logocentric conception of the sign. For Derrida this means that thought can contain movement, change and fluidity but only because every sign draws its justification from other signs in an infinite chain of regression. As meaning is always predetermined on the existence of prior meaning there can be no certain and final truth, rather meaning becomes 'Differance' – the indefinable state of an utterance whose meaning is forever deferred:

> Without a retention in the minimal unit of temporal experience, without a trace retaining the other as other in the same, no difference would do its work and no meaning would appear. It is not the question of a constituted difference here, but rather, before all determination of the content, of the *pure* movement which produces difference, *The (pure) trace is differance.*[26]

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[25] Colebrook, *Ethics and Representation*, 107.

[26] Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, 62.

The photographic latent image fits well with Derrida's description of the

'*pure trace*', or '*différance*' as the 'obliterated origin of absence and presence'

that, despite being obliterated can still claim some form of presence.[27] In this

sense Derrida's description of the *différance* seem fitting: '[It] is what not only

precedes metaphysics but also extends beyond the thought of being.'[28]

Read through Derrida's notion of the 'originary trace' the latent image

suggests a possibility of thinking about a photograph not as an image of

something but as the pre-metaphysical imageless image which produces an effect

which, while not in-itself *logos* nevertheless allows for thought to begin. The

latent image can be conceived as both the affirmation of *différance* and as a

possible way of escaping logocentrism while avoiding the necessity of grounding

thought in representation. The reason that such a move might be possible is

because the latent image is not a form of writing but a form of technology that

places reproduction, rather than representation as the foundation of meaning.

However, this move away from logocentrism can be successful if, and only if,

the image is allowed to remain latent, i.e. invisible and unknowable. Being

unknowable, the latent image is pre-representational, and yet its existence is not

assumed or logically deduced but produced by technology.[29] The latent image

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[27] Peter Geimer in his account of photography before the invention of photography tentatively suggests that it is in fact a form of arche-writing: '[N]umerous other causes on which Santini reports [...] demonstrate that such natural images have probably always existed. According to this account, photography would not be something that was invented, since it had always existed as a sort of natural system of writing.' Geimer, "'Self-Generated' Images," 55.

[28] Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, 145.

[29] According to Kant only the representable world can be known and nothing that is un-representable can be grasped by a human subject. Nevertheless, Kant proposed the concept of

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does not dispose with the idea of the ground, but it shifts it from representation to production, forcing the ground to become movable, to self-replicate and to contain within it a rhythm of production. As the latent image is unknowable it has no signifying meaning, however, it does carry within it a trace of a process of reproduction that proceeds by dint of one body making an imprint on another body. This process is both pre-subjective and pre linguistic but it stores within it certain force of becoming.[30]

While the latent image might be considered accidental or even marginal to the photographic process it does seem to offer an image of the way *logos* as philosophical thought can come into being: On the one hand, the latent image is nothing more than a trace left by one object upon another, but at the same time it is unique kind of trace because it is the invisible signature of self-replicating technology. The latent image can be the 'image of thought' for a new kind of philosophy one that is closer to the essence of technology than to human *logos*

What seems to be the most significant feature of the latent image is that it is not a metaphor for the way rational thought is actualised out of *doxa* or myth, rather it can be conceived in Deleuzeian terms as 'pure becoming' in which the

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noumena to designate the non-representable world inaccessible to humans yet independently existing. Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, 258-264 (B306|307-B316|317)

[30] Colebrook quotes from an interview in which Derrida points to the possibility of a language that is made of traces and marks rather than linguistic signs: 'Of course, if one defines language in such a way that it is reserved for what we call man, what there is to say? But if one re-inscribes language in a network of possibilities that do not merely encompass it but mark it irreducibly from inside, everything changes. I am thinking in particular of the mark in general, of the trace, of iterability, of difference. These possibilities or necessities, without which there would be no language, *are themselves not only human.*' Jacques Derrida, *Points...: Interviews, 1974-1994* Ed Elisabeth Weber trans. Peggy Kamuf (Stanford University Press, 1995), 284-5.

object fulfils its potential for becoming other than itself. Following this strand of Deleuze's thought it is possible to mobilise the latent image against the creation of meaning through representation. The latent image is then not a step on the way to a legible image but a movement that has no other aim than becoming for its own sake. Deleuze and Guattari call this form of becoming 'art brut':

> Can this becoming, this emergence be called art? That would make the territory a result of art. [...] Territorial maps are readymades. And what is called *art brut* is not at all pathological or primitive; it is merely this constitution, this freeing, of matters of expression in the movement of territoriality – the base or ground of art.[31]

This form of art is not 'meaningful' or signifying because it has no content as such and because it announces only the fact of presence, only the quid without the quod.[32] Its expression is in establishing a boundary (territorialisation) that works through repetition: 'the refrain is rhythm and melody that have been territorialized because they have become expressive–and have become expressive because they are territorializing.'[33]

The refrain here is set against the idea of the subject who establishes his own territory by drawing a circle in the sand and claiming that whatever is within the circle is theirs.[34] The subject is not the one who creates the refrain. Refrain is the pure expressive force without ground and foundation. In this sense refrain is

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[31] Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 316.

[32] See Lyotard, *The Lyotard Reader*, 196-211.

[33] Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 317.

