

Visual Vertigo, Phantasmagoric Physiognomies: Joseph Roth and Walter Benjamin on the Visual Experience of Architecture

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They kept their huts. Some wrote their names above their doors and began trading in soap, shoe laces, onions, leather. They returned from the wild and tragic expanses of fortune hunters to the sad modesty of small scale shopkeepers. In the meantime their huts, originally built for the occupancy of a mere handful of months, remained in place for many a year, and stabilised their transitory redundancy into a characteristic local *couleur*. – The huts remind one of exhibited stills in film studios, of primitive illustrations on book covers to Californian tales, of hallucinations. It appears to me (who knows several large districts of industry) that nowhere else do sober businesses bear such phantasmagoric physiognomies. Here, capitalism exuberates into expressionism. (Roth, 1930) ¹

This origin myth of (at the time) new towns in Polish Galicia reaches us from the pen of one Joseph Roth. Better known for his later novels, above all the 1932 *Radetzky March*, Roth sustained himself in the 1920s by regular dispatches from the Austrian ex-realm's frontiers. Presented in the format of newspaper reports published in the *Frankfurter Zeitung* (the above quote being an excerpt), Roth's journalistic texts dispatched from Paris to Brody soon celebrated a life of their own, reappearing in the author's 1930 collection *Panoptikum: Gestalten und Kulissen* (*Panopticon: figures and stage props*).²

The visuality of Roth's miniature prose in *Panopticon* – that of the travelling onlooker, moving by train, and writing home – may help put into clearer relief a much larger text, separated from

it by three years: that of Walter Benjamin's *The Arcades Project*, begun in Parisian exile in 1933 and published posthumously.³ Both texts begin life in the snippet and end up as albums (where a textual 'album' denotes the contingent, and partly arbitrary, termination point of an author's own re-arrangement of extant *textual* fragments, much like a photo album).⁴ Both fasten on a shared vocabulary: 'We find early contributions to the *physiognomy* of the crowd in Engels and Poe. The crowd is the veil through which the flâneur sees the customary city as *phantasmagoria*.'⁵ The flâneur's phantasmagorias, Benjamin adds, are of space, not time – a pun on the word *Raum*, which can mean both space *and* room, more particularly an interior room inside a house.⁶ His *Arcades Project*, we will see, associates such interiority with boundless phantasmagoria – and will associate both with our perceptual experience of the modern city, at once 'customary' and estranged. Both texts, finally, attempt a coming to terms, visually and verbally, with new urbanisms – an attempt that shall occupy me across most of what follows. For perception, and its representation in text, is a focal point of Benjamin's interest in the urban fabric of nineteenth century Paris – a city he beheld with the feverish, estranged sensitivity Heinrich Heine brought to London a century earlier.

What helps Benjamin and Roth 'come to terms' with the modern city is accomplished not simply via an accidentally shared language, or a shared set of observations such as the similarity of modern department stores to greenhouses.⁷ Rather, and not

coincidentally, they operate on shared key concepts, and view the urban fabric through the lenses of *expressionism*, *physiognomy*, and *phantasmagoria*. It is these concepts my paper aims to clarify above all. As this requires close attention to the authors who (re)introduced these concepts to architecture, and as I have to concentrate my efforts on those of whom Benjamin is the benefactor rather than the interlocutor, my own text is less an analysis of Benjamin's than an opening towards its re-reading. It proposes to view *The Arcades Project* both as a rather strange optical corrective to more customary (say, historians') forms of writing employed to bring yesteryear's architecture into clearer focus – and as less of a departure from modernist (historical) writing on architecture, from Hildebrand to Ozenfant, than that text's own physiognomy would have us believe.

Panopticon

'Panopticon': Steering wonderfully clear of Benthamite reverberations, the title of Roth's book seems to indicate the width and fleeting nature of the imagery reported and conjured by his texts, imagery from places far and near to the German speaking peoples in Central Europe. But the title also shows, at times, the phenomena reported, as preoccupied with splendid things seen in kaleidoscopic fashion, throwing new light on the very phenomenon of visual experience itself. Thus, one text collected in *Panopticon*, entitled 'Remarks on Sound Film', ponders the addition of sound to hitherto silent film. Roth remarks on the strange three-dimensionality and nearness (to the viewer) of recorded spoken sound, in voice and noise, compared to the remote flatness of the projected image – an image that, Roth adds, would now need its own technological innovation to bring it back to life, or at least, to a vividness equal to that of sound. For sonority, or voice, is now 'the triumphant competitor of the image.'⁸

It is nearly impossible to *not* extend Roth's diagnosis to the very medium he uses to report it – the

short, impressionistic travel report or *Reportage*, made famous by Heine in the German feuilletons a century earlier (we return to Heine below). For *that* form of conjuring up an image would now suffer from the growing competition by regular (sometimes weekly) newsreels in an increasing number of cinemas with footage from around the world, with such glorious titles as *Weltschau* (a survey or panorama of the entire world). Roth heavily critiqued the visual overload of (or clumsy handling of 'the unconscious' in) cinema at the hands of inept film makers, and lamented the visual fatigue suffered in cinemas' overly decorated and over-commercialised *interiors* (points that will play a heavy role in *The Arcades Project*, as we shall see).⁹ Nonetheless, Roth perfectly understood how the moving image, with its spatiotemporal proximity to worlds both near and far, would soon replace, be the 'triumphant competitor' over, journalistic writing such as his own. (A point with considerable contemporary resonance, provided we instantiate 'moving image' not by cinema but internet.)

Observe how, in our opening quote, Roth likens the picturesque charm of the transitory huts to what one can find on book covers to Californian stories – or, he adds, *in hallucinations*. The continuity of Roth's analogies from conventional text based media to vertigo is suggestive of *the means by which* Roth intends to solve the challenge to textual media. The solution's groping for vertigo, of which more below, strikes at the heart of much narrative paucity Roth detected in contemporary film making. He writes of one such director (the other target of his scorn being Fritz Lang),

In an age without cinema, a Richard Oswald would have become a connoisseur of images, a collector, constructor of painting galleries, a stage prop decorator with artistic pretensions. In the eye of *this* beholder we find the happenings (*Geschehen*) of the world, not its soul.¹⁰

The challenge from the (auditorially enhanced) moving image brings up the question of how to amplify, at a technological (mechanic, corporeal) level, the conjuring power of the text, to make it the equal of cinematic impression, just as the silent film image had to reinvent itself to be(come) the equal of recorded sonority. The key lies in expression (even *expressionism*), not impression, if the opening passage is to be believed – that is, not in recording someone else's experience (*Erfahrung*), namely the author's, but in invigorating a lived experience (*Erlebnis*) in the reader. Only thus can we avoid the dullness of sheer happenings (*Geschehen*) and their duller yet repetition, or re-enactment, on page or screen. And this brings us to Benjamin in three regards.

