

CAN PHOTOGRAPHY DESCRIBE ITS OWN EVENT?

**The dissolving of the classical
perspective in the concept of
photography**

PhD thesis
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DECLARATION SHEET

This work has not previously been accepted in substance for any degree and is not being concurrently submitted in candidature for any degree.

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STATEMENT 1

This thesis is the result of my own investigations, except where otherwise stated. Where correction services have been used the extent and nature of the correction is clearly marked in a footnote(s). Other sources are acknowledged by footnotes giving explicit references. A bibliography is appended.

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Abstract

The thesis title *Can Photography Describe Its Own Event?* is purposefully designed to ask very complex questions of the medium of photography in its present moment. It is a question, which employed under differing conditions of thought throughout the thesis tests photography against the fields of difference and creativity. Gilles Deleuze threw down a challenge to the medium by neglecting to include consideration of the photographic in his process led philosophy of difference. He purposefully ignores photography and seemingly locates it firmly within a system of representation and identity that his work was designed to systematically dismantle.

Whilst presenting photography as a form of spatialised stasis, often consisting of pictorial clichés reproducing fixed *bytes* of information, his vitalist thought alternately seeks to interpret temporal continuity and constant variation in service of the power of creativity. The thesis asks, how can a concept invented in the service of facts and positivism contribute to a new world of speculative uncertainty. To describe its *own* event, photography must partake of difference and temporal paradigms such as a performative process-seriality. It must perceive itself as being an *immanent* practice consisting of all the uncertainties and intensities of variation of any other event in the world. A temporal *cryptography*.

The *dénouement* of the thesis seeks to tentatively locate photography as working in an emergent fashion in the service of a process-reality rather than representational model and copy. This new *zerography* strips away the well-worn conventions of photographic syntax and imagines resetting itself to *zero*. Moving past the informational and the symbolic and beyond the binary subject/object position it emerges into a world of *quantum* indeterminacy where it is no longer interested in defining other events but of contributing to a new speculative creativity and invention. The world *as if* rather than *as is*.

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Introduction:

Can Photography Describe Its Own Event?

It is fair to say that we are now at a moment that sees itself as being after postmodernism but that has yet to attract the burden of a proper name or the motivation of an enabling politics. The invention of such a politics and with it a mode of critical writing that is appropriate for the times we live therefore remains the most pressing task to face the present generation of photography's interlocutors.

(Batchen 2009: 21)

If photography can remain open, and encourage us to remain open, to the spontaneous dynamism of life, its unplanned energies, and the anticipation of the virtual, it has the potential to use *and* relinquish such documentary power—to image both the photographic actual and imagine photographic becoming.

(Kramp 2012: *u.p.* n.19) [*emphasis in original*]

Becoming is a Deleuzian [*sic*] *concept*: not just another word but a problem, and for this reason Deleuze will try to give as many nuances and sense to becoming as possible.

(Colebrook 2002: 4) [*emphasis in original*]

And so what of a becoming photography? Amongst the questions that we shall be asking in the thesis is can photography become Photography in an expanded sense? Can the practice with its existing theoretical positions become something more, can we begin to ask if it can attain more of the status of concept, in that it can finally be seen as a way of thinking the world and not just seeing? And if so can it begin to describe its own event? In the transcendent world of model and copy that transcribes both identity and representation, photography exists as external to the events of the world, working as an archive or a library for human experience. ‘Becoming’ suggests an alternate paradigm; one of immanence and process, where all is motivated and in flux and everything emerges *within* a dynamic field of variation, in that the conditions of events and entities constantly differ *in* themselves. If like Henri Bergson we can perceive of photography as equal to perception, then in a ‘process reality’ it can surely think its own event, and it is the work of the thesis to extend this to the questions of both *performing* and *describing* its own event. Thinking, performing and describing the event of photography become to be seen as intensive modalities from within the expanded concept of photography. But now what of the event; “[a]s *an event, a beginning must be understood as a novel selection in ongoing and continually altering series*” (Williams 2008: 2) [*emphasis in original*]. Concerning the prospect of an event and a beginning then, it will be pertinent at this early stage to state that each Section including this Introduction will be instigated by three quotations. These quotations offer the reader both a glimpse into future musings whilst resisting a definitive set starting point as far as possible, thus moving the ‘beginning’ of each Section away from a singular, fixed point. This offers a metaphorical entrance

into the work of the thesis as the quotations simultaneously suggest several representative *snapshots* of the workings of each Section, as well as introducing the alternative paradigm of difference, in the sense that they present *images* of the intensive processes of the subsequent ideas and arguments.

The themes of becoming and difference will occur over and over again, and should become more precise as this book [thesis] progresses. This ties in with Deleuze's concept of repetition. We need to *repeat* difference and thinking; the minute we feel we have grasped what thinking and difference *are* then we have lost the very power of difference.

(Colebrook 2002: 7-8) [*emphasis in original, my brackets*]

Therefore we shall look at the concept of photography from many different perspectives in order to fracture the notion of its coherent and historically bound classical perspective. We need to address the enigma of our title over and over in order to unleash the power of difference from within its possibilities. By subjecting it to multiple interpretations we will begin to repeat difference until it no longer has the power to promote a fixed and coherent meaning. Through this method we hope to form a productive process whereby we can perceive of the concept of photography in more fluid terms and as a set of concepts encompassing heterogeneous becomings rather than an entity with a more or less bounded outline.

The six words that transmit the productive question out into the writings are carefully arranged so as to produce creative interpretations that will lead us away from the concept of representation in all of its fixity and towards new creative models. “Indeed, the aim of writing should not be representation but invention.” (Colebrook 2002: 4). A particularly assiduous reader might well be wondering why the thesis does not ask the more logical question *can photography perform its own event?* But crucially, in this form we lose both the paradox and the enigma as afforded by the word *describe*, which sets photography’s own constative function against itself – *can photography describe its own event?* The first question has been addressed recently and as one of the precursors of the thesis, is included as a case study in the first Section. This is the concept of ‘Performed Photography’ conceived of by Paul Jeff¹ and published as a PhD by the University of Wales in 2008. In the thesis, our title and question reoccurs throughout as the central tenet of the work and which all other questions revolve around. Through the act of repetition through variation the question increasingly portrays its own instability, hence its ability to creatively generate multiple interpretations. As such, it will appear in the text variously written in full in italics, or in acronym form integrating the question mark as a symbol within a perceived code, rather than the mere denotation of a question (as the question mark is absorbed into the code, the phrase when appearing at the end of a sentence will incorporate a full stop). We shall address *CPDIOE?* in this way as a multiplicity; at once a question, a code, a crypt and a plane of potentiality, these dealt with in three consecutive Sections to be folded into an expanded coexistent form of photography, able to interrogate the world from many perspectives and not just from the hegemony of vision. One

way to summarise the general trajectory of the research would be through the particularly elegant quotation below by Eduardo Cadava in *Words of Light:*

Theses on the Photography of History (1997):

Like the gaze of the camera that momentarily fixes history in an image, the thesis condenses a network of relations into a frame whose borders remain permeable. A photograph in prose, the thesis names a force of arrest. It signals in writing the interruption of writing.

(Cadava 1997: xx)

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The central hypothesis will then be continually interrupted as each new Section introduces another perspective on the question and this brings us in turn to the question of the Sections. There are three Sections to the thesis, each headed by semantic constructions, in turn; Section I: Photo[graphy], Section II: Crypto[graphy] and Section III: Zero[graphy]. The suffix '[graphy]' presented here in bracketed parenthesis is used to denote the relation of each conceptual perspective to writing, writing here being emphasised to dissolve the reliance on vision in photography and to broaden the conception into a mode of thought as well as a practice. The prefix to each bracket marks the distinction between Sections and their corresponding emphases. Section I utilises 'photo' to refer to

light or the period of Enlightenment from which photography was born. Section II introduces the ‘crypt’ or dark, unseen elements of the concept of photography and this also encapsulates the position of the author here in the thesis as a whole, as a cryptographer as Gilles Deleuze calls for in his book *The Fold: Leibniz and the Baroque* ([1993] 2003):

A ‘cryptographer’ is needed, someone who can at once account for nature and decipher the soul, who can peer into the crannies of matter and read into the folds of the soul.

(Deleuze [1993] 2003: 3)

Section III introduces a perspective more of my own invention perhaps, to describe the perceived current moment of photography post-digitisation; zero[graphy] in which we will explore a more emergent concept of photography, one we may term a photography of immanence. These three perspectives (Sections) are meant to be perceived in their coexistence as intensities of the same concept, and not as distinct theories. In this way it is hoped that we can reconcile photography as a concept in both its mainstream conception as representation as well as its potentialities within the field of difference.

Instead of providing yet one more system of terms and ideas Deleuze wanted to express the dynamism and instability of thought. He reinvented his style and vocabulary with each project. No term in his work is capable of being defined in itself; any single

term makes sense only in relation to the whole
which it helps to create.
(Colebrook 2002: 4)

The quotation above elucidates the complex intermingling of concepts at play here, which helps to add different dimensions to these ideas, whilst also revealing how, over time, the concepts themselves differ in kind and appear as new foldings, new interpretations. If we refer to photography's etymological roots it reveals its connection with light, writing and representation, quite literally translated from Greek as *photos* (light) *graphos* (writing/drawing). Conversely, the etymology of cryptography resides in the dark and the buried – from the Greek root *kryptos* meaning hidden, remaining in the dark and not brought to the light of representation. To move to our third and final Section zero[graphy], zero has its etymological roots in the Sanskrit *śūnya/shūnya* for zero or nothing, and also the Arabic word *çifr*, which is the common root for cipher, thus making a connection to Section II. The conceptual arrangement of the three Sections provides us with three differing fields on which to test our question and hypothesis. Firstly the question as it exists to the rational light of day, secondly the question as it resides within the hidden and the unseen irrationality of night, and lastly, the question as it emerges from the breaking light of dawn and disappears into the twilight before night, that indeterminable state on the cusp of consciousness.

We will now return to our three opening quotations to the Introduction and say a few words that might reveal our endeavour. As Geoffrey Batchen has recognised, “...it is fair to say that we are now at a moment that sees itself as being after postmodernism but that has yet to attract the burden of a proper name or the motivation of an enabling politics”. (Batchen 2009: 21). For many including Simon O’Sullivan this new era may be considered as anti-representational, or beyond the limits of representation. “How in fact to think beyond representation?” (O’Sullivan 2006: 29). If this is the case then the thesis will ask what is the role of the photographic in this new moment? Batchen goes on to say that the invention of new modes of political and critical practice “...remains the most pressing task to face the present generation of photography’s interlocutors” (Batchen 2009: 21). It is this pressing task that the thesis sets out to address and, by asking a series of questions in the Bergsonian sense, attempts to contribute toward a solution. Henri Bergson, in *The Creative Mind: An Introduction to Metaphysics* (1946) states:

The truth is that in philosophy and even elsewhere it is a question of finding the problem and consequently of positing it, even more than of solving it. For a speculative problem is solved as soon as it is properly stated. By that I mean that its solution exists then, although it may remain *hidden* and, so to speak, *covered up*: The only thing left to do is *uncover* it. But stating the problem is not simply *uncovering*, it is *inventing*.

(Bergson 1946: 58-59) [*my emphasis*]

In order to address the *problem* Batchen identifies, we must take up the method that Bergson advocates. The thesis is engaged in a speculative problem to the extent that it is involved in an attempt to dissolve the classical perspective, that is, representation in photographic discourse and to *invent* new creative possibilities and potentialities for the future of the medium. The speculation is that it may be possible to re-orient the concept of photography away from what Deleuze regards “...as an instrument for reproducing representations of reality—a device that iterates images until they are ossified as established stories, icons, or event stagnant perceptions.” (Kramp 2012: *u.p.* n.3). And invest in it the:

...creative power to legislate *and* dance, to produce knowledges and experience that remain diverse and allusive, and to imagine new kinds of relationships and sensations that at once have efficacy and explosive untapped energies.

(Kramp 2012: *u.p.* n.7) [*emphasis in original*]

In the quotation at the top of the Section Michael Kramp is looking for a new photography, one that is not so closed and enclosing and one that offers more than “...dated empirical encounters that have been transformed and organised into archived authorities.” (Kramp 2012: *u.p.* n.2).

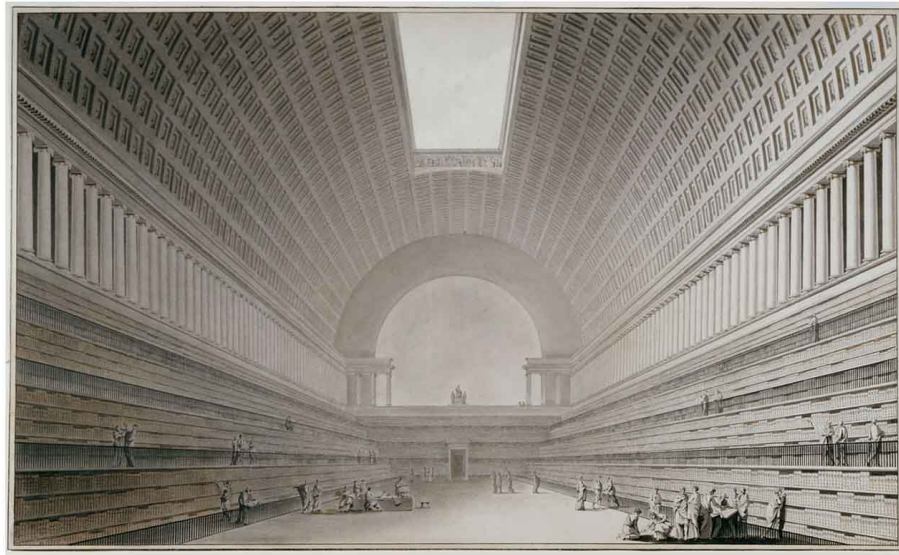


Figure 1: 'Interior of a Library' [drawing] (c. 1798) Etienne-Louis Boulée. Thaw Collection, The Pierpont Morgan Library, New York.

Kramp begins his introductory essay to a special edition of the journal *Rhizomes: Cultural Studies in Emerging Knowledge*, entitled 'Unburdening Life, or the Deleuzian Potential of Photography' (2012) by analysing a futuristic library that might one day make a material reality out of Enlightenment dreams. This is a dream of categorisation, information and facts, all catalogued, collected together and legitimated. He ends the opening paragraph by making an allusion to the invention of photography and its part in compiling such a positivist Enlightenment vision. We can see even in Boulée's drawing an aspiration towards a photographic realism, a mere forty years before its invention, with its optical depth of field, perspective and great rendering of detail.

A central concern of Kramp here is to invent a practice that utilises both representation *and* difference in which it can employ its documentary attributes

and renounce them in the same movement. The quotation by Claire Colebrook from her book *Gilles Deleuze* (2002) addresses the concept of ‘becoming’ as *problem*, and observes that it is precisely because of this that Deleuze sets about revealing the variation and subtle tonalities of meaning and sense of his concept. We will also share this strategy in our elucidation of *CPDIOE?* in its various semblances *via* the multiplicity of interpretations and nuances of our central question that will be uncovered throughout the thesis. To clarify the use of the three quotations at the top of each Section and indeed of this Introduction and the Conclusion, we can already state at least three objectives. The first is to interpret our contemporary moment in the context of the photographic and to begin the task of constructing future modalities, as well as breaking from the habitual and perhaps ossified conventions of the past. To find new creative ways forward for a new context. It is important to note the link Batchen makes to politics and a new critical writing as these non-photographic perspectives can be appended to the medium in order for it to be able to expand beyond its own boundaries. The second objective is introduced by Kramp *via* the very specific philosophy of Deleuze and concerns the quest for new photographic creativities and potentialities. Since embarking on this research scholars such as Kramp have also begun to apply the philosophers ideas to lens-based theories and practices. This emerging perspective largely concerns the un-harnessing of photography from its Enlightenment project of cataloguing/archiving the world and representing a particular type of empirical truth. The project is to turn the medium around one hundred and eighty degrees and enable photography to partake in potential futures and creatively decipher the virtual (possible) as well as represent the actual (real),

these Deleuzian concepts will be expanded upon in Section III. The final objective to be drawn from this Introduction and initiated by Colebrook is that of applying the Deleuzian concept of *becoming* (or continuous variation) to the inherent stasis of photography, which renders the world into an idealistic stillness. The *problem* being how to represent a world of dynamic flux and change utilising a medium specifically invented to arrest and fix such instability. If we perceive the world from a vitalist viewpoint then the task for photography must be how to approach a world of forces and *becomings* in a creative, inventive and productive manner that also allows for understandings of such a world. In order to begin such a task it will prove fruitful to more fully appreciate the parameters and potentialities of photography. This involves understandings of both the history and present moment of photography, and then exploring fresh perspectives that can reinvent how photography partakes in the world, and how we can find new and innovative ways to use it. For this purpose the thesis will be leaning more on the concepts of Deleuze than any other thinker, although we shall encompass many other ideas and perspectives. At this stage we must also acknowledge that the thesis is more concerned with *writing* a practice of photography than developing a new practical model. This *writing photography* might be better explained in Batchen's terms as a 'photogrammatology' (Batchen 1994), where he leans on the deconstructive perspective of Derrida's *Of Grammatology* ([1967] 1976). Reflecting on photography as a form of language, Batchen references John Tagg who states; "...history has no unity. It is a flickering across a field of institutional spaces. It is this field we must study, not photography as such." (Tagg 1988: 63). This is another central strategy of the thesis and language and writing will loom large

within that approach. We shall take a moment to read Batchen's own words in this respect from his essay 'Photogrammatology: Writing/Photography' (1994):

According to this view, photography itself has no unified history or singular identity, because the meanings and effects of any individual photograph are always contingent, i.e., are entirely determined by the various institutions or discourses in which that photograph is caught at any given moment. Likewise, photography has no power of its own. Rather, it is temporarily vested with the power of the apparatuses that deploy it in particular circumstances. As a system of representation, photography has no meaning outside of these real-politic deployments. Thus, there can be no such thing as a singular photography at all, only a myriad of discontinuous *photographies*.

(Batchen 1994: 3) [*emphasis in original*]

It is these *photographies* as a multiplicity that we are concerned with here in the thesis and Batchen offers another contribution in the same essay, and one that we can utilise here in the Introduction in order to take the first step in deciphering our code/question *CPDIOE?*. Returning to the question of the suffix '*graphy*', Batchen explains that it is an "...abstract noun of action or function." (Batchen 1994: 5) which as such, has both active and passive connotations. He goes on to say; "[o]perating simultaneously as verb and noun, this is a writing that produces while being produced, inscribing even as it is inscribed." (Batchen 1994: 5). This is the first clue that our title/question can hold many interpretations as within the construct 'photography', the suffix, that is, *graphy* denotes the ability to inscribe whilst at the same moment being inscribed. Perhaps here we can draw an analogy

to photography describing whilst at the same moment being described – *can photography describe its own event?*

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Now we shall address the sub-title of the thesis; ‘The dissolving of the classical perspective in the concept of photography’. This phrase deals with the mainstream practice of photography, and the history of the medium and its practitioners. In Deleuze and Guattari’s conception, it is the *major* or dominant position of the medium of photography and that which we shall endeavour to cause a rupture within, and so enabling new creative possibilities (see Section I for an exposition on the *major/minor* concept). The phrase ‘classical perspective’ will for the purposes of the thesis be synonymous with this hegemonic major outlook. The notion of *dissolving* refers to Bergson’s famous maxim concerning duration and difference in kind (how an entity or concept can differ in itself, or change over time), regarding a lump of sugar dissolving in a glass of warm water. The sugar is granted duration in so far as it takes part in natural processes and therefore is seen to differ in kind from its initial spatial configuration (this is dealt with more comprehensively in Section I). Therefore, we are attempting to *dissolve* the aforementioned classical perspective of photography by immersing it within a new element, in this case, the field of difference or to refer back to an originary idea, Alfred North-Whitehead’s process philosophy that Deleuze is particularly

indebted to. In *Process and Reality* ([1929] 1978) Whitehead was trying to express a new vision that challenged many ‘common-sense’ ideas in that he prioritised events and processes over objects and spatial realities. Such ideas could not simply be expressed in the common language (Mesle 2008: 17). Here again is another justification for the use of language in our pursuit of new photographs:

Words and phrases must be stretched towards a generality foreign to their ordinary usage; and however such elements of language be stabilized as technicalities, they remain metaphors mutely appealing for an imaginative leap...
(Whitehead [1929] 1978: 4)

This then presents us with the challenge of the fluidity and mutability of language, in that all meanings hold the potential to be expressed in new ways; where the notion of a fixed certainty is disrupted by a wavering indeterminacy. In some ways this evokes the dance between the Bergsonian conception of difference by degree and difference in kind (in itself)², if we acknowledge a move from stasis and a world of distinct entities to a world of mobility expressed in its fluid state. As we will see in the thesis, the recurrence of certain ideas and concepts will reveal this process; that is, how we understand and appreciate such ideas shall change and transform over the duration of the work. Moreover, by interrogating and continually questioning these concepts and terms, we instigate a certain fluidity in our interpretive faculties and learn that concepts and objects always

have more than one aspect, and so a multi-perspectival approach should always be more fruitful. Through the process of *stretching* words and phrases as Whitehead advocates above, it is our task to consider, what we understand the concept of photography to be; *what photography is*, but also to imagine what photography *could be*. A shift in emphasis from the *as is* of the world to the *as if* (see Section III). We will return often to the question of the instability of meaning and its productive use and generative function in enabling differing positions that we will apply throughout the thesis.

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This will be a suitable point to state the hypothesis of the thesis and also indicate some hopefully original contributions that arise from it. If a hypothesis "...states a relationship between two, or more, concepts and suggests that one has an impact on the other." (Grix 2004: 42), then our hypothesis is concerned with the relationship of two philosophical systems, representation and difference, as they pertain to the medium of photography. In this case, the direction of travel will be toward a realignment of the medium away from its representational history and toward the potentialities of difference, or variation through duration. Our first proposition is that future creative photographs (potential practices or modes of thought) will be premised on dynamic theories of event rather than pictorial or representational theories. The next proposition is that the axes around which

photographies are constructed will shift from a spatialised bias to a more temporally inflected paradigm. A related proposition tests photography against theories of difference (continuous temporal moulding as Deleuze refers to it ([1993] 2003)) so as to produce the possibility of a temporally motivated becoming-photography; here we shall be reliant principally on the philosophical thought of Gilles Deleuze. Another proposition concerns the encompassing of the event of photography into a dynamic event-field so that its relation to that field is no longer external but interpreted as immanent and inherent; enveloped in an expansive field of vision. Finally, we propose a new interpretive possibility for photography which we shall name 'zero[graphy]'. This term shall encompass new photographic forms of expression, a neutral process-led iteration that allows the medium freedom from old certainties (as well as hackneyed and clichéd metaphorical adjuncts) and the creativity to explore the indeterminate, the fictional and the virtual.

By utilising a carefully constructed question, *can photography describe its own event? (CPDIOE?)*, we hope that we can test the allegiances of photography to its mainstream history and look for fractures and spaces where old boundaries dissolve, allowing for entries into the realm of difference. By testing our question against multiple perspectives; photographic, philosophical and literary, we will demonstrate photography's capacity to act creatively as a multiplicity. As we create new interpretations of our question/problem *via* the process of complex repetition that returns difference with each elucidation, we will also be inventing new perspectives and potential manifestations for the concept of photography. In

this respect, one more proposition will be that photography will increasingly become to be perceived as a mode of thought rather than merely a technological practice.

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The protocols of close reading and deciphering, analyzing and translating, questioning and obsessive revisiting that deconstruction follows hardly can be thought in separation from the kind of prayerlike attentiveness and careful, restless study that a serious engagement with photography requires.
(Richter 2010: xxii)

Philosophically the paradigm of thought the thesis adopts will be that of a radical empiricism/phenomenology. It traces a line of thought from Heraclitus and Leibniz, through Bergson and Whitehead in the early twentieth century and culminating in Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari at the end of the century; all are concerned with mobility, flux, flow and becoming. These thinkers provide in Damian Sutton's terms a 'field of narrativity', a kind of background matrix on which I shall inscribe my ideas. "*Narrativity* is the immanence of story, and to exist in any part of the text it must be indivisible over the whole." (Sutton 2009: 144) [*emphasis in original*]. The thesis adopts a qualitative approach to research, which places an emphasis on the *qualities* of entities and on processes and

meanings that are not quantifiably measured (Denzin and Lincoln 2005: 10).

Yvonna S. Lincoln and Egon Guba offer an understanding of qualitative research by utilising Cary Nelson et al.'s definition of cultural studies:

Qualitative research is an interdisciplinary, transdisciplinary, and sometimes counterdisciplinary field. It crosscuts the humanities and the social and physical sciences. Qualitative research is many things at the same time. It is multiparadigmatic in focus.

(Nelson et al. in Lincoln and Guba 2005: 4)

Whilst we might situate the research within a combination of the Constructivist, Post-Structuralist and Participatory research paradigms (Lincoln and Guba 1985), the above quotation offers a sage reminder that ideas and methods in a number of areas are moving away from fixed definitions and instead becoming increasingly interconnected. To briefly address the paradigms for a moment though, Constructivism "...connects action to praxis and builds on antifoundational arguments while encouraging experimental and multi-voiced texts" (Denzin and Lincoln 2005: 189). Whilst Post-Structuralism "...permits – even invites or incites – us to reflect on our method and explore new ways of knowing" (Richardson and St. Pierre 2005: 962). The Participatory paradigm is largely implied in the main text of the thesis, however there is evidence provided in the **'Photographic Experiments carried out as IPCRES' (between Section III and the Conclusion)** to show some practical experimentation toward the findings. As Denzin and Lincoln note, within the last decade "...the borders and boundary lines between these

paradigms and perspectives have begun to blur” (Denzin and Lincoln 2005: 183-4). Susan Finley maintains this point and recognises that the old paradigms have been ruptured by shifts and a “...border crossing dynamic” (Finley 2005: 684), which has allowed for previously distinct or incompatible paradigms of inquiry to be understood together. Concerning our area of research, Finley in her essay ‘Arts-Based Inquiry: Performing Revolutionary Pedagogy’ (2005) avers:

Arts-based researchers are increasingly using art forms that include visual and performing arts as well as forms borrowed from literature. This presents a boundary crossing amongst arts-based researchers, it critiques the privilege of language-based ways of knowing and it further challenges status quo responses to the question ‘what is research?’
(Finley 2005: 685)

Of particular interest to the thesis is a further point Finley makes in that; “...the hyphen that connects ‘arts’ and ‘based’ is a textual reference to the arts as a basis for something else, something that is ‘not art’.” (Finley 2005: 686). This is precisely where we shall locate our research, in that whilst being arts-based, it by no means sits comfortably in a narrow categorisation of one specific field. Finley goes on, “[a]mong the particular skills of the arts-based researcher is the ability to play or, perhaps more accurately, to construct a field for play” (Finley 2005: 686). Perhaps it is our philosophical paradigm of thought as detailed above that demarcates our constructed ‘field for play’, and what we are playing with on this ground is the concept of photography. As the Introduction has shown thus far, it

would make little sense to pin down a set of conventions by which to carry out this research as this would absolutely contradict modes of thought as an unstable process. “I make, remake and unmake my concepts along a moving horizon, from an always decentered centre, from an always displaced periphery which repeats and differentiates them.” (Deleuze [1968] 2004a: xix). Indeed, with the dissolving of the once fixed boundaries between paradigms and practices, there lies an opportunity for new connections and relations to be instigated that draw on interdisciplinarity in the ever-expanding field of the visual arts. Concerning this endeavour, Denzin and Lincoln identify the role of the researcher ‘-as-interpretive-bricoleur’ (Denzin and Lincoln 2005) as a key component of qualitative research. This notion of *bricolage* is one we will become familiar with in the thesis as we can recognise this improvisation as a favoured strategy by Deleuze in his *oeuvre*. With Guattari in *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* ([1972] 2004), Deleuze cites *bricolage* (a term used by Claude Lévi-Strauss) as the characteristic mode of production of the schizophrenic producer. (Deleuze and Guattari [1972] 2004: 7-8). As a research methodology, we could refer to this as a *rhizomatic* approach (Deleuze and Guattari [1987] 2004a), which promotes connections and communications between heterogeneous locations and events. As O’Sullivan observes, “[b]y blurring discrete categories, producing new encounters and fostering monstrous couplings, new kinds of writing and new kinds of thought become possible.” (O’Sullivan 2006: 18).

Although the thesis is not a practice-based work, yet again the boundaries between paradigms and practices are such that relevance can be found in many

perspectives. We might note here a practice-based research methodology that has emerged from the growing interest and the increasing fluidity between practices as highlighted above; ‘a/r/tography’, which has been developed by Rita L. Irwin et al. (2004, 2005, 2006). This methodology adopts a non-hierarchical, rhizomatic approach to what Irwin et al. refer to as a ‘living inquiry’ (2005) or a ‘methodology of situations’ (2006) and addresses the multifarious splintered practices of academics, researchers and writers (artists, writers, teachers representing the a/r/t of a/r/tography)³ in the contemporary age. Irwin also introduces the concept of *métissage*, a kind of mixed knowledge economy, which is adopted in a contemporary career in the cultural/academic sphere; “...an existence that desires an aesthetic experience found in an elegance of flow between intellect, feeling, and practice.” (Irwin 2004: 29). This mirrors to a small extent the relationships of interest that merge together in the thesis, those of a photographer/practitioner that finds constructive elements within for instance, fields of study such as philosophy and literature to enable a greater understanding of the primary area of inquiry.

Métissage is an act of interdisciplinarity. It hyphenates, bridges, slashes, and creates other forms of thirdness that provide the space for exploration, translation, and understanding in deeper and more enhanced ways of meaning-making.

(Irwin 2004: 30)

Finally, whilst not wholly relevant here, it is worth noting that there is an element of performativity within the wider field of the research, not just in the practical experiments that are related to the research, but in the context below it is worth including:

Performativity is the writing and rewriting of meanings that continually disrupts the authority of texts. Resistance is a kind of performance that holds up for critique hegemonic texts have become privileged stories told and retold.

(Finley 2005: 687)

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Before detailing the trajectory of the research through the structure of the thesis, it will be pertinent to address the difficulties of working around binary oppositions. This thorny question occurs several times throughout the thesis and can often offer paradoxical perspectives. Although our text utilises the concept on occasion as a productive method for introducing new concepts, it is important to recognise here that binary thought is related to representation, in that it produces two opposing fixed positions from which to operate. There are a number of strategies employed in the thesis by which to disrupt this fixity to differing degrees. The first is the most obvious and that is to form a productive synthesis from the two terms. The most disruptive starting point being from within the binary

construction. The use of the term *antinomies* also provides a complexity of reading as it provides a tension between two reasonable statements (or positions) that promotes a sense of the illogical, paradoxical and indeterminate. A more appropriate method for the aims of the thesis is that of proving coexistence in all positions, including binaries, thereby producing an equivalence of terms and an acceptance that the world is a fluid multiplicity, rather than a matrix of fixed points. We should recognise that the very notion of binary oppositions are potentially problematic from a Deleuzian perspective, a perspective that promotes rhizomatic thinking, fluidity and connectivity. As O'Sullivan highlights:

Poststructuralism, at least from a certain perspective, is a critique of these binaries. However, this critique often merely entails the reversing of the binary, or the putting under erasure (the deferral) of the privileged term.
(O'Sullivan 2006: 15)

Therefore, as O'Sullivan attests, to carry out a critique of binary oppositions is to carry out a critique of representation.

As this introduction draws to a close we shall briefly detail the trajectory of the research question and disclose the structure of the three Sections.

Section I: Photo[graphy] is concerned with the classical perspective of photography, not so much the delineations of the medium but more through posing it as a problem in need of a creative resolution. After some rumination on the notion of a Bergsonian problem, that is, how to state a problem so that its solution is implicit in the stating, we shall move on to examining the concrete conditions of photography in its mainstream manifestations. Following a short discussion on the possibilities of a paradigm shift for the medium we will look for indications of the commencement of such a shift concentrating here on a recent development in photography, the performative practice of ‘Performed Photography’. We move on to consider further questions of the performative/temporal as potential strategies within the visual arts that begin to evoke the temporality of event over the spatiality of picture/representation. Next we will look at the further potential for ruptures in mainstream practice from which more experimental modalities might emerge. Deleuze and Guattari write of these ruptures as ‘minor’ practices that are developed from *within* their major expression or dominant discourse. Our question *CPDIOE?* is designed to facilitate the thinking of minor practices and we will identify Performed Photography as a contemporary example. To depart from and dissolve the classical perspective of photography involves the invocation of the philosophical paradigm of difference, as initiated by Henri Bergson at the turn of the twentieth century. Deleuze adopts the concept of difference as a major tenet of his philosophy of becoming and we

will follow its trajectory into his key philosophical work *Difference and Repetition* ([1968] 2004a) in order to see if it offers us the possibility of an alternative paradigm of expression.

Section II: Crypto[graphy] asks the question what lies beyond representation?

Introducing a more detailed interrogation of the forces of difference. Here I will take on the role of cryptographer (as suggested by Deleuze) and we shall take the reader out of the *light* of photography into the metaphorical darkness of the crypt of *CPDIOE?*. As an encryption it introduces us to the obscure realm of difference. We shall employ as guides, to navigate us through the labyrinthine depths of difference, such luminaries as G.W. Leibniz, Walter Benjamin, Bergson and Deleuze himself. A recurring theme will be the concept of the distinct/obscure as it relates to multiple perspectives and differing aspects of our object of study. In our journey we will encounter the strange world of the Leibnizian monad, before we return to further interpretations of difference and repetition *via* the dark folds of the crypt of our question. We revisit the question of ‘questions within questions’ before encountering Benjamin again and the question of legibility. After navigating our way through a labyrinth of uncertainty we shall tackle the question of language and translation. Language and words are usually formed in order to lead us towards certainty, yet we often find that they propel us further into the depths of the indiscernible. Finally we shall draw a veil over the Section by looking at Jaques Derrida’s discussion on vision and blindness. This opaque Section consists of a series of enigmatic questions, which purposefully repel all

notions of clarity as they reveal the intensive states that constitute the differing dimensions of our question *CPDIOE?*.

Section III: Zero[graphy] is more speculative in intent as it attempts to formulate a new perspective within the expanded field (concept) of photography as a mode of perception/expression. Beginning with an analysis of ‘degree zero’ as utilised in the semiotic experiments of Roland Barthes, and then as reinterpreted in terms of the photographic by Geoffrey Batchen, the Section employs the metaphor of a flat plane after the depths of the crypt. Here a flat grey light illuminates our ruminations as we develop a theory of zero[graphy] from the cusp of consciousness, the liminal boundary between sleep and waking. In the territory now of Marcel Proust and once again Benjamin, we consider the uncertainty of the moment of the events of thought and expression. Returning to Barthes, we continue with deliberations on the similarities between his writing degree zero and his famous *third* or *obtuse* meaning, particularly the absence of the signifier and the signification of absence. This notion of absence and zero is transferred to the thought of Japanese philosopher Keiji Nishitani and his field of *śūnyatā* or emptiness. Employing Norman Bryson’s essay ‘The Gaze in the Expanded Field’ (1988), we contrast Western theories of subjective vision as espoused by John-Paul Sartre and Jacques Lacan to the esoteric ideas of Nishitani and his notion of the dissolving of the boundaries between entities or objects in what Bryson calls the ‘remainder’ of the visual field. After a short detour into quantum physics by which we consolidate our ideas on uncertainty and indeterminacy, we move tentatively toward the extreme edges of reason with the imaginary science of

`pataphysics in order to further qualify a shift from the world of *as is* to the many potential worlds of the *as if*. The literary poetics of Stéphane Mallarmé, in particular his seminal work *Un Coup de Dés jamais n'abolira le Hasard* ('*A Throw of the Dice will Never Abolish Chance*') (1897) provides us with a second case study that we will interpret initially from the perspective of Alain Badiou. Utilising his unique conception of event he interprets Mallarmé's purposefully indecipherable poetics of place and situation to his own end. His aim to prove ultimately that it is never possible to prove the veracity of any event. That in the end the relation of event to situation and place is shrouded in a fog of indeterminacy. From here we return to the concept of zero and address a rare occurrence of the phrase 'zerography' as it appears in critical literary discourse, particularly in relation to Friedrich Nietzsche in order to assess its usefulness to our own rendering of zero[graphy]. Finally, returning to Deleuze, we will consider the concepts of *immanence* and *becoming* as they impact on the perspective of the thesis, before contrasting his innovative process-led conception of event with that of his philosophical rival, Badiou.

The conclusion will take an *extensive* view of our *intensive* process-led matrix of questions and draw together the central points made through the three sections into some sort of resolution. Here we will consider briefly the future possibilities of the *medium* of photography and the potential ramifications of dissolving the classical perspective of the *concept* of photography. We will speculate on the possibilities that a theory of zero[graphy] could afford future photographs, and attempt to focus some of our findings on my own experiments. Some

consideration will also be given here to areas of possible post-doctoral study that might prove fruitful, such as the radical immanence of François Laruelle and his concept of non-philosophy/photography. We hope to prove by the end of the thesis that some light will have been shed on the potential coexistence in concept of representation and difference within an expanded field of photography, both as a practice and a mode of thought.

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A few notes on language here, I have kept all translations in their original spelling (this mainly concerns American texts – the s/z for example) and any grammatical, spelling or punctuation errors in quotations remain unaltered in order to remain faithful to the quoted author. Concerning translations themselves, there are a number of instances, particularly in Walter Benjamin and Stéphane Mallarmé where in differing translations meanings can be altered quite significantly, therefore offering us a productive uncertainty. Where possible in the bibliography of the thesis, I have acknowledged the translator of the text in order to attribute the appropriate significance to their valued work. Each Section has its own distinctive voice in the way that it narrates its particular content; the first analysing from a perspective of clarity, the second feeling its way through the darkness and the coded questions as an intensive experience. And the last Section, a voice concerned primarily with blurring the boundaries of its subject matter

until the object of study dissolves into its own zerography. Finally the voice of the general ‘author’ is utilised as a guide that accompanies the reader through the material, engaging with them as ‘we’ to underscore the critique of a singular, fixed identity. This guide-like voice is also to facilitate and emphasise the experience of reading, discovering, and creating/inventing as a process that is shared in service of speculative thought. Here we may cite the authorial voice employed by writer and photographer Yve Lomax as a form of precedent to the voice I vary throughout the thesis. Lomax utilises an esoteric writing style that employs a form of double articulation in that she seems to be asking herself or an undisclosed companion questions. It is in this way that she articulates and builds a particular sensibility as she interrogates the interface of writing and image.

And to conclude this introduction a word on our imagined reader, a reader who is perhaps best articulated through a brief analysis of recent thought and practical application on the interface of philosophy and the arts. In 1996 film-maker Daniel Frampton set up an email discussion list; the ‘Film-Philosophy Salon’, to enable debate amongst academics and interested parties into the cross-pollination between film and philosophy. The ‘salon’ subsequently became an online open-access journal in 2006 and from 2016, has been published by Edinburgh University Press.

...Film-Philosophy supports the strong argument that cinema can *do* philosophy in a way that is unique to

the medium. Therefore, film is not only capable of presenting extended thought experiments or illustrating philosophical concepts, but is philosophy itself.

(Sorfa 2016: 3) [*emphasis in original*]

In this way I hope to show that by treating photography as a concept as well as a practice it is also capable of *doing* philosophy and more ambitiously, following the same argument, that photography can indeed be perceived as a form of philosophy. If we can interpret this thesis as a form of *photography-philosophy* then we can see how it might address some of the issues taken up by the film-philosophy movement. David Sorfa in his Introduction to the twentieth volume of *Film-Philosophy* (January 2016) links the beginnings of the movement to Deleuze's work on Cinema from the 1980's (with mention of American philosopher Stanley Cavell), thereby expanding the arc of thought of this thesis' ideal reader. Our audience then belongs to the territory of what might be determined a photography-philosophy debate after Deleuze. As Sorfa observes:

...French philosopher Gilles Deleuze's work of film-philosophy has become more associated with film theory, perhaps because when his 'Cinema' books appeared in the 1980's, there was no such term as 'film-philosophy', and they were taken up by film theorists. Whatever the case, Deleuze and Cavell are among the first to explicitly claim that films can do or be philosophy.

(Sorfa 2016: 4)

The constituency of the thesis then and hence its readership, falls largely into the broad field of ‘non-philosophy’, of which its proponents claim that the philosophical project can be taken forward through inter-disciplinary links with related practices such as the arts. In particular, that approached from the correct perspective certain practices such as film, theatre, and photography for instance can *do* or *be* philosophy. This is a concept close to the work of Deleuze and taken up again more radically by Laruelle to whom we shall return in the Conclusion. This form of interdisciplinarity, taking philosophy as one axis, has taken hold in many areas of academia, most notably in the Arts and Humanities and so one of the ambitions of the thesis is to extend this practice into my own medium of photography. In *The Deleuze Connections* (2000), John Rajchman intends his book to be “...a map meant for those who want to take up or take on Deleuze philosophically as well as those engaged in what Deleuze called the ‘nonphilosophical understanding of philosophy’.” (Rajchman 2000: 5). Therefore, our reader is invited to consider anew the potential of photography as an expanded field or concept tested against certain philosophical perspectives “...in which both art and thought come alive and discover their resonances with one another.” (Rajchman 2000: 115).

Although the thesis deals with complex theories from photographic theory to continental philosophy and critical literary discourse, the thesis is conceived as an *assemblage* and written as a poetic construction. “We write only at the frontiers of our knowledge, at the border which separates our knowledge from our ignorance and transforms the one into the other.” (Deleuze [1968] 2004a: xx).

We learn nothing except by deciphering and interpreting. But the plurality of worlds is such that these signs are not of the same kind, do not have the same way of appearing, do not allow themselves to be deciphered in the same manner, so do not have an identical relation with their meaning.

(Deleuze [1964] 2008: 4)

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Endnotes to Introduction

¹ This thesis is the result of an advertised bursary by Swansea Metropolitan University (now UWTSD) to study in the Faculty of Art and Design in the research area of Performed Photography.

² As Deleuze states:

The important thing here is that the decomposition of the composite reveals to us two types of multiplicity. One is represented by space (or rather, if all the nuances are taken into account, by the impure combination of homogenous time): It is a multiplicity of exteriority, of simultaneity, or juxtaposition, of order, of quantitative differentiation, of *difference in degree*; it is a numerical multiplicity, *discontinuous and actual*. The other type of multiplicity appears in pure duration: It is an internal multiplicity of succession, of fusion, of organization, of heterogeneity, of qualitative discrimination, or of *difference in kind*; it is a *virtual and continuous* multiplicity that cannot be reduced to numbers...

(Deleuze [1966] 1988a: 38)

³ “The slashes in a/r/tography (and other related words) purposefully illustrate a doubling of identities and concepts rather than a separation/bifurcation of ideas” (Irwin et al. 2006: 70 n.1)

Section I:

Photo[graphy]

...to pose the problem is instead to *invent* and not only dis-cover; it is to *create*, in the same movement, both the problem and its solution.

(Alliez 2004: 113) [*emphasis in original*]

...the manner in which we are led away from the most important task, that of determining problems and realising in them our power of creation and decision.

(Deleuze [1968] 2004a: 337)

...out of this interaction they may be able to produce something that is itself equally new. But they must share with philosophers like Deleuze one ambition at least and that is to render the world problematic by elaborating questions. To simply offer solutions is not enough.

(Thrift 2008: 18)

Introduction

It is our task in this initial Section to look beyond the illusion of three dimensions that photography maintains, and toward the construct of two-dimensional representation based as it is on perspective, which utilises a vanishing point to present an imaginary sense of depth. That is, a two-dimensional plane that gives the appearance of three-dimensional space. In this Section we shall be examining the concept of photography as it exists in a mainstream practice that can trace its roots back into Enlightenment thought thereby enabling us to speak of a ‘classical perspective’ in the medium of photography. The hypothesis of the thesis is an enigmatic one, as we ask the question *can photography describe its own event?* (CPDIOE?), and as mentioned above in the Introduction, we shall be taking a multi-perspectival approach to this. The first Section named ‘Photo[graphy]’ will be analysing the concept of photography as it exists in its Enlightenment aspect, specifically shining a light on the object of photography from the perspective of the mainstream conventions that we will name for our purposes as the classical perspective. We will be interrogating the formation of photography’s conventions from the Positivist era of its invention, through the modern and the post-modern periods in order to ascertain a position from whence we may look at the possibilities of a paradigm shift. By considering contemporary tropes such as performativity and event-based photographic practices we will be testing new instances of the medium, such as our case study of ‘performed photography’ against contemporary philosophical perspectives provided principally by French philosopher Gilles Deleuze. As we consider photography from the aspect of its

mainstream history, we shall begin to interrogate its conditions utilising our enigmatic title/question (*CPDIOE?*) to discover how the medium stands up to new creative philosophical perspectives. This will begin the process of the dissolving of the classical perspective and provide us with some context and a departure point for when we begin our more radical experiments into ‘Crypto[graphy]’ and ‘Zero[graphy]’ in Sections II and III respectively. However, now we can commence our considerations of the questions within our question.

One of the principal strategies of the thesis takes the form of a quotation by Henri Bergson that is reproduced near the beginning of the Introduction¹, in which Bergson lays emphasis on the stating, the positing and the *uncovering* of a problem, as opposed to merely attempting to solve it. By this, he purports that the answer to a problem is inherent in a well-stated question, which is attempted in our primary title/question – *can photography describe its own event?*, the enigma of which we hope to explore over the next three Sections. As a preamble to Section I, the opening three quotations by different authors are re-positing Bergson’s thesis; they are reiterations of Bergson’s ideas of *problematization* or the notion of a Bergsonian problem. This Section is concerned with what I have termed here the ‘problematization of photography’ in its present form, and conducts a critique of mainstream photographic practices. It shall provide an opportunity to apply Bergson’s strategy to the investigation and outlines both the possibility and the necessity for a paradigm shift for contemporary photographic practices. It is pertinent to consider relevant aspects of the *status quo* of mainstream photographic practice in order to begin to recognise and also to

articulate newer conceptions of the medium, aided and abetted by philosophers, theorists and photographic practitioners who have provided partial responses to some of the questions raised by the thesis. To fully comprehend the possibility of a paradigm shift in the practice, communication and *concept* of photography, more established ‘formations’ and theoretical definitions of the medium that are currently in use shall be outlined and challenged in this Section.

The above quotation by Eric Alliez offers a succinct *précis* of the original Bergson quotation that is under scrutiny in Alliez’s discussion on Bergson’s work *The Creative Mind: An Introduction to Metaphysics* (1946), in particular, the ‘Introduction (Part II): Stating the Problems’. The emphasis that can be drawn out from this particular phrasing by Alliez is that it is possible that there is credibility in the assertion that by posing a question well enough, both the problem and its solution *reveal* themselves in a double movement. Moving on to the next quotation by Deleuze in *Difference and Repetition* ([1968] 2004a), which although not cited, is so close to Bergson’s quotation it almost reads as a paraphrasing of it, it becomes clear that of interest here, is the power of invention and creation in the very determining of problems. We aim to embrace both of these perspectives on the question of the question as we move through the thesis. Finally, Nigel Thrift in *Non-Representational Theory: Space, Politics, Affect* (2008) is speaking of his perception of the role of the social scientist with reference to Deleuze’s text *Empiricism and Subjectivity: An essay on Hume’s Theory of Human Nature* ([1953] 1991); “[i]n fact, a philosophical theory is an elaborately developed question, and nothing else; by itself and in itself, it is not

the resolution to a problem, but the elaboration, to the very end, of the necessary implications of a formulated question” (Deleuze [1953] 1991: 116). Coupled with the Thrift quotation above, the importance of interpreting² and elaborating well-formulated questions as proffered here is paramount, and indeed is one of the central concerns of the thesis.

The problem as it exists

The title of the thesis contains an enigmatic question; *can photography describe its own event?*. This Section will attempt to interrogate that Bergsonian question in all its ‘aspects’ in order to draw out perspectives on those six words. As it has been noted, it shall be necessary to observe the photographic field as I perceive it and to critique and problematise (not necessarily look for solutions) the classical perspective of photography as it exists at present. It follows that providing these questions are dealt with sufficiently and posited well enough, it is possible that they will shed some light on the enigmatic central question; *can photography describe its own event?*. What is crucial here is the aspiration to address these concerns fully enough in order to leave them, to *flee* from them. This propulsion to move forward (and also away) from the existing state of photography has an association with Deleuze and Guattari’s ‘lines of flight’. Lines of flight are points of departure and as O’Sullivan attests; “[w]e might see one of the roles of art as being an entry point on/into this smooth space, a line of flight from

representational habits of being and thought on/into the multiplicity of the world.”
(O’Sullivan 2006: 29).

...the rhizome is constantly creating a new ‘line of flight’ that enables it to deterritorialise. Along this line of flight it has the potential to move into (and onto) new territories. Lines of flight are created at the edge of the rhizomatic formation, where the multiplicity experiences an outside, and transforms and changes. At this border there is a double becoming that changes both the rhizome and that which it encounters.

(Sutton and Martin-Jones 2008: 6)

The rhizome is a biological term used to describe an acentered root system and in *A Thousand Plateaus* ([1987] 2004a), Deleuze and Guattari apply it to theoretical work as a means of promoting connections between heterogeneous locations and events. One of the key attributes of the rhizome is that it is non-hierarchical and composed not of points, but of the lines between these points. As the above quotation suggests, lines of flight facilitate a transformation of the rhizome and that which it encounters; “[a] ‘line of flight’ is a path of mutation” (Lorraine 2010: 148). Therefore, if we perceive mainstream photographic practices in rhizomatic terms, then the research contained within the thesis can be regarded as lines of flight (plural) towards new ways of thinking photography based on the distilled question *can photography describe its own event?*. During this process of transformation, the ‘double becoming’ that Sutton and Martin-Jones highlight is also an interconnected process of deterritorialisation and reterritorialisation³.

Deleuze and Guattari provide an example of this process with an analogy of a wasp pollinating an orchid:

How could movements of deterritorialization and processes of reterritorialization not be relative, always connected, caught up in one another? The orchid deterritorializes by forming an image, a tracing of a wasp; but the wasp reterritorializes on that image. The wasp is nevertheless deterritorialized, becoming a piece of the orchid's reproductive apparatus. But it reterritorializes the orchid by transporting its pollen. Wasp and orchid, as heterogeneous elements, form a rhizome.
(Deleuze and Guattari [1987] 2004a: 11)

The task is to interpret the central question beyond or perhaps *through* the enigma that the question is couched within. The further encrypted questions that are held in the six-word arrangement are in the process of being discovered, not through any sense of an overarching question as it resides on the surface of the enigma, but through the multiple interpretations or possible 'folded' worlds that this enigmatic question holds. The many perspectives and inflections that produce vibrations and possible 'events', constituting a multiplicity (infinity) of harmonics and rhythms waiting to be uncovered. It is precisely through an excavation of the question that the invention and creation of new modalities of the concept of photography will appear. I have adopted the position of the 'cryptographer', experimenting with the possibilities afforded by this simply stated question, in that its status as question is so vital that it is collapsed into its own enigma.

In Deleuze's words:

A 'cryptographer' is needed, someone who can at once account for nature and decipher the soul, who can peer into the crannies of matter and read into the folds of the soul.

(Deleuze [1993] 2003: 3)

Perhaps the multiple interpretations of this enigmatic question can be deemed a virtual difference in kind, with each interpretation afforded the possibility of being *converted* into an actualisation through this very process. It is necessary to foreground these six words and perhaps each actualisation (interpretation) can be understood as a temporal/allegorical dimension of the question. In Deleuze's conception of the actualisation of concepts and events in the world, it is the realm of the virtual, which holds precedence as it unfurls into actualisation as a process. Many thinkers prioritise the actual in this process, suggesting that there is some transcendent event in play, whereas Deleuze places emphasis on the interdependency of the two states in an oscillation of process resulting in actualisation, in other words, it is an immanent process. "Most important for Deleuze is that the virtual is not to be understood as duplicating or resembling the actual, nor should it be taken to mean transcendence. Simply put, problems do not resemble or represent their solutions." (Boundas in Parr 2010a: 302). We will consider this process further in Section III of the thesis. In this Section however, we seek to interpret the contemporary state of photography as it resides in a potential new moment and will investigate the possibilities of redressing the

balance between the spatial concerns of the medium and newer conceptions of the medium that draw on its temporal qualities. In order to do this, the emphasis of the Section shall be placed on temporality as opposed to spatialisation. In spite of this, it must be noted that the thesis is not attempting to argue for temporal concerns *over* spatial ones, but it will begin to highlight the paradigm of difference over that of representation in order to eventually attain some state of entropy in terms of a resting equilibrium between the two. Our programme here is to rectify the imbalance that exists within the medium in terms of a system of spatial representation and the potential of a system premised on temporal difference. An often-used example of entropy increasing in nature is ice cubes melting in a glass of water, and it is this state of the diffusion of one element within another that will help us to perceive of dissolving the classical perspective of photography (representation) into the complementary perspective of philosophical difference. This is reminiscent of Bergson's famous example of difference in kind, which he illuminates through the example of sugar dissolving in a warm glass of water. In terms of the two major contemporary systems of philosophical thought, representation and difference, certainly for Deleuze, the possibility of these two paradigms running alongside one another is at least productive, and can even be a source of creation. A creation born out of a synthesis *between* the two systems and resulting in the emergence of *pure* difference. Pure difference being in Deleuzian terms the difference between difference and its alternate, representation. The notion of a synthesis in this manner is of particular importance and shall be expanded upon in relation to Deleuze's difference and repetition later in this Section. At this stage it is relevant

to note the identification of a few tentative practices/instances in the visual arts that shall be investigated here in order to provide points of reflection for ‘*can photography describe its own event?*’ – perhaps the most noteworthy in our context being Jeff’s theory of performed photography and the interpretation as *event* of Pollock’s action paintings. *Can photography describe its own event?* calls for a problematisation of photography that seeks to emerge from the parameters of representation and difference. It is possible to perceive of these two concepts within a binary arrangement, but this is not a helpful position within the parameters of the thesis as we shall endeavour to place the two into co-existence instead of setting them against each other as antinomies. We shall also be looking similarly to practical and theoretical models in order to advance our argument. In order to aid our investigations into the folding of one concept into another, it might be useful to consider the following quotation from Deleuze’s book *The Fold: Leibniz and the Baroque* ([1993] 2003):

The Baroque is inseparable from a new regime of light and colour. To begin, we can consider light and shadows as 1 and 0, as the two levels of the world separated by a thin line of waters: the Happy and the Damned. An opposition is no longer in question. If we move into the upper level, in a room with neither door nor window, we observe that it is already very dark, in fact almost decorated in black, ‘*fuscum subnigrum*’. This is a Baroque contribution: in place of the white chalk or plaster that primes the canvas, Tintoretto and Caravaggio use a dark, red-brown background on which they place the thickest shadows [...] The painting is transformed. Things jump out of the background, colours spring from the common base that attests to their obscure nature, figures are defined by their

covering more than their contour. Yet this is not in opposition to light; to the contrary, it is by virtue of the new regime of light.

(Deleuze [1993] 2003: 31-32)

Above Deleuze invokes Leibniz's multi-perspectival aspect of the monad, which we shall discuss further in Section II, but what is important here is the emphasis on the relationship between light and dark (and interestingly one and zero for our discussions in Section III) which will be mirrored by the relationship of Section I to II. As in Section II, we will be laying a dark field of difference from which the figure of representation can spring more vibrantly. In other words, we will try to reveal how representation can be enhanced by unearthing the dark crypt of difference upon which ground it stands.

A point of clarification is necessary here with regards the space/time philosophical 'dualism', and leads on from the point made above concerning a Deleuzian synthesis of the spatial (representation) and the temporal (difference) in relation to photographic practices. As it has been established, this research is not merely arguing for temporal strategies over spatial ones, it does so in order to re-adjust the balance and the perceived hegemony of the spatial in photography's history. Furthermore, the emphasis on temporality here is not to denigrate spatiality or to contribute to the dualism as discussed above. "Within such a dualism, where Time is understood as the domain of dynamism and Progress, the spatial is relegated to the realm of stasis and thus excavated of any meaningful politics." (May and Thrift 2001: 2). Instead, in developing a critical arrangement

that promotes syntheses rather than consolidating distinct binary oppositions, this research connects with the notion of ‘TimeSpace’, a concept developed in the social sciences and geography (May and Thrift 2001). The concept of TimeSpace addresses the need to “...overcome [...] the very formulation of space/time in terms of this kind of dichotomy [...] [and to recognise instead] that space and time are inextricably interwoven” (Massey 1994: 260-61) [*my brackets*]. In other words, we are thinking here time and space as a multiplicity rather than as a dualism and seek to address what Frederic Jameson called the ‘spatial turn’, when detecting a certain spatial imperialism in post-modern theory (Jameson 1992).

The classical perspective as it exists

This part of the investigation sets the scene regarding the philosophical and aesthetic landscape that photography inherited, and it is this matrix of ideas that now forms what is understood as the hegemonic form of representation. By the twentieth century the concept of what we know as representation was more broadly understood as an amalgamation of inventions, conventions and theories (both philosophical and practical) that date back to early fifteenth century Italy with the development of linear perspective by Filippo Brunelleschi (1377 – 1446). In addition, Leon Battista Alberti’s (1404 –1472) treatise *De Pittura (On Painting)* (1435) is widely regarded as the first rigorous theoretical interpretation of pictorial representation in conjunction with Brunelleschi’s practical invention.

Both the aesthetic and technical origins of photography can be traced back to this point – “Renaissance perspective adopted vision as the sole basis for representation: every perspective picture represents its subject as it would be seen from a particular point of view at a particular moment.” (Galassi 1981: 12-13). The evolution of such ideas throughout the Renaissance and Enlightenment was premised on an ocular-centric attitude towards representation. As a result of the invention of lenses in the seventeenth century, instruments such as the telescope and the microscope extended the breadth of vision and aided the prevalence of the visual in this period and as Donald Lowe notes, the perceptual field “...was fundamentally non-reflexive, visual and quantitative.” (Lowe 1982: 26). The development of the concept of the camera obscura as a ‘visual aid’ during this time is important too, as an example of how an image/representation could be rendered *via* a lens – as a result there was a convergence between mathematical/linear perspective and optical perspective. The historical development of perspective is significant in that optical perspective essentially forms what we know to be the basis of photography; that is, light being focused through a lens to create an image. The development of both mathematical perspective and optical perspective analogous to the phenomenological experience of seeing became part of a set of conditions, that allied with chemical advancements allowed for the eventual invention of photography in the early nineteenth century. It is worth looking in further detail at these ‘precursors’ of photography because it is these same conditions that were simultaneously defining a whole referential system of representation based on identity and resemblance. A system that contemporary thinkers such as Foucault and Deleuze

decided to challenge. Furthermore, the invention of photography in 1839 was born into an environment that communicated *via* a concept of language by now concerned with an abstract naturalised form based on taxonomy and differences, and a philosophical model that was positivist⁴ in its outlook and concerned with ‘facts’. Earlier eras utilised a system based on allegorical similarity that promotes imaginative interpretation⁵. Photography produced a transparent realism approximate to how we perceive through the eye and was heralded as the embodiment of a reality construct that had been undergoing development for centuries prior to its existence; as Galassi notes, it was “...the epitome of realism” (Galassi 1981: 12).

In order to critique mainstream photography within a contemporary conceptualisation of representation it is necessary to examine further the principles that it is founded upon. The central question of the thesis is designed to move the argument away from a transparent conventionalised representation and towards new areas of inquiry, which it is hoped are going to be more fruitful than the current *status quo*. The thesis aims to consider a system of (Deleuzian) ‘difference’ as opposed to an inherited representational model based on identity and a return of the ‘same’. A system that is not merely couched in terms of identity and resemblance, therefore promoting the concept of object⁶, but that returns difference over duration, promoting the concept of event. To ‘picture’ (from within a Deleuzian critique) is to freeze, to solidify and render the world static. It is also to fix the observer in space.

The preceding sentence takes a very particular perspective and we must be sure here to stipulate that it is a useful perspective in the context of this research, and is certainly not intended as a *carte blanche* statement regarding the construct of representation, and the more aesthetic considerations of the wider field. We might add a note of caution here, a *proviso* for our reader in order to clarify that it is not representation *per se* that we are taking issue with through this critique. The thesis in general takes up a particularly socio-political aspect of representation that thinkers such as Foucault and Deleuze developed into an antagonistic stance against the ‘classical’ perspective. This stance depended upon perceiving representation as resting upon the concepts of identity and resemblance in particular, hence ‘picturing’ the world as static and leaving little room for a more vitalist conception of the world encompassing ‘difference’. This can be perceived as a narrow conception however of representation in its many guises, particularly in the realm of aesthetics and more mainstream analytical philosophical as well as phenomenological treatments of ‘classical’ representation.⁷

The Section divider between Sections II and III utilises J.M.W. Turner’s (1775 – 1851) painting ‘*Snow Storm: Steam Boat off a Harbour’s mouth making Signals in Shallow Water, and going by the Lead. The Author was in this Storm on the Night the Ariel left Harwich*’ (1842) in order to denote the theme of *indiscernability* that runs through Section III. The inclusion of this painting in the thesis recognises that the issue of uncertainty in perception, and imperceptibility of form has its own tradition within the history of art as well as in contemporary

event theory. The general theme of a negative critique of representation raised so far is not the true purpose of the thesis, but rather to contextualise photography and its perceived conventionality so that we may look for a possible paradigm shift in both its thought and its practice. Representation is a more polysemic enterprise than can be encapsulated in such a specific argument. We shall take a moment to look at Turner here to highlight some of the aesthetic and more art-historical concepts of representation that are beyond the scope of the thesis.

Turner's was a poetic and innovative imagination often elucidated through lyrical titles as above, and the inclusion of quotations and poetic fragments alongside his paintings, thus interweaving verbal and visual forms of meaning. Indeed, it seems that there was no ship called Ariel operating out of Harwich at the time (Butlin and Joll [1977] 1984: 247), testament to Turner's preference for imaginative construction over the realistic depiction of events. Metaphor, materials, myth, history, topography, place and space were all important in the rendering of a representation. An illuminating incident that underscores the complexity of Turner's method was when his patron, Walter Fawkes, asked him to:

...make me a drawing [watercolour] of the ordinary dimensions that will give some idea of the size of a man of war [...] he began by pouring wet paint till [*sic*] it was saturated, he tore, he scratched, he scrubbed at in a kind of frenzy and the whole thing was chaos – but gradually and as if by magic the lovely ship, with all its exquisite minutia, came into being...

(Fawkes in Bailey [1997] 2013: 210)

The above account by Edith Fawkes provides a vivid portrayal of Turner's material practice but also offers an entry into the dynamic turbulent spaces in his paintings, full of light and atmosphere. Turner *poured* his many wide-ranging interests into the makings of his work and given his personal acquaintance with some of the major scientific minds of the day including Michael Faraday (1791 – 1867) and Mary Somerville (1780 – 1872), it is not too fanciful to see his paintings as expressive of the thermodynamic and electromagnetic conceptions of matter in development at the time. To illustrate this point further, French philosopher Gaston Bachelard (1884 – 1962) in his seminal book *The Poetics of Space* ([1958] 1969) discusses a poem by Pieyre de Mandiargues (1909 – 1991) and conjures up an appropriate image to Turner's painting:

With what fantasy he conferred multiple curvature
on space! This is really a fantasy on Reimann's
curved space. Because every universe is enclosed in
curves, every universe is concentrated in a nucleus, a
spore, a dynamited centre. And the centre is
powerful because it is an imagined centre.
(Bachelard [1958] 1969: 157)

Therefore, although Deleuze's conception of classical representation is one of repression and immobility, we must place this caveat here in the thesis to remind ourselves and the reader, of the imaginative power that is situated on the horizons and vanishing points of representation. This issue will re-emerge in Section III when we look at the poetry of Stéphane Mallarmé. These asides are merely to

show that the many connections this thesis makes in the service of philosophical difference as it pertains to representation, are in essence no different to the many connections that have been made in the service of classical representation in order to illuminate the myriad potentialities of the aesthetic image. It does well to recognise here that the primary interest of the thesis in no way denigrates or diminishes the inventive/creative potentialities that still exist in ‘mainstream’ representational modalities.



Figure 2: J.M.W. Turner ‘Snow Storm: Steam Boat off a Harbour’s Mouth making Signals in Shallow Water. And going by the Lead. The Author was in this Storm on the Night the Ariel left Harwich’, 1842, [oil on canvas] (91.5 x 122cm) National Gallery, London.

But in Turner's 'Snowstorm' nothing comes to rest. The swathes of snow and water swing about in a wholly unpredictable manner, and their impetus is deflected by contrary movements of spray and mysterious striations of light. To look at them for long is an uncomfortable, even an exhausting, experience.