[34] Rousseau. *Discourse on Inequality*. Quoted in Golding, "Ana-materialism and the Pineal Eye" 109.

opposed to representation because it is driven not by the law of identity but only

through the repetition of difference:

> It is always *in one and the same movement that repetition includes difference* (not as an accidental and extrinsic variant but at its heart, as the essential variant of which it is composed, the displacement and disguise which constitute it as a difference that is itself divergent and displaced [...] (the abandoned snake skin, the envelope emptied of what it implicates, the epidermis which lives and dies only from its own soul or latent content). This is the case with concepts of nature.[35]

It is by differing both from the object and from the (visible) image, that the

latent image avoids becoming a sign in a signifying chain. The latent image is

'technology brut' in which the intensivity of becoming is posited on the one hand

on a multiplicity of the trace that can be mechanically repeated with each

repetition creating difference, and on the other hand on producing an "image"

that is not attached to the semiotics of vision.

The picture that the latent image puts forward is not a picture in the sense

of a likeness or a portrayal but it is also not as abstract as the picture in

Heidegger's *The Age of the World Picture*.[36] As was discussed in Chapter 3, for

Heidegger the 'picture' was the way by which modern subjectivity got

established through a shift that occurred in the idea of representation in the

modern era, from metaphorical and pictorial to scientific. Modernity in this sense

is 'The Age of the World Picture' because the modern subject is the product of

Descartes' and Kant's philosophies that declared representation to be the limit

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[35] Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 361.

[36] See supra Chapters 3.6, 3.7.

and the possibility of all knowledge.[37] In other words, Heidegger is not saying

that the world is now known through pictures or that the modern subject

possesses a picture of the world, rather he is concerned to show that *picturing* is

the modern way of engaging with reality and with being and that this way of

engagement is, to some extent, not human. Everything that is known is known

though picturing it. It is further significant that this form of picturing is directly

connected to Heidegger's understanding of modern technology as a particular

logic of the ability to: '"grasp" the "out there" and, simultaneously, be grasped

by it [...]. This relation, the relation of b ⇔ B, enframes our world, and forms

'our picture' if it – a picture that is not particularly "visual"[...]'[38] In the latent

image there is the 'belonging together' of technology on the one hand and the

unknowable nothingness on the other. For Heidegger, this drawing together of

thinking and nothing is the task of thinking. However the task is not in

conceptualising their fusion, but in 'experiencing this together in terms of

belonging.'[39]

It is also worthy of note that towards the end of the second part of

Identity and Difference Heidegger reasons that the 'experiencing together' is

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[37] See supra Chapter 3 where the question of representation is discussed in detail.

[38] Golding, "Fractal Philosophy", 135. See also: 'Picture here does not mean some imitation, but rather what sounds forth in the colloquial expression, "We get the picture" concerning something. This means the matter stands before us exactly as it sands with it for us. "To get into the picture" with respect to something means to set whatever is, itself, in place before oneself just in the way that it stand with it, and to have it fixedly before oneself as set up in this way.' Heidegger, "The Age of the World Picture," 129.

[39] Heidegger, *Identity and Difference,* 29.

ultimately impossible because of the metaphysical structure of language.[40]

However, following the earlier discussion of the latent image as *arche-trace*,

it is possible to consider it in terms of the onto-photo-logical primacy of the

latent image over thought. The latent image initiates the possibility of thought

because it establishes a regime of repetition in which technology takes being

(matter) and through a process of self-replication creates a repetition which *ipso*

facto is difference. In the latent image the actuality of the world and the virtuality

of the image are fully merged not as separate entities but in an act of mutual

production and creation.[41]

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[40] Ibid., 73.This aspect of Heidegger's thought is taken up in supra Chapter 5.

[41] 'The image is neither actual nor virtual but the interval that brings actuality out of the virtual.' Claire Colebrook, *Deleuze and the Meaning of Life*, (London. New York: Continuum, 2010), 87-8.

6.5   Photography: difference at a standstill

What comes to light in the history of photography, in the history that is photography, is therefore the secret rapport between photography and philosophy. [42]

According to the passing references in the works of Deleuze and Deleuze and Guattari they do not consider photography as a site of *percepts* capable of responding to the environment in the same way that art, ballet and mime can. [43]

However the difference between representation and percept acquires specific meaning within the photographic context for it suggests that the

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[42] Cadava, *Words of Light*, 5.

[43] Deleuze and Guattari's view of photography (as opposed to cinema) is disappointingly clichéd, for they see it squarely within representational terms of reference as can be grasped from the following extracts: 'short term memory is of the rhizome or diagram type, and long-term memory is arborescent and centralized (imprint, engram, tracing, or photograph)'. Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 16. 'What we must do is reach the photographic or cinematic threshold; but in relation to the photograph, movement and affect one again took refuge above and below.' Ibid., 281. In considering photography within the representational frame Deleuze and Guattari follow in the footsteps of Adorno who also did not see in photography the potential for 'negative dialectics' and for non-identity. 'On no account is the principle of montage a trick to integrate photography and its derivatives into art despite the limitations defined by their dependence on empirical reality. Rather, montage goes beyond photography immanently without infiltrating it with a facile sorcery, but also without sanctioning as a norm its status as a thing: It is photography's self-correction.' It is significant that Adorno considers montage as the appropriately dialectical medium that 'rescues' photography from its falsifying adherence to empirical reality. It is however even more interesting to ask why Deleuze overlooked the creative potential of photography. One possible response is that photography presents the same challenge for Deleuze that cinema was for Bergson. As Deleuze explains in the opening chapter of 'Cinema 1; the movement image' Bergson failed to see the creative potential of cinema because for him it was an example of the homogenization of thinking and mechanization of time which he opposed to creativity and intuition. 'it was precisely where Bergson appeared to have stopped thinking' Colebrook, *Deleuze and the Meaning of Life*, 8. Bergson failed to see cinema's potential to move beyond representation by showing pre-human duration and pre-human consciousness. 'We can therefore define the cinema as the system which reproduces movement by relating it to the any-instant-whatever.' Deleuze, *Cinema 1*, 7. The cinematic apparatus creates the possibility for radically new philosophy which does not seek the eternal but rather produces the new and the singular in the pre-human unity of intellect and intuition made possible by the technology that transfigures movement into any-instant-whatever. Ibid., 8. Similarly, Deleuze considers photography as representation and fails to see its potential to create an image of difference.