First, contemporary 'poverty of experience', Benjamin tells us, designates less a yearning for new experiences (*Erfahrung*) than a liberation from (our constantly having to make) them.¹¹ Secondly, Benjamin's *Arcades Project* is a project in reinventing the composition of text to endow it with new powers of the imagination – of imagination as, quite literally, the conjuring up (the expressing and not just impressing) of images from elsewhere, *ou-topos*, to relate us to remote places, geographically, historically, intellectually. Thirdly, the challenge of text to become the equal of the moving image – perhaps by *becoming* in moments itself a moving image – brings us from Roth's diagnostic worry, of one medium being the triumphant competitor over another, directly to architecture quite generally, and to Benjamin's engagement with it more specifically, as something to be captured in his own text.

In particular, we are brought to an overused quotation from another arch-Parisian text discussed by Benjamin in *The Arcades Project*: Victor Hugo's 1831 *Notre-Dame de Paris*, and its worry that the printed book would supplant, and not simply

supplement (exegetically, as it were), the built edifice, specifically the Gothic cathedral.¹² For the challenge now is to measure architecture itself in terms of its imaginary (imaginative and image-conjuring) power, provided we indulge (momentarily at least) the idea to see it as competitor, and not just as supplement, to other forms of image, such as text, sound, and projected image. Benjamin's key idea here, it seems, is to rethink architecture in ways not too dissimilar to how his text rethinks textuality. And the guiding idea for both, isolated in Benjamin's writings but anticipated by Roth in his 1920s writings, is that of 'physiognomy': to interpret buildings, as it were, in terms of surfaces, façades in terms of faces (the two are etymologically connected for a reason), and faces in terms of character – *persona*, the 'sounding through' of a presence behind, and traversing across the physical boundaries of, a mask. At one remove, the idea is to give the text its own (distinctive, unmistakable) physiognomy, insofar as an (increasingly fragmented) authorial voice can use text as a mask for the author's own persona.¹³ Whether this contest, or contention, between architecture and text ends in triumph for either one (and if so, in what kind of triumph) remains to be seen.

Physiognomy

The notion of physiognomy in- and outside architecture designates a project with considerable prehistory and problems. So when Benjamin, and his main source on the subject, Sigfried Giedion, tap into that notion so as to confront and render legible the buildings of the nineteenth century, they *ipso facto* inherit (and have to come up with responses to) those problems. More particularly, their challenge is to see nineteenth century buildings in terms of their faciality and persona, a challenge that is twofold.

For one, the buildings to be examined – here Benjamin squarely rests on Giedion – are no longer

the aesthetically elite projects of Beaux Arts architects, but factory halls (already explored for their architectural potential by Karl Friedrich Schinkel in 1826), train stations, construction bridges, railways, and more. So the object of study shifts, as does the medium by which we study it. The photograph replaces the craftsman's master plan (both beautiful and precise), and replaces the rendering in watercolours, with its perspective accentuating the scenic quality of the aesthetic object. But the change of (documentary) medium from one to another runs deeper than this: the photograph serves Giedion as his argument. He says from the beginning how the shown photos serve as proxy for, not simply quotations of text, but the very 'argument' such quotations would (co-)compose in a conventional monograph – thus Giedion's (in)famous 'Preface to the Hurried Reader' in his 1928 book *Bauen in Frankreich, Bauen in Eisen, Bauen in Eisenbeton* (*Building in France, Building in Iron, Building in Ferro-Concrete*).¹⁴ This, too, closes the gap from Giedion to Benjamin, as it explains the physiognomy that the latter's text would assume. It is a physiognomy at least partly rooted in contemporary writing on architecture, most importantly that of Ozenfant (whom Benjamin ostensibly read, and quotes from) and Jeanneret in their 1920s papers in *L'Esprit nouveau*, writing likewise driven in its argumentation by photographs of buildings.¹⁵ Moreover, some of these photographs were deliberately tampered with to better complement the authors' rhetorical goals in the text, and doubly so in the album that would literally incorporate these papers in the manner that Benjamin would later 'incorporate' Giedion: Le Corbusier's *Vers une architecture*.¹⁶

Secondly, the project to bring physiognomy to the study of buildings – their faces, façades, and demeanour – has faced a stock objection since at least the mid nineteenth century. (Thus the second challenge.) Physiognomy itself is (typically taken to connote) a study of the face arrested in motion. This, architect and theorist Gottfried Semper points

out, wreaks havoc with anything but the most simplistic of architecture, since we must understand its elements and surfaces as already animated. Something as elementary as the rounded as opposed to pointed arch,¹⁷ he says,

permits a much freer application [...] and a more manifold characterization of the building; the minutest of deviations of forms and relations, as is the case in the formation of the human face, suffice to give the building a wholly different demeanour. By the rounded arch [...] architectural expression can nearly be elevated to physiognomic freedom.¹⁸

Semper's use of 'freedom' (juxtaposed to a delicate 'nearly') is elusive. His phrasing leaves it open whether architectural expression attains freedom *from* physiognomic constraints – or rather attains a particularly liberated physiognomy. (And in either case, what does architecture thereby gain?) Equally intriguing is Semper's explicit connection of physiognomy to *character*(isation) – a connection that will presently occupy us considerably. As to his passage's more immediate concern, I shall not here dive into the vast and rich literature on animated architecture, and refer, in place of much else, to Alina Payne's study on the moving wall, as made famous in Jakob Burckhardt's and Alois Riegl's inquiries of Baroque architecture.¹⁹ The reason to *not* dive into this literature is the stylistic irrelevance of, and remoteness from, *its* objects of study to those of Benjamin's and Giedion's studies. The challenge is to exploit, and redeploy, this way of decoding animated visuality in objects very remote from Baroque palaces and museums, or even Gothic cathedrals, and bring it to the apparently sterile, solid, resting, and unmoved structure of iron construction. Therein lies the real challenge for Giedion, and consequently for Benjamin in his difficult 'Chapter F' on iron construction.