(Clark 1960: 143)

Indeed as Kenneth Clark expresses above in *Looking at Pictures* (1960), we can claim Turner's image as an important precursor for the work of the thesis as it can be said to embody both representation and difference simultaneously. Whilst teetering on the edge of a representation of an event in the world it conveys a sensation of "...giddiness, intoxication and cruelty, and even of death." (Deleuze [1968] 2004a: 331) hence approaching Deleuze's ambition of enhancing the potentialities of representation by allowing it to co-exist with philosophical difference (see page 202).

Although the precursors of photography are not the main remit of the thesis, (and it is interesting to note that Turner was indeed very interested in the 'new' invention) it is still helpful at this stage to inquire further into this inherited construct of reality based on appearance. In order to set the scene for a full-scale critique there are a few seminal texts that may prove useful. These texts provide a succinct *précis* of key points that are crucial in forming an understanding of the aforementioned *status quo* regarding representation before concerning ourselves with more contemporary issues – Martin Jay's essay *Scopic Regimes of Modernity* (1988), Johnathan Crary's *Techniques of the Observer: On Vision and Modernity*

in the Nineteenth Century (1990) and Peter Galassi's exhibition and catalogue *Before Photography: Painting and the Invention of Photography* (1981)⁸. These are indeed seminal texts and it is perhaps to our advantage here that they are all late twentieth century, as they aptly and expertly sum up aspects of what we are terming the classical perspective of photography, premised as they are on vision. Set against these, we will also be utilising a contemporary essay that appears in a special edition of the journal *Rhizomes: Cultural Studies in Emerging Knowledge*⁹ by Michael Kramp as an introduction to the issue, titled 'Unburdening Life, or the Deleuzian Potential of Photography' (2012), which offers an excellent overview of our shared concern.

Perspective in Renaissance times was based on the physiology of the eye and the 'perspective picture' sought to replicate and approximate the experience of seeing from a single fixed point of view. Peter Galassi in *Before Photography* cites Alberti's explanation of a perspective picture in *De Pittura* as "...a plane intersecting the pyramid of vision." (Galassi 1981: 16). He explains, "[a]t the apex of the pyramid is the eye. The pyramid's base is the perimeter of the picture. The picture is the projection upon the intersecting plane of everything that lies within the scope of the pyramid, extending to infinity." (Galassi 1981: 16). Perhaps it is useful to consider how this conception of perspective is analogous to how the earlier development of the camera obscura functions *via* the 'darkened room'. The 'intersecting plane' of the camera obscura is the wall or surface of the room opposite the hole where the inverted image is visible. The impression of the world outside that appeared through the small hole was later

directed through a lens and mirror, which rendered the image in a correct orientation. The 'plane' is where painters would place their canvas to work. Both the subjective viewing position of the perspective picture and the hole/lens of the camera obscura (and later the camera) demonstrate the fixed, static attitude that both these strategies adopt. The camera obscura contributed greatly to the Renaissance conception of perspective, which "...harnessed vision as a rational basis of picture-making." (Galassi 1981: 18). This system of perspective also metaphorically connected man and God, allowing man a privileged position from which to survey the world. A clear example of this can be seen in Leonardo Da Vinci's (1452 – 1519) painting *The Last Supper* (c.1497), which uses geometric rules of space to position God (Jesus) and the individual viewer in diametric opposition to one another. The subjective viewer taking the founding position for the picture whilst God is represented on the axis of infinity or vanishing point. The use of classical perspective in the painting that forms this relation promotes the notion of the 'individual' as it alludes to a more individual relationship to God. God and man now stand staring in dialectical (binary) opposition to each other, as man is elevated *via* the perspectival system. Norman Bryson uses the term 'Founding Perception' to identify the metaphorical potential however of this static and monocular point of view of the subjective viewing position:

...the gaze of the painter arrests the flux of phenomena, contemplates the visual field from a vantage-point outside the mobility of duration, in an eternal moment of disclosed presence; while in the moment of viewing, the viewing subject unites his gaze with the Founding Perception, in a

moment of perfect recreation of that first
epiphany.

(Bryson 1983: 94)

The primacy of vision in Western thought that is so crucial to the hegemony of representation that we are tracing here is fundamentally due to the influence of French philosopher René Descartes (1596 – 1650). One of the cornerstones of Western thought being his famous dictum – *cogito ergo sum* (I think therefore I am). Descartes’ *cogito* provides a rationale for the philosophical construction of self and also of individual existence in relation to God. For Descartes, internal experience/individual consciousness is separated from the projection of the external world, which forms a mind/body dualism. The *cogito* is the primary statement of Cartesian representation; the separation between the mind and the body introduced the concept of subjectivity and an emphasis was placed on the individual mind (logocentric) allied to monocentric perspective. Furthermore, this construct of reality based on the eye, further promotes distance as it precludes the body. Perhaps the camera can be regarded as a ‘disembodied eye’ in that it shares the properties of Descartes philosophical invention promoting “...the disinterested gaze of the disincarnated Cartesian spectator” (Jay 1988: 18). We can also consider the concept of the projector as the Cartesian primacy of the mind renders the external world a mere projection out into external space. Just like the camera obscura the mind/body dualism of Cartesian thought promotes a sense of the distinction between an interior intensity and an extensive exteriority.

This Cartesian dualism shares an affinity with the notion of perspective that has been highlighted so far, particularly in respect to Bryson's 'founding perception' in which man and God share diametric roles in a dialectical yet democratic construction, democratic because everyman can occupy the perspectival or founding of view. In *Scopic Regimes of Modernity* Martin Jay provides an examination of the competing 'scopic regimes'¹⁰ (a term coined by Christian Metz) that constitute the visual culture of the modern era, and cites the dominant visual model as being 'Cartesian perspectivalism'. This term unites Renaissance notions of perspective in the visual arts and Cartesian ideas of subjective rationality in philosophy (Jay 1988: 4)¹¹.

Cartesian Perspectivalism was thus in league with a scientific world view that no longer hermeneutically read the world as a divine text, but rather saw it as situated in a mathematically regular spatio-temporal order filled with natural objects that could only be observed from without by the dispassionate eye of the neutral researcher.
(Jay 1988: 9)

Photography became the representational vehicle *par excellence* for the Enlightenment project, in terms of its ability to provide a close approximation of our philosophical reality construct (basically Cartesian) as it was born out of the Renaissance and the Enlightenment, as demonstrated above. This involves a transparent contract with nature based on the perspectival projection of space as we experience it through the eye¹², and an easy literal translation of our

environment predicated now on taxonomy and resemblance rather than similarity and metaphor. The Enlightenment, ‘The Age of Reason’, was concerned with the quest for the advancement of knowledge based on rationalism *via* thought on the one hand and empiricism, knowledge received through the senses on the other. The desire for clarity, lucidity and discovery in this movement can be seen as linked to the earlier discoveries of both mathematical and optical perspective as a rationalising of the world about us, and our place in it. A light was literally shone onto the world and our experience and connections to it. A sense of certainty was beginning to be constructed and increased knowledge about the world would lead to incremental and steady progress. This sense of light was enhanced with the invention of photo[graphy] which was able to perfectly render a world full of facts and objects, and catalogue them in the sense of the encyclopaedia that was such a treasured Enlightenment concept. As Alan Sekula in ‘The Body and the Archive’ (1986) recognises:

...photography doubly fulfilled the Enlightenment dream of a universal language: the universal mimetic language of the camera yielded up a higher, more cerebral truth, a truth that could be uttered in the universal abstract language of mathematics. [...] Photography promised more than a wealth of detail; it promised to reduce nature to its geometric essence
(Sekula 1986: 17)

Adopting the Cartesian perspectival visual order widened the gap between the spectacle and the spectator. Despite its perceived hegemony, widespread

philosophical critique surrounding Cartesian perspectivalism has "...denounced its privileging of an ahistorical, disinterested, disembodied subject entirely outside of the world it claims to know only from afar." (Jay 1988: 10). In fact, an accurate naturalistic visual depiction of the scene was now of paramount importance (over the allegorical complexities of earlier works) "...as abstract, quantitatively conceptualized space became more interesting to the artist than the qualitatively differentiated subjects painted within it..." (Jay 1988: 8). It was in 1839 that photography took up its role as an agent of representation – showcasing its ability to provide a vision of the world analogous to that as seen through our eyes, as the perfect machine to depict the world in a way that satisfied the ideas of the time. As the Photo historian Beaumont Newhall remarked, "[t]he fever for reality was running high." (Newhall 1964: 12) and there was a sense of "...the ubiquity of vision as the master sense of the modern era." (Jay 1988: 3).

All these advances were in direct contrast to the way in which meaning was generated up to the cusp of the eighteenth century. In *Gardens of Speculation: Landscape in the Draughtsman's Contract* (1983), Simon Watney analyses Peter Greenaway's 1982 film *The Draughtsman's Contract* in relation to allegory and the representation of landscape. Watney writes:

Set in a period which still conceived its world in allegorical terms, prior to the encroachments of rationalist or positivist thought, it is a film which encourages modern audiences to reflect on the profound changes in the history of European representation over the last three centuries, and the

consequences for how we think ourselves and the world we share.

(Watney 1983b: 183)

Gardens of Speculation investigates the genesis of naturalistic language, a language that had migrated from being based on similarity and allegorical possibilities, indeed multiplicities, towards a dialect of taxonomy, and categorisation. This new transparent approach to language, which was equated with the naturalistic rendering of the world according to the eye, converged with the arrangement of objects in projected space (as the eye and the mind projected them) to form a construct of reality that is predicated on what Bergson saw as ‘difference by degree’, how each objects differs from the next, rather than ‘difference in kind’, how an object or process differs from itself (through duration). Here raising the enigmatic spectre of our founding question – *can photography describe its own event?*. Taxonomy promotes the perception of a world of distinct objects; this is opposed by the theory of a world of forces that work on those objects as change over time, a distinction that separates *representation* from *difference* and will prove vital to the thesis.

The invention of linear/mathematical perspective facilitated the fixing of objects in space. These changes marked a distinct shift in how the world was represented, and a fundamental question in the history of representation that is acknowledged in both Watney and Galassi’s texts, as well as Greenaway’s, that is; do you represent what you see, or what you know? The distinction between ‘seeing’ and ‘knowing’ is reflective of the changes outlined above. What is ‘known’ relates to

the symbolic nature of language, pre the eighteenth century, veiled in allegory and inviting an unfolding of interpretive possibilities. An analogy can also be made here between Galassi's two forms of perspective, synthetic, which equates to the inventing of material on the 'measured stage' of the perspectival plane, and analytic perspective, which takes account of the world as seen as a dynamic field of potential pictures that the artist can throw a frame around. This analytic vision of the world equates obviously to what is 'seen', whereas the synthetic solution can be linked to what the artist 'knows' about the world. The latter's potential for allegory plays a central role in *The Draughtsman's Contract* and Simon Watney asserts the importance of this over 'mere' appearances:

This is the very nature of allegory – to demand further elucidation and commentary, beyond any closure of literal narrative devices. For allegory invariably proceeds from a radical distrust in 'mere' appearances. It conceives the world not as a stable set of coherent discrete objects, but rather as an endless network of resemblances and associations, in which signification is the *primary* order of things.

(Watney 1983b: 185) [*emphasis in original*]

This will be the project of the latter two Sections of the thesis, to uncover the hidden networks of signification that lay beyond, underneath, *within* appearances.

The allegorical, contemplative gardens of the seventeenth century and their symbolic plants could be 'read' through the placement of statuary and plantation; each formal garden told a story that could be deciphered at ones' leisure. As Watney maintains, allegory demands inquisitiveness and promotes the importance

of not taking meaning as something that is fixed or one-dimensional. Instead it focuses on the ability to make connections and the potential multiplicity of interpretations – “...all events are open to interpretation and re-interpretation.” (Greenaway 1982: *u.p.*). The onset of categorisation morphed these plant species into distinct, classifiable entities that were given Latin names to identify their form. This shift wiped away the imaginative potential of similarity and was in stark contrast to the richness and complexity of the previous mode of language. It was becoming more and more apparent that what was seen was taking precedence over what was known. Peter Galassi, speaking about Meyer Schapiro’s essay *Style* (1953) observes “...the now familiar sense of art’s history as an irreversible trend from tactile to visual intuitions, from knowing to seeing” (Galassi 1981: 15). Attempting to trace this movement as a way of providing a ‘history of seeing’, Galassi compares Schapiro’s essay with Ernst Gombrich’s *Art and Illusion* (1961) that suggested this change:

...need not be explained as an ineluctable drift from tactile to visual intuitions. He showed, rather, that it should be understood in terms of the progressive invention of basic pictorial tools – he called them schemas – each derived from the existing normative analogue of vision and establishing a potential prototype of the next.
(Galassi 1981: 15)

The invention of pictorial tools Galassi is referring to here encompasses the development of perspective and subsequent inventions that aided such

advancements, a particularly rich history in the fifteenth, seventeenth and nineteenth centuries. Perspective led the way for representing the world spatially – artworks could now be constructed using these pictorial tools in order to produce works that represented a view of the world that corresponded with how it was seen through the eye. The fundamental concern for the perspective picture was that it achieved an accurate representation of the world as seen through the eye. The rationalised space of the perspective picture was determined by three fundamental choices – the arrangement of the subject, the point of view, and the scope of the view. These essential choices lie between two restricting cases; “...the point of view and the frame – the visual pyramid – are established first, creating a measured stage.” (Galassi 1981: 16). Alternately, “...the world is accepted first as an uninterrupted field of potential pictures. From the latter point of view, the artist scans the field with the pyramid of vision, forming a picture and choosing where and when to stop.” (Galassi 1981: 16). Galassi uses Paolo Uccello (1397 – 1495) and Edgar Degas (1834 – 1917) as contrasting examples of these cases. Uccello’s method is an example of the ‘measured stage’ approach (synthetic), using the pyramid as a static container in which he organised the elements, whereas Degas’s visual pyramid is mobile and active (analytic).

Where Uccello’s painting seems comprehensive, Degas’s seems fragmentary, concentrating in a single visual aspect the vital spirit of the entire scene. Uccello worked from pieces to a whole: he synthesized. Degas worked from a whole to an aspect: he analyzed.

(Galassi 1981: 17)

Galassi notes that Uccello's procedure of 'logical construction' gave way to Degas's strategy of 'selective description'. A comparison can be made here between the two polar conceptions of analytic/synthetic perspective and the distinction between representing what is seen and what is known. The synthetic perspective of Uccello has a relation to latter – like the *speculative gardens* of the Renaissance, Uccello constructs the scene himself. Degas's analytic perspective however, represents what is seen – selectively describing an aspect he chooses (as demonstrated by the draughtsman in the film). It is significant here that there appears to be a reciprocal arrangement here in the sense that photography certainly did have an impact on Degas' painting, that Degas marks in art history through an emphasis on the radical difference in perspectival modes that 'sight' precipitates.

If photography had an impact on painting (and it certainly did), it is because the new medium was born to an artistic environment that increasingly valued the mundane, the fragmentary, the seemingly uncomposed – that found in the contingent qualities of perception a standard of artistic, and moral, authenticity.

(Galassi 1981: 28)

Galassi goes on to cite the development of the landscape sketch that emerged around 1800 as "...the emergence of a new norm of pictorial coherence that made photography conceivable." (Galassi 1981: 18).

The landscape sketches [...] present a new and fundamentally modern pictorial syntax of immediate, synoptic perceptions and discontinuous, unexpected forms. It is the syntax of an art devoted to the singular and contingent rather than the universal and stable. It is also the syntax of photography.
(Galassi 1981: 25)

Here he is talking of the change in function of sketching, from the compositional sketch to the observational sketch, each with its obvious alliances; "...the former was a record of imagination, the latter of reality." (Galassi 1981: 20). There are two important nineteenth century interjections against the tide of naturalism at this point, one by J.M.W. Turner¹³, who "...of course preferred 'pictures made up of bits' (imaginative compositions) to 'pictures of bits' (straightforward visual records)." (Galassi 1981: 21). The other concerns a poet:

... Baudelaire claimed that photography could not be an art. A medium that allowed the artist no right to compose – to meddle in the internal affairs of the picture – could never be a vehicle of the imagination.
(Galassi 1981: 28)

Both draw a distinction that in its time might have been considered reductionist and against the tide of a growing trend for realism. It is a distinction that will prove important though in the impending direction of the thesis. As representation and

the strategies outlined here become more and more conventionalised, there seems to be a turn toward what might be deemed the representation of the ‘unrepresentable’ once more. A move against clarity and lucidity and a return to allegory, metaphor and a taste for multiplicity. James Elkins in his book *Six Stories from the End of Representation* (2008) talks of a new opaqueness and indistinctness in art *and* photography, and also “...a growing fascination with the last moments of ordinary representation.” (Elkins 2008: 16). If the age of ordinary representation is in its dying embers then the task for future photographers may well be “...to try and make an image that owes as little to ordinary photographic representation as possible.” (Elkins 2008: 77). We will return to this prescient book in Section II. **At this stage of the argument, we are concerned with identifying key elements in the system of representation that specifically impact on the history of photography and might through supplement and modification, offer better future opportunities for the medium. The direction that this Section is taking is first and foremost to prepare a nuanced argument in preparation for the work of Sections II and III which will start to build new and different perspectives regarding the dissolving of the classical perspective and assessing the conceptual field beyond this process.**

The thesis will go on to trace and explore the anti-realist and anti-representational impulses that seem to increasingly predicate much contemporary thinking as well as artistic expression. In Jay’s essay *Scopic Regimes of Modernity* he traces not only the constituent parts of Cartesian perspectivalism but also the visual sub-cultures that have grown around it in what might be deemed to evoke another of

Jay's works, a 'denigration of vision'¹⁴. The foremost of these sub-cultures is the 'baroque', which as Jay explains, can be thought of in dialectical opposition to Cartesian perspectivalism in some ways. In Nietzsche's terms the baroque is the Dionysian counterpoint to the Apollonian aspect of the Cartesian matrix¹⁵. The Dionysian 'paradigm' will be investigated more closely in Section II but for now it is enough to note a sea-change in representational modes and a return to forms of complexity and multiplicities in terms of communication. Issues are cloaked in opacity and folded and encrypted in baroque doublings. As the thesis explores these movements it also traces the ideas of the most modern of baroque thinkers, Gilles Deleuze.

Numerous scholars have completed impressive critical studies detailing the cultural impact of the rise of photography on modern systems of knowledge such as archives, museums and libraries, but for reasons that are quite sound, we have not yet seen an abundance of Deleuzian treatments on photography, its history, or its aesthetic potential. Deleuze's relatively sparse comments on photography suggest neither his philosophical interest in the art form nor his confidence in its potential to create new concepts or relationships. Instead, like many scholars, he often discusses photography as an important instrument of the Enlightenment system of knowledge.

(Kramp 2012: *u.p.* n.2)

Here we have the challenge of Deleuze in relation to photography, how do we construct a Deleuzian perspective when he dismisses the medium so readily?

Kramp goes on to advocate that we might "...read Deleuze against Deleuze to

reconsider photography's artistic capacity to engage with and generate new experiences of reality." (Kramp 2012: *u.p.*). If we are to take Deleuze's philosophy as a counterpoint to the Cartesian constructs that we have been discussing here as the basis of recognisable mainstream representation, then we must look at his opposition to the concept of identity, but also his method. Descartes and his rationalist, analytical deductive method according to reason, opposed by Deleuze's method, which is synthetic and dialectical as developed in his major work *Difference and Repetition*, and "...depends on the view that all knowledge is partial and open to revision." (Williams 2010: 51).

Thus, any relative truth is open to extension through syntheses with further discoveries and through further experiments. The relation between these truths is dialectical rather than analytical and foundational. There is a reciprocal process of revision and change between them, as opposed to Cartesian moves from secure and inviolable bases out into the unknown. Where Descartes situates reason at the heart of his method, as shown by the role of thinking in the cogito, Deleuze emphasises sensation.

(Williams 2010: 51-52)

By his emphasis on sensation Deleuze can claim to be an empiricist rather than a rationalist, his reason usually being speculative to say the least. However one of the important aspects of Deleuze, and in particular in his dealings with other philosophers and their methods, is his own preference for synthesis, which he prefers to the more analytic method. This extends also to his empiricism and

indeed he could claim to be a transcendental empiricist, which in some ways could be seen to be a synthesis of sorts between his position and Descartes, as will be explored further through his concept of pure difference in Section II.

Deleuze is not simply anti-Cartesian; rather, he extends the active subject through passivity and through the conditions for sensation. The cogito is an important moment in philosophy, but it requires completing through syntheses that belie its independence.

(Williams 2010: 52)

As we have begun to move out of the territory of fixed perspectives and the illusion of certainty, it is time to consider more closely the concept of change. We might ask in this current moment just as Kramp does “...if photography can free painting and painters to pursue novel creative opportunities, can it likewise free itself? Photographic practitioners, and even viewers to create and re-create anew?” (Kramp 2012: *u.p.* n.3).

A word of clarification at this point concerning the ‘illustrations’ utilised throughout the thesis. I do not wish to retrospectively apply the theories in this thesis *onto* existing artists from the cannon of visual arts, but instead merely note that sub-cultures and fissures within the classical perspective have always existed. Indeed, it is they who have added the nuances and sophistications to the wider field of representation. It might prove useful here to note a photographer who challenged notions of fixed perspective and certainty, forming a body of work that

was irrational, beyond reason, where meaning was shifting, fluid and open.

Francesca Woodman (1958 – 1981) worked largely on intuition often forgoing notions of identity by morphing herself into ambiguous spaces, often seeming to disappear into the fabric of space and place.

...Woodman's sense of a changeable self was not expressed through playful disguise. Instead, through the blurry images and the captured movements, she reveals an inner cartography that circles around variations on the same evasive persona. Her series are made up of sequences shot mostly in old houses and usually featuring herself, though she rarely shows her face.

(Conley 2008: 227)



Figure 3: Francesca Woodman 1975-76, 'Space2, Providence, Rhode Island' [black and white photograph].

Here again, as with Turner, we have an artist who seems to embody the future in the 'now', a representational artist that prefigures the issues that we are exploring here in the thesis. A practice in which the perceived properties of an archive of ideas and events also holds within it the capacity for variation, flux and uncertainty of meaning. Woodman eschewed deep perspective in her photographs, preferring a flatness of image, utilising walls, wallpaper and facades, which she often attempted to disappear into. It almost seems as if she is trying to hide in (or emerge from) the very thinness of the image itself or the paper manifestation of the image as photograph. Like Turner, there is an attempt to use the surface as a place of rupture where the imagination can be led beyond the frame, evoking sensations from beyond geometric perspective, vanishing points that both produce and dissolve meaning. If we are going to critique certain tenets of mainstream representation in order to prepare the ground for possible new conceptual frameworks for photography, then photographs such as Woodman's above can act as signposts when surveying the field as it stands in order to identify plateaus of practice perhaps not fully explored to date. There are many artists such as Turner and Woodman throughout the history of visual representation whose work seems prescient and holds the potentiality at least to prefigure change or symbolise an instance of Bachelard's notion of *epistemological rupture*¹⁶, applied to the sciences when one mode of thought was displaced by another. An idea enhanced by the work of Thomas Kuhn into the possibilities of paradigm shifts within the realm of the sciences and subsequently culture.

Shifting paradigms

The phrase ‘paradigm shift’ in this context will be used as a means of highlighting and uncovering the possibilities of a shift in the practice and communication of photography, a shift toward a more temporal interpretation of the medium and away from the mainstream model and its pictorial conventions:

...to theorize photography’s creative power [...], to produce knowledges and experience that remain diverse and allusive, and to imagine new kinds of relationships and sensations that at once have efficacy and explosive untapped energies.

(Kramp 2012: *u.p.* n.7)

It is relevant here to explain this notion further by referring to A.D. Coleman and his insightful essay *The Perils of Pluralism: Thoughts on the Condition of Photography at Century’s End* (2000). Here, Coleman discusses the prospect of a paradigm shift within photography and defines the phrase as “...the collapse of an established model of thought and its inexorable replacement by a new one” (Coleman 2000: 11), such a collapse he points out, signals a paradigm’s exhaustion. Coleman draws from the field of the history of sciences, where the term ‘paradigm shift’ acquired new meaning when introduced by Thomas Kuhn in *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (1970)¹⁷. By reflecting on the ideas of Kuhn and attempting to apply his findings to art, Coleman identifies some

differences between these two areas. When an established model of thought collapses within science it cannot be remedied, "...it is almost invariably terminal" (Coleman 2000: 11). This leads to the formulation of a more innovative paradigm, and in this moment, during the disintegration of the current paradigm but before the appearance of a 'new paradigm', "...practitioners enter a pre-paradigm state of confusion, restlessness and anticipation" (Coleman 2000: 11). In art however, Coleman observes that old paradigms never die but instead are converted, demoting them from a belief system into a style or 'genre'.

Thus it seems the time has come for some of those involved in the observation and criticism of *photography* to shift critical and analytical paradigms. Perhaps, if we did so, we might even discover a new way of looking at the sometimes disheartening data laid out here and informing it differently. In the event, if we have any chance of turning the international image community into a genuine 'plywood culture', strengthened by its opposed layers, rather than a weak repository made, like particle board, of fragmented leftovers, we will need to ask a different and more probing set of questions, teasing out the 'deep structures' of lens-based communication.

(Coleman 2000: 15)

Written over a decade ago, Coleman's prophetic closing sentences suggest what potentially lay ahead for photographic practice in the dawn of a new century. The emphasis in the above quotation offers some clues as to how to proceed into this new moment, with suggestions being to find new ways of looking and interpreting the photographic 'data'. 'Disheartening' implies that some approaches have

reached a point of exhaustion and perhaps we are, as Kuhn advises, in a state of 'pre-paradigm confusion'. It is worth noting that what Coleman seems to be searching for is something deeper and more complex – "...we will need to ask a different and more probing set of questions, teasing out the 'deep structures' of lens-based communication." (Coleman 2000: 15). Move forward almost a decade and another key voice in contemporary photographic theory Geoffrey Batchen, is asking some similar questions. A likeness can be made between the tone of Batchen's writing and Coleman's – Batchen is also concerned with a new moment appearing, and the role the photographic takes in this. The quotation, from *Photography Degree Zero: Reflections on Roland Barthes's Camera Lucida* (2009) which appears in the Introduction to the thesis, is reproduced here as a point of comparison:

It is fair to say that we are now at a moment that sees itself as being after postmodernism but that has yet to attract the burden of a proper name or the motivation of an enabling politics. The invention of such a politics and with it a mode of critical writing that is appropriate for the times we live therefore remains the most pressing task to face the present generation of photography's interlocutors.

(Batchen 2009: 21)

Furthermore, we uncover a quotation from Batchen that appears twelve years earlier in *Burning with Desire: The Conception of Photography* (1997) that emphasises his concern with this issue:

Perhaps photography could only be conceived at a moment when classical and modern epistemes were folding over and into each other. In other words, photography's birth pangs coincided in a movement that involved both the demise of the premodern and the invention of a peculiarly modern arrangement of knowledges; the appearance of one was only made possible through the erasure of the other. Photography's historical emergence is therefore best described as a palimpsest, as an event that inscribes itself with the space simultaneously marked and left blank by the sudden collapse of natural philosophy and its Enlightenment worldview.

(Batchen 1997: 186)

This particular moment for photography is especially anxious as in addition to the concerns outlined above by Coleman and Batchen, it also straddles the transition from analogue to digital in its mode of production. Concerning the nature of photography at present Derrida speculates "...does what we have available to us now deserve the name of photography?" (Derrida 2010: 5). Concerning the 'name' of photography, Bergson proposes that photography is analogous to perception, Eduardo Cadava writes:

Photography and perception are analogous to one another in Bergson not so much because perception works like a camera to seize reality but rather because, working like a camera, it fails to seize reality. What photography and perception do not perceive they do not perceive for reasons of principle. That is, it is because they are photography and perception that they do not perceive.

(Cadava 1997: 92-3)

On one hand Derrida's observation could be regarded as extremely medium-specific in order to identify what constitutes 'photography proper' in the smallest detail. On the other hand, Bergson's analysis states that photography is equal to perception – a substantial claim in comparison. To take this further, this difference can be interpreted perhaps through Deleuze's discussion on the too large and the too small of difference¹⁸. Perhaps the too large of difference equates with the perspective that photography and perception are akin to each other as major concepts, whereas the too small of difference is reminiscent of the laborious medium specificity that Derrida seems to be alluding to. Whether or not in accordance with the current parameters of the medium, be it technological, theoretical or philosophical... can it still be called photography? That is, understood as the action of light focused through a lens onto light sensitive materials or sensors. Here we are merely speculating however, as maybe it is more apt to equate the too large of difference with representation as premised on difference by degree, and the too small with intensive difference based on difference in kind or how something changes over duration. This does not deny our speculative thoughts, as photography and perception are usually seen as differing by degree, whilst Derrida's question can be perceived to be a question of 'in kind'. Hence the question, can a fixed culturally defined term such as photography still remain appropriate when the concept it is attached to has differed in kind so much that the name of the concept seems out of joint? This seeming double articulation of thought is an example of how difference resides even in language in a continuous play with representation.

Case Study: *The Theory of Performed Photography*

To examine further how difference can reside in concepts in a continuous and co-existent play with representation, we shall now evaluate a contemporary mode of photography for which this claim is made. Here we shall carry out a concise exposition of the theory of ‘performed photography’ as developed by Paul Jeff in his PhD thesis (2008). This provides some context and example for our critique of the classical perspective and also as a practice that begins to open the curtain onto the possibilities of a photography based as much on difference as on representation. Performed photography critiques photography as a static, pictorial medium and endeavours to supplement it with a mobile and temporally biased practice. Jeff’s thesis seeks to realign photography with temporality in order to address the imbalance that exists within the medium as a largely spatialised practice. One predicated on the ordering of space and pictorial conventions that utilises a system of representation based upon concepts of identity and resemblance. Whereas a temporally motivated practice however, identifies with a more radical conception of the medium. It is imperative to note that the emphasis on temporal concerns is an attempt to redress an imbalance and not merely to argue for temporal concerns *over* spatial ones. In addition to developing a time-based conception of photography, Jeff posits a theory of *At/one(mo)ment* (At one moment) or ‘atonement’ a temporal interpretive construction that can be regarded as a compliment to Henri Cartier-Bresson’s (spatial) ‘decisive moment’.

Furthermore, there are a number of practical works contained within Jeff’s thesis

that test or ‘open up’ these theories, which serve to provide space for further contemplations of possible practical explications of a radical temporally biased photography. Perhaps one of the most apparent influences in these works is the use of Deleuze’s concept of difference and repetition; marking a distinct shift away from identity and resemblance (the representational spatial model) and towards an anti-representational approach that addresses concerns of temporality and difference. Therein emerges a more radical conception of the medium that provides a compliment to traditional photographic practices, yet also a necessary challenge, to ensure a practice of photography that remains fully contemporary as a mode of expression at this critical stage in its history.

Performed photography is an important precedent in my research and its constituent parts shall be investigated here, as this theory offers a strong example of an event/process-led practice that challenges the mainstream practice of photography. It is notable that the term ‘performed photography’ has been used in different contexts by both Jennifer Blessing (1997) for the exhibition ‘Rose is a Rose is a Rose: Gender Performance in Photography’ at the Guggenheim Museum in New York and RoseLee Goldberg (1998: 98) before Jeff’s coherent theory (2008). More recently, curator and writer Susan Bright has highlighted Jeff’s theory in her publication *Auto Focus: The Self-Portrait in Contemporary Photography* (2010), thus giving credence to the contemporary significance of this approach to rethinking photography; “...[performed photography] is an important addition to the genre of self-portraiture, as it pushes photography far from the traditions that have dominated the medium” (Bright 2010: 183). We

should recognise here that Bright places performed photography within the 'genre' of self-portraiture for the purpose of the publication, however this abridgement of the concept is misleading as it has far wider implications. Performed photography can be recognised as an inter-disciplinary genre that highlights the relationship between the performative act and the act of photography and so can also be equated with performance/theatre and live art practices. The dramaturge Mike Pearson has placed equal importance on the theory and practice of performed photography as a mode of live art or experimental theatre in his book *Site-Specific Performance* (2010). Performed photography draws out the concept of performativity as applicable in the visual arts in order to justify a new temporal paradigm. Precedents for this can be situated in particular works by Jackson Pollock, Richard Avedon and Phillip Auslander. However to uncover its theoretical origin, it is necessary to go back to John Longshaw Austin and his articulation of the performative. In *How to do Things with Words* (1961) the linguist J.L. Austin relates the performative to language in order to draw attention to the clear distinction between the descriptive and the performative in terms of utterance:

For Austin, performatives are a special category of language, distinct from 'constatives' or those utterances that describe or are statements of fact. A performative utterance is one in which saying and doing are the same; in each case, words 'accomplish an act through the very process of their enunciation'.
(Blocker 2004: 114)

Pollock's paintings in the late 1940's of drip-smearred canvases became known as 'action paintings', a term coined by critic Harold Rosenberg in *The American Action Painters* (1952). Rosenberg speculated that "[a canvas was] an arena in which to act" (Rosenberg 1952: 22) and that "[w]hat was to go on the canvas was not a picture but an event" (Rosenberg 1952: 22). (It is Pollock's work *via* Rosenberg's critique that leads to an important quotation for the aspiration of performed photography by artist Ralph Rumney that appears later in this case study). Such interpretations of Pollock's art as 'event' are owed to the photographs and films of Pollock's documenter, Hans Namuth. Namuth's work can be implicated into Phillip Auslander's 'The Performativity of Performance Documentation' (2006) as the dispersal of such documentation raised questions over Namuth's relationship to Pollock and his art¹⁹. As Tracy Warr notes, in their essay 'Jackson Pollock, Painting and the myth of Photography' ([1983] 1996a) Fred Orton and Griselda Pollock consider "...how far does the photographer document what happened and how far does he or she *create* the 'documented' phenomenon?" (Warr 2003: 32). The word *create* is significant here in that photography is one of the mediums that can be said to define the parameters of representation in that it is constative (descriptive, in a way very true to nature) rather than performative in terms set out by Austin. These ideas permeate the title of the thesis – *can photography describe its own event?*, and as such then, does it *perform* its own event in Austin's terms, or are we left merely to allude to photography's position as a descriptive medium in the popular imagination.

What now becomes apparent is the possibility of a ‘performative’ photograph, as we can introduce it *via* the conception of the theory of performed photography. Outlined below are some of the key theoretical concerns that contribute to an understanding of performed photography, whilst also helping to highlight some prospective ideas that will reverberate for our enigmatic question *CPDIOE?* at later stages in the thesis. Jeff takes his standpoint from performance and time-based arts in an attempt to revive a practice of photography that was seemingly exhausted and as the vehicle *par excellence* for depicting (and contributing to the hegemony of) spatial concerns, operating as an agent of representation. One of the key elements that contribute to a formulation of a practice/theory of performed photography concern performance and the question of its record. American portrait photographer Richard Avedon draws attention to the idea of the performative in relation to photographic portraiture in his essay *Borrowed Dogs* (1989):

Portraiture is performance, and like any performance, in the balance of its effects it is good or bad, not natural or unnatural. I can understand being troubled by this idea – that all portraits are performances – because it seems to imply some kind of artifice that conceals the truth about the sitter. But that’s not it at all. The point is that you can’t get at the thing itself, the real nature of the sitter, by stripping away the surface. The surface is all you’ve got. You can only get beyond the surface by working with the surface. All that you can do is manipulate the surface – gesture, costume, expression – radically and correctly.

(Avedon 1989: 17)

In the essay, Avedon proposes that an intrinsic relationship exists between portraiture and performance. Initially, this may allude to the suggestion that portraiture is merely an artificial representation, however Avedon furthers his argument by proposing that it is necessary to work with the ‘image surface’ (as a photographer) in conjunction with the sitters ‘body surface’; this being a reciprocal process. This introduces the possibility of performance and as Peggy Phelan posits, it is in this dual manipulation that the performative emerges (Phelan 1993: 37). It is the conception that “[a]ll portrait photography is fundamentally performative” (Phelan 1993: 35) that runs in tandem with the suspicion of artificiality; as Phelan remarks, the ‘art-fiction’ (Phelan 1993: 36) of portraiture. As in Avedon’s case, and indeed the inspiration for the title of his essay, his family album appears to be “...built on some kind of lie about who we were and revealed a truth about who we wanted to be” (Avedon 1989: 15); he recalls dressing up and posing with borrowed dogs and “...in front of expensive cars, homes that weren’t ours” (Avedon 1989: 15). Despite this, photography has a natural affiliation with truth as the photograph acts as ‘proof’ in the popular imagination, though this is put into question when considering photographic portraiture as Phelan highlights; “[t]he performative nature of portrait photography complicates the traditional claims of the camera to reproduce an authentic ‘real’” (Phelan 1993: 36).

The notion of performativity is augmented through essays by Phillip Auslander and Amelia Jones. Auslander and Jones have written extensively in this area and

two key essays that collectively develop a contemporary understanding of performativity and the documentation of performance are 'Auslander's The Performativity of Performance Documentation' (2006) and Jones' "'Presence' in absentia: Experiencing Performance as Documentation' (1997). Auslander's seminal article proposes that performance documentation falls into two categories – the 'documentary' and the 'theatrical'. In reference to Jones' 1997 article, Auslander notes that the documentary vein of performance documentation suggests an ontological connection and acts as "...evidence that it actually occurred" (Auslander 2006: 1). It is within the theatrical category that Auslander situates the term 'performed photography', which "...suggests that such works be understood as a kind of photograph rather than as performances" (Auslander 2006: 3). Auslander draws attention to "...cases in which performances were staged solely to be photographed or filmed and had no meaningful prior existence as autonomous events presented to audiences" (Auslander 2006: 2). He advises that these theatrical images "...are not performances at all and the images are not documents, but something else, another kind of art work perhaps" (Auslander 2006: 3). Well known examples of this may be artists such as Cindy Sherman and Francesca Woodman, where a fabricated performance is made solely for the camera. This is as far as Auslander goes in attempting to define the notion of performed photography; the first coherent theoretical definition is posited in Jeff's thesis. Performance and the question of its record/documentation is discussed at length in Jones' article, who raises some interesting questions relating to viewing performance solely through its documentation. That is, how the photograph acts as document and in her case, a substitute for the performance, and how the

photograph becomes testimony to the events occurrence. Auslander extends this definition by positing that a performance can continue to act performatively to secondary audiences through an ongoing performative function of the documentation.

Drawing on performance and the question of its record, Jones' interest lies in the concerns and strategies of documenting performance, and the issue of subjectivity and intersubjectivity in relation to engagement and interpretation by the audience of the performances/documentation. Jones writes about performance entirely through its documentation and raises the concern of not only how the photograph acts as document (or in Jones' case a substitute for the performance) but additionally, the straight contract between event and photograph becomes energised as the photograph continues to perform the meanings of the ephemeral event to subsequent audiences. In *Performing the Body/Performing the Text* (1999) Amelia Jones and Andrew Stephenson discuss the emergence of performativity within art practices over the last fifty years and consider how this has impacted on interpretive possibilities; "...artistic meaning can [now] be understood and enacted through interpretive engagements that are themselves performative in their intersubjectivity." (Jones and Stephenson 1999: 1). Also, many of these performative art practices "...enact the body or subject in a performative fashion (*Performing the Body*) in order to point to the act of interpretation itself as a kind of performance (*Performing the Text*)." (Jones and Stephenson 1999: 1) [*emphasis in original*]. Recognising the importance of the spatial/temporal balance for Jeff's research, there are three 'founding quotations'

that illuminate his premise and shall be summarised here in order to contextualise the argument.

Firstly, due to the capabilities of the medium to operate as a harbinger of truth and to provide an accurate (representational) depiction of reality, it is possible that the reason for a perceived stagnation of the medium is a result of photography becoming a slave to the depiction of space, to the detriment of its other constituent parts – the passing of time. The following quotation is from Walter Benjamin in *A Short History of Photography* ([1931] 1972):

The procedure itself caused the models to live inside rather than outside the moment. During the long duration of these shots they grew as it were into the picture and in this way presented an extreme opposite to the figures on a snapshot.
(Benjamin [1931] 1972: 17)

Here, Benjamin is concerned with the durational nature of early photographic exposure times. The portrait of the Newhaven Fishwife²⁰ that he is discussing embodies Benjamin's interest with the temporality and aura within early photographic portraiture. This portrait reveals a moment that is imbued with duration (a temporality that instant shutter speeds expel) and as a result of the considerable duration of the early photographic exposure times, it could be said that these early portrait sitters had to reside *within* the photographic moment. Here we have a worthwhile insight for this present thesis (*CPDIOE?*) in that Benjamin

appears to be advocating an *immanent* practice. An instance where the sitter and the medium come together, *existing within* and coexisting in the photographic moment as the event of photography. This is in conflict with the estrangement between the event/referent and its representation that mainstream photography promotes. The significance of this quotation for performed photography provokes Jeff to ask – “...how to get back inside the moment?” (Jeff 2008: 14). Benjamin emphasised that as a result of increasingly fast shutter speeds brought about by increases in lens and emulsion technology, the subject and by extension the viewing subject were expelled from the photographic moment, only able to observe ‘a passing reality’²¹ from outside. Paradoxically equating the technological improvements of the time with the *decline* of photography²², Benjamin was certain that such changes were detrimental to the medium – “[i]mmobilizing and interdicting the passage between the photograph and the photographed, the decline of photography names both the involuntary conjuring of a distance, of an aura, and the forgetting of this ghostly emergence.” (Cadava 1997: 15). Eduardo Cadava writing on Benjamin in *Words of Light* (1997) remarks on this distance that appeared between the photograph and the photographed in the age of mechanical reproduction (the much discussed notion of *estrangement* that has concerned most photographic theory since Benjamin). A correlation can be seen here in the separation between the event/referent and its representation that still exists in mainstream photography today. A central concern of performed photography is to diminish this distance and regain what has been lost in technological developments that have pushed us *outside* the photographic moment, “[i]t is fair to say that in performed photography the work emerges from

the ‘instance of duration’ rather than being captured *via* the concept of the instant” (Jeff 2008: 27). Here we can perceive in Benjamin’s insightful writing an inherent tension between the largely transcendent properties of photography as practiced, and the potentialities of a sub-cultural immanent practice. Secondly, coupled with the above assertion, this quotation by Roland Barthes holds particular significance to the aspirations of performed photography:

Yet it is not (it seems to me) by Painting that
Photography touches Art but by Theater [*sic*].
(Barthes 1982 [2000]: 31)

Barthes is also fascinated by the temporality of photography but recognised too that, photography had more in common with theatre than ‘art’, as painting is a spatial medium and theatre is a temporal/performative medium. Considering that photography is one of the mediums that can be said to define the parameters of representation in that it is constative (descriptive), naturalistic and predicated on vision, rather than performative in terms set out by Austin, this proposition by Barthes is at the very least intriguing and certainly illuminates the potential for this affiliation to be further explored; a theatrical style of photography. Finally, in thinking about the possibilities of a temporally motivated practice, an element that shall be expanded upon here is the proposition that this term aligns photography with a practice built around a founding event that leaves a *trace*. Performed photography exemplifies the element that is of interest here, the prospect of collapsing the event and its record (or *trace*) together, until they are folded around

each other and resemble something akin to Austin's performative utterance. Artist and Situationist Ralph Rumney makes the point:

The trace of an act can be interpreted as an absolute realism. The act of making a trace is a whole other ball game. It's obvious it's not the same thing... the act of making a trace implies that you attribute significance to the trace, whereas the trace itself may or may not carry this significance.
(Woods 2000: 154)

A crucial distinction is to be made between these two perspectives. In Rumney's quotation, "[t]he trace of an act can be interpreted as an absolute realism" coincides with Roland Barthes' *noeme* of photography; *That-has-been*. "In Photography I can never deny that *the thing has been there*. There is a superimposition here: of reality and of the past." (Barthes [1980] 2000: 76) [*emphasis in original*]. However, "[t]he act of making a trace" is a reference to the largely pictorial history of photography; and observing the pictorialist tradition, the aesthetics and composition of the image are paramount. Graham Clarke writes about the concerns of Peter Henry Emerson, who was a central figure in 'pictorialism'; "...detail, light and the formal composition of the scene are central, but it was the *seen* rather than the scene that remained crucial." (Clarke 1997: 51-52). Therefore in general terms, if Rumney's quote is applied to photographic practice it seems to imply an emphasis upon an act or event over its representation in terms of an absolute realism. That is, the promotion of the *act*, or performative action that can leave a trace beyond the rationale of *making* a trace. In making a

connection with the spatial/temporal models of photography, it is the spatialised model (representation) that is premised on the ordering of space and pictorial conventions, whereas a temporal model is concerned with a practice that is built around a founding event that leaves a trace, a movement from within itself. Temporally motivated practices bring the event to the fore and place the emphasis on event over document, and mobility over stasis, marking a departure from a *picture* base in favour of an *event* base. This highlights a resistance to the depiction of a tableau (even in the contemporary theatrical practices of Jeff Wall or Gregory Crewdson for instance), in order to place the emphasis on a durational performance. The resulting record being implicated into the event as something that will carry the event forward, even to the point of being indistinguishable from the event. Moreover, there is the further possibility that the event itself is photographic, with the photograph acting as a record of its own process. This touches yet again upon our central question – *can photography describe its own event?*. If the process of photography is central to the event designed then it follows in this case, that it is possible that one could say that photography is describing its own event. This is the essence of ‘performed photography’ and Rumney’s important distinction provides a fitting analogy between temporal and spatial concerns, and their corresponding *traces*. Thus when we emphasise the making of a trace in Rumney, we are concentrating on the act of representation. This is where the fetishisation of the object of photography lies in mainstream practice, that is, paying particular significance to the polishing up of the trace and making it self-important through editing, printing and display – these are all characteristics of a spatial practice. On the other hand, the trace of an act speaks

of temporality and belongs to a new practice – a practice based on experiential flux, process and the concept of event – performed photography being a case in point.

So far we have summarised some of the central theoretical concerns of performed photography. It is now necessary to provide a more functional outline that will help to further illuminate how performed photography can actually be practiced. It is also necessary to clarify here that this case study is useful to our general hypothesis in that it proves that there are practices being explored that are beginning the task of dissolving the classical perspective in photography. Practices that are currently engaged with new strategies of making meaning beyond a reliance on empirical observation and that are starting to reject some of photography's core values. Space, clarity and producing order from chaos typify the great formalist era of the medium, values from which photography must eventually turn in order to progress. To do this it must arguably look beyond its own boundaries and adopt more non-specific codes²³ (multi-disciplinarity) that can be seen to epitomize the trajectory of many other representational mediums during the last decades of the twentieth century.

Historically, performance art has been a medium that challenges and violates borders between disciplines and genders, between private and public, and between everyday life and art, and that follows no rules. In the process it has energised and affected other disciplines - ... *photography as performance*.
(Goldberg 1998: 30-31) [*my emphasis*]

As Goldberg attests, performance art has been recognised as a medium that has the capability to revitalise other disciplines and by its very nature as an experimental and sometimes provocative practice²⁴, seeks to challenge boundaries and conformist perceptions. Arguably, when placed in a contextual arrangement, notions of performativity and the practice of photography can provide suitable conditions for challenging more traditional conceptions of all mediums concerned. By drawing on the performative elements inherent in the medium, performed photography seeks to reconfigure the relationship between the act (event) of photography and its record, suggesting here that it *is* possible for photography to describe its own event. As has been discussed above, in mainstream photographic practices the event and its record are usually separate and exist independently of one another. The record subsequently becomes fetishised as ‘object’, which creates a further distance as “...the event being ephemeral, disappears, leaving the photographic record standing highly visible in its role as mausoleum” (Jeff 2008: 25-6), containing nothing but ghosts. Whereas in performed photography, the distance between event and record is diminished by designing an event or situation that has its own resultant document placed at its core. Due to the experimental nature of performed photography, it should be noted that there are many levels and layers to this practice, however for the purpose of providing an overview, the most transparent ‘variant’ shall be discussed. In the same way that a subject matter is ‘chosen’ in mainstream photography, in performed photography, an event is designed to address a

particular question, and is often carried out in public where the spectators/audience are invited to attend or often encounter the event *en passant*.

Once discovered, the audience becomes party to the event, and subsequently also party to, and observer of the photographic act. They witness the usually unseen process of photographing and often get to see the photographic results of that process during the event (Polaroid or digital). In this way process, edit and exhibition are *collapsed* into the event, giving photography an approximation to live art or theatre, and as a consequence taking on the immediacy, fluidity and ephemeral nature of (experimental) theatre.

(Jeff 2008: 27) [*emphasis in original*]

The model of empirical observation that photography relies upon as a naturalised truth bearer is replaced *via* a designed event by ‘provoked’ observation, denoting true experimentation. Exhibition is replaced by event in performed photography and instead of being passive observers to an end product of framed photographs hung on a gallery wall for example; the audience takes an active role from within the duration of the event. By experiencing the event/act of photography in this way, the mode of interpretation by the audience becomes active and performative, and in some cases, the event actually relies on audience participation for the work to be realised. In other cases, each designed ‘project’ is undertaken collaboratively, which can be identified by the PAUL+A pseudonym that Jeff operates under – the protagonist *plus* ‘another’ who often varies from work to work. The pieces are usually shown *via* projection, which adds another level of

temporality to the work and as screenings often with music, the durational element and feeling of endurance resembles an experience similar to theatre. As the works are process-based and the emphasis is not on the photographic 'object', it seems more fitting to use a method of presentation (transient, mobile, temporary) that subverts more traditional ideas of photographic exhibition, as stasis gives way to flux.

Jeff's own practice of performed photography reveals its anti-representational tendencies through the deployment of Deleuze's concept of 'difference and repetition', in order to facilitate the interpretation of the photographic act as a time-based medium. (See [here](#) an excerpt from the PAUL+A project '*I Watched Her Until She Dissappeared*' (2006) on page 206.) If the concerns of photography are to shift balance somewhat from a spatialised model toward a more temporal one, then it follows that the general framework cannot be wholly representational, as we have already ascertained that representation itself is a system based on space. To find an alternative one must look for a way to interpret the world in a more process led, temporal manner, the most workable alternative is Deleuze's concept of difference and repetition²⁵. This concept was devised to provide both a balance and an alternative to spatial representation and works by returning difference rather than the 'same' as in representation. Difference and repetition subverts and energises the system of model and copy employed by representation and serialises it so that it is the difference between a complex repetition (as opposed to the simple repetition of representation) that becomes productive in the search for any meaning. In Jeff's practice of performed photography he employs

this serial strategy of the return of repetition itself in order to produce an enigmatic difference that becomes both creative as well as productive. The notion of identity is fractured by this complex series of repetition and the four precepts of the representational system as identified by both Foucault and Deleuze are nullified. Section I proper will expand upon the notion of difference and repetition as highlighted here, and shall investigate how such a concept can operate in relation to a contemporary practice of photography in order to produce a new ‘image of thought’²⁶.

It is my assertion that Jeff’s development of a temporally biased strategy concerning photography might provide the first tentative steps away from photography’s reliance on representation and into a new and more challenging realm based on Deleuze’s conception of difference and repetition, itself a temporal strategy in opposition to the hegemony of representation. If we were to concur with Michel Foucault’s quip that perhaps the twenty-first century would be called ‘Deleuzian’²⁷, then I would argue that it is credible that here is an area of photography that is yet to be developed. The seeds of which could be seen to lie in the conception of a temporally attuned practice, in this case performed photography. Though Jeff’s elucidation of a practical model of performed photography relies on difference and repetition amongst other things, I anticipate alternative conceptions of a temporal practice of the medium that takes inspiration from some of the areas discussed here, concentrating particularly on formulating a Deleuzian methodology based perhaps on seriality. Perhaps we can speculate an ‘intensive’ practice that takes account of difference in kind as it deals with an

‘extensive’ projection of space. An early model of what we might call a ‘photography degree zero’ could be Vito Acconci’s (b. 1940) work *Blinks* (1969) (see page 157 for a further elucidation on this project). Here the artist walks down a city street pressing the camera shutter each time he blinks, producing an arbitrary ‘blank’ document, of which the concept or idea plays a predominant role over and above the representation of the street.

The thesis title *can photography describe its own event?* speaks of a conception of photography where event and record are folded around each other, being both a descriptive and a performative utterance at the same time. In this way, it is possible that performed photography provides some answer as to whether photography *can* describe its own event – that is, can it utter performatively and describe simultaneously? My title has intimations of Deleuzian difference in kind (as influenced by Bergson) and alludes to the potential of Austin’s linguistic distinction between constative (descriptive) and performative in terms of utterance in relation to photography’s position as a descriptive medium. Moreover, drawing on the temporal inflection inherent in these concerns, this investigation will unfold the concept of ‘event’ in its many impressions. This concern developed from the utilisation of performativity and shifts from an object/picture base (spatial) towards an event based (temporal) framework that can be recognised in performed photography. I shall attempt to extend these considerations to encompass philosophical ruminations of the notion of ‘event’ in order to posit a new conception of the practice of photography but perhaps more importantly, of the concept of photography.

Although we have discussed above the premise of a paradigm shift within the practice of photography, my intention in the thesis is more to uncover what may be considered the hidden conditions and possibilities inherent within the medium. In the same instance it may be possible to intuit new future orientations of photography. This assertion is underpinned by Coleman and Batchen's arguments. What can be seen to unite the two writers is that both their observations offer a shared belief that the conditions are fertile for change within the medium. Whether this manifests itself as an emergent practice or a rupture in the trajectory of photography may become evident later in the thesis. For now, a contemporary practice of photography that challenges the current paradigm, providing a significant change in its tenets and methods, can be recognised in 'Performed Photography'. Performed Photography critiques photography as a static, pictorial medium and endeavours to replace it with a mobile and temporally biased medium. It is the first practice to combine creatively the traditional representational mode with the potentiality of *difference*. It is my belief that performed photography can be regarded as enough of a challenge to constitute a paradigm shift because the major elements that construct an understanding of mainstream photography are brought into question. This research trajectory suggests a move from the spatial to the temporal, from the descriptive to the performative, from representation to event. The thesis takes this conception of photography as its starting point and is centred around potential photographic processes that are re-energised as time-based enigmatic actions built around a founding event that ripples with traces, rather than a static re-presented pictorial

record. It concerns photography as an enigmatic event that can both iterate its own actions and describe them simultaneously. It is therefore necessary to identify some of the key arguments and characteristics of Performed Photography in order to outline the constituency of thought that is adopted by this thesis, and may yet provide a platform for a 'leap into the void'.

***You cannot hang an event on the wall, only a picture*²⁸**

Having investigated our question *can photography describe its own event?* through the concept of Performed Photography, it is possible that we can instigate a productive encounter between my six-word arrangement and Jackson Pollock's 'action paintings'. We have already ascertained the importance of Pollock in relation to performativity in the visual arts in the case study, however it will be pertinent now to look at Pollock's work as it sits on the cusp of spatial representation and temporal act, that is, between representation and difference. **In our very specific argument, we should stipulate here that we are presenting a particular perspective as it pertains to a general shift in the art of the mid twentieth century toward performativity and event. This concerns Pollock's work in a perceived conceptual manifestation and is not meant to impinge on the many other important nuances that this artist brings to aesthetics and the practice of painting in which cases he was also highly innovative. The argument we are building here is in service of a temporality and performativity, which might be**

utilised for photography and so will subsequently owe a debt to Pollock the painter.

As discussed earlier in the Section in relation to paradigm shifts, in the history of the sciences when an earlier system or ‘paradigm’ collapses or is rejected a new one is formed that is detached from its predecessor. For Thomas Kuhn, the previous paradigm becomes elapsed and redundant. A.D. Coleman notes that this ‘cutting adrift’ of previous paradigms as in the sciences is not characteristic of what occurs in the arts, and that old paradigms in this instance are merely ‘downgraded’ but not forgotten. As such, we can read through Deleuze’s *Difference and Repetition* and find a philosophical analogy. It is not a case of consigning representation to history, but of balancing and supplementing it with more contemporary ideas of temporal difference. Deleuze himself takes up this concept and utilising one of Nietzsche’s aphorisms from *The Birth of Tragedy* (1993), ably explains the tension between systems of representation and difference through an analogy with Ideas. “Ideas as they exist in themselves are distinct-obscure. Opposed to the clear-and-distinct of Apollonian representation, Ideas are Dionysian, existing in an obscure zone which they themselves preserve and maintain.” (Deleuze [1968] 2004a: 350). This is a basic dialectical coupling that we shall point out here is mirrored in the content of Sections I and II of the thesis. In the course of the thesis, we speak in various instances of the concepts of synthesis and coexistence and it is important to note here that although they are not identical in the concept, they are interrelated, the boundary between the two being often blurred. Similar to events, concepts can overlap, exist in parallel and

move in and out of relation with each other, therefore our use of the terms will always be interrelated and dynamic in a process of oscillation. Considering the importance of forming a synthesis as highlighted here, our examination of Pollock's action painting serves to explicate a means of creation²⁹ between more traditional binary configurations and their constituent parts. It could be argued that this area of Pollock's work appears to operate at the interstices between such binary arrangements in their numerous semblances and on a variety of levels. Furthermore, this resonates with Amelia Jones' note on the significance of Allan Kaprow's 1958 essay 'The Legacy of Jackson Pollock' and how it "...forms a sort of pivot between the static Pollock of modernism and the performative Pollock who would have spoken as one of many origins for postmodernism." (Jones 1998: 56). The fundamental importance of Pollock's work in the 1940's was that it altered the public perception of painting as a spatial (picture based) practice towards an event based, performative practice. For Jones, the "Pollockian Performative" (Jones 1998: 55) is a term used to express the Jackson Pollock as seen *through* the writings by Harold Rosenberg, Allan Kaprow, Clement Greenberg, but also through the photographs and films that were in widespread circulation taken by Pollock's documenter Hans Namuth. The way Pollock was perceived as a result was unprecedented; the photographs exposed the process of creating his action paintings, which provided a previously unseen perspective to his work. In addition it transpired that these writings, particularly Rosenberg's *The American Action Painters* (1952) where he claimed that Pollock and other American artists used the canvas as an arena to stage an event within (Rosenberg 1952: 22), were a response to the Pollock as documented by Namuth as opposed

to the finished paintings as seen in a gallery space. As Barbara Rose notes: “[i]n retrospect, I realize Rosenberg was not talking about painting at all; he was describing Namuth’s photographs of Pollock.” (Rose 1980: *u.p.*). This gives some indication as to the impact the photographic documentation had on Pollock’s reception (here we are back on the ground of Auslander’s ‘The Performativity of Performance Documentation’). There is a temporality inherent in Pollock’s work that is central to our investigation if we are to consider the action paintings as an event. Firstly, we witness the event of painting through Namuth’s photographs, we see the artist nimbly dancing around the canvas (on the floor) and splattering the paint – we see the process of creation, the performative action. Subsequently, we see the painting in a frame hung on a gallery wall. There appears to be a transitional period where the paint dries and it is prepared for display and in this process it is *converted* into a spatial representation. It may be an apt metaphor that as the fluid paint solidifies the event evaporates and the flux and flow of the action becomes stilled. What becomes interesting is that Pollock’s action paintings provide us with the ability to witness the shift between the temporal act and the spatialised picture. As Rosenberg observes in his preface to the second edition of *The Tradition of the New* (1960): “[p]ainting, however, is in the ‘realm’ of things made, not of deeds done; and art wins against the painter by changing his ‘act’ back into a picture.” (Rosenberg 1960: 5). This directional flow, seemingly towards representation, is evoked by Historian Michael Lesy in his book *Wisconsin Death Trip* (1973) when he poses the counter *problem*. “The only problem is how to change a portrait back into a person and how to change a sentence back into an event.” (Lesy 1973: *u.p.*). He also states further down the

page “[t]he thing to worry about is meanings, not appearances.” (Lesy 1973: *u.p.*) which resonates again for our question *CPDIOE?*. This boundary in Pollock signals the shift between the ‘act’ or event, and the ‘picture’ in action painting, and confirms that ultimately, the work does convert to a spatialised representation from a temporal act. This happens in the move from the flat plane of the floor to the vertical plane of the wall, and prompts Rosenberg to ask:

...must an Action Painting, which reflects a consciousness of the changed nature of the work of art in our time, inevitably lose its character as an event in the interval following its creation? Will it not rather augment its activity the moment it leaves the studio?
(Rosenburg 1960: 7-8)

It appears to be the documents of Namuth that indeed augment this activity, especially when considering how the photographs and films function in connection with Auslander’s performativity of the performance document. Pollock is such a pertinent example here because his work not only reveals a shift, but also shows how the two modes of representation exist in a state of oscillation and coexistence. We may speculate that in terms of an estrangement between the event of a work and its record (here the painting on the wall) it is the act of photography that paradoxically here, mediates and facilitates the two realms of temporality and spatiality, and brings the process into the light. In the case of the earlier event, the painting becomes a document of its own event/act and to use Ralph Rumney’s term “...the trace of an act can be interpreted as an absolute

realism” (Woods 2000: 154). The document and the event are conflated into the same instance in terms of the work – the painting, folded together in an intensive becoming of the event/painting/object. They are folded into each other in the manner of a Deleuzian fold and the difference between these folds is not an external difference by degree, but an internal difference in kind:

The outside is not a fixed limit but moving matter animated by peristaltic movements, folds and foldings that altogether make up an inside: they are not something other than the outside, but precisely the inside *of* an outside.

(Deleuze 1988b: 96-97) [*my emphasis*]

Once Pollock’s painting is hung on the wall it becomes a record, a record of the event of its own making. It is here that we can make a connection to our central question *can photography describe its own event?* as the painting becomes the constative utterance of the performative event of its making. The *event* appears at different levels – the creation of the work and the document of the event take place on the same ‘plane’; the canvas is at once an event and a document – a movement from itself and a folding in or out of itself. Thus it is impossible to perceive these as separate entities when they are both one and the same, the canvas in this way operating in line with Deleuzian ‘difference in itself’, or an intensive process³⁰. Intensity in this sense concerns the temporality of the painting. If we consider the painting as event, and therefore process, this reveals the levels of differentiation it has endured or how it has differed in kind, rather

like Bergson's sugar cube melting in a glass of warm water. The painting, moved from the performative horizontal of Pollock's floor to the vertical 'page' of the gallery wall reveals its extensive attributes as a spatialised pictorial measurable space but now at the expense of the intensive process it has gone through. By "...privileging extension and extended magnitudes we bypass the intensive genesis of the extended" (Boundas 2010: 133), Pollock's process as revealed by Namuth's documents shows us the intensive states that are inherent in the spatial object of every painting. Pollock and Namuth together help us to encounter the intensity inherent in the visual image, to become aware of difference in itself as the condition of 'absolute realism'.

If we reflect on Pollock's action painting as a document of its own event, then it is imperative to understand how the other 'forms' of document in circulation function in relation to this. Perhaps the most significant of these documents in this instance takes the form of Namuth's photographs and films and indeed, the interpretation of Pollock's painting as an event is largely down to this documentation that was released and published extensively. However, this level of documentation is *secondary* to the 'painting as document' because despite contributing to a wider appreciation of the process behind Pollock's work, the photographs are not embedded in the creation of the painting, but are embedded in the wider event of the painting. In Deleuzian terms, the relationship between the painting/event and the photographs is one of difference by degree – the photographs are external to the event of the painting and Namuth remains a detached observer. The relationship between the event and the photograph in

performed photography however, is one of difference in kind as the photographs are actually implicated *into* the event. As we have just attempted to prove with Namuth's documentation of Pollock's process. Namuth's photographs do take on another role as document as they carry the originary event of the painting forward and facilitate the conditions for further interpretations (such as our interpretation here), whilst also providing an example of Auslander's performativity of the performance document. In this way, the writings on Pollock can also be regarded as another form of 'document' as they provide additional interpretations of the paintings. To some extent, this level of interpretation could be deemed as reverberations of the action paintings because (particularly in Rosenberg's case) this art criticism is written from the perspective of viewing the paintings *in conjunction* with the documentary photographs³¹. Namuth's photographs become implicated with the painting as the 'trace of an act' and therefore can be interpreted also as being implicated into the absolute realism of the event. Here we can recognise the paradox of Namuth's photographs – as operating within the representational mode and so external to the event whilst in coexistence, being implicated, folded into the event of the painting, consequently engaging in an intensive relationship with the paintings event.

This analysis of Pollock illuminates how his action paintings reveal what we might now call a *synthetic coexistence*; a productive conflation of the terms synthesis and coexistence as discussed earlier. One that similar to Galassi's ideas concerning perspective, brings together as an arrangement, the temporal and the spatial, the performative and the descriptive, representation and difference into an

image of thought, and producing what Rumney terms an absolute realism. When investigated through the Deleuzian concept of difference, Pollock's work allows us to see that it is possible to find a border which is somewhere between each 'set' of antinomies – and what potentially could be perceived as pure difference. The notion of a synthesis as an eruption from an unfixed point that is between the traditional dualisms also offers a baroque sensibility to the encounter. Through this investigation the very process of forming a synthesis has been expounded, and we see it as a form of 'superposition' where an idea forms as both distinct and obscure, or where in Nietzsche's terms the Apollonian and the Dionysian exist within the same concept. In a discussion of *The Birth of Tragedy* (1993), Michael Tanner in *Nietzsche* (1994) elaborates:

He rapidly moves on to dealing with the 'opposition' between the Appoline and the Dionysiac, but that should not be taken to mean that they are enemies. As his exposition unfolds, it immediately becomes clear that 'These two very different tendencies walk side by side, usually in violent opposition to one another, inciting one another to even more powerful births,' until they seem 'at last to beget the work of art that is as Dionysiac as it is Appoline-Attic tragedy.' This kind of opposition which yet contrives to be immensely more fruitful than anything that could be produced by either of the opponents going it alone, is characteristic of nineteenth-century German philosophy...
(Tanner 1994: 9)

Two possible articulations that can help to provide partial reflections on our question *can photography describe its own event?* have been expounded here.

