(De)constructing Technologies of Subjectivity

Nicole Anderson

Introduction

One of the very few works where Derrida explicitly discusses the 'subject' is in an interview conducted by Jean-Luc Nancy around the question 'who comes after the subject?' In this interview, Derrida acknowledges that the reason for rarely speaking of the "'subject' or of 'subjectivity'", is because "the discourse on the subject, even if it locates difference, inadequation, the dehiscence within auto affection, etc., continues to link subjectivity with man" (Derrida 1991: 105). As he goes on to argue several pages later, the attributes that link subject and man are ordered:

> around being present (*etant-present*), presence to self - which implies therefore a certain interpretation of temporality: identity to self, positionality, property, personality, ego, consciousness will, intentionality, freedom, humanity, etc. It is necessary to question this authority of the being-present (Derrida 1991: 109).

Derrida does question, implicitly, the presence of the subject, through his critique of Western metaphysics. For Derrida, Western metaphysics has attempted to ground the questions of truth, God, reality, etc., in absolute fundamental principles. It is this search for principles (foundations, or origins) that Derrida has labelled logocentrism, derived from the Greek word logos (meaning: speech, logic, reason, the word of God). Thus metaphysics in its search for foundations is logocentric (Derrida 1981: ix). One of the means by which Western metaphysics attempts to found the origin is through binary oppositions, inaugurated by Plato. Another, first articulated by Aristotle and culminating in the modern philosophy of Husserl, is through a concept of time as linear; that is, as a series of 'present' moments (Harvey 1983: 124). Not only do binary oppositions and notions of present time circumscribe western metaphysics and philosophy, they perpetuate and privilege the notion of presence, or in Derrida's words "all conceptual oppositions of metaphysics...refer to the presence of something present" (Derrida 1982: 29). The present can be understood as a structuring of time and space in and through binary oppositions. For instance, space is privileged, as the proximity of an object to an observing subject, over its absence or distance. And time is privileged as the single present moment, the instant, the Now, the occurrence of the representation without delay, lapse or deferral, over the past and the future. (That is, traditionally time is conceived and perceived as a linear and teleological progress). 'Presence', as a privileging of certain ideas (hence values and beliefs) over others, informs our understanding of space and time. Space and time can thus be defined as the "presence of the present" and the "present of the presence" (Derrida 1996: 9). Derrida contends that presence is privileged precisely because it is set against, or constructed in opposition to, something 'other'. Consequently, this other is constituted as different to presence, and is, therefore, perceived as derivative and marginal. The metaphysics of presence conceives of 'hard' or instrumental technologies as 'other' to the subject. That is, the subject in its presence, in its autonomy, controls and creates technology and in the process conceives technology as that which is 'outside' the subject. In and through his discussion of imaging technologies, such as the 'frame' and photography, Derrida demonstrates how this metaphysical conception of technology in fact constitutes particular metaphysical (that is, humanist) technologies of perception, and thus of subjectivity.

By putting into question hierarchical oppositions Derrida not only claims, as he does in this interview with Jean-Luc Nancy, that there is never full presence (and thereby suggesting that the notion of the subject as present to self is "a fable" (Derrida 1991: 102)), but also he *implicitly* offers a way of thinking about the political and ethical implications of the binary that the metaphysics of presence constructs between the subject and technology. Thus, by using Derrida's thinking on the 'frame' and photography, I demonstrate that the subject-object dichotomy (and its accompanying 'instrumental' ontology) remains the default position for accounts of the relation between 'human' as organism and the artefacts and practices of technology. I argue that this 'default position' simply replays the humanist account of the subject in its instrumental relation to the

phenomenal universe 'outside': with 'technology' cast in the guise of the 'other'. Demonstrating this I argue that what Derrida's deconstructive intervention into imaging technologies enables, then, is a sophisticated means by which to rethink the subject, not as separate from, but a**s** technology.