photographic process and the camera liberate the image from the sensory-motor

apparatus and offer a model of vision that goes beyond a human observer. In

other words, a little bit of Ahab's blood runs in Fox Talbot veins.[44] While this

claim can appear fanciful to someone who is considering photography as the

most ubiquitous representational device or as the manifestation of copyrealism,

there are good grounds to suggest that during the early days of modern

photography it had something of Herman Melville's Moby Dick about it:

> 'And this I believe to be the first instance on record, of a house having painted its own portrait.'[45]

The above quotation from January 25, 1839 suggests that for the inventor

of the negative/positive process 'photogenic drawing' was not a straightforward

representation but something altogether more *becoming*. The title of the paper

Fox Talbot presented to the Royal Society on January 31, 1839 reinforces the

notion of an image made not by human hand (*archeiropoietoi*): 'Some account of

the Art of Photogenic Drawing, or, the Process by which Natural Objects May

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[44] Herman Melville's Moby Dick was published in 1851. Photography was officially announced in 1839. Deleuze saw the unresolvable darkness of Moby Dick and felt strong kinship with Melville. T. H. Crawford. "Captain Deleuze and the White Whale: Melville, Moby-dick, and the Cartographic Inclination," *Social Semiotics* 7, no. 2 (1997): 219-232, 219. yet he did not see the power of photography to generate schizophrenic folds, rhizomes and percepts. It is the contention of this thesis that photography is part of the imperceptible constellation of forces – like the compass of Captain Ahab that points not towards the magnetic north but in the direction of the whale. This section aims to suggest that since its inception as modern technology photography had something unresolvable and Dionysian about it. As Deleuze says: '[I]t is a question of causing a little of Dionysus's blood to flow in the organic veins of Apollo.' Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 331.

[45] William Henry Fox Talbot *Literary Gazette*, no.1150 (February 2, 1839), p.74 quoted in Newhall, *The History of Photography*, 20.

Be Made to Delineate Themselves without the Aid of the Artist's Pencil'.[46] The

automatism of photography was noted by several nineteenth century

practitioners.[47] Subsequently, automatism of the new medium became a key

assurance in photography's claim for truth, as the ability of the image to self-

generate appears to warrant for the objectivity of the representation. Yet, the

notion of 'a house having painted its own portrait' can also be taken to mean the

possibility of expression that is beyond and outside representation:

> Sensation is pure contemplation, for it is through contemplation that
> one contracts, contemplating that one contracts, contemplating
> oneself to the extent that one contemplates the elements from which
> one originates. Contemplating is creating, the mystery of passive
> creation, sensation. Sensation fills out the plane of composition and
> is filled with itself by filling itself with what it contemplates: it is
> 'enjoyment' and 'self-enjoyment.'[48]

The house that paints its own image is the very image of immanence; the

expression of a possibility of life as a coming-to-being of an image, or of a

power to image expressing itself in making a mark.[49] The image that the house

itself paints does not rely on the idea of representation, it is not an image that

relates to some fixed and pre-given form, rather it is the pure force to replicate

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[46] Ibid., 20. The question of photography 'not by human hand' have been raised by several writers, most notably by Didi-Huberman's analysis of the Shroud of Turin. Georges Didi-Huberman, "The Index of the Absent Wound (monograph on a Stain)," *October* 29 (1984): 63-81.

[47] Azoulay, "Photography".

[48] Deleuze and Guattari, *What Is Philosophy?*, 212.

[49] Deleuze contrasts immanence to binary thinking, presenting it as philosophy distinguished by its intercourse with life, not as a rational force of survival but as a diverse field of forces: 'We will say of pure immanence that it is A LIFE, and nothing else. It is not immanence to life, but the immanent that is in nothing is itself a life. A life is the immanence of immanence, absolute immanence: it is complete power, complete bliss' Deleuze, *Pure Immanence*, 27.

not through the biological process of replication but through the technological process of reproduction. The automatism of the photographic image indicates that here the technology of repetition leaves its mark within the image. The photograph is not only an image of a past moment available in the present, but it is also an answer to the following question: 'What is the condition of possibility that makes the image possible?'

To answer this question means thinking about photography not in terms of what one sees but in terms of the forces that constantly reshape it. It means to stop paying attention to the visual without however forgetting or ignoring the visible. To be able to affect and to be affected in this case means allowing the latent image to enter the space of thought where it could take the place of the *now*. The failure of ocularcentrism is the failure of subjectivity to grapple with the unknowable, but where identity fails, where representation flounders, depth is rising to the surface without ceasing being depth and photography becomes the study of surfaces, the work of sense[50]:

> We no longer penetrate in depth, but through an act of sliding pass through the looking-glass, turning everything the other way round like a left-handler. The stock market of Fortunatus described by Carroll as a Möbius strip on which a single line traverses the two sides. Mathematics is good because it brings new surfaces into existence, and brings peace to a world whose mixtures in depth would be terrible: Carroll the mathematician, or Carroll the photographer.[51]

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[50] Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition,* 33.