Performed photography offers a practical model of photography that addresses some of these concerns and the investigation of Pollock provides a precursor for such an argument when viewed from a Deleuzian perspective. *Can photography describe its own event?* is a productive paradox, which has what James Williams recognises as a ‘generative function’ (Williams 2011: 53). Each time my six-word question is stated the problem transforms itself in each recurrence, and each repetition alludes to difference in itself.

...one of the distinctive features of Deleuze’s philosophy of time is to embrace paradoxes for their productive power. This is related to the power ascribed to problems in *Difference and Repetition*; like problems, paradoxes cannot be resolved but must rather be transformed creatively within a necessarily speculative model. It could be said that paradoxes prepare the way for problems through a critical clearing of the commonsense certainties of a field and through the generation of a structure of opposed, yet connected and irreducible principles.
(Williams 2011: 63)

An affinity can be seen here between Deleuze’s productive paradox and the notion of a Bergsonian problem as discussed earlier in this Section. By positing the question well enough in a Bergsonian sense, it is considered that both the problem and its solution can be revealed, whilst the determining of problems (as with paradoxes) has its own space for creative transformations and inventions.

Photography becoming-minor

We shall now consider the operations of the minor in Deleuze and Guattari's thought, and posit that our enigmatic question *CPDIOE?* instigates a becoming-minor for photography. Deleuze and Guattari put the term to use in relation to literature, particularly in their book *Kafka: Towards a Minor Literature* (1986a) and also in *A Thousand Plateaus* ([1987] 2004a). In *Kafka*, they disclose that the minor 'mode' of practice "...stops being representative in order to now move towards its extremities or its limits" (Deleuze and Guattari 1986a: 23). Taking this further, O'Sullivan underlines that, "...a minor art pushes up against the edge of representation; it bends it, forces it to the limits and often to a certain absurdity" (O'Sullivan 2006: 73). Here we notice a resonance for *CPDIOE?* in that as a paradoxical construction that purposely eludes straightforward definition, we can acknowledge a certain level of absurdity intrinsically folded into our code/question. Let us contemplate that a minor-photography operates from within major (mainstream) conceptions of the medium and seeks to reconfigure the very *concept* of photography so that it operates in a minor key. This can also be said for a practice of photography that challenges more recognisable modes, such as performed photography and my practical experiments for IPCRES – the *International Project Centre for Research into Events and Situations*. Thus, minor-photography is a disruption or a rupture from the major, (spatialised) practices of photography.

... a minor literature does not occur 'elsewhere' or 'apart from' a major literature (this is not a dialectic) but on the contrary operates from within, using the same elements as it were but in a different manner. In fact, it is not so much a question of the minor of the major but of a *becoming* minor in the sense of producing movement from 'within' the major...

(O'Sullivan 2006: 71) [*emphasis and brackets in original*]

As the above quotation suggests, instead of recognising the minor as a distinct entity from the major, we should think of it more as a process, a *becoming* from within the major. It is worth noting that 'minor' does not signify a numerical minority, instead it is a concept that deterritorialises the 'major' and it is by this process that 'becoming-minoritarian' takes place. Working from a peripheral position then, a minor-photography advocates an alternative practice of photography that engages with a more radical conception of the medium. That is, by changing the conditions that surround photography from being concerned with representation to inhabiting the realm of difference, we can think of this as 'using the same elements but in a different manner'. Here we might turn our attention to an edited book that was published in 2012 by the Lieven Gevaert Research Centre for photography in Leuven, Belgium, titled *Minor Photography: Connecting Deleuze and Guattari to Photography Theory*, which examines the notion of 'the minor' as espoused by Deleuze and Guattari in connection with photographic theory. Despite offering a seemingly interesting inquiry on the outset, especially given our concerns here, the book is limited in its use as most of the essays try to contextualise existing works within the operations of the minor. They attempt to overlay Deleuze and Guattari's ideas *onto* the surface of existing practices of

photography. Beyond my own practical experiments, the illustrations included in this thesis are intended to be evocative of the general argument and not to act as examples of the theories I am promoting. There is no attempt to apply my theories retrospectively onto existing works. It is my opinion that these publications fall short in fully embracing the potential Deleuze and Guattari's thought offers and perhaps these tentative writings tend to fall more into an examination, or explication to use Deleuze's term³², rather than harnessing more creative and inventive strategies that work towards a future-orientated practice – *a photography yet to come*. Aside from the essays that directly engage with photography, Simon O'Sullivan provides an introductory essay to the book; a reworking of some of his previous works in the form of the text 'From Stuttering and Stammering to the Diagram: Towards a Minor Art Practice' (2012). We must note here that O'Sullivan does not venture into developing the concept of a minor photography but instead talks about the minor in more general terms, save for his conclusion where he reflects:

If stuttering and stammering are the mode in which literature becomes minor, and the figural and the diagram are painting's specifically minor mode—then what might be the character or components—of a specifically minor photography? [...] It seems to me that here a turn is required away from the notion of the minor as it has already been deployed in Deleuze, and indeed myself, towards photography and to its own specificity. Indeed, I take this to be one of the intensions of this edited collection – to excavate a minor tradition of photography that is particular to its medium and as a practice. In such an enquiry and exploration it seems to me that the very

definition of the minor (an possibly of photography also) will necessarily change.
(O'Sullivan 2012: 15)

Whilst we should recognise that the concept of a minor photography is not our main concern in the thesis, this insightful rumination prompts a valid questioning of what reflects photography's minor tradition. For now though, we will return to O'Sullivan's earlier book *Art Encounters Deleuze and Guattari: Thought Beyond Representation* (2006) and consider the minor mode less specifically, *via* an engagement with the expanded field of contemporary art practice. The role of the minor within art then, is concerned with the producing of "...a break with habitual formations and dominant signifying regimes." (O'Sullivan 2006: 69). In relation to art practices that operate in this *minor* key, O'Sullivan makes some practical suggestions as to what we might consider as minor-practices of contemporary art which shall help us ascertain whether the concept *CPDIOE?* (and related practices) can be regarded as a becoming-minor for photography. Practices that are minor to the major tradition of Modernism such as post-modernism and other critiques can offer one example, as well as "...those marginal and dissonant practices that were themselves part of modernity but which also in some senses turned against it; modernity's 'other voice' as it were." (O'Sullivan 2006: 72). Here, O'Sullivan is referring to dissident manifestos by groups such as Dada, Futurism and the Situationists. In addition, O'Sullivan suggests we might "...characterise those practices as minor which abandoned the canvas (happenings, performance and so on)" (O'Sullivan 2006: 72). Furthermore, "[t]he expanded practices of today would be but the last moment in this genealogy of a

minor art positioned explicitly outside the gallery and indeed ‘outside’ typical and traditional definitions of art.” (O’Sullivan 2006: 72). As we can see, performed photography is a particularly pertinent example of a minor practice here as this practice unequivocally takes place outside the gallery and ‘outside’ archetypal and conventional definitions of photography. In *Kafka*, Deleuze and Guattari discuss the characteristics of a minor literature and the most relevant to note here is that for them, a minor literature is always collective (Deleuze and Guattari 1986a: 17). (IPCRES works are also participatory and event-based). The emphasis on the collaborative nature of the minor can also be recognised in performed photography as practiced under the guise of PAUL+A – each designed ‘project’ is undertaken by the protagonist *plus (and)* ‘another’ as alluded to by the pseudonym. Interestingly, concerning the ‘+’ as a mechanism for connections, Verena Conley notes:

The minority is nodenumerable, but it may have many elements. The non-denumerable is characterised by the presence of connections, that is, the additive conjunction ‘and’ or the mathematical sign ‘+’: a minoritarian language is ‘x + y and b + traits a + a and...’. It is produced between sets and belongs to neither. It eludes them and constitutes a line of flight.

(Conley 2010: 167)

Here we can recognise further how the minor is implicated into the notion of Deleuzian becoming as a mode or *process* of connection, and as a creative stammering that causes the deterritorialisation of the major. The focus of the

movement is on becoming; "...on relations, on what happens between: between actions, between affections, between perceptions. For Deleuze, a minor cinema is situated in a logic and an aesthetics of the 'and'. It is a creative stammering (and...and...and)..." (Verevis 2010: 169-170). The creative stammering of the 'and...and...and' invokes a movement from within the concept of photography and calls forth a practice that perpetually differs from itself. (We shall return to the concept of the 'and' in Section II). In literal terms, PAUL+A (as the practitioner of performed photography) is a collective enunciation, which in itself is mutable from one work to the next. And in our crypt/code *CPDIOE?*, we create a stuttering and a stammering between each enunciation of our central question, as its surrounding conditions are in a dynamic flow of continuous variation. Additionally, the 'and...and...and' is a rupturing of representation, that generates a photography that disrupts its own reading as each repetition of our question evokes difference. Deleuze and Guattari conceived the conception of major and minor first and foremost as an operation of language/literature. What we are interested in here is how something new emerges from within the conventions of the *status quo*, or even, how the dissolving of a convention can change the expanded field. Both actions can create a new event.

A major use of language limits, organises and controls and regulates linguistic materials in support of a dominant social order, whereas a minor usage of language induces disequilibrium in its components, taking advantage for the potential for diverse and divergent discursive practices already present within the language.

(Bogue in Parr 2010a: 170-171)

Bergson and the dissolving of an object into an event

A major literature repeats forms of the past, and subjugates itself to some supposed identity which all those forms express. A minor literature repeats nothing other than the power to be different; its becoming is not *within time* but it is untimely. Difference is not the difference between different forms, or the difference from some original model; difference is the power that over and over again produces new forms.

(Colebrook 2002: 122-123) [*emphasis in original*]

The above quotation lies at the heart of the thesis, in our quest to find minor modalities within the concept of photography that can emerge from within the major tradition (the classical perspective) and fracture the field of representation through the power of difference. This attitude is embodied in our central question (*CPDIOE?*) as the enigmatic aspect of that question is produced from the paradox of its construction, where the first three words ‘*can photography describe*’ (representational paradigm) are disrupted by the last three words ‘*its own event?*’ (paradigm of difference). It is from the perceived fracture in the sentence that the force of the enigma emerges, and proceeds to disrupt its own meaning. “The principle of enigma is the coincidence of the rational and the irrational.” (Perniola [1990] 1995: 16). This becomes an important principle of the thesis and one that we will demonstrate over and over again by applying different sets of research to our enigmatic question. The result will help us in our hypothesis by revealing that,

as Mario Perniola attests in *Enigmas: The Egyptian Moment in Society and Art* ([1990] 1995) "...enigma is capable of simultaneous explanation on many different registers of meaning, all of which are equally valid..." (Perniola [1990] 1995: 10). It is also worth stating here that enigma by its very nature resides in temporality and this is underscored by its indiscernability.

In order to address the prospect of photography being accepted as a time and process-based medium and as an equal and complimentary possibility to the mainstream spatialised models of photography, some tensions between the spatial and the temporal shall be reviewed here. In order to identify some of the inherent problems of spatialisation, it is necessary to examine Henri Bergson's critique of spatial thought. By adopting Bergson's philosophical project and thinking in terms of time rather than space, it allows photography to be explored as a temporal, as opposed to a primarily spatial practice. Bergson is a central figure to the thesis as his anti-Cartesian phenomenology focused on mobility, flux and the dynamic. There has been a resurgence of interest in his work in recent years and Deleuze owes much of his inspiration for his writings in this area to Bergson.

Bergson postulated that if we think spatially, we only see the world in differences of degree; how one object or concept differs from the next, but if we introduce temporal aspects such as duration and memory we are able to see the world *unfolding* by differences in kind. That is, how each object or concept changes over time in terms of itself 'in itself'. He offers the famous analogy of the dissolving of a lump of sugar. Deleuze in *Bergsonism* ([1966] 1988a) elucidates Bergson's aphorism 'I must wait until the sugar dissolves':

Take a lump of sugar. It has a spatial configuration. But if we approach it from that angle, all we will ever grasp are differences in degree between that sugar and any other thing. But it also has a duration, a way of being in time that is at least partially revealed in the process of its dissolving, and that shows how this sugar differs in kind not only from other things, but first and foremost, from itself. This alteration, which is one with the essence or the substance of a thing, is what we grasp when we conceive of it in terms of Duration.

(Deleuze [1966] 1988a: 31-32)

To elaborate on this, difference by degree promotes the notion of an 'object' by prioritising how things differ from other things, thereby objectifying the world as a site of discrete entities in a spatial field. It is this world-view that promotes identity in the object and gives rise to the representational paradigm. A challenge to this hegemonic viewpoint arises from Bergson's complimentary notion of difference in kind (or difference in itself) which perceives the world as dynamic and in constant change. Difference here speaks of the difference of an object or concept over a duration in time, producing a world that is in continuous variation. It is interesting to note that the former which leads to the fixity of identity and representation is the dominant world-view, whereas the world we experience is never fixed but in continual flux. It is difference in kind that offers a world of events and processes and qualitative experience. The spatially orientated realm of difference by degree allows for a quantitative experience that holds the measure as the mark of everything. This is the world of the picture where in photography's overwhelming proclivity for an analytic perspectival system allows for optical

reality to be organised as spatial configurations within a frame. For our enigmatic question *CPDIOE?*, the act of describing ones own event correlates to Bergson's notion of difference in kind, and so moves the inference regarding photography from the spatial to the temporal. In his doctoral dissertation published as *Time and Free Will: An Essay on the Immediate Data of Consciousness* ([1889] 2001), Bergson suggested there are different conceptions of time that need to be identified. He posited that the spatial could be connected to a quantitative, homogenous conception of time, which is measurable, mathematical and linear – what can be understood as 'clock-time'. In contrast to 'clock-time' was experiential 'living time', which he termed *la durée* and it is Bergson's assertion that *la durée* was a qualitative heterogeneous multiplicity. What becomes necessary is to get back to this mode of experience somewhat – to balance the quantitative with the qualitative and in our treatise on photography, to fulfil Benjamin's wish to reside *within* the moment of photography once more.

[O]ur life unfolds in space rather than in time; we live for the external world rather than for ourselves; we speak rather than think; we 'are acted' rather than act ourselves. To act freely is to recover possession of oneself and get back into pure duration.

(Bergson [1889] 2001: 231-232)

Making an association with Bergson's conceptions of time as mentioned above, 'differences by degree' correlate to the quantitative view of time, and 'differences in kind' are commensurate with *la durée*; a qualitative construal of time. It can

also be identified that endurance and experience are attributes of the concept of *la durée*, as it is the accumulation and evolution of these occurrences that give rise to this ‘living’ time. In terms of our case study on performed photography, as a minor practice it attempts to capture a durational qualitative moment, what Jeff calls ‘an instance of duration’ that is indistinguishable from (or folded into), and equal to, the spatialised representational instant of capture. Performed photography in its efforts to ‘collapse’ (Jeff’s term) an event and its record into the same instance, what he terms *At/one(mo)ment* (from the phrase ‘at one moment’) or ‘Atonement’, invents a photographic moment that is analogous to a cosmological black hole, or a singularity. A point in time in which concepts and narratives can be collapsed into and which perform mobility in the concept *via* a strategy of complex repetition (see below) returning difference through seriality.³³

In the quotation below from *Copy, Archive, Signature: A Conversation on Photography* (2010), Derrida is contemplating the possibility of a record or archive that is conflated with the event it represents, and can perhaps be read as an articulation of performed photography:

It’s a question of *point of view*, and you are touching on the *most acute point* [la *pointe*] of the difficulty. Is it possible to think otherwise than from the *point of view of that point*? But is it possible also to think from a *point of view*? How to imagine an archive that is somehow immediate, a present that *consists* of its own memory or its own reproduction?

(Derrida 2010: 2) [*emphasis and brackets in original*]

We might add here, can photography describe its own *point of view*? In order to develop this argument further, there are related Deleuzian concepts that are pertinent to mention in relation to these areas of Bergson's work, which shall provide points of comparison and may accentuate some connections to be made between Bergsonian/ Deleuzian thought. Deleuze was a *bricoleur* and drew inspiration from a range of significant thinkers. What is useful about Deleuze is that his contemporary writings can in some ways be regarded as 'updated' versions of concepts laid out for him to pick up and revitalise. For example he dedicated a series of monographs to the works of philosophers and artists, Spinoza, Foucault, Kafka, Bacon, Nietzsche, Kant, Leibniz, Proust and Bergson amongst others. Drawing from these writings, Deleuze formulated his own concepts that are often closely linked to his interpretations of aspects of these originary works. It is this taking up of concepts and subjecting them to the force of change and variation that we might see as analogous to the concept of difference in kind (in itself).

Perhaps the most notable achievement of Deleuze is his book *Difference and Repetition*, which details his concept of 'pure difference' and 'complex repetition'. It will serve us well here to look more closely at this aspect of Deleuze's work to gain a valuable perspective on our code/question *CPDIOE?* (and to prepare us for Section II where we will be putting these ideas to use). For Deleuze, repetition can be seen as dependent on difference from *within* the same concept, as the whole concept emerges on different levels, just as in Bergson's concept of difference in kind that we have described above. Whereas mainstream

representation (as we understand it in the context of the thesis) is a product of spatialisation, Deleuze's concept is conceived from within a temporal field beyond rationality and as such, proposes a critique of the former perspective. Representation (simple repetition) allows for an understanding of how one concept or object differs from another - *difference by degree*. However, the repetition of difference (complex repetition) moves towards an understanding of how something can *differ in itself* and can be related back to Bergson's ideas on duration.

At this stage, we can recognise the primary motivation of the thesis and arguably one of the most important aspects of Deleuze's thought, that of continuous variation and becoming. Deleuze purports that we should not perceive existence as a combination of separate entities that join together to make a whole, but instead, existence must be characterised as the mobilisation of variation into a continuous flow of movement and change. This line of thought can be traced all the way back to Greek philosopher Heraclitus (c. 535 – c.475 BC) whom Deleuze mentions on occasion. In *Nietzsche and Philosophy* ([1983] 2006b) he makes reference to Heraclitus being dubbed 'The Obscure' philosopher and remarks; "Heraclitus is obscure because he leads us to the threshold of the obscure: what is the being of becoming? What is the being inseparable from that which is becoming?" (Deleuze [1983] 2006b: 23). (We might point out that we are also moving towards more obscure modes of thought as we move from this Section and into the next.) Heraclitus' famous dictum two thousand five hundred years ago concerned the ever-present change that exists in the universe; 'you cannot

step in the same river twice'. As such a significant precursor to Deleuze's entire philosophy, we will take a moment to summarise an area of study pertinent to the thesis that stems from this thought (and was a source of inspiration for Deleuze); process-relational philosophy and the work of Alfred North Whitehead (1861–1947). Heraclitus' student Cratylus (date unknown) went one step further and posited that you can't even step in the same river once, as C. Robert Mesle in *Process-Relational Philosophy: An Introduction to Alfred North Whitehead* (2008) elaborates:

The river changes as we step into it, and so do we. Some things change very slowly, but all things change. Or to put it better, the world is not finally made up of 'things' at all, if a thing is something that exists over time without changing. The world is composed of events and processes.
(Mesle 2008: 8)

Whitehead will appear in later parts of the thesis, though most explicitly in Section III where we will appreciate how his theories of event came to influence Deleuze's rendering of this concept to a great extent. In short, in Whitehead's thought an event is denoted through the relational aspect between concepts or objects, to the extent that objects are perceived as very slow events. He believed that every real life-object might be understood as a similarly constructed series of events and processes. Whitehead is important to this area of study, as his process philosophy of event over object, dynamic change over stasis, relates directly to a critique of the classical perspective of photography, as a central tenet of our

reliance on representation. It is worth reminding ourselves here that one of the questions we are asking of the medium of photography is, can it react to a worldview of process philosophy and still remain meaningful, when not wholly employed in a representational mode? Another question might be, can photography ever give access to the sensation of existence, to go beyond mere appearance and to help us adapt to an ever-changing environment? James Williams asks a similar question on a more human scale:

...if we are to understand how to act in such a way as to make our lives intense and individual and to understand and react to the intensity of our environments, then we must allow our thoughts and bodies to turn into intensities, to difference in itself.
(Williams 2003: 11)

Let us now validate photography's credentials within the representational paradigm, by looking at the constituent elements of representation **from the socio-political perspectives of** Michel Foucault and Gilles Deleuze. Foucault in *The Order of Things* ([1966] 2009) and Deleuze in *Difference and Repetition* ([1968] 2004a) define the 'four iron collars of representation'; "...identity in the concept, opposition in the predicate, analogy in judgement and resemblance in perception" (Deleuze [1968] 2004a: 330). As Deleuze explains, these are the four dimensions of the classical world of representation which co-ordinate and measure it (Deleuze [1968] 2004a: 330). The possibility of a system based on difference will be examined through the thesis by using these four dimensions as starting points in

order to uncover where possible fractures may occur within mainstream representational theory. In simple terms, by avoiding or at least subverting these four precepts it is possible that we might find our way beyond the limits of representation. If we look further into the four 'iron collars' of representation we can understand better how they function and define the parameters of representation. Identity is the referential link that names an entity or concept, however because reality is a process of becoming and is inscribed by difference then the concept is too limited to correspond to the continuous variation of life. Opposition refers to the workings of the dialectic and promotes reason; if we can nullify opposition in the concept then we can also exit the rational too, as will be demonstrated in the following Section. Analogy forms yet another link with reason and so aids understanding of the concept, and resemblance employing mimesis as an aid to perception. What we must attempt to do in order to fracture the notion of identity in representation is to *multiply* the instances of the concept (complex repetition), which will also nullify opposition and simple reason, and as resemblance is complicated analogy too is nullified leaving judgement and understanding in an obscure zone. These are the workings of a complex repetition that Deleuze advocates in order to produce pure difference through a system of 'simulacra' in place of representation, as simulacra divert from the model and copy of representation to take the form of series. Such a series also works to dissolve the notion of an original until it is not the one or the other but the and...and...and...of the series (see Section II).

A singularity is the point of departure for a series which extends over all the ordinary points of the system, as far as the region of another singularity which itself gives rise to another series which may either converge with or diverge from the first.
(Deleuze [1968] 2004a: 348)

Encounters with knowledge and photography

In *Proust and Signs* ([1964] 2008) Deleuze provides us with an invaluable methodology with which to evade the fixity of representation with its resultant *clichés* in that he makes a distinction between the object of an *encounter* and the object of recognition. “Truth depends on an encounter with something that forces us to think and to seek the truth.” (Deleuze [1964] 2008: 12). When we recognise something, what we already know is reconfirmed and we take recourse to habitual thought. The object of recognition is something that is always already in place and now is merely re-presented, the only process that takes place is the reaffirmation of a way of being in, and thinking about the world. With a true encounter we are forced to thought as our habitual thought processes undergo a rupture in the face of the truly new or novel. Once we have assimilated the encounter our world is renewed and we have a moment of affirmation of new conditions, old ways are challenged, existing knowledge is disrupted. The encounter then, encompasses creativity as it is in service of the production of the new.

Something in the world forces us to think. This something is an object not of recognition but of a fundamental *encounter*.

(Deleuze [1968] 1994: 139)

We shall conclude this Section with an instance of photography's encounter with itself, as it was brought to thought by artist Yves Klein (1928 – 1962) and his *Leap into the Void* (1960). In this seemingly straightforward black and white documentary photograph of a mundane Paris side-street, we are confronted by the image of a man (Klein himself) launching himself off a wall from which he will inevitably crash down into the street. The reality of the material photograph however is that Klein remains suspended in mid-air for eternity, in the photograph he will never fall. Indeed, it was as much Klein's wish that the image would be read as a man floating upwards rather than falling downwards. To quote Cadava from *Words of Light* (1997), "...the thesis condenses a network of relations into a frame whose borders remain permeable. A photograph in prose, the thesis names a force of arrest. It signals in writing the interruption of writing." (Cadava 1997: xx). The instance of *Leap into the Void* therefore signals in photography the interruption of photography. The photograph strikes at the very heart of the medium's contract with rational truth and our desire to believe the evidence of photographs, especially when they propose to be the document (trace) of an act. Set against this miraculous photograph where we as viewers are more concerned with the instance after rather than the instance of, are a set of purportedly known facts, that is, the photograph consists of two halves, of which the original lower half showed the tarpaulin held by friends that he was going to fall into. Also, that

Klein put two photographs into circulation – one with a man on a bicycle cycling away into the distance, the other without. This assemblage surrounding the seeming event of the photograph precisely interrupts what we would like to believe about that event. With this work Klein challenges the veracity of documentary photography and its substantiating credentials. If Klein intuits that all events are ostensibly unknowable or indiscernible, then he achieves this insight with a brilliant pictorial version of Werner Heisenburg’s ‘Uncertainty Principle’ (1927) (to which we will return in Section II). Whereas we can plot Klein’s position, we cannot plot his movement simultaneously. Klein leaves the situation of his leap in an indeterminate state due to the conditions of his experiment with photography. In a slight of hand reminiscent of Erwin Schrödinger’s famous thought experiment concerning a cat in a box³⁴ with a flask of poison that may or not be broken, Klein is simultaneously floating upwards and crashing downwards. The alternate photographs of the safety net, and with or without the cyclist, give the possible conditions upon ‘opening the box’. These ‘realities’ must be regarded as possible realities now, and mark the limit of when the potential conditions of the situation collapse into one possibility or another. In the situation of Klein’s photograph the box remains unopened, we can know nothing for sure of the event depicted. In deference to Marcel Proust’s (1871 – 1922) proclivity for describing photographs in his great novel *In Search of Lost Time* ([1913 – 1927] 1996), we will withhold Klein’s artwork here. We will simply replicate the inscribed dedication on the back of a photograph of Edgar Aubert, given to Proust by the young man; “[l]ook in my face: my name is *Might Have Been*; I am also called *No More, Too Late, Farewell*.” (Brassaï 2001: 17) [*emphasis in original*].

The age of resemblance is drawing to a close. It is leaving nothing behind it but games. Games whose powers of enchantment grow out of the kinship between resemblance and illusion; the chimeras of similitude loom up on all sides, but they are recognised as chimeras; it is the privileged age of *trompe-l'oeil* painting, of the comic illusion, of the play that duplicates itself by representing another play, of the *quid pro quo*, of dreams and visions; it is the ages of the deceiving senses; it is the ages in which the poetic dimension of language is defined by metaphor, simile and allegory.

(Foucault [1966] 2009: 57) [*emphasis in original*]

Before we follow Klein and take a leap into our next Section, writings that in many ways evoke the concept of the void as we attempt to describe a multiplicity of perspectives on difference, we must take stock and offer an overview of the arc of the research so far.

A summation and the trajectory of enquiry

The purpose of this opening Section has been to establish a degree of understanding of the classical perspective in the concept of photography. This provided a starting point from which to identify potential outmoded methodologies and allowed some thought of how to address areas that could be useful in the generation of new paradigms of the medium. Using the Bergsonian

problem as method the thesis began to ask questions of the current status of the medium. By introducing the notion of ‘event’ into the matrix that makes up contemporary photographic theory, we began to lay the foundations for a practice of temporality, to be set against and compliment present conventionalised (spatialised) models of photography. This allowed us to move from the spatialised *status quo* of a pictorialised practice into speculative notions of temporal event-based practices of photography. Next we introduced a major element of philosophical thought of concern to the thesis, principally through the work of Henri Bergson and Gilles Deleuze – that of a complimentary system of philosophical difference, to be both set against and to enhance existing representational modes. This coexistence of perspectives in continental philosophy offers a model for how a complex medium such as photography can build from its representational basis enabling it to flourish in innovative directions, as yet unimagined. By identifying a temporally biased Case Study (Performed Photography) that seemed to hold some promise for our project, we started to unpick the potentiality of *time* in its ability to offer a hitherto unforeseen perspective for photography. It was shown through an analysis of Pollock’s paintings that this shift into temporality *via* the performative had already occurred in other artistic mediums and it was my assertion that the conditions were ripe for change within the medium of photography. From this point, it was suggested that through experimentation in these areas, new photographs could emerge from within the hegemony of mainstream expressions of the medium. Furthermore, how our question *CPDIOE?* (the thesis) instigates, *performs*, and facilitates a ‘becoming-minor’ for photography (moving towards its extremities or limits).

The Section used the metaphor of *light* to describe already existing modes of photography (an Enlightenment invention) and set the medium's descriptive characteristics against potential performative modalities. At the end of the Section we set the tone for Section II by metaphorically turning out the lights of vision and reason by analysing Klein's extraordinary *Leap into the Void* thereby setting the scene for the work of Section II. The trajectory of enquiry that will be carried through Section II will introduce a more enigmatic, opaque writing style in order to reflect the material. This will prove a variation from the more academic voice of Section I. In the following Section, rather than attending to the illusion of three-dimensionality in photography, we shall be concentrating specifically on the potentiality of depth that the application of philosophical difference might speculatively offer the medium. In effect, we will counter the (presumed) stasis and fixity of current modes of photography with the potential for flux, variation and indeterminacy of meaning. By inducing the metaphor of a crypt and moving from the *light* into the *dark*, we will be exploring the thought of such Baroque thinkers as G.W. Leibniz, Walter Benjamin and in further depth, the contemporary work of Deleuze. The arc of the research at this point will allow us to introduce a key counter-balance and compliment to the system of representation explored in part in Section I. Central to this is Deleuze's seminal work, *Difference and Repetition* ([1968] 2004a), which both critiques and seeks to enhance classical representation. The purpose of this inquiry is to look at photography as a much more complex concept and begin to look beyond its classical horizons towards a new opacity that can properly reflect perceived

uncertainties in a new age. We may conclude from Section I that photography in its representational mode might in fact be showing signs of exhaustion through its history so far. Moreover, in agreement with Batchen, Coleman, Kramp *et al*, the Section confirms that photography in its present moment could and arguably *should* be ready for change with regards to a paradigm shift within the medium.

Endnotes to Section I: Photo[graphy]

¹ The truth is that in philosophy and even elsewhere it is a question of finding the problem and consequently of positing it, even more than of solving it. For a speculative problem is solved as soon as it is properly stated. By that I mean that its solution exists then, although it may remain *hidden* and, so to speak, *covered up*: The only thing left to do is *uncover* it. But stating the problem is not simply *uncovering*, it is *inventing*.

(Bergson 1946: 58-59) [*my emphasis*]

² In *Difference and Repetition* ([1968] 2004a) Deleuze relates ‘explicating’ to representation, whilst ‘interpreting’ conveys the paradigm of difference. *Explicating* has links to logical explanation and has an inherent linearity, whereas *interpreting* speaks of a more subjective and discontinuous multiplicity of readings. See Deleuze [1968] 2004a: 359.

³ Deterritorialisation is concerned with the “...breaking up of order, boundaries and form to produce movement and growth, especially where this involves the survival or the creation of a new life [...] or the disturbance of arbitrary or social rules” (Sutton and Martin-Jones 2008: 142) whilst reterritorialisation seeks “the re-establishment of order, boundaries and forms to produce stable embodiments or static identities. This might also include the incorporation of radical ideas or practices into dominant social formations.” (Sutton and Martin-Jones 2008: 143).

⁴ Positivism is a ‘philosophical system recognizing only that which can be scientifically verified or which is capable of logical or mathematical proof, and therefore rejecting metaphysics and theism’.
(<http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/positivism>).

⁵ For further elucidation of this concept see Watney ‘Gardens of Speculation: Landscape in the Draughtsman’s Contract’ (1983a).

⁶ See later in Section I for object/process and critique of representation and as a progression of the concept see Section II for difference and repetition.

⁷ To read more on this issue see a number of key texts; Nelson Goodman’s *Languages of Art* (1976), followed by a critique of Goodman by Dominic Lopez in *Understanding Pictures* ([1996] 2004) and an additional critique in *Art and Imagination, Photography and Representation* (1974) by Roger Scruton. John Campbell’s *Reference and Consciousness* (2002) also tackles related issues concerning representation and reference, perception, denotation, mimesis and expression.

⁸ Galassi’s exhibition and catalogue *Before Photography* is often regarded as a touchstone for providing an overview of the role of vision in art that subsequently

led to the invention of photography. Nevertheless, a number of critics have taken issue with the ‘artful convenience’ of Galassi’s choice of paintings and photographs that comply with his argument for the exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art in 1981.

⁹ The Rhizomes Manifesto

‘*Rhizomes* oppose the idea that knowledge must grow in a tree structure from previously accepted ideas. New thinking need not follow established patterns. *Rhizomes* promotes experimental work located outside current disciplines, work that has no proper location. As our name suggests, works written in the spirit of Deleuzian approaches are welcomed but not required. We are not interested in publishing texts that establish their authority merely by affirming what is already believed. Instead, we encourage migrations into new conceptual territories resulting from unpredictable juxtapositions.’

<http://www.rhizomes.net/files/manifesto.html>

¹⁰ See page 61 of Metz *The Imaginary Signifier: Psychoanalysis and the Cinema* (1982).

¹¹ It is noteworthy that the scope of the essay is broader than summarised here – this part of the Section is looking specifically at the history of perspective and the implications this had on the invention of photography. The accompanying argument that Jay puts forward in the second half of the essay concerns the rupture of the baroque and other visual subcultures that are in contention with the hegemony of a Cartesian world-view.

¹² The mind/body dualism that Cartesian Persectivalism promotes was challenged in the late 1960’s by artist Vito Acconci (b. 1940). For example, in his work *Stretch* (1969), Acconci breaks up the Cartesian construct and dislocates the eye and the mind by removing the camera from its assumed position and takes a series of four photographs from the extremities of his arms and legs almost as a way of ‘mapping’. The resulting photographs were then accompanied with a text and displayed in a grid so that “...each photograph maps the limits of the body while connecting those limits to the larger visual field.” (Poggi 1999: 257). During this time, Acconci experimented with works that challenged the notion of performance documentation and perceptions of vision, for example *Blinks* (1969) and *Lay of the Land* (1969). We will briefly return to the work *Blinks* later in the Section. Within the Cartesian construct, the object/subject is always ‘over there’; at the apex of where the lines of perspective meet, in Acconci’s case however, he incorporates his corporeal self into this construct and though doing so, *embodies* vision.

¹³ See the Section II/III divider image of J.M.W. Turner’s ‘*Snow Storm: Steam Boat off a Harbour’s Mouth*’ (1842). It is perhaps of note here that we have used a section (bit) of the image.

¹⁴ This phrase forms the sub-title to Jay's book *Downcast Eyes: The Denigration of Vision in Twentieth-Century French Thought* (1994).

¹⁵ For this concept see Nietzsche's *The Birth of Tragedy* (1993) page 14-18.

¹⁶ For further elucidation on the concept see Gaston Bachelard *The Formation of the Scientific Mind: A Contribution to a Psychoanalysis of Objective Knowledge* ([1938] 1986).

¹⁷ Kuhn's study "...designates the intellectual horizon of science during a certain period, determining a threshold beyond which it cannot go unless it fundamentally shifts its tenets and methods." (Foster *et al.* 2004: 687).

¹⁸ 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.
(Deleuze [1968] 2004a: 331)

¹⁹ See Tracey Warr 'Image as Icon: Recognising the Enigma' (2003) in Adrian George, *Art, Lies and Videotape: Exposing Performance*, London: Tate, page 32.

²⁰ The photograph Benjamin was discussing was by Robert Adamson and David Octavius Hill of Mrs Elizabeth (Johnstone) Hall, *The Newhaven Fishwife*, c. 1843.

²¹ [w]e take snapshots, as it were, of the passing reality, and, as these are characteristic of this reality, we have only to string them on a becoming, abstract, uniform and invisible, situated at the back of the apparatus of knowledge, in order to imitate what there is that is characteristic in this becoming itself. Perception, intellection, and language proceed this way in general. Whether we would think becoming, or express it, or even perceive it, we hardly do anything else than set going a kind of cinematograph inside us. . . . *The mechanism of our ordinary knowledge is of a cinematographical kind.*
(Bergson [1907] 1944: 322) [*emphasis in original*]

²² See Benjamin [1936] 2008a – *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction* for a general discussion on the paradox between technological advance and auratic decline.

²³ This term was coined by Christian Metz, for further reading see his seminal text *The Imaginary Signifier* (1982).

²⁴ By this Goldberg is speaking of perhaps a golden age of performance art, incorporating the works of artists such as Chris Burden, Vito Acconci and Carolee Schneemann. See for instance Adrian George *Art, Lies and Videotape: Exposing Performance* (2003).

²⁵ There are contemporaneous works that explore difference from other perspectives, such as Derrida's *Of Grammatology* ([1967] 1976). For further reading see Patton and Protevi's (edited) *Between Deleuze & Derrida* (2003).

²⁶ See Deleuze *Difference and Repetition* [1968] 2004a chapter 3.

²⁷ "...One day, perhaps this century will be called Deleuzian." (Foucault 1970: 885).

²⁸ "You cannot hang an event on a wall, only a picture." (McCarthy in Rosenberg 1960: 5)

"But a painting hangs on the wall. It reminds me of the old joke about the herring: 'you can hang it on the wall.' Is its occupancy of the wall the function by which painting today is to be defined, so that the idea of its 'activity' results in what Miss McCarthy calls 'a weird contradiction'? Only if, through the habit of looking back to other times, we forget the multiple existence which a painting now enjoys in separation from its physical body: its ghostly presence through reproduction in books and magazines that carry it *as picture* far from its durable being of paint and canvas; the intellectual character it takes on from the interpretations irremovably tacked to it by critics, art historians, psychiatrists, philosophers of culture; its role in the political rivalry of states and factions and in the educational activities of international institutions; the power of transformation it wields over its own creator through the energy it accumulates on its passage through the social orbit."

(Rosenburg 1959: 7)

²⁹ "In truth, all the arts require a performance, the painter executes or 'performs' a portrait... Creation is performance" (Dufrenne [1953] 1973: 30). For further discussion, see also Jones *Body Art: Performing the Subject* (1998) page 55.

³⁰ "...intensities are incommensurable and their 'distance' from one another makes each one of them a veritable difference in itself." (Boundas 2010: 132).

³¹ See here Auslander 'The Performativity of Performance Documentation' (2006).

³² "One is developed and must be explicated; the other is enveloped and must be interpreted." (Deleuze [1968] 2004a: 359) 'One' in this case referring to representation, the 'other' refers to the paradigm of difference.

³³ For further reading on Jeff's practice see Watt 'Transgressing the witness at three sites of knowledge' (2007), Bright *Auto Focus: The Self-Portrait in Contemporary Photography* (2010) and Pearson *Site-Specific Performance* (2010).

³⁴ Schrödinger's Cat (1935) presents a paradoxical situation that is known in quantum mechanics as quantum superposition. See Gribbin *In Search of Schrödinger's Cat* (1991) and Section III of the thesis.



Section II:

Crypto[graphy]

A 'cryptographer' is needed, someone who can at once account for nature and decipher the soul, who can peer into the crannies of matter and read into the folds of the soul.

(Deleuze [1993] 2003: 3)

As Tintin could tell you, if there are secret operations going on in this degree-zero zone of writing, then these can only be approached by overlaying, reading across, reading through. That is what we will be doing in this book. As we do so we should arm ourselves with Tintin's intuition that while some texts (like the pilot's puzzle), complete on their own, can simply be decoded so as to point to information hidden in the world, others (like each of the three parchments) need supplementing before meaning starts emerging, while others still will generate layers of meaning never intended in the first place when they are connected via some link, however spurious, to another scene, another context might have emerged quite independently of them [...]. And we should be forewarned that, even when we manage to gather all the texts, scenes and contexts together and hold them up for inspection, their real content may still remain invisible, hiding in the light.

(McCarthy 2006: 33)

Tirelessly the process of thinking makes new beginnings, returning in a roundabout way to its original object. This continual pausing for breath is the mode most proper to the process of contemplation. For by pursuing different levels of meaning in its examination of one single object it receives both the incentive to begin again and the justification for its irregular rhythm. Just as mosaics preserve their majesty despite their fragmentation into capricious particles, so philosophical contemplation is not lacking in momentum. Both are made up of the distinct and the disparate; and nothing could bear more powerful testimony to the transcendent force of the sacred image and the truth itself. The value of fragments of thought is all the greater the less direct their relationship to the underlying idea, and the brilliance of the representation depends as much on this value as the brilliance of the mosaic does on the quality of the glass paste. The relationship between the minute precision of the work and the proportions of the sculptural or intellectual whole demonstrates that truth-content is only to be grasped through immersion in the most minute details of subject-matter.

(Benjamin [1963] 2009: 28-29)

Introduction

To repeat is to begin again; *can photography describe its own event? (CPDIOE?)*.

This Section will make use of a different approach to consider this question, its structure itself formed by a series of questions. In both *Difference and Repetition* and *A Thousand Plateaus* (with Guattari) Deleuze uses the form and structure of these works to echo the content in some way. That is, in *Difference and Repetition* for instance, each chapter covers the same concept from a different perspective, thereby creating several intensities of the originary idea. Each chapter as it stands in for the whole thesis performs the intensive strategy of difference and repetition, a complex repetition producing pure difference. This Section is a modest attempt to enact this same function, and just as stated in the Benjamin quotation above, as this Section will take on a mosaic like form then “[t]he value of fragments of thought is all the greater the less direct their relationship to the underlying idea...”. (Benjamin [1963] 2009: 28-29). The underlying idea or concept here, is photography. Here we attempt to *supplement* photography in its representational mode with a sub-culture of ideas that have arguably been ever present (if hidden) in the dark recesses of the medium, and perhaps best equated with Martin Jay’s concept of a baroque scopic regime always in the shadow of Cartesian perspectivalism (Jay 1988). These esoteric ideas were always present in the photographic writings of Walter Benjamin and now more contemporaneously are best explored perhaps through the work of Gilles Deleuze; two writers from whom I hope to draw many allusions and parallels.

Taking Deleuze's advice, I am adopting the guise of 'the cryptographer' in order to investigate the concept of photography as a crypt. **It is my contention here that whereas the photography of Section I might have been analogous to the great Enlightenment library, future photographs following contemporary philosophical imperatives and even the formidable invention of the internet could be more appropriately conceived through the metaphor of the crypt.** This marks a departure from the *light* of photography in the previous Section, as we descend into the darkness of the crypt that is *CPDIOE?*. This metaphorical darkness forces us to deal with encounters instead of recognitions as it withholds the privileging of sight and the ability to analyse in terms of appearances. "Something in the world forces us to think. This something is an object not of recognition but of a fundamental *encounter*." (Deleuze [1968] 1994: 139) [*emphasis in original*]. Recognition after all is vital to representation which inevitably leads to a reliance at base level to fixed meanings and a form of stasis, whereas the encounter is a rupture, a moment of both affirmation and creation¹. This breaks the spell of representation as the 'blindness' imposed by the crypt encourages our other senses to become more perceptive, which will help us make the necessary encounters to decipher the crypt.² If cryptography can be considered as an "...art of inventing the key to an enveloped thing" (Deleuze [1993] 2003: 143 n.4)³, then the questions that punctuate the Section can also be thought to function in a similar way – perhaps they are attempts to invent a key or keys to multiple readings and novel interpretations of *CPDIOE?*.

Deleuze:

...we learn nothing except by deciphering and interpreting. But the plurality of worlds is such that these signs are not of the same kind, do not have the same way of appearing, do not allow themselves to be deciphered in the same manner, do not have an identical relation with their meaning.

(Deleuze [1964] 2008: 4)

As a construct then, our code/question *CPDIOE?* has many aspects and may *appear* differently, depending upon the perspective we view it from. How might you ask, does this six-word enigma differ from the same arrangement that appeared in the previous Section? For this task, let us reconsider our crypt as a productive paradox and embrace the fluidity and instability of this enigmatic question, let us think in terms of difference. The quotation above from *Proust and Signs* ([1964] 2008) can help reveal something of this endeavor. The signs emitted by *CPDIOE?* do not have the same way of appearing and so need to be deciphered and interpreted in multiple ways – “...it is true that these signs themselves are not homogeneous. At one and the same moment they are differentiated...” (Deleuze [1964] 2008: 4). If this is the case, then perhaps we must continue to address these creative transformations that emanate from our central question.

Towards the end of the previous Section, we were offered some guidance that will ameliorate our negotiation of the crypt ahead of us. The concept of difference was introduced in a way commensurate with the rest of the Section. In this Section, we shall be exploring the more obscure depths of difference in a way more appropriate to the content. Taking this further, Deleuze, speaking of representation and difference suggests that “One is developed and must be explicated; the other is enveloped and must be interpreted.” (Deleuze [1968] 2004a: 359). ‘One’ in this case referring to representation, the ‘other’ refers to the paradigm of difference. This is something that will be investigated later in the Section, but for the purposes of unfolding *CPDIOE?* it is useful to raise this point here. If we contemplate what this means for us at this stage, it seems to suggest that we have only completed half of the task. Section I then, developed and explicated the question, it *identified* it in its constituent parts, it was extensive. The extensive here having links to spatiality, but meaning that it was utilising the rationale of linear clarity and the perceptible (transparency) in order to attempt to bring precise meanings to *light*. By the same token this Section will envelop and interpret the question, it shall be intensive, employing a system of difference inherently aligned to temporality, evoking a baroque paradigm of the obtuse and irrational; the imperceptible. In Bergson’s terms we can again make analogies to a *pure* difference between difference by degree (extensity) and difference in kind or in itself (intensity).

CPDIOE? is an intensive construction in itself, denying explanation but inviting interpretation. This interpretation however, is not one that desires a fixed

meaning; instead it calls for multiple interpretations and continually invites new readings. For James Williams, a problem “...can only lead to a series of creative reactions rather than to a lasting solution.” (Williams 2003: 121). In this way, the ‘key’ we are trying to invent here to our crypt, *CPDIOE?*, is not singular but plural – we require a series of keys to help us get further into the crypt.

Six intensive plateaus from which to gain new perspectives on photography as its own event: or how many surrounding hilltops does Leibniz require in order to perceive the township below in its full dimensions?

It is important to remind our reader here that our study into potential future photographies is formed largely from a Deleuzian perspective, and the writings of this Section whilst necessarily oblique are concerned with the intersection of photography and Deleuzian philosophy. This follows the Deleuzian turn we made in Section I and our task here will be to unlock some of his concepts to the benefit of photography. One of the keys we are trying to invent to unlock our question concerns the notion of intensities. The concept of intensities can provide a means of getting further into the crypt of *CPDIOE?* as the very question of something describing itself reveals the intensive element that is folded into the question. We shall attend to this proposition through a series of six quotations that are either about or from Deleuze’s seminal work *Difference and Repetition* ([1968] 2004a). These quotations take the form of six ‘plateaus’, with each plateau differing in

kind through the intensive nature of its interpretation. Furthermore, the writings that surround each quotation reflect on how Deleuze's cryptic convoluted thought resonates throughout *CPDIOE?* and what it can offer to help us decipher this six-word enigma. So, one answer to the question 'what lies beyond representation' is *difference*, as we refer more and more to Deleuze's contrary concept of understanding a world beyond a system predicated on the constituent parts of Cartesian perspectivalism, or in a word, identity. In order to fracture identity we need to look beyond the extensive qualities of an *object/thing*, its discreteness, and peer into the intensive 'crannies' of how some-thing differs in itself (in kind).

This exercise will be useful in order to better understand the enigmatic nature of intensities as they relate to objects of representation. Only by understanding minute difference in variation 'between states' in concepts and *objects/things* can we begin to think through the sophistications of thought necessary to develop supplements to representational photography. The intention here is not to apply philosophy or concepts to the category of the image, as it is recognised that the image itself already holds an enigmatic position in relation to concepts and is never amenable 'in itself' to the imposition of them. The Section instead attempts to proffer insights that might supplement the interrogation and hopefully production of a photographic image construction.

(1)

...intensities cannot be subdivided without a corresponding change in their nature. Therefore, intensities are incommensurable and their 'distance' from one another makes each one of them a veritable difference in itself.

(Boundas 2010: 134)

So what we are dealing with here is not an external difference by degree but an internal difference in kind. Deleuze's ontology is premised on the promotion of how something can *differ in itself* over a duration and we must also think about intensities in this way – that is, they cannot be measured because they are in a constant state of change. It can be said that intensities can extend "...as far as the too large and the too small of difference" (Deleuze [1968] 2004a: 331). An assertion that needs to be made here is that our enigmatic question is undeniably irrational and the reason for its irrationality can be unlocked through utilising the concept of intensities. Attempts to understand the question as a rational sentence were futile as its very construction as an enigma repels both clarity and coherence. Its formation is such that it requires to be read as an intensity, as a difference in kind, rather than an *extensive* construction that is logical or linear. Each repetition of *CPDIOE?* infers difference. By speculating that the arrangement *CPDIOE?* can be considered a question of intensities, we begin to understand why the previous Section did not yield enough clues to decipher this six-word enigma. Through subjecting the question to a *dissection*, it became rationalised as it was interrogated from the standpoint of a representational model based on extensive

qualities. In relation to this, perhaps we can enable a metaphor for intensity in the same way that time is shown as strata in an archaeological excavation – *via* a *cross section*. A dissection can be aligned to a breakdown of constituent parts (horizontal) whereas a cross section reveals intensity through the variation that takes place between strata (vertical); between the interpretations enveloped in *CPDIOE?*.

As an intensity, the phrase is at once an expression of an idea – *CPDIOE?*, yet its ‘position’ is incommensurable in the depth of intensities. Despite this, at that level and in the instance it is uttered each iteration of the question describes the whole concept; the whole concept is collapsed into the enigmatic phrase (crypt/code) *CPDIOE?*. Therefore, if we think of the question as an indivisible totality and instead approach each repetition of *CPDIOE?* as a new beginning, then the difference between each utterance becomes an internal difference. This is how we think the question as intensity and connect to difference in itself. In this sense, as we move through these plateaus we are not solely concentrating on one quotation at a time but must also be aware of how the six work together, on the *extensive* plane. With this writing on plateaus I am putting into practice the concept of intensity in my explanation of intensities; each one providing an intensive difference *via* repetition.

(2)

Between the intensive and thought, it is always by means of an intensity that thought comes to us. The privilege of sensibility as origin appears in the fact that, in an encounter, what forces sensation and that which can only be sensed are one and the same thing, whereas in other cases the two instances are distinct. In effect, the intensive or difference in intensity is at once both the object of the encounter and the object to which the encounter raises sensibility.

(Deleuze [1968] 2004a: 182)

An intensity that forces us to thought is also an encounter, and as Deleuze advises in the quotation above, "...what forces sensation and that which can only be sensed are one and the same thing..." (Deleuze [1968] 2004a: 182). To make a comparison here, in the construction *CPDIOE?*, photography and event are also one and the same thing within the assemblage (as mentioned earlier, in performed photography they are also indistinguishable from one another), whereas in mainstream conceptions of photography the two instances are detached from one another. Two divisible parts collapse to form an indivisible totality – here essentially we are talking about the event of photography. *CPDIOE?* is both an intensity and an encounter then, and it remains an encounter even when repeated because the conditions that surround the question are in perpetual variation. It cannot become habitual or reliant upon recognition because each time we ask the question we are always starting anew.

(3)

Qualitative contrariety is only the reflection of the intense, a reflection which betrays it by explicating it in intensity. It is intensity or difference in intensity which constitutes the peculiar limit of sensibility. As such, it has the paradoxical character of that limit: it is the imperceptible, that which cannot be sensed because it is always covered by a quality which alienates or contradicts it, always distributed within an extensity which inverts and cancels it.

(Deleuze [1968] 2004a: 296-297)

Perhaps the first thing to say here is that *CPDIOE?* exists in an absolute field of qualitative contrariety. This enigmatic phrase contains both a difference and an inconsistency in so far as it is not pinned to a particular meaning and each enunciation of the question is a qualitative explication – *CPDIOE?* envelops plurality in its ensemble of intensive interpretations. To guide us through this plateau, let us imagine a series of photographs arranged mosaic style. By first of all focusing our attention on the ‘one’ and not the ‘many’ in the series, the surrounding photographs fade into the background and at both the moment of photographing and the moment of looking (or reading, Benjamin’s famous *now-time*⁴), the one becomes the most contracted and most concentrated of the many possible interpretations.⁵ So when we are dealing with the one intensity (the one photograph), the whole concept (the whole series of photographs) is enveloped by that intensity; the one stands in for the whole concept. Now when we attempt to see the whole series simultaneously, this action converts the intensity into an extensity by rendering the representation of the series as a whole as spatial. By

struggling to perceive more than one intensity in this way we come up against that ‘peculiar limit of sensibility’ and the intensive becomes ‘distributed within an extensity which inverts and cancels it’. In other words, as we are thrown out of the intensive moment the construction becomes spatial and we are left dealing with extensities once more. From difference in kind to difference by degree.

To consider the relationship between the many and the one in the series of photographs is to be attentive of the understanding that both are enhanced by the knowledge of the other. That is to say there is an oscillation between focusing on the one and the awareness that the one is part of the whole series, and how the whole series (the many) allows us to comprehend how the one can stand in for the whole at each moment or instance. The variables of ‘many’ and ‘one’ should not be plotted/determined without consideration of the other, and our experience of each is richer if we remain mindful of their correlation. This brings to mind the relationship of the One to the multiple in Leibniz’s famous monad; “... a unity that envelops a multiplicity, this multiplicity developing the One in the manner of a ‘series’.” (Deleuze [1993] 2003: 23). Deserving significantly more attention than it is given here, the concept of the monad shall be addressed later in the Section, however its relevance should be noted here in light of the emphasis of this ‘plateau’. “As an individual unit each monad includes the whole series; hence it conveys the entire world, but does not express it *without expressing more clearly a small region of the world, a ‘subdivision,’ a borough of the city, a finite sequence.*” (Deleuze [1993] 2003: 25) [*emphasis in original*].

If we return here briefly to a work mentioned in Section I, Vito Acconci's *'Blinks'* (1969), where the artist collapses perception into representation through the act of walking down a city street and taking a photograph each time he is forced to blink in order to fill the gaps in his visual perception of the walk. The gridded twelve-image work illustrates vividly the interdependence between the intensive variation of view as he moves down the street with the embodied experience of the walk as a whole. We can perceive here an oscillation between the individual photographs and the whole concept (the series of photographs) where each image can stand in for the whole event in each moment or instance. Again, this conjures up the notion of a unity that envelops a multiplicity in the manner of a series. Acconci's piece becomes another instance of representational experimentation prefiguring some of the concepts that we are exploring through the thesis.



Figure 4: Vito Acconci 1969, 'Blinks, November 23 1969, afternoon, Greenwich Street New York City; Kodak Instamatic 124' [black and white photographic piece].

The intensive nature of *CPDIOE?* operates in a similar way, each interpretation standing in for the whole at that particular moment as the whole concept emerges on different levels. In *Difference and Repetition* too, each section is a ‘contraction’ of the rest of the book – “...each section develops others to lesser or greater degrees of density. So each section is the complete book, but more or less clear (and obscure) on each aspect.” (Williams 2003: 23). Most importantly though, is that one section does not enjoy privilege over another section and does not provide the last word on the topic, as we crucially miss the point by merely focusing our attention on one. This is commensurate with how each interpretation functions for the assemblage *CPDIOE?*. As a convoluted or enigmatic assemblage it is important to acknowledge that within the field of difference it has not one particular aspect or appearance but as Deleuze himself says it must take the form of a ‘swarm of appearances’⁶. This notion of a ‘swarm of appearances’ is first expressed by Leibniz in his concept of perception, which he said “...is nothing other than the representation of multitude in the unity” (Leibniz in Antognazza 2009: 498). He held that the physical world was no more than a collection of chimeras and images, and for instance, if a group of people views a city from a series of hilltops (plateaus) each would have just one perspective, all different. No one perceiver could see the whole city three hundred and sixty degrees around but each perception is referred to a supposed objective city, a fictional extrapolation from multiple individual perspectives. Leibniz therefore deduced that the objective world was merely the sum of a multiplicity of viewpoints or perspectives that represented to us a mathematically certain geometric world – *a swarm of appearances*. The ‘representation of multitude in the unity’ is

approximate to the concept of intensities, an extensive whole made up of intensities, or differences in kind to form an indivisible totality.

(4)

An intensive quantity may be divided, but not without changing its nature. In a sense, it is therefore indivisible, but only because no part exists prior to the division and no part retains the same nature after the division.

(Deleuze [1968] 2004a: 297)

To perceive photography as an event is to take two concepts and combine them. The act of combination of ‘photography + event’ fuses together two disparate concepts, making them intensive and indivisible. What Deleuze is speaking of here and what Constantin Boundas seems to be paraphrasing from this in ‘Plateau 1’ is the production of difference *through* repetition. Considering the possibility of the combination of concepts for *CPDIOE?*, Henry Somers-Hall in his essay ‘Time Out of Joint: Hamlet and the Pure Form of Time’ (2011) puts forward a useful analogy that can be applied here. Somers-Hall offers an analogy of a red apple in relation to Kant’s account of the relationship between intuition and understanding. This relationship is born out of a synthesis, which Kant in the *Critique of Pure Reason* (1929) defines as “...the act of putting different representations together, and of grasping what is manifold in them in one act of knowledge” (Kant in Somers-Hall 2011: 61). So the synthesis of the notion of

‘apple’ and of ‘redness’ allow for an understanding of a ‘red apple’. Taken slightly out of context perhaps (though these ideas will be developed in Section III) we can contemplate that it is the *event of photography* that becomes analogous to the ‘red apple’; bringing together the determinations of ‘photography’ and ‘event’, ‘apple’ and ‘redness’. Accordingly, for *CPDIOE?*, we could consider the temporal relationship between event and photography as different intensities of a synthesised event. Photography and event are now differing *in kind* as intensities of the same concept; they are no longer differing by degree because the collapse of photography into event and event into photography has formed an indivisible totality.

To take this one step further and speculate a while, let us consider the relationship photography has with perception in Bergson’s writings, and the implications this has for *CPDIOE?*. As Bergson writes in *Creative Evolution* ([1907] 1944):

[w]e take snapshots, as it were, of the passing reality, and, as these are characteristic of this reality, we have only to string them on a becoming, abstract, uniform and invisible, situated at the back of the apparatus of knowledge, in order to imitate what there is that is characteristic in this becoming itself. Perception, intellection, and language proceed this way in general. Whether we would think becoming, or express it, or even perceive it, we hardly do anything else than set going a kind of cinematograph inside us. . . . *The mechanism of our ordinary knowledge is of a cinematographical kind.*
(Bergson [1907] 1944: 322) [*emphasis in original*]

For Bergson photography and perception can be considered analogous to one another, and in this way, perhaps we can contemplate that the event of photography is also the event of perception. Crucially this allows us an insight into our central question, for we may now say *can perception describe its own event?* and Bergson hints that it can, *via* a cinematographical process. Making analogies between human perception and cinematography in the way the mind records the passing reality, he suggests in *Matter and Memory* ([1988] 2005) that “[t]he 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, taken from a fixed point by that special apparatus which is called an organ of perception...” (Bergson [1988] 2005: 38). Furthermore, Cadava in *Words of Light* citing Bergson, recognises that “...from the very moment that there is thought, there is photography, even if it is a photography before photography as we know it...” (Cadava 1997: 90). This perhaps sheds some light on the perception/perspective of photography utilised throughout the thesis. In some senses, we are inverting the relationship between thought and/or perception and photography in order to investigate the very concept of photography beyond the practice of the medium. As in our work on the enigmatic construct *CPDIOE?*, this takes us into the realm of hermeneutics and interpretation; an attempt to ‘peer into the crannies of matter and read into the folds of the soul’⁷. In terms of the event of photography it becomes analogous to the process of perception, therefore interpretation, so perhaps what we are asking in simple terms then, is how do we perceive the event of photography?

The experience of perceiving an event is then essentially photographic for Bergson and we can conceive of an event, its perception and the photographic coinciding as an intensive event. Therefore perception, photography and event can be thought of as folded into each other as they present themselves as related intensities. This also has resonances to the theory of performed photography as detailed in Section I. If the three concepts can be merged to form an indivisible totality then each can be seen as a different intensity of a new concept. As “...intensity cannot be reduced to measure and, hence, to identity. That is why intensity can only be a matter of sensation or of the transformation of an identity beyond its known boundaries in an event.” (Williams 2003: 188). It is precisely the incommensurable nature of intensity that avoids any connection to be made with the notion of identity. It follows that as independent concepts, event, perception and photography lose some of their prior ‘identity’ when they are understood as intensities of the new folded concept. Thus, the resultant synthesis of these terms produces something akin to what Whitehead encourages in *Process and Reality* ([1929] 1978) (and to which we will return at the end of this Section); a ‘stretching’ of words and phrases to their limits that enables definitions already in circulation to be re-defined.

(5)

This is why Ideas have the logical character of being simultaneously both distinct and obscure. They are obscure (undifferentiated and coexisting with other Ideas, ‘perpllicated’ with them) in so far as they are distinct [*omni modo determinata*]. The question then is what happens when Ideas are expressed by intensities or individuals in this new dimension of implication.

(Deleuze [1968] 2004a: 314)

If photography as an event is an Idea, as an Idea, there are aspects that are both simultaneously distinct and obscure. If we imagine a series (mosaic) of photographs once more, and concentrate on one, that intensity (photograph) becomes distinct as the other intensities around it become necessarily obscure. Instead of a series of photographs, we shall now imagine a mosaic. The whole mosaic represents the whole concept, but the fragments can also stand in for the whole as explained above. Let us recall the third opening quotation of this Section by Walter Benjamin that addresses his analogy of the mosaic as a method of writing, and reflect on how this approach resonates for *CPDIOE?*. Also, we will make connections between the ‘distinct and the obscure’ that simultaneously occur in Ideas for Deleuze and the ‘distinct and the disparate’ that form the pieces of the mosaic for Benjamin. Benjamin advocated that a text should make the reader continually pause for breath in order to create a space for reflection; “...the writer must stop and restart with every new sentence.” (Benjamin [1963] 2009: 29). This ‘break’ is often referred to as a *caesura* of thought and perhaps a

comparison can be made here with Deleuze's notion of an encounter; an encounter *forces* us to thought whereas the *caesura* offers a pause, an interval to thought before beginning the encounter anew. Nevertheless, the task of engaging in different levels of meaning as a way of examining 'one single object' is most certainly the project of *CPDIOE?* as we must remember that each time we ask the question we are always starting anew. For Benjamin these differing levels of meaning or a multiplicity of interpretation produces an irregular rhythm, and as each interpretation of *CPDIOE?* differs from the next (as an internal difference) it is conceivable that the rhythm it produces would also be irregular. Just as our enigmatic question is in a state of perpetual variation, the beat that emanates from each level of interpretation is in a state of constant change and mutation too, which accounts for its irregular pulse. It is this 'pause for breath' and differing levels of interpretation that possess a fragmentation that Benjamin equates with the mosaic in the 'Epistemo-Critical Prologue' to *The Origin of Tragic Drama* ([1963] 2009).

So as with each interpretation of our question, each tiny piece of glass that makes up the mosaic also functions as an intensity. Yet, if we step back from the mosaic and view the whole 'concept' as a series of glass pieces, their individual charm becomes indistinct/is lost as the intensities morph into an extensive whole. To view the whole in this manner as a spatial representation is at the expense of perceiving the majesty that each fragment holds. We must now turn our attention to what secures the mosaic together – the glass paste. For Benjamin, "[t]he value of fragments of thought is all the greater the less direct their relationship to the

underlying idea, and the brilliance of the representation depends as much on this value as the brilliance of the mosaic does on the quality of the glass paste.” (Benjamin [1963] 2009: 28-29). This ‘binding agent’ allows the individual pieces of glass to be connected to each other as intensities of the same concept. Perhaps it is also the space of the Deleuzian ‘and’ (the conjunctive ‘and’ that replaces the ‘is’ of identity) as it introduces the concept of ‘relations’ into the equation, evoking a movement as well as a connection from within the intensities (between each piece of glass). It is important to note that this takes place when we carry out an intensive interpretation as we focus our attention on each fragment *and* then another fragment *and* another, by doing this we are able to witness the glass pieces as a difference in kind, as intensities of the same concept. Perhaps to speculate again, it is in this liminal space that we encounter enigma as an intensive construction; *between* the intensive and the extensive, between the distinct and the indistinct and so on; even between the actual and the virtual, where clarity plunges into obscurity. These terms however should not be interpreted as binary constructions, one does not enjoy privilege over the other, they are always part of a process, where succession and co-existence must collide; and so they must be regarded as fluid and unfixed co-ordinates from which meaning can be produced. This space also opens up the notion of the productive paradox once more in terms of its generative function. Regarding our enigmatic construction *CPDIOE?*, meanings are produced or generated from a point where a productive paradox is created, where succession (representation) and co-existence (difference) collide.