Derrida's deconstruction of the subject is well known. Nevertheless, I briefly outlined his views here, as they form the ground on which are tethered the evolving 'analogies' that unfold throughout this paper: analogies which constitute a challenge to metaphysical technologies of subjectivity. Given Derrida's critique of metaphysics, traditional explication is of little value. Instead, the paper draws from, and draws on, 'differing' topics and issues across several of Derrida's works in an attempt to rethink, and to dissociate, the subject from its traditional perception as one of presence in a way not explicitly formulated by Derrida. However, if I draw out an unformulated connection, I also follow Derrida: that is, by discussing Derrida's various works and their issues and themes, this paper moves from one analogy to another (from metaphor to metaphor), while at the same time, moving between discussions of hard (imaging) technologies to more 'organic' versions of the technologies of the subject and to ontological technologies more generally. In other words, while Derrida intervenes in metaphysical conceptions of imaging technologies, what I attempt in this paper in and through the move between analogies and various technologies (both in the specific and broader senses) is a performative demonstration of the complex notion of the double sense of technology as ontology. In a nutshell, this paper is/constitutes a critical intervention into technologies of the subject as presence.

In section one entitled "(Un)framing the Subject", the first analogy between the subject and the notion of the *parergonal* is elucidated through a discussion of Derrida's deconstruction of interpretations of the frame and the artwork that are based on the "metaphysical conceptuality...of the difference between outside and inside" (Derrida 1976: 71). The aim of this section is to demonstrate the ways in which traditional metaphysical notions of subjectivity are *constructed* in and through the 'hard' (imaging) technology of 'framing', and to then *deconstruct* the 'impermeable' boundaries said to lie between the organic and the technological: in doing so, this paper also presents a challenge not only to the metaphysical, but to the postmodern accounts of subjectivity that, for all their posturing, remain locked in an essentially humanist conceptualisation, and thus find it impossible to deal adequately with the network of connections linking biological individuum (as system of systems) to all that lies 'outside'. Looked at from this perspective, boundaries between the inside and outside, the organismic and the technological, like those between the frame and what it separates, inevitably blur.

This discussion informs the second section of this paper "Shadows of Subjectivity", where a second analogy is developed between the *parergonal* and 'haunting' (what I call 'shadows') as Derrida articulates this term in a discussion of the photographic image in several books and articles. 'Haunting', 'shadows' and the 'photographic image' serve as metaphors that then inform my discussion of the relation between subject and 'the other' in the third section "subject<>alterity<>other", leading to the final analogy, linking the *parergonal* as haunting and shadows to 'alterity'. By alterity I mean an irreducible difference, or 'otherness' that constitutes the subject, and the other. While 'other' I use to mean another person, that is, as other to/than the subject. This alterity, as we will see not only undermines the idea of the subject as fully present to itself, but, in turn, the distinction, the limit between subject and other. Given this, the subject can now be understood not simply as 'presence', but as presence-in-absence in alterity: as a dispersion or deferral across an array of systems - social, biological, material -within and through which it is (re)constituted. By rethinking the subject in this way, we must inevitably rethink technology (and not just in its instrumentality: in its very ontology): in this rethinking, subject and technology become mutually constitutive.

(Un)Framing the Subject

If presence operates in and through binary oppositions, is the defining characteristic of modern western metaphysics, and determines the traditional interpretation of subjectivity, then the metaphysics of presence also has implications for how the frame is perceived and interpreted. The common view of the frame (a view that is situated within, or defined by, the metaphysics of presence) is that it is a structure (wooden, metallic, plastic; square, rectangle, round) that supports or encloses a drawing; painting; object, or photograph. Yet, the frame is defined not necessarily, or only, by some tangible, tactile structure, but simultaneously by a metaphysical concept of space (as discussed earlier). Thus what is left out, in a

fundamental way is also what determines the frame. In this conception of the frame there exists an opposition between the inside and the outside, albeit a theoretical one. Derrida argues that this:

> permanent requirement - to distinguish between the internal or proper and the circumstance of the object being talked about - organizes all philosophical discourses on art, and meaning as such, from Plato to Hegel, Husserl to Heidegger. This requirement presupposes a discourse on the limit between inside and outside of the art object, here a discourse on the frame (Derrida 1987: 45).