[51] Deleuze, *Essays Critical and Clinical*, 21.This quotation is remarkable because the photographic here appears as 'minor' i.e. capable of producing surfaces without depth, meaning without representation. It is likely that Mieke Bleyen is right when she says 'Deleuze and

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Ontologically, both images and objects (as well as thoughts and things) belong to the same source that Deleuze and Guattari refer to as 'chaos'.[52] In the words of Zourabichvili:

> The force resonating in us and mixed with our own lives is not anthropomorphism, but the very sign of becoming: things, in their manner of existence, resonate in us, as a manner for us to exist, even if this means, as Deleuze insistently adds, that things conversely become other, that is, pure sensation.

As the ground zero of photography, the latent image is pure difference. In any case representation cannot appear as such if it was not preceded by the latent image, which inaugurates the conditions out of which representation can emerge. It remains to be shown that the latent image is not accidental to the photographic but constitutes the field of expressive and dynamic multiplicity that determines the visual and yet it is inaccessible to metaphysical thought. The latent image is excluded not only from the discourse of photography but also from the philosophical discourse that takes representation as its ground, because it is unable to deal with the unknowable that refuses to have 'characteristics' or to maintain a relationship with notions of truth (*aletheia*) and memory (mimesis). For that reason, to the extent that the latent image needs its own post-

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Guattari seem not at all to have been attracted to photography, and this has everything to do with the way they equated the medium with the logic of the cliché-photography's documentary and representational qualities–and with memory or narrative illustration.' Mieke Bleyen, *Minor Photography. Connecting Deleuze and Guattari to Photography Theory*. (Leuven: Leuven UP, 2012), xi.

[52]As Jeffery Bell explains, chaos does not mean nihilism or that anything goes, for there is a logic to it, but it is a different kind of logic. Bell, *Philosophy at the Edge of Chaos*, 5-7

metaphysical discourse to articulate it as a form of aesthetics that draws its inspiration from difference rather than from identity and representation, post-metaphysical thought needs the latent image as the 'image of thought' that can get the post-metaphysical move started.[53]

Given the unknowability of the latent image, it requires a non-ocularcentric logic, one that privileges the *quod* over *quid*, logic that states 'it is happening' before questions about what it is and about its significance.[54] For this reason, the latent image is closer to what Lyotard names 'an event, an occurrence' while Deleuze names this kind of surface 'singularity'.[55] The logic at work here is not the logic of signs, signifiers and concepts, rather it is the sensual logic of the percept, of which Deleuze and Guattari say:

> As percepts, sensations are not perceptions referring to an object (reference): if they resemble something it is with a resemblance produced with their own methods;. If resemblance haunts a work of art, it is because sensation refers only to its material: it is the percept or affect of the material itself, the smile of oil, the gesture of fired clay, the thrust of metal, the crouch of Romanesque stone, and the ascent of Gothic stone.[56]

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[53] Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition,* 164-174.

[54] Lyotard, *The Lyotard Reader,* 197.

[55] Deleuze explains: 'No, singularities are not imprisoned within individuals and persons; and one does not fall into an undifferentiated ground, into a groundless depth, when one undoes the individual and the person. The impersonal and pre-individual are the free nomadic singularities. Deeper than any other ground is the surface and the skin. A new type of esoteric language is formed here which is its own model and reality. Becoming-mad changes shape in its climb to the surface, along the straight line of the Aion, in I, the lost identity, when they cease being buried and begin, on the contrary, to liberate the singularities of the surface. Nonsense and sense enter into co-presence of a static genesis – as the nonsense of the surface and the sense which hovers over it.' Deleuze, *The Logic of Sense,* 159.

[56] Deleuze and Guattari, *What Is Philosophy?,* 166.

As percept, the latent image resonates with its own materiality, its own latency. Its resemblance is with itself, the sensation it evokes does not concern the eye or the mind because this is unreadable, automimetic image that operates through difference, not resemblance. It is resistant to copy, imitation or representation, yet it restores the kind of presence that Lyotard connects with the anti-representational and the unnameable '*is*'. The convention that photography is light made legible is so pervasive that it is strange to think that the latent image has no legible signs, it carries no inscriptions. Yet it is itself a kind of sign, a hieroglyph that marks the presence not of the object but of the process by which an object is being made present. The object leaves its mark not by writing itself into the picture (discourse) but by making itself into an inscription.[57] In the latent image the photo-graph recovers its own form of writing, its photo-gramatology, its typo-photo-graphy. The evacuation of representation and truth is also the evacuation of memory and subjectivity. The automimetic space does not belong to the chronology of instant moments; it is alien to linear time. While photography in general is often read semiotically though the devices of signifier, signified, absence, negation and lack, the latent image is non-discursive, pre-individual affirmation of presence.

The latent image delineates the one-sidedness of photographic theory that considers photography solely from the perspective of the image. Approached through the representational model, the photographic image is the universal

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[57] Lacoue-Labarthe names this kind of inscription 'typography' as the other of writing. Lacoue-Labarthe, "Typography," 126-138. See supra Chapter 6.2, *Between Representation and Simulacra.*

floating signifier that mediates everything, making everything into images but

fails to speak of that which lies-to-hand, of the materiality of the *now*, of which

Lyotard says that it contains the possibility of nothing happening.[58] This is

perhaps the reason why several attempts were made to turn the tables on

representation by subtracting it from the photograph.[59] The aim of the so-called

'material turn' was to criticise the one-sidedness of the photographic discourse

and to propose that the photograph has material existence as an object. However,

both the representational approach that ignores the object and the 'object

oriented' approach that ignores the content are oblivious to the consideration that

an image is not only the reflection of a thing but also *a thing*. The

representational approach ignores the 'thingness' of photography, treating it as

an abstract signifier while the object-oriented approach ignores the image that the

photograph contains focusing on the materials, processes and histories of the

photograph as an object. The representational approach is right to say that the

photograph is an image but it is wrong to say that the image is nothing but a

representation, while the object oriented approach is right to say that the

photograph has material presence but it is wrong to locate it in the paper,

chemicals and frame and not in the image.[60] In both cases something essential

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[58] Lyotard, *The Lyotard Reader*, 267-70.