(6)

...all the intensities are implicated into one another, each in turn both enveloped and enveloping, such that each continues to express the changing totality of Ideas, the variable ensemble of differential relations.

(Deleuze [1968] 2004a: 314-315)

The relationship between intensities and envelopment is one of connection; intensities being both *enveloped and enveloping* is suggestive of the process of infinitesimal variation taking place. This is because "... singular intensities do not divide or diminish – instead they include one another in different ways." (Williams 2003: 183). In this way, intensities avoid the logic of negation because of their unfixed co-ordinates – they do not conform to a binary arrangement/configuration as there is a perpetual process of change/relation *between* two or more points, which is played out in an act of oscillation between what is concealed and what is revealed, between what is enveloped and what is enveloping. Imagining a series (mosaic) of photographs once more, in the act of regarding a particular intensity (photograph), that intensity is enveloped by the other intensities that make up the whole. And so it follows that by focusing on another intensive moment, then the previous intensive moment has differed from its capacity as one that is enveloped to one that envelops; the relationship that is formed from the *enveloped and enveloping* takes place in difference in kind. The intensity that is the focus of our attention at this particular moment takes a central

position in terms of its ‘connectedness’ to the other intensities that encircle it; “... clarity comes from being at the centre, in the sense of greatest number of connections [*sic*], of a nexus of relations and obscurity from a peripheral position.” (Williams 2003: 199). This expresses once again the relation of the one to the multiple and shows the myriad different aspects that can be sensed through the “...expression of all intensities, though in different configurations of envelopment.” (Williams 2003: 191). Once again this has deep resonances with Leibniz’s concept of the monad, essentially a singularity surrounded by ‘ordinaries’, a concept we will return to later in the Section.

To return to the question of *What Lies Beyond Representation?*, representation as we speak of it here is basically a system that returns the *same*, as opposed to Deleuze’s conception of Difference and Repetition that is anti-representational in that it returns difference. As already stated, difference by degree is a perspective on the world that is couched in spatialisation and leads to and distinguishes between a world of discrete objects, an extensive world-view ideally constructed for representation. Difference in kind speaks of temporality and duration, a world of process where things change over/through time, the degrees or depths of that change are intensities. From a Deleuzian perspective then, it can be argued that what lies beyond representation is *difference*, although it must be stressed that these two ‘systems’ are also co-existent.

Can we find Deleuze/Benjamin in the distinct/obscure concepts of Benjamin/Deleuze?

The work of this Section is to begin the translation of a photography in the classical perspective to one that engages with contemporary ideas of difference. To aid this process we must also begin to make a translation between the thought of Walter Benjamin and that of Gilles Deleuze. Benjamin was the great commentator of the classical period; Deleuze will be our guide into future potentialities. Both prefer the convoluted ‘darkness’ of the Baroque period at the expense of a transparency of thought. The metaphorical darkness that is imposed by our crypt forces us to make mental connections and to allow ideas to spring to light, that will help move closer towards solving the enigma of our question. From this position, engulfed by darkness, I sense that there are some as yet uncovered links that can be made between the baroque writer *par excellence* Walter Benjamin and Gilles Deleuze. If we consider Benjamin’s writings as crypts to be deciphered, it is my conviction that we can re-open Benjamin with a Deleuzian ‘key’ of intensities. To carry out this task we must read Benjamin *through* Deleuze (and Deleuze *through* Benjamin), with particular reference to the six intensive plateaus we set up earlier in this Section. This is no easy job as we have a double process of interpretation to carry out; firstly, we need to investigate the depths of the crypts that Benjamin arguably sets up for us in order to re-interpret his complex ideas through a Deleuzian optic and laterally; we must consider how to use our findings to get us further into *our* crypt – *CPDIOE?*.

To begin, it seems pertinent to remark on the dubious lack of acknowledgement between these two figures, despite their mutual sources of inspiration. Benjamin (1892–1940) was writing before Deleuze (1925–1995) however there is surprisingly little written on their connections and crossovers by critics or scholars in either field of study. Let us consider a number of examples to plot against each other in order to detect a Benjaminian presence in Deleuze *via* two figures that link them, Bergson and Leibniz. I propose that in some ways, Benjamin operates as a *dark precursor* in Deleuze’s works; he is obscured from view but nevertheless remains folded into Deleuzian concepts. Deleuze asks, “...what is this agent, this force which ensures communication? Thunderbolts explode between different intensities, but they are preceded by an invisible, imperceptible *dark precursor*...” (Deleuze [1968] 2004a: 145) [*emphasis in original*]. It is the dark precursor that causes communications between heterogeneous locations and events and in this case, we will seek to map⁸ connections between Deleuze, Bergson and Leibniz *via* Benjamin.

It must be noted that Benjamin was a contemporary of Henri Bergson (1859–1941) therefore both their stars were shining brightly at the same time. Perhaps what Benjamin takes most from Bergson is a sense of the importance of temporality and a certain type of spatialisation that was the antithesis of Bergson’s *durée*. These Bergsonian ideas also formed the strong foundations upon which Deleuze’s whole conception of time was developed, largely expounded in *Difference and Repetition* and *Bergsonism*. In addition, Deleuze drew on

Bergson's concept of difference to form an unashamed 'update' *via* the fold, which reflects on the concept of the relationship of the fold as difference in itself.

Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz (1646–1716), another source of inspiration for both Benjamin and Deleuze was a catalyst for Benjamin's famous *dialectical image*, based on Leibniz's monad and as Michael Löwy has noted in *Fire Alarm*, the two terms appear to be interchangeable for Benjamin and we can intuit this double articulation in an intensive reading of 'Thesis XVIII' from *Theses on the Philosophy of History* ([1940] 1969b). For Deleuze, perhaps his most famous token of gratitude to Leibniz comes in the form of his book *The Fold* ([1993] 2003), suitably subtitled *Leibniz and the Baroque* and it is in this book where Deleuze's appreciation of both Bergson and Leibniz converge. Though this is not the place to conduct an extensive critique of the intersections that can be observed between these four great thinkers, it provides a context for arguing that these connections inevitably point to the questionable lack of acknowledgement of Benjamin by Deleuze, despite seeming to be so intrinsically connected *via* Leibniz and Bergson. This part of the Section seeks to uncover some of these 'coincidences'.

Benjamin's dense allegorical texts are open to continual re-interpretation as they refuse to be stabilised or fixed to any one reading and the fragmentary method he employed ensured that his ideas remained in oscillation and required an active engagement from the reader. In the introduction to his *Trauerspiel* book, Benjamin identifies "...the ideas that gather together the dispersed elements of

thought” (Cadava 1997: 28) as ‘configurations’ or ‘constellations’. This part of the Section then, will provide a reflection on Deleuze’s intensities *via* Benjamin’s notion of *constellations*. Furthermore, it is in this way that the formation of this Section is akin to a constellation of ideas, where an assemblage of ideas shine out momentarily before fading back into darkness. The stars that form these constellations can be read in multiple ways, depending on their configuration at any one time. This is true for the constellation of questions that form this Section as they all seek to interpret our central question *CPDIOE?*, and each question is an attempt to move further into the crypt. Perhaps when we look back at the questions as a matrix forming a whole, a configuration will shine out to us, which will provide the key to unlocking our enigmatic code – *CPDIOE?*. On the other hand, maybe we are closest to solving this puzzle when we are tirelessly toiling with the ‘minute details of subject-matter’ as Benjamin suggests we do. As Tom McCarthy recommends in *Tintin and the Secret of Literature* (2006: 33), we must approach the secret operations as Tintin does by ‘overlaying, reading across, reading through’ to help us move further into the crypt.

I suggest that Benjamin is capable of being *translated via* Deleuze in order to shed new light on reading Benjamin in a contemporary Deleuzian context. **This also helps our project as a whole as we are attempting a translation from within the concept of photography.** Benjamin himself was familiar with carrying out such a task as in *The Origin of German Tragic Drama* he posits Hamlet as *Trauerspiel* and as Graeme Gilloch notes, “...the play is uprooted from its conventional context, and repositioned and illuminated afresh as a fragment of a

different idea.” (Gilloch 2002: 71). The very nature of a constellation has the potential to bring together fragments that form new combinations, new interpretations.⁹ Gilloch, discussing Benjamin’s analogy of the mosaic recognises that, “[f]ragments which seem inconsequential may be the most precious for the purpose of oblique representation.” (Gilloch 2002: 68). As it will become evident, at different times and in different texts, Benjamin often used different words to describe related concepts and ideas. Arguably, this is another way that he creates crypts for his reader because of the instability that results from his changeable terminology; forcing the reader to make their own connections and consider how this manifold of meaning impacts on the coherence (or incoherence) of Benjamin’s *oeuvre*. As a result, the texts themselves gain an additional level of encryption that is further intensified when the works are translated; this issue of translation will be discussed at the end of the Section. We have encountered an instance of this here; each individual tessera of the mosaic is equivalent, if not analogous to, each star that forms the constellation. Furthermore, if we remind ourselves of the connections we made between intensities and mosaics earlier in this Section, we begin to open up some of the consistencies that can be mapped between Deleuze and Benjamin. Bearing this in mind, Max Pensky describing the process of formation of a constellation notes:

...the constellation emerges – discloses itself – only insofar as the concept divests the particulars of their status as *merely* particular, refers them to their hidden arrangement, but also preserves their material existence. At that point, a meaningful image jumps forward from the previously disparate elements,

which from that point onward can never be seen as merely disparate again.

(Pensky 1993: 70) [*emphasis in original*]

If we cast our mind back to our series of photographs arranged mosaic-style, the image that jumps forward for Pensky can be equated with the mosaic, as suddenly recognised as a discrete image in its own right. By the same token, each individual tessera in its intensity also stands in for the whole mosaic, as there is a unique relationship formed between the one and the multiple. This is precisely what we discussed in relation to Deleuzian intensities, and read from a Benjaminian perspective, we can equate the very notion of an ‘idea’ in its relation to ‘objects’ (intensities) being analogous to the relation of constellations to stars.

“Ideas are to objects as constellations are to stars.” (Benjamin [1963] 2009: 34).

For Benjamin, image is “...dialectics at a standstill”, (Benjamin 1999a: 462) and this moment, his famous lightning flash, is the moment in which two opposing concepts/ideas are in complete tension with one another.¹⁰ If we re-interpret this from a Deleuzian perspective in relation to the two types of difference, it is difference by degree (extensity) and difference in kind (intensity) that are held in tension with one another and it is in these circumstances that we witness the production of pure difference. In this way, when an intensive moment comes out of an extensive construct in a flash the intensity comes “...to legibility” (Benjamin 1999a: 462). This blinding flash is the moment of reading and of learning, it is when we recognise the intensity *as an intensity*; let us remind

ourselves of the generative function of productive syntheses once more. It must be noted however that we are not speaking of ‘recognition’ in representational terms here (that produces stasis) because for Benjamin, “[t]he now of recognizability is the moment of awakening.” (Benjamin 1999a: 486).

It’s not that what is past casts its light on what is present, or what is present casts its light on the past; rather, image is that wherein what has been comes together in a flash with the now to form a constellation. In other words, image is dialectics at a standstill. For while the relation of the present to the past is a purely temporal, continuous one, the relation of what-has-been to the now is dialectical: is not progression but image, suddenly emergent. – Only dialectical images are genuine images (that is, not archaic); and the place where one encounters them is language.

(Benjamin 1999a: 462)

In a well-known passage from ‘Convolute N’ in *The Arcades Project*, Benjamin sheds some light on the concept of the dialectical image, where its emergence marks a temporal interruption, a “...caesura in the movement of thought” (Benjamin 1999a: 475). Certainly, to form a constellation with intensities emerging from an extensive plane alludes to the correlation between the one and the multiple again (if we recall the relationship of the tessera to the mosaic), with the resultant ‘image’ erupting as *dialectics at a standstill*. In a historical sense, the ‘what has been’ and the ‘now’ in the context of the thesis also forms a similar relationship to Benjamin’s dialectical image – the ‘then’ of Benjamin, of Deleuze (and by extension of Bergson and of Leibniz) comes together with the ‘now’ of

my reading to form a constellation of interpretations, *suddenly emergent*. This arrangement or configuration requires the work of a cryptographer to ‘peer into the crannies’ of thought developed by Benjamin and Deleuze in order for us to perceive the mosaic of seemingly distinct concepts as difference in kind as opposed to difference by degree. It becomes productive to consider the relationship between each philosopher’s ‘version’/update of a particular concept as fresh intensities of a concept that differs in kind over a duration, with each philosopher providing an additional perspective. We must not think in terms of the ‘model and copy’ as in representation but instead recognise the multiple interpretations as internal differences, where no privilege is placed on any one interpretation. For this let us look to Benjamin’s thought on the term of ‘origin’ as he explains in the ‘Epistemo-Critical Prologue’:

Origin [*Ursprung*], although an entirely historical category, has, nevertheless, nothing to do with genesis [*Entstehung*]. The term origin is not intended to describe the process by which the existent came into being, but rather to describe that which emerges from the process of becoming and disappearance. Origin is an eddy in the stream of becoming...

(Benjamin [1963] 2009: 45)

The important distinction Benjamin makes between the terms ‘origin’ and ‘genesis’ enables us to make a comparison to a Deleuzian perspective; where the process of becoming is always privileged over stasis and fixed identities, and where meanings are both mobile and mutable. Crucially for Deleuze, the very

notion of becoming speaks of a process of de- and re-territorialisation, where what is territorialising and that which is being territorialised undergo a reciprocal process of transformation. In fact, it is this ‘double becoming’ that invokes a state of flux and state of perpetual variation. Benjamin’s interpretation of ‘origin’ evokes a similar process in that ‘the existent’ remains open to a continuous temporal modulation/moulding¹¹, thus de-stabilising the permanence that is implied by the term origin as it is generally understood (as a synonym of ‘genesis’). Each interpretation of a particular concept then, comes together to form a multiplicity, a constellation.

And so Benjamin’s *stream of becoming* is rhizomatic, always in motion and seeking connections, just as a stream is part of a connected network of streams, rivers and seas. The eddy disrupts the unidirectional flow of the stream as the current doubles back on itself; it is a moment of interruption. It is in this way that origin as a vortex in the stream of becoming resonates with our question *CPDIOE?*, and I suggest that (for the purpose of this analogy) this enigmatic code represents an eddy in the *stream of representation*. The eruption of this question results in a break in representation (that produces stasis) and offers an encounter as it forces us to try to decipher what is meant by the question *can photography describe its own event?* Instead of the linear arrangement of ‘event – photograph – representation’ that was interrogated in Section I, *CPDIOE?* speaks of a photography where event and photograph are folded into each other, *around* each other, and this very action creates an eddy which disrupts the conventional ‘flow’ of mainstream photographic representation. Regarding the impact this has in

terms of temporality that concerned the previous Section of the thesis, Graeme Gilloch notes that “[o]rigin is a temporal disturbance, an ‘eddy in the stream of becoming’ as time is folded back upon itself.” (Gilloch 2002: 73). And so we can interpret the process of folding ‘event’ into ‘photography’ to become a single iterance as a ‘double becoming’ – a reciprocal process of transformation and renewal between these previously disparate terms. Indeed, there is also a sense of perpetual collapse in how performed photography negotiates the mainstream (linear) procedure of ‘shooting – editing – exhibition’, in that it disrupts this conventional practice in favour of collapsing these three components into a continuous stream of becoming. Thus at this time, it is not the wasp and orchid that partake in a dance of de- and re-territorialisation along the rhizome, but event and photography. **One might also say that our larger endeavour of synthesising the classical perspective in photography with difference is also one of de- and re-territorialisation.**

The reading of this constellation also allows us to get further into the crypt. It is in our *now-time* [*jetztzeit*] that the constellation comes together in a flash to unlock the latent connections to be made between these concepts/thinkers and as Carol Jacobs notes; “[t]he moment of interpretation, what Benjamin calls the perception of similarities, takes place from no privileged, external vantage point. Rather, the reader-astrologer is taken into the constellation in a flash...” (Jacobs 1999: 71).

The perception [of similarity] is in every case bound to an instantaneous flash. It flits by... it offers itself

to the eye just as fleetingly, transitorily as a constellation of stars. The perception of similarities therefore appears bound to a moment of time. It is like the supervention [*Dazukommen*] of the third, of the astrologer, to the conjunction of two stars that wishes to be grasped in the moment.
(Benjamin 1979c: 66)

In ‘Convolute N’ of *The Arcades Project* Walter Benjamin relays to Ernst Bloch how his conception of the dialectical image was comparable in method “...to the process of splitting the atom” (Benjamin 1999a: 463). By this we can take it to mean that natural laws are being broken when two or more intensities emerge in a flash of legibility to form a dialectical image. As mentioned in the discussion on intensities above, the very nature of an intensive magnitude is that it is indivisible. If we try to experience more than one intensive moment in the *now* of our reading we come up against the “...peculiar limit of sensibility” (Deleuze [1968] 2004a: 296). Thus, we can experience only one intensity at any one moment as any other intensive moment will immediately replace the first and force it to fade back. As Benjamin notes there may always be an exception and if it was possible to perceive two or more intensities at once then they would come together in a blinding flash against the laws of natural physics just like the splitting of the atom. It is worth noting that Benjamin is writing at the birth of the quantum era and his imagination is taken with the possibilities that particles/elements can potentially be in two places at once.¹² Certainly the inverse also holds, that if more than one intensity could potentially emerge at once in the same moment then the impossible could also occur when an ‘indivisible’ intensity could split. This is the basis of dialectics at a standstill, or the dialectical image and the potential forces

of history that it could unleash. It is therefore possible in concept at least to “...liberate[s] the enormous energies of history that are bound up in the ‘once upon a time’ of classical historiography. The history that showed things ‘as they really were’ was the strongest narcotic of the century.” (Benjamin 1999a: 463).

The ‘what has been’ can also be interpreted as the extensive whole, and the ‘now’ is the intensity (Nietzsche’s gateway called ‘moment’)¹³. As it was illuminated by the ‘six intensive plateaus’ earlier in the Section, any intensity stands in for the whole at that particular moment. Read from the perspective of the ‘reader-astrologer’, the eruption of intensities from the whole marks a contraction into *now-time* – it is the time of *our* interpretation. This moment reveals the tension between the extensive and the intensive, suspended in a process of oscillation that extends to infinity. This is dialectics at a standstill, it is also Deleuze’s notion of pure difference, emerging from the paradox of extensity and the intensive.

Perhaps a comparison can be made here between the reader-astrologer’s relationship to the constellation of stars, and the role the photographer takes in performed photography. Just as the reader-astrologer is brought into the constellation in a flash – “...the astrologer does not perceive the constellation or name it from the outside.” (Jacobs 1999: 100), the photographer in performed photography also operates from *inside* the event. So neither the astrologer or the photographer takes up an external viewing position, instead they become subsumed, *enveloped*, into the constellation of an extended event. This is an interesting proposition in light of our central question *CPDIOE?* and as Cadava attests, “...the photographic event interrupts the present; it occurs *between* the

present and itself, between the movement of time and itself.” (Cadava 1997: 61).

This resonates for our enigmatic central question as we begin to catch glimpses of a folded, even quantum understanding of photography that emerges from the darkness, and offers a foretaste of what we might uncover as we move further into the crypt.

Monad or Nomad?

In an effort to prove that the concept of difference has always somehow, and in many different manifestations, been folded into the classical perspective, we will turn to Leibniz now in order to better understand the process of folding and unfurling. Hopefully this can illuminate how we can take the concept of photography and submit it to a folding, unfolding and refolding in order to instigate change.

The idea is a monad. The being enters into it, with its past and subsequent history, brings – concealed in its own form – an indistinct abbreviation of the rest of the world of ideas, just as, according to Leibniz’s *Discourse on Metaphysics* (1686), every single monad contains in an indistinct way, all the others.

(Benjamin [1963] 2009: 47)

Here we encounter another of Benjamin's *mélange* of expressions, this time using a Leibnizian concept. Having already ascertained that the idea is a constellation, we now discover that it is also a monad. As another way of detailing the concept of the idea and the monad using an astronomical metaphor, Benjamin explains; "[e]very idea is a sun and is related to other ideas just as suns are related to each other." (Benjamin [1963] 2009: 37). This opens up the possibility of the quantum again as we consider the connections between Benjamin's suns in relation to the Baroque fold, which "...unfurls all the way to infinity." (Deleuze [1993] 2003: 3). So each monad is related to other monads, which are related to *other* monads, and so on. I suggest that it is in this way that each tessera that forms the mosaic can take on the guise of a monad, with each piece of glass shining its light onto the surrounding fragments whilst holding its own dark secret. Just as there are universes within universes and suns within suns, there are folds within folds and intensities within intensities, as after all, "...every single monad contains in an indistinct way, all the others." (Benjamin [1963] 2009: 47). Concerning the traits of Leibniz's concept of the monad, Benjamin also remarks that it is of no surprise that the philosopher of *The Monadology* (1898) was also the founder of infinitesimal calculus (Benjamin [1963] 2009: 48). Perhaps we are moving towards uncovering an *infinitesimal* philosophy of photography in the thesis, as we peer into the crannies of what is 'concealed in its own form'; of what is concealed in the form of our question – *CPDIOE?*

This issue of connectivity brings us back to Deleuzian rhizomatics. As with Benjamin's notion of 'origin' that is in a perpetual process of transformation and

becoming, we must consider the rhizome as a nomadic multiplicity that is in a state of indeterminate movement, as opposed to a movement toward a fixed destination. Just as origin is not the start point for Benjamin of a concept or an idea, the movement of a rhizome is not unidirectional or towards an end point, instead it remains indefinite and in constant flux. Perhaps we can note a comparison here to psychogeography and the Situationist practice of the *dérive* (drift) as nomadic action, and as Guy Debord notes: “[f]rom the *dérive* point of view cities have a psychological relief, with constant currents, fixed points and vortexes which strongly discourage entry or exit from certain zones.” (Debord in Ford 2005: 35). The *dérive* then, is a practice that is open-ended in duration and its character is that of uncertainty and encounter. Debord’s explanation resonates with our understanding of how the rhizome operates, and the currents and vortexes are suggestive of what Benjamin evokes in the relationship of origin to becoming. The *dérives* of the Situationists took place in the streets of Paris and were akin to a ‘mapping’ of the city, with the map being a space of multiplicity, of performance:

The map is open, connectable in all its dimensions, and capable of being dismantled; it is reversible, and susceptible to constant modification. It can be torn, reversed, adapted to montages of every kind, taken in hand by an individual, a group or a social formation. [...] Contrary to the tracing, which always returns to the ‘same’, a map has multiple entrances. A map is a matter of performance, whereas the tracing always refers to an alleged ‘competence’.

(Deleuze and Guattari 1983: 26)

In the closing pages of *The Fold*, Deleuze tantalisingly offers an incidental comment that helps to make clear his trajectory: "...to overtake monadology with a 'nomadology'." (Deleuze [1993] 2003: 137). It is this play between the 'monad' and 'nomad' that signals a two-way oscillation between the singular and the rhizomatic and suggests the occurrence of 'double becoming'. This double becoming reveals itself as both an interconnected process of de- and re-territorialisation and as a productive paradox. Furthermore, it could be argued that in his works on other philosophers, Deleuze is engaging in a complete act of nomadology and to conclude his book on Leibniz, he writes – "[w]e are all still Leibnizian, although accords no longer convey our world or our text. We are discovering new ways of folding, akin to new envelopments, but we all remain Leibnizian because what always matters is folding, unfolding, refolding." (Deleuze [1993] 2003: 137). Indeed, our crypt is made up of an infinity of folds and so it will serve us well to become accustomed to the *art of convolution* if we are to fully comprehend the possibilities for *CPDIOE?*. Arguably, it is the process of folding, unfolding and refolding that represents Deleuze's approach to both Bergson and Leibniz's philosophies, and the very nature of *bricolage* that he was so often held accountable for.¹⁴ It is a nomadic movement that de- and re-territorialises the work and in doing so, Deleuze builds a new constituency of thought, a new *constellation* out of Bergson, Leibniz and Kant *et al.* As with Benjamin's interpretation of 'origin' and as it has been posited above, we can perceive Deleuze's 're-workings', his 're-foldings' of such works as newer intensities of these concepts.

To return to the notion of the *dérive* for a moment, perhaps the first and greatest perambulatory figure was Charles Baudelaire, the nomad-poet of Benjamin's imagination. The intensive poet forever emergent from the dark mass[es], the *flâneur* moving against the flow of the crowd:

This [passage] suggests two insights. For one thing it tells us about the close connection in Baudelaire between the figure of shock and contact with the urban masses. For another, it tells us what is really meant by these masses. They do not stand for classes or any sort of collective; rather, they are nothing but the amorphous crowd of passers-by, the people in the street. This crowd, whose existence Baudelaire is always aware of, does not serve as the model for any of his works; but it is imprinted on his creativity as a hidden figure, just as it constitutes the figure concealed in the excerpt quoted above. [*sic*] We can discern the image of the fencer in it: the blows he deals are designed to open a path for him through the crowd. To be sure, the neighbourhoods through which the poet of 'Le Soleil' makes his way are deserted. But the hidden constellation – in which the profound beauty of that stanza becomes thoroughly transparent – is no doubt a phantom crowd: the words, the fragments, the beginnings of lines, from which the poet, in the deserted streets, wrests poetic booty.

(Benjamin 2006b: 180-181) [*my brackets*]

As a point of comparison, we shall now re-interpret what Benjamin is writing here about Baudelaire in *The Writer of Modern Life: Essays on Charles Baudelaire* (2006b) in the context of the thesis, to make connections that will help illuminate the way as we move into the depths of our crypt. The masses, the phantom crowd that Baudelaire senses constitutes the figure of extensive magnitude for us, indeed

the crowd is *imprinted on his creativity as a hidden figure*; just as the intensive magnitudes of *CPDIOE?* are latent within the enigma of its form. The poet/fencer becomes the cryptographer in our scenario, as each blow the fencer deals will help him carve out a path to move further through the crowd, and alternatively each question we ask represents an attempt to get further into our crypt. Arguably, at times throughout the Section, the ‘cryptographer’ also takes on the additional guise of the *poet-cryptographer*, which perhaps more fittingly portrays the role undertaken by us in particular instances. And it is the beginnings of lines in the above quotation that form the rhizomatic lines of flight in our crypt; our question. These lines are capable of revealing the true value of this endeavour, as from these dark crypts, these deserted streets, we uncover the rewards that such a convoluted task offers, transmitted to us as a hidden constellation to be unlocked; a crypt to be deciphered.

Benjamin thus seeks to create a textual space in which speculative, intuitive, and analytical intelligence can move, reading images and the relays between them in such a way that the *present* meaning of ‘what has been comes together in a flash.’ This is what Benjamin calls the dialectical image. And ‘The Paris of the Second Empire in Baudelaire’ is the finest, most fully realized example of the critical practice informed by the theory of the dialectical image.

(Jennings 2006: 13) [*emphasis in original*]

Out of the amalgamation of essays contained within Benjamin's book, as the above quotation suggests, one particular work comes forward as an example of his infamous dialectical image. This work, 'The Paris of the Second Empire in Baudelaire' ([1938] 2006c) allowed for a conjunction of disparate ideas to present themselves as an illuminating constellation, with new configurations shining a light on issues such as capitalism and modernism. Indeed, we can note a similarity here to the formation of the Section, in that it brings together seemingly disparate ideas that emanate from/around *CPDIOE?* in the form of a series of questions. Our central question is undergoing a process of interrogation from multiple perspectives, with the interpretations presenting themselves as different intensities of *CPDIOE?*. As we speculated in the opening pages of the Section, perhaps these questions will form a constellation able to unlock the 'true value' of our endeavour, to unlock the crypt/code, whilst shining a light on new interpretations of photography.

As we ascertained earlier in the Section (question), the idea for Benjamin is both a constellation and a monad, and as Michael Löwy recognises in *Fire Alarm* (2005) "[i]t is the task of remembrance, in Benjamin's work, to build 'constellations' linking the present and the past. These constellations, these moments wrested from empty historical continuity are monads." (Löwy 2005: 95). Benjamin creates crypts through encrypted writings. Perhaps the most seminal and well known of these crypts is the 'Theses on the Philosophy of History' ([1940] 1969b), which we will peer into later in this chapter, employing Michael Löwy as guide.

Whence identity once the threshold is crossed?

Let us shift focus from the ‘clear-and-distinct’ nature of the previous Section (Photo[graphy]) as we attempt to move towards the ‘obscure zone’. In order to make this transition from clarity to obscurity, we began the Section by opening the door to the crypt and crossing over the threshold; is this also the threshold between representation and what lies beyond it? The crypt we speak of in metaphoric terms is the dark, the illegible, and that which is encrypted is our question – *CPDIOE?*. As we move into the depths of the crypt of *CPDIOE?*, we realise that we have got far enough over the threshold now, as the light from the Renaissance that illuminates representation fades behind us. It is time to find/invent another key to the darkness of *CPDIOE?*, and for this let us turn to Deleuze and his magnum opus *Difference and Repetition* ([1968] 2004a) to make an effort to unlock some of the complexities that lie in the depths of our crypt.

To help us in the darkness, we must remember what was uncovered about Ideas and intensities earlier in this Section from the six intensive plateaus, in terms of their dual capacity to both envelop and be enveloped. We shall now interpret this from the perspective of what James Williams suggests is perhaps one of the most important metaphors in *Difference and Repetition* ([1968] 2004a) – that of clarity and obscurity, or light and shadow (Williams 2003: 151). This metaphor illuminates the importance placed on principles of connectivity and rhizomatic

relations in Deleuze's *oeuvre* as the very construction of 'light' and 'shadow' must not be considered binary but dialectical.

The obscurity of some things is the cause of the clarity of others, in the sense that some things have to fade into the background for others to come to the fore. Clarity does not make sense unless we understand how obscurity has allowed it to come about.

(Williams 2003: 152)

As with our mosaic of photographs that helped us to understand intensities, we return to the process of oscillation, this time between clarity and obscurity and, moving further into our crypt, between light and darkness. What Deleuze wishes to convey in *Difference and Repetition* is the interrelatedness between the antinomies of clarity and obscurity as "...Ideas contain all the varieties of differential relations and all the distributions of singular points coexisting in diverse orders 'perpllicated' in one another." (Deleuze [1968] 2004a: 257). This notion of 'perplication' is a term Deleuze used to signal the coexistent state of Ideas, and if we remember that '*pli*' in French means 'fold', we can deduce that for Deleuze, Ideas are folded, unfolded and refolded into one another. Williams notes that it is this sense of folding that evades any misinterpretation of the light and shadow metaphor, this metaphor also "...reinforces the opposition between Deleuze's philosophy and the Cartesian legacy. Deleuze does not accept that things can be distinct, only more or less clear and more or less obscure."

(Williams 2003:151-152).

Deleuze writes: “Ideas as they exist in themselves are distinct-obscure. Opposed to the clear-and-distinct of Apollonian representation, Ideas are Dionysian, existing in an obscure zone which they themselves preserve and maintain.” (Deleuze [1968] 2004a: 350). Here Deleuze evokes Nietzsche in his use of the forces of the Apollonian and Dionysian from *The Birth of Tragedy* (1993) to present the dichotomy between the ‘clear-and-distinct’ and the ‘distinct-obscure’. As it was addressed in Section I of the thesis, the Apollonian represents clarity, rationality and light, whereas the Dionysian is associated with chaos, irrationality and excess.

The ‘clear and distinct’ itself is inseparable from the model of recognition which serves as the instrument of every orthodoxy, even when it is rational. Clarity and distinctness form the logic of recognition, just as innateness is the theology of common sense: both have already pushed the Idea over into representation. The restitution of the Idea in the doctrine of the faculties requires the explosion of the clear and the distinct, and the discovery of a Dionysian value according to which *the Idea is necessarily obscure in so far as it is distinct*, all the more obscure the more it is distinct. Distinction-obscurity becomes here the true tone of philosophy, the symphony of the discordant Idea.

(Deleuze [1968] 2004a: 184) [*emphasis in original*]

It seems pertinent here to interpret this Deleuzian position in relation to photography and dispel the well-rehearsed myth that photography is absolutely

clear or truthful (or should we say ‘clear-and-distinct’), and suggest that perhaps in the context of the thesis, what photography concerns itself with is being more or less clear or more or less obscure. This proposition is at least interesting if we make connections to Apollo and Dionysius above, in the sense that it could serve photography well to align itself with the ‘force’ of irrationality. Indeed, the project of *CPDIOE?* is one that strives to disassociate itself with clarity in order to encounter the obscure, to allow something of the Dionysian intoxication to permeate the glaring light of clear-and-distinct Apollonian representation. “In short, it is a question of causing a little of Dionysus’s blood to flow into the organic veins of Apollo.” (Deleuze [1968] 2004a: 331).

A text that can provide an interesting perspective on the issue of ‘distinction-obscurity’ here is James Elkins’ *Six Stories from the End of Representation* (2008). The book is written from the unusual position of attempting to conflate six fields of study: painting, photography and four branches of physics – astronomy, microscopy, particle physics and quantum mechanics. His concern is to study images from these six fields as an investigation into the limits of representation and as Elkins explains, the images he collected “... seemed to have a common theme: they were images that did not simply depict objects, but demonstrated how some objects resist depiction.” (Elkins 2008: xv). Though the book is quite heavily focused on a close, almost microscopic, analysis of an assemblage of images (and as a result much of the discussion is directed towards issues of representation in terms of technological apparatus), Elkins’s overarching study offers a novel way of thinking about some of the broader concerns of the thesis. It

appears that as we progress through the book we move further and further towards obscurity, with the final chapter investigating quantum mechanics, something we will be confronted with later in the Section.

If we are to draw on the concept of ‘enigma’ here for a moment, Elkins discusses a specific example briefly that is of use to us in relation to obscurity. He examines what the painter Giorgio De Chirico (1888–1978) cited as the inspiration for his work – ‘the enigma’. Elkins notes that “...De Chirico’s main concern was a specific kind of conceptual opacity. ‘Enigma’ was an apotropaic magic word, meant to ward off interpretations that would dissect his allusions.” (Elkins 2008: 15). Interestingly, De Chirico’s concept of ‘the enigma’ was seen to have developed from personal experiences and memories of the city of Turin and his thoughts about Nietzsche (Elkins 2008: 15-16), for whom the city held particular significance¹⁵. In the context of ‘distinction-obscurity’ then, it is useful to consider enigma as a kind of conceptual opacity, as something that repels clarity. The idea of conceptual opacity can be understood as the ‘obscure’ for the sake of this interpretation in the sense that it is difficult to decipher, and so we can align enigma with the obscure, the imperceptible and the cryptic. It is true that we can see De Chirico himself as an enigma as he was notorious for his “...nebulous, cryptic statements about his work and intentions, [...] this habit certainly reinforced his mysterious and enigmatic persona, his sense of unknowableness.” (Walker 2012: *u.p.*). Let us turn briefly to Nietzsche’s influence on De Chirico’s work, an issue that has been the subject of much art-historical debate. In her essay ‘Spectres in the City – De Chirico’s Mythologized Streetscapes’ (2010), Deborah

Walker offers some examples of the artists' paintings that have particular resonance with key themes in Nietzsche's texts. For instance, in works such as *The Red Tower* (1913) and *The Enigma of the Day* (1914), Walker observes "[i]t is possible to see the interdependence of the Apollonian-Dionysian unity in these works..." (Walker 2012: *u.p.*). In light of the concerns of the thesis, it is pertinent to note that much of De Chirico's painting was quite deeply inspired by the notion of duality and paradox. Let us take this example from *The Birth of Tragedy* (1993):

Only in so far as the genius is fused with the primal artist of the world in the act of artistic creation does he know anything of the eternal essence of art; for in that state he is wonderfully similar to *the weird fairy-tale image of the creature that can turn its eyes around and look at itself; now he is at once subject and object, at once poet, actor and audience.*
(Nietzsche 1993: 32) [*my emphasis*]

Interestingly, whilst illuminating the notion of paradox in Nietzsche that we find in De Chirico, it is undeniable that this quotation has strong resonances for our central question, our cryptic code – *CPDIOE?*. Perhaps photography in this instance becomes the creature that Nietzsche speaks of that can turn its eyes around and look at itself; where photography is folded into itself as it becomes both subject and object. This sense of collapse, of folding, is what Kennan Ferguson calls Nietzsche's '*at-onceness*', it is "...a call to plurality of identity [...] it is the crossing of established positionings—that the audience can in part

become the creator and the creator can become the audience.” (Ferguson 2007: 14). Certainly this entanglement of roles between poet, actor and audience can be read in connection with the concerns of performed photography in Section I, though this observation is not something to be expanded upon here¹⁶. We shall now investigate further the plurality of identity, or even, the breaking up/down of identity in the crypt. If we consider the ‘breaking *up*’ of identity, this suggests a division or a split in identity where identity becomes fractured, however these ‘fragments’ can still be recognised as facets of ‘identity’ *per se*. These fragments of identity come together to form a multiplicity of identities, where identity morphs from singular to plural in its form. A ‘breaking *down*’ of identity on the other hand, has more destructive connotations in its evocation of a sense of collapse, from which there is no return. Perhaps what this provocation reveals is that when identity is broken *up*, there is still a chance for redemption, identity can be pieced back together and salvaged. However when identity is broken *down*, there is an irrevocable shift in ‘states’; identity is left in ruins. Perhaps the crypt will allow for both these events to take place in a double-movement (breaking up/breaking down), as a double-becoming where identity has the capacity to rupture but also to collapse into itself. As Deleuze remarks in *Nietzsche and Philosophy* ([1983] 2006b); “[t]here is no event, no phenomenon, word or thought which does not have a multiple sense” (Deleuze [1983] 2006b: 4).

To consider the metaphor of the crypt once more, is to be attentive to the indiscernability we face that results from being in the darkness. If we are able to ascertain that we are moving further into the crypt (I hasten to add that this

movement is not unidirectional), we become conscious of a sense of movement, though we remain unaware of our position. Here we can make a connection with quantum mechanics *via* Werner Heisenberg's 'Uncertainty Principle' (1927), which (speaking of particles) states that, "...it is not possible simultaneously to have perfect knowledge of both position and momentum." (Polkinhorne 2002: 33). For Heisenberg, the pairs of physical properties of a particle are inextricably related because the more accurately we are able to plot the position of the particle, the less accurately we can obtain data regarding its momentum, and vice versa. In this way, perhaps this Section of the thesis is focused on concerning itself with momentum; which in this context is the movement through the questions as intensities in order to get further into the crypt of *CPDIOE?*. For this reason, we can use such an allusion of position and movement to think about the breaking up/down of identity in the crypt. Touching upon the issue of the 'clear-and-distinct' and the 'distinct-obscure' once more, identity is allied to the notion of the 'clear-and-distinct' and to the logic of recognition, yet when we speak of something becoming indistinct (more or less clear or more or less obscure), we enter into the realm of distinction-obscurity. If we think of identity as the position of something at any one time, it can be linked to a world of discrete objects and of *difference by degree*. However, without the privileging of sight we move through the darkness of the crypt with uncertainty – unable to determine any accurate position, yet with a heightened sense of movement. In this instance, we are able to experience the mobility of thinking in terms of *difference in kind* as we "...allow our thoughts and bodies to turn into intensities, to difference in itself." (Williams 2003: 11). We become powerless in our ability to spatialise our position in the

crypt and as a result, the indeterminate movement through this dark space is imbued with a sense of open-ended temporality. As we move through this indistinct space, we must remember the plight of Deleuze's cryptographer – "...to peer into the crannies of matter and read into the folds of the soul." (Deleuze [1993] 2003: 3), and so it is our task to find the keys that will take us into the crannies of darkness and into the folds of the crypt of *CPDIOE?*. In way of orientation at this point in the thesis, we can state that taking the role of the cryptographer is allowing us to decode the assumed transparency of the classical perspective by looking through the opaque optic of difference. The method is to see photography as a fully rounded concept beyond its obvious two-dimensionality and to multiply and enrich the many possible perspectives that we can gain on the medium.

Difference and Repetition, the key to thresholds yet to come?

Now we must invent another key to *CPDIOE?*, and perhaps this iteration will allow us to get closer to the enigma of our question as each repetition provides a different 'configuration' that presents itself as an intensity. The very act of intensively interpreting this enveloped code opens up the crypt to reveal the depth and obscurity that is inherent in our question, and that through repetition we can make effort to access what this enigmatic phrase holds secret. It is appropriate then, that this 'key' concerns the issue of difference and repetition, which will

address the process that we are employing in this Section as a way of drawing attention to some of the intricacies of the construction of *CPDIOE*?

“The world, as a multiplicity, is constituted by moments of, and differences in, intensity.” (O’Sullivan 2006: 31).

It is Deleuze’s task in *Difference and Repetition* ([1968] 2004a) to conduct a critique of mainstream representation, and in doing so, he hoped to destabilise the fixity of classical representation. As we noted in the closing pages of Section I, Deleuze and Foucault determine four ‘iron collars’ of the classical world of representation, which co-ordinate and measure it (Deleuze [1968] 2004a: 330). To remind ourselves, these four dimensions are: “...identity in the concept, opposition in the predicate, analogy in judgement and resemblance in perception” (Deleuze [1968] 2004a: 330). As we investigated in the previous Section of the thesis, representation **in this context** can be understood as a product of spatialisation, whereas difference and repetition is to be found in temporality and beyond rationality – indeed it was theorised in order to escape from the canon of mainstream representation, as outlined above. In this way, we can surely catch glimpses of the potential of such a developed strategy that is concerned with temporality and the irrational to get us further into the crypt of *CPDIOE*?

In conjunction with the challenge to representation that difference and repetition presents, it is also important to acknowledge another aspect, that is, the promotion of the concept of difference that is not based on a relationship with sameness,

what Cliff Stagoll calls Deleuze's 'liberation' of difference (Stagoll 2010: 75) from the model of representation. As Deleuze himself proclaims, "[d]ifference is not and cannot be thought in itself, so long as it is subject to the requirements of representation." (Deleuze [1968] 2004a: 330). So in order to experience an intensive *difference in itself* (difference in kind), as opposed to an extensive *difference by degree*, it is crucial that we must think difference differently – as a difference not controlled by identity or similarity, but as a 'conceptual' difference. Furthermore, repetition is connected to, and produced by, difference in its capacity as a productive process of continuous variation that occurs through each repetition.

For Deleuze, repetition is produced via difference, not mimesis. It is a process of ungrounding that resists turning into an inert system of replication. In fact, the whole Platonist idea of representing in order to produce copies is completely undermined by Deleuze. For Deleuze maintains this approach is deeply flawed because it subsumes the creative nature of difference under an immobile system of resemblance.

(Parr 2010b: 225)

It is here that we can understand the reciprocal relationship that is played out between difference *and* repetition and it becomes our task at this stage to free both counterparts from their impoverished meaning within representation. By liberating difference and repetition from these constraints, we are able to speak not of representational difference and simple repetition, but of *pure* difference and

complex repetition, which is produced out of this emancipation. We are already aware of how this aforementioned intensive ‘difference in kind’ operates, so let us turn briefly to its relationship with Deleuze’s notion of complex repetition, and similarly, how this can help to decipher *CPDIOE?*. Rather than a material and bare repetition *of the same* that takes place within representation, in order to access a clothed, ‘complex repetition’ Deleuze utilises a system of *simulacra*, which divert from the model and copy of representation to take the form of *series*. As Deleuze attests, “[s]imulacra are those systems in which difference relates to different *by means of* difference in itself. What is essential is that we find in these systems no *prior identity*, no *internal resemblance*.” (Deleuze [1968] 2004a: 372-373) [*emphasis in original*].

Systems of simulacra affirm divergence and decentring: the only unity, the only convergence of all the series, is an informal chaos in which they are all included. No series enjoys privilege over others, none possesses the identity of a model, none the resemblance of a copy. None is either opposed or analogous to another. Each is constituted by differences, and communicates with the others through differences of differences. Crowned anarchies are substituted for the hierarchies of representation; nomadic distributions for the sedentary distributions of representations.

(Deleuze [1968] 2004a: 348)

Indeed it seems pertinent to remark that in this way, perhaps our enigmatic question *CPDIOE?* employs the principles of simulacra in its continuous recurrence, as the repetitions multiply to form a rhizomatic, non-hierarchical

series. In fact, in order to ‘overthrow Platonism’ and subvert the world of representation, Deleuze, in *The Logic of Sense* ([1990] 2004c) stresses, “[t]he simulacrum is not a degraded copy. It harbors a positive power which denies *the original and the copy, the model and the reproduction*. [...] There is no longer any privileged point of view except that of the object common to all points of view.” (Deleuze [1990] 2004c: 299) [*emphasis in original*]. We can see resonances here with Leibniz’s writings on perspective and his example of the multiple viewpoints of a city, as one particular view is not afforded the luxury of a privileged position, instead, the perspectives come together to form a multiplicity, a series. Aside from this, if we return to the above quotation from *Difference and Repetition* ([1968] 2004a), our perceptions are heightened as we become acutely aware of the inner workings of *CPDIOE?* and how this cryptic code operates, as each repetition of the question is constituted by differences *and communicates with the others through differences of differences*.

Certainly the qualities Deleuze attributes to difference and repetition strike a chord with the broader concerns of the thesis, and the more pointed inquiries of this Section on cryptography in particular; “[t]he powers of repetition include displacement and disguise, just as difference includes power [*sic*] of divergence and decentring.” (Deleuze [1968] 2004a: 360). As we have ascertained thus far in investigations concerning intensities and the issue of distinction-obscurity, it is worth noting the significance of repetition having the capability to *displace* and *disguise*. Moreover, such a proclivity is commensurate with being in the darkness of the crypt of *CPDIOE?* as we search for clues that will help us unlock this

enigmatic conundrum. Let us look more closely at the two forms of repetition that Deleuze puts forward:

One has fixed terms and places; the other essentially includes displacement and disguise. One is negative and by default; the other is positive and by excess. One is of elements, extrinsic parts, cases and times; the other is of variable internal totalities, degrees and levels. One involves succession in fact, the other coexistence in principle. One is static; the other dynamic. One is extensive, the other intensive. One is ordinary; the other distinctive and involving singularities. One is horizontal; the other vertical. One is developed and must be explicated; the other is enveloped and must be interpreted. One is a repetition of equality and symmetry *in the effect*; the other is a repetition of inequality as though it were a repetition of asymmetry *in the cause*. One is repetition of mechanism and precision; the other repetition of selection and freedom. One is bare repetition which can be masked only afterwards and in addition; the other is a clothed repetition of which the masks, the displacements and the disguises are the first, last and only elements.

(Deleuze [1968] 2004a: 359) [*emphasis in original*]

Perhaps the first point to be made here is that for Deleuze, true difference lies between the two forms of repetition, as outlined above. In the quotation, ‘One’ can be aligned to representation, which Deleuze links with identity, and the ‘other’ represents the heterogenous group, and is connected to difference and temporality. If we remind ourselves of the generative power of productive syntheses once more, it becomes clear that we are not merely focusing on representation *or* difference, as such a synthesis enables us to redress the balance

of the perceived hegemony of representation *over* a Deleuzian system of difference. It is from this process that we enable succession (representation) and co-existence (difference) to collide. To return to the question of photography for a moment, let us contemplate the difference between the two types of repetition in order to shed some light onto our question *CPDIOE?*. For instance, ‘One is of elements, extrinsic parts, cases and times’ and ‘the other is of variable internal totalities, degrees and levels’. This is a particularly apt example given that *extrinsic parts, cases and times* seems to suggest some sort of *ex-ternal* or distanced relationship, which, given the concerns of the previous Section, we can perhaps align with a photography that is committed to spatial concerns from a representational standpoint. On the other hand, *variable internal totalities, degrees and levels* evokes something more convoluted and labyrinthine, and calls forth a complex photographic potentiality... *CPDIOE?*.

As with the creative power Deleuze ascribes to the positing of problems, we must also recognise the possibilities for transformation and invention that emanate from the act of repetition, as Adrian Parr notes, “...repetition dissolves identities as it changes them, giving rise to something unrecognisable and productive.” (Parr 2010b: 226). This is the encounter of repetition that rejects stasis in favour of the dynamism and flux of difference in itself. Indeed, it is important to remember that repetition is not unidirectional towards an already predetermined destination – “...repetition calls forth a *terra incognita* filled with a sense of novelty and unfamiliarity.” (Parr 2010b: 226). From our perspective then, such an experience of repetition leading into the unknown is undoubtedly heightened as we move

deeper into the crypt of *CPDIOE?*. Whilst there is no ‘end point’ which repetition seeks to arrive at, there is neither any ‘object’ of repetition – what is repeated is repetition itself, and it is the act of repetition that produces pure difference.

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.

(Deleuze [1968] 2004a: 331)

Perhaps the thesis offers a response to the task of the above quotation in that it seeks to add *a hitherto unsuspected perspective to representation*. I would suggest that this ‘unsuspected perspective’ in the context of this investigation and photography, takes the form of a minor-photography, as it emerges as a rupture from within the major, spatialised practices of the medium in question. It is this movement, this rumble of the minor, that has the potential to produce a paradigm shift within the medium by creating lines of flight that moves us out towards the peripheries, and extends representation to its limits. Furthermore, the ‘technique’ we have invented to enable us to *integrate the depth of difference in itself* has arguably been expounded in this Section – it is revealed as our question, our code, *CPDIOE?*. Now turning towards a baroque complexity, it is well to consider that

the crypt of *CPDIOE?* wishes to *conquer* (encounter) *the obscure*, whilst still allowing representation to *capture the power of giddiness and intoxication*. Here Deleuze evokes Dionysius once more in order to stir the irrationality that this impulsive figure of excess conjures up in our imagination. In relation to our endeavour, this suggests that whilst concerning ourselves with the minute details of the question in a multiplicity of attempts to conquer the obscurity of *CPDIOE?*, perhaps this six-word enigma withholds any sense of rationality in favour of that which is aligned to a baroque imperceptibility, as it retains its mystique in the face of such an interrogation.

Questions and questions and questions in questions – the ultimate crypt?

As we attempt to invent another key to the crypt of *CPDIOE?*, let us focus our attention on the Deleuzian ‘and’ and the concept of the fold to get us further into the darkness. At this stage it will serve us well to recall the notion of a ‘Bergsonian problem’, in order to reflect on the way that we are set to work at *uncovering* and positing our question fully, as opposed to hopelessly searching for a steadfast or lasting ‘solution’ to the problem. In a short interview for *Cahiers de Cinéma* in 1976, Deleuze offers a response to Jean-Luc Godard’s mini-television series *Six Fois Deux/Sur et sous la communication* (Six Times Two/On and Beneath Communication) (1976). Published in *Negotiations* (1995) under the title

‘Three Questions on ‘Six Times Two’, Deleuze discusses ideas relating to the broadcast. He begins by drawing on a well known saying by Godard “...not a just image, just an image.” (Godard in Deleuze 1995: 38), and suggests that perhaps philosophers should also make it their task to carry this out in their activities and explains, “...the just ideas are always those that conform to accepted meanings or to established precepts, they’re always ideas that confirm something...” (Deleuze 1995: 38). Alternatively, “...‘just ideas’ is a becoming-present, a stammering of ideas, and can only be expressed in the form of questions that tend to confound any answers. Or you can present something simple that disrupts all the arguments.” (Deleuze 1995: 38). Here we can draw our resonances with the Bergsonian problem once more, in that ‘answers’ do not present themselves to us when considering ‘just ideas’, and so we are left with questions... questions... questions. Perhaps we can attest that our question *CPDIOE?* is ‘just an idea’ in this sense, in that the very task of its formation as a crypt/code/question is to perplex and confuse and, following the above quotation, is deceiving in its supposed simplicity whilst it operates as a force of disruption. Let us now consider how *CPDIOE?* produces a creative stammering through both its repetition and its use of the conjunctive ‘and’ to evoke a multiplicity:

...a multiplicity is not defined by the number of its terms. We can always add a 3rd to 2, a 4th to 3, etc., we do not escape dualism in this way, since the elements of any set whatever can be related to a succession of choices which are themselves binary. It is not the elements or the sets which define the multiplicity. What defines it is the AND, as something which has its place between the elements

or between the sets. AND, AND, AND–stammering. And even if there are only two terms, there is an AND between the two, which is neither the one nor the other, nor the one which becomes the other, but which constitutes the multiplicity. This is why it is always possible to undo dualisms from the inside, by tracing the line of flight which passes between the two terms or the two sets, the narrow stream which belongs neither to the one nor to the other, but draws both into a non-parallel evolution, into a heterochronous becoming.

(Deleuze and Parnet [1987] 2002: 26)
[emphasis in original]

So it is our task at this stage to remain within a qualitative appreciation of the ‘and’, that is, we must turn our backs to a numerical, quantifiable understanding, we must not concern ourselves with *how many times* we ask our question *CPDIOE?*, but instead focus our attention on the act of repeating, of asking again... *CPDIOE?*. Indeed, this question of numbers appears in Godard too, prompting the interviewer to ask Deleuze what these numbers *mean*. In riposte, Deleuze nimbly puts forward his notion of creative stammering that is enveloped in the conjunctive ‘and’ – “...AND, ‘and...and...and...’ is precisely a creative stammering, a foreign use of language, as opposed to a conformist and dominant use based on the verb ‘to be’.” (Deleuze 1995: 44):

A and B. The AND is not even a specific relation or conjunction, it is that which subtends all relations, the path of all relations, which makes relations shoot outside their terms and outside the set of their terms, and outside everything which could be determined as Being, One, or Whole. The AND as extra being, inter-being. Relations might still establish

themselves between their terms, or between two sets, from one to the other, but the AND gives relations another direction, and puts to flight terms and sets, the former and the latter on the line of flight which it actively creates. Thinking *with* AND, instead of thinking IS, instead of thinking *for* IS...
(Deleuze and Parnet [1987] 2002: 43)
[emphasis in original]



Figure 5: PAUL+A 2006, 'I Watched Her Until She Disappeared' (excerpt) [performed photography, black and white 5x4 Polaroid photographs]. Courtesy of the artist.

We shall return briefly here to Jeff's experiments in performed photography under the pseudonym PAUL+A. In the work *'I Watched Her Until She Disappeared'* (2006), Jeff utilises Deleuze's conception of difference and repetition in an attempt to generate meaning in the conjunctive spaces between photographs. It is precisely the works' utilisation of this notion of creative stammering enveloped in the conjunctive 'and' that turns against a conventional photographic language. The work is concerned with the generation of emotion or sensation through a

constructed situation that attempts to unfurl a traumatic experience, in this case the abduction and imprisonment of young women in Mexico by the drug cartels. Located in a prison cell in Northern Ireland, the work interrogates the parallel situations of being imprisoned, both in reality and metaphorically as well as *via* gender, within photographic representation. This one image was generated every hour for a whole week (one hundred and sixty eight Polaroid photographs), the pose remaining the same with only the inscribed feelings of the imprisoned woman and the black or white dress producing variation. Rather than describing the condition of being imprisoned, the serial nature of the work constitutes a multiplicity, opening up new directions by which to interpret an event in all its ramifications. Here one could argue that photography is *thinking with AND instead of thinking IS, instead of thinking for IS.*

It seems productive here to consider the relationship between the conjunctive ‘and’ that replaces the ‘is’ of identity, and the concept of the fold as the relationship of difference with itself. As we have acknowledged thus far, the ‘and’ operates as an agent of connection *between* elements or sets and deftly constructs relations that form a multiplicity – “AND is neither one thing nor the other, its always in-between, between two things; it’s the borderline, there’s always a border, a line of flight or flow, only we don’t see it, because it’s the least perceptible of things.” (Deleuze 1995: 45). Still, the fold can be said to function in a similar way in that it advocates an intensive process, and maybe along each crease of each fold we sense the practice of the ‘and’ which has been set to work along these lines. “The problem is not how to finish a fold, but how to continue it,

to have it go through the ceiling, how to bring it to infinity.” (Deleuze [1993] 2003: 34). Perhaps what becomes apparent is that such a relationship between the two signals a ‘principle of connectivity’, hence, it could be argued that both the ‘and’ and the ‘fold’ share the same motive in that they both seek to rupture the permanence of ‘being’ by a process of ‘becoming’.

The fold must surely take us further into the crypt of our question, as its very construction is one that contains folds – *CPDIOE?* is an ineluctable enigma – *can photography describe its own event?*. Certainly, it becomes pertinent to consider the inner workings of the fold, as O’Sullivan notes, “...the fold can also be understood as the name for one’s relation to oneself (or, the effect of the self *on* the self).” (O’Sullivan 2010b: 107), and points out that it was the Greeks to first discover this technique of folding, or ‘self mastery’ (O’Sullivan 2010b: 107). This notion of ‘self mastery’ is a particularly revealing term to use in relation to *CPDIOE?*, as the task of fully comprehending the possibilities for this complex question becomes an apprenticeship of sorts. As Deleuze attests in *Proust and Signs* ([1964] 2008), “[t]o learn is first of all to consider a substance, an object, a being as if it emitted signs to be deciphered, interpreted. There is no apprentice who is not ‘the Egyptologist’ of something.” (Deleuze [1964] 2008: 4).

Indeed, the workings of this apprenticeship signifies what is detailed in the thesis, and we must not underestimate the importance the role that the cryptographer takes in such an endeavour – deciphering and interpreting the crypt of *CPDIOE?*. As we determined in the opening pages of the Section, it is our task here to

intensively *envelop and interpret* the question, in contrast to the concerns of the previous Section which *developed and explicated CPDIOE?*. In terms of how our question/code utilises folds, let us take inspiration from a Deleuzian folded architecture, as Graham Livesey explains, “A folded, or pliant architecture is able to interconnect with a context/site in a seamless manner, and is able to create complexity from a single gesture.” (Livesey 2010: 110). Thus, our folded question/code creates complexity in the single gesture of its utterance.

The crypt encapsulated; doors wide shut?

Key to this next sub-section in terms of the dissolving of the classical perspective in photography is the evocation of a darkness hiding in the full light of reason. By returning to the concept of the monad, we move into the darkest part of the crypt. This dark enigmatic space is made up of an infinity of folds, in which the whole world of monads are encapsulated, hidden. The monad as a unit then, is both completely contained, a crypt, yet also communicates with other monads. This supposed paradox is made clear through the metaphor of the two-floored baroque house – the lower floor forms connections to the world (and other monads), whereas the upper floor contains the soul and is completely incommunicable – “[t]he world of matter, open to the universe (exteriority), and the world of the soul, closed in on itself and without windows and doors (interiority).” (O’Sullivan 2006: 123). As Deleuze explains in an interview on Leibniz:

Leibniz's most famous proposition is that every soul or subject (monad) is completely closed, windowless and doorless, and contains the whole world in its darkest depths, whilst also illuminating some little portion of that world, each monad, a different portion. So the world is enfolded in each soul, but differently, because each illuminates only one little aspect of the overall folding.
(Deleuze 1995: 157)

Here we can make a connection with what we uncovered about the distinct-obscure earlier in this Section, in the sense that clarity only appears because of obscurity. As O'Sullivan (following Deleuze) concisely explains, each monad includes a 'clear zone', which contains an element that is uniquely attributed to that specific monad, what Bergson terms a 'zone of perception' (O'Sullivan 2006: 123). We learn in *The Fold*, that "[e]ssential to the monad is its *dark background*: everything is drawn out of it, and nothing goes out or comes in from the outside." (Deleuze [1993] 2003: 27) [*emphasis in original*]. Indeed, what is outside the 'clear zone' of the monad makes up this *dark background*, which represents the obscure for the monad in question, but would constitute the 'clear zone' for other monads (O'Sullivan 2006: 123). Here we can make an analogy perhaps to the classic conception of the latent image in analogue photography. A dark background imbued with pure potential that forms a threshold with the clear zone of the image.

The ability to reconcile opposites, a hallmark of Baroque art and architecture, means that inside and outside (coextensive space), illusion and reality, light and dark, movement and stasis, finite and infinite and space and mass, interact in complex interplays, both unifying and blurring the distinctions between each.

(Livesey 2010: 109)

The above quotation reminds us of one of the key principles of Deleuze's philosophy that he seemingly developed from the traits of Baroque art and architecture; namely, the possibilities for productive syntheses *between* antinomies. As a central tenet of the thesis, the principle has been expounded in a variety of ways thus far, though now we must investigate the relationship between the one and the multiple in relation to monads and divergent and convergent seriality. The emphasis here will be placed on the connection between monads; how each monad *indistinctly* contains the whole world of monads within itself, encapsulated in the enigma of its form. The one is enveloped in the multiple and the multiple enveloped in the one.¹⁷ Earlier in the Section we saw how Deleuze and Parnet utilised the 'and' as a way of opening up, of undoing dualisms from the *inside*, and so it is our task here to think not of the 'one' and the 'multiple' as binary oppositions, but to consider how they both include the other and indeed, the process of oscillation that occurs between them. As O'Sullivan notes, "[i]t is in this sense that the Baroque is at one and the same time the multiple *and the* One, a constant interplay, or resonance, between the two – the two floors of the Baroque house." (O'Sullivan 2006: 137). And so the monad itself speaks of the relationship of the one to the multiple, enveloped in a single point of view. We

can see how the oscillations, vacillations, between the one and the multiple reverberate for *CPDIOE?* in the way that each iteration of our crypt/code forms an interconnected ‘web’ with all other actual/virtual articulations of our enigmatic question. *CPDIOE?* as a question then, is infinite in its variation.

A new or another dualism? No. A problem in writing: inexact expressions are absolutely necessary in order to designate something exactly. And not at all because one has to pass through them, nor because one can proceed only through approximations: inexactitude is the exact path of what is done, and not at all an approximation.
(Deleuze and Guattari 1983: 47)

Here, Deleuze and Guattari in ‘Rhizome’¹⁸; first published in *On the Line* (1983) and subsequently as the Introduction to *A Thousand Plateaus* ([1987] 2004a), describe the process of enacting a rhizomatic gesture between dualisms – “[w]e invoke one dualism only in order to challenge another. [...] Each time, mental correctives are necessary to undo the dualisms we had no wish to construct but through wish we pass.” (Deleuze and Guattari [1987] 2004a: 22-23). It is through this process that we arrive at Deleuze and Guattari’s ‘magic’ paradoxical formula: “PLURALISM = MONISM” (Deleuze and Guattari [1987] 2004a: 23).

Furthermore, given that the major trajectory of the thesis is concerned with positing our question (*CPDIOE?*) well in the Bergsonian sense (as opposed to looking for a ‘lasting solution’ to the question/problem), the term *inexact expression* from the above quotation is particularly revealing. In fact, perhaps the

questions that form the Section constitute ‘inexact expressions’ of *CPDIOE?* and that it is only when all questions come into alignment (as in a constellation), are we able to comprehend the possibilities afforded by our simply stated question. Our crypt follows the *path of inexactitude*.

We begin with the world as if with a series of inflections or events: it is a pure emission of singularities. Here, for example, are three singularities: to be the first man, to live in a garden of paradise, to have a wife created from one’s own rib. And then fourth: sinning. Singularity events of this kind hold a relation with ‘ordinaries’ or ‘regulars’ (the difference here being minimal). A singularity is surrounded by a cloud of ordinaries or regulars.

(Deleuze [1993] 2003: 60)

According to Deleuze, Leibniz’s world-view was one of “...an infinity of converging series, capable of being extended into each other, around unique points.” (Deleuze [1993] 2003: 60). These ‘unique points’ are singularities, and in *Difference and Repetition*, they are points of “...perpetual recommencement and of variation.” (Conley 2010: 256). So the convergence and divergence of all series form a connected network through these ‘points’, always in a state of flux and renewal. Singularities can instigate new series, which may extend and overlap with other series generated from other singularities. This very notion of series by Leibniz is continued by Deleuze in *Difference and Repetition*, where he puts forward a system of simulacra as a challenge to the ‘model and copy’ of representation. As we uncovered earlier in the Section, simulacra take the form of

a non-hierarchical series and communicate *via* difference; we can arguably see resonances of Leibniz's connected network of series here. At this juncture, it is well to remember how the conjunctive 'and' operates as an agent of connection, as we suggested with the glass paste that holds together the tesserae of Benjamin's mosaic, and also more recently, the 'AND' that activates a "...heterochronous becoming" (Deleuze and Parnet [1987] 2002: 26) between dualisms, that in turn constitutes a Deleuzian multiplicity.

Now, considering our interest in the relationship *between* monads, we will concentrate our attention here on the 'opening up' of the monad that we touched upon briefly in an earlier question of this Section ('*monad or nomad?*'), which arguably instigates new kinds of folding, new envelopments. Tom Conley in his translator's foreword to *The Fold* addresses this transformation of *monadology* into *nomadology* as he suggests, "[t]he two worlds must fold into each other." (Conley [1993] 2003: xv-xvi). Perhaps the most well known example Deleuze uses to offer a contemporary interpretation of the monad is that of the speeding car of Tony Smith – "[s]omething has changed in the situation of monads, between the former model, the closed chapel with imperceptible openings, and the new model invoked by Tony Smith, the sealed car speeding down the dark highway." (Deleuze [1993] 2003: 137).