According to Derrida, this metaphysical discourse on the frame fails to question the limit between the inside and outside, thereby maintaining common conceptions of the frame, as well as contributing to a perpetuation of binary oppositions. Moreover, the common view or discourse of the frame, experienced as an inside/outside opposition, I would argue, in turn, organises a notion of 'perspective' that reinforces a further opposition between the eye (the observing subject, the gaze) and what is seen (the observed object). That is to say, this opposition is actually undermined and complicated by what I will call perspective as a 'way of knowing' and perspective as a 'way of seeing'. However they do not construct an opposition, they are not opposed, but instead feed off and inform each other. Perspective as a 'way of knowing' is about how and what we see being determined by the social, theoretical, and cultural milieu in which we as observers are situated. Therefore, the observer is not a completely autonomous subject independently determining meaning. Rather, the boundaries, the 'limit' between the subject and the 'social', are not permanent and stable, since it is the kinds of meaning-making conventions into which a subject/observer has been socialised that determines the reading positions the subject can take up in respect of what is observed. This is not an argument for reading positions being absolutely contextual, which is only one side of the coin, and this is because there is operating at the same time, perspective as a 'way of seeing'. That is, the formal properties of an image (whether that be a photographic, painterly image or an object in a natural or constructed environment), seen by the observer, influences the observers understanding of that image. 'Ways of seeing', then, are organised by the materiality of the frame(d). What I am arguing is that both 'ways of knowing' and 'seeing' inform each other, to the point where the material and social situation in which we find ourselves structures the ideological perspectives we have of the world generally. An image (artwork or photograph, for example), as structured by the oppositions between inside/outside, and analogously, observed/observer, corresponds to, and determines, a traditional notion of the subject-and-other relation. Therefore, questioning the traditional notion of perspective has important implications for questioning, in turn, traditional notions of subjectivity.

As discussed earlier, Derrida's work challenges the binary oppositions that constitute the metaphysics of presence. However, Derrida not only questions the hierarchy of binary oppositions, but the 'limit' that maintains them. In *The Truth in Painting* this questioning of 'oppositionality' becomes evident when Derrida exploits Immanuel Kant's term *parergon* to deconstruct the distinction between inside and outside that operates as a metaphysical-technological "discourse on the frame" (Derrida 1987: 45). Furthermore, in the example of Kant, Derrida reveals how a questioning of binary oppositions can only take place because of an inherent problematics in the structure of oppositions, exposed precisely at the moment when these binary oppositions are defined (and Kant is confronted with this very dilemma). As Derrida demonstrates, *parergon* is Kant's word for frame. It is also, on Derrida's reading, an analogy for the outside, as opposed to *ergon* (meaning the work of art, and by analogy, the inside). In this discussion, Derrida comments that:

> the whole analytic of the aesthetic judgement forever assumes that one can distinguish rigorously between intrinsic and extrinsic...And when Kant replies to our question "What is a frame?" by saying it's a parergon, a hybrid of outside and inside, but a hybrid that is not a mixture or half-measure...and when he gives as examples of the parergon, alongside the frame, clothing and column, we ask to see, we say to ourselves that there are 'great difficulties' here (Derrida 1987: 63-64).

Kant's "great difficulty" is not so much failing to question the opposition between *parergon* and *ergon* (what will be referred to for simplification from now on as 'frame' and 'work' respectively), but that while evidently aware of the 'slipperiness' of this opposition, he still attempts to make permanent and stable the distinction between them. However, as Derrida points out, this entails not only knowing where the frame and work begin and end, but also knowing "what one is

excluding as frame and outside the frame" (Derrida 1987: 63). The frame Derrida argues, has:

> a surface which separates [it]...not only (as Kant would have it) from the integral inside, from the body proper of the [work], but also from the outside, from the wall on which the painting is hung, from the space in which statue or column is erected, then, step by step, from the whole field of historical, political inscription (Derrida 1987: 61).