[59] For instance Elizabeth Edwards says: 'The central rationale of *Photographs, Objects, Histories* is that a photograph is a three-dimensional thing, not only a two-dimensional image. As such, photographs exist materially in the world, as chemical deposits on paper, as images mounted on a multitude of different sized, shaped, coloured and decorated cards, as subject to additions to their surface or as drawing their meanings from presentational forms such as frames and albums.' Edwards and Hart, *Photographs Objects Histories*, 1.

[60] Deleuze clarifies this point thus: 'It is strange that aesthetics ... could be found on what can be represented in the sensible. True, the inverse procedure is not much better, consisting of the

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about photography is being forgotten or ignored. What is required is not to forget

either the object or the image but to raise the image to the level of an object by

recovering the *invisible* in the image, by drawing on the perception of that which

cannot be seen *in the image* and by overcoming the opposition between vision

and expression. The latent image is important here because it does not detract

attention from the image, but demands to consider the image not in terms of the

visible, not in terms of the signifier and the logic of representation but in terms of

the force that imprinted itself on the image *without* making itself visible.

Deleuze says that the nature of the immanent invisible is 'to make visible

those forces that are not visible'.[61] The notion of the force however requires

clarification, as it is key in understanding the move Deleuze initiates away from

representation:

> We will never find the sense of something (of a human, a biological
> or even a physical phenomenon) if we do not know the force which
> appropriates the thing, which exploits it, which takes possession of
> it or is expressed in it.[62]

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attempt to withdraw the pure sensible from representation and to determine it as that which
remains once representation is removed (a contradictory flux, for example, or a rhapsody of
sensations). Empiricism truly becomes transcendental, and aesthetics and apodictic discipline,
only when we apprehend directly in the sensible that which can only be sensed, the very being *of*
the sensible: difference, potential difference and difference in intensity as the reason behind
qualitative diversity.' Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 68.

[61] Gilles Deleuze, *Francis Bacon: The Logic of Sensation*, trans. Daniel W Smith (New York;
London: Continuum, 2005), 43. See also, François Zourabichvili, "Six Notes on the Percept (on
the Relation Between Critical and Clinical)," In *Deleuze: A Critical Reader*. Ed. Paul Patton
(Oxford: Blackwell, 1996), 190.

[62] Gilles Deleuze, *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson (London: Continuum,
2006), 3.

Deleuze is not seeking to define the relationship of forces between the subject and his/her environment in terms of the master-slave dialectic in which the subject triumphs over the landscape or over another human, or becomes the victim, crashed by nature or by another's will. Force here should not be understood as a zero-sum equation in which one side overpowers the other, because in this case what is being presupposed is the underlying commensurability between the two sides, a commensurability which is based on a heteronomous equation of A=A. In a move reminiscent of Heidegger in *The Principle of Identity*, Deleuze uses the notion of force to step out of dialectical, oppositional thinking by replacing the notion of identity or subjectivity with the notion of sensible intensities that organize pre-subjective investments.[63] As Nathan Widder explains: '...relations among forces cannot be reduced to equality, nor can their differences be measured by a fixed scale, for both these manoeuvres presuppose a Sameness, identity, or ground.'[64] For Deleuze, there is no distinction between beings and forces: 'the object itself is force, the expression of force.'[65] This understanding of force as the sameness of beings negates the dialectical understanding of beings as distinct entities, either being-

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[63] '[F]or it is the nature of forces to be in relation to other forces and it is in this relation that they acquire their essence of quality.' Deleuze, *Pure Immanence: Essays on a Life*, 73. As Deleuze explains, the relation of forces determines the meaning of an event. In a move that is reminiscent of Heidegger's privileging of *together* over *belonging* as a way of stepping out of metaphysical and identitarian thinking (see Stambaugh, "Introduction," 13.) Deleuze emphasizes that force does not relate to the desire to dominate because considering force in this way 'we inevitably make it depend on established values...' Deleuze, *Pure Immanence*, 73.

[64] Widder, *Genealogies of Difference*. 40.

[65] Deleuze, *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, 6.

in-itself or being-for-itself.[66] The illusion of opposites is rooted in the understanding of relations themselves as heteronomous and relying on external power (god, absolute, reason) to institute the opposition in the first place.[67] It could be said then that whenever there is a juxtaposition of two entities, such as subject and object or form and content, there is already implied a system of relations that is external to the entities in question and this system implicitly implies that the entities adhere to a law or rule that is given by an outside force. It is precisely this idea of an externally given logic that Deleuze opposes by redefining the notion of force. As there is no sovereign externally given logic that underwrites relations between entities, there is also no hierarchical distinction between different kinds of things, which means for instance that material things (table, tree) and thoughts (concepts, ideas) do not belong to separate series but share parallel and mutual organisation. It also means that thoughts are not ascribed to individuals and that there is no principal distinction between thoughts and objects, rather, both thoughts and objects share the same ontological essence that Deleuze and Guattari name 'becoming':

> We are not in the world; we become with the world; we become by contemplating it. Everything is vision, becoming. We become universes. Becoming animal, plant, molecular, becoming zero. This is true of all the arts. [...] Art does not have opinions. Art undoes the triple organization of perceptions, affections, and opinions in order to substitute a monument composed of percepts, affects, and

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[66] Widder, *Genealogies of Difference.* 39.