The quotation suggests that the 'opening up' of the monad includes an integration of speed and movement – the *monad becoming nomad*. Accordingly, "[w]hen Glenn Gould speeds up the performance of a piece, he is not simply being a

virtuoso; he is transforming the musical points into lines, and making the ensemble proliferate.” (Deleuze and Guattari 1983: 15). As the monad is mobilised (the sealed car speeding down the highway), it instigates its own line of flight and puts all other monads into perpetual movement; *points are transformed into lines*. In terms of Heisenburg’s ‘Uncertainty Principle’ (1927) which we investigated earlier, the more precisely we can plot the position of particles, the less information we can gather about their speed or the momentum. In this way, we are shifting gear in our understanding of the monad to incorporate the ‘other’ dimension – that of movement as opposed to that of position. Just as speed causes the multiplication of Gould’s musical ensemble, this act of *nomadology* enables more channels of communication to be activated between monads. As Deleuze recognises, “[t]here’s nothing more unsettling than the continual movement of something that seems fixed. In Leibniz’s words: a dance of particles folding back on themselves.” (Deleuze 1995: 157). Thinking of the continual movement of the rhizome again, it is the lines of flight that instigate a perpetual process of de- and re-territorialisation of the rhizome and that which it encounters:

There is a rupture in the rhizome each time the segmentary lines explode into a line of flight, but the line of flight is part of the rhizome. These lines never cease to refer to one another, which is why a dualism or a dichotomy can never be assumed...

(Deleuze and Guattari 1983: 18)

In relation to this, if we remember that for Benjamin, all monads indistinctly contain all other monads, then we can begin to see that perhaps this intrinsic (yet not always visible) connecting element is precisely what a contemporary interpretation of the monad reveals in a more explicit manner. So if we can identify the need for flight then from what are we fleeing? (Is fleeing inherently negative in connotation?). Perhaps it is the rigidity of systems, the habitual rationale in need of deterritorialisation? In a certain sense then, to relate this Section back to Section I, it may be the flight from legibility itself, in search of new forms of creativity. Let us remind ourselves of Deleuze's definition of Leibniz's famous monad: "...a unity that envelops a multiplicity, this multiplicity developing the One in the manner of a 'series'." (Deleuze [1993] 2003: 23). And so we move forward leaving the legible to Section I and the *light* of photography, just as we are now engaged in interrogating the *dark* elements of the concept, and as we will move on again in Section III to the emergence of the photographic event from the plane of zero.

Walter Benjamin – a dream of legibility?

In order to dispel the dream of legibility (or at least the illusion of it) as it pertains to photography, we have been supplementing/dissolving the classical perspective with the concept of difference. This is a central tenet of our hypothesis and as we move towards the end of the Section, we shall now investigate a possible site of convergence of the major concepts detailed thus far, which can arguably be found

in a recollection of a dream by Walter Benjamin. The concepts we will be considering include intensities, monads, difference, multiplicities and notions of enigma and cryptography. Perhaps this meeting place will allow some of the convolutions we have been fostering throughout this cryptic journey to come together to form a new constellation, a new interpretation of our code *CPDIOE?*, which will enable us to invent another key to get further into our crypt. It seems pertinent to note at this stage that, in keeping with the concerns of the thesis, we are going to eschew a more predictable Freudian analysis in deciphering the dream, in favour of employing the figure of the cryptographer to carry out this task. Consequently, we will draw on the knowledge gained along our crypts' *paths of inexactitude* to interpret the dream for creative possibilities relating to our general trajectory of enquiry. We shall now look further into the scenario of the dream. Let us return to the Baroque writer *par excellence*, and in particular, a letter Benjamin wrote in October 1939 (the final year of his life) to good friend Greta Adorno (1902 – 1993), in which he details his profound experience. Benjamin's dream was an enigma; it preoccupied the rest of his work as he spent the last months of his life trying to decipher this unfathomable allegory. Indeed the space of the dream is a space displaced beyond rationality and it is interesting that as a purposefully cryptic writer, Benjamin was struck by such an allusive encounter himself.

Let us turn to Buci-Glucksmann's account of Benjamin's dream:

Benjamin narrates that he was in the company of Doctor Dausse (who had cured him of malaria) and that, having left some other people, they found themselves at an *excavation site*. Almost at the level of the ground: ‘*Couches* of a strange kind, the length of *sarcophagi*’. But in fact, in ‘half kneeling down, I realized that we were softly sinking into it as in a *bed*’. It was all ‘covered with moss or ivy’ so that ‘the whole thing resembled a *forest*’. Suddenly the view changes: the forest becomes like a ‘nautical construction’ and ‘on the deck . . . were three women with whom Dausse was living. This sight does not disturb him anymore than the discovery that I made *at the very moment* when I was leaving my hat on a grand piano. It was a real *straw hat*, a panama that I had *inherited from my father*. As I was *ridding myself of it*, I was struck by a *wide fissure* that appeared in the upper part . . . with *traces of red* on the edges.

Then follow a number of events linked with women. The first of these women, a graphology expert, is particularly unsettling for the dreamer. ‘I feared that some of *my intimate traits* might thereby be *disclosed*. I drew closer. What I *saw* was a *fabric covered with images*.’ The only writing he can distinguish on it is the upper part of the letter D, the more ‘spiritual’ part. Some conversations then take place about this writing, and Benjamin retains a clear textual and oral memory. At a certain moment he said the words: ‘The point was *to change some poetry into a scarf*.’

But scarcely had I said these words than *something very intriguing happened*. I notice that among the women was a very beautiful one lying in a bed. When she heard my explication she has a brief moment like a *flash of lightning* . . . and drew aside a tiny piece of the blanket . . . But what she wanted to show me was not *her body* but the *pattern of the sheet*, which displayed imagery similar to that which I had to write many years ago when giving a present to Dausse. I *knew* very well that the lady was making that movement. But what told me this was a kind of *supplementary vision*. For *the eyes of my body*

were elsewhere and I could not at all make out
what the sheet had *fleetingly* thrown open to me.
End of dream, insomnia, intense happiness.
(Buci-Glucksmann 1994: 83)
[emphasis in original]

Aside from revelling in the enigma of the dream, we will now undertake our own act of cryptography on Benjamin's behalf to draw out some connections to be made, but with the concerns of the thesis in mind. Perhaps the first thing we notice is the abundance of fractured narratives and discrete images melded together in the dream, and the instability and fluidity that result from such an amalgamation. It is worth noting that these traits are of significance for the structure of Baroque narratives in general as for example, Deleuze, commenting on Leibniz's *Théodicée* (1710) notes that, "[t]he text responds marvelously to the general criteria of Baroque narrative: stories enclosed one in the other, and the variation of the relation of narrator-and-narration." (Deleuze [1993] 2003: 61). Certainly we can see why such convolutions were of interest to the author of *The Fold* ([1993] 2003), and the possibility of stories and ideas being enclosed in each other resonates for us here in relation to Benjamin's enigmatic dream. Furthermore, this enfolding and unfolding of stories can also be understood in relation to what we recently uncovered about how monads *indistinctly* contain all other monads. Alongside the variability of locations and narratives in the dream, perhaps what is also reduced to fragments is identity – it is shattered by the 'AND... AND... AND...'. It is in this way that Benjamin sees the whole dream like his concept of the mosaic, and it is by the conjunctive 'and' and the glass paste that these fragments are always held in relation. The doctor *and* the forest

and some moss and a boat and three women and one woman and images and blankets AND a lightning flash?

Benjamin's encounter with the first of the women is particularly unsettling as he observes a fabric covered in images; are these images some sort of code? As a graphology expert the woman's presence is important, though Benjamin only seems able to decipher the possible writing on the fabric as the top half of the letter D; 'the more spiritual part'. This could well be an allusion to the more 'spiritual' top floor of the Baroque house, the windowless monad, and perhaps also signals a reference to Doctor Dausse. We can speculate that Dausse is important to Benjamin as he rid him of a fevered irrationality when he contracted malaria. Towards the end of the dream Benjamin is confronted by yet more cryptographic symbols on a blanket of a bed, are these patterns or words? Just as James Elkins in *What Photography Is* (2011) describes the surface of a photographic print as "...a *griffonage* (an illegible handwriting) of marks and scratches" (Elkins 2011: 26)¹⁹, the marks Benjamin is trying to decipher are also a *griffonage* of mark making. Furthermore, as Deleuze advises in *Proust and Signs* "...every act of learning is an interpretation of signs or hieroglyphs." (Deleuze [1964] 2008: 4). Perhaps these symbols are a way of revealing the hidden depths enveloped in the dream that cannot be grasped on surface level, here represented by a *griffonage*, a scrambled code, a crypt. Their presence in the dream is an act of displacement and disguise, arguably the very subject of Baroque allegory.

To return to the lightning flash in the dream, perhaps we can recognise here a particularly telling allusion to Benjamin's *other* famous *lightning flash* – the dialectical image. As we posited earlier in the Section, if the dialectical image is analogous to the splitting of the atom, it is because of the potentially explosive nature of going beyond the bounds of the possible, by perceiving an extensive construct that appears to have multiple emergences of intensities in the same moment it can almost be seen as an inversion of the splitting of the atom, but with the same explosive effect. This is the definition of the dialectical image where images of past, present and future emerge together in a lightning flash of *dialectics at a standstill*. Regarding the work we carried out on intensities earlier in this Section, perhaps we can suggest that the dream represents the breakdown of *legibility* where more than one intensity struggles to emerge at the same time. In addition, the dialectical image reveals an instance of this possibility; indeed it is an impossibility in essence, which is why it emerges only for the flash of an instant, barely perceptible in a soup of quantum potentiality. The resultant perceptual 'image' becomes fractured and fractal and, to return to Leibniz, is transmitted as a 'swarm of appearances':

Thus there is nothing fallow, nothing sterile, nothing dead in the universe, no chaos, no confusion, save in appearance, somewhat as it might appear to be in a pond at a distance, in which one would see a confused movement and, as it were, a swarming of fish in the pond, without separately distinguishing the fish themselves. (Theod. Pref. [E. 475 b; 477; G. vi. 40, 44].)

(Leibniz 1898: 257 §69)

And so the dream represents the confusion or *swarm* of emergent intensities/singularities as the disparate images produced in the dream cannot be grasped in the same moment. Such multiple emergences fracture the cohesion or sense of the extensity from which they materialise in the way that out of an extensive scene/construct it is usually only possible for one intensity to be clear at once, the remainder cloaked by a field of obscurity. Thus, when Benjamin looks for a resolution to the meaning of the dream he is faced with more than one intensive moment vying for attention within the same moment, or perhaps in other words, pure enigma. The enigmatic dream leaves us in the zone of indiscernibility. Yet for a fleeting moment Benjamin is confronted by the *flash of legibility* of dialectics at a standstill or a dialectical image, which is generated by the cryptic symbols on the sheet, though as we know all too well, there is a sense of legibility that disappears as soon as it is sensed – the dialectical image emerges and disappears in the flash. We are left in darkness. Arguably what Benjamin tries to do is illuminate the unknowable, the intensive thought that plunges back into obscurity. In a vain attempt to bring the image back into intelligibility, Benjamin falls back on the notion of translation, which for him in ‘The Task of the Translator’ ([1923] 1999c) is a site of pure creativity.

Fragments of a vessel which are to be glued together must match one another in the smallest details, although they need not be like one another. In the same way as a translation, instead of resembling the meaning of the original, must lovingly and in detail incorporate the original’s mode of signification, thus

making both the original and the translation
recognizable as fragments of a greater language, just
as fragments are part of a vessel.
(Benjamin [1923] 1999c: 79)

Benjamin, using an analogy of fragments again (though this time of a vessel and not a mosaic), notes the importance of translation working on a deeper level than mere resemblance and how the task of translation must be considered a creative act in its own right. The very nature of translating therefore requires an attentive/immersive, even emotional ('loving'), investment in the text in order to convey the implications of the original accurately and with aplomb. Regarding meaning, "...the language of a translation can – in fact, must – let itself go, so that it gives voice to the *intentio* of the original not as reproduction but as harmony, as a supplement to the language in which it expresses itself, as its own kind of *intentio*." (Benjamin [1923] 1999c: 79). So the translation strives to achieve a harmony with the original as opposed to a 'reproduction', which reiterates the importance placed on creativity here in the conveyance of meaning, of intention. The cryptic message on the sheet in the dream then, represents the enigma of what is beyond translation and understanding, other than in the moment of the blinding flash of the dialectical image, and so Benjamin sets about interrogating the dream from the perspective of something comprehensible; language. In relation to his writings on translation then, perhaps we can suggest that Benjamin hoped to find resolution through approaching his dream from an oblique angle – in attempting to create something more akin to a 'harmony' with the unfathomable dream, in fear of leaving it painfully unresolved. Offering a simile to help elucidate his case

for translation further, Benjamin speaks of the way in which a tangent touches a circle at one point, as a translation also "...touches the original lightly and only at the infinitely small point of the sense, thereupon pursuing its own course according to the laws of fidelity in the freedom of linguistic flux." (Benjamin [1923] 1999c: 81). The notion of 'linguistic flux' is particularly important here, in terms of the instability and fluidity that accompany the possibilities of creation that exist in the translation of language. To provide another perspective, it is worth noting the plight of Alfred North Whitehead in *Process and Reality* ([1929] 1978), who, writing at the same time as Benjamin, advocated overcoming the limits of language by performing a 'stretching' of words and phrases as they are commonly understood, to enable new experiences and interpretations. (Whitehead [1929] 1978: 4). We can compare this to a comment by Benjamin that "[e]ven words with fixed meaning can undergo a maturing process." (Benjamin [1923] 1999c 73-74). Interestingly, in the opening pages of the book, Whitehead also speaks of a flash of insight, which has resonances with Benjamin's flash of the dialectical image as it signals a *coming to legibility* – "[t]here is no first principle which is in itself unknowable, not to be captured by a flash of insight." (Whitehead [1929] 1978: 4).

Let us concentrate for a moment on how the concept of translation "...touches the original lightly and only at the infinitely small point of the sense" (Benjamin [1923] 1999c: 81) and note a connection here between this quotation and the definition of Leibniz's concept of the monad. We can speculate that perhaps the surrounding 'zone of communication' around each monad *touches lightly* the

zones of communication of the neighbouring monads. By this same touch, almost imperceptible at times, each monad indistinctly reflects the whole world/universe of monads within itself. Here we can make an allusion to Benjamin's writing on mosaics in the 'Epistemo-Critical Prologue' to *The Origin of German Tragic Drama* where he suggests that "[t]he value of fragments of thought is all the greater the less direct their relationship to the underlying idea..." (Benjamin [1963] 2009: 28-29). So just as we discovered in the fragments of the vessel mentioned above, the tesserae need not match or resemble each other exactly, and perhaps it is their difference that renders the representation (and the idea) all the more valuable.

To return to the issues of translation and difference, Benjamin remarks "...no translation would be possible if in its ultimate essence it strove for likeness to the original." (Benjamin [1923] 1999c: 73). Now we must address further this possibility of transformation and renewal of the original text, *via* the process of translation. A useful perspective can be offered by Carol Jacobs, who contemplates a German proverb: '*Wie man in den Wald hineinruft, so schallt's heraus*' – "As one calls into the forest, so it will resound." (Jacobs 1999: 85-86).

She goes on:

The proverb speaks of an unproblematic reverberation not necessarily at play in Benjamin's version of it. Still, translation's call into the forest of language is not a repetition of the original but the awakening of an echo of itself. This signifies its disregard for coherence of content, for the sound that returns is its own tongue become foreign. Just as the

vase of translation built unlike fragment on unlike fragment, only to achieve a final fragmentation, so the echo of translation elicits only fragments of language, distorted into a disquieting foreignness.
(Jacobs 1999: 86)

The scenario described above resonates profoundly for what this Section as a whole seeks to communicate in that essentially, we can read Jacobs' analysis of the echo in the forest from a Deleuzian perspective – almost as a treatise on *difference in kind*. After calling into the forest, the echo that returns is *its own tongue become foreign*; it has undergone an internal transformation as it differs in itself over the duration of the original call and the reverberation of the echo. If we bellow loud enough, the reverberation has the capability to multiply itself, further exposing this inherent Deleuzian difference – “[d]ifference inhabits repetition.” (Deleuze [1968] 2004a: 97). In addition, the quotation below from Eduardo Cadava in *Words of Light* evokes the continual renewal and fluidity of language as something that is always in a ‘process of becoming’. These *becomings*, like Benjamin’s dream are fleeting and ineffable, yet in a lightning flash, the pasts, presents and futures of language can reveal themselves and emerge together, as if a constellation.

That a language is always in the process of becoming different from itself—that it is in fact never itself—can be understood in relation to the fugacity of images. Like the image that flits past cognition, language eludes the grasp of the translator.
(Cadava 1997: 17)

As we have been intimating in the preceding pages, it seems it is our task here to side-step the very construct of perceiving the ‘original’ and the ‘translation’ as something akin to the notion of the ‘model’ and ‘copy’ as in representation, and instead consider the ‘original’ and ‘translation’ as fragments of something larger, of the *web of language* in general perhaps. This evades the negative connotations of the translation being ‘inferior’ to the original in that, if we are in agreement with Benjamin’s conviction that the act of translation is the site of creation, then we must surely attribute appropriate significance to the task of the translator/cryptographer. We can also make a further connection to what we uncovered earlier in the Section regarding the links between Deleuze, Bergson and Leibniz *via* Benjamin, and how we can witness a number of concepts developed by these four great thinkers being ‘updated’ or ‘renewed’ by each other. This is no new occurrence in the history of philosophy, however the importance lies in the notion that ideas themselves form an interconnected rhizomatic *web*, and that confounded by translation, the resultant ‘image’ is indeed made up of a *mosaic* of fragments. Furthermore, Benjamin also enjoyed playing with the interchangeability of his concepts creatively which in turn emphasised the oscillations of meaning that come with precise combinations of words/phrases and their etymological roots. As we are now acutely aware, the process of translation heightens this activity further. And so meaning is dependent on consensus and interpretation, and as we see in both Benjamin and Whitehead, words and phrases are not fixed but fluid and self-differing, which reveals the task ahead. These concerns bring us closer our next question, which seeks to further

elucidate the task of the translator and the act of cryptography. To conclude our work here as cryptographers of Benjamin's elusive encounter, we can also interpret the dream from the Deleuzian problem of succession (representation) and co-existence (difference). The dream signifies co-existence on the level of multiple intensities appearing at the same time, which results in the fracturing of identity and consequently representation. Rather than struggling to unlock the dream, what becomes significant is the *difference* (co-existence) *between* the fragments of the dream (the AND...AND...AND...). This is precisely why our attempts to understand the dream in terms of succession (representation) are futile, as we are incapable of *translating* co-existence into succession. Instead, co-existence and succession must be held in tension (oscillation) with one another and it is this action that produces pure difference and perhaps also, pure enigma.

Even in Benjamin's attempt at translating the dream, he remains on the cusp of *legibility*, unable to decipher the symbols under the corner of the sheet. Their emergent revelation in the *flash* of dialectics at a standstill was only too brief, yet despite this, he has a suspicion that they are the key to the crypt of his dream.

Herein lies the possibility that perhaps the key to *our* crypt *CPDIOE?* is wrapped up in this scenario too. In the way that our enigmatic question repels clarity, the blanket and its embellished symbols that caused Benjamin such unrest elude any coherent explanation. Perhaps the reason the dream troubled him so much was that all the facets and tropes of his life's work lay bound up in its enigma. We must remember that Benjamin did illuminate one part of the dream, the top part of

the letter ‘D’, though perhaps from our perspective, this letter may be more profoundly the letter ‘P’; is this the axis on which our inquiry turns?

Translation, or how to change some poetry into a scarf?

To reiterate, the major work of this thesis can be perceived as a project concerning translation. The object is not to obliterate a representational photography, replacing it with something else (as in the sciences), but to translate it in a way that aids a becoming-new ‘in itself’. Perhaps we can speculate that the relationship between the original text and the translation is akin to the process of de- and re- territorialisation (see Section I for Deleuze’s analogy of a wasp pollinating an orchid), and note how both the original language and the language of translation are affected in their convergence; in a *double-becoming*. Benjamin acknowledges – “[f]or in its afterlife – which could not be called that if it were not a transformation and a renewal of something living – the original undergoes a change.” (Benjamin [1923] 1999c: 73). These transformations go some way to regaining what Benjamin refers to as a ‘pure language’ that extends boundaries between language and translation. In addition, Benjamin, quoting Stéphane Mallarmé recognises that:

The imperfection of languages consists in their plurality, the supreme one is lacking: thinking is writing without accessories or even whispering, the immortal world still remains silent; the diversity of idioms on earth prevents everybody from uttering the words which otherwise, at one single stroke, would materialise as truth.

(Mallarmé in Benjamin [1923] 1999c: 78)

We shall now conduct a more ‘technical’ interrogation of the notion of translation, concentrating in particular on a number of German words used (and on occasion, invented) by Benjamin in his texts that will be pertinent to our investigation. We must remember too that the site of translation is imbued with creativity. Some of these words will be familiar to us, having already encountered them earlier in this Section and others will be more obscure, only coming to the surface as a result of the provocations initiated by our enigmatic question *CPDIOE?*. Translation forms a synthesis with the original text and it is this synthesis that allows for reverberations to be felt across space and through time, with novel or differing translations emerging. As we suggested in the previous ‘question’, these renewals and transformations of the text form a connected web and hold the possibility of *activating* new translations and interpretations. Our web has rhizomatic qualities in this sense, with new lines of flight continually being elicited. It is the task of the cryptographer-translator as always then with Benjamin’s texts, to illuminate some of the obscured depths that will help provide a bridge to the next Section, as we move out of Crypto[graphy] and into Zero[graphy].

To begin we will investigate Benjamin's *now-time* [*Jetztzeit*] – his 'alternative Messianic time' that is in stark contrast to the empty time of positivism, and which he articulates in the 'Theses on the Philosophy of History'²⁰; "[h]istory is the subject of a structure whose site is not homogenous, empty time, but time filled with the presence of the now [*Jetztzeit*]." (Benjamin [1940] 1999d: 252-253). The note alongside this in the text reads, "Benjamin says '*Jetztzeit*' and indicates by the quotation marks that he does not simply mean an equivalent to *Gegenwart*, that is, present. He is clearly thinking of the mystical *nunc stans*." (Arendt in Benjamin [1940] 1999d: 253). This *nunc stans* represents an eternal time, "...the abiding now, the instant that knows no temporal articulation, where distinctions between now, earlier and later have fallen away or have not risen." (Loewald 1978: 65). Furthermore, these moments are "...unique and matchless, complete in themselves and somehow containing all there is in experience." (Loewald 1978: 65). Benjamin's contraction into *now-time* is also the time of reading and the moment of truth, which reveals itself in the lightning flash of *dialectics at a standstill*.

We shall now concentrate on the notion of *now-time* as being a force of arrest, and the very action of being brought to a standstill, which the Langenscheidt Dictionary (1973) (which we will use throughout this section) refers to as *stillstand*, or to be at a standstill, *stillstehen*. For this task we shall use Benjamin's 'Thesis XVII' from 'Theses on the Philosophy of History' and two translations to be scrutinized. The first of the translations is from the essay as it appears in *Illuminations*, though we shall use Carol Jacobs' transcript as it appears in her

Chapter ‘Emergency, Break’ from the book *In the Language of Walter Benjamin* (1999), as her version differs slightly from a later copy. The second translation is by Dennis Redmond (2005).

To thinking belongs not only the movement of thoughts but also their bringing to a standstill [*Stillstellung*]. Where thinking suddenly stops in a constellation [*Konstellation*] sated with tensions, there it imparts to the constellation a shock by which it crystallizes itself as a monad. The historical materialist approaches a historical object there and only there where he encounters it as monad. In this structure he recognizes the sign of the messianic arrest [*Stillstellung*] of happening.

(Benjamin [1940] 1969b: 262-293, cited in Jacobs 1999: 102)

Thinking involves not only the movement of thoughts but also their zero-hour [*Stillstellung*]. Where thinking suddenly halts in a constellation overflowing with tensions, there it yields a shock to the same, through which it crystallizes as a monad. The historical materialist approaches a historical object solely and alone where he encounters it as a monad. In this structure he cognizes the sign of a messianic zero-hour [*Stillstellung*] of events, or put differently, a revolutionary chance in the struggle for the suppressed past.

(Benjamin [1940] 1974 trans. Redmond 2005: *u.p.*)

If we look more closely at this term ‘*stillstellung*’, a word Benjamin invented, we can see that it is made up of ‘*still*’, translated as to be silent or to hold one’s peace, and ‘*stellung*’, which speaks of position; posture; arrangement; constellation. We

will return to this term constellation in a moment. As we can see in the above quotation, its use signals an interruption, particularly pertinent to our next Section, a *zero-hour*. It is worth acknowledging that ‘zero’ in German is ‘*null*’; translated back to English as nought, cipher, nonentity, neutral point (‘*nullpunkt*’) and *zero-hour* as ‘*nullzeit*’, or ‘*zeitpunkt*’, or interestingly, a term used by Heidegger – ‘*augenblick*’, to signify a ‘moment of vision’.²¹ This etymological deconstruction of the German words and phrases can help us get closer to understanding what Benjamin strove to portray in his distinctive word ‘*stillstellung*’. In his translator’s foreword to the essay, Dennis Redmond (2005) elucidates this term further:

Jetztzeit was translated as “here-and-now,” in order to distinguish it from its polar opposite, the empty and homogenous time of positivism. Stillstellung was rendered as “zero-hour,” rather than the misleading “standstill”; the verb “stillstehen” means to come to a stop or standstill, but Stillstellung is Benjamin’s own unique invention, which connotes an objective interruption of a mechanical process, rather like the dramatic pause at the end of an action-adventure movie...
(Redmond 2005: *u.p.*)

Next we turn to the term constellation [*Konstellation*], a synonym of position and arrangement, from the German noun ‘*stellung*’ that forms part of Benjamin’s ‘*stillstellung*’, as mentioned above. We can also find a slightly different interpretation of constellation as we move from English to German, which refers to astrology, that is, a constellation of stars that represent the twelve signs of the zodiac; translated as ‘*sternbild*’. The oscillations in meaning between

'konstellation' and *'sternbild'* are (not surprisingly) utilised to full effect by Benjamin in his texts, particularly in *The Origin of German Tragic Drama*. Furthermore, as it was revealed earlier in this Section, each star that forms the constellation can be regarded as equivalent, if not analogous to each individual tessera that forms the mosaic, thus the constellation and the mosaic in Benjamin are intrinsically connected, folded into each other to form an extensive magnitude. Hence, looking to 'mosaic' in German we find the word *'mosaik'* but also the words *'luftbild'* and *'reihenbild'* ... is there anything to be uncovered here? Indeed what we notice is the inclusion of *'bild'* in all these terms, including our zodiacal constellation *'sternbild'*; *'bild'* signifies a picture, image or photograph. This is commensurate with the way the stars fall into particular configurations that are recognised as fixed patterns, 'images' for each of the twelve zodiac signs (out of interest, Benjamin's sign was Cancer). Moving further into the crypt that is translation, *'luftbild'* is translated as an aerial (or air) photo(graph), an aerial view, or a vision or a phantasm. Interestingly, in his Preface to *Words of Light*, Eduardo Cadava touches upon Theodor Adorno's 'Introduction to Benjamin's *Schriften*' ([1955] 1992), in which he makes a connection between Benjamin and the photographer Nadar; who is said to have invented aerial photography. Cadava summarises – "[I]ike Nadar's aerial photographs, Benjamin's writings seek to capture the shifting world beneath his gaze..." (Cadava 1997: xxi). Concerning the appearance of aerial photographs in the translation above then, this reference to Cadava helps to highlight the transience of *luftbild*, whilst also bringing a perspective to the alternative translation as a vision or a phantasm, something shifting and ephemeral. Furthermore, in conjunction with *'reihenbild'*, which

means ‘serial photographs’, we begin to catch glimpses of an intriguing correlation to be made that resonates for the concerns of this investigation and our crypt/code *CPDIOE*?

Returning, as Benjamin would say, in a roundabout way to our original object, let us contemplate what this *dérive* (drift) through the language and translation of Walter Benjamin has revealed to us. By carrying out the task of translation and paying close attention to particular appearances of words and synonyms that are of significance to the thesis in general, and this Section in particular, we have stumbled upon some connections that will, we anticipate, come to illuminate the hypothesis. Taking a step back to survey the scene before us, and to offer a *précis* to this complex web we have woven, we have discovered that Benjamin felt the need to invent words to communicate a particular idea precisely. For this reason, ‘*stillstellung*’ is a necessarily obscure reference and fragile in the hands (or the pen) of the translator. Perhaps the most revealing explanation in terms of the concerns of the next Section: Zero[graphy], is from the Redmond translation: “[t]hinking involves not only the movement of thoughts but also their zero-hour [*Stillstellung*].” (Benjamin [1940] 1974, trans. Redmond 2005: *u.p.*). Certainly, the possibilities that emanate from this intersection shall be addressed in the following Section, though we must acknowledge their ‘germination’ here. Then, the intrinsic relationship between Benjamin’s constellation [*konstellation/sternbild*] and his mosaic [*mosaik/luftbild/reihebild*] was examined, and it was through the process of translation between English and German that we were able to uncover an almost undetectable relationship to be traced to

photography maybe, in this endeavour. By placing these words and their translations together in this *rhizomatic web*, we have arguably speculated a new perspective on our central question *CPDIOE?*. This perspective/interpretation seems to point towards the possibility for a practice of photography based on the notion of series, from a neutral, mechanical position. It also takes the position of zero and calls forth a moment of interruption, is this what we are alluding to when we ask ...*can photography describe its own event?* We have also sensed the agility that comes with working with oscillations between fixed and fluid meanings and how this very process of fluctuation reveals that, often it is in their combination; at the very core of their instability, that meanings are at their most illuminating.

How to produce an event - *Ex Nihilo?*²²

To conclude this Section on cryptography and its relation to our question *CPDIOE?*, we need to bring to mind the importance of the notion of ‘event’ once more, in order to prepare ourselves for the next Section, where its appearance will become more visible. Indeed, this part of the thesis has necessarily concerned itself with an exegesis of *CPDIOE?* and as such, has been focused on hermeneutics and intensive interpretations of the crypt/code/question. It is worth noting that the concept of ‘event’ is inherently bound up in much of these activities yet in an *indistinct* way, only materialising more lucidly on occasion,

whereas Section III: Zero[graphy] will deal with such concerns in a more explicit manner. As we prepare to move out of the metaphorical darkness of our crypt and onto a different *plane*, let us reflect for a moment on the imposed ‘blindness’ that has consumed this Section. To do this let us look to a suitably titled book concerning vision, representation and art, Derrida’s *Memoirs of the Blind* (1993):

By praying on the verge of tears, the sacred allegory *does [fait]* something. It makes something happen or come, makes something come to the eyes, makes something well up in them, by producing an event. It is performative, something vision would be incapable of if it gave rise only to representational reporting.

(Derrida [1990] 1993: 122) [*emphasis in original*]

The quotation above recognises a shift from passive contemplation to energised action... how to produce an event? The importance placed on *producing* an event reveals itself through the emphasis and repetition of “...*makes* something happen or come, *makes* something come to the eyes, *makes* something well up in them...” (Derrida [1990] 1993: 122) [*my emphasis*]. The event then, is a performative act through which we can access the sacred allegory, and as the last part of the quotation suggests, is unable to be grasped within the parameters of a system of mainstream representation. Derrida’s dense (performative) writing style also commands the reader to encounter his metaphorical prose in an energised and active way, much like Benjamin’s *caesura* causing the reader to continually pause for breath.

The act of praying engages the imagination and in this way relies on a sense of displacement from the real, it is a time where the very *act* can provoke an awakening, a moment of reconciliation, or an encounter – to *make* something happen we are *forced to thought*. We can also note a connection to Benjamin’s *now-time* [*jetztzeit*], which was recognised earlier as the moment of reading or interpretation that crucially, takes place from *within* the event/constellation. Perhaps this is akin to the force of making something happen, which reaches a climax when something causes the tears to well up, indeed an event wells up from within the event of prayer. Let us remind ourselves of what Carol Jacobs describes as a newly conceived ‘moment of interpretation’ of the reader-astrologer – “...both completes and is assimilated into the constellation in a flash, a constellation that is not one until the astrologer joins the two stars that otherwise form no figure at all.” (Jacobs 1999: 100)²³. Perhaps we can interpret Jacobs’ description from our own perspective here – just as the astrologer is central to the forming of the constellation, the sheer intensity and concentration of praying close to tears conjures up the sacred allegory. Hence, the event produced by the sacred allegory is ‘activated’ by the praying figure and as such, does not exist independently of it, is not external to it, but internal and enveloped into the event. The sacred allegory being perhaps the communion between man and God as witnessed by Christ’s ascension from the cross and developed through the theory of transubstantiation where the bread and the wine somehow become the body and the blood of Christ through a miraculous event. It is praying on the verge of tears that forces this communion and thus produces an event that is beyond sight

or representational reporting, and where vision becomes hallucination and is transferred to the mental image or imagination. Also pertinent is the *invisible* and highly subjective nature of such a practice or process, which is intensive, internalised and imbued with sensation, in some ways only becoming perceptible by the tears welling up as a culmination of emotion. The prominence placed on the distorting of vision that accompanies the act praying *on the verge of tears* is of particular relevance to the Section, in an investigation that has taken place without the privileging of sight. Arguably, as we suggested in the opening pages of the Section, this metaphorical blindness has encouraged our other senses to become more perceptive to allow us to get further into the crypt of our question, and perhaps we can now speculate/appreciate that such enforcement has brought our imagination to the forefront of this endeavour. Moreover, it is important for Derrida that the loss of sight is not at the expense of a loss of ‘vision’:

Deep down, deep down inside, the eye would be destined not to see but to weep. For at the very moment they veil sight, tears would unveil what is proper to the eye. [...] The blindness that opens the eye is not the one that darkens vision. The revelatory or apocalyptic blindness, the blindness that reveals the very truth of the eyes, would be the gaze veiled by tears. It neither sees or does not see: it is indifferent to its blurred vision. It implores: first of all in order to know where these tears stream down and from whose eyes they come to well up. From where and from whom this mourning or these tears of joy? This essence of the eye, this eye water?

(Derrida [1990] 1993: 126-127)

Thus, Derrida's *veil of tears* calls for a performative practice, which takes place on a verge, a threshold between vision and blindness, between clarity and obscurity. As we are now aware, such a practice is unable to operate from within the constraints of a system of representation, and so as Derrida recommends, it is crucial that we become attuned to *producing an event*. And so the project of *CDPIOE?* strives to negotiate this liminal zone, it's very code evoking the possibilities concerning the notion of 'event', with each iteration providing an intensive interpretation of the six-word enigma and each repetition inferring difference. "For in order for any message to carry real force, it must negotiate a danger zone, cross a frontier, transgress a prohibition." (Bourriaud in McCarthy, Critchley et al. 2012: 18)²⁴. Perhaps this signals our position... have we reached the threshold of the crypt?

Perceived from the point of view of a coded message, referring back to the history of language in wartime, writing (for the INS), again, carries an aura of danger, like those phosphorescent organisms whose properties are only revealed in darkness. Sometimes, the powerful spotlights of meaning must be shut off for another kind of radiation to appear.
(Bourriaud in McCarthy, Critchley et al. 2012: 21)

The quotation above arguably reveals the importance of our endeavour. In our negotiating of the threshold between Photo[graphy] and Crypto[graphy] and the entering of the crypt of *CPDIOE?*, we switched off 'the powerful spotlights of meaning' in order to encounter other kinds of radiation, namely – the intensive,

the obscure, the cryptic. Now that we leave the crypt into unknown territories, we must now test our question yet again. Here we must ask ourselves, what form will the interrogation take on this new occasion? **As we shall see the nature of any event is uncertain just as we have found in this little section on Derrida. By attempting to supplement or even translate the classical perspective of photography via concepts of difference we must hope to have produced something *new* by our work in the thesis so far. The next Section will deal with this indeterminacy of the new as it unfolds via a series of thought experiments regarding the concept of emergence from the zero degree of communication.**

A summation and the trajectory of enquiry

The main emphasis of Section II was to introduce the element of the enigmatic and the opaque into the concept of photography, whereas previously we argued (in agreement with Michael Kramp) that it had existed in a more transparent mode and with greater certainty in how it reflected the world. Using our central question *CPDIOE?*, we have explored the notion of difference, whilst keeping in mind how it could perhaps be utilised in the service of photography (if only obliquely). The premise of this Section was to *flip* photography so we perceive it as a crypt or code instead of an agent of exposure to knowledge and facts. It was our assertion in this part of the thesis that we can relocate photography into a new encounter with the world in order to introduce novel concepts and fresh

directions into the field of study. Perhaps it would be possible from this perspective to excavate new *minor* photographs that reveal the object of photography as having more than one aspect. As an analogy, we might think of the dark side of the moon that makes a sphere out of what was once perceived as a flat disk, something larger, (literally) more rounded and with more potential. By applying variation and ‘difference in itself’ to the concept of photography, we have described the arc of passage from a descriptive practice to one that *performs* meaning in an overt sense, with all the inherent instabilities that might imply. Difference reveals seriality from within an essence (intensities from within an extensity) and through oscillating between these states we can also transcribe the arc of thought from a picture to an event, from object/essence to serialisation.

At this point in the thesis, we are able to see how Section I and Section II work together to form a synthesis – that is, how representation supplemented and supported by difference, offers a paradigm shift in both the concept and practice of photography. If representational photography is by necessity a transcendent practice, then the journey so far in the research has brought us to a stage where we can speculate further upon an emergent, immanent form of photography. This *zerography*, which we shall investigate in Section III, is unsurprisingly difficult to imagine and in order to ameliorate these complexities we shall perform an interrogation of the cultural resonances of the concept of zero. *Zerography* is an enabling concept, a certain perspective that does not ‘name’ a new practice, but rather should be considered an interpretive tool analogous to

Rudolf Kuenzli's innovative readings of the work of Friedrich Nietzsche. It creates a sense of paradox within the concept that moves away from readings of clarity and certainty to those of ambiguity, invention, and in the final analysis, indiscernability. In the tradition and spirit of such ideas Section III will contemplate a zone of indeterminacy, as it moves into the realm of event theory in all its uncertainty. This trajectory will take us from Barthes' ruminations on a zero degree of communication, through to Eastern alternate philosophies of vision that uncouple the subject-object axis of western representation.

Following this, we will explore the irrational world of quantum mechanics as well as the 'surrational' world of 'pataphysics, at each stage reflecting on how these might form a constituency of thought for a useful *zerography*. After assessing Nietzsche's 'zerography' (the only other use of the word in circulation from critical theory), we shall spend some time considering the hazy world of events in some of their diverse manifestations using a seminal poem by Stéphane Mallarmé in order to unlock the nature of the event at its zero degree. By the end of this final Section we hope to have mapped out the space of zero as it pertains to a cultural enquiry into the concept, and perhaps have prepared the way for future photographs to perform in this zone of undecidability. Where Section I and II together formed a synthesis of representation and difference in order to enrich the concept and practice of photography, Section III hopes to peer beyond present horizons, laying some foundations for an immanent practice of photography yet to come.

Endnotes to Section II: Crypto[graphy]

¹ O’Sullivan sees this moment of affirmation as “...a way of seeing and thinking this world differently. This is the creative moment of the encounter that obliges us to think otherwise. Life, when it truly is lived, is a history of these encounters, which will always necessarily occur beyond representation.” (O’Sullivan 2006: 2).

² “To be sensitive to signs, to consider the world as an object to be deciphered, is a doubtless gift. But this gift risks remaining buried in us if we do not make the necessary encounters...” (Deleuze [1964] 2008: 18)

³ This phrase is used in ‘Further Notes’ to *The Fold*, the endnote reads: “On cryptography as an ‘art of inventing the key to an enveloped thing,’ see Fragment, *Un livre sur l’art combinatoire . . . (C, Opuscules)*. And the *Nouveaux essais sur l’entendement humain*. IV, chap. 17, § 8: the fold of Nature and the ‘summaries’.” (Deleuze [1993] 2003: 143 n.4).

⁴ Benjamin’s concept of *now-time* concerns a coming to legibility in the act of reading. See Benjamin 1999a page 473 and Löwy 2005 page 2.

⁵ If a difference is necessarily (in depth) part of the superficial repetition from which *it* is drawn, the question is: Of what does this difference consist? This difference is a contraction, but in what does this contraction consist? Is it not itself the most contracted degree or the most concentrated level of a past which coexists with itself at all levels of relaxation and in all degrees? This was Bergson’s splendid hypothesis: the entire past at every moment but at diverse degrees and levels, of which the present is only the most contracted, the most concentrated. (Deleuze [1968] 2004a: 358) [*emphasis in original*]

⁶ Deleuze insisted that if we *really* want to accept the appearance of the world without judgement or presupposition then we will not refer to appearances as appearances *of* some world; there will be nothing other than a ‘swarm’ of appearances – with no foundation of the experiencing mind or subject. (Colebrook 2001: 6) [*emphasis in original*]

⁷ See Deleuze [1993] 2003, page 3.

⁸ The map is open, connectable in all its dimensions, and capable of being dismantled; it is reversible, and susceptible to constant modification. It can be torn, reversed, adapted to montages of every kind, taken in hand by an individual, a group or a social formation. It can be drawn on a wall, conceived of as a work of art, constructed as a political action or as a meditation. [...] Contrary to a tracing, which always returns to the ‘same’, a map has multiple entrances. A map is a

matter of performance, whereas the tracing always refers to an alleged ‘competence’.

(Deleuze and Guattari 1983: 26)

⁹ “It is the power of their combination and arrangement, not of their ‘encyclopedic accumulation’ (OGTD, p. 33), which is important.” (Gilloch 2002: 67-68) (Referencing Benjamin *The Origin of German Tragic Drama* [1963] 2009 inside the quotation).

¹⁰ To thinking belongs the movement as well as the arrest of thoughts. Where thinking comes to a standstill in a constellation saturated with tensions – there the dialectical image appears. It is the caesura in the movement of thought. Its position is naturally not an arbitrary one. It is to be found, in a word, where the tension between dialectical opposites is greatest...

(Benjamin 1999a: 475)

Interestingly, in a different version we can map the relationship with the monad:

To thinking belongs not only the movement of thoughts but also their bringing to a standstill [*Stillstellung*]. Where thinking suddenly stops in a constellation [*Konstellation*] sated with tensions, there it imparts to the constellation a shock by which it crystallizes itself as a monad.

(Benjamin [1940] 1969b: 262-263)

¹¹ “...modulating is molding in a continuous and perpetually variable fashion.” (Simondon in Deleuze [1993] 2003: 19).

¹² As an intellectual living through huge breakthroughs in science, concepts such as the Copenhagen Interpretation and quantum superposition would have had a great impact on Walter Benjamin.

¹³ ‘Behold this gateway, dwarf!’ I went on: ‘it has two aspects. Two paths come together here: no one has ever reached their end.

‘This long lane behind up: it goes on for an eternity. And that long lane ahead of us – that is another eternity.’

‘They are in opposition to one another, these paths; they abut on one another: and it is here at this gateway that they come together. The name of the gateway is written above it: ‘Moment’.’

(Nietzsche 1961: 178)

¹⁴ Deleuze on writing on other philosophers; an ‘intellectual buggery’:

“...I supposed the main way I coped with it at the time was to see the history of philosophy as a sort of buggery or (it comes to the same thing) immaculate conception. I saw myself as taking an author from behind and giving him a child that would be his own offspring, yet monstrous.”

(Deleuze 1995: 6)

¹⁵ Nietzsche's mental breakdown in 1889 is purported to stem from an incident in Turin where he witnessed the flogging of a horse. Nietzsche ran to protect the horse but then collapsed to the ground. For further reading see Anacleto Verrecchia 'Nietzsche's Breakdown in Turin' (1988).

¹⁶ For example, see the work of performance artists Hayley Newman and Jemima Stehli.

¹⁷ The life of a monad does not seem as solitary as it in fact is. Each monad, according to Leibniz, has within itself a 'mirror' of the entire universe - a picture of what is happening everywhere at all times and how its own activities 'fit in'. Thus monads are essentially mindlike. That is, they have a faculty of perception that constructs for them a picture of the 'external' world, and a faculty of apperception that registers an awareness of this process of perception itself. By means of these 'mirrors' of consciousness, each monad replicates the entire universe of monads within itself; and so each monad is a 'universe in prototype'. Leibniz refers to this strange vision of worlds within worlds as 'the principle of macrocosm and microcosm' - meaning that the microcosm contains or replicates the macrocosm all the way down to the infinitely small. He expresses the same notion in his claim that the ancient doctrine that 'All is One' must now be supplemented with the equally important corollary that 'One is All'.

(Stewart 2005: 245)

¹⁸ The question of translation, one that we will approach very soon, is something to also be acknowledged here in relation to a text written by Deleuze and Guattari called 'Rhizome'. 'Rhizome' was first published in a little book called *On the Line* (1983, translated by John Johnston) and subsequently appeared as 'Introduction: Rhizome' in *A Thousand Plateaus* ([1987] 2004a, translated by Brian Massumi). There are slight but notable variations in emphasis in the translations of these texts, and so a combination of the two translations will be utilised as opposed to merely adhering to one 'version', in service of properly comprehending the text.

¹⁹ James Elkins in *What Photography Is* (2011) likens photography to black ice: Black ice is a horizontal window that looks down onto nothing visible. You see into it as is into a thick deep darkness: you do not see a black surface like the wall of a room at night, but a place where light becomes weak, where it loses energy, slows, and dies in some viscous depth. [...] That place beneath the black ice, where I know that water must be, admits light but does not give back any image. [a reference to Mallarmé's poem *Le vierge* about the frozen swan].

(Elkins 2011: 19)

Concerning the surface of the photograph or the pixels on a screen Elkins observes:

My eyes can touch the surface of the photograph. If it is a print made in a darkroom, I can see its surface as a *griffonage* (an illegible handwriting) of marks and scratches. If it's on screen I can barely make out the fuzzy mosaic...

(Elkins 2011: 26)

²⁰ This work is also referred to as ‘On the Concept of History’, particularly by American scholars.

²¹ See Heidegger *Being and Time* ([1927] 1992) page 376.

²² This is a reference to Leibniz’s theory of co-existence between mathematics and metaphysics:

“His novel contribution was to make the numbers *binary*. Just as the whole of arithmetic could be derived from one and zero, so the whole universe was generated out of pure being (God) and nothingness.” (MacDonald Ross 1984: 101) [*emphasis in original*]. *Unus ex nihilo Omnia fecit* – One made all Things ex nihilo.

²³ In an endnote to this part of the text, Jacobs notes that it is this connection between reading, writing and the constellation is *the* fundamental point of Benjamin’s essay ‘Doctrine of the Similar’ (1979c). “There, reading and writing are imbedded into in the rapid temporality, the flash we have seen to take place in the constellation.” (Jacobs 1999: 129 n.11).

²⁴ In a guest-written Introduction to the International Necronautical Society’s (INS) *The Mattering of Matter* (2012), Nicholas Bourriaud attempts to tap into this enigmatic organization as he addresses (in relation to the INS operations concerning the space of death) this notion of the threshold.



Section III:

Zero[graphy]

The second problem arising in connection with privative opposition is that of the unmarked term. It is called the *zero degree* of the opposition. The zero degree is therefore not a total absence (this is a common mistake), *it is a significant absence*. We have here a pure differential state; the zero degree testifies to the power held by any system of signs, of creating meaning ‘out of nothing’: ‘the language can be content with an opposition of something and nothing.’

(Barthes [1964] 1984e: 138) [*emphasis in original*]

NOTHING / WILL HAVE TAKEN PLACE / BUT THE PLACE:
... or was the event brought about in view of every null result.

(Mallarmé in Badiou [1988] 2005: 191)

...NOTHING of the memorable crisis in which the event may have happened in view of every null result.

(Mallarmé in Meillassoux 2012: [x])

...NOTHING of the memorable crisis or if it were the event fulfilled in light of all voided outcomes.

(Mallarmé [1898] 2015: 20-21)

This play of building and destroying, of asserting and doubting, of riding old myths and parodying them, of lyrical flights and self-parody seems to form Nietzsche’s zerography. This circular motion, which rhythmically passes through the moments of forgetting and remembering, puts everything into question

(Kuenzli 1981: 113)

Introduction

As we leave the crypt we emerge onto a flat plain/plane. Here light and dark have cancelled each other out and it is an even grey, the eighteen percent grey of zone five perhaps, from a time when the photographic zone system was still relevant.¹

It is a space of entropy, a plane of consistency where we will encounter photography degree zero. It is the space of Barthes, Mallarmé and Nietzsche. In our investigation into the concept of zero we shall be looking to its cultural and philosophical origins in the writings of the three figures named above. At this point, it must be acknowledged that of the three terms used as Section titles, this term '[zero]graphy' is my own conceptual invention and through our investigation it is hoped that the term can come to describe a new perspective on photography.

Although the term zero is common currency in mathematics, and used less commonly in cultural and literary theory, I have found only two references to the term zerography, one only as a subheading in Garrett Stewart's *Reading Voices: Literature and the Phonotext* (1990), and the other more useful citation in a text about Nietzsche by Rudolf Kuenzli. Written in 1981, his essay 'Nietzsche's Zerography: Thus Spoke Zarathustra' is concerned with Critical Literary Discourse and we will return to this later in the Section. After the depths of the crypt in Section II, this Section will be concerned with exploring the flatness of the plane; planes of consistency, planes of immanence, zones of indeterminacy, and the levels of zero degree. We are concerned primarily with the cusp of emergence, a twilight world of synthesis, entropy, oscillation and coexistence.

For the purpose of this Section on zero[graphy], let us consider that the first two Sections offer somewhat of a binary – photo[graphy]/crypto[graphy], or *light/dark* in metaphoric terms. This then, gives us clues as to how the third part of the thesis functions; in some respects it will create a synthesis of the two – photo[graphy] + crypto[graphy] = zero[graphy]. Or *light* plus *dark* shall be synthesised together to produce a grey flatness perhaps, that offers us a starting point for an exploration into the concept of zero[graphy]. At this point, it shall be useful to look closer at how the notions of oscillation and coexistence can help elucidate how this Section operates in relation to the previous two Sections. In turn, we shall touch upon these concepts in a broader sense in order to offer a bridge from Crypto[graphy] to Zero[graphy]. **The Section shall be written in a more thetic manner producing an archipelago of ideas forming connections (constellations) reminiscent of the plateaus of Section II. This is an attempt to connect a matrix of ideas that might describe a hypothetical *zerography*. In terms of the aims of the thesis, this state of zerography will encompass or approximate to an imagined field of meanings and communications covering new differentiated photographs. It hoped that *zerography* will provide an elusive and metaphorical ‘third’ aspect to the synthesis of representation and difference as it pertains to photography.** Now it is time however to reintroduce our enigmatic question *can photography describe its own event? (CPDIOE?)*. In this Section, our question will erupt periodically as we investigate different concepts, flights of thought that are pertinent to our enquiry as we wrestle with its latent potential. To be aware of ones own event, there needs to be an acknowledgement of its

emergence from within oneself. To summon an awareness of ones own event will surely require a heightened sense of consciousness. With the crypt behind us as the light dawns, perhaps it is possible to slowly awake, to conjure an awareness of ones own condition that is, in photography's own terms, to glimpse the latent image within. A latent image that still requires developing, to cross the threshold from one state to another; from the possible to the real, or the virtual to the actual, or perhaps a synthesis as process. There are two writers in particular who have attempted to describe this liminal condition, this coming to consciousness, Marcel Proust and Walter Benjamin.

Awakenings

To meet a familiar figure once more, it is Walter Benjamin who locates the concept of awakening between the oscillation of light and dark, and as discussed in Section II, he also describes it as a moment of recognition, the 'now of recognizability'², a coming to thought. In addition, it is at the very beginning of Marcel Proust's *In Search of Lost Time* (published [1913 – 1927] 1996) that we experience the oscillation between night and day, sleeping and waking, where we encounter a narrator who is falling asleep even as he wakes up, struggling to locate his position or that of his furniture even in a whirl of darkness.

For it always happened that when I awoke like this, and my mind struggled in an unsuccessful attempt to discover where I was, everything revolved around me through the darkness: things, places, years. My body, still too heavy with sleep to move, would endeavour to construe from the pattern of its tiredness the position of its various limbs, in order to deduce therefrom the direction of the wall, the location of the furniture, to piece together and give a name to the house in which it lay.

(Proust [1913 – 1927] 1996a: 4)

As Eduardo Cadava notes, “[t]his coincidence of sleeping and waking conjures the twilight state...” (Cadava 1997: 73). It is in this state and at this fugitive moment that we become aware of the swirling sea of antinomies that surround us, around Proust’s narrator, emerging and lapsing between sleep and consciousness. The cusp is the grey between the black and white; it is the zone of indeterminacy. Benjamin too, sees these alternate concepts as existing simultaneously, perhaps in the manner of Schrödinger’s Cat being at once both alive and dead. As Cadava expresses the concept “[c]onsciousness is perhaps what it is only to the extent that it remains both awake and asleep at the same time.” (Cadava 1997: 68). The point here is to emphasise the simultaneous nature of both states occupied during the process of awakening. Furthermore, to quote Benjamin himself “[w]here waking does not part from sleeping/Luminousness makes its appearance” (Scholem and Adorno 1994: 96). Here we have the potential for the emergence of recognition. The double articulation of such a metamorphosis moving equally in both directions is reminiscent of Benjamin’s ‘Convolute N’ in *The Arcades Project* where he famously states that it is not a matter of the past casting its light on the present or vice versa, but more that these two positions (like Section I and Section

II) (1999a: 462) "...deconstitute one another in their relation." (Cadava 1997: 71).

We can perceive this process as an oscillation, a state of flux and continuous momentum, two perspectives that when coexisting better describe an idea. Section I in the 'major' perspective, Section II can be seen as a 'minor' perspective, both hold truth, but in truth both are co-existent.

Is awakening perhaps the synthesis of dream consciousness (as thesis) and waking (as antithesis)? Then the moment of awakening would be identical with the 'now of recognizability,' in which things put on their true-surrealist-face. Thus, in Proust, the importance of staking an entire life on life's supremely dialectical point of rupture: awakening. Proust begins with an evocation of the space of someone waking up.

(Benjamin 1999a: 463-464) [*emphasis in original*]

However the synthesis of dreaming and waking also exists in the grey fog that permeates their coexistence. This is the estrangement of the rational or the 'rearrangement of the furniture' of consciousness. Here lies the paradox of the moment of awakening as it is both dark and light simultaneously. "This sleep and darkness – the conditions of the self's disassociation from itself – are what Ernst Bloch calls 'the darkness of the lived moment'." (Cadava 1997:78) [*emphasis in original*]. Bloch's 'darkness' (Bloch 1986: 290) constitutes a blind spot, the fugitive nature of experience that Benjamin relates to happening as in the space of a "darkroom" (Cadava 1997: 80). It is worth noticing that Proust also alludes to the photographic metaphor of an 'inner darkroom' when speaking of processing

experience, returning us to ‘the darkness of the lived moment’ and the suggestion “...that the point at which experience touches us – at which we experience experience – is a blind spot.” (Cadava 1997: 78).

I had become myself again. Pleasure in this respect is like photography. What we take, in the presence of the beloved object, is merely a negative, which we develop later, when we are back at home, and have once again found at our disposal that inner darkroom the entrance to which is barred to us so long as we are with other people.

(Proust [1913 – 1927] 1996b: 522)

This blind spot is exactly the territory of our question *CPDIOE?* in that it explains the difficulty of understanding how a subject/concept can be truly aware of itself. *Can photography describe its own event?* The indication is that where we do indeed experience ourselves is a place of estrangement, and like Proust’s narrator we can only grasp at it in the double articulation of awakening. “The light of photography never arrives alone. It is always attended by darkness. We may even say that the relay between light and darkness that names photography also gives birth to it.” (Cadava 1997: 66). In an interesting if literal inversion Douglas McCulloh makes the following observation; “[b]lind photographers operate at the heart of the medium; they are the zero point of photography” (McCulloh 2012: 9) which in light of the above has increased resonance.

At this point it may be appropriate to observe that the first two Sections in their ostensibly binary relationship demonstrate that the light of representation lies in opposition, or more correctly in oscillation with the crypt of difference. As Deleuze concludes, pure difference resides, erupts, between the concepts of representation and difference, therefore we can site the concept of awakening (in terms of *CPDIOE?*) between photography's ability to describe events in the world and the potential for it to describe its own event. The blind spot that we have identified, this darkness of the lived moment, lies on the cusp of the rational and the irrational, the Apollonian and the Dionysian in Nietzsche's terms. It returns us to Benjamin's 'distinct and the disparate' and Deleuze's 'distinct and obscure' that forms the basis of every idea or concept. This coincides with the two aspects of photography that we are trying to articulate, firstly the distinct ability to describe an event in the world, and then the obscure potential for it to describe its own event. The former belongs to the realm of representation and the latter to the paradigm of difference. What we are attempting to describe here is the potential for the two to coincide in the double articulation that is inscribed in the concept of awakening, as developed by both Proust and Benjamin. To summarise, we are dealing here with the idea of a transcendent representation and the concept of an immanent difference. The notion of 'awakening' or residing between the two should in Benjamin's conception allow us to recognise (illuminate), if only briefly, the fugitive and fleeting resolution or decryption of our code *CPDIOE?* A question that "...puts everything into question". (Kuenzli 1981: 113).³

How do you describe something that does not represent anything?⁴

Here as we begin to explore the possible degree zero of the sign, it will be useful to consider these concepts in terms of a thought experiment regarding the classical perspective in photography. As the consequence of introducing the zero degree of expression to photography might well result in the stripping away of most of what was hitherto recognisable. Thus reinventing photography as an encounter with the world. As a starting point, we shall address what is arguably the most well known of the coincidences between classic photographic theory and zero, which comes in the form of the first book written by Roland Barthes in 1953 – *Writing Degree Zero*.⁵ Although this essay is about language, the title was adapted by Geoffrey Batchen for his edited book *Photography Degree Zero: Reflections on Roland Barthes's Camera Lucida* (2009) which surveys the myriad of academic essays reflecting on Barthes' seminal, and resolutely distinct and obscure, book on photography. In his introduction to the book, Batchen explains the choice of title as a way of linking together Barthes' first book with his last and perhaps most famous; *Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography* (1980). With the book *Writing Degree Zero* it was Barthes intention to both agree and respond to Jean-Paul Sartre's 1947 book *What is Literature?*, where as well as supporting the premise that "...all texts involve a mutually productive exchange of responsibilities between reader and writer" (Batchen 2009: 4) he goes on to argue that the *form* of a text is of equal importance to this exchange as the content. He advocates a 'colourless writing' striving for a neutral or 'zero degree' of form,

however this is not a type of neo-Realism as Barthes himself states; “[t]he writing of Realism is far from being neutral, it is on the contrary loaded with the most spectacular signs of fabrication” (Barthes [1953] 1984d: 56). Here we might recognise classical documentary photography for example. There are instances in film and literature however, of artists attempting to approach a degree zero of articulation. Barthes himself is interested in the tension between writing as a communication in order to engage the reader, and writing as a mode of silence that promotes form over content and in ‘Writing Degree Zero’ declares that “...the disintegration of language can only lead to the silence of writing” (Barthes [1953] 1984d: 63) which is a desirable state. He is looking for a condition where words resonate in an empty zone and in which speech patterns no longer reverberate, even “...the complete abandonment of communication.” (Barthes [1953] 1984d: 63). Another book that takes its title from paraphrasing Barthes’ seminal text is Timothy Scheie, *Performance Degree Zero* (2006) in which he states:

The only escape Barthes proposes is to destroy literature altogether, to pare the conventions of the literary down to their zero degree, to strip away the signs of literature to reach the pure *literality* of a ‘white writing’ with no literary shadow.
(Scheie 2006: 25) [*emphasis in original*]

Barthes himself cites Albert Camus’ *Outsider* as an initiator of this experiment in zero degree form in the twentieth century, though also notes the efforts of Jean

Cayrol, Alain Robbe-Grillet and indeed the American William Burroughs as well as recognising the contribution made by nineteenth century poet Stéphane Mallarmé. It was Barthes' contention that a true zero degree remained something to strive for, yet in reality it would remain a utopian fantasy. A contemporary artist, filmmaker Jean-Luc Godard also flirted with a degree zero of cinematic language but he too found it difficult to balance the communicative content of the film with experiments "...that approach a zero-degree style through deliberate flatness and repetition (Sterritt 1999: 260).⁶ To conclude this point it seems pertinent (as the main protagonist of degree zero) to read Barthes' own account of his invention/creation:

Proportionately speaking, writing at the zero degree is basically in the indicative mood, or if you like, amodal; it would be accurate to say that it is a journalist's writing, if it were not precisely the case that journalism develops, in general, optative or imperative (that is, emotive) forms. The new neutral writing takes its place in the midst of all those ejaculations and judgments without becoming involved in any of them; it consists precisely in their absence. But this absence is complete, it implies no refuge, no secret; one cannot therefore say that it is an impassive mode of writing; rather, that it is innocent. The aim here is to go beyond Literature by entrusting one's fate to a sort of basic speech, equally far from living languages and from literary language proper. This transparent form of speech, initiated by Camus's *Outsider*, achieves a style of absence which is almost an ideal absence of style; writing is then reduced to a sort of negative mood in which the social or mythical characters of a language are abolished in favour of a neutral and inert state of form...

(Barthes [1953] 1984d: 64) [*emphasis in original*]

We shall return to the concept of the zero degree of form later in the Section but for now, we turn our attention to another of Barthes works, a collection of essays published as *Image – Music – Text* ([1977] 1984a). In particular ‘The Third Meaning’ which he wrote in 1970 and is important here as it contributes in part to the way this thesis is conceptually structured. In ‘The Third Meaning’, Barthes uses a number of film stills from works by Soviet Russian director and film theorist Sergei Mikhailovich Eisenstein (1898 – 1948) in an attempt to recognise three levels of meaning from these scenes. The essay identifies the first level of meaning as an informational level, “[t]his level is that of communication.” (Barthes [1977] 1984a: 52) and the second is a symbolic level (of which Barthes gives examples of referential symbolism, diegetic symbolism, Eisensteinian symbolism and historical symbolism), which as a whole functions as a level of signification (Barthes [1977] 1984a: 52). “As for the other meaning, the third, the one ‘too many’, the supplement that my intellection cannot succeed in absorbing, at once persistent and fleeting, smooth and elusive, I propose to call it *the obtuse meaning*.” (Barthes [1977] 1984a: 54) [*emphasis in original*].

An obtuse angle is greater than a right angle: *an obtuse angle of 100°*, says the dictionary; the third meaning also seems to me greater than the pure, upright, secant, legal perpendicular of the narrative, it seems to open up the field of meaning totally, that is infinitely. I even accept for the obtuse meaning the word’s pejorative connotation: the obtuse meaning appears to extend outside culture, knowledge, information; analytically, it has

something derisory about it: opening out into the
infinity of language...
(Barthes [1977] 1984a: 55) [*emphasis in
original*]

If we take Barthes first two levels of meaning, the informational and the symbolic, then perhaps we can draw a loose analogy between the first two Sections of the thesis – photo and crypt, the light of information and the corresponding darkness perhaps of the symbolic in terms of its lack of transparency. We can then speculate that this third Section presents itself as an obtuse chapter in Bartsian terms, or to quote Tom McCarthy “...that what it holds in store is not the treasure of the unexpressed but, borrowing Barthes words, ‘the signifier of the inexpressible’.” (McCarthy 2006: 29). This takes us to another of Barthes seminal writings, ‘Elements of Semiology’ ([1964] 1984e) where he demonstrates the classification of oppositions, the best known of which is the privative or binary opposition. A binary consists of two polar elements such as the positive and negative of an electrical charge, or as Barthes states *marked* and *unmarked*, “...the opposition of a mark and a zero degree.” ([1964] 1984e: 141). Returning to Barthes’ quotation that opened the Section, we can see that the unmarked term of any binary opposition is not a total absence but a *significant absence*, that we might also call a *defining* absence. Whereas it might seem obvious to associate the *mark* with the exceptional, and the *unmarked* with a sense of normality, we can get the idea that the unmarked is somehow secondary or docile in relation to the mark or even “...derived from the *marked* by a subsequent subtraction” (Barthes ([1964] 1984e: 138) [*emphasis in original*] and therefore negative. Barthes

however appears to see this as too simplistic as the distinction is made *via* an appeal to content and not purely form. Alternately, the mark can be seen as an *additional* significant element that does not throw the unmarked into the negative, but merely differentiates between two intensities of the same concept. As Barthes himself says "...when one wants to say more, one adds a supplementary sign" (Barthes ([1964] 1984e: 138), which we can perceive as a further intensity in an extensive whole. In this sense we can speculate how a binary opposition or paradox can be assimilated into the same concept, just as we are trying to prove with our code *CPDIOE?* (*can photography describe its own event?*). If the mark is a supplement and the unmarked comprises a significant absence then we might say we have a concept in constant oscillation and the force in this relation is generated from the unmarked or the zero degree. "The concept of the zero degree [...] lends itself to a great many applications [...] a 'zero sign' is spoken of in cases where the absence of any explicit signifier functions by itself as a signifier" (Barthes [1964] 1984e: 138-139). Here we have a link between the obtuse meaning and the zero degree, summed up again perhaps in the phrase "...the signifier of the inexpressible, not of the unexpressed..." (Barthes [1973] 2002: 216) which is an inversion in co-existence of the definition of the zero degree, an absence acting as its own signifier. Two polarities held in oscillation, the third meaning and the zero degree (degree zero). Barthes himself refers to part of theoretical physicist Jean-Louis Destouche's (1909 – 1980) *Cours de logique* 'Notions de logistique' (1946); "A is in the zero state, that is to say that A does not actually exist, but under certain conditions it can be made to appear". (Barthes [1964] 1984e: 139). Therefore A in the zero state can be seen as a *significant*

absence oscillating between the invisible and the visible, the virtual and the actual. This is where we are situating our obtuse code/question *CPDIOE?* and hoping that from time to time it will appear and illuminate our argument.