Thus, there is not only a limit, a separation between the frame and the work, but as Derrida has just described, between the frame and its surroundings, for instance the wall. Furthermore, the work, the frame, and that which is outside the frame, such as the wall, are all set off against the cultural milieu *in* and *by* which it is situated and informed. There is more than simply one limit, one separation that occurs (but complicates) the frame and the work. And if the frame and work is separated from endless social and political inscription, then the limit is a limit of, a limit of, and so on indefinitely, because limits are not permanent and stable. In regards to this, Derrida goes on to argue that:

> The parergonal frame stands out against two grounds [*fonds*], but with respect to each of these two grounds, it merges [*se fond*] into the other. With respect to the work which can serve as a ground for it, it merges into the wall, and then gradually, into the general text. With respect to the background which the general text is, it merges into the work, which stands out against the general background (Derrida 1987: 61).

As we saw in the previous quote, there is a limit between frame and work. As this later quote now suggests, however, it is the *parergonal* that simultaneously makes possible the relation between the frame and work (Harvey 1989: 73).

What does Derrida mean by *parergonal*? From Kant's use of the word *parergon*, as noun, Derrida moves to the adjective, *parergonal*, making what, I think, is an interesting shift from the 'noun' (what is fixed, stable, present/presence), for example the 'proper' name, to the adjective that, as description, is always a reference to something else. He does this in order to demonstrate that not only are the terms in a binary opposition, such as frame and work, never pure and distinct from one another, but that the frame (*parergon*) itself is never an unambiguous or unified concept either. The limit, the interstice, the border, the edge, the line, or what Derrida elsewhere calls the "trait" (Derrida 1978: 5-33), that divides the frame from the work, and the frame from its general surroundings is never pure, hence, the *parergonal* is neither the inside nor the outside of the frame; neither the inside nor the outside of the work, but is at the same time, both inside and outside the frame and the work. The *parergonal* that makes oppositions possible is not Derrida attempting a synthesis of opposites, yet neither are the terms in the oppositions to be thought of as pure and uncontaminated terms, as Kant would like. Derrida's reading of Kant is what Harvey (1989) calls 'exemplary' of a deconstructive practice, but as Derrida also warns, "deconstruction must neither reframe nor dream of the pure and simple absence of the frame" (Derrida 1987: 73).

How binary oppositions operate has been demonstrated through a discussion of the common views of the frame, and of perspective. The conclusion being that both inform each other. To clarify this further, in his article "Right of Inspection", when raising questions about the gaze in relation to the frame, Derrida observes that one is:

> free but there are rules, there is a law that assigns the right of inspection, you must observe these rules which in turn keep you under surveillance. Remain within these limits, this frame, the framework of these frames the chain of this chain of events.(Derrida 1989: 24)

In other words, the frame constructs the observer's response by how it frames what is framed. Moreover, the response or thoughts of the observer determine what is seen. 'Ways of knowing' (the world) determine 'ways of seeing' (the world), and vice versa. By way of example, one may have asked oneself (as a reader) what the inside/outside opposition that constructs notions of the frame have to do with the title of this paper: "(De)constructing Technologies of Subjectivity"? Moreover, the title positions one to not only anticipate a theme, a topic, but to actually pose this question. We are all not only positioned by an artwork: painting, photograph, sculpture, et cetera, but by all texts, and at this very moment this one. The title of this

paper is itself a frame.