How to bring physiognomy, a method of deciphering arrested features, to the apparently

arrested features of modern construction? Our clue comes from Roth. Anticipating his own self-imposed exile to Paris in the 1930s, he dedicates a section in his 1927 book *The Wandering Jews* to the (especially Eastern European) Jewish communities and exiles in the city, and writes: ‘they have it easy in Paris. Their physiognomy does not give them away. Their lively (*lebhaft*) natures do not stand out. Their humour meets that of the French half way.’²⁰ The genius of Roth’s exposition here is that the last two sentences are meant as a gloss, and not an expansion, on the phrase ‘their physiognomy’. That is, we are so used to think of physiognomy as a study of arrested facial features alone, of the curvature of noses and (minute alterations in the) pigmentation of the skin, that we forget that the term, *as originally introduced*, included things such as people’s lively natures and their distinct senses of humour. The founder of physiognomy, Johann Caspar Lavater, explains this in 1772 as follows:

Physiognomics is the science of recognizing men’s character (not the *accidentia*), in the widest sense of that term, from their exterior. *Physiognomy* in this widest sense would accordingly designate all outwardly recognizable features of the human body and the motions of the same, insofar as these permit recognition of human character. Given how many diverse [kinds of] characters one man can have simultaneously, that is, given how we can study man from so many points of view, then one and the same man has thus many kinds of physiognomies. Accordingly, physiognomics comprehends all characters of a man which surmount to his complete total character, and studies the physiological, temperamental, medical, physical, intellectual, moral, habitual, athletic, social or interpersonal character, and many more. The actual (simple or composite) expression of each of these characters in the human body, or in man’s exterior as such, is the concern of physiognomics. Insofar as it seeks to recognise character from its corresponding expression, one should call it *empirical* physiognomics; and insofar as it concerns itself with the causes

that give the origin of those expressions, bringing into view the direct relation between expression and character, [one should call it] *theoretical* physiognomics.²¹

The inclusion of a distinctly athletic personality might seem initially odd. Benjamin mentions the distinctly ‘bodily physiognomy’, describing advocacy lawyers’ ‘muscular emphasis in their rhetoric’.²² Here, ‘bodily’ does not attach to ‘physiognomy’ as a pleonasm but qualifies it as a kind.

As for Lavater, his entire undertaking (described above) is premised primarily on

what reason tells us, sc. that each thing in the world has an outward and inner side to it, which stand in an exact relation to each other[,] so that each thing – for this reason, as it is what it is, and not some other thing – has something to it, wherein we can discern what distinctness sets it apart from all other things.²³

The last line explains why Roth sees fit to say that, in Paris at least, the physiognomy of Eastern Jews – with all that entails – does not have them *stand out* as much. They are not singled out for attention, a point that held immense cultural and political significance for Roth who, first exiled to Paris, would later and prematurely die in the city, a year before its fall to the Nazis.

In terms of method, the ‘exact relation’ Lavater presupposes is (what he later calls) a ‘perfect congruency (or correspondence) between man’s soul and his body’. Due to that relation, the various inner states of men, the variety of their souls, correspond to and correlate with an equinumerous variety of bodies and outward appearances.²⁴ Lavater himself was not slow to apply this to a study and systematisation of the arts, and of motifs in art. And Hegel’s efforts to discredit the idea (and its use in art history) notwithstanding, by the 1880s Heinrich Wölfflin – Giedion’s mentor – uses Lavater to develop the foundations for a theory of architectural

styles. Daniela Bohde, who has recently written a monograph on (inter alia) the connection of Wölfflin to Lavater, writes, 'if the relation between built corpus and human bodies was the main theme in Wölfflin's early writings, then he later focused on the visual perception of art and architecture.'²⁵ This bears repeating: physiognomy is first and foremost a project *about*, as opposed to a project enlisting, the visual perception of architecture, specifically of architectural *body*. But what separates this project from other inquiries into architecture's visuality? The major concern, ever since Lavater, is the correlation of (visual) characteristics with *character*, and we saw the same in Semper. Wölfflin's task now was to isolate what in Schinkel's writings had remained intractable: the ascription of character *to buildings*.²⁶ That ascription had figured just as centrally, and mystifyingly, in French architecture theory (especially Boffrand, Blondel, Boullée, and Viollet-le-Duc) and had, as in Wölfflin, formed part of a larger project – that of a developing a physiognomy of architectural styles.²⁷

The problem, for all of these architects and certainly for Wölfflin, was an unhelpful fixation on the physiognomy *of the human body* and on human bodily proprioception – to decode, via these, our visual experience of architecture. This restricted a potentially interesting inquiry, of a physiognomy of architecture, to the most superficial of anthropomorphic observations and claims, as when to buildings would be attributed, not a distinct character of their own, but a character that could only be described metaphorically, as the mood or physical bearing of a human being.²⁸ One of many trajectories shut down here was the application of Lavater's presupposition, of a one-one correspondence between inner character and its outward configuration, to his long list of the varieties of character, especially to moral character. And that omission is surprising given how, unlike the other arts, architecture had started its theoretical life in Vitruvius, specifically his requirement that a building have *decorum*. Given

the term's origin in Cicero's work on rhetoric, the

ethical branch of *decorum* also affected architecture, for [Cicero's] injunctions to seemingly social behaviour were transferable to a theory of representation of social structures through built form. [...] At its origin, the Greek term *prepon* (Latin *decorum*) qualified the relationship between appearance and the carrier of that appearance – that is, between that which is visible and meets the viewer's eye and inner being.²⁹

So the fixation of architectural physiognomy on the human body was fatal in two regards: first, it interpreted the *outward features* in a metaphorical rather than literal manner (as being man-like), and secondly, it restricted the *character* expressed by buildings' overt features to mental states *of humans*, such as grief or elation. In short, it replaced the full reach of a budding *discipline* with the limited interest of a single *idea*.³⁰

But the reason this was a dead corner was not simply the restriction of its point of reference (and comparison) to a single body, moreover a non-architectural one (the human adult). Much worse, it understood that one body, and consequently the buildings it studied, in the most reductionist, physicalist sense possible, and narrowed Lavater's original project to what its author had rather disparagingly called *anatomical* physiognomics. A contemporary reviewer of Bohde fails to see her rehabilitation of physiognomy for what it is, and instead takes her to task for *confusing* the notion (which so obviously should be restricted to a study of facial features alone) for a fully generalised sense of morphology.³¹ In actual fact, it is neither.