The obtuse meaning is a signifier without a signified, hence the difficulty in naming it. My reading remains suspended between the image and its description, between definition and approximation. If the obtuse meaning cannot be described, that is because, in contrast to the obvious meaning, it does not copy anything – *how do you describe something that does not represent anything?*

(Barthes [1977] 1984a: 61) [*my emphasis*]

Remainder

In an effort to locate the zero state (degree) or blind spot in relation to the visual spectrum, **particularly pertinent in light of classical photography's inextricable link to vision**, we can turn to Hal Foster's edited book *Vision and Visuality* (1988) and an essay by Norman Bryson 'The Gaze in the Expanded Field' (1988). In his text, Bryson draws our attention to the Japanese Kyoto School of Philosophy where key figures such as Kitarō Nishida (1870 – 1945) and his student Keiji Nishitani (1900 – 1990) were engaged in reflections on Western philosophy from their own inherently Eastern perspective. In particular, the critique of the Western subject, re-imagining the work of both John-Paul Sartre (1905 – 1980) and

Jacques Lacan (1901 – 1981). For the purpose of our investigation, we shall largely be focusing on Nishitani in order to unravel how his ideas can prove useful in articulating our question *CPDIOE?*. In addition to Bryson’s contribution, we shall be using an edited book on Nishitani by Taitetsu Unno and a number of essays in order to gain a more rounded reflection of the philosopher’s work, whilst specifically focusing on the aspects that pertain to our interests in this Section. It is worth noting that much of these ideas are yet to reach a wider audience due to delays in translation and its associated issues.⁷ To *précis* Bryson’s introduction to provide some context here, he proposes that Nishida and Nishitani go further than the arguably better-known philosophers Sartre and Lacan in their ideas concerning visuality. They especially offer a challenge to the notion that vision is seen as a field in which the subject is placed at the centre. Bryson begins with Sartre and his story of a subject alone in a park – “...everything in the park is there for him to regard from an unchallenged center of the visual field.” (Bryson 1988: 88). However, the watcher in the park is then disturbed by the entry/irruption of another figure:

...now another perspective opens up, and the lines of flight race away from the watcher self to meet this new point of entry. For the intruder himself stands at his own center of things, and draws towards and into himself everything he sees; the watcher self is now a tangent not a center, a vanishing point not a viewing point, an opacity on the other’s distant horizon.

(Bryson 1988: 89)

As we can see, the arrival/addition of a second figure into the scene (that represents the dismantling of the centralized subject) produces two fixed points, where a tension is created between the viewing point and the vanishing point of each 'watcher'. Each figure is at once both the watcher and the watched, occupying both the space of the viewing point and the vanishing point in one moment. This produces a binary situation where the two polarities annihilate (to use Bryson's term) each other's subjective centralized viewing point, and vision becomes caught up in a play of binaries of subject/object. Now Bryson turns to Lacan's story, which takes place on a boat off the coast of Brittany and concerns the pieces of flotsam the fisherman and Lacan observe. Of particular importance is the presence of a sardine can – which one of the men remarks that whilst Lacan can see the sardine can, the sardine can cannot see Lacan. This semantic tongue twister can perhaps itself be seen as a worthy (witty even) metaphor for the complex relationship of the subject and the object in the field of vision. This troubles Lacan because he feels that "...the world of inanimate objects to some extent always looks back on the perceiver."⁸ [...] Lacan's account depends, not on the irruption of another personal viewer but the irruption, in the visual field, of the Signifier." (Bryson 1988: 91). Indeed this brings into play the centre ground in this scenario, the space between the subject and the signifier in the world, as it appears as a matrix or network of meanings. A web (net) of discourse on visuality, a '*screen of signs*' – "[f]or when we look through the screen, what we see is caught up in a network that comes to us from the outside: mobile tesserae of signification, *a mosaic that moves*." (Bryson 1988: 92) [*my emphasis*]. Here signifiers seem to lose their object-ness, appearing and disappearing in the visual

environment, we are reminded again of the fleetingness and indeterminacy of the third meaning, "... the obtuse meaning can only come and go, appearing-disappearing." (Barthes [1977] 1984a: 63). This screen as Bryson talks about in relation to language is beyond the control of the subject. The subject is de-centered precisely because these networks, either language or visual, exist before any act of language or seeing is articulated, rendering the subject tangential rather than the centrality they imagine for themselves.

This network of signification which we can now see existing between Sartre's binary subject positions in the park takes us forward somewhat in the notion of an expanded field of vision. Despite Sartre's seminal work *Being and Nothingness* ([1943] 1956) being a criticism of the Cartesian self-enclosure of the *cogito*, Nishitani writes his *Religion and Nothingness* (1982) in order to go further than Sartre in the pursuit of breaking down the twin polarities of subject and object. Nishitani's aim is to dismantle this scenario of Western vision and instead consider the wider field, the question of vision's 'wider frame' (Bryson 1988: 96). In the *cogito* subject and object exist in fixity, the subject looks out from a position of universal centrality onto a field of separate objects. As we mentioned in Section I: Photo[graphy], there is a distance between subject and object in the *cogito*, a separation that exists between two points. For Nishitani's critique of the centralized subject, he posits the use of the term *śūnyatā*, which is translated as 'emptiness', 'radical impermanence', 'blankness' and 'nihility' (Nishitani 1982: 116). The term's etymology offers a foretaste of how these ideas can begin to resonate for us in this Section on zero[graphy], as it is from the Sanskrit noun

from the adjective for zero, nothing (*śūnya, śhūnya*).⁹ The use of the word *śūnyatā* does not denote an object or fixed entity, rather it signifies a field or space, not unlike the concept of (plane of) immanence that we shall discuss later in the Section. Nisihitani's argument is that the subject and object in Sartre's park scenario remain intact. "The subject, from its position of center amidst the world of things, looks out on its objects and perceives them as separate *entities*." (Bryson 1988: 96) [*emphasis in original*]. The inference being that objects have an independent self-existence, are located in a single place and have a fixed form. The field of *śūnyatā* however, has a profound effect on all entities – causing the subject-entity and the object-entity to break up under the conditions of radical impermanence (Bryson 1988: 97). For our purposes here we may see the radical impermanence as the field of difference and in particular difference in itself or constant variation. Perhaps we can make a connection here between this concept of emptiness (*śūnyatā*) to Barthes' concept of zero degree (when what is inexpressible is actually signified by the absence of a signifier) in that what we are marking here is not the narrow field of vision or zone of signification but the *remainder*. Hence we can be said to be marking the unmarked.

If the object is say, a flower, its existence is only as a *phase* of incremental transformations between seed and dust, in a continuous exfoliation or perturbation of matter: at no point does the object come under an arrest that would immobilize it as Form or *eidōs*. Moved on to the field of *śūnyatā* or radical impermanence, the entity comes apart. It cannot be said to occupy a *single* location, since its locus is always the universal field of transformations: it

cannot achieve separation from that field or acquire any kind of bounded outline.

(Bryson 1988: 97-98) [*emphasis in original*]

Here we learn that the object cannot exist in this emptiness as a discrete fixed entity, it is radically destabilised by the field of *śūnyatā* and its location becomes nullified by the surrounding universal field of transformations. To momentarily revisit another flower analogy from Section I, this notion conjures up the rhizomatic relationship between Deleuze and Guatarri's wasp and orchid. Their concept of de-/re-territorialization becomes recognisable in Nishitani's notion of radical impermanence. We are also reminded of Benjamin's mosaic where each tessera or piece of glass melts away as we look to another or indeed the whole. The difference between the intensive fragment and the extensive whole is also invoked in this quotation:

In Nishitani's description, an object's presence can be defined only in negative terms. Since there is no way of singling out an object *x* without at the same time including it in the global field of transformations, what appears *as* the object *x* is only the *difference* between *x* and the total surrounding field.

(Bryson 1988: 98) [*emphasis in original*]

Here may be an optimum moment to transcribe these ideas onto our enigmatic question *CPDIOE?*. The 'classical'¹⁰ conception of photography is far more analogous to Sartre's park scenario with subject and object being held in a binary

relationship, the photographic act of looking being exactly that of Sartre's in his analogy. In this way of course, the idea of the subjective viewing position (photography) describing its own event makes little sense. This stems from the fact that both subject and object are seen as discrete entities and fixed points occupying distinct space. If we apply Nishitani's field of *śūnyatā* or radical impermanence all entities empty out, they lose their object-ness, they are literally dismantled by the surrounding universal field of transformations. They move from the marked to the unmarked, from a zone of signification to that of the remainder. Each entity is in constant flux and so cannot attain a state of fixed form or *eidōs*. If we align Photography with perception¹¹ then all of its subject/object positions lose their boundaries and fixity within Nishitani's field of thought, again rendering them part of the remainder *via* the concept of *śūnyatā*. In the classical sense photography *cannot* describe its own event as this equates to the Sartrean condition of the viewing position and the vanishing point annihilating each other (as in the park scenario), as they mirror each other in their binary existence.

The viewpoint and the vanishing point are inseparable: there is no view point without vanishing point, and no vanishing point without viewing point. The self-possession of the viewing subject has built into it, therefore, the principle of its own abolition: annihilation of the subject as center is a condition of the very moment of the look.

(Bryson 1988: 91)

This relationship as embodied in the photographic represents only a fraction of the field of universal surround, which defines the remainder. It is confined to a narrow field of vision between the subject and the object and describes only this narrow conception of the world. Nishitani's wider conception of the universal field of transformations incorporates both photography and the entire field of multiple co-existent events including of course its own event. And so by placing the object of photography onto the expanded field, the emptiness of *śūnyatā* would allow us speculatively to conceive of it describing its own event, as part of a totality of invisibility. Under the conditions of *śūnyatā*, there is no self-existence as the ground of all being is the existence of everything else. With no bounded outline what appears as the object is only the difference between the object and the total surrounding field. As stated above therefore, photography and any event (including its own event) is only a matter of the difference between itself and the total surrounding field. Without tying the terms into a language of objects then our speculative question *CPDIOE?* can suggest new potentialities, photography collapses into an undifferentiated domain that contains its own event. Two divisible entities collapse to form an indivisible totality – here essentially we are talking about a co-existent event of photography.¹² Bryson points to a useful comparison between vision and language in that Ferdinand Saussure (1857 – 1913) maintains that an individual word means nothing in itself, it does not have the attributes of an entity, but is constituted in its difference from all other words. Nishitani argues for the same state in the existence of objects, and like Lacan's account of vision, it is the ever shifting matrix between entities or positions that

takes precedence in delivering any meaning: a matrix or network that pre-exists all communication.

Meaning in a sense never arrives, and in the same way, for Nishitani, being never arrives (beings never arrive). The form of the seed is already turning into the form of the flower, and the flower is already becoming dust. The present state of the object appearing as the flower is inhabited by its past as seed and its future as dust, in a continuous motion of postponement whose effect is that the flower is never presently *there*, anymore than the seed or dust are there.

(Bryson 1988: 98-99) [*emphasis in original*]

Walter Benjamin might call this a dialectical image in the sense that the true nature of the flower incorporating both seed and dust simultaneously emerges in a flash of legibility in terms of the concept 'flower' as a boundless entity. Just as meaning never arrives and is constantly deferred, as with the unbounded form of an entity or object we can see similarities with the concept of awakening as stated above in that consciousness/perception too is in a constant process of deferral.

Proust articulates this deferral in his description of the furniture objects that swirl in a sea of antinomies.

Nishitani illustrates his idea using a number of ancient Eastern aphorisms; 'Fire does not burn fire', 'water does not wash water', '*The eye does not see the eye*' (Nishitani in Unno 1989: 31) [*my emphasis*].

The burning that takes place when the fire burns firewood points to the selfness of fire, but so does the fact that fire does not burn itself. The two are here one and the same. As something that burns firewood, fire does not burn itself; as something that does not burn itself it burns firewood. This is the mode of being of fire as fire, the self-identity of fire. Only where it does not burn itself is fire truly on its own homeground. In other words, we speak not only of the selfness of fire *for us*, but also the selfness of fire *for fire itself*.

(Nishitani in Unno 1989: 31) [*emphasis in original*]

It is at this point perhaps that we arrive at the nearest resolution that may be possible to the question that defines this thesis – *can photography describe its own event?* In the above quotation, if we map across and substitute the words ‘photography’, ‘describe’ and ‘event’, for ‘fire’, ‘burn’ and ‘firewood’ we begin to recognise a basic truth in the words of Nishitani:

The describing that takes place when photography describes an event points to the selfness of photography, but so does the fact that photography does not describe itself. The two are here one and the same. As something that describes an event, photography does not describe itself; as something that does not describe itself it describes an event. This is the mode of being of photography as photography, the self-identity of photography. Only where it does not describe itself is photography truly on its own homeground. In other words, we speak not only of the selfness of photography for us, but also the selfness of photography for photography itself.

In the above exercise of substitution, what we can take from Nishitani's logic is that the essence of photography is that it describes, yet it cannot describe itself. "It cannot exist in self-enclosure" (Bryson 1988:99). It can describe everything but itself, and to be itself it must extend beyond the enclosure of photography as entity and into the surrounding field, the remainder. Therefore it is part of the surrounding field, mutable, an unbounded entity.

Photography *for us* is when it describes the world, however photography *for itself* is only when it describes its own event. In the co-existence of these two perspectives we have the true nature of photography, *only* when it describes its own event is photography truly on its own 'homeground'. The 'self-identity' of photography consists in describing events in the world *and* in describing its own event. Unno elucidates Nishitani's phrase 'in itself' (*jītai*) as explaining the mode of being of entities in the field of *śūnyatā* is beyond representation and so to an extent counter-intuitive. "...*śūnyatā* indicates the standpoint of 'in itself', which is completely free from all representation – representation not only in terms of the subject-object duality, but also in terms of nihility which overcomes that duality." (Unno 1989: 30) [*emphasis in original*]. In this sense then we might speculate that *śūnyatā* may be equated with a Bergsonian/Deleuzian difference (in itself) as irradiated in Section II.

In order for us to further comprehend the challenge Nishitani offers in his analysis of vision, we shall now focus on a metaphor that is fittingly photographic. As we

have come to realise, whilst presenting a reflection on the subject/object duality in his watchers in the park scenario, Sartre's binary tension remains unbroken. Bryson points out that in Sartre, the object is what appears to the subject "...so to speak at the end of a viewfinder." (Bryson 1988: 100). This framing apparatus – viewfinder, camera, picture frame, perspective, instills a distance between the two fixed points, but also crucially, is discriminating in what it chooses to include in the 'picture', that is, it creates a tunnel vision that screens out the surrounding field in terms of perception (Bryson 1988: 100). Nishitani however, seeks to dissolve the framing apparatus and break down the distance between the subject and the object, so that the object is no longer 'over there', but instead exists "...in the total field of the universal remainder. The object opens out *omnidirectionally* on to the universal surround, against which it defines itself negatively and diacritically." (Bryson 1988: 100) [*emphasis in original*].

The viewer who looks out at the object sees only one angle of the global field where the object resides, one single tangent of the 360 degrees of the circle, and of the 360 degrees in all directions of the radiating sphere of light spreading out from the object into the global envelopment.

(Bryson 1988: 100)

The 'total field of the universal remainder' therefore describes a system that is diametrically opposed to Sartre's narrow field of perspective that produces a subject and an object, a tunnel vision. The remainder is therefore the total sum of perspectives that is not that of Sartre's viewing subject. Of course, we are using

Sartre as our example but his scenario is commensurate with Cartesian perspectivalism and geometric perspective, all of which rely on a founding subjective viewing position with a corresponding vanishing point. Systems, that are at the root of classical representation. We could indeed speculate metaphorically that the field of the universal remainder exists beyond the vanishing point *via* its very invisibility, and therefore beyond representation. The sum of the non-subjective perspectives that constitute the remainder remind us of Leibniz's allusion to an ideal townscape in his *Monadology*:

And as the same town, looked at from various sides, appears quite different and becomes as it were numerous in aspects; even so, as a result of the infinite number of simple substances, it is as if there were so many different universes, which, nevertheless are nothing but aspects [perspectives] of a single universe...

(Leibniz [1714] 2008: 13)

The total field of the universal remainder therefore corresponds with Leibniz's "...representation of multitude in the unity" (Leibniz in Antognazza 2009: 498), that is, detailed in another image from *The Monadology*:

Thus there is nothing fallow, nothing sterile, nothing dead in the universe, no chaos, no confusion save in appearance, somewhat as it might appear to be in a pond at a distance, in which one would see a

confused movement and, as it were, a swarming of fish in the pond, without separately distinguishing the fish themselves.

(Leibniz [1714] 2008: 13)

Here we can see a parallel between Nishitani's 'expanded field of blankness' (*śūnyatā*), or Bryson's "...dark or unmarked remainder" (Bryson 1988: 101), which we can perhaps trace back to his teacher Nishida, whom we know was influenced by Leibniz in his philosophical writings (Heisig 1990: 76). In this field of total vision (the sum of all perspectives) the fish as entity becomes unbounded, lose their object-ness in space. Indeed, Leibniz believed that objects are only mental constructs, for each viewer has a different perspective on them revealing only the frontal aspect of the object. The object therefore is no more than a fictional extrapolation from all the perspectives, as no single perspective offers a perceptual image corresponding to the geometrical description of a solid object; objects are mere chimeras, a fiction. Subjects merely mistake an aspect or profile for an object. Returning to Nishitani, he offers us another metaphor by which to elucidate his concept of emptiness¹³, that of "making things transparent" (Hase n.d.: 78) in which he speaks of two rooms. In order to dissolve the boundaries of these two entities he imagines that the wall between the rooms is transparent, not that it disappears but that it is transparent. In this way, the entities or rooms can be seen as part of each other rather than separate. These unbounded entities now form part of a whole as each object or entity merges into a transparent unity. This is analogous to Leibniz's 'representation of multitude in the unity' in that perspectives and boundaries are dissolved as the many are seen in relation to the

one. This is a reciprocal dissolution concerning subject as well as object; “[i]n the field of *śūnyatā* the centralized subject falls apart; its boundary dissolves, together with the consoling boundary of the object.” (Bryson 1988: 106). The concept of *śūnyatā* then, as being non-subjective can be perceived as “the surrounding envelope of invisibility” (Bryson 1988: 103), a field without signifiers and so the absence of a signifier that paradoxically acts as the signifier of the inexpressible, the unmarked, that reveals we have reached the zero-degree.

But once that frame is dissolved on the field of *śūnyatā* or emptiness, the narrow angle is found to be enveloped on all sides by a surround of invisibility. Once dis-framed, the brightly luminous segment is found actually to be constructed from *within* the invisible, the dark or unmarked remainder that extends beyond the edge of peripheral vision into the space that wraps its way round behind the spectator’s head and behind the eyes. What can be seen is supported and interpenetrated by what is outside sight, a Gaze of the other enveloping sight on all sides.

(Bryson 1988: 101) [*emphasis in original*]

The brightly luminous segment then, constitutes the invisible hiding inside the visible. It appears as a field of vision but in reality, only in oscillation with the remainder – the invisible. “The obtuse meaning, then, has something to do with disguise.” (Barthes [1977] 1984a: 58) ... “The obtuse meaning can only come and go, appearing disappearing.” (Barthes [1977] 1984a: 63).

...surely we now stand at the very limits of representation. From this point on, only a technique which undermines the frame can stand in for the invisible which the frame excludes. And if we try to picture to ourselves the Gaze of *śūnyatā* or blankness, it must be in terms of the nonrepresentational or the anti-representational.
(Bryson 1988: 101)

As boundaries and perspectives dissolve so does the dual centrality of the subject-object polarity. A radical decentered subject "...comes to know itself in noncentered terms, as inhabiting and inhabited by a constitutive emptiness."
(Bryson 1988: 106). The subject-centered account of the world is dissolved as the subject is exposed to its own radical impermanence and becomes aware of the remainder hiding within it. This may be the zero degree of consciousness. Here we may ascertain that the subject of photography too as it is presently understood, is also exposed to its own radical impermanence and in the context of this thesis, it becomes aware of a remainder hiding within its perceived boundaries. A remainder we might term difference, and one we may glimpse in artists such as Woodman.

Boundless states

Certainly I was now well awake; my body had veered round for the last time and the good angel of certainty had made all the surrounding objects stand

still, had set me down under my bedclothes, in my bedroom, and had fixed, approximately in their right places in the uncertain light, my chest of drawers, my writing-table, my fireplace, the window overlooking the street, and both the doors.

(Proust [1913 – 1927] 1996a: 7-8)

Let us momentarily return to Proust's narrator as an introduction to this part of the Section, which concerns a collection of illogical uncertainties. Just as Proust's furniture at the moment of awakening succumbed to the 'good angel of certainty', here we shall make allusions to quantum theory and the prevalent inconsistency of the question of certainty within this field. The 'good angel of certainty' in the quotation above serves a purpose here in that it corresponds to the point of view of the first Section of the thesis; 'Photo[graphy]' and the mainstream perspective of 'classical' photography. A viewpoint that is markedly different from the position we currently find ourselves in, and the ideas that surround us. Furthermore, we can also equate it with 'classical' physics in its relation to its quantum counterpoint (quantum physics/quantum mechanics). "Classical physics describes a world that is clear and determinate. Quantum physics describes a world that is cloudy and fitful." (Polkinhorne 2002: 26). We must now leave the good angel of certainty behind yet again, as we take some tentative steps towards a zone of indeterminacy.

It is here that we shall conjure up our findings from within the crypt of the previous Section regarding the ideas of quantum mechanics and Heisenburg's 'Uncertainty Principle' whilst uncovering another experiment that seems pertinent

to our investigation; the ‘Double-Slit Experiment’ of quantum physics. We are reminded that what Heisenburg was grappling with was the problem that it is possible to plot a particles’ movement *or* a particles’ location, yet it is impossible to record both aspects in tandem, at one moment:

The implication is that one increasingly loses knowledge of what the electron’s momentum will be after the position measurement. There is an inescapable trade-off between the increasing accuracy of position measurement and the decreasing accuracy of knowledge of momentum. This fact is the basis of the uncertainty principle: it is not possible simultaneously to have perfect knowledge of both position and momentum.
(Polkinhorne 2002: 33)

So attempting to synthesise speed and position is futile, and what remains is inexpressibility.¹⁴ Tapping into the realm of uncertainty here, “...the cloudy unpicturability of quantum processes” (Polkinhorne 2002: 67) reveals itself. “The physical world is laid out before the potentially all-seeing eye of the scientist. In the quantum world, by contrast, the physicist’s vision is partially veiled.” (Polkinhorne 2002: 32). As we set to work, carrying out our investigations in this grey half-light, the possibilities for a future photography, a ‘photography yet to come’¹⁵ perhaps, start to form. So just as quantum physicists’ need to dismiss logic and the powers of deduction in order to approach an area of study that is riddled with paradox, it will serve us well to leave behind more logical, rigid conceptions of photography and continue to deliberate its more abstract

manifestations. As Nobel Prize-winning physicist Erwin Schrödinger (1887 – 1961) humorously remarked on the nature of quantum mechanics, “I don’t like it, and I’m sorry I ever had anything to do with it. (Schrödinger in Gribbin 1991: inside cover).¹⁶ Notions of indeterminacy, inexpressibility, ‘unpicturability’, and the grey cloud (fog) that surrounds quantum theory strike chords with our enigmatic question *CPDIOE?* as they offer an irrational, imaginative interpretation of what impact this could have on more ‘classical’ conceptions of photography. The exciting potentiality that is inherent in this field of study can illuminate the way for more novel formulations of contemporary photography. Proust’s good angel of certainty is nowhere to be found.

We now return to an enigma that (another) Nobel Prize-winning physicist Richard Feynman believes lies at the heart of quantum mechanics; the double-slit experiment. It entails ‘a source of quantum entities’ (Polkinhorne 2002: 22) and an ‘electron gun’ that fire a steady stream of particles/electrons at two slits A and B, whilst recording the subsequent positions of these electrons on an observing (detector) screen. As the electrons arrive on screen one at a time, its point of impact is marked and demonstrates that the electrons behave in a particle-like mode. Nevertheless, when there has been a large accumulation of marks on the screen the pattern that has been created shows the form of what physicists recognise as an ‘interference effect’. It is this diffraction pattern that reveals the illogicality of this quantum problem; when the electrons arrive one after the other they can be seen to be showing particle-like behaviour, yet the collective interference pattern points towards electrons behaving in a wavelike mode. The

results are puzzling because on the observing screen appears an elusive ‘third’ slit – a point between the two slits of the ‘double-slit’, that shows detection of electrons. “There is an intense dark spot on the screen opposite the point midway between the two slits, corresponding to the location where the largest number of electron marks have been deposited.” (Polkinhorne 2002: 23). This experiment also illustrates the ‘superposition principle’, which actually permits the electron to go through both of the slits simultaneously; “[w]hat classically were mutually distinct possibilities are entangled with each other quantum mechanically.” (Polkinhorne 2002: 41). What appears to have one aspect is actually in oscillation with a multitude of aspects, just as in Benjamin’s famous mosaic.

In classical physics, measurement is unproblematic. It is simply the observation of what is the case. [...] measurement in conventional quantum theory is different because the superposition principle holds together alternative, and eventually mutually exclusive, possibilities right until the last moment, when suddenly one of them alone surfaces as the realized actuality on this occasion [...] all the probability collapses onto this single actuality.
(Polkinhorne 2002: 44-45)

Perhaps it is worth making a correlation here between the complex ambiguity of these quantum experiments and the shifting, hard to pin down ‘third meaning’ of Barthes from earlier in this Section. The third (obtuse) meaning shares some of the traits in the way that it resists/eludes definition, it is hard to locate; it is

subjective and can sometimes remain imperceptible. As in our earlier discussion, the third meaning can hide in the first two as a remainder, a field of invisibility or zero degree. The invisible third slit of the experiment hides within/behind the two visible slits and marks the remainder in its inexpressibility. Likewise, *zerography* as we are determining it here can be seen to hide within/behind the philosophical ground of the first two Sections. In both circumstances we are left with the remainder as an imaginary field, the ‘darkness of the lived moment’, our blind spot.

What if the *as is* of the world is superseded by the *as if*?

To recapitulate; if Section I speaks of a photography that perceives the world *as is*, a world of empirical data, and Section II adds depth and variation to surface appearances, then it falls to this Section to ask a further question; what place might there be for a photography whose task it could be to measure the very uncertainty of events? Perhaps a theory of *zerography* can enable some resolution to such questions, as its very nature is that of indiscernability and uncertainty. Let us now move further into this world of the inexpressible.

“Isn’t the imaginary a mode of calculation – that which involves itself with probabilities and uncertainties?” (Lomax 2000a: 52)

To take a side step for a minute, a brief swerve, we shall investigate a practice that offers a perspective unlike one we might find anywhere else, a realm that, similar to our enigmatic question *CPDIOE?*, resists definition and is purposefully obscure; the world of `pataphysics. Indeed, it is certainly problematic (and in itself extremely unpataphysical¹⁷) to pin down a set of parameters in which to enclose such a capricious cluster of ideas. `Pataphysics itself remains resolutely unbounded and has no ambitions to become an enclosed entity.¹⁸ In fact, to refer back to Nishitani, it literally prides itself on its transparency as object and its ability to infuse a multitude of disciplines. In a seminal text on `pataphysics, Christian Bök acknowledges that “[e]ven this survey may not explain the existence of `pataphysics so much as conjure `pataphysics into existence.” (Bök 2002: 10). Here again we have the notion of oscillation of appearing and disappearing as Barthes notes of his own ‘obtuse meaning’. `Pataphysics is the obtuse incarnate. It is the science of indeterminacy, where everything is equivalent to everything else, it is a form of intellectual entropy in that it measures the disorder that exists in any system and more importantly, celebrates it, creates it even. But by some way of an introduction we can attempt an imprecise description, `pataphysics can be recognised as a pseudo-scientific literary and philosophic collection of eccentric concepts created by French poet Alfred Jarry (1873 – 1907). “Pataphysics is the science of imaginary solutions, which symbolically attributes the properties of objects, described by their virtuality, to their lineaments.” (Jarry [1911] 1996: 22). That is, to pick up our deliberations above, that an object can be described by the potentiality of what it could be as much as what it appears to be if we consider its form. Again, the notion of de/re-

territorialisation is brought to play once more on the concept of objects, **just as it can equally be applied to a concept such as photography in order to unlock its future potential forms.**

“Pataphysics represents a supplement to metaphysics, accenting it, then replacing it, in order to create a philosophical alternative to rationalism.” (Bök 2002: 3).

Therefore, the realm of `pataphysics takes up the position of third in relation to what we consider reality. If we take a sideways step from the concept of reality (physics) into metaphysics, then one further step takes us into the realm of `pataphysics. ‘Meta’ standing for beyond and ‘pata’ meaning beside. “Pataphysics is to metaphysics as metaphysics is to physics.” (Hugill 2012: 4). `Pataphysics in its shift from the rational to the irrational to the surrational reminds us of Barthes’ three levels of meaning – the informational level (one), the symbolic (two) and the obtuse; the third meaning. In our thesis, we can equate this again with our three sections, photo[graphy], crypto[graphy] and finally zero[graphy], a place of indeterminacy. `Pataphysics takes the rational view of the world as ‘what is’ and prompts a translation into a fictionalised ‘what if’. Evoking Nishitani, `pataphysics ruptures the self-enclosed nature of things, making objects transparent to all emergent potentiality. Therefore in its own absurd way, unleashing the field of *śūnyatā* into all relations.

`Pataphysics thus behaves as if it is a *Philosophie des Als Ob*. Vaihinger observes that the phrase ‘as if’ constitutes a ‘comparative apperception’ ([1911] 1966, 91), juxtaposing two concepts somewhere in

the interzone between the virtuality of a figural relation and the actuality of a literal equation. Neither rhetorical nor theoretical, the *as if* constitutes a paradox of contingency, since reference is made to an impossibility, but from this possibility an inference is made: ‘reality... is *compared* with something whose... unreality is at the same time admitted’ (98). The *as if* posits the possible consequences of an impossible inconsequence. The *as if* is simply the imaginary solution to the question *what if*.

(Bök 2002: 25-26) [*emphasis in original*]

Nishitani’s radical field of transformations is reinterpreted by ‘pataphysics by purposeful misreading and the conjuring up of all other perspectives, virtual or actual, in order to make us aware of the remainder beyond fixed meanings. The invisible always resides within the visible. Indeed Bök tells us (after Bergson and Deleuze we might add): “[q]uestions always define in advance the regime of their answers. The problem always persists in the very paradigm that allows the solution to make sense as a solution. No enigma is solved so well as its status of enigma ceases to exist. A solution is infinitely imaginary.” (Bök 2002: 45). In effect, after Deleuze, this reinforces the point that solutions and problems are co-existent and I am hoping to prove that if my question *CPDIOE?* is elegantly enough stated within the thesis then any ‘solution’ along with its inherent enigma will be preserved also. Here see the initial discussion regarding the determining of problems at the beginning of Section I.

It is the task of the pataphysicist to be concerned with a creative misunderstanding and not just to understand the world of the ‘as is’ as this is merely a reactive truth.

To base one's understanding on purposeful error is to be creative and to invent the world 'as if'. (Bök 2002: 18). This necessitates utilising the information of the world in an obtuse manner and by taking the decision to willfully facilitate creation and invention over the *status quo* we free ourselves from the servitude of the good angel of certainty. "Pataphysics will examine the laws which govern exceptions, and will explain the universe supplementary to this one; or, less ambitiously, will describe a universe which can be – and perhaps should be – envisaged in the place of the traditional one" (Jarry [1911] 1965b: 145). This dark, alternate universe surely equates with Nishitani's field of emptiness, and is a call to describe the remainder, as discussed in an earlier part of this Section. If 'pataphysics evokes a supplementary universe to this one, then we have here another example of Barthes' concept of the marked and the unmarked, "...the opposition of a mark and a zero degree." (Barthes [1964] 1984e: 141). Therefore, the pataphysical universe of 'as if' as the unmarked term can be seen as a significant absence, indeed the absence of the signifier. 'Pataphysics can therefore be seen as the zero degree of 'reality', and as Bök says, "[w]e see science itself vanish before the zero degree of its own antiscience." (Bök 2002: 4). We can infer from this perhaps that the fictional has a direct relationship to reality in the way that Barthes' mark can be seen as merely differentiating between two co-existent intensities of the same concept. Thereby, the real and the fictional (the actual and the virtual) can be brought into the same orbit merely by applying the concept of the zero degree. The inexpressible remainder where photography *can* describe its own event lies within the pataphysical universe of the 'as if', whereas as rational

beings we reside in the world of 'as is' where photography describing its own event remains an unanswerable paradox.

This returns us to the idea of exceptions and we are reminded by Jarry that 'pataphysics is "...the science of imaginary solutions and arbitrary exceptions."' (Jarry [1911] 1965a: 192). In addition, considerate of the impossibility of 'defining' 'pataphysics, Andrew Hugill in *'Pataphysics: A Useless Guide* asks, "[h]ow can a definition be exceptional, or contain its own contradiction?" (Hugill 2012: 3). Accordingly, we should deem *CPDIOE?* then as a pataphysical question, in the way that its very formation expresses an enigmatic ambiguity that resists an undemanding explanation. We have been dealing with the matter of it containing its own contradiction throughout the thesis and in our ruminations on 'pataphysics, it becomes clearer how it is possible for our question to fall into the category of exception. Just as *CPDIOE?* calls for multiple interpretations and can appear differently in different contextual arguments, "'[p]ataphysics passes easily from one state of apparent definition to another. Thus it can present itself under the aspects of a gas, a liquid or a solid.'" (Patafluens 2001, Istituto Patafisico Vitellianense, Viadana 2002 in Brotchie et al. 2003: 12).

Jarry implies that such a science can only be written with an invisible ink, 'sulphate of quinine,' whose words remain unseen until read in the dark under the 'infrared rays of a spectrum whose other colours [are] locked in an opaque box' ([1911] 1965, 191-92). Such a science cannot be seen except under a light that cannot be seen in a place that cannot be seen. Such a science exists paradoxically in an

eigenstate of indeterminate potentiality, not unlike the Schrödinger cat – both there and not there at the same time.

(Bök 2002: 10) [*emphasis in original*]

In the way that Barthes' obtuse meaning has something to do with disguise, both appearing and disappearing simultaneously, we find that 'pataphysics too shares the attributes of indeterminacy and quantum physics. At this stage then, our speculations on a zero[graphy] applicable to photography seen in the light of quantum physics and 'pataphysics no longer belong to the world of the 'major' perspective, as we continue to make the invisible visible. 'Pataphysics bears some relation to our recent foray into quantum theory in the way that quantum physicists' approach experiments in their field of study. The relationship between a classical physicist and a quantum physicist is directly proportionate to the study of metaphysics and 'pataphysics. The one being clear and lucid based on quantifiable fact and supposition, the other patently operating beyond that realm. Pataphysicists then, operate in a perpetual state of invention and indeed creation, attempting "...to imagine a multitude of divergent realities created simultaneously from the same text [*or concept*]." (Bök 2002: 78) [*my emphasis*]. This is precisely the task we have undertaken in the thesis as we tap into the multitude of potentialities that are deeply enveloped in our enigmatic central code, which on first glance are obfuscated by the obtuse cryptic construction of the question, *CPDIOE?*

This apparent convergence of pataphysics with theoretical physics, however, should not lead to any confusion, since pataphysics views the theories of quantum mechanics in precisely the same way as it views every other theoretical, and indeed nontheoretical, understanding: as an imaginary solution. A universe comprised of exceptions implies an *equivalence* between imaginary solutions. This applies in physics, metaphysics and pataphysics.

(Hugill 2012: 9) [*emphasis in original*]

The idea of equivalence suggests a non-hierarchical series of imaginary solutions, none of necessity either right or wrong and therefore all standing at any one moment for the whole concept. In these terms, the concept/question *CPDIOE?* contains many solutions, all equivalent, and all perspectives capable of illuminating the many unseen potentialities of photography. The code *CPDIOE?* in its indeterminate nature merely forms an *exception* that can reveal these solutions and so situates our question in the `pataphysical territory of the *clinamen*. “The exception explicates the rule, testing its limits, defying its fields” (Bök 2002: 71). As named by Lucretius (ca. 99 BC – ca. 55 BC), *clinamen* is the Latin term for the unpremeditated event of the swerve of the atoms that led to the creation of the world in Epicurian philosophy. Epicurius’ (341 – 270 BC) novel conception of the universe consisted of atoms that consistently rained from an absolute high to an absolute low, during this descent some of the atoms arbitrarily performed very slight swerves, deviations, (*clinamen*) causing them to collide with others. According to Epicurus this is how matter was created. From our perspective we might call these collisions events, each event having the capacity to change things, and therefore creating change and vitality in the universe. (In contemporary

particle physics, this process describes the opposite of what the ‘Large Hadron Collider’ near Geneva is attempting,¹⁹ both endeavours of an indeterminate nature it might be added.) In `pataphysics, the term is used as one of the three ‘declensions of exception’, whereby exceptions can manifest themselves in different ways; variance (*anomalos*), alliance (*syzygia*) or deviance – the *clinamen*. The *clinamen* is the necessary swerve from the true that prevents systems from ossifying and engenders free will and creativity.

They are the final acknowledgement the pataphysician makes that the universe is governed by chance, so the words we speak, the things we do, our exploits and opinions, are the products of an inexplicable swerve. The words we speak and the things we do merely serve to demonstrate the existence of the *clinamen*...

(Hugill 2012: 16) [*emphasis in original*]

The speculative claim that photography *can* describe its own event (*CPDIOE?*) can be demonstrated to act as the *clinamen* for the thesis in that it attempts to perform the task of producing “...the smallest possible aberration that can make the greatest possible difference.” (Bök 2002: 45). The aim is to deviate, disturb or interfere with classical thought in any manifestation and whilst within the remit of `pataphysics is often absurd, it is still an excellent tactic for producing the new and the innovative. Our obtuse code *CPDIOE?* operates as an interpretative swerve from the classical perspective of photography. This deviation from mainstream photographic theory is perhaps necessary for “...the movement of

invention among the play of constraints” (Tufail 1999: 130) for a ‘photography yet to come’. Hopefully our enigmatic code can be perceived as the swerve of an exception “...that gives extra emphasis and a twist in meaning.” (Hugill 2012: 211).

As important as the concept of the *clinamen* is we must now pay some attention to another pataphysical notion, that of the antimony, or the ‘plus-minus’, which consists of two opposing ideas that create a paradoxical result. We might speculate that (given the concerns of this Section) plus and minus numbers revolve around the fulcrum of the mathematical zero which can be seen to hold the paradox in balance. This was demonstrated in a stage instruction for Jarry’s imaginary 1895 *Caesar-Antichrist*, which detailed a revolving stick which turned across the stage describing at various times in its circular movement both the plus (+) and the minus (–) sign as it produced both a circle and a *zero* (0). This is also seen in the general pataphysical symbol of the *gidouille*, which inscribes a spiral.

...the *gidouille* has become a general symbol of pataphysics, not least because drawing the spiral in fact creates *two* spirals: the one that is drawn and that one that is described by what is drawn. This echoes the plus-minus, or that which is and that which is not, in simultaneous coexistence. In pataphysics, mutually exclusive opposites can and do coexist.

(Hugill 2012: 6) [*emphasis in original*]

The Nature of the Event at Zero Degree

To move the argument on, Jarry was a great admirer of the French symbolist poet Stéphane Mallarmé (1842 –1898), whose major preoccupations we might say were simultaneous co-existence and the concept of indeterminacy. Also as Barthes states, he worked consistently toward “...the complete abandonment of communication” (Barthes [1953] 1984d: 63) and the destruction of language, (paradoxically to save it from an excess of literature) and was perhaps the first to search for a zero degree of language. **As it is our task here to uncover a zero degree of expression in the concept of photography it is apt to consider how this has been achieved in other areas of cultural communication.** As a great exponent of literary experimentation, Mallarmé invented a new word ‘ptyx’ in order to describe the workings of his *Sonnet en ‘-yx’* (1887), a poem that was an allegory of itself and therefore an attempt to displace the meaning of its own meaning. (Perhaps we can also claim that our question *CPDIOE?* makes effort to perform such a displacement in its convoluted folds²⁰ and deviations). “‘Ptyx,’ therefore, referred not to a thing or a place, but to something whose absence is its presence, as in the folds (*pli*) of a fan or a conch shell...” (Hugill 2012: 6) [*emphasis in original*]. As the quotation above conveys, the pataphysical notion of the ‘plus-minus’ is a subtle reference to Mallarmé’s ‘ptyx’ which comprises the concatenation of opposites, a perfect example being the pataphysical motto “I arise the same though changed” (Hugill 2012: 7). We might also make a subtle connection of our own at this point in relation to the ‘something whose absence is its presence’ of the ptyx. Let us recall Barthes’ definition of the zero degree or

sign and how we connected it to the third (obtuse) meaning – “...a ‘zero sign’ is spoken of in cases where the absence of any explicit signifier functions by itself as a signifier” (Barthes ([1964] 1984e: 138-139) [*emphasis in original*]). Thus proving that Mallarmé’s poetry was operating in part at the zero degree in its endeavour to signify the inexpressible. Indeed Mallarmé’s words, as Barthes notes, are often typeset in empty space that perhaps symbolizes a surrounding field of silence or blankness.

Mallarmé’s typographical agraphia seeks to create around rarified words an empty zone in which speech, liberated from its guilty social overtones, may, by some happy contrivance, no longer reverberate.

(Barthes [1953] 1984d: 63)

In the Introduction to *Stéphane Mallarmé: Collected Poems and Other Verse* (2006), Elizabeth McCombie states “...non-meaning is not an absence of meaning but a potentiality of meaning that no specific meaning can exhaust.” (McCombie 2006: xii). To reiterate, zero degree substitutes an absence for a presence, whilst the obtuse meaning as the signifier of the inexpressible, utilises a presence to speak of an absence or a void. Here we can notice the double movement of the antinomy at play – held in oscillation and furthermore, in co-existence.

Certainly, we should also broach the issue of translation once more on behalf of Mallarmé’s *oeuvre* in connection with the process of unraveling hidden meanings

through translation in Benjamin's texts in Section II, especially as Mallarmé is considered one of the most difficult French poets to translate into English (Mallarmé, Blackmore and Blackmore (eds.) 2006: xxix). Drawing on the inherent difficulty of the task of the translator, we can acknowledge once again those complexities that reverberate over multiple layers of meaning, which run the risk of being diluted (or even lost) by the migration from one language to another. Particularly for Mallarmé though, one particular layer, or *intensity* of 'reading' of his work takes place on a phonetic level, using sounds and words to conjure up points of reference. These words often hold the attributes of 'plateaus' as discussed in Section II. At the point of translation this creates a metamorphosis between the original French and the new language into which it is being translated, bringing forth its own phonetic and etymological associations. Whilst it is inevitable that some of the original intricacies fade back into the web of language and fall back into the obscure domain of ideas, translation offers a multitude of new interpretations and potentialities.

This very issue of interpretation, of translation, reveals itself in the variety of differing phrasings of the title of Mallarmé's *Un Coup de Dés jamais n'abolira le Hasard* (1897) – 'A Throw of the Dice will Never Abolish Chance' being the most widespread version. Others include a 'roll' of the dice, which is regarded as an Americanised rendering (Glazier 2015: *u.p.*) and in French, philosopher Alain Badiou's (b. 1937) (translated) *Being and Event* ([1988] 2005) the poem is referred to as 'A Cast of Dice...'. For continuity, we shall refer to the poem by its shortened French title - *Un Coup de Dés*, which we shall now concentrate on.

Badiou addresses the ‘Mallarméan enigma’ in its similarities to elements of a detective novel, noting “Mallarmé is a thinker of the event-drama, in the double sense of the staging of its appearance-disappearance...” (Badiou [1988] 2005: 191). In *Un Coup de Dés* then, we become witness to a shipwreck that perhaps never happened – “[p]oetry is the stellar assumption of that pure undecidable, against a background of nothingness, that is an action which one can only *know* whether it has taken place inasmuch as one *bets* upon its truth.” (Badiou [1988] 2005: 192) [*emphasis in original*]. Indeed, Mallarmé’s intentionally dense prose can elude understanding and in *Unfolding Mallarmé: The Development of a Poetic Art* (1996) Roger Pearson recognises; “[u]nfortunately the difficulty of his writing has meant that his readers have tended to experience the anguish of nightfall more acutely than the proffered splendours of stellar configuration...” (Pearson 1996: 295). He goes on:

Unfolding Mallarmé has been an attempt to part some of the folds of darkness which this poet so knowingly applied, to explicate shapes—a constellation or a rainbow, a hyperbola, a cube, a scroll—and to trace the emergence of these configurations from the foam of linguistic contingency.

(Pearson 1996: 295) [*emphasis in original*]

What does become clear here is the test that Mallarmé exhorts on the limits and indeed the stability of language/knowledge as we try to uncover the enigma. His text provides us with an indeterminacy of objects in the field of vision, a

shipwreck appears and disappears, being both present or absent depending on our perspective. Perhaps we can contemplate Schrödinger's Cat here in it being both alive and dead simultaneously, alongside observing an event and a non-event in Mallarmé (*via* Badiou).

The paradox of an evental-site is that it can only be recognized on the basis of what it does not present in the situation in which it is presented. [...] Mallarmé brilliantly presents this paradox by composing, on the basis of the site—the deserted Ocean—a *phantom* multiple, which metaphorizes the inexistence of which the site is the presentation. Within the scenic frame, you have nothing apart from the Abyss, the sea and sky being indistinguishable. Yet from the 'flat incline' of the sky and the 'yawning deep' of the waves, the image of a ship is composed, sails and hull, annulled as soon as invoked, such that the desert of the site 'quite inwardly sketches... a vessel' which, itself, does not exist, being the figurative interiority of which the empty scene indicates, using its resources alone, the probable absence.

(Badiou [1988] 2005: 192) [*emphasis in original*]



Figure 6: Hiroshi Sugimoto, 1990, 'Seascape: Aegean Sea, Pillon' [Silver Gelatin photograph].

It is possible to see in Sugimoto's time-exposed photographs of the sea and the sky such a phantom multiple, in what we could speculate to be the presentation of an evental-site, an abyss. Here the photographer presents a site of indeterminacy where things might happen, can happen, or don't happen, at once an event and a non-event. Perhaps we can suggest here that the Abyss is commensurate with zero and that this field of zero degree can conjure up events, or at least their invocation. Following Nishitani, and as the above quotation suggests, just as the sea and sky are impossible to differentiate, we can speculate that the object or shipwreck exists in a boundless state and not the self-enclosed entity of an object. What is more, the shipwreck and its event oscillate between the virtual realm and forays into actuality. In Mallarmé's own words, as quoted by Barthes in his essay

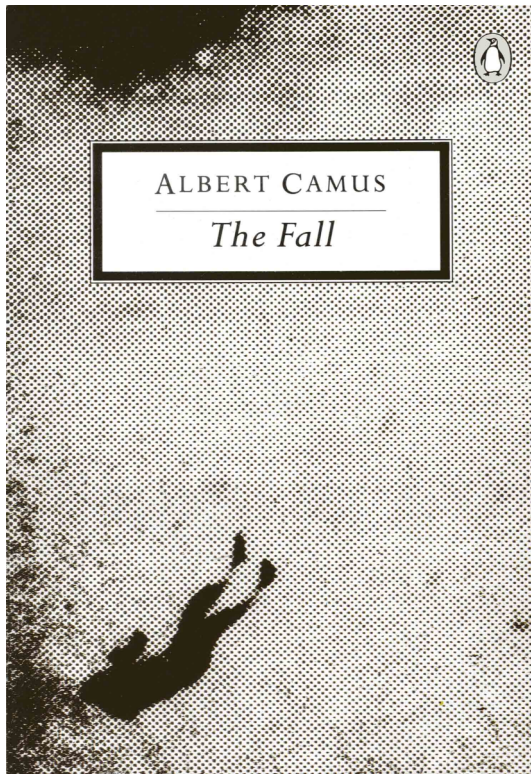
‘Introduction to the Structural Analysis of Narratives’ [1966] in *Image Music Text* ([1977] 1984a) “[a] dramatic work displays the succession of exteriors of the act without any moment retaining reality and, in the end, anything happening.” (Mallarmé in Barthes [1977] 1984a: 124 n.1). In the poem Mallarmé gives clues through the distillation of words and figures to the parameters of an event. From these disparate, scattered intimations we are led to believe that we are witness to an event, but crucially, an event that only exists in the delineation of an ‘evental-site’ circumscribed in language. Recalling perhaps the ‘pataphysical imaginary solution, “...which symbolically attributes the properties of objects, described by their virtuality, to their lineaments.” (Jarry [1911] 1996: 22). Situational fragments couched in language fragments mean it is both presented to appearance but oscillating in a state of non-appearance or indeed to use Badiou’s term, non-being. It is “...the pure and cancelled occurrence of the gesture” (Badiou [1988] 2005: 191). What is described as real is the notion of place, as in the poem it is from the massivity of the sea and the sky that the ship-event is rendered in its boundless form. Therefore (as previously cited) for both the poem and Badiou we have the manifestation of the “...pure undecidable, against a background of nothingness, that is an action of which one can only *know* whether it has taken place inasmuch as one *bets* upon its truth” (Badiou [1988] 2005: 192) [*emphasis in original*]. In *Un Coup de Dés*, the nature of the event hangs on a single gesture, that of the ship’s Master, whose arm is raised above the waves, his fist clutching a pair of dice, as if to cast them across the surface of the sea. The dice symbolise the connection of chance to the necessity of a result²¹, so we anticipate from the dice in the fist that there will be a throw. This shadows the condition of the event in so

much that what is at stake is the producing of an event out of the thought of an event. This is exactly the constituency of *CPDIOE?*, and so prompts the further question – can the thought of describing its own event bring such an event to actuality? The whole question, the enigma, resides within a Mallarméan ‘Abyss’ of dissolved meanings.

...given that the essence of the event is to be undecidable with regard to its belonging to the situation, an event whose content is the eventness of the event (and this is clearly the cast of dice thrown ‘in eternal circumstances’) cannot, in turn, have any other *form* than that of indecision.

(Badiou [1988] 2005: 193) [*emphasis in original*]

Badiou claims that there is always a hesitation at play, which continually precludes us from knowing the certainty of any event. In the poem the Master will never cast the dice and it is that hesitation that prevents us from ever really perceiving the actuality of the event. It is left to imagination. If he casts the dice the event is lost in our anticipation of it, and if he does not then, to reference the poem, “...nothing will have taken place but place...” (Mallarmé in Badiou [1988] 2005: 193). By this logic then, the true answer to our own questionable ‘event’ has to be undecidable, it is lost between its belonging to the situation of photography, the visible, and the cancellation of the event by its total invisibility in the situation.



*Figure 7: Pavel Büchler, 1987, detail from 'Principles' [black and white photograph] Redesigned as book cover for Albert Camus *The Fall* ([1956] 1963).*

Above we have a Pavel Büchler (b. 1952) image that has been recontextualised into a book cover for Camus' *The Fall* ([1956] 1963), an image, which in a way, is meant to signal the event of the book. The black markings in the bottom left-hand corner in their indeterminacy can either be imagined as a black ink-spot or a man falling. It is the book as evental-site that in itself signals the possible event of the falling man. The book itself consisting of the drunken thoughts of a man regarding his own existence produce an uncertain testimony insofar as *what is at stake is the producing of an event out of the thought of an event*. Büchler himself

describes his own practice as ‘making nothing happen’, perfectly apt in this context.

The six words of the question *Can Photography Describe Its Own Event?* stage their own undecidability; the anticipation of the situation of the event, named as the ‘place’ of photography, cancelled out by the inbuilt hesitancy of the question, which renders it suspended within its own irrationality. The result of such inevitable undecidability meaning that again ‘nothing will have taken place but place’ – nothing will have taken place but photography leaving us with “...the nothingness of the presentation in which the unpresentables of the site are dispersed.” (Badiou [1988] 2005: 194). Just as we have tried to prove so far, notably in Section II that with such a question composed of successive transformations, it is always enough that one supplementary image-interpretation is sufficient to disrupt the extensive whole. The wager of the cast of the dice is then “...the wager of being able to decide an absolute event” (Badiou [1988] 2005: 195). The hesitancy of the clenched fist is that of deciding between a rational choice within the situation and the appeal to chance, and it is the indeterminacy of the gesture that allows for the annihilation of both positions (Schrödinger’s Cat once more), resulting in the neutral position of the zero degree of the event. *If* the dice were cast then the number would be known and the event would come to actuality and it would assume the form of an enclosed entity, or as Badiou states, “...having closed itself within its own appearance [...] In short, the event would be within the situation, it would have been presented...” (Badiou [1988] 2005: 195). Badiou concludes that the poem is telling us that the true

nature of any event is that it is incalculable. It is not the ‘nothing’ or the absence of what happens, but how that absence comes to signify the event of language. All at the zero degree is inexpressible, or in Mallarmé’s words, “Every Thought Emits a Throw of Dice” (Mallarmé in Meillassoux 2012: 273[XI]). Therefore if undecidability is a prerequisite of every thought/event we are left to bet on the existence of such an event, including of course the event of photography. For Badiou it seems that it is the concept of event that engenders the creation of new possibilities, new actualities of presentation.

The fixity of the event as result [...] is carefully detailed by Mallarmé: it would come to *existence*, [...] it would be enclosed within its *limits*, [...] having emerged amidst its own disappearance, [...] and having closed itself within its own appearance, [...] In short, the event would be within the situation, it would have been presented.

(Badiou ([1988] 2005: 195) [*emphasis in original*])

On this notion of the presentation of the event, Badiou’s former student Quentin Meillassoux (b. 1967) in *The Number and the Siren: A Decipherment of Mallarmé’s ‘Coup de Dés’* (2012) proposes that the mode of presentation offered in Mallarmé’s poem owes more to the Eucharist of religion than to literary experimentation. The oscillation between the anticipation of the event and the hesitancy that denies its being is equivalent to the anticipated presence of the ‘Son of Man’ (Christ) in the Mass that Meillassoux identifies as “...a paradoxical mode of ‘presence in absence’” (Meillassoux 2012: 111) [*emphasis in original*]. A hoped

for event that in which as yet, ‘nothing will have taken place but place’. “It is a presence that is not in the present, but in the past and in the future.” (Meillasoux 2012: 111-112).

The ultimate singularity of Mallarmé’s poetics – the idea that oriented his last writings – thus consisted in the quest for a ‘diffusion of the absolute’ emancipated from representation (even if, evidently, the latter is not annulled in the labor of the work)...
(Meillasoux 2012: 112) [*emphasis in original*]

In Meillasoux’s argument then, the Eucharist is the ultimate model for the presentation and disappearance in oscillation of all events in Mallarmé. Yet this is only an aspect of Meillasoux’s book, as the central tenet is concerned with the ‘decipherment’ of a secret code in Mallarmé’s classic poem. Meillasoux engages with the notion that *Un Coup de Dés* is encrypted and that through a process of deciphering, the unique number hidden within the lines of the poem will be revealed. Seeing as we have been *deciphering* the question of *CPDIOE?* throughout the thesis, let us look more closely into the term ‘decipherment’ that forms part of the subheading of the book. For this we must turn to the translator’s note, where Robin Mackay clarifies the play between the terms *déchiffrement* – deciphering and *déchiffrage* – which “...brings together a musical motif with that of coding and decoding” (Mackay 2012: 294) in that it specifically references a musician’s ‘deciphering’ of a written musical score. Moreover, although the French–English translation does convey the ‘etymological convergence’ between

“...that of musical keys and keys that unlock – there is no English equivalent for ‘déchiffrage’, the equivalent term being ‘sight-reading’, which I have used once or twice to mark the double register.” (Mackay 2012: 294) [*emphasis in original*]. Certainly, we can appreciate this subtle difference in terms and recognise that the very layout of Mallarmé’s poem in some way resembles a musical score, as his prose dances disruptively across the page.

Thus, the discovery of the code will not offer us a response that will unknot all the difficulties of the poem, but will instead present us with a new question: *Why* encrypt the *Coup de Dés*; or more exactly, why encrypt it *in this way*? The code will not give us the ultimate key to the poem, but rather the form of its unsuspected lock: not the revelation of its true meaning, but the making explicit of a heretofore invisible difficulty. The text will not be completely illuminated once its cipher is elucidated, but will obscure itself otherwise, cloaking itself in unsuspected shadows. The elucidation of the encryption, rather than being the end of the mystery, will be the unveiling of a new problem, which can be posed only by the reader aware of the encryption: *How did a simple, elementary secret code acquire a fundamental poetical importance for Mallarmé?* Only the resolution of this ‘enigma within the enigma’ will allow us to penetrate the meaning of this strange poem.

(Meillasoux 2012: 112) [*emphasis in original*]

Whilst this is not the place to elaborate in great detail, it seems pertinent to acknowledge this aspect of the speculative-realist philosophers’ book, given that we are carrying out an investigation of a similar nature concerning our enigmatic

code *CPDIOE?*. The quotation above perhaps comes the closest to our endeavour in the tone that it is written and accordingly we can draw parallels between our work and the sentiment of Meillasoux's quest. If we now *translate* some of the above we can ask some speculative questions of the inquiry of *Can Photography Describe Its Own Event?*. As we have established at great length thus far, we must concur with the assertion that it will not be possible to reveal the 'true meaning' of *CPDIOE?*, yet, *via* the decryption of our code, we have taken away some of the shrouded ambiguity of the enigma. That is not to say though that this has been a fruitless undertaking, as we would be missing the point if we were to hope for a concrete resolution to emerge from something that resists definition, is fugitive, fleeting. Perhaps our 'enigma within the enigma' then could be the question: *how does the code/question CPDIOE? acquire a fundamental importance for photography?* Philippe Sollers in writing about *Un Coup de Dés* described the full sentence of Mallarmé's title as being "[s]ubjected to an atomic disintegration and dissemination," where what remains is "...no longer the transcription of a meaning, but the virtually spontaneous upheaval of the written surface." (Sollers in Glazier 2015: *u.p.*). The very purpose of the thesis has been to achieve something similar in terms of photography with our own complex and encrypted question. Our central question *Can Photography Describe Its Own Event?* performs a call to contingency and arguably produces such an 'atomic disintegration', an *infinitesimal dissolution* of the classical perspective in the concept of photography, or indeed the 'virtual spontaneous upheaval of the *photographic surface*'.

Nietzsche's 'Zerography'

Let us now dig a little deeper into the formulation of our concept of '[zero]graphy' by looking at the other very sparse uses of the phrase 'zerography', which can be found particularly within the field of Critical Literary Discourse. It is worth identifying here that we can uncover the term in two essays, the first being by Rudolf Kuenzli from 1981 titled 'Nietzsche's Zerography: Thus Spoke Zarathustra', that formed part of a publication *Boundary 2: Why Nietzsche Now? A Boundary 2 Symposium*. The second usage, also in this field, appears in Garrett Stewart's *Reading Voices: Literature and the Phonotext* (1990), where Stewart uses this term as a subheading (without elaboration) in an essay titled 'Catching the Drift: Woolf as Shakespeare's Sister'. Kuenzli's essay is primarily concerned with 'reading' Nietzsche, or more specifically, the problems in reading a philosopher who "...has cast the strongest doubt on language itself" (Kuenzli 1981: 99). To try and understand Nietzsche's multifarious writings and to establish a sense of continuity, to take his *oeuvre* from the realm of hazy ambiguity into that of transparent lucidity is certainly a problematic endeavour, yet a challenge that many philosophers are unable to resist. We can draw a parallel here with our work on Benjamin in Section II in that we uncovered inconsistencies over different times and in a variety of texts, which lends his work the appearance of a palimpsest, also a malleable entity that can be 'read' in many (different) ways. "More traditional philosophers may very well disagree with the misreading of Nietzsche as a zerographer. But they have to be aware of their own

methods and strategies by which they manufacture their Nietzsche.” (Kuenzli 1981: 99). Kuenzli goes on to identify the variety of ways philosophers try to “...exercise their sense of charity, to save Nietzsche from himself, from his style [...] and to rewrite him in unambiguous statements that produce a philosophical system.” (Kuenzli 1981: 100), by way of focusing on specific texts, or finding stability in categorising his work into ‘phases’ and in consequence, eliminating problematic contradictions. On the other hand, as an alternate reading:

Nietzsche’s deconstruction of his own text, his *zerography*, has become the model for critics who, having subdued their former rage for the organic whole, are now drawn to the holes, breaks, ruptures and discontinuities in the text.

(Kuenzli 1981: 99) [*my emphasis*]

Here we may draw an allusion to the task of this thesis in so much as it attempts to deconstruct photography as a form of communication, and by applying a close textual analysis as it were, we too are looking for discontinuities, breaks and ruptures from which to build new meanings. We can now begin to grapple with the use of the term *zerography* in the essay and see if it shares any consistencies with our ideas thus far. Once we have established the use of the phrase here, we shall *read across, read through* this to draw out aspects that might reverberate for our own concerns. In turn, it is hoped this will help to reinstate the term in a new context and the possibility that it can actually illuminate our aim for zero[graphy] to offer a new perspective for photography. Within the text, the formalised

method that we have briefly considered above is then set against an alternative way to '(mis)read' Nietzsche – to instead take an approach that seeks to connect with the unstable and shifting meanings that exist at the heart of his writings. Referring to Blanchot's distinction between Nietzsche's variety of approaches, Kuenzli notes, "...the fragmentary, discontinuous nature of Nietzsche's work, which does neither affirm nor deny, but which establishes a pluralism of meaning, a labyrinth." (Kuenzli 1981: 102). Furthermore, Kuenzli points out the apparent importance we can place on Nietzsche in a philosopher such as Derrida's writings, an influence the philosopher seems uncomfortable to disclose.

He himself describes his zerography in the following way: "...a blaze of words: to consume the sign to ashes, but first and more violently dislocate the verbal unity, the integrity of the voice through the irritated verve, to wear down or frighten... the calm surface of 'words' by subjecting their body to a gymnastic ceremony."

(Derrida in Kuenzli 1981: 103)

Indeed, we can see the similarity with Nietzsche's concerns in Derrida's writing in the quotation above, a preoccupation with pushing words to their limits, revelling in the joy of the displacement, disruption, *destruction of language*. The remaining fragments of language, of ideas, entice the reader into adopting the role of a detective, just as we saw in Mallarmé, as we seek to uncover the hidden depths of what is tantalisingly laid out for us. It is here that we arrive at the core of the essay, where we unearth the use of the term *via* Kuenzli's examination of

Nietzsche's zerography, that he succinctly defines as "...the textual machinery by which he is able to put everything he states into doubt." (Kuenzli 1981:103-4). He goes on:

'Zerography' seems to be at least in the English and French language a suitable term. The *OED* lists the Arabic word 'çifr' as the common root for 'zero' and 'cipher'. The relatedness and former interchangeability of 'zero/cipher' is given in the following quote from the *OED*: 'They accounted their weeks by thirteen days, marking the days with a zero or a cipher.' 'Zero' then is a 'cipher', a marking, a character. Zerography then is the turning of the wheel, the circle, the loosening of the fixed meaning, the production of the pluralistic text.
(Kuenzli 1981: 104) [*emphasis in original*]

This explanation unquestionably falls into line with the ideas we have been addressing throughout the thesis, certainly with regards to the notion of codes and encryption – what Kuenzli describes as a literary apparatus or tactic of sorts. "Zerography then is the writing process, the strategy by which the whole is deconstructed and rendered as a cipher, the signifier is liberated from the 'primary signified'." (Kuenzli 1981: 104) [*emphasis in original*]. Here we can refer back to the very start of this Section and Barthes' 'third meaning', where once again we find the signifier in an estranged relationship with the signified. Perhaps we can speculate here that although the term zerography as used by Kuenzli describes a very similar function in regard to language that Barthes' concept of the zero degree does, he is trying to avoid confusing his ruminations on Nietzsche with the

contemporary writings of Barthes, hence the use of the term *zerography*. However, this Section aims to prove connections between various functions of the concept of zero and its associated terminology and we can see how Mallarmé's experiments in *writing degree zero* (Barthes' expression) and Kuenzli's observations regarding Nietzsche's philosophy describe the same functioning of language when subjected to the cipher of the obtuse. Both writers employ strategies and codes in order to bring the serious reader to thought and as we can see, Nietzsche, Mallarmé and later Benjamin were no strangers to utilising misdirection and promoting willful misunderstanding as literary devices. We might even say that they often encrypted their thought in a haze of ambiguity, as testament to their baroque sensibilities.