If the traditional notion of perspective is constituted in and through binary oppositions, then perspective - in this common 'sense' - also informs not just perspective(s) and points of view on works of art but in conjunction, subjectivity generally. In other words, Derrida's deconstruction of the frame (as hard imaging technology) unveils not only the way in which the metaphysics of subjectivity is constructed and maintained, but in doing so, enables us to 'see' how hard technologies in (form) subjectivity, and how there is no subject outside of this technological text. However, I want to suggest that Derrida's *parergonal* puts into question the binary oppositions frame and work, inside and outside, on which the traditional humanist perspective of subjectivity is founded. Thus, the *parergonal* radically disrupts the 'subject as presence'. That is, like an artwork, the subject is framed by relationships with the world and with others, and like the frame with its endless blurring of limits the subject is not permanent and stable. The next section will pursue this argument in more detail by demonstrating, through the analogy of the concept of the photographic image as 'haunting' and 'shadows', that the *parergonal*, in disrupting the subject as presence, at the same time, disrupts the opposition between subject and other. In demonstrating this, the next section also reveals the operation of the double sense of technologies of subjectivity (as presence, as ontology, etc.)

Shadows of Subjectivity

In the same way that there is a traditional view on the frame, so too are there traditional views on the photograph, such as 'formalism'. To give a brief, general and unfortunately reductive overview, these traditional positions argue that the photograph 'represents' or provides a window onto the world of reality. This 'reality' is perceived to be unified, true, universal, unchanging, eternal, and existing independently of us. Consequently, it is believed that the object represented by the photograph has been 'captured' accurately and purely so that what is represented stands in, directly, for what is absent. It follows from this that for the traditional positions there is only one fixed meaning to the photograph and this meaning is the photograph's 'essence'.

(As an aside, while the traditional positions may still, today, be the dominant way of thinking about photography, they have been challenged by various positions that will, for clarity, be called 'contextual'. These positions argue that rather than existing independently of us, the photograph is a cultural phenomenon. It is contextual to the point where the values and meanings attached or read into the photograph are thoroughly mutable, contingent and constructed, and therefore a site of multiple meanings. Thus, the photograph is not a representation of universal truths that transcend human society and culture, as the traditional positions would have us believe. These contextual positions, in arguing that there is no essential meaning in the photographic image, promotes a perspective of politics and social practice that in turn constitutes the photograph. However, traditional positions on photography are not alone in perpetuating the idea of representation as 'true'; so too do the seemingly oppositional contextual positions. That is, by identifying the photograph so exclusively with culture, and ignoring other functions that may play a part, including the codes that were employed in the original construction of the image, these contextual positions argue that what is represented by the photograph is an ideological truth. Therefore despite the variations evident in, and between, their theoretical perspectives, or however oppositional the traditional and contextual positions appear to be, they both carry out essentialising gestures by assuming the photograph is a consequence of either nature or culture, respectively. The result of this is that not only do both fail to question the binary oppositions that their positions constitute, but also they end up sharing a homogenising perspective of representation).

The concept of a photograph as capturing the 'present' but significant moment is analogous to the idea that what is captured is a, or the, truth behind appearance. Therefore the 'present' moment is the real, the true. However, the issue is not only that the captured moment is supposedly 'true', but also, that associated with the captured, present moment, is a view of the subject fixed in space and time as permanently 'present' (unified in the here and now). The connection I am attempting to make here is between the subject/object captured in the 'present' moment of the photograph (as a frame), and the concept of the subject as 'presence'. That is, what is experienced as captured in a photographic image is an idea of the humanist subject: simultaneously unified, autonomous, universal, and therefore essential. This humanistic interpretation of the photographic image (an image as a subject, or referent) and the materiality of the photograph itself is also a consequence of how they are framed by metaphysical-technological discourse. Yet the subject is not simply the "presence of the present" or

the "present of the presence", as the following discussion of Derrida's concept of 'haunting' in relation to the photograph, will attempt to demonstrate.