[67] Ibid., 40.

blocks of sensations that *takes the place of language*. It is about listening [...] This is precisely the task of art.[68]

The roadmap to move beyond representation as the foundation of art requires, according to Deleuze and Guattari revisiting the basic structuralist assumptions about language.[69] If knowledge is based on language then any attempt to describe the structure of knowledge will have to be outside of the structure and invisible to itself.[70] However, in the above quotation Deleuze and Guattari also reject the possibility of basing knowledge on experience and

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[68] Deleuze and Guattari, *What Is Philosophy?*, 170, 177. quoted in: Golding, "Fractal Philosophy" 134

[69] Becoming has to be understood as the movement of translation between forces. However the translation does not take place between opposites (as dialectical logic would have) rather this translation is more like the Möbius band where the transition between the two sides is happening on the surface that is both the inside and outside because there is only one surface and yet it has an internal and external dimensions that run around each other, curve around each other but never get into oppositional or confrontational relation. As Golding explains, *becoming* is not designed to replace an ontological begging, but to get rid of all beginnings, starting points and other forms of telos in as much as beginnings presuppose hierarchy and a linear unfolding. Deleuzian becoming is only possible when the place where one begins is not the 'broken middle' of Hegelian logic understood as the movement between past and present, or as a point on a chronological continuum ('the constitutive 'is'') but an event of sense, and event of 'it is happening' in which the happening is the way of grasping the 'is' with that which lies to hand: 'Accounting both epistemologically and analytically for the "constitutive is" in terms of this "age" called "technology" meant taking seriously the combinatory logic of "technē" itself.' Golding, "Fractal Philosophy", 140.

[70] On the contradictions inherent in the structuralist approach to knowledge specifically in relation to anthropology see Derrida: 'Lévi-Strauss will always remain faithful to this double intention: to preserve as an instrument something whose truth value he criticizes. "Structure, Sign and Play in the Discourse of Human Sciences", *Writing and Difference*, 351-370. As Derrida points out this 'double intention' allows structural anthropology to analyze the structures of other civilizations without interrogating the structure of its own analysis. However, Derrida's response to the problem of structure is different from that of Deleuze and Deleuze and Guattari. For Derrida, structuralism is a reaction to the ontological crisis ('rupture') of Western metaphysics. Prior to the rupture, knowledge was derived from 'the determination of Being as *presence* in all senses of this word.' Ibid., 353. The rupture occurs at a point when questions begin to be asked about the desire for a center: 'it was necessary to begin thinking that there was no center, that the center could not be thought in the form of a present-being...'.Ibid., 353. Derrida concludes that 'the absence of the transcendental signified extends the domain and the play of signification infinitely.' Ibid., 354. Since there is no center and no externally given foundation 'everything became discourse' Ibid., 354. Derrida's way out of this impasse consists in 'putting into question the system in which the preceding reduction functioned: first and foremost, the opposition between the sensible and the intelligible' Ibid., 355.

perception because experience too presupposes the existence of some thing that

is experienced.[71] The strategic turn to art as a successor of both structuralism and

phenomenology is motivated by art's ability to create images that do not bear on

any pre-established structure but refer only to themselves. The value of art is not

in its ability to commemorate the past, to reflect on situations and to represent

events, rather 'it is a block of present sensations that owe their preservation only

to themselves'.[72] The transformative power of art lies in its ability to expose life

as a force in a constant state of 'becoming'. Art is a philosophy precisely to the

extent that it uses its potential to create a concept of difference. Accordingly,

photography can be considered art in the Deleuze and Guattari sense only if it

can offer a perception of difference in the visual field. This requires going

beyond the limits of human perception, beyond the visible to the human eye. The

photographic apparatus is unique in its ability to produce an image that is

simultaneously concrete and yet it is marked by completely pre-human

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[71] The philosophy of Edmund Husserl is the case in point here.

[72] Deleuze and Guattari, *What Is Philosophy?*, 167. Deleuze and Guattari advance here an understanding of art that is both a continuation of Adorno's 'Aesthetic Theory' and a radical break with Adorno's metaphysics. Cf. 'The resistance to empirical reality that the subject marshals in the autonomous work is at the same time resistance to the immediate appearance of nature. For what becomes perceptible in nature no more coincides with empirical reality than does–according to Kant's grandly paradoxical conception–the thing itself with the world of 'phenomena,' the categorically constituted objects.' Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory*, 86. Adorno, like Deleuze and Guattari insists that the role of art is not to express some state of affairs. However, for Adorno art is both true and false at the same time which allows him to claim that art embodies a form of logic that is different to the dominant rationality. In this way art marks the possibility of a better word: 'Art need not defend itself against the rebuke that it is degenerate; art meets this rebuke by refusing to affirm the miserable course of the world as the iron law of nature.' Ibid., 65. While not mimetic, art is still a form of identity even if this identity is constituted with its own logic and not by reference to an external reality. While Deleuze and Guattari follow Adorno in rejecting representation as the basis of art, they also reject the possibility of identity. Deleuze re-defines the notion of simulacra to propose a work of art that is an expression of pure difference. See supra Chapter 6.1, *Positioning Simulacra within Philosophical Framework.*

perception. The latent image offers a glimpse into what it is like to perceive as a non-human, what it is like to see with an eye that is not constrained by human psychology and biology. Derrida speaks of the requirement of absolute invisibility as a precondition of drawing:

> To be the other of the visible, *absolute* invisibility must neither take place elsewhere nor constitute another visible, that is, something that does not yet appear of has already disappeared... This nonvisible does not describe a phenomenon that is present elsewhere, that is latent, imaginary, unconscious, hidden or past... The *aperspective* thus obliges us to consider the objective definition, the anatomico-physiology or ophthalmology of the '*punctum caecum,*' as itself a mere image, an analogical index of vision itself, of vision in general[73]

'Absolute invisibility' allows one not to see objects, forms, shapes and colours but to be open to the forces that operate within these structures.[74] Invisibility is not the absence of vision, rather it is the step back from visual that allows to evaluate and to interpret the forces within the visual. The stepping back from the visual is the condition under which photography becomes the visible expression of difference.