Karl Jaspers in his seminal work *Nietzsche: An Introduction to the Understanding of His Philosophical Activity* ([1936] 1965) identifies the philosopher's contradictions as one of the most important elements of his work; "[a]ll statements seem to be annulled by other statements. *Self-contradiction* is the fundamental ingredient of Nietzsche's thought. For nearly every single one of Nietzsche's judgments, one can also find an opposite." (Jaspers [1936] 1965: 10) [*emphasis in original*]. In Kuenzli, the notion of self-contradiction must also be regarded as the key strategy of Nietzsche's zerography (Kuenzli 1981: 104) and we can speculate that another reason he chose to use this term can be found here. The notion of one position annulling another to create a neutrality takes us back to the very start of this Section: Zero[graphy] where we considered the idea of the combination of the enlightened and the encrypted (Sections I and II) leading to a

third and neutralised state, *zerography*. Furthermore, we must also recall the contradiction and inconsistency of our enigmatic question at this point – *can photography describe its own event?* Here too, we see that Nietzsche’s self-contradiction creates a similar situation in the tension between two opposing ideas, or antinomies, “[i]t is due to the presence of these two constantly recurring moments of creation and deconstruction, that diametrically opposed readings of *Zarathustra* are possible.” (Kuenzli 1981: 107). Perhaps it is here that we can see Nietzsche as a major influence on Nishitani in his play of self-contradiction, as Heisig notes – “[a]s a young man grappling with the problems of life and unsure where to turn [...] he used to carry *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* around with him ‘like my bible.’” (Heisig 1990: 76) [*emphasis in original*].

This play of building and destroying, of asserting and doubting, of riding old myths and parodying them, of lyrical flights and self-parody seems to form Nietzsche’s *zerography*. This circular motion, which rhythmically passes through the moments of forgetting and remembering, puts everything into question [...]

(Kuenzli 1981: 113)

This image brings to mind the circular motion of Jarry’s revolving stick as discussed above in *Caesar-Antichrist* which turned across the stage, inscribing the figure of the circle, or zero, oscillating between the plus and the minus sign in the way perhaps Kuenzli speaks of the forgetting and the remembering. According to his theory of Nietzsche’s *zerography* “...the sequential rhythmical alternation

between segments of forgetting and remembering” (Kuenzli 1981: 113) is best summed up by the relationship of the troublesome fourth part of *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* to the preceding text. The comic tone of this final section works to undercut and nullify the seriousness of Zarathustra’s teachings in the book as a whole. It is worth noting that this ill-received section is titled ‘The Awakening’ and maybe this was Nietzsche’s very own way of rearranging the furniture of his thought. “Zarathustra’s repeated awareness of the necessary falsity of all signs leads him at times to claim that all his speeches are mere noise that hides his silence” (Kuenzli 1981: 112). Many critics have tried to dismiss this section as the beginnings of Nietzsche’s mental decay; Kuenzli disagrees and finds in it the vital clue to Nietzsche’s zerography, of the play of building and destroying that testify to his thought process. As Bök states insightfully:

Jarry performs humorously on behalf of literature
what Nietzsche performs seriously on behalf of
philosophy. Both thinkers in effect dream up a ‘gay
science,’ whose joie de vivre thrives wherever the
tyranny of truth has increased our esteem for the lie
and wherever the tyranny of reason has increased
our esteem for the mad.

(Bök 2002: 9) [*emphasis in original*]

Nietzsche places all his writings ‘under erasure’ in the form of *Gedankenstriche*, which Kuenzli understands as a ‘crossing out of ideas, thoughts’ (Kuenzli 1981: 117 n.47) and by the end of his essay he counsels us against even quoting from Nietzsche, as by doing so “...we ‘freeze’ the sense of passage, whose meaning is

undecidable, since it is a fluid state and caught within the movement of Nietzsche's zerography." (Kuenzli 1981: 113) [*emphasis in original*]. Arkady Plotnitsky has referred to something similar to Nietzsche's zerography (as identified by Kuenzli as a purposeful nullification that signifies the inexpressible) as *non-nonwriting* in his essay 'Un-Scriptible' from the edited *Writing the Image after Roland Barthes* (1997). By this term he maintains that the double negative does not return us to the positive before the negative but "...moves toward a more radical difference from both the positive and the first negative." (Plotnitsky 1997: 254). This concept could provide a more accurate way of situating this present Section of the thesis in relation to the first two. That is to say that if Section I constitutes a *writing* of photography and the crypt of Section II a *non-writing*, then Section III suggests the potential for a paradigm shift in what we consider the very concept of photography to be. A *non-nonwriting* of photography that occupies a productive neutral space; a space in which photography may transform itself.

The second instance of the use of the phrase 'zerography' is referenced as a subheading in a chapter in Stewart's *Reading Voices: Literature and the Phonotext* (1990). Written nine years after Kuenzli's essay was published and within the same field of study, we are left to assume a connection, as there is no citation to Kuenzli in Stewart's use of this term. Aside from this, 'zerography' does not appear again but a brief discussion follows on aspects of zero, which we shall now summarise. Here Stewart's thesis recalls for us Nishitani's theory of self-identity *via* the number theory of Gottlob Frege (1848 – 1925) and the rupture

between one and zero. Frege names the number one as assigned to the concept of self-identity as "...logic demands that any object be identical to itself, each object is therefore identified singly by the number 'one', naming not wholeness but the concept of being one of itself, one with itself." (Stewart 1990: 267-268). Frege then ponders which numerical concept would name an object that is *not* identical with itself.

Since this concept is a logical contradiction, it subsumes among possible objects exactly 'none'. Thus the zero is engendered. As the number that names the concept having no object, zero is paradoxically the first 'one' among the series of numbers but it is represented there not by the numerical '1' but by the arithmetical '0'.
(Stewart 1990: 268) [*emphasis in original*]

A code or a cipher is appealed to here as "[z]ero thus oscillates between an inauguration and a naught, a cipher in both senses, an integer and its own negation, logically engorged by the sequence it institutes." (Stewart 1990: 268). Like the Derridian concept of writing under erasure (*sous rature*), (or as Kuenzli argues above, a crossing out of ideas) a designation under erasure leaves a trace, a remainder. It is this oscillation between an absence and a signifying presence that barely masks it that marks the self-identity of zero. Following Nishitani's logic, just as with the self-identity of fire it cannot exist in its own self-enclosure and so zero (0) in order to exist as the selfness of zero *for itself* must extend beyond the enclosure of its own entity into the surrounding field. 'Since this concept is a

logical contradiction’ (see quotation above) then just as fire must burn itself as well as the firewood to assume its true self identity, (and photography must describe its own event as well as external events in the world to assume *its* true self identity) then the true concept of zero must oscillate between an absence and a presence in order to be self identical as the one that displaces the zero. “Let us grant that zero marks the rupture...” (Stewart 1990: 268). The rupture then, in the question *CPDIOE?*, is marked by the shadow of zero and can be identified as the emergence of *zero[graphy]*.

Becoming zero

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*.
(Deleuze and Guattari [1991] 1994: 169) [*my
emphasis*]

And so what of a becoming photography? The very words with which we began this thesis. In order to *map out*²² the present task, we shall explore the topography of our current surroundings and negotiate the terrain of the grey, flat plane in which we metaphorically find ourselves situated, and that we might identify for our purpose now as a plane of immanence. Immanence can succinctly be defined as something that is inherent or innate in itself; remaining or existing within – and

as such, has no outside as a relation. There are no external forces working against a system of immanence as all change is emergent from within its own internal relations. We will first contextualise the Deleuzian plane of immanence (which is of primary importance to this Section) through the influences of Spinoza and Nietzsche and then address his concept of the virtual as adopted from Bergson. An appropriate starting point here is Baruch Spinoza's (1632 – 1677) speculative and daring idea that God and nature amount to the same thing and are not in conflict with each other. In Spinoza, 'Nature' refers to the 'Nature' of everything; "Nature, in this sense, is the essence of the world, or that which makes the world what it is." (Stewart 2005: 158). It was Spinoza's radical conviction that there was no mysterious force or essence external to the world; the world was ultimately knowable in itself. Even if there are things we may never know, potentially there is nothing that cannot *be* known. He makes the distinction between the immanent cause of things (God) and a transitive cause of things that lies outside its effect; the renowned example of a transitive cause being the watchmaker who is ultimately responsible for the existence of the watch. "An 'immanent' cause is in some sense 'inside' or 'together with' that which it causes. The nature of a circle, for example, is the immanent cause of its roundness." (Stewart 2005: 159) [*emphasis in original*]. In Spinoza's philosophy, 'God, or Nature' is commensurate with his term 'substance' of which there is only one, and not many, and consists of infinite attributes (God once more). However it is important to note as Spinoza states in the *Ethics* ([1677] 1996) that "[t]hings could not have been produced by God in any manner or in any order different from that which in fact exists." (Spinoza [1677] 1996: 22 – *part 1, proposition 33*). This

underlines the premise that there is no transcendent external will exercising choice or anything else, and that the ‘Nature’ of the world emerges or unfolds from its own constituent elements. We can see now that our question *CPDIOE?* is in fact a question of immanence, as in an immanent system there would be no event external to the event of photography. This is a radical shift in the classical perspective of photography, as the referent and its representation can no longer sit in transcendental relation to each other; estranged, but must be seen as immanent in process, emergent from within the internal conditions of the concept of photography. We will also speculate later whether a practice of zero[graphy] in relation to photography could also be considered an immanent practice.

Deleuze aligns himself with philosophies of immanence over those of transcendence and for ease of explanation James Williams asks us to consider, “[a]re the privileged relations in a philosophy of the form of a relation ‘to’ something, or of a relation ‘in’ something? If it is ‘to’ then it is philosophy of transcendence. If it is ‘in’ then it is immanence.” (Williams in Parr 2010a: 128) [*emphasis in original*]. In his final essay ‘Immanence: A Life’ ([1995] 2001c), we can see how there is a consistency between Deleuze’s immanence and Spinoza’s ideas of a single substance, that is, that immanence is not immanent *to* substance, but instead, immanence *is* substance – namely, it is immanent to itself. As Deleuze notes, “...it is only when immanence is no longer immanence to anything other than itself that we can speak of a plane of immanence.” (Deleuze [1995] 2001c: 27).

It is essential not to confuse the plane of immanence and the concepts that occupy it. Although the same elements may appear twice over, on the plane and in the concept, it will not be in the same guise, even when they are expressed in the same verb and words.

(Deleuze and Guattari [1991] 1994: 39)

Here we can recognise the Nietzschean influence on Deleuze and Guattari's conception of immanence in the above quotation, as an evocation of his doctrine of *eternal return* – despite elements appearing the same at different instances, this semblance is illusory. Eternal return then, is an immanent process that reveals it is not the 'same' that is being returned, it is the transformative return of difference. Both immanence and difference as Deleuzian concepts, the latter of which we expounded in Sections I and II, can be seen to take inspiration from Nietzsche's philosophy. It is principally from Nietzsche that a *third* related concept emerges for Deleuze, the *univocal*. This is where Deleuze deviates from the Platonic norm in philosophy, where for instance the referent in photography would hold precedence over the copy or representation in an equivocal system. With univocity, everything is 'real' to the same degree, there is no hierarchy between model and copy, the real or the potential. As in Spinoza there is only one substance and all difference comes from within. (We are reminded here of the pataphysical (non)system of equivalence where all concepts and objects have equality in the world.) The concept of univocity renders a conventional discussion of the marked and the unmarked term in linguistics null and void, save for Barthes intuition (as discussed above) that they are differentiated intensities of the same

concept. Within the univocal perspective no event or object is more real than any other which, we might speculate can lead to a certain indeterminacy between concepts and objects in the field of thought (as well as vision) – between fact and fiction for instance, which one could argue throws everything into Nishitani’s field of radical impermanence – *śūnyatā*. This describes a reality of continuous variation or process that distinguishes itself on a plane of immanence, rather than a more ‘bounded’ transcendent attitude. In Bergsonian terms, if we have a univocity, then difference can only exist as difference in kind, each difference/intensity as real as any other and therefore only differing from itself. It is from Spinoza’s univocity that Deleuze can form his own conception of immanence, that is, if there is only one substance this denies any perspective external to that substance and so everything that *is* possesses full and equal reality from within the plane of the substance. Therefore the Platonic/Cartesian division between mind and matter makes no sense when considered as distinct substances and so logically neither can be reliant or derived from one another, and in Spinoza’s terms, are merely attributes of a single substance. Nietzsche’s concept of the eternal return concurs with this singular sense of being but introduces the concept of becoming as that which ushers in the new and engenders the notion of radically different futures. Eternal return repeats and affirms what has gone before whilst slowly factoring out any negative attributes, and it is important to see this as an organic process constituting the passage between two boundless states, an increase or decrease in power and/or speed. This process affirms difference and negates identity as Deleuze insists it is only difference that returns and not the same. “Eternal return is an immanent process that brings differentiating and

identifying processes together. In eternal return, difference returns to transform identities (the same).” (Williams in Parr 2010a: 129). This throws some light on the differentiating properties of our question *CPDIOE?* as it negates the identity of photography, whilst affirming the self-identity of photography (see Nishitani above), as it further promotes the difference in kind in the concept of photography.

Let us now turn to the concept of the virtual, a field of difference and creation that perhaps holds one of the keys to this Section inasmuch as in order to dissolve the classical perspective in the concept of photography, we must differ in concept from the ‘real and the possible’ to the ‘virtual and the actual’. We shall take a moment to focus on some terms that pertain to the virtual, in order to aid our understanding of the concept and its relation to other ideas discussed in this section. When we consider similar terms that could arguably lead to some confusion, we must recognise that the ontological coupling of the ‘actual and the virtual’ are opposed to the ‘real and the possible’.

The virtual then names a real place but one which has yet to be actualised. Whereas the real and the possible instigate a philosophy of transcendence, the virtual and the actual affirm immanence. We might rephrase this and say that whereas the possible names the logic of Being (ontology of stasis), the virtual affirms a logic of becoming (ontology of process). Indeed, it is only with, and within, the virtual that we have pure difference in and of itself [...] The virtual, or rather the actualisation of the virtual is then the creative act – precisely the

production, or actualisation, of difference and thus
diversity from a pre-existing field of potentialities.
(O’Sullivan 2006: 103)

To return to the beginning of the thesis, and more specifically the opening pages of Section I, we established an attitude in approaching our question in that we would follow the model of the Bergsonian question. A question that is eloquently stated by Alliez in that “...to pose the problem is instead to *invent* and not only dis-cover; it is to *create*, in the same movement, both the problem and its solution.” (Alliez 2004: 113) [*emphasis in original*]. This takes us to the very heart of actualisation. In *Difference and Repetition*, Deleuze remarks that “[t]he virtual possesses the reality of a task to be performed or a problem to be solved...” (Deleuze [1968] 2004a: 264). In the context of the virtual/actual paradigm, one must note that the conditions of what might be termed ‘the problem’ do not resemble or represent its solution. “Most important for Deleuze is that the virtual is not to be understood as duplicating or resembling the actual, nor should it be taken to mean transcendence.” (Boundas in Parr 2010a: 302). Therefore without resembling that actual, the virtual is fundamental in bringing an object or thought to actualisation. The virtual, unlike the possible, is not opposed to the real, and in possessing a reality by itself it does not need realising, and so the process it participates in is that of actualisation. However, if the possible has to be realised, and the virtual partakes in actualisation, a crucial difference is that the processes are governed by different rules – in Deleuze’s own words:

...the process of realization is subject to two essential rules, one of resemblance and one of limitation. For the real is supposed to be in the image of the possible that it realizes. [...] and the rules of actualization are not those of resemblance and limitation, but those of difference or divergence and creation.

(Deleuze [1966] 1988a: 97)

What this means is that where actualisation through difference always brings about the ‘new’ then the realisation of the possible merely offers more of the same. Here once again we are made aware of the different paradigms of difference and representation, indeed at this stage we can say immanence and transcendence. For Deleuze the plane of immanence is commensurate with the play of the virtual and as an empirical thinker the ultimate example is perhaps that of the ‘Idea’, which has as its essence the ability to actualise itself. Again we can claim this as the primary method of the thesis in the Bergsonian sense, that our enigmatic question and our workings upon it throughout the Sections are played out as if on a plane of immanence/consistency²³ where we can map the movements of the virtual into actualisation – *can photography describe its own event?*. In each case, to appreciate the multiple actualisations of the question, we must be able to intuit their virtual conditions.

Concepts are like multiple waves, rising and falling, but the plane of immanence is the single wave that rolls them up and unrolls them. The plane envelops infinite movements that pass back and forth through it, but concepts are the infinite speeds of finite movements that, in each case, pass only through

their own components. [...] this speed requires a milieu that moves infinitely in itself – the plane, the void, the horizon.

(Deleuze and Guattari [1991] 1994: 35-36)

As the evocative quotation above puts forward, we should perceive the plane of immanence like a wave, and perhaps we might speculate that this is also akin to the waves of Mallarmé's poem whereby they create the virtual event of the shipwreck from the immanent plane of the ocean, which may or may not have come to actualisation. The indeterminacy of such an event however has no perceivable impact on its status within the real, for Mallarmé situates the shipwreck-event on the cusp of the waves that delineate it and perhaps in the process of actualisation. The evental-site being "...the deserted Ocean—a *phantom* multiple, which metaphorizes the inexistence of which the site is the presentation." (Badiou [1988] 2005: 192) [*emphasis in original*]. This imagined scene where the shipwreck-event emerges from the foaming waves of an indistinguishable sea and sky may enable us to comprehend as an image the relationship of event to plane of immanence. The shipwreck then is not an act that we are contemplating as past but as a becoming on the degree zero of the immanent space of sea and sky. The indeterminate event of the ship being subsumed by the waves:

...is no longer an object as such, or not only an object, but also a space or a zone from which creativity emerges. An 'event site' as Alain Badiou might call it; 'a point of exile where *it is possible*

that something, finally, might happen' (Badiou 1999, 84.5).

(O'Sullivan 2006: 45) [*emphasis in original*]

Perhaps this is our dream for a becoming-photography that under the supplement of difference and through the optic of a *zerography*, a new creativity might emerge. The shipwreck of Mallarmé's poem situated in the plane of the indistinguishable sea and sky is no more than a becoming-shipwreck event, a boundless object in the 'total field of the universal remainder' and reminds us of Deleuze and Guattari's interest in Herman Melville's (1819 – 1891) seafaring novel *Moby-Dick* (1851). "Absolute immanence is in itself: it is not in something, to something; it does not depend on an object or belong to a subject." (Deleuze [1995] 2001c: 26) [*emphasis in original*]. Captain Ahab's obsession with the whale Moby-Dick is about a transversal becoming between Ahab and the whale in much the same way as the de-/re-territorialisation of the wasp and the orchid as discussed earlier in the thesis; "Captain Ahab is engaged in an irresistible becoming-whale with Moby Dick..." (Deleuze and Guattari [1987] 2004a: 335). What matters in this case is the dissolving borders between the entities, as in our discussion of awakenings earlier in this Section and Nishitani's transparent or permeable borders between objects in the concept of radical impermanence.

...I have no personal history with Moby-Dick, no revenge to take, anymore than I have a myth to play out; but I do have a becoming! Moby-Dick is neither an individual nor a genus; he is the borderline, and I have to strike him to get at the pack as a whole [...]

the characteristics of the pack are only symbolic entities; all that counts is the borderline—the anomalous.

(Deleuze and Guattari [1987] 2004a: 270)

Here we can see that the relationship between Ahab and the whale does not reside within the paradigm of the subject-object duality. Moby-Dick here is not an entity as such or part of an individuated species but both man and whale are caught up in a multiplicity of experiences that has absorbed them in virtuality and rolls them back out as event. “The principle of immanence demands that we do not see experience as the experience *of* some being or some ultimate subject. Rather, there is a flow or multiplicity of experiences *from which* any being or idea is effected.” (Colebrook 2002: 87) [*emphasis in original*].

Taking his lead from Frederick Nietzsche’s early notes, Deleuze uses the term ‘becoming’ (*devenir*) to describe the continual production (or ‘return’) of difference immanent within the constitution of events, whether physical or otherwise. Becoming is the pure movement evident in changes *between* particular events.

(Stagoll in Parr 2010a: 26) [*emphasis in original*]

As we already know from our work thus far, alongside difference, *becoming* is one of the central tenets of Deleuze’s philosophical project. It should also be reiterated that as a connecting mechanism, becoming does not seek out an endpoint or a conclusion, nor does it simply denote a phase between two points.

Instead, we must consider becoming as a dynamic process of change and transformation that produces the productive return of difference. Furthermore, becoming has no founding origin and in the ‘Translator’s Notes’ to *Negotiations*, Martin Joughin recognises that “[b]ecoming has ‘itself’ no fixed identity or being, is always becoming-other, alteration rather than alternation, pure difference rather than repetition, multiple becomings rather than unitary becoming.” (Joughin in Deleuze 1995: 186 n.8). Considering the difference between ‘alteration’ and ‘alternation’ then, this reveals a subtle yet significant point in Deleuze’s ontology of becoming. It is true that *alternation* speaks of a process of change, yet this change is determined by a consecutive and regular repeated pattern. However, *alteration* can markedly be aligned with change *via* difference and process, a variation that has no predetermined ‘outline’ but instead manifests itself as an undefined boundless entity. Here we can refer back to Nietzsche’s eternal return as a productive cyclical arrangement that constitutes a process of becoming: “...becoming ‘moves through’ every event, such that each is simultaneously start-point, end-point and mid-point of an ongoing cycle of production.” (Stagoll in Parr 2010a: 26) [*emphasis in original*].

It is at *this* point in our perambulations through disparate yet related concepts relating to our formulation of zero[graphy] that we must return to our map to make those connections. In this sub-section *becoming zero*, we have turned our attention to Deleuze’s plane of immanence, the inter-related ideas of eternal return, the codependent terms of the virtual and actual in the process of actualisation and the foundational ideas that perhaps connect them all, that of

difference and becoming. Now we must turn our attention back to the concept of zero and how events emerge from a zero degree plane, the zero degree of language, of representation, of difference. “To make a clean slate of it, to start over and over again at zero, to look for a beginning or a foundation – *all imply a false conception of voyage and movement* [...]” (Deleuze and Guattari 1983: 58) [*my emphasis*] but we must find “...another way to travel, as if moving or setting off in the middle, through the middle, entering and leaving, not beginning or ending.” (Deleuze and Guattari 1983: 58). *To begin again in the middle*, and acknowledge our founding question *can photography describe its own event?*, we must look to the immanent emergence of the event in what we might speculate to be a zero[graphy]. Thus far, we have considered a degree zero of form in terms of language *via* Barthes, Mallarmé and Nietzsche in their attempts at attaining a neutrality of form, a ‘colourless writing’ as Barthes calls it. Perhaps we can contemplate this zero degree of writing as an immanent practice of writing, and from this position it shall be useful to ascertain what relevance Deleuze’s plane of immanence (or consistency) has for us in our formulation of the concept of zero[graphy]. Is it possible for the photographic to emerge from a set of circumstances, as an unfolding event without beginning or end in a rhizomatic relation to its remainder? “As Deleuze will say, we always start from the middle of things; thought has no beginning, just an outside to which it is connected.” (Hurley in Deleuze [1970] 1988c: i). For as O’Sullivan notes when viewing Robert Smithson’s large earthwork the *Spiral Jetty* (1970) from a helicopter, there is an index where the natural and the artificial become to be seen as co-existent, where form and formlessness synthesise into a ‘degree 0’ that can only be intuited

and experienced from within an affective register. “Smithson is not nihilistic, he does not plunge into the abyss, but like Deleuze he favours that art which has something of the abyss, of chaos, about it.” (O’Sullivan 2006: 117).

What constitutes an Event?

To set photography in motion by describing it as a becoming-photography, is to produce it as an event in itself. Let us now address the concept of becoming in its relation to Deleuze’s event, which occurs across a number of texts, though most notably in *The Logic of Sense* ([1990] 2004c), *The Fold: Leibniz and The Baroque* ([1993] 2003) and with Guattari in *What is Philosophy?* ([1991] 1994). At this stage, it is worth noting that the concept of ‘event’ is one that permeates the thought of a number of scholars in a variety of philosophical contexts that extend far beyond the scope of the thesis. So in order to deftly negotiate this complicated area, we shall focus on interpretations that pertain to our investigation thus far, and to our enigmatic question; *can photography describe its own event?* This shall entail a consideration of Deleuze’s rendition followed by a brief reflection on the irksome philosophical relationship between Deleuze and Badiou. In *The Logic of Sense*, Deleuze introduces the notion of the ‘event’ as something that manifests itself out of the changes immanent to the convergence and interaction of forces. A useful explanation here is the changing colour of the tree in the spring. For Deleuze, the event must not be thought of as ‘the tree becomes green’ because this

is a passing "...surface effect or expression of an events actualisation..." (Stagoll in Parr 2010: 90). It also reveals the confluence of other events on the tree such as weather patterns, pigmentation effects, soil conditions and so on. "Therefore we ought not to say 'the tree became green' or 'the tree is now green' (both of which imply a change in the tree's essence), but rather 'the tree greens'." (Stagoll in Parr 2010: 90) [*emphasis in original*]. The becoming-green of the tree does not disrupt some continuous state in the tree, but rather, when actualised, marks the tree in a state of transformation. The 'tree greens' is a dynamic event that speaks of process and continuous variation, as well as becoming and as such, there is no end-point that marks the 'ideal' state of the tree. We might recall in Section II the notion of a red apple and Kant's synthesis of intuition and understanding, whereby the representations of 'apple' and 'redness' are synthesised in a single act of knowledge. We may now understand this in Deleuzian terms as an event with no beginning, middle or end but instead a becoming-red of the apple as an instance of difference in itself, or more properly in Deleuze's event theory, as an intrinsic property of an extensive series. The redness of the apple is now seen in terms of an intensity or gradation. "It is something rather than nothing, but also this rather than that: no longer the indefinite article, but the demonstrative pronoun." (Deleuze [1993] 2003: 77). It is now a red apple, demonstratively ripe, rather than just an apple, thereby determining change or inherent difference.

Before we move on, it is important to remind ourselves that over different timeframes and in different texts Deleuze uses particular words and phrases in diverse yet specific ways, so any conflicting terms or ideas must be read as the

current expression of Deleuze's thought in the work being referred to at the time. We can read these as intensities of the same concept in Deleuze's mind as they develop and change. As a philosopher that was interested in the folding, unfolding and refolding of ideas, it is not surprising that this process can present supposed 'inconsistencies' over his body of work as a whole. As we know, Deleuze enjoyed the process of engaging in close studies of particular philosophers or aspects of their work he found provocative. In this case of *The Fold* then, he writes 'What Is An Event?' a short section heavily influenced by Whitehead in a book about Leibniz. Indeed, this is the very nature of constructing an argument, drawing together ideas from a number of inspirations, yet we must recognise that such an intellectual miscellany can result in a problematic use of terminology on some occasions. Our task here is to sustain an unprejudiced way of reading Deleuze that opens up the philosophers thought rather than getting caught up in assumed dichotomies.

We shall begin by noticing a number of characteristics in the Deleuzian event that can offer an entry point onto quite a difficult aspect of the philosopher's thought, in part due to his intentional *folding* of meanings and sense throughout his work. First of all, there is no predetermined path that paves the way for the happening of an event; instead, an event occurs primitively, that is, it arises from the forces of its production at the very moment of their interaction. The event is not external to this process but an inherent characteristic of it, intrinsically connected to it, immanent. Secondly, events are not based on representative models or copies *via* an overarching reality but are born out of immanence and creativity and always

produce what is new. Lastly, an event is not concerned with finding an end-point; its function is purely an instigator of change. To sum up, “[A]n event is unrelated to any material content, being without fixed structure, position, temporality or property, and without beginning or end.” (Stagoll in Parr 2010a: 90). Stagoll goes on:

An event is neither a beginning nor an end point, but rather always ‘in the middle’. Events themselves have no beginning- or end-point, and their relationship with Deleuze’s notion of dynamic change – ‘becoming’ – is neither one of ‘joining moments together’ nor one in which an event is the ‘end’ of one productive process, to be supplanted or supplemented by the next. Rather, becoming ‘moves through’ an event, with the event representing just a momentary productive intensity.

(Stagoll in Parr 2010a: 91) [*emphasis in original*]

So we understand from the characteristics of an event and through the quotation above that becoming does not operate as an intermediary, a liaison between events, but is actually a distinguishing feature of them. Moreover, becoming expresses the continuous immanent production of difference *inside* the creation of events.

In Deleuze’s account of series and events, life is *only* constituted by series and events, that is by wave-like alterations running through series of relations. To occur at all any event highlights some

changing relations and makes others dimmer. This stress on distinctness *and* obscurity, against the Cartesian clarity and distinctness, is a recurrent theme in Deleuze's work [...] The inseparability of distinctness and obscurity in series leads to a focus on connections and shifts in emphasis, rather than to clear analytical distinctions. Selections and events are not cuts and abstraction. Instead, they must be cuts, connections, shadings and highlights, where none of these terms is separable from the others.

(Williams 2008: 7-8) [*emphasis in original*]

As we can see from the illuminating explanation above, perhaps the fundamental aspect of Deleuze's conception of event is its interconnectedness and indistinguishable relationship with its surroundings and even when focusing on one event, it is imperative that we maintain an awareness of relations that have been 'made dimmer'. This was precisely the pursuit of Section II: Crypto[graphy], where much of the undertaking concerned itself with the oscillations, vacillations and reverberations between distinctness *and* obscurity that dealt with the shifts in emphasis and points of connection within the crypt of our code *CPDIOE?*.

In Chapter Six of *The Fold: Leibniz and the Baroque*, 'What Is an Event?' Deleuze addresses this question *via* Whitehead's Process-Relational Philosophy, which appeared in Section I of the thesis. Deleuze asks us in this Chapter to reconsider what we might comprehend as an *event*, and puts forward The Great Pyramid as an example of this: "[t]he Great Pyramid is an event, and its duration for a period of one hour, thirty minutes, five minutes . . . , a passage of Nature," (Deleuze [1993] 2003: 76) [*emphasis in original*]. In the 'Translator's Foreword' to *The Fold*, Tom Conley explains:

In the vision of Alfred North Whitehead, a philosopher inspired by Leibniz, an event can be seen in the duration that produces the site of a pyramid, an avalanche of snow, or the jagged edge of rifts in a block of ice. For Deleuze, an event unfolds from the union of our perception and the duration of a fan – of the kind Mallarmé describes in his occasional verse – that unites and disperses a word (an *event*) and an object (an *éventail*) when it swirls in the atmosphere.

(Conley [1993] 2003: xii) [*emphasis in original*]

It is our contention here that photography too is such an event. If we delve into the obtuse writings that constitute Deleuze's book on *The Fold*, then we can see that he situates the concept of the event first and foremost in a field of chaos; "...when an event occurs it must do so in relation to something incalculable, a chaos that alters the effect." (Williams 2008: 6). This chaos is an abstraction in that it is inseparable from what Deleuze terms a 'screen' that allows something to emerge from it. Here we can speculate that by the term 'screen', Deleuze is referring to the concept that elsewhere he calls the plane of immanence. The 'something' that emerges he distinguishes from the concept of chaos by formulating a Leibnizian relationship between the *Many* (chaos) and the *One* (something); "A great screen has to be placed between them. Like a formless elastic membrane, an electromagnetic field, [...] the screen makes something issue from chaos, and, *even if this something differs only slightly.*" (Deleuze [1993] 2003: 76) [*emphasis in original*]. When Leibniz insists that the world is the 'best of all possible worlds', he means that those properties that emerge into the actual world are

merely those that can be extracted from the chaos and exist in actuality as *compossibles* – only those things that can exist together and only the best combination of compossibles. In Deleuze’s conception then, events emerge from the ‘screen’ or plane of immanence in a manner that means they can co-exist to form series. “The event is a vibration with an infinity of harmonics or submultiples.” (Deleuze [1993] 2003: 77). The plane of immanence extracts ‘differentials’ that are possible to be integrated into ordered perceptions. As Deleuze suggests, chaos is an abstraction of the underside of the ‘great screen’ or plane.

Developing his formation of event based on Whitehead and Leibniz’s thought, Deleuze specifies four conditions or components of the definition of an event: extension, intensities, the individual (and ‘prehensions’) and eternal objects (or ‘ingressions’). We shall now briefly summarise these four conditions in order to better understand Deleuze’s conception of event (and despite the obtuse level of theory at play, it is hoped that some light might be shed on our notion of a photography of immanence that could be perceived of as event in itself).

Extension concerns the transitive inter-relation between events and the variety of ways this plays out – from the extent that events can be completely included in other events, they can be entirely separate from one another, or they can overlap without complete inclusion.

Extension exists when one element is stretched over the following ones, such that it is a whole and the

following elements are its parts. Such a connection of whole-parts forms an infinite series that contains neither a final term or limit (the limits of our senses being excepted).

(Deleuze [1993] 2003: 77) [*emphasis in original*]

Perhaps we can grasp this more clearly if we think of Benjamin's mosaic analogy – the tesserae being analogous to Deleuze's notion of intensities within an extensive whole, and this leads us onto Deleuze's second condition; intensity. The intrinsic properties of extensive series enter into new multiple series, but this time convergent series working towards limits as the properties we may consider could include "...height, intensity, timbre of a sound, a tint, a value, a saturation of colour..." (Deleuze [1993] 2003: 77). The redness of the apple or the greenness of the tree for instance. These properties are no longer extensions but intentions, intensities or degrees. These intensive properties however, hold some material value and are intensities between, which have a relation to "...a function of different materials that are part of it." (Deleuze [1993] 2003: 77). The third component is that of the individual, which is equivalent to creativity and the new and introduces Whitehead's notion of 'prehension', which is a relationship between entities that encompasses both experience, and affect and that are embodied in individual unity. "Everything prehends its antecedents and its concomitants and, by degrees, prehends a world." (Deleuze [1993] 2003: 78). Here we may look to Whitehead for a precursor to these ideas and for him, the smallest of all events "...are momentary drops of experience or *feeling*. These are the building blocks of reality. Your mind, your flow of awareness, for example, is

a series of such events.” (Mesle 2008: 95) [*emphasis in original*]. For Whitehead, your mind is constituted from a series of what he termed actual entities (occasions), which comprise an event of space-time, or a drop of feeling. “That the actual world is a process, and that the process is the becoming of actual entities.” (Whitehead [1929] 1978: 22). Whitehead states that these actual entities or occasions are “...the final real things of which the world is made up. [...] They differ among themselves ...”(Whitehead [1929] 1978: 18). Here Deleuze in *The Fold* makes the leap to another precursor in that he links these ‘final real things’ in the world to Leibniz’s system of monads, thereby updating Leibniz’s ingenious notion of substances to the process reality of Whitehead. The latter believing that *becoming* is merely a series of events and that there is nothing between these events but difference that we may call change. “[h]ow an actual entity *becomes* constitutes *what* that actual entity *is* [...] Its ‘being’ is constituted by its ‘becoming’. This is the ‘principle of process.’” (Whitehead [1929] 1978: 23) [*emphasis in original*]. Here we have an emphasis central to this mode of thought in that being is always comprised of its becomings, thereby promoting the notion of seriality over that of essence, process over object. So for Whitehead, an actual entity (or occasion) has to create itself out of past actual entities, appropriating the term ‘apprehend’, Whitehead states that an actual entity prehends or detains previous actual entities in order to create itself in the now. “The individual emerges as a becoming, a prehension that relates past and present, subject and object, potentiality and reality. The prehension of the event renders the event as an event to another event.” (Crockett 2013: 90). It is here that difference emerges for Deleuze as the primary concept in event theory and as Clayton Crockett notes in

Deleuze Beyond Badiou: Ontology, Multiplicity and Event (2013), “[t]he individual prehension occurs in the contrast between extension and intensity, and the difference between them.” (Crockett 2013: 90). Thus we are dealing in Deleuzian terms with pure difference, the difference between the extensive and the intensive, between representation and difference. The fourth condition of an event is concerned with eternal objects or ‘ingressions’, which is a term Whitehead uses in *The Concept of Nature* ([1920] 2004)²⁴ to speak of the relationship of objects as part of events. This concerns how an object gains access to an event and vice versa in order to make events of the world and in the world.

Eternal objects produce ingression in the event. Sometimes these can be Qualities, such as a color or a sound that qualifies a combination of prehensions; sometimes Figures, like the pyramid, that determine an extension; sometimes they are Things, like gold or marble, that cut through a matter. [...] An eternal object can thus cease becoming incarnate, just as new things – a new shade of color, or a new figure – can finally find their conditions.

(Deleuze [1993] 2003: 79-80)

Is it too much to speculate here that the ‘object’ of photography even can have finally found its condition? In more literal terms can the camera as an object become to be seen as gaining access or ingress into the concept of event, and furthermore be perceived as part of the relations of the matrix of entities that make up events in all their virtuality? Referring to Whitehead’s use of the term ingression to denote a general relation of objects to events, “[t]he ingression of an

object into an event is the way the character of the event shapes itself in virtue of the being of the object.” (Whitehead [1920] 2004: 144). If we see the concept of photography as a mode of perception then we recognise that the event is defined by the object and even modified by the object, indeed “[i]t is equally true to say that objects are what they are because events are what they are.” (Whitehead [1920] 2004: 144). In terms of photography, we can perhaps speak of a form of observer interaction as in quantum physics maybe, where events are determined to a small degree by the process of observing and measuring. This speculation is of no real consequence in our argument, but might be an interesting perspective when designing event based photographic works.

At this point perhaps we should address the reader who intrinsically links the notion of event with Alain Badiou in order to demonstrate the differences and tensions between Deleuze’s event and that of Badiou’s. In this process, it is possible that our own use of the term event (*CPDIOE?*) can be illuminated from more than one direction. As we learned above, whilst Deleuze’s event delves into the subatomic structure of processes that overlap and coexist, Badiou’s event is more constructed and rarefied, to the point that it can be considered elite. Rather than emerging from chaos through a screen or plane of immanence in a play of the virtual and actual, Badiou’s event is resolutely human in scale and is imagined (as its status is always to the fore), as we saw from his treatment of Mallarmé’s poem above. “An event is what will *come to be*. An event is a be-coming. The only temporality therefore is future anterior – purely formal and non-durational.” (Mullarkey 2006: 101) [*emphasis in original*]. Furthermore, Badiou’s privileged

events are restricted to the conventional grand narratives of science, art, love and politics, these being the foremost endeavors of humanity, and as such, the subjective and the event are intrinsically linked. An event in this context is based within the parameters of ‘universal truth’, a position antithetical to most post-structuralist thought, including Deleuze. For Badiou, his commitment to universal truth is supported by his dependence on mathematics and set theory, which provide him with constants in the development of his philosophy. Truth here is placed in a reciprocal arrangement with the concepts of subject and event, an arrangement that is never less than innovative or revolutionary in its relation to the *status quo* of established knowledge. Here Badiou’s notion of event manifests its central radical aspect. Real truths or events always disrupt and renew hitherto accepted truths.

A truth is always the product of an event, which is something that is necessarily unpredictable and inexplicable from the perspective of existing knowledge: ‘A truth is solely constituted by rupturing with the order that supports it, never as an effect of that order. I have named this type of rupture which opens up truths “the event”.’

(West 2010: 260)

Events *emerge* in Badiou, just as in Deleuze, although in the former it is more akin to an irruption or a rupture in an already existing situation, rather than an impersonal process. Both are connected integrally to the production of the new – one as a process, the other as ‘what will come to be’. “The event belongs to the

situation but also supplements it by transforming it. It is both *in* it and *of* it – and this duplicity *is* its power of transformation...” (Mullarkey 2006: 101) [*emphasis in original*].

Change arises from an anomalous position within any situation, what is called an ‘evental-site’. Evental-sites are always local, *in situ*, at ‘site-points’. The existence of an evental-site does not guarantee a change in the situation, however: it merely outlines the event to come.

(Mullarkey 2006: 101) [*emphasis in original*]

We have already seen this in Badiou’s explication of Mallarmé’s shipwreck-event in the poem *Un Coup de Dés* earlier in this Section insofar as the event was ultimately indiscernible. An event’s true function is to transform a situation in a way that cannot be foreseen. In terms of the intrinsic link between a subject and an event, “[t]ruths are *made* rather than *discovered* by subjects. What is more, both truths and events are subjective in the additional sense that they serve to constitute genuine subjects in the first place.” (West 2010: 261) [*emphasis in original*]. The event being unpredictable and formulated through a rupture in the status quo (situation), is tied to a subject who recognises the event as new and names it. Therefore the subject of any event only comes into existence with the nomination of such an event. As all truths (synonymous here with events) come into being through a radical break from the existing state of affairs Badiou insists that ‘real’ subjects too can only be synonymous with ‘militants of truth’ (West

2010: 261). Here we see the centrality of the political in Badiou's conception of the event; an event is always political for him as we can see by many of his examples, which often constitute revolutionary political moments such as the French revolution. Events always work toward the good of a situation, "[t]hey concern emancipation, and as such, equality." (Mullarkey 2006: 104). In conclusion Badiou does not recognise Deleuze's processural folding of the past into the future but conceptualises a rupture, an interruption, in situational time from where new beginnings emerge as if from nothing, from a void. If we consider again Mallarmé's poem, then we can see how the shipwreck appears and disappears in the rupture of the evental-site or place (the indiscernible sea and sky) and produces a paradox from which the event is born. This paradox is however a productive paradox in that it produces the event. Or if alternately no event, then "...nothing will have taken place but the place..." (Mallarmé [1898] 2015: 20-21).

Between Deleuze and Badiou then, we have two perspectives on the zero degree of the event. One emerging from chaos, through a screen onto a plane of immanence as compossibles that are capable of existing together in the actual. The other 'coming to be' through a rupture in a situation, which can be seen as a paradoxical interruption in the *status quo*. Both of which though, crucially give birth to the new, creating something out of seemingly nothing, one from a co-dependent realm of the virtual, the other literally from the void. Two aspects perhaps of what we might term a zero degree that at this point, we might speculatively posit as a zerography.

Let us now take a moment to *interpret* these two formations of event *through* our enigmatic question *CPDIOE?*. First, we shall consider the perspective that a Deleuzian concept of event offers for *CPDIOE?*, which highlights its inherence to an immanent process of change and the creative production of the new. As a philosopher of becoming, of dynamic process and difference, Deleuze's event is most certainly folded into these overarching ideas and presents a novel interpretation on such concepts. We can notice at this stage how the concept of event here corresponds to the Deleuzian perspective we have expounded thus far in the thesis, and in addition, how it reverberates for this Section as a whole. For our question then, *can photography describe its own event?*, Deleuze's perspective allows us to contemplate a new interpretation of photography, a photography that differs in itself by invoking movement from within the concept. It allows us to creatively question how we can instigate change *via* the production of new elucidations of the concept of photography, *the event of photography itself*. Here we are more concerned with the concept of photography as a mode of perception and a perspective in itself for interpreting the world and its becomings. There may well be ways that this perspective can be applied to the practical notion of photography but that is not our first concern here.

Furthermore, an event signifies a "...momentary productive intensity" (Stagoll in Parr 2010a: 91) of the process of becoming, and just as this fleeting expression manifests itself, it is connected inseparably to its surrounding field and as a result, becomes indistinct through a shift in emphasis, in focus. Here we must think

about the question *can photography describe its own event?*, and how each iteration incites transformation and difference in the production of new intensities of the crypt/question. We are brought back to Whitehead's assertion in the Introduction of the thesis of the re-definition of words and phrases, which must be "...stretched towards a generality foreign to their ordinary usage" (Whitehead [1929] 1978: 4). That is to say, how the word or phrase or *concept* of 'photography' is "...mutely appealing for an imaginative leap" (Whitehead [1929] 1978: 4). This imaginative leap then, calls forth a creative rendering, in order to attend to a more imaginative interpretation of the medium that perhaps lies outside a photography that is based on the model of representation. The instability of meaning that is reiterated throughout the thesis in differing manifestations provokes us to deliberate how we could utilise such an idea by applying it to our enigmatic question. As we have witnessed, many of the philosophers we have encountered through this process shared an interest in pushing or more fittingly, *stretching*, words, phrases and even ideas out of more established positions or modes and into new areas. This encounter with new modalities of thought has perhaps been our task; to stretch the concept of photography 'towards a generality foreign to its ordinary usage'. Maybe the remit of the thesis is not in the end that of performed photography for instance, in that it is looking for new modes of practice, but rather, the imperative is to instigate a break in the concept of photography whereby photography becomes a way of thinking about the world. An eddy in the stream of becoming, a mode of thought, as well as a practice. There are precedents to this in the thought of figures discussed in the thesis, Benjamin, Barthes and Bergson, "...from the very moment that there is thought,

there is photography, even if it is a photography before photography as we know it...” (Cadava 1997: 90). As we learned in Section I, Deleuze has a far more indirect relationship with these ideas, but nevertheless, even though Deleuze rarely mentions the medium and even then, often as a negative, he says enough as to offer a challenge toward a more *creative* future for the medium:

Photography is a kind of ‘molding’: the mould organizes the internal forces of the thing in such a way that they reach a state of equilibrium at a certain instant (immobile section). However, modulation does not stop when equilibrium is reached, and constantly modifies the mould, constitutes a variable, continuous, temporal mould.

(Deleuze [1983] 1986: 24) [*emphasis in original*]

One could read this in the context of Auslander (as discussed in Section I) that the photograph continues to perform meaning over time and through context, and so is not necessarily as enclosed as we might believe. It was pure creativity as potential that drew Deleuze to art in its generative capacity and for this reason, his interest was taken up with genres such as painting, music, cinema and literature, but not photography due to its supposed enclosure and its setting of a limit on the dynamism of life. This is why the thesis and our ‘case study’ in Section I on Performed Photography place an emphasis on event and not picture or representation, which reflect mainstream practices. It is the position of the thesis that only an event-based practice can provide a paradigm shift in photography that

moves the medium toward a vitalist position that Deleuze would have appreciated.

To return to the concept of event as argued above, it is a question of scale, Deleuze's infinitesimal process in coexistence with Badiou's majestic creation that offers us two useful interpretations of event (however it is acknowledged that there are many theories of event in existence). In this way, we can regard these two theories as antinomies of the concept of event in that both are reasonable yet discordant expressions of the idea. Contradiction and incoherence present themselves to us as a productive paradox, in which we can acknowledge a generative function where new understandings and interpretations emerge. Throughout the thesis, it has been our intention to elucidate such a process, in order to better state our enigmatic question – *can photography describe its own event?*. A code/question that is intentionally obtuse in its construction in order to force the reader to thought, to produce an *encounter*, as Deleuze would say.²⁵ Perhaps we might suggest that Badiou was advocating his own encounter with Deleuze (and his audience) by ostensibly setting out his daring ideas against the philosopher in such a palpable way. Deleuze and Badiou both appeal for a return to a philosophy of immanence, and perhaps their approaches to the notion of *event* can be broadly read as differing dimensions, as intensities of the same concept. Also, as process philosophers (albeit in different ways), Deleuze's view is concerned with a 'process-vitalism' and Badiou's preoccupation lies with a 'process-truth'. As Mullarkey notes; "[i]n each case there is a focus on how immanence relates to change – the immanent change of truth procedures for

Badiou, in material flows on the plane of immanence for Deleuze...” (Mullarkey 2006: 8).

Deleuze’s philosophy was always already ontological, and it was not shaped by the linguistic turn. Badiou follows Deleuze in evading the consequences of the linguistic turn, although Badiou is more invested in formalizing this ontology in mathematical terms, whereas Deleuze is more interested in problematizing philosophy, that is, seeing how philosophy asks questions and poses problems. Badiou’s philosophy and his mathematics are axiomatic, whereas Deleuze’s philosophy is more unsettled, and in a continual state of becoming. (Crockett 2013: 4)

The principal disparity and source of contention between these two thinkers is caught up in Badiou’s position as an Actualist and as such, he is resolutely opposed to Deleuze’s concept of the virtual, believing it to be a transcendent realm. However, Williams makes a valid point: “[b]ut this is to miss the necessary inter-relation of virtual and actual through a reciprocal determination. Neither is independent of the other and cannot therefore be said to enter into a relation of transcendence.” (Williams in Parr 2010a: 129-30). Acknowledging that the perspective of the thesis is largely Deleuzian it is interesting to consider Badiou’s work here as a foil and fuel for speculation. For instance Badiou’s notion of paradox as central to the productive force of an event can be used if we put Deleuze against Badiou here. The paradox between them producing a new event, a rupture, in political or human dimension that *could* produce a paradigm shift and

hence put the concept to work for the ends of the thesis in that a new line of thought (flight?) is produced. In this sense we can speculate on producing a Badiouian event from the paradox of the two thinkers conceptions of event. In fact the thesis could be perceived as an evental-site in the Badiouian sense in that it represents “...some unpredictable change within a situation that, with further investigation, may eventually come to be an event.” (Mullarkey 2006: 114). This is not too outlandish considering how Badiou purposely misreads Deleuze in order to promote his own philosophical endeavour. As stated earlier in this Section in our ruminations on Nietzsche’s zerography, it is not uncommon for thinkers to read (misread) the work of others in a way that conforms to their own concerns. It is my opinion here that Deleuze is often more generous with the work of others and not so led by his own ego.

...in many ways Deleuze worked out his philosophy by means of a profound engagement with other thinkers as well as artists, but the danger of reading Deleuze on another figure is that the result is a composite. *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, for example, is the expression of a kind of Deleuze-Nietzsche. In this book, Deleuze helped create the so-called French Nietzsche who became so prominent and influential in the 1960s and 1970s.

(Crockett 2013: 9) [*emphasis in original*]

Within Mullarkey’s critique of Badiou’s notion of event he makes an important distinction for our project here, in his invocation of Bergson’s notion of ‘fabulation’, that is how we construct an event from more primary and multiple

processes – how we utilise fiction in making events real for ourselves. (On a basic level this explains how we purposely ignore the fictional status of a film for instance, and allow ourselves to suspend disbelief in entering into another reality (Mullarkey 2007)). As we have seen from Badiou’s treatment of Mallarmé’s poem, where there is a tension between the fiction and reality of the shipwreck-event, we recognise that it is the *description* of the event that produces such indeterminacy. Here we have another resonance for our question *can photography describe its own event? (CPDIOE?)* in that the indeterminacy that marks the question can be said to reverberate between the event of photography and the very notion of its description. “The description of an event is another event, or rather, it is part of the event it describes, it fabulates it.” (Mullarkey 2006: 117).

How can a philosophy of immanence critique its outside? Must it only describe everything it sees, or can it not also prescribe what is exemplary for it? If it is to be critical rather than just descriptive, then on what new set of values will its ‘judgments’ be based and how will these values be established?

(Mullarkey 2010: 9) [*emphasis in original*]

Endnotes to Section III: Zero[graphy]

¹ The zone system was an analogue method for calibrating negative exposures, printing techniques and cameras. The system was scaled between zero and ten, zero being black. Zone five was commonly known as eighteen percent grey, or mid-tone.

² “The now of recognizability is the moment of awakening.” (Benjamin 1999a: 486).

³ This refers to the third opening quotation of this Section.

⁴ See ‘The Third Meaning’ (Barthes [1977] 1984a: 61).

⁵ ‘Writing Degree Zero’ was published alongside another famous text ‘Elements of Semiology’ (1964) in *Writing Degree Zero & Elements of Semiology* (1984).

⁶ As David Sterritt notes, Godard;
...strips away superficially enticing moments in hopes of finding a ‘zero-degree’ of cinematic language – an objective dating back (with different sets of inflections) to the Dziga-Vertov Group films and even to *The Little Soldier* and portions of *Breathless*. The goal of this effort is made clear by an exchange I cited in the introduction to this book, between Émile Rousseau and Patricia Lumumba, the punningly named protagonists of *Le Gai Savoir*, near the beginning of that movie. ‘I want to learn,’ says Patricia, ‘to teach... that we must turn against our enemy the weapon with which he fundamentally attacks us: language.’ Émile agrees, adding, ‘Let’s start from zero.’ Patricia then refines their task by asserting that ‘first we have to go back there, return to zero,’ a process that will mean dissolving ‘images and sounds’ in order to grasp how these are constituted and capitalized on in the modern world.

(Sterritt 1999: 260) [*emphasis in original*]

⁷ Another element not to be overlooked is the considerable machinations that the Japanese had to go through to translate philosophical works into their own language. In absorbing new ideas, they often preferred not to draw on terms from their own intellectual history and thus force assimilation, but to learn a foreign vocabulary and let it seep into the culture naturally. As ponderous and unattractive as this new vocabulary was, the etymological transparency lent to it by the Chinese characters made it more immediately suggestive than the Greek and Latin terms which philosophy has tended to adopt for its technical terminology have been to the West.

(Heisig 1990: 56)

⁸ This is a reference to the title of James Elkins's book *The Object Stares Back: On the Nature of Seeing* (1997).

⁹ This Section shows the etymology of zero moving from the Indian Sanskrit *śūnya* to the Arabic *ḥifr* which evolved into *cipher*. As John D. Barrow explains in *The Book of Nothing: Vacuums, Voids, and the Latest Ideas about the Origins of the Universe* (2002), the concept of *śūnya* was multifaceted, much more than merely a digit:

Whereas the Babylonian tradition had a one-dimensional approach to the zero symbol, seeing it as simply as a sign for a vacant slot in an accountant's register, the Indian mind saw it as part of a wider philosophical spectrum of meanings for nothingness and the void.

(Barrow 2002: 36)

¹⁰ The term 'classical', which holds a commonly held definition, can also be used within the thesis as analogous between classical physics and the revolution to come of quantum physics.

¹¹ Photography and perception are analogous to one another in Bergson not so much because perception works like a camera to seize reality but rather because, working like a camera, it fails to seize reality. What photography and perception do not perceive they do not perceive for reasons of principle. That is, it is because they are photography and perception that they do not perceive.

(Cadava 1997: 92-3)

¹² Here I would draw the readers attention in Section I regarding Nietzsche's concept of the Apollonian and the Dionysian which coexist within the same concept.

¹³ This essay is about the later period of Nishitani's life, and is not specifically about *śūnyatā* but it evidently bears some relation.

¹⁴ Observables come in pairs that epistemologically exclude each other. An everyday example of this behaviour can be given in musical terms. It is not possible to both assign a precise instant to when a note was sounded and to know precisely what its pitch was. This is because determining the pitch of a note requires analysing the frequency of the sound and this requires listening to a note for a period lasting several oscillations before an accurate estimate can be made. It is the wave nature of sound that imposes this restriction, and if the measurement questions of quantum theory are discussed from the point of view of wave mechanics, exactly similar considerations lead back to the uncertainty principle.

(Polkinhorne 2002: 33)

¹⁵ See Deleuze and Guattari *What is Philosophy?* ([1991] 1994):

"The creation of concepts in itself calls for a future form, for a new earth and people that do not yet exist." (Deleuze and Guattari [1991] 1994: 108).

Albert Einstein (1879 – 1955) was a staunch opponent and refused to accept it – “The idea was anathema to Einstein, among others. ‘God does not play dice,’ he said referring to the theory that the world is governed by the accumulation of outcomes of essentially random ‘choices’ of possibilities at the quantum level.” (Gribbin 1991: 3)

¹⁷ Concerning the use of the apostrophe:

“[T]his book will follow the Collège conventions that `pataphysics given with the apostrophe is conscious or, better expressed, *voluntary* (and refers to Jarry’s science and the activities of the Collège), whereas pataphysics *sans apostrophe* is *involuntary*. The words *pataphysician* and *pataphysical* will always be given without the apostrophe.”

(Hugill 2012: 8) [*emphasis in original*]

¹⁸ `Pataphysics is part of the twentieth century avant-garde and related to movements such as dada, surrealism and the situationists, however it is a much more fluid ephemeral undercurrent than a movement.

¹⁹ See between Section III and the Conclusion in ‘Photographic Experiments carried out as IPCRES’ for project, the ‘IPCRES Reading Ensemble’.

²⁰ In the ‘Translator’s Notes’ to *Negotiations*, Martin Joughin notes a composition by French classical composer Pierre Boulez (b. 1925) ‘Fold by Fold’, “*Pli selon pli* (1957–62) is the title of Boulez’s ‘musical portrait’ of Mallarmé (one of the composer’s chief inspirations).” (Joughin in Deleuze 1995: 202, n.7).

²¹ See Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition* ([1968] 2004a) conclusion, pages 353-355 on the divine game “...that which Mallarmé evokes with such religious fear and repentance...” (Deleuze [1968] 2004a: 353)

...For us it is the most difficult game to understand, impossible to deal with in the world of representation. First there is no pre-existent rule, since the game includes its own rules. As a result, every time, the whole of chance is affirmed in the necessarily winning throw. Nothing is exempt from the game: consequences are not subtracted from chance by connecting them with a hypothetical necessity which would tie them to a determinate fragment; on the contrary, they are adequate to the whole of chance, which retains and sub-divides all possible consequences.

(Deleuze [1968] 2004a: 353-354)

²² See note 8 of Section II: Crypto[graphy]. O’Sullivan further elucidates: A rhizome, as a map is to do with experimentation. It does not trace something that came before (again no *representation*) rather it actively creates the terrain it maps – setting out the coordination points for the worlds-in-progress, for subjectivities-to-come.

(O’Sullivan 2006: 35) [*emphasis in original*]

²³ These terms are interchangeable in Deleuze's writings.

²⁴ You may have noticed that I am using the term 'ingression' to denote the general relation of objects to events. The ingression of an object into an event is the way the character of the event shapes itself in virtue of the being of the object. Namely, the event is what it is, because the object is what it is; and when I am thinking of this modification of the event by the object, I call the relation between the two 'the ingression of the object into the event.' It is equally true to say that objects are what they are because events are what they are.

(Whitehead [1920] 2004: 144) [*emphasis in original*]

²⁵ "Something in the world forces us to think. This something is an object not of recognition but of a fundamental *encounter*." (Deleuze [1968] 1994: 139)

Photographic experiments carried out as:

The **I**nternational **P**roject **C**entre for **R**esearch into **E**vents and **S**ituations (**IPCRES**)

Before the Conclusion it will be useful to introduce some visual material that might illuminate some of the conceptual arguments put forward by the thesis. The work that appears over the following pages consists of photographic experiments that have been devised parallel to my research. They flow from the parameters laid down by ‘performed photography’ in so far as they formulate an event-based practice, but differ through the application of a differential seriality amidst a zero degree of communication. The general argument of the thesis is for a practice of co-existence between the representational paradigm and the paradigm of difference based largely on the work of Bergson and Deleuze. More than this, the thesis offers a theory of *zerography* (that emerges metaphorically from a synthesis of the two paradigms) as it might pertain to photographic practice and it is hoped that the nuances introduced through an interrogation of the three perspectives; photo[graphy], crypto[graphy] and zero[graphy] can be recognised in the following experiments. In terms of photography, the practice has the transparency of the representational mode, although it has been rendered serial. Images are still predicated on vision and optical perspective although they do not necessarily conform fully to pictorial conventions. The images are non-decisional in character, that is, they are un-composed, taken as part of a process and therefore

to some extent correspond to François Laruelle's concept of non-photography, which is discussed further in the Conclusion of the thesis. Regarding cryptography, the serial nature of the photographs demonstrates the major themes of Section II concerning the discussions on the intensive and the extensive, the relation of the one to the multiple and difference and repetition. Here one can also perceive the dissolving of the concept of identity (as well as the classical perspective) that is reinforced by the creative stammering of seriality in relation to event, the and...and...and of the space between. The founding event that envelops the act of photography in these works is rendered as process through serialisation in order to align the photographic method with notions of temporality as espoused by featured philosophers Deleuze and Bergson. The concept of the instant is replaced by the instance of duration. Concerning the novel concept of *zerography* as proposed by the thesis there are several pertinent issues that the experimental works address. Firstly, the act of photography emerging as it does from within the event cannot therefore objectify the event as external to itself in the conventional representational manner. This renders the event enigmatic, placing it in a blind spot whilst the camera surveys the 'remainder' as in our discussion of Nishitani in Section III. What constitutes an event in western representation is thrown into uncertainty and photography at such a zero-degree no longer describes the world from the perspective of the subject-object axis. The zero-degree of representation is indeed a strange space as it describes significant absence rather than presence. As we look for meaning in these works we must rely on context, as a *zerography* can only present a neutrality of communication, and ultimately in Mallarmé's words, *nothing will have taken place but the place* (Mallarmé in Badiou [1988])

2005: 191). In the final analysis perhaps the application of difference to the representational mode forming a co-existent state as a new way to describe the world is reminiscent of Proust's notion of a new awakening, a paradigm shift. Insomuch as for a moment, we struggle to locate our position as all the furniture is shifting around us. It is for the reader to speculate on the evidence provided by the thesis to decide whether photography is in the end enhanced by looking at the world *as if* instead of *as is*. Further analysis and contextualisation of these visual experiments can be found in the Conclusion.

Figure 8: (overleaf) (PORTFOLIO: 2 PROJECTS)
Photographic experiments carried out as the International Project Centre for Research into Events and Situations (IPCRES) 2011/2012.
[serial event based photography]

IPCRES

CREATION
CRISIS
CRITIQUE
?

AVOID CATASTROPHE
MARCH **BACKWARDS**

4th International Deleuze Studies Conference

IPCREs MISSION BRIEFING



#0996. Protest Against Progress.

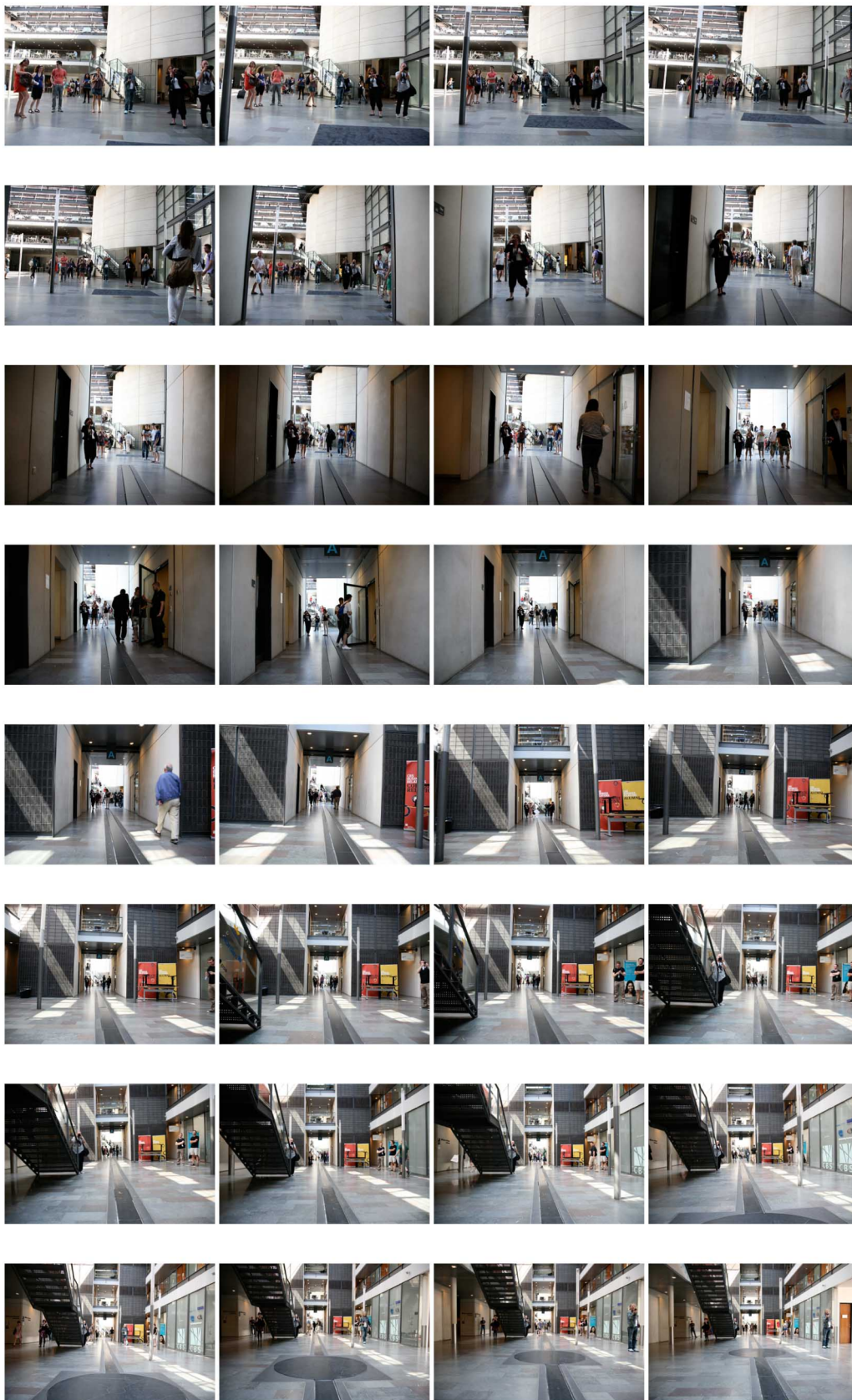
Qualitative Easing.