Derrida argues that the metaphysics of presence is defined partly by binary oppositions, (which from now on will be generically represented by the terms presence and absence). Not only do all oppositions exist in a hierarchical relation, the limit between oppositions is constructed and perceived to be permanent and stable. However, as already discussed in terms of the frame and work, Derrida demonstrates that the limit that separates oppositions is never stable. Derrida uses the analogy of 'haunting' to capture this instability: each term in an opposition "haunts" or 'shadows', as I will also refer to it, the other term and vice versa. I use the word 'shadow' (in keeping with the metaphor of the photograph used in this paper), as a play on and challenge to, the negative/positive, light/dark binary images produced by the photograph. That is, presence haunts and shadows absence, absence haunts and shadows presence. Derrida, in fact uses the analogy of the photograph to show exactly how haunting operates:

> [T]his concept of the photograph *photographs* all conceptual oppositions. It traces a relationship of haunting which perhaps is constitutive of all logics...Neither life nor death, it is the haunting of the one by the other. The versus of the conceptual opposition is as insubstantial as a camera's click (Derrida 1988: 267).

While the concept of haunting challenges the traditional positions on the photograph, as well as the concept of the subject as presence, Derrida does not use the concept of haunting to transcend or to synthesise oppositions, nor does he reject them. This is because presence is always a result of absence, and given this we can say that absence is another (a different) presence. This was demonstrated through the notion of the *parergonal*, which simultaneously makes possible the relation or the limit between the frame and the work. However, this can be elucidated further by turning to Derrida's discussion of the images of (certain) photographs in "Right of Inspection". In this article Derrida argues that "these images themselves" are like "spectres, ghosts and phantoms", and that "the spectral is the essence of photography"(Derrida 1989: 34), not in the sense given to the concept of essence by the metaphysics of presence, rather, and paradoxically, the essence in its spectrality is a non-essence: a shadow, a non-centre. In other words, haunting and shadows are the absence of a centre, the absence of a presence. Shadows are "elusive, unactualisable, and non-existent" (Derrida 1995: 286). What the photograph in the form of the image captures then, is really a shadow; a haunting; a reference to the referent. Thus, Derrida insists that the photograph is unable to fix or suspend the referent, no matter how much we may think, or may want, the referent to be the "presence of the present" and vice versa. So what remains in the photograph is the 'silhouette', the shadow of something that is forever elusive (Derrida 1989: 74/90).

Implied in my discussion is a metonymic relation between the haunting or shadows evident in the photographic image, and the *parergonal*. I want to link these two metaphors that underlie the discussion on subjectivity to further argue that not only is haunting itself the *parergonal*, but that the *parergonal* is a metonymy for subjectivity. In other words, the subject is (the) *parergonal*. This can be demonstrated by again using Derrida's concept of the photographic image as haunting. For instance Derrida argues that "in the photograph, the referent is noticeably absent...vanished into the unique past time of its event" (Derrida 1988: 281). From this I would infer that the subject is never simply or only 'presence/present' because it is haunted, shadowed by 'absence'. Moreover, the *parergonal*, as a shadowing or haunting of presence within absence, and absence within presence, is what makes "the presentation of being-present possible" (Derrida 1996: 134). Without absence there would be no presence. As a corollary then, the subject like the photographic referent is never simply or only permanently present, rather what is perceived as the present of the subject, is so because the subject is simultaneously preceding and succeeding itself. That is to say, the subject as the present is determined, informed, made possible, by that which is absent (but not absent): the past and the future. In Derrida's words:

> It addresses itself to me, this solitude that tears the fabric of the same, the networks and ruses of economy. But it is always the singularity of the other in so far as it comes to me without being directed towards me, without being present to me, and the other can be 'me', me having been or having had to be, are already dead in the future anterior and past anterior of my photograph (Derrida 1988: 264).

Like the photographic image that is a shadow, a haunting, of something else, of what has been and what is no more, the subject is also a shadow, a haunting: a reference to what has been, what is no more, and what will be. In this sense the subject, like the *parergonal* frame, is itself divided, and thus, is always 'other' to itself. Moreover, when Derrida argues that "the 'referent'...the 'Spectrum', can be me, seen in the photograph of myself", this is an experience of death:

> This is the 'return of the dead' whose spectral arrival in the very space of the photogramme well resemble an emission or emanation. Already a sort of hallucinating metonymy: it is something else, a bit come from the other (from the referent) which is found in me (...it belongs neither to the sensible body nor to the medium of the photogramme) (Derrida 1988: 281-282).