The point of Wölfflin's appropriation of Lavater is rather its very *continuity* with Semper's attempts to port comparative morphology, familiar from the biological sciences, into architecture – and then drive such attempts towards a study of architectural *character*, as per Semper's own remarks earlier.³² For

physiognomy (-ics, in Lavater's parlance) operates on a more restricted set of shapes than morphology, but *not* because it by definition only deals with facial features. Rather, it occupies itself with those, and only those, features relevant to the study of character. A morphological study of Gothic cathedrals may legitimately focus on features they share with Romanesque structures: a physiognomic study cannot. (When Roth subtitles *Panopticon* a study of *Gestalten*, he has in mind shapes or features indicative of character. His work is thus one of physiognomy rather than morphology.) As if to remind his readers of this essentialist focus required for the perceptual study of architectonic form and body, Carl Boetticher selects, for his 1852 *Die Tektonik der Hellenen* (*Tectonics of the Hellenes*), a motto that is basically a variation on Lavater's congruency thesis between body and soul: 'The form of the body is the mirror of its very essence (*Wesen*) – penetrate one and you shall have unlocked the other.'³³ Such 'penetration' largely depends on the viability of one's philosophy, not so much of form and essence, as of architectonic body disclosed in perception. Here, Giedion's frustration in having to deal with the limitations of the physiognomic project in Wölfflin is palpable. But it falls on Benjamin to actually overcome them. To do so, like Roth before him, Benjamin reverses the central flaws of architectural physiognomy thus far, particularly Boetticher's. First, the built environment becomes, not an extension (or remote representation) of the human body, but an autonomous entity capable of challenge and threat to human sensitivity. Secondly, the body of the built is never just physical, anatomical, where sterile geometric descriptions purport the tectonic structure of buildings. For Boetticher, a Greek temple is foremost a calibrated system of static (horizontal and vertical) forces; the forces explain the static whole (in balance) which they compose, analogous to how the position of a table top relative to the floor is explained by the length of the legs that support it, and vice versa.³⁴ This is also Boetticher's take on iron construction that Benjamin

quotes, with little enthusiasm, in *The Arcades Project*.³⁵ Our task, Benjamin signals, is to overcome this restricted individuation of buildings – of built bodies whose character an architectural physiognomy needs to render intelligible – as closed physical systems. To do this, he reverses the direction of the gaze: it is not *our* voluntary perception of buildings, technologically enhanced or not, but their sensory overwhelming *us*, that reinstates a proper ontology of buildings, and in turn makes possible, by furnishing rich enough data and 'input' for, a physiognomy of architecture.

It is also here that the present paper departs most sharply from Detlef Mertins's work on Benjamin, entitled (in part) 'Using Architecture as Optical Instrument'.³⁶ Where I see Benjamin pursuing architecture as *itself* an optical corrective, Mertins regards buildings as optical *instruments* controlled by human subjects – in the manner one operates a telescope, with a static, controlled, and dead object at the other end of one's lens. Buildings' own capacity for shock and vertigo (on which more shortly) is here suppressed. Buildings are optical tools only, in Mertins, insofar as they furnish us with platforms from which to view new urban vistas (a point I return to below). Finally, it is ultimately not buildings, but their capture in new forms of photography discussed by Benjamin,³⁷ that for Mertins affords us an alternate and unsettling view of reality.³⁸ More importantly, photos help convey 'the immediacy of lived experience'³⁹ because they reveal

the physiognomic aspects of visual worlds which dwell in the smallest things, meaningful yet covert enough to find a hiding place in waking dreams, but which, enlarged and capable of formulation, make the difference between technology and magic visible as a thoroughly historical value.⁴⁰

While Benjamin's interest in photography (whether or not of architecture) is undoubtedly fascinating in

its own right, its relevance to our stated goal – to unearth Benjamin’s peculiar (optical) take on the urban fabric – is at best indirect. Let us therefore return to our earlier challenge.

How can we bring *physiognomy* to bear on the apparently arrested features of modern construction? For Roth, it meant to expand the term to all varieties of character, including moral character, and a wide variety of character’s indicators (characteristics). Writing of novel urban venues to enable women to exercise physically, Roth detects

a relation to modern dance: [the human body] renders itself subservient to the laws of space [*Raum*], [its] movement becomes architecture and not *only* stays [a mere concern for matters like] hygiene. [...] Such venues are of immeasurable social and moral value.⁴¹

Observe Roth’s ground- and category-breaking claim: the dancers literally *become* architecture. This can be read as a metaphorical re-description of what the dancers do. Or, it can be read as a quite literal statement, requiring, as it does, an expanded understanding of *architecture*, as something that includes and not merely facilitates movement. This expansion re-opens the project of architecture’s physiognomy, and connects that project to architectural phenomena legitimately *characterised* as holding, in Roth’s phrase, ‘an immeasurable social and moral value’.

For Benjamin, too, physiognomy needs enrichment by attention to the very feature that initially seems to threaten its prospect: it is thus married with an interest in movement itself, so as to break out of the restriction to the physically arrested body. Hence, when Giedion and Benjamin study architecture, they are always already interested in movement, and places of movement, or of places facilitating movement or other ‘transitory purposes’ of *others* (of machines, such as trains, and of peoples, across platforms).⁴² But that merely

isolates the phenomena, and still requires that we need to isolate the moving aspect of building itself, not of its tenants, the functions it houses, and so on. And here, I think we can see Benjamin’s creative genius – in bringing out (analogous to, if differently nuanced than Roth) the mobility of *architecture*, the vividness of the images it evokes, in more indirect and elusive senses. To this, we turn next.

Vertigo

Traversing a city from a pedestrian angle, we can get immersed in representations, and we can decipher these – from street signs, to objects displayed in arcades – in utterly cinematic terms. The close mechanical connection of the visual impressions one gathers on a train ride, to the rapid progression of film stills to make for an animated sequence, is well documented, as is the potential of either to produce vertigo in its onlookers:

One can imagine that a contemporary of Charles the Great does not essentially differ in biological constitution from a person today. But it is easily conceivable, that the environmental conditions of a metropolis – with its violent noise peaks, air pollution, hectic (com) motions – would be deadly to him. Schivelbuch, in his book on the history of the *Eisenbahn* (iron railway), mentions how the first travellers by train regularly fell into deep sleep, since the rapidity of impressions created by the landscape exploded the pacing of visibility (of episodes of seeing) they were used to. The senses (the entire biological constitution of man) need to come up with a response to changes in the social-historical world, so that man can live and remain alive.⁴³

Similar reports can be found in Heine’s 1827 travel reports from London, with the important difference that Heine does not single out the damaging impact of metropolitan life on the senses, but on sentimentality – that is, not on biological man, but on cultivated man:

I've beheld the strangest things this world can reveal
to an inquiring mind / I've seen them and remain at
a loss / In my memory still lies this petrified forest of
houses / And in its midst a stream of human faces with
all their varied passions/ all their horrid haste of love,
of hunger, and of hate / [...] This barren seriousness
in all things, this colossal monotony /this mechanical
motion, this weariness of joy itself – / It chokes imagi-
nation / and tears the heart asunder.⁴⁴

'Send a philosopher to London', Heine concludes,
'for all you hold dear, don't ever send a poet', having
no doubt in mind a philosopher with the cool *ratio* of
Kant, as opposed to the delicate, immensely fragile
senses of a Hölderlin. The devastation of the urban
on human sensitivity is total for Heine, as it is for
Schivelbuch's travellers. In both cases, devasta-
tion's entry point is the senses. For them, particularly
vision, operate at both junctures – nature and
culture. For now, let us stay with the (quasi)biolog-
ical restriction on vision, and see how to recuperate
vision's intactness from the assault it suffers from
new urbanism.⁴⁵

If we stick to the travellers falling into deep
sleep, then it is vertigo of this kind that, I think,
Benjamin's inquiry is after. (It is certainly the metric
by which Roth measures the disruptive potential
of urban visual phenomena. Berlin's verbal-visu-
ally agitated election posters cannot 'interrupt the
cold, precise rhythm of this town', as 'only a very
suggestive image of strong suddenness penetrates
the retina of the type of man who only knows work
and leisure.')

One loses one's senses after having
them overwhelmed rather than dulled; and one loses
consciousness after having one's mind too deeply
perturbed. On writing then rests the urgent task of
recuperating one's senses. The text, in particular,
is there to re-orient our own sensuality, and to
understand the very objects that gave us distress,
overpowered us, became the competitors 'trium-
phant over' our dormancy. It is here, of course, that
Benjamin's text explicitly connects us, his readers,

to the slumbers of a dreaming city, since it is the city
as much as ourselves that needs to be re-awakened
for a new dawn. The text, however, does not accom-
plish this immense task in opposition to the objects'
visual prowess, but in full complicity with them. After
all, only then can the two become *competitors*.

If vertigo of *this type* animates Benjamin's text,
how can it unlock (make vivid, re-endow with move-
ment) built objects with such vertigo? One way
architectonic objects provide visual vertigo is by
quite literally providing a platform from which one
can get unprecedented vistas. Thus one of the
most frequently discussed buildings in Benjamin's
chapter 'F', the Eiffel Tower,⁴⁷ quickly acquired the
added function of two platforms from which to obtain
urban vistas from a vantage point of unprecedented
height.⁴⁸ Its four steel cage 'columns' serve only one
purpose other than erecting the radio transmission
point at its peak – they house interior *staircases*
(and later, elevators) to move the would be subjects
to their vistas. Quite literally, then, architecture
serves as point of movement and mobility in two
senses: first, it transports people along a position
in space (vertically, in a tower, or horizontally, on a
bridge), and secondly, it provides sites of vista from
which to behold the environs. Architecture here puts
into *mise en scène* its own contemplation and spec-
tacle. A deeper, less literal, sense of architecture's
vertigo, however, lies elsewhere – on the inside of
architecture.

Boundless interiority

If iron railways can overwhelm us to the point of
unconsciousness, of falling into deep sleep and
uneasy dreams, the same holds for modern iron
constructions more generally, once we pay more
attention to the specific interiors of such buildings.
For here Benjamin's preoccupation with the exteri-
orization of built and artifactual interiors emerges,
interiors like that of museums or suitcases (the felt
lined *etui*).

The domestic interior moves outside. It is as though the bourgeois were so sure of his prosperity that he is careless of the façade, and can exclaim: My house, no matter where you choose to cut into it, is façade.⁴⁹

The very continuity of interiority on a building's exterior licenses Benjamin, and us, to read, as it were, the exterior as a quasi-interior, as if 'the interior and exterior were reflecting each other.'⁵⁰ This is all Benjamin's analysis requires to appropriate Lavater's foundational principle for the project of physiognomy to get underway – the correlation, and congruence, of inner character with outward appearance. Recall the importance of *façade* to the project of (architectural) physiognomy, given how it is the building's face or exterior demeanour; accordingly, the totalisation of interiority on the built exterior and *its* demeanour (the appearance of façade *no matter where you cut* or intersect a building) acquires a special significance. Benjamin himself locates 'the physiognomy of the arcade' in Baudelaire's observation that he could have passed the arcade's 'enchanted haunt so often' without having suspected crossing its entrance: boundless interiority, like a vaulted maze with no exit.⁵¹ He adds later, 'The interest of the panorama is in seeing the true city – the city indoors. What stands within the windowless house is the true. Moreover, the arcade, too, is a windowless house.'⁵² Despite the ubiquity of glass panels, none of them function as windows, that is, provide visual access to a world *outside* the arcade. The exterior world is similarly shut out (visually) in the museum, which 'appears as an interior magnified on a giant scale'.⁵³ You can cut the house any way you want. You will always find façade, but never – an outside.

It is in the interior where the phenomenological qualities raised above – the visual vertigo, the hallucinatory and imaginative power of architecture, on which its enigmatic physiognomy rests – emerge, and range in degrees of intensity 'from the banal

to the hallucinatory'.⁵⁴ Given how interiors are not merely 'receptacles of things, but also the support of affects', some of them are perfectly suited to furnish Benjamin with the consummate 'theory of phantasmagoria, enabling him to chart an interpretation of complex relationships between object and spectator.'⁵⁵ Particularly in the arcades' display areas of luxurious commodities, those fetishes of the worlds of fashion and design, human sensitivity encounters the fantastic, the exotic, the elusive, and the overwhelming. If this seems again a change of topic (we move from buildings to objects displayed *in* buildings), we have to remember that boundless interiorisation all but secures that the transition, not simply from outside to inside, but from building to displayed object, has been rendered seamless. Just as Roth's female dancers *became* architecture, Benjamin's displayed commodities do not simply *bestow* their phenomenal, hallucinatory, qualities *on* their display areas, but rather share these qualities with built interiority. They, and it, are now one and the same, are or have *become* architecture. Since iron construction's totalising *interiorisation* has no corresponding element in Giedion's analysis, Benjamin is justly critical of his main source, and writes,

Attempt to develop Giedion's thesis. 'In the nineteenth century', he writes, 'construction plays the role of the subconscious.' Wouldn't it be better to say, 'the role of bodily processes' around which 'artistic' architectures gather, like dreams around the framework of physiological processes?⁵⁶

Benjamin rejects the idea of construction and architecture, of unconscious and surface, as two neatly delineated strata, such that either one of these could be teased out with comparable ease in the analysis of an architecture historian's like Giedion.⁵⁷ Such an analysis would require no recourse to the metaphysical, the transcendental, the religious: it could dispense, in fact, with theology. Negate that,

and Benjamin's own orientation moves into clear focus. Since the two strata cannot be separated, and the exterior vertigo of the architectural mantle (whose inside and outside we can no longer separate) disrupts us visually and spiritually, nothing less than a spiritual, theological reading is required to bring it into focus, and 'come to terms' with it.

Benjamin's reorientation towards the spiritual further explains the messianic *habitus* he brings to his texts. For him, that *habitus*, the messianic as such, must extend to the order of the profane, that is, the order of things *The Arcades Project* imbues with such significant mythology. It is, as Benjamin puts it in his 1929 *Theological-Political Fragment*, this order which actually *explains* (as much as it is explained by) the messianic impulse, and actually beckons the coming (the nearing, *das Nähern*) of the messiah, and with it, redemption. For *The Arcades Project*, that beckoning is precisely grounded in material reality: 'each epoch', and with it the architecture of each epoch, 'not merely dreams the next but dreamingly pushes towards awakening'.⁵⁸ The messiah's task then becomes to quicken that 'nearing', and concomitantly his own. For him, mythological reality is thus intimately linked to material reality, of which architecture and fashion furnish the collective unconscious – a reality that historic materialism,⁵⁹ requiring for its success attention to 'things spiritual and refined', can only comprehend by enlisting 'the services of theology'.⁶⁰ The task for *The Arcades Project* thus became to render tangible this reality of everyday material objects – the dormant mythology of the profane.

This move (its attendant modification of historic materialism) would cost Benjamin dear among his Marxist friends, including Adorno.⁶¹ But it puts into sharp relief Benjamin's improvement on those who, like Giedion and Boetticher, now look like crude materialists lacking a developed sense for 'things spiritual and refined'. Benjamin's purported

improvement on his distinguished predecessors (not to mention, successors) in architectural non-materialism will look considerably less impressive, however.

The enigma and the cipher

Benjamin's *Arcades Project* rests on the shoulders of giants, certainly where its interest in architecture is concerned. He quotes and, to the delight of posterity, subverts the likes of Boetticher, Kaufmann, and Giedion, and thereby brings to fruition the long frustrated project of architecture's own physiognomy. At the same time, some stark omissions put a damper on the project's originality. By jumping from Boetticher's essay in the 1840s directly to Meyer's 1907 monograph on iron, Benjamin falls into the same trap as Giedion in overlooking the intervening decades of discussion in Germany on iron construction and its relation to architectonic form.⁶² Like Giedion, Benjamin omits any reference to Adolf Hildebrand's introduction of 'Wirkungsform', of form as psychological effect, as a third element to complement Boetticher's limited dyad of core form and art form.⁶³ Presenting himself as the first thinker to imbue Boetticher's dyad with the psychology of the unconscious, Benjamin is able to re-invent the wheel, and dress it in the verbal garb of unprecedented mystery – that of secular mythology.⁶⁴

Harder to place, however, is the absence of any nod to Joseph Roth, Benjamin's colleague at the *Frankfurter Zeitung*. Unlike Roth, who published sixty-five texts for the newspaper in his first three years alone, Benjamin barely landed twenty such texts in his lifetime.⁶⁵ Beyond quantity, Roth attained the status of a much sought after star critic as well as (soon thereafter) the paper's go-to person for French culture – Benjamin's self-professed if under-solicited area of expertise.⁶⁶ Benjamin held Roth in high esteem for his *Frankfurter Zeitung* texts, and would sometimes make notes from them for his own use; but he held little personal regard for their

author.⁶⁷ Neither did Roth care much for Benjamin, and their relation in the shared years of exile in Paris was accordingly muted, not to say cold.⁶⁸ As Jews fleeing Westward, both despaired when Nazi Germany set out to destroy their chosen refuge of civilization: the capital of the nineteenth century. Their premature deaths are the result of that despair and sixteen months apart to the day.⁶⁹ Roth's tomb stone in Paris reads, *écrivain autrichien – mort à Paris en exil*, and has now become part of the city's endlessly inscribed fabric.

Neither of them was capable of, much less interested in, sustained dialogue with the other. A summary of their hypothetical exchanges is thus as impossible as it is pointless. And yet the final physiognomy their textual albums assumed may provide a fragment to a larger explanation, as to Roth's absence in *The Arcades Project* – a rather odd absence, given how many of Roth's *Frankfurter Zeitung* texts look like crib sheets to that vast volume.⁷⁰ A contemporary reader of Roth's *Wandering Jews* puts it thus:

Again and again – with one neat phrase – Roth puts anxieties into words that it took others whole books to communicate, and then, only vaguely. Not even the magnificent Kafka comes close to a tidy phrase of self-condemnation such as this, referring to the deracinated Western Jew, with his 'secret perversities, his cringing before the law, his well-bred hat held in his anxious hand'.⁷¹

Roth is to Benjamin what in the English language Kipling is to Orwell. Doomed to success, able to make a forceful point concisely, without having to cite (much less think by recourse to) the theoretical crutches of others: Roth's texts exuded a maddening ease, and could not but exert an influence on his contemporaries Benjamin was simply denied.

That situation is all but reversed today. Muddled thought, clumsy prose, and the restraint of a glutton when faced with the most ragged of theories: such ingredients make for the perennially grateful candidate at the university seminar, the learned monograph, the feuilleton feature.⁷² All the better that Benjamin's texts led quiet lives of desperation, and needed rescuing by academia, editorialising, and institutionalisation. All the better that that suitcase holding these texts was so *nearly* vanquished in the Pyrenees.

Roth held no such enigma: he must remain a cipher. His texts defied and defeated editorialising of the barest minimum, even by their very own author, much less another. *Panopticon* contains neither introduction nor references to prior publication. Its presence in *The Arcades Project* would have, both trivially and fatally, made for a different book: the very shock Benjamin's textual montage so eminently desired to provoke, would have ricocheted on itself.⁷³

Notes

I thank Harry Mallgrave and August Sarnitz for comments and help on details. I also wish to record a much older debt to Ritchie Robertson who provided one-on-one tutorials on Kafka, and then supervised my undergraduate thesis on Kafka and philosophy. Robertson saw a beginning, where I barely glimpsed the fullness of his learning, on Austro-German literature, and 'The Jewish Question' within.

1. Joseph Roth, *Panoptikum: Gestalten und Kulissen* (Munich: Knorr und Hirth, 1930; repr. Amsterdam: Allert de Lange, 1976), 90. All translations in this paper are my own, unless otherwise noted.
2. Roth's journalistic output comprises several thousand pages, some of them now collected in Joseph Roth, *Das Journalistische Werk* (hereafter cited as JW), 3 vols., ed. Klaus Westermann (Cologne: Kippenheuer & Witsch, 1989–1991). Roth's urbane journalism belongs in the Viennese tradition of Alfred Polgar and

- Adolf Loos. Texts like Roth's 1929 'Architektur' (JW vol. 2, 115–116), 1930 review of Werner Hegemann's *Steinernes Berlin* (JW vol. 3, 228–230), or 'Die sanierte Stadt' (JW vol. 2, 3–4) are indiscernible from a Loos text.
3. Walter Benjamin, *Das Passagen-Werk*, ed. Rolf Tiedemann (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1982). All references are to this edition (under the work's customary English title *The Arcades Project*) and by customary section and paragraph numbers, except for the work's introduction.
 4. Ludwig Wittgenstein, who arrived at the final text of his 1953 *Philosophical Investigations* in just this manner, concludes: 'Thus this book is really only an album.' See Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophische Untersuchungen*, translated by Elizabeth Anscombe as *Philosophical Investigations* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1953, reissued 1986), p. vii.
 5. Benjamin, *Arcades Project*, 54, italics added.
 6. *Ibid.*, 57.
 7. Roth, 'Das Warenhaus und das Denkmal', *Frankfurter Zeitung* 12 January 1928 (JW vol. 2, 810), Cf. Roth, 'Das ganz große Warenhaus', *Münchener Neueste Nachrichten* 8 Sept 1929 (JW vol. 3, 81–84). Benjamin, *Arcades Project*, F4,2.
 8. Roth, *Panopticon*, 97.
 9. Cf. Roth, JW vol. 2, 256–258. Cf. JW vol. 2, 130–131 on 'the unconscious in film', and JW vol. 2, 61–62 on the contrasting aesthetics of German and American posters advertising films.
 10. Roth, 'Zwei Filmsensationen', *Frankfurter Zeitung* 12 March 1924 (JW vol. 2, 90). By contrast, Roth lauds Chaplin's and Lindner's sense of pacing in their works (JW vol. 2, 258).
 11. Benjamin, 1933 essay 'Erfahrung und Armut', reprinted in Benjamin, *Illuminationen. Ausgewählte Schriften* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1977).
 12. The relevant passage is excerpted in Vittorio Lampugnani et al. (ed.), *Von der Stadt der Aufklärung zur Metropole des industriellen Zeitalters. Anthologie zum Städtebau*, 2 vols. (Berlin: Gebrüder Mann Verlag, 2008), Volume 1, 354–360. Benjamin discusses Hugo's book (specifically its take on the Paris Stock Exchange) in *The Arcades Project* F6a,1.
 13. This is explored in, and used to great effect by, Michel Foucault, *L'ordre du discours* (Paris: Gallimard, 1971).
 14. Sigfried Giedion, *Bauen in Frankreich, Bauen in Eisen, Bauen in Eisenbeton* (Leipzig: Klinkhardt & Biermann, 1928).
 15. For instance, in *The Arcades Project*, section F8,2.
 16. On the text's photographic argument and manipulations, see Jean Louis Cohen, 'Introduction', in Le Corbusier, *Toward an Architecture* (Los Angeles: Getty Publications, 2008); on its textual argument, and the transition to album(hood), see Stefan Koller, *The Birth of Ethics from the Spirit of Tectonics*, TU Delft PhD Thesis, 2015, chap. 6.
 17. That is, in Romanic as opposed to Gothic architecture. Benjamin opens chapter F in *The Arcades Project* with a similarly basic contrast, that of arched to trabeated vaults (F1,1).
 18. Gottfried Semper, *Kleine Schriften*, ed. Manfred and Hans Semper (Berlin: W. Spemann, 1884), 461. For discussion and an alternative translation, see Harry Francis Mallgrave, *Gottfried Semper. Architect of the Nineteenth Century* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1996), 357.
 19. Alina Payne, 'Living Stones, Crying Walls: The Dangers of Enlivenment in Architecture from Renaissance *putti* to Warburg's *Nachleben*', in: Caroline van Eck et al. (eds.), *The Secret Lives of Artworks. Exploring the Boundaries between Art and Life* (Leiden: Leiden University Press, 2014) 308–339.
 20. Joseph Roth, *Juden auf Wanderschaft* (Berlin: Die Schmiede, 1927; reprinted Cologne: Kippenheuer & Witsch, 1985), 54.
 21. Johann Caspar Lavater, *Von der Physiognomik* (Leipzig: Weidmanns Erben, 1772). Chap. 3, italics (mostly) mine.
 22. Benjamin, *Arcades Project*, F5,2.
 23. Lavater, *Physiognomik*, chap. 4. The interjection seemingly recalls a quip from Bishop Butler used to great effect in John Locke's chapter on personal identity in his 1690 *Essay Concerning Humane*

- Understanding*. However, there is no evidence that Lavater read Butler or Locke.
24. Ibid.
 25. Daniela Bohde, *Kunstgeschichte als physiognomische Wissenschaft. Kritik einer Denkfigur der 1920er bis 1940er Jahre* (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 2012), 59.
 26. For Schinkel's use of 'character', see especially the concluding pages of his 'Gedanken und Bemerkungen über Kunst im Allgemeinen', posthumously published as part of his 1863 *Nachlass*; reprinted in Marcel Reich-Ranicki (ed.), *Die Deutsche Literatur. Der Kanon. Essays. Band 1* (Frankfurt am Main: Insel Verlag, 2006) 597–623.
 27. Bohde, *Kunstgeschichte*, 62.
 28. This stance survives to the present day in Roger Scruton's aesthetics of architecture and music. Our only way to understand these nonfigurative arts, for Scruton, is to attribute to them, metaphorically and in a mode of quasi-pretense, human mental states. This alone, he says, accounts for these arts' representational excess over their material presence as sound and body. For a critical assessment, see Robert Grant, 'Music, Metaphor, and Society: Some thoughts on Scruton', *Royal Institute of Philosophy Supplement 71* (2012), 177–207.
 29. Alina Payne, *The Architectural Treatise in the Italian Renaissance* (Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 56.
 30. For a modern history of that idea, see Joseph Rykwert, *The Dancing Column: On Order in Architecture* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1996). Roger Scruton's review of the book is in sympathy with its main concern (cf. n28) but exasperated by its methodology. See Roger Scruton, 'Palpitating Stones', *London Review of Books* 19.7 (1997), 13.
 31. Stefan Diebitz, 'Daniela Bohde: Kunstgeschichte als physiognomische Wissenschaft. Kritik einer Denkfigur der 1920er bis 1940 Jahre, Akademie Verlag 2012'. Accessed 22 June 2015. http://www.portalkunstgeschichte.de/meldung/daniela_bohde_kunstgeschichte_als_physiognomische_wissenschaft_kritik_einer_denkfigur_der_1920er_bis_1940_jahre_akademie_verlag_2012-5404.html.
 32. Gottfried Semper, *Der Stil in den technischen und tektonischen Künsten* (Munich: Friedrich Bruckmann, 1860, 1863), 2 vols.
 33. Carl Boetticher, *Die Tektonik der Hellenen. Erster Band, Erstes Buch: Einleitung und Dorika* (Potsdam: Ferdinand Riegel, 1852), frontispiece.
 34. For this reading of Boetticher's analysis on trabeated architecture, and for that analysis's shortcomings compared to Hübsch's and Semper's, see my *Birth of Ethics from the Spirit of Tectonics*, chap. 8.
 35. Benjamin, *Arcades Project*, 45 and F1,1.
 36. Detlef Mertins, 'Walter Benjamin and the Tectonic Unconscious: Using Architecture as Optical Instrument', in Alex Coles (ed.), *The Optic of Walter Benjamin* (London: Black Dog Publishing, 1999), 196–221.
 37. See Benjamin, *Arcades Project*, 48–49.
 38. Mertins, 'Tectonic Unconscious', 207.
 39. Ibid., 214. I invite readers to compare this paragraph, and its (about to be quoted) attendant quote from Benjamin, to *Footprint's* Call for Papers for 'Constellation of Awakening': 'With regard to the architectural theory Benjamin engaged directly with the tectonic tradition, especially the work of Boetticher. He posited the tectonic unconscious and the deployment of optical instruments as crucial for understanding the development which architecture carried from the luxus capitalist forms of commodity.' Observe also the Call's references to 'expressive character' and Benjamin's 'physiognomic' method. Accessed 21 June 2015. <https://www.h-net.org/announce/show.cgi?ID=223137>.
 40. Walter Benjamin, 'Kleine Geschichte der Photographie', reprinted in *Aufsätze, Essays, Vorträge. Band II.2* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1977), 368–385, excerpt translated by Mertins, 'Tectonic Unconscious', 214.
 41. Roth, 'Körperliche Erziehung der Frau', *Frankfurter Zeitung* 26 March 1925 (JW vol. 2, 370).
 42. Benjamin, *Arcades Project*, F2,9.
 43. Alexander Kluge and Oskar Negt, *Geschichte und Eigensinn* (Vol. 1, *Entstehung der industriellen Disziplin aus Trennung und Enteignung*), orig. 1972, re-issued

- in 1993 (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp:), 19–20n4.
44. Heine's (much longer) original is reprinted in Lampugnani, *Von der Stadt der Aufklärung*, vol. 2, 714–718.
 45. In some philosophical systems, this very distinction of the biological and the cultural is misplaced of course. Gibson, for one, regards the distinction a major source of confusion in visual studies. For the point's careful application to architecture, see Andrej Radman, *Gibsonism: Ecologies of Architecture* (TU Delft Doctoral Thesis, 2012).
 46. Roth, 'Wahlkampf in Berlin', *Frankfurter Zeitung* 29 April 1924 (JW vol. 2, 169).
 47. Benjamin, *Arcades Project*, F4a,2 to F4a,4 and F5a,7 and F8,2.
 48. Benjamin, *Arcades Project*, F3,5 on the 'magnificent urban views opened up by new constructions in iron'. See further Mertins, 'Tectonic Unconscious', 206 and 212.
 49. Benjamin, *Arcades Project*, 53 and L1,5.
 50. Georges Teyssot, 'Traumhaus. L'intérieur comme innervation du collectif' (in *Spielraum: Walter Benjamin et l'architecture*, ed. Libero Andreotti, Paris: Éditions de La Villette, 2011, 21–49); revised and translated as 'The Dream House', in: Teyssot, *A Topology of Everyday Objects* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2013), 85–86. My paper's present section quotes the standard English translation of *The Arcades Project* that Teyssot explicitly relies on. For a more literal translation of key passages from Benjamin's contested 'Konvolute 1' on the interior (*Arcades Project* I1,1 to I8,3), see now: Cornelia Klinger, 'Interior Spaces and Other Playgrounds of Inwardness', in August Sarnitz and Inge Scholz-Strasser (eds.), *Private Utopia. Cultural Setting of the Interior in the 19th and 20th Century* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2015), 89–90, 90n3, 92n6. Klinger's discussion of those passages' relation to architecture came to my notice too late.
 51. Benjamin, *Arcades Project*, A12,4.
 52. *Ibid.*, Q2a,7.
 53. *Ibid.*, L1a,2.
 54. Cf. Teyssot, 'Dream House', 104.
 55. *Ibid.*, 117.
 56. Benjamin, *Arcades Project*, K1a,7.
 57. Cf. Teyssot, 'Dream House', 97.
 58. Benjamin, *Arcades Project*, 59.
 59. *Ibid.*, K1,5.
 60. See Benjamin's 1939–40 essay 'Über den Begriff der Geschichte', reprinted in *Kleine Prosa. Baudelaire-Übertragungen*, (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1972).
 61. Alexander Kluge, *Die Lücke, die der Teufel läßt*, (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2003), 890–891, with 891n13.
 62. See Harry Francis Mallgrave, 'The fragility of history', in Henrik Karge (ed.), *Gottfried Semper. Dresden und Europa* (Munich: Deutscher Kunstverlag, 2004), 338. Among other failings, Benjamin (F3,7) inherits Boetticher's limited understanding of tectonics as a term restricted to wooden (or quasi-wooden) construction. Contrast Semper on tectonics, as discussed in chap. 8 of my *Birth of Ethics*.
 63. Adolf Hildebrand, *Das Problem der Form in der bildenden Kunst* (Strassburg: Heitz & Mündel, 1893) – a key text for later studies, such as Wilhelm Worringer's. Limitations of place prevented a fuller consideration of these texts.
 64. A point of historiographical distortion inherited by those who take Benjamin's attestations at face value, like Jean-Louis Cohen, *The Future of Architecture Since 1889* (London: Phaidon, 2012), 23 ff.
 65. Jean-Michel Palmier, *Le chiffonier, l'Ange et le Petit Bossu. Esthétique et politique chez Walter Benjamin* (Paris: Éditions Klincksieck, 2006); translated by Florent