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[73] Derrida, *Memoirs of the Blind*, 52.

[74] Daniel Smith evokes similar image in discussing the way the act of becoming involves becoming imperceptible: 'Cézanne spoke of the need to always paint at close range, to *no longer see* what field, to be too close to it, to lose oneself in the landscape, without landmarks, to the point where one no longer sees forms or even matters, but only forces, densities, intensities: the forces of folding in a mountain, the forces of germination in an apple, the thermal and magnetic forces of a landscape... the world before humanity.' Daniel W. Smith, "Introduction" in Gilles Deleuze, *Essays Critical and Clinical,* trans. Michael A Greco (London, New York: Verso, 1998), xxxv.

7   Conclusion

7.1   Immanence: a Photograph

What is a transcendental field? It can be distinguished from experience in that it doesn't refer to an object or belong to a subject (empirical representation). It appears therefore as a pure stream of a-subjective consciousness, a pre-reflexive impersonal consciousness, a qualitative duration of consciousness without a self.[1]

This thesis outlined photography as the multi-dimensional, expressive, singular and non-identical practice that frustrates static, linear, oppositional totalities and reflected subjectivities. The motivation behind this work was to rescue the image from the kind of metaphysics in which it refers to an object or belongs to a subject, from being subsumed under the aspect of representation and from being dissolved by subjectivity that seeks to find itself in its own reflection. The photographic image is worth 'salvaging' not because of the sentimental and politically suspect attachment to the regimes of the spectatorship, nor out of surrender to the overwhelming power of the gaze and the admission that neither the ear, nor the nose are able to compete with the sovereignty of the eye.

This research is driven by frustration with the inability to see that which lies beyond the visual. Due to its own mode of production photography can point towards a form of seeing that surpasses the visual in favour of the quasi-image that stands against the whole of the philosophical tradition of subjectivity as inaugurated by Descartes's *Cogito*. A tradition which sets one on the path of

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[1] Gilles Deleuze, "Immanence: A Life", *Pure Immanence*, 25

seeking truth by means of an image and it is quite prepared to sacrifice the knowledge of the image for the sake of this absolute truth. As per Wilém Flusser's pithy remark the heirs of the Greeks and the Jews have this common: they do not tolerate any spiritualisation of matter or materialisation of spirit.[2] Both also deem the image to be a second-rate form of reality and it is precisely this that allows the subject to depend on the image for self-knowledge.[3] Photography is the antidote to metaphysical and conceptual thinking because photography produces an image of being that caries within it the knowledge of being an image.

The frame, the edge of the photograph is the self-referential aspect of the image. The frame seems to indicate in a simple and unambiguous manner that an image is being made. As far as the frame is concerned, there is no question of representation, only of the presence of the statement 'it is an image'. However, it also gets complicated, because the frame implies a content that constitutes the object of the image, a content around which the frame frames. Nevertheless, the object has to be suspended for the frame to be articulated and come into view. The object does not come before the frame, the frame, in that sense does not frame the object but dissolves it. Vision here is faced with the almost impossible task of facing the ground zero of vision: the limit of visibility. The frame

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[2] Flusser, "Immaterialism," 216.

[3] See also: 'As we have seen, reflection as self-reflection coincides in modern metaphysics with the powerful motif of subjectivity. Therefore, it is in subjectivity that we must look for the source of unification of the reflexive process's separate elements, although this implies that the mirror's self-reflection cannot be part of that whole comparable to the moment of objective reflection. The mirroring subject's self-mirroring is the goal of the whole process.' Gasché, *The Tain of the Mirror*, 20.

dissolves not only the object but also the dialectics of subject and object, form and content. The photographic frame is truly 'The Thought of the Outside' as Foucault wished to establish, because it does not lead back into the interiority of the image but only towards the repetition of the frame. For this reason, photography is able to accomplish the break with subjectivity that language can never fully achieve, as Foucault himself admitted: 'It is extremely difficult to find a language faithful to this thought'.[4]

By force of the authorial voice language tends to lead the discourse back into the bowels of subjectivity because the moment it moves beyond deictic statements such as 'this', 'here' or indeed 'I speak', and engages in propositions about objects it is forced to resort to the distinction between the 'I' who speaks and the subject of the discourse. In short, in order to become non-metaphysical, language requires a little help from some quarters where subjectivity does not writ large and where expression is separated from authorship. Due to its inseparability from language, philosophy is perpetually under the auspice of *ratio*, unable to go forward (or sideways) to the point of madness or unreason. As this thesis proposed, philosophy that does not want to begin from an image of thought, must begin from an image: Not an image that evokes the subject but one that awakens the unknowable within thought. What is required is not an image of something, not a reflection of pre-given reality, as this immediately brings *ratio*