The photograph is a 'return of the dead' in that it is a ghost, a haunting: it is a reference to a past moment. This past moment, as a return of the dead, is in turn, an experience of death because the photographic image, the referent, as a past moment is a reminder of a future moment, of a/the death to come. Also, and at the same time, the present moment is always an experience of death in that the past always haunts the present, which haunts the future, which haunts the present, which haunts the past, and so on in a circular fashion indefinitely. In other words, presence (and thus the referent) is never absolutely present. Therefore, death is constantly recurring and 'returning' to us. In his book *Specters of Marx*. Derrida questions: "Is not to possess a specter to be possessed by it, possessed period?" (Derrida 1994: 132) A page on from this question Derrida concludes:

> Therefore 'I am' would mean 'I am haunted': I am haunted by myself who am (haunted by myself who am haunted by myself who am...and so forth). Where ever there is Ego, *es spukt*, 'it spooks'. (...not simply 'it spooks', as we have just ventured to translate, but 'it returns', 'it ghosts', 'it specters'). The essential mode of self-presence of the cogito would be the haunting obsession of this *'es spukt'* (Derrida 1994: 133).

Like the *parergonal* frame that is divided from the work but also from the political, social milieu, so too is the subject divided from, not only the past and the future of itself, the other in and of itself, but from the other outside itself. And, again, these divisions are never clear-cut: they endlessly divide the subject from itself and from the other, while at he same time, blurring this edge, border, limit between itself and the other.

subject <>alterity<>other

When Derrida argues, in a passage quoted earlier, that "a discourse on the limit between inside and outside of the art object" is a "discourse on the frame" (Derrida 1987: 45), and that discourse is precisely about the limit, he raises an important question that I want to elucidate. That is, while there *is* an opposition, maintained by the limit, the border, the edge, the line, the "trait", the question here is not that there is or is not a limit or a blurring of the limit between oppositions, and therefore, as a corollary, a blurring of the opposition between subject and other, *soma* and technology, but rather, *how far* does the blurring of the limit, the line, the edge between the subject and other go? Is it an endless blurring or shadowing? Moreover, if there is no limit, if the blurring, the shadowing, of one term in the opposition into the other and vice versa is endless, is this a form of reducing the other to the same, is this a denial of difference? As we have seen in the discussion of Derrida's *The Truth in Painting*, Kant's desire to keep oppositions pure is exemplary of wanting to dispense with the other, to deny difference, by *attempting* to reduce the other to the same, and I will return to a discussion of what this 'attempt' involves shortly.

Meanwhile, if (as demonstrated through the examples of several binary oppositions) the limit between subject and other is informed by a shadowing and haunting, if the limit is blurred, then the implications of this are complicated: the other (and the way the other's alterity affect the subject) is never absolutely or totally outside the subject, but also inside the subject simultaneously. However, this shadowing or haunting is only possible precisely because there is a limit, and without this division, without this limit, there would be no subject and other. The question that raises itself now, is how and where does the limit (as division or separation) come into place, and how is it maintained? (As Derrida asks: "Where does the parergon

begin and end"?) (Derrida 1987: 57) Inversely, and because of this division, the subject is not only inside itself, but by the way it is informed and affected by the other, is at the same time, outside itself. Once again, an analogy to the photographic image will help illustrate this.