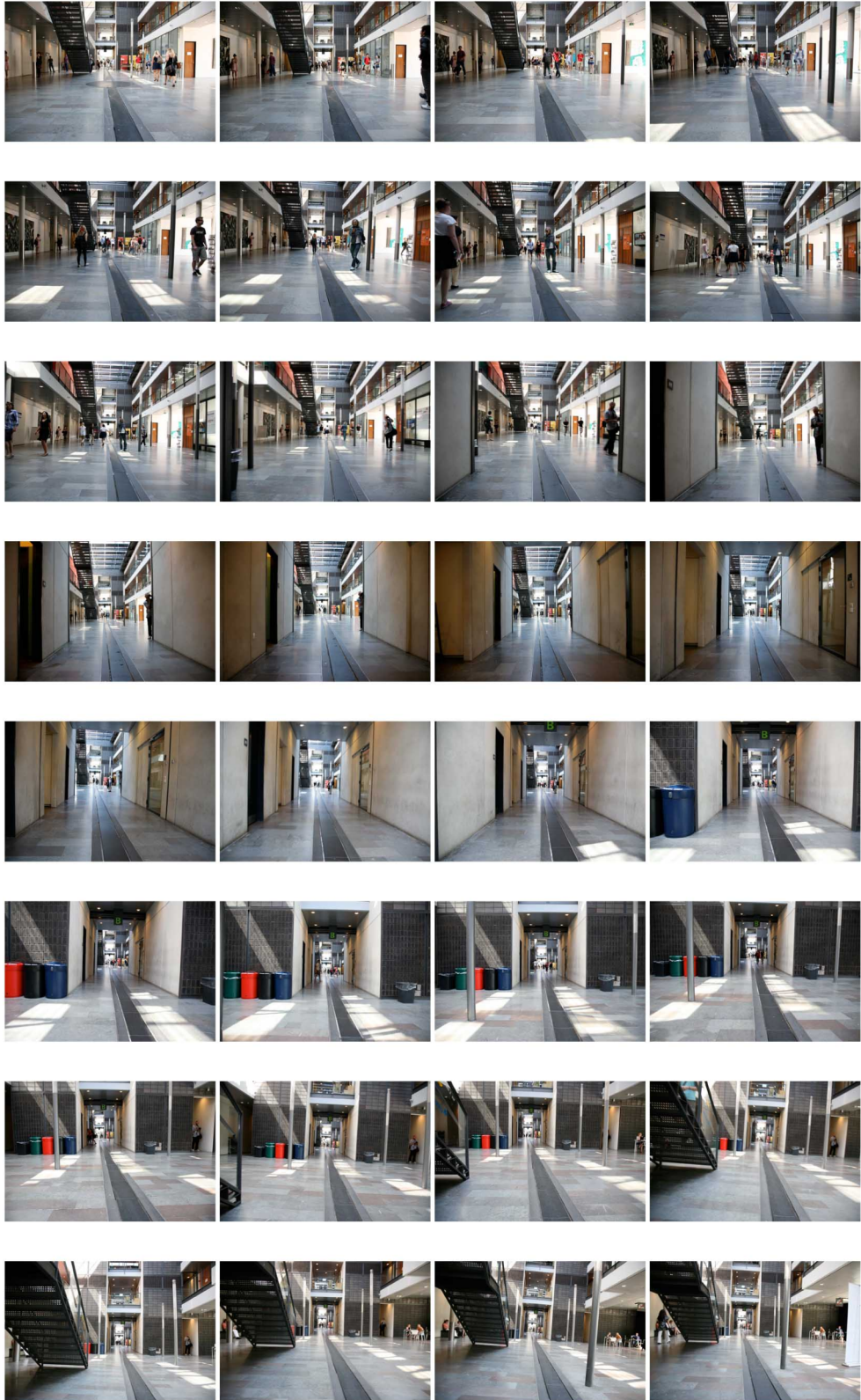
This mission is concerned with an organised protest against the concept of progress. To be carried out at the 4th International Deleuze Studies Conference in Copenhagen, June 2011. An assembled group will convene at an agreed time and place in the city of Copenhagen. The assemblage will be holding IPCRES placards sporting the words 'Protest Against Progress' and 'Avoid Catastrophe March Backwards'. The concept of the march is to take one step forward and two steps back, done rhythmically, so that we progress slowly backwards through the urban space until we arrive at a predetermined destination. To document the event an IPCRES Officer will be at the 'head' of the march with a camera around her neck, pressing the shutter every third step thereby documenting a slowly receding city view, a la Vito Acconci.

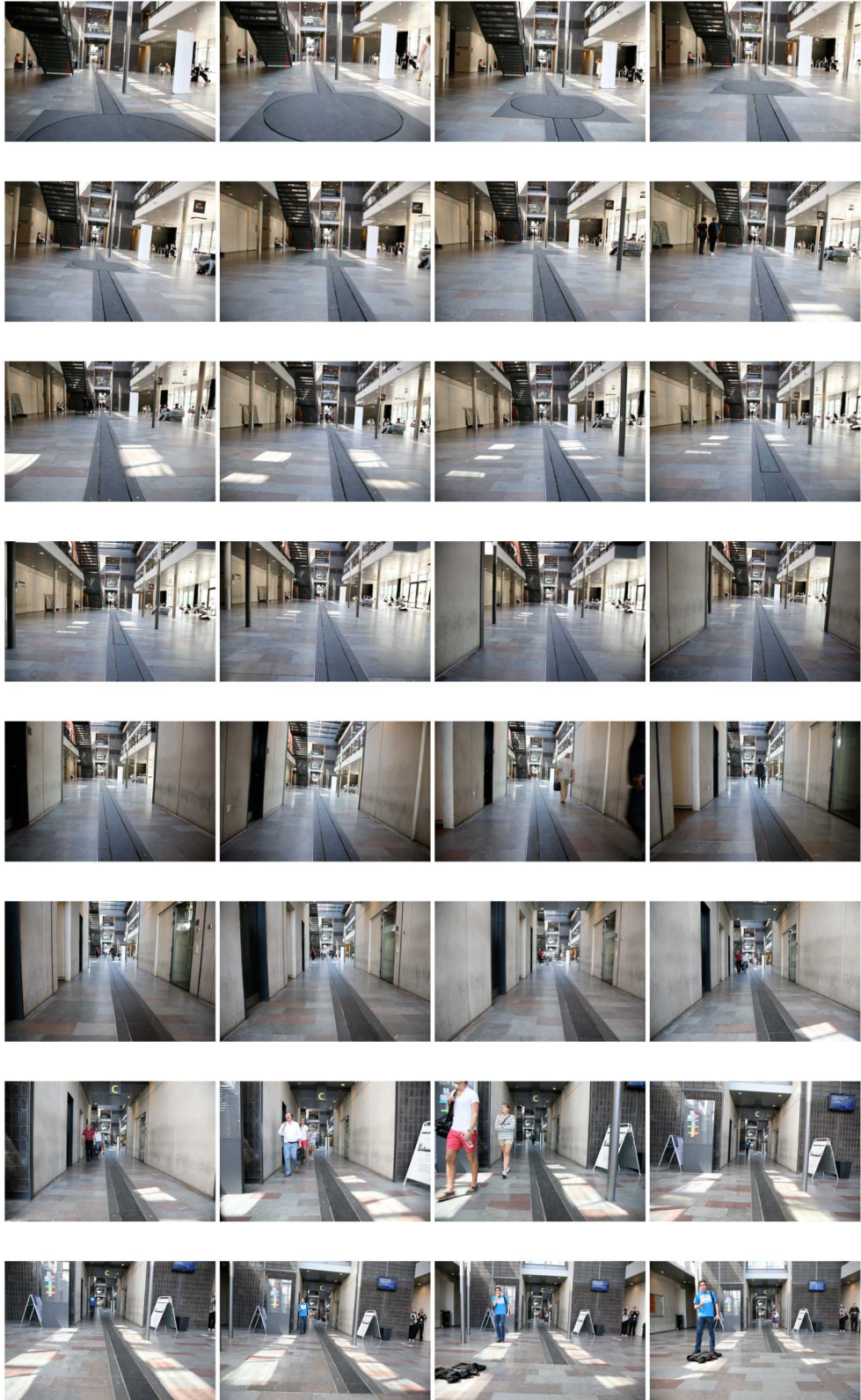
Both Leibniz and Nietzsche sensed and feared an over-rationalization of our daily experience. Benjamin spoke of the 'decline of photography' after the 1850s in direct contrast to the rapid technological improvements that occurred (although by progress we don't mean technology). Bergson asked us to think in terms of time rather than space, and valued a non-measurable duration (*duree*) over a spatialised and measured time. All of these in reaction to what 'opinion' called progress. These intuitions are part of Deleuze's inheritance. Our protest invokes Benjamin's 'Angel of History' metaphor where the angel is being blown backwards into the future, whilst a storm, which blows in from paradise, piles up catastrophe at the angel's feet. The storm is called progress. Like the angel we must distance ourselves from the thing that we are staring at. The catastrophe at our feet is rationalization.

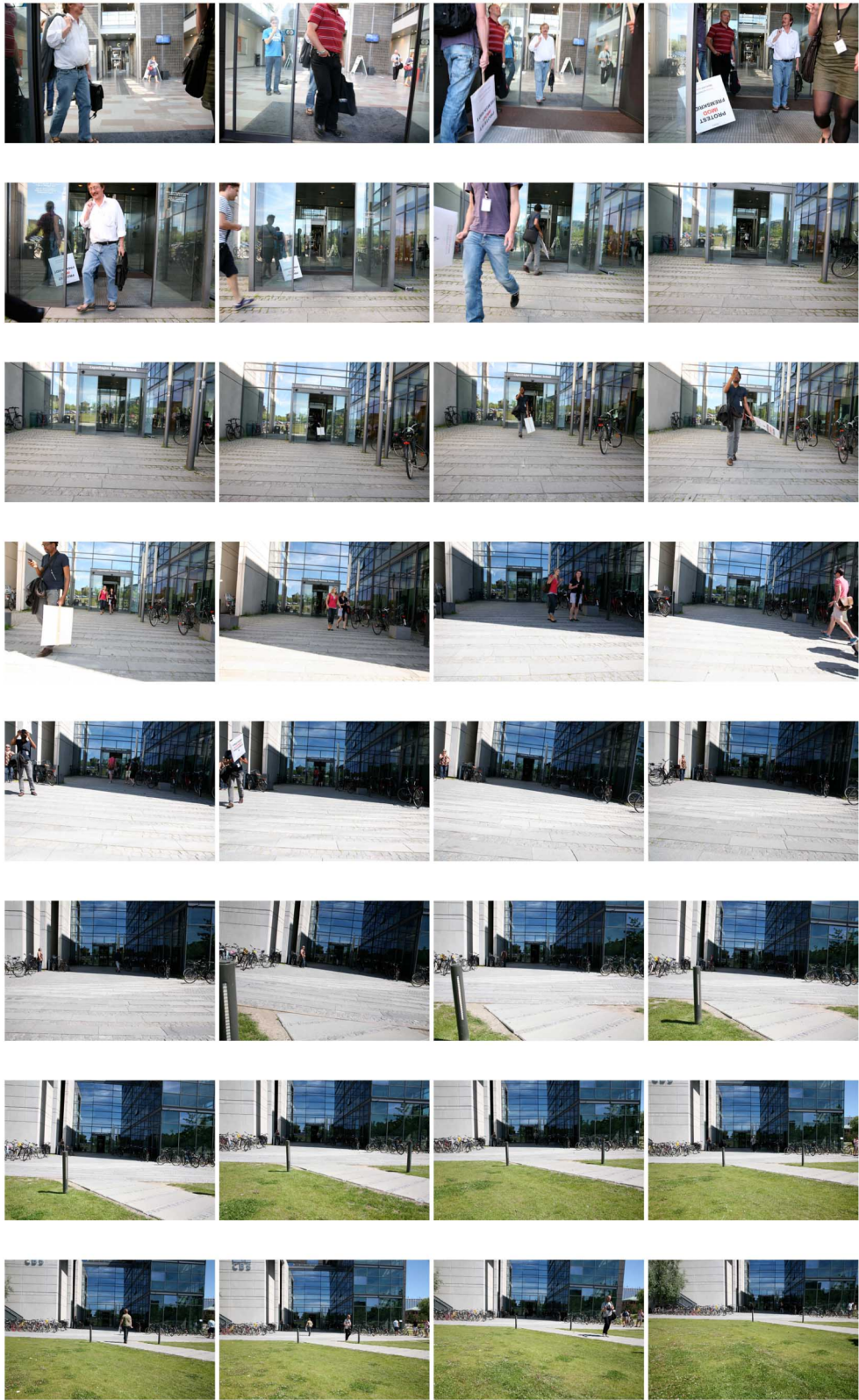
This project is part of IPCRES's programme of *qualitative easing*. In an increasingly information obsessed, homogenous and quantifiable society, where everything is described and measured and little experienced anymore beyond the audit, it is deemed desirable to inject enigmatic qualitative lived 'moments' into the urban space. This is an incursion into everyday life and an antidote to a spatialised and quantitatively bland world where lived experience is valued less and less. We are enduring a qualitative recession masked by a quantitative boom. *Qualitative easing* allows people to encounter strangeness on the streets for no cost and little reason. It increases our ability to encounter the world rather than merely recognise it. Meaning is as deep or as shallow as you wish and all that is wished for is the generation of stories, and an appreciation of the moment you find yourself in.

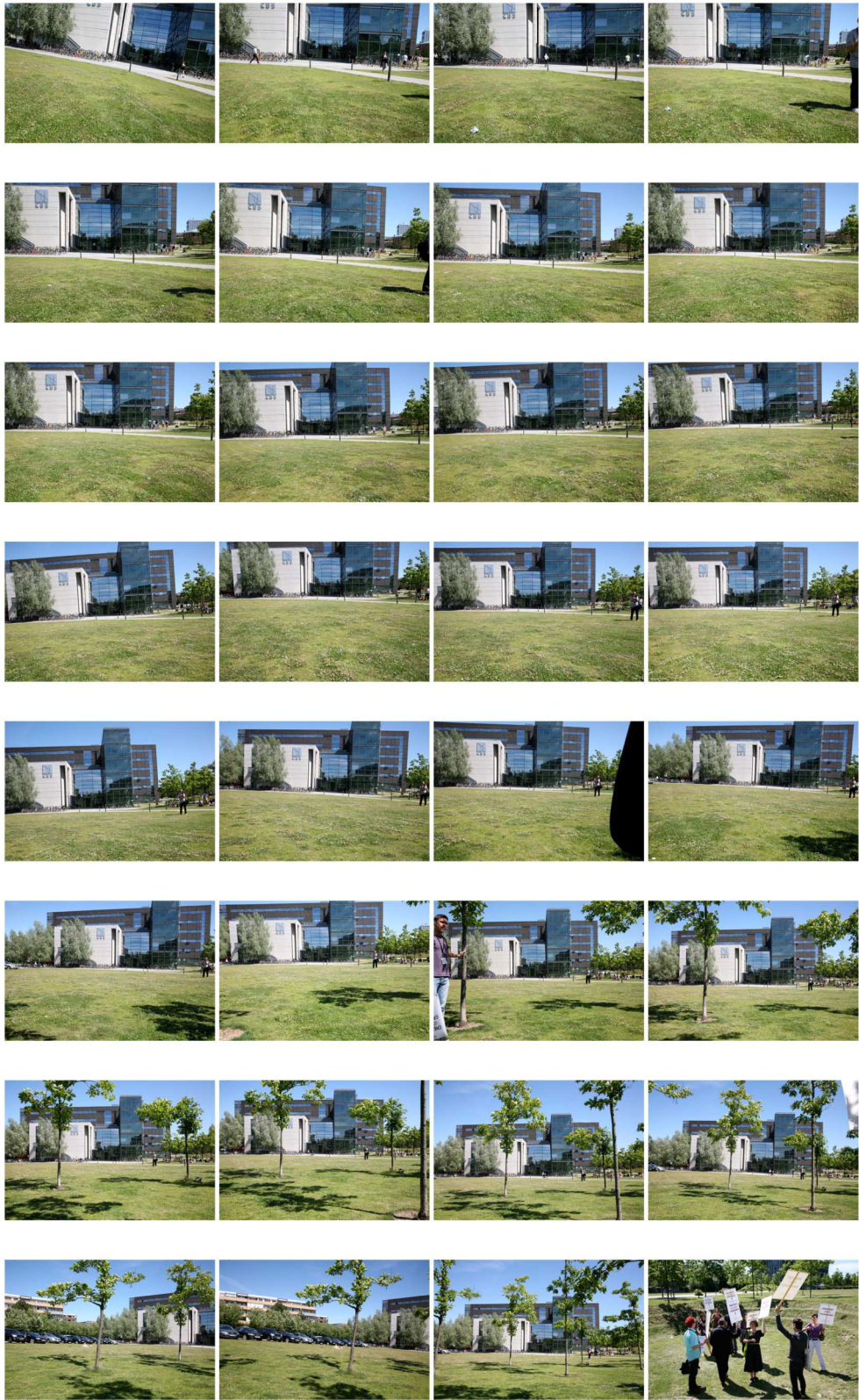
The photographic documentation can be found at some future time in IPCRES file #0996, should we or the conference organisers desire to make public at a future date. This proclamation contains a call for delegates/volunteers to assemble at a given time in a given place. Individual instances of documentation are authorised. All enquiries to the IPCRES office or IPCREs@xxxxxxxxxx













IPCRES

MIS ION BRIEFING

S



0986. The IPCRES Reading Ensemble.

Book Live! International Symposium. London South Bank Univ, 8.6.12.
I will not make poems with reference to parts/ But I will make poems with reference to ensemble - Walt Whitman.

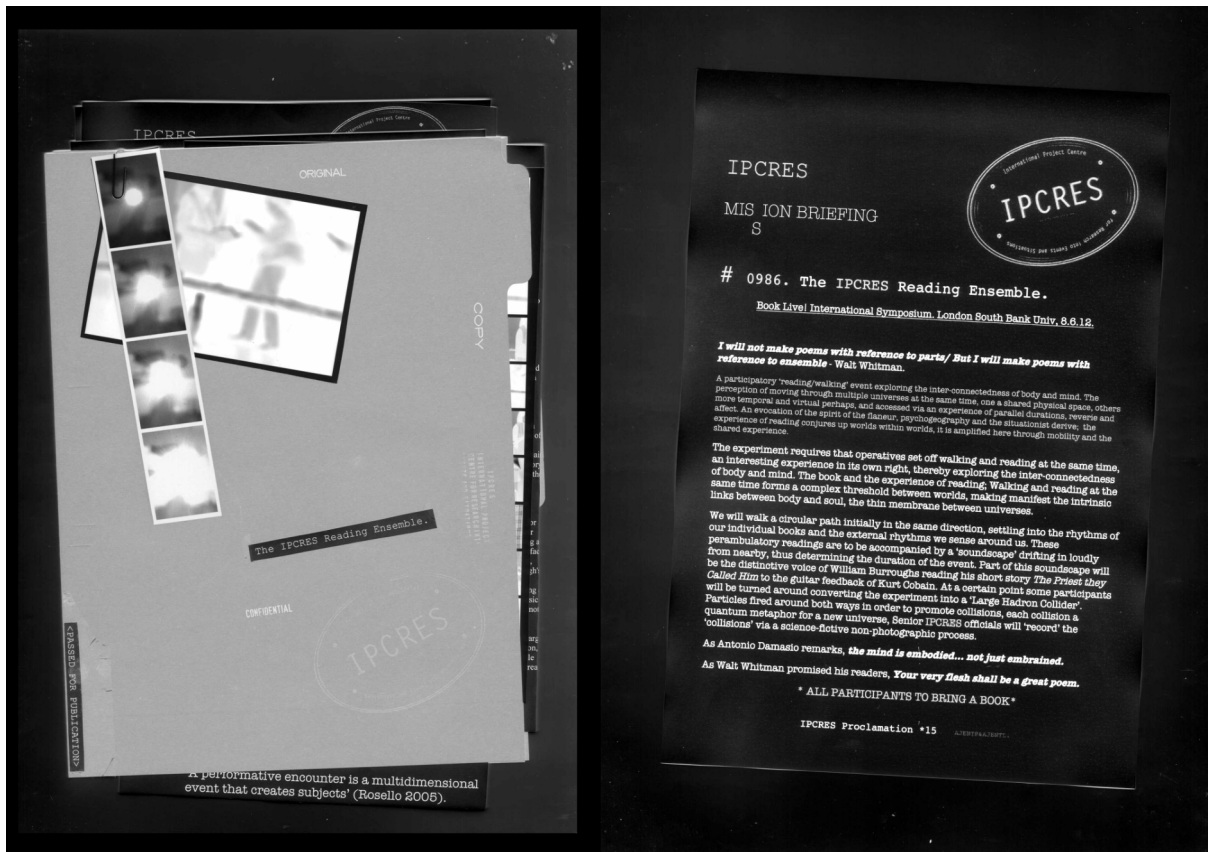
The IPCRES Reading Ensemble is a performative encounter with the book and the act of reading, in order to create ‘new universes of reference’ (Guattari 1989) – an affective poem with reference to ensemble.

A participatory ‘reading/walking’ event exploring the inter-connectedness of body and mind. The perception of moving through multiple universes at the same time, one a shared physical space, others more temporal and virtual perhaps, and accessed via an experience of parallel durations, reverie and affect. An evocation of the spirit of the flaneur, psychogeography and the situationist derive; the experience of reading conjures up worlds within worlds, it is amplified here through mobility and the shared experience. At a certain point some participants will be turned around converting the experiment into a ‘Large Hadron Collider’. Particles fired around both ways in order to promote collisions, each collision a quantum metaphor for a new universe. Senior IPCRES operatives will ‘record’ the ‘collisions’ via a photographic process.

The experiment requires that operatives set off walking and reading at the same time, an interesting experience in its own right, thereby exploring the inter-connectedness of body and mind. The book and the experience of reading; walking and reading at the same time forms a complex threshold between worlds, making manifest the intrinsic links between body and soul, the thin membrane between universes.

As Antonio Damasio remarks, ***the mind is embodied... not just embrained.***

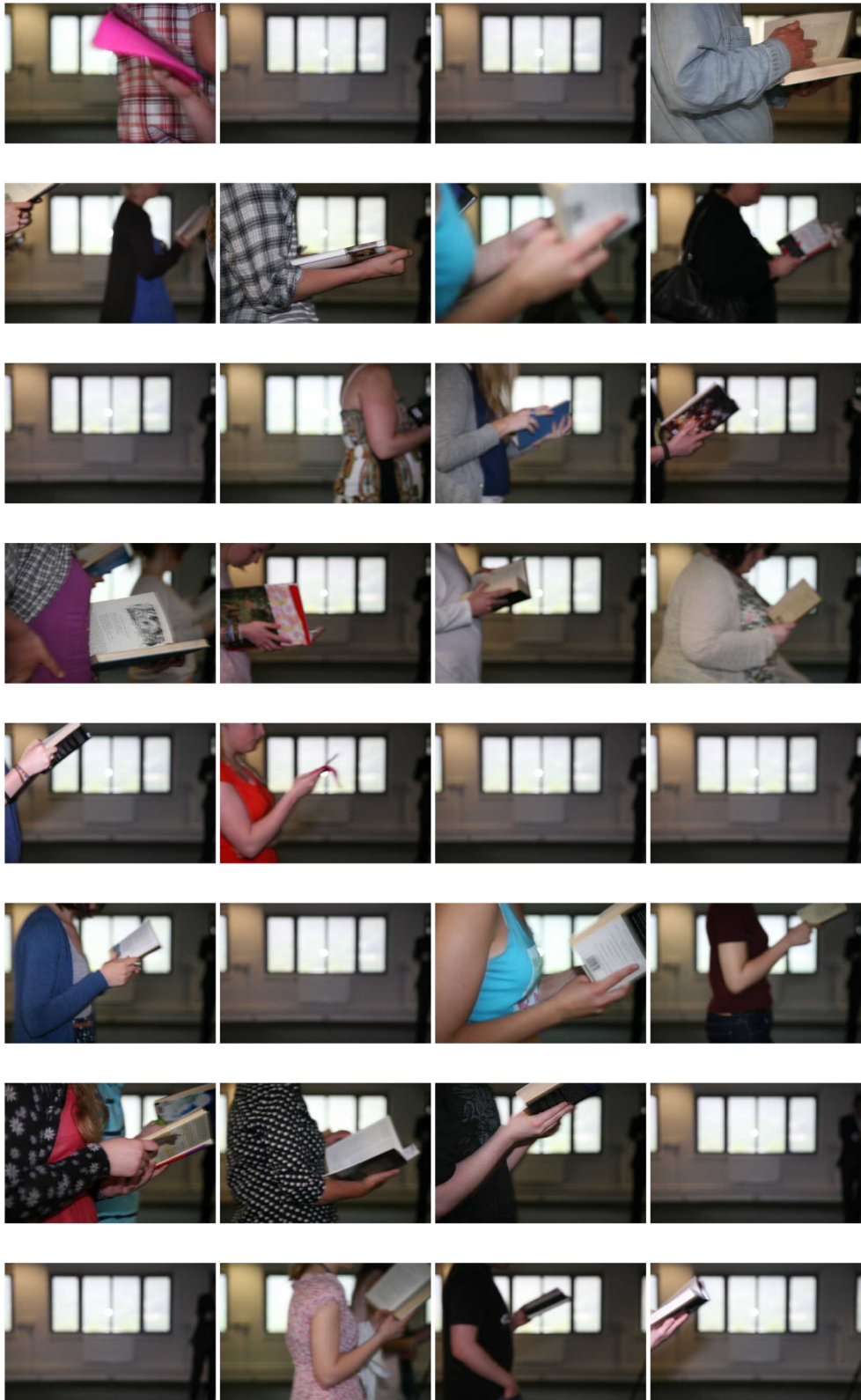
As Walt Whitman promised his readers, ***Your very flesh shall be a great poem.***

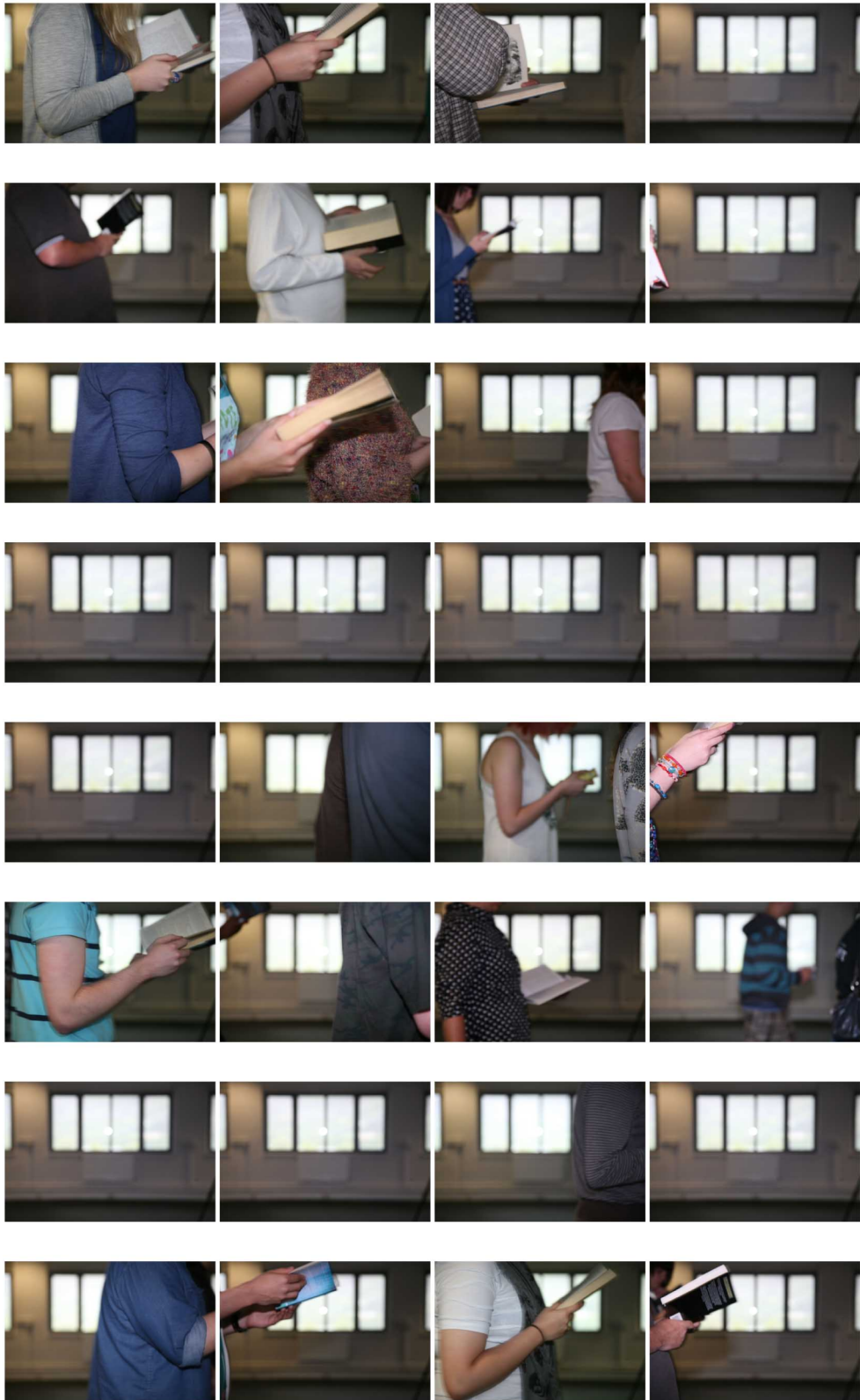


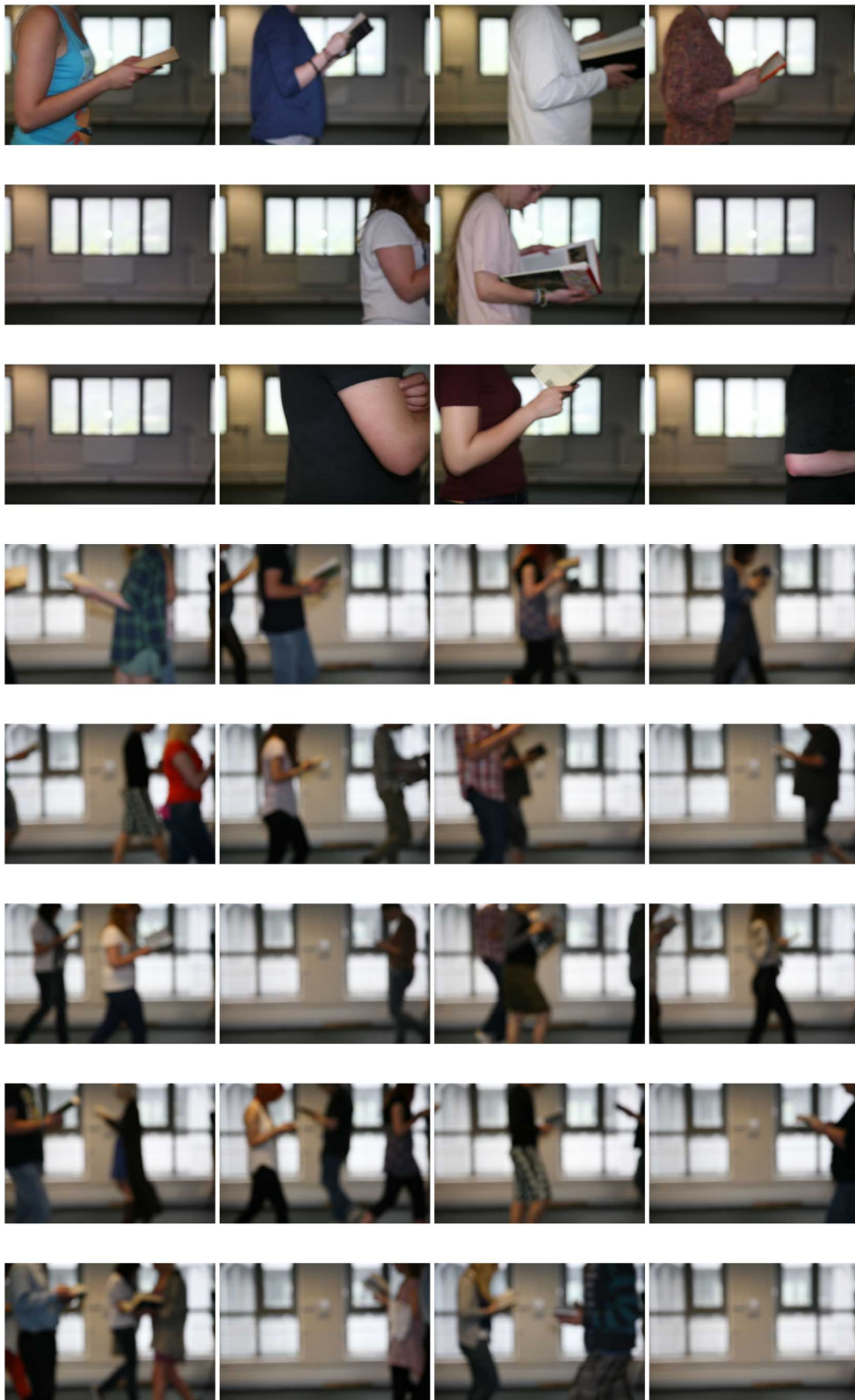
IPCRES READING ENSEMBLE: THE BOOK IS ALIVE! (PUBLISHED 2013)

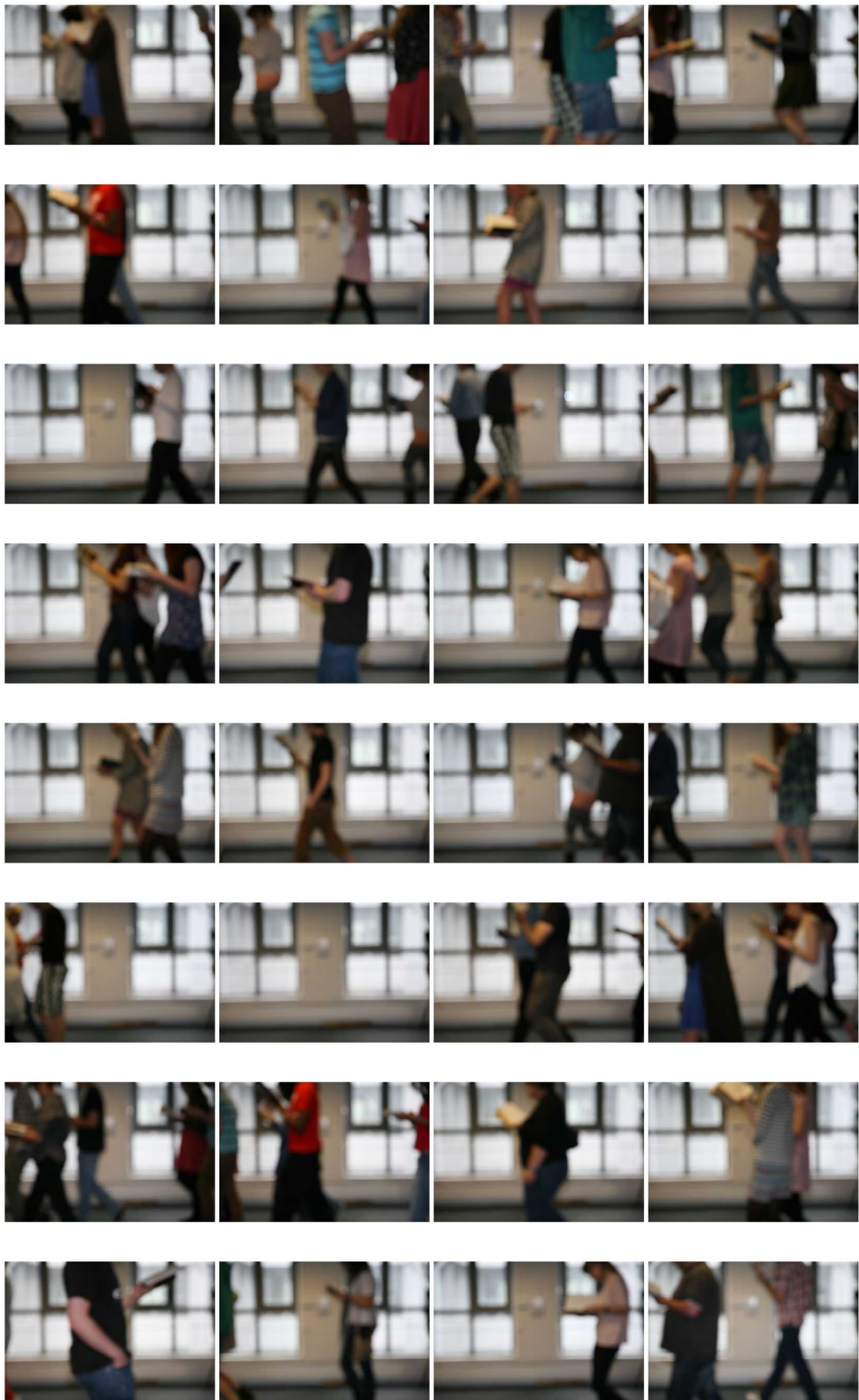


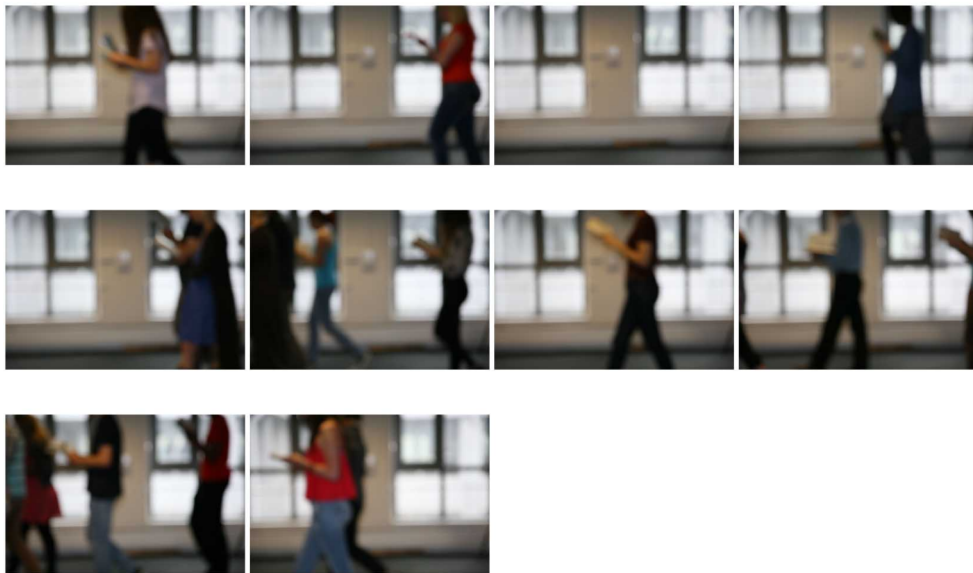












Conclusion:

Can Photography Describe Its Own Event?



*Figure 9: Bruno Jakob, 2003,
'Invisible Painting (Horse)'*

Perhaps the immobility of the things that surround us is forced upon them by our conviction that they are themselves and not anything else, by the immobility of our conception of them.

(Proust 1996: 4)

...without *some* common ground in the professional-level literature, the conversation has to take place in a third discipline, which I would argue is always, in the end, philosophy.

(Elkins 2008: 228) [*emphasis in original*]

The result of a productive assemblage is a new means of expression, a new territorial/spatial organisation, a new institution, a new behaviour, or a new realisation. The assemblage is destined to produce a new reality, by making numerous, often unexpected connections.

(Livesey in Parr 2010a: 19)

We end the thesis as we began, still pondering our enigmatic question, the crypt/code that has been the insistent force behind our investigations; *can photography describe its own event? (CPDIOE?)*. We shall conclude in the manner that we embarked upon our quest, in the spirit of the Bergsonian problem (in which the resolution is inherent in its stating); explained initially as the method by which we would achieve some forms of resolution, not necessarily through logic or deduction, but through creation and invention. “Indeed, the aim of writing should not be representation but invention.” (Colebrook 2002: 4). It would be antithetical to our work to expect the customary answer at this point, one that merely maintains the classical binary polarity of question/answer. “Certainty and presence are displaced, and they are found in another context.” (Elkins 2008: 85). For that reason this conclusion shall be brief and instead we shall make some observations; both regarding the thesis and potential directions post-doctoral research might take, whilst making some connections to my continuing interest in the concept of zero and my ongoing practical experiments. These experiments although related to the conceptual work of the thesis are not an area of primary concern here, but are included to show possible manifestations of the ideas and future directions for photographies yet to come. Indeed, the works offer another way to perform my thoughts other than writing.

To address the first quotation at the head of this Conclusion, Proust here delineates one of our central ideas, particularly attended to in Section I: Photo[graphy]. That is, that photography in the classical perspective was invented

for and adopts a position towards a world of facts and objects, ideally suited to a practice of representation, where the force of immobility is applied to the forces of the world. As O’Sullivan simply states, photography is “...*the* representational medium.” (O’Sullivan 2012: 3) [*emphasis in original*]. This articulation by Proust of his own conception of the ‘angel of certainty’ (Proust 1996a: 7-8) is suggestive of O’Sullivan’s remark in that it might be photography that largely forms this conviction in its imposition of stasis – ‘that they are themselves and not anything else’. A crucial point to make here is that Proust’s quotation suggests that this immobility, supported by the invention of photography, is essentially the immobility of our own thought. In terms of the thesis, this can be mediated by recognising the potential coexistence of representation alongside a system of difference and the dynamism that this brings to our sensibilities. Elkins in the following quotation illuminates a recurrent aspect of the thesis; that of the ‘third’. Our third Section provides the ground for a coexistence of the first two, that is, representation and difference in tandem produce what we refer to here as zero[graphy]. This is further illustrated by Barthes’ conception of the Third or obtuse meaning, which follows both the informational level of meaning, and the symbolic level of meaning. As Elkins argues, our own conversation often takes place in a ‘third discipline’, that of philosophy, even if only used as a poetic construct. The conversation then, takes place on foreign ground, sometimes that of critical literary theory, and of necessity draws in the concept of translation that I have highlighted wherever possible. Livesey in the third quotation highlights another method of the thesis, one that we can say is akin to the theory of *Ars Combinatoria*¹ of G.W. Leibniz, that of making productive connections. This ‘art

of combinations' re-termed *assemblage* by Deleuze and Guattari (the English translation of *agencement* – arrangement), concerns the linkage together of disparate elements in interesting ways to produce new ideas. Assemblages are "...complex constellations of objects, bodies, expressions, qualities, and territories that come together for varying periods of time to ideally create new ways of functioning." (Livesey in Parr 2010a: 18). In the thesis we have drawn together perhaps eccentric ideas that pertain to the question *CPDIOE?*, in order to produce resonances and vibrations *between* concepts that constitute new lines of flight and innovative constellations of thought. New conditions, for concepts and practices of photographs yet to come. This speaks of what is succinctly summed up by O'Sullivan in *Art Encounters Deleuze and Guattari: Thought Beyond Representation* (2006):

It is the power art has to break habit, and produce new and more spontaneous ways of being in the world that seems of particular importance. Here, creativity and recombination (difference and repetition) replace critique as art's *modus operandi*. This might involve only a small deviation from the typical, but this *clinamen* can operate as the germ of something new.

(O'Sullivan 2006: 154) [*emphasis in original*]

It may be pertinent here to review both our hypothesis and some claims to originality that the thesis offers. Our intention from the outset was directly acknowledged in the (sub) title of the thesis – the dissolving of the classical perspective in the concept of photography. Dissolving in this context is a reference to Henri Bergson’s illustration of the concept of difference whereby he ‘dissolved’ a lump of sugar in a glass of warm water, proving difference through duration in that the constituent parts remained the same, but have differed in themselves in synthesising with the water (something akin to the process of osmosis). The hypothesis was that photography in its classical perspective could undergo similar differences in its constituent form through a synthesis with the philosophical paradigm of difference. This expansion in the conception of photography allows a shift from the spatial to the temporal, from picture to event and ushers in perhaps unlimited new creative potential. Finally our hypothesis in seeking a synthesis of representation and difference as an expanded form of photographic communication, also exposes a further theoretical paradigm that I have named *zerography*. It is this *zerography*, a zero degree of photographic expression that defines the likely outcome of the synthesis referred to above, forming evocative new expressions of meaning that define the potential inexpressibility of contemporary expositions of what constitutes an event in the world. The logical conclusion of such a hypothesis will produce the conditions for an immanent practice of photography; it is this theoretical research that is proffered in the thesis.

As for the original contributions of the thesis, I can claim to have imagined a scenario for photography by which two major antagonistic paradigms of thought

(representation and difference) can be potentially reconciled together in the theoretical orbit of photography. A major motivation addressed in the earlier stages of the thesis was to consider “[h]ow in fact to think beyond representation?” (O’Sullivan 2006: 29) as well as to address Batchen’s imperative of inventing new modes of critical practice, which as he states “...remains the most pressing task to face the present generation of photography’s interlocutors” (Batchen 2009: 21). I can realistically claim at this stage to have made a serious attempt at both. Furthermore, in the process I have participated in the play on invention and creation of concepts, not least in inventing an enigmatic question (*CPDIOE?*) that within six words encapsulates the intellectual trajectory of the thesis and in doing so, produces a paradoxical multiplicity that I have rendered productive. As a consequence of the above, I have also imagined a new hermeneutics that emerges from the swirling sea of antinomies produced by a co-existence in the concept of representation and difference. The tensions generated promote a sense of the illogical, the paradoxical and the indeterminate that I have named *zerography*. These contributions are directed toward a new generation of researchers for whom interdisciplinarity and the synthesis of practice and theory form a contemporary syntax, also those scholars in the world of photography for whom Deleuze presents a vital opportunity.

Some further thoughts regarding the photographic works that precede this Conclusion and are carried out under the auspices of IPCRES (International Project Centre for Research into Events and Situations). Works that are made manifest under a serialised form based on Deleuze’s theory of difference and

repetition and carried out at a *zero degree* of photography, devoid of metaphor and any pictorialised subject/object polarity. “There is almost nothing left to look at in these pictures. The object has departed: it has gone far away, beyond representation, leaving only its hollow and inadequate traces.” (Elkins 2008: 231). It must be recognised here that the works employ the seriality of a xerox machine by which a zerography, a phonetic play on xerography, produces serial copies fracturing in Benjamin’s terms, the aura of any supposed original². In fact, in the case of the works it is quite evident that there is no original. This seriality of form fractures the *essence* of any supposed content too as it also motivates and mobilizes that essence, as Deleuze asserts in *Proust and Signs* ([1964] 2008):

This is because essence is in itself difference. But it does not have the power to diversify, and to diversify itself, without also having the power to repeat itself, identical to itself. What can one do with essence, which is ultimate difference, except to repeat it, because it is irreplaceable and because nothing can be substituted for it?
(Deleuze [1964] 2008: 32)

It is the contention of the thesis that this can also be said of photography and our experiments in repeating photography, ‘identical to itself’ – *can photography describe its own event?*. All photographs within the serial for each work are taken from within a constructed event, therefore disrupting the central binary tenet of vision in representation (see Sartre and Lacan in Section III) by being *immanent* to the event and looking both through (evoking Nishitani) and out of the event as

part of the *remainder* of the field of vision. As in most cases, there appears to be no isolated and bounded object to the practice of zerography, the visual concept encompasses the uncertainty of Heisenburg and the indeterminacy of Mallarmé as well as the neutrality of Barthes' zero degree.

That zero degree, says Blanchot, is not just the neutral, fearless style that Barthes finds exemplified in Camus. It is a more dangerous, more destructible, more lethal neutrality. In that neutrality everything, including literature itself disappears...
(Miller 2003: 80)

Following literary critic Joseph Hillis Miller's (b. 1928) linguistic observation that "...words must be differentiated from other words to make meaning." (Miller 2003: 52), the serialised photographs from my experiments with IPCRES fracture the notion of subject through repetition and are undifferentiated in relation to the event. Miller goes on, "[z]ero is undifferentiated, incapable of being differentiated, just one long undifferentiated tone [...] 'Zero' is an assemblage of phonemes..." (Miller 2003: 52). Here we are reminded of Yves Klein's 1949 *Monotone Symphony* that comprised a twenty-minute single sustained chord, followed by a period of silence lasting a further twenty minutes. In a recent publication (October 22nd 2015 in hardback), Mehgan Vicks in *Narratives of Nothing in Twentieth Century Literature* (2015) explores how that in literature the concept of nothing is inextricably linked to the creation of meaning; she writes of Maurice Blanchot (1907 – 2003) and the 'zero point':

...he argues that the liberated, true writer will devote himself to the 'zero point'—the point of literature where even writing is done away with, thus destroying the temple of writing that has made sacred and necessary this very action, writerly conventions, and the written word. That is, *writing* is literature's final convention, which the writer must break free of if he is to truly write. The true writer, therefore, will ultimately turn to silence.

(Vicks 2015: 17) [*emphasis in original*]

As we did in Section III regarding a quotation by Nishitani, if we map across and substitute the words 'photography' for 'writing' whilst also translating the context of the quotation relevant to our own concerns, then it can reveal a central concern of the thesis with regards to the concept and practice of zero[graphy].

...he argues that the liberated, true photographer will devote himself to the 'zero point'—the point of photography where even photography is done away with, thus destroying the temple of photography that has made sacred and necessary this very action, photographic conventions, and the photographic image. That is, photography is representation's final convention, which the photographer must break free of if he is to truly decipher the world. The true photographer, therefore, will ultimately turn to silence.

It is interesting to point out here that Blanchot was an avid reader of Mallarmé and took many of his ideas from the experimental work of the poet. Returning to my

own practical experiments, it is worthy of note that just as in performed photography, the photographs relation to the event is one of immanence. An event is designed and the photography emerges from within the event and therefore does not take up the transcendent position of mainstream practice. Perhaps the most significant distinction between the two practices of performed photography and my zero[graphy] is that performed photography is attempting to bridge the dispassionate estrangement in representational photography by purposefully imbuing the situation with emotional intent. After all, this practice emerged from the performative paradigms of experimental theatre and live art. My experiments although sharing many aspects with performed photography, most notably as an event based practice, have evolved from it in that any subject matter has almost disappeared and there is an emphasis on a zero degree neutrality of expression. My work in relation to the IPCRES performative events highlights the process-led seriality of event theory. Each non-decisional photograph is an intensive stage of the larger event and when viewed in its seriality can be seen *via* the intensive relation to an extensive whole to be premised on a productive difference. A complex repetition that produces pure difference, hence a process. IPCRES events are intentionally designed around the notion of a progressive rhythm and my photographic experiments are attempts to coincide an internal record of the event with the natural rhythms of the event. Another important aspect that differentiates my experiments with IPCRES from performed photography is that each serial photograph is fundamentally non-decisional, as well as non-pictorial and un-composed. In fact, there is a machinic non-human dimension to the images that removes them as far as possible from human agency and returns them to a purely

photographic ontology that François Laruelle (b. 1937) identifies as a ‘non-photography’.

There is no photographic decision; on the other hand there is a (non-)photographic vision that is, so to speak, parallel to the World; a photographic process which has the same contents of representation as those that are in the World, but which enjoys an absolutely different transcendental status since it is by definition immanent to vision-force.

(Laruelle 2011: 19)

The concept of non-philosophy (non-photography) as espoused by Laruelle is only of interest to the thesis insofar as it offers direction for post-doctoral work. In the present context, Laruelle’s radical immanence is too eccentric to be much use to our argument, although it is worthy of a small detour at this point. As Deleuze and Guattari remark in *What is Philosophy?* ([1991] 1994), “François Laruelle is engaged in one of the most interesting undertakings of contemporary philosophy.” (Deleuze and Guattari [1991] 1994: 220 n.5). John Mullarkey and Anthony Paul Smith in *Laruelle and Non-Philosophy* (2012) assert that Laruelle’s concept engages in “...the rigor of invention and not convention...” (Mullarkey and Smith (eds.) 2012: 160) and he extols us to invent philosophy, invent photography. Laruelle’s system is anti-representational where there are no representations of reality that are not a material part of the ‘Real’. Representation is immanent to and part of the Real, rather than any transcendental notion that can ‘capture’ the Real. Therefore it makes no sense for a part to be able to represent the whole (Real), as

the whole is indifferent to its parts. Transferred to photography, this means that the concept, being immanent to the Real, cannot represent it as such but must know itself as an inherent element of the Real. Hence, photography like thought must see "...itself as a performative thought and not a representational one [...] as non-philosophy [photography] is an action, a doing and a showing, rather than a saying or a representing." (Mullarkey and Smith (eds.) 2012: 9) [*my brackets*]. In Laruelle's own words concerning photography, "[n]on-photography is thus neither an extension of photography with some variation, difference or decision; nor its negation. It is a use of photography..." (Laruelle [2011] 2012: 4-5). Laruelle regards photography as a theoretical practice that is no more or less relevant than any other knowledge production system such as science, mathematics and art. All knowledges are equal in his conception and have the condition of 'flat' thought. It is interesting in the context of the thesis that Laruelle describes photography as a mode of thinking, photography *itself* thinks. "But for non-photography the photo is no longer *of an object*, it is its own Reality, it photographs, or puts 'in-photo', the Real." (Mullarkey and Smith (eds.) 2012: 151) [*emphasis in original*]. Thought as photography is not about the world, but is coexistent with (alongside) a Real in which both are inherent. For the thesis then, if photography is an inherent *part* of the Real that it photographs, or renders 'in-photo' for Laruelle, then every photograph of necessity partakes in *performing* a description of its own event. One might say it literally *thinks* its own event.

...a good description of photography necessitates that one treat it as an essence unto itself; [...] that

one recognise the existence, not just of a photographic art, but of an authentic photographic thought; the existence, beyond the components of technology and image-production, of a certain specific relation to the real, one which knows itself as such.

(Laruelle [2011] 2012: 6)

-0-

As there are very few instances where the thesis concentrates on actual works of art, perhaps I should qualify here some of the reasons. The pivotal question of *zero* seems to be stimulating an increasingly popular area of study across a number of disciplines. At this stage, I would like to acknowledge some preliminary research material that, being more broadly historical, assisted in my initial formulating of ideas concerning zero and cryptography but did not feature in the arguments themselves. These were Robert Kaplan's *The Nothing That Is: A Natural History of Zero* (1999), Charles Seife and *Zero: The Biography of a Dangerous Idea* (2000), Murphy and Piper's *Cryptography: A Very Short Introduction* (2002) and Mario Perniola's *Enigmas: The Egyptian Moment in Society and Art* ([1990] 1995). Although more general in purpose, these works have been informative, however my particular intention has been to test how the coincidence of photography and zero can instigate new modalities of thought in both areas of study. As the thesis has revealed, much of the work on zero has been carried out within critical literary discourse. Whilst many of these scholars have

addressed artworks pertinent to this shared concern, they often identify certain conventions within art that produce an effluence between *zero* and *nothing*.

In an informal conversation with novelist Tom McCarthy in 2012 I offered the title of the thesis; *can photography describe its own event? (CPDIOE?)* and my term ‘zero[graphy]’, with a reference to the anti-representational, and so followed a speculation on the subject matter. His conjecture was Kazimir Malevich (1878 – 1935), the Russian Suprematist painter renowned for his *Black Square* (1915) paintings, perhaps the apotheosis of non-representational art. We should refer here to one of Malevich’s famous quotations that corroborates this presumption; “[i]t is from zero, in zero, that the true movement of being begins.” (Druitt 2003: inside cover). From the research I have carried out, this reference is one that continually surfaces, along with Ad Reinhardt’s (1913 – 1967) monochrome paintings of the 1950’s, followed by his all-black paintings of the 1960’s. In addition, the relationship between silence, nothing and zero converge in John Cage’s *4’33”* (1952) which additionally seems a consistent point of reference for writers approaching this area of study. Austin Clarkson clarifies this connection in his essay ‘The Intent of the Musical Moment: Cage and the Transpersonal’ (2001):

...when one adds up 4 minutes and 33 seconds, the sum is 273 seconds. Translated into negative degrees of temperature, this happens to be absolute zero on the Kelvin scale (actually -273.2°C). As substances approach that temperature, molecular motion ceases and they begin to exhibit peculiar properties. Although Cage heard sounds in an anechoic chamber and concluded that silence does not exist,

his silent prayer of 273 seconds is a metaphor for a physical state in which matter is maximally ordered, vibratory activity is stilled, and silence is, in principle, absolute.

(Clarkson 2001: 72)

Malevich first exhibited his *Black Square* painting at the *0.10* exhibition in Petrograd in 1915. The enigmatic title of the exhibition referring to the figure of zero which denoted the possibility of beginning again, and ten signaling the number of artists taking part in the exhibition (eventually there were fourteen in total).

To move on to a very contemporary exhibition I recently viewed at the Guggenheim, New York, a show titled, *Zero: Countdown to Tomorrow: 1950s-60s* (October 2014 – January 2015). This was a historical survey dedicated to the German artists' group, the Zero group (1957 – 66) founded by Heinz Mack (b. 1931) and Otto Piene (1928 – 2014). They were joined by Günther Uecker (b. 1930) and the artists collective ZERO in 1961, an international network of experimental artists from Europe, Japan and North and South America. Piene explained in 1964 that the name was to suggest "...a zone of silence and of pure possibilities for a new beginning as at the countdown when rockets take off" (in Hillings 2015: u.p.). The show contained work by such radical artists as Yves Klein and Jean Tinguely (1925 – 1991). Interestingly, the panel discussion on the subject of the exhibition was entitled '*ZEROgraphy: Mapping the ZERO network 1957-67*' in which Guggenheim describe the phrase '*ZEROgraphy*' as a mapping

geography of the ZERO movement, which consisted of over forty artists across a number of countries.

I mention these instances of zero in the arts to show that the term has a certain currency within the art establishment and that my researches have encompassed them. To conclude the thesis I make these closing remarks. In terms of the structure, the journey from Photo[graphy] to Zero[graphy] *via* Crypto[graphy] seems a long and arduous one. And it is easy to forget that the thesis speaks primarily about the coexistence of all of these concepts within possible photographs of the future. Practices that in Deleuze's terms deal with matter and imagination in the same instance, that can describe a world in constant variation without resorting to rational notions of an ideal, fixed and static state. Perhaps we must emphasise here that the mainstream practice of photography is not to be eradicated by any possible paradigm shift, but merely enriched by other perspectives. "Then it would begin to seem unintelligible, as the thoughts of a previous existence must be after reincarnation;" (Proust 1996a: 1). A word of explanation regarding the two images included on tracing paper that act as porous membranes between Sections. The first is a photograph that Barthes identifies in the French Edition of *Camera Lucida* as 'Polaroid, 1979' by Daniel Boudinet from a series called '*Fragments of a Labyrinth*'. This relatively little discussed image remains somewhat of an enigma in relation to the book and for our purposes, the chink of light it offers us through the closed curtains shields the entrance to the crypt of Section II. We leave it to W.J.T. Mitchell to illuminate any perceived meaning:

The Boudinet polaroid stands independent of Barthes's text: the best 'reading' we can give it is perhaps simply as an emblem of the unreadability of photography, its occupation of a site forever prior to and outside Barthes's text. The photo presents an image of a veiled, intimate *boudoir*, simultaneously erotic and funereal, its tantalizingly partial revelation of light gleaming through the cleavage in the curtains like the secret at the center [*sic*] of a labyrinth.

(Mitchell 1995: 302) [*emphasis in original*]

The only colour image in Barthes' book *Camera Lucida* (French edition only), Diana Knight makes the connection that as the dawn light gives the curtains a blue-green luminosity this is the same blue-green that Barthes' in his book attributes to his mothers' eyes. (Knight 1997: 138). In the thesis, it is enough to reproduce it in monochrome. The other image between Section II and III is a section from J.M.W. Turner's '*Snow Storm: Steam Boat off a Harbour's Mouth*' (1842) and simply introduces the theme of undecidability which runs through the ensuing Section. On top of this, it goes some way to evoking Mallarmé's poem *Un Coup de Dés* (1897) as well as encapsulating the concept of *zero-zero*, a weather term denoting zero visibility in both vertical and horizontal directions. It has also been reproduced here in monochrome.

The thesis takes us from the light of photography through the depths of cryptography and onto the flat plane of an immanent zero[graphy]. The desire to move away from the metaphor-laden photographs of the past can be summed up best by referring to Maurice Blanchot. "Zero [...] is not a unique generative

source within each author. It is an impersonal zero point on the horizon or in the depths, or somewhere out of this world, toward which the literary effort is oriented and which it attempts to reach..." (Miller 2003: 73). And so we leave the final word to the poetic vision of Blanchot via Joseph Hillis Miller:

With zero we come to the end of the alphabetical line. We reach rock bottom. Or rather we plunge into the bottomless pit, or perhaps into an unfathomable ocean, such as that place, 'l'espace littéraire', the place where everything turns into image. Maurice Blanchot says the Song of the Sirens leads us to that place, a zero point where all song vanishes:
(Miller 2003: 39)

What was that place? It was a place where the only thing left was to disappear, because in this region of source and origin, music itself has disappeared more completely than in any other place in the world; it was like a sea into which the living would sink with their ears closed and where the Sirens, too, even they, as proof of their good will, would one day have to disappear.
(Blanchot 1981: 105)

Endnotes to Conclusion

¹ For an explanation of this concept see Antognazza *Leibniz: An Intellectual Biography* (2009), page 63.

² See Benjamin [1936] 2008a – *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction* for a general discussion on the concept of aura in an original Work of Art.

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IPCRES PUBLICATIONS AND EVENTS:

- 2009, *The Conversion of Essence into Series: A Dance of Repetition from Vermeer to Leibniz*, Performative visual arts project, 18 thetic events staged over 6 months based on Vermeer's painting *The Girl with the Pearl Earring*, Swansea / Amsterdam / The Hague.
[Performed Events]
- 2010, *Protest Against Progress*, City of Swansea, participatory performative encounter on Election Day.
[Performed Event]

- 2010, *Super Vision* Symposium, UWIC, Howard Gardens, Cardiff.
[Symposium Paper]
- 2010, *The Creative Supervisory Team*, Seminar, University of West of England, Bristol.
[Research Seminar Paper]
- 2010, *The Conversion of Essence into Series: A Dance of Repetition from Vermeer to Leibniz*, in proceedings of 3rd International Deleuze Studies Conference, Amsterdam, Amsterdam School for Cultural Analysis.
[Performed Paper]
- 2011, IPCRES installation, Chester: University of Chester.
[Public Event]
- 2011, *Protest Against Progress*, in proceedings of the 4th International Deleuze Studies Conference, Copenhagen, Copenhagen Business School.
[Performed Paper, Special Conference Event]
- 2012, ‘The Conversion of Essence into Series’, in Scheer E. (Issue ed.). (University of New South Wales Australia) 2012, *Performance Research Journal*, Issue 17.5 ‘On Duration’ London: Routledge Journals/Taylor & Francis, pp. 78-81.
[Creative Paper]
- 2012, *IPCRES Reading Ensemble* in conference proceedings of the BookLive! International Symposium, London: London Southbank University, June.
[Performed Event]
- 2013, ‘IPCRES Reading Ensemble’ in Waeckerle, E. & Sawdon Smith, R. (eds.) *The Book is Alive!*, Manchester: RGAP, pp. 168-171, 197.
[Creative Paper]
- 2013, *On the Secrets of the Sublime*, in ‘Everyone, Everything’, The Ragged School Gallery, Swansea, conceptual panel work in Group exhibition.
[Exhibition Piece]
- 2014, *Let There Be No Correlation*, in Co-Respondents, Mission Gallery, Swansea, conceptual installation in Group exhibition.
[Installation Piece]
- 2014, *Coupled*, in proceedings of *Double Dialogues Conference – Precursors into the Future*, hosted by Cardiff University, organised by *Double Dialogues* Periodical, Deakin University: Australia.
[Performed Event]