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[4] Foucault, *The Essential Works of Michel Foucault, Vol. 2*, 151. See also: 'The breakthrough to a language from which the subject is excluded, the bringing to light of a perhaps irremediable incompatibility between the appearing of language in its being and consciousness of the self in its identity, is an experience now being heralded at diverse points in culture; in the simple gesture of writing as in attempts to formalise language, in the study of all Western reason.' Ibid., 149.

back in as 'transcendental contraband'.[5] Rather, the image has to be of the structural undecidability of the image, of the libidinal pleasure of the repetition of the same.[6]

Numerous attempts to escape transcendentalist thought ended up bringing the transcendental back in. Human condition might be just that: the never-to-be-fulfilled desire to get out of the metaphysical sphere. Simply stated the problem is that there is no thought without concept, but concept requires bringing into the fold the Trojan horse of *ratio*. Lyotard's charge against Marxist dialectics is precisely that in positing the material conditions of labour as the ground of history (and of thought) it established materialism as the basis of its own metaphysics. As was suggested on the pages of this thesis, photography is not a standpoint, rather it points towards a way out of this impasse. The language of photography is the language by which immanence speaks: It is the affirmation of difference as the eternal return of the copy. Its voice is heard in the unknowability of the latent image and in the rhythmic cadence of the photographic frame. It is by paying attention to the frame of the photograph that one is able to observe productivity without labour, in other words, here is a productive process that does not establish a transcendental logic (whether materialist or idealist).

Crucially, photography is not simply a manifestation of desire, of life force or of *Élan Vital* because these too presuppose the presence of sensation. As was

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[5] Jacques Derrida, *Glas*, trans. R Rand and J.P. Leavey (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1986), 44a.

[6] Lyotard, *Libidinal Economy*, 110.

discussed previously, at its most basic state a photograph is a mark made by one body on another body[7]. It is not *art brut,* rather it is *technology brut.* It is the hand-to-hand combat and the passage of one body onto the other.[8] For this reason, photography is neither idea nor affect; rather it names the never-to-be-grasped interval between them. The latent image is precisely that: neither an idea nor a body, however it posits the unknowable as the required third space, the pineal eye between the body and the mind.[9] There is no 'image of' to speak of, as the latent image has no content. It is stripped of all signification. All divisions between inside and outside, between the exteriority of the real world and the depth of the cave are abolished, and yet, it is nothing if not a sign: albeit one that signifies nothing. However, this is not to say that the latent image is a sign of the 'Great Zero' as Lyotard might say, or of castration / negation / absence as suggested by the semioticians, rather it signifies nothing more than the possibility of repetition, the potential to self-replicate and multiply. It is a non-oedipal reproductive encounter that has no inside or outside. It is also a sign that a body was on hand to make a mark, that force was meet with force and is now stored, accumulated in the unknowable image.[10] Whether the latent image resembles something or not is a moot point, as it is

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[7] Supra Chapter 6.4, *Latent Image and Subjectivity.*

[8] On 'hand to hand combat of energies' see Massumi, *A User's Guide to Capitalism and Schizophrenia,* 146. See also Bolt, *Art Beyond Representation,* 83.

[9] See: Golding, "Ana-materialism and the Pineal Eye", 99-100

[10] See Lyotard, *Libidinal Economy,* 66.

unknowable, yet it is a diagram of the way the visible and the expressive belong together.

However, this diagram escapes representation because the path around which the entire chain of signification happens in semiology requires a signifier and a signified, or at least a floating signifier. But if photography is considered in its full sense; as this thesis proposed; then it exceeds the signifying chain and therefore analysis cannot begin via semiotics. Being unknowable, the latent image does not allow for resemblance (identity by other name). The latent image cannot be identified, individualized or specified, it is fully virtual in Deleuze's sense of unactualised reality.

The only thing that can be sensed about the latent image is the sense of there being one. There is no phenomenological content that can be processed by the nervous system, converted into categories, or data tables or used in the construction of subjectivity. Yet, this is not the absence of sense either, for what can be sensed is the presence of sensation capable of repeating itself. This form of repetition is not chronological or linear, it does not repeat what have already happened, it repeats horizontally creating a surface without depth. Instead of memory it requires not exactly forgetting but a kind of memory loss that allows to move along a twisted band that is inside one moment and outside the other. Like the protagonist of the movie *Memento* for whom the polaroid photograph is not a souvenir from the past but a point of access to a different peak of present, the photographic image points towards a-rational logic of

heterogeneity and profusion that precedes the visible image and the subject-

object opposition.[11] Photography could be said to allow access to the visible

that comes before the visual, to the image that does not stand in relation to an

object, does not belong to the Cartesian perspectival schema and does not say

that $A=A$[12]. Instead, the self-replicating formula of photography is

$A+A+A+A+...$ While the visible image is defined by what it is not (not an

object), the photographic image is constructed from unknowability and

repetition; it refuses negation and the communication of meaning in favor of

'the unfolding of pure exteriority'.[13] This raw and monstrous image is a point

of entry to the outside of thought because of its resistance to cognition,

consciousness, identity and *ratio*. It is an image not reduced to the human eye.

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[11] Deleuze, *Cinema 2*, 98. For a Deleuzian reading of Christopher Nolan's movie *Memento* (2000) see: Colebrook, *Deleuze: A Guide for the Perplexed*, 73.

[12] The problem of identity, expressed here as the formula $A=A$, is key philosophical concern that was discussed supra Chapter 3.6, *Heidegger, Representation and Identity*.

[13] Foucault, *The Essential Works of Michel Foucault, 1954-1984. Vol. 2*, 148.

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