In "Right of Inspection", Derrida implies that the photograph in fact challenges this dichotomous concept of the subject/ other relation, not only by suspending reference, but by "indefinitely deferring a certain type of reality, that of the perceptible referent" (Derrida 1989: 91), or transcendental signified. In other words, the traditional conceptualisation of a true reality, hence meaning, in the photographic image, is thwarted, because the image as haunting, as shadow, does not fix but instead defers meaning. There is only a deferral and differing (differ*a*nce) from one reference to another reference and so on indefinitely. While this differing/deferral disrupts the privilege given to the presence of the photographic image, it is (as discussed earlier in relation to the *parergonal*) the differing and deferral of meaning that makes the "presentation of being present possible" (Derrida 1996: 134). Thus, like the photographic image whose meaning is deferred, so too is the 'presence/present', of the subject deferred and differed by the division, and hence, alterity within itself. That is, the simultaneous division and blurring (haunting) that constructs the limit, produces alterity inside and outside the subject. As Derrida argues, "[t]he relation to self...can only be *differance*, that is to say alterity" (Derrida 1991: 100).

However, not only is the subject divided by alterity of itself, but so too does the alterity of the other divide the subject. That is, the subject is 'affected' by the alterity of the other so that a blurring of the limit between subject and other is produced. To be affected is not to reduce the other to the same. This is because to be affected is not the same as interiorising the other to the point where the other becomes part of an already constituted, unchanging subject (as present/presence). Rather, to be affected is to be profoundly and continually changed. That is to say, it is this change, generated by relations with the other, that divides, and hence produces alterity in the subject. Consequently, as Derrida argues, we should redefine, or rethink "the subject...as the finite experience of non-identity to self, as the underivable interpellation inasmuch as it comes from the other, from the trace [alterity] of the other" (Derrida 1991: 103). In this respect, I would argue, it is precisely because of the alterity in/of the subject, and of the other, that 'reduction to sameness' is impossible. This is because in order to actually enact a reduction of the other to the same, both subject, and other, would have to be simultaneously present to themselves in space and time. But, as we have seen, the subject is constantly divided from itself and other. This is not to say that reduction is not attempted, for example, through interiorisation, denial, and objectification. However, even these attempts are not reduction as such, as they, paradoxically, constitute or reaffirm the alterity of the other. Rather than being reductions, interiorisation, denial, or objectification of the other, are ethical responses that not only negatively affect the other, but the subject as well.

If the subject is divided from itself, and from the other in space and time, and if the subject is divided by affect, then Derrida argues that this division, this alterity of the subject, actually "gives the prerogative to the other, opens uncertainty of a relation to the completely other, a relation without relation" (Derrida 1989: 91). Yet, having argued that alterity blurs the limit, it nonetheless, and at the very same time, maintains the limit. That is, alterity continually separates and creates a limit between subject and other. Consequently, the subject and other can never be reduced to one another, and can never become 'one' and the 'same'. Thus, the subject is always unique, or as Derrida puts it, 'singular'. By this Derrida does not mean that the subject has an essence in the humanist sense, singularity "is not the individuality of a thing that would be identical to itself, it is not an atom". Rather, Derrida argues:

> It is a singularity that dislocates or divides itself in gathering itself together to answer to the other, whose call somehow precedes its own identification with itself, for to this call I can *only* answer, have already answered, even if I think I am answering "no" (Derrida 1991: 100).

Singularity is produced precisely because of the subject's division, and hence alterity, within itself, and its alterity from/to the other. Moreover, as Derrida implies here, alterity also produces an ethical relation between the subject and other.

Conclusion

By pushing the logic of Derrida's argument as outlined through the discussion of the frame as parergon, I have argued that

any reduction of the other to the same is an attempt to construct a permanent and stable limit that can only fail because it is to elide what is perpetually happening: the slippage, haunting, shadowing or blurring between subject and other. Likewise, there is a blurring of the limit between hard imaging technologies and technologies of subjectivity, between instrumentalist accounts of technology and organismic (biological/material) accounts of subjectivity. This paper has attempted to enact this blurring between technologies by not only moving between them but by exposing the double sense of technology: as that which simultaneously constitutes and deconstructs subjectivity, thus forming new and ever changing ontological technologies. In this way the paper has been an enactment of a technological intervention into other technologies (of the other, of ethics, of alterity), especially given that the limit between subject and other is constituted by a social and ethical milieu that informs, and is informed by, the singularity in alterity, and the alterity in the other.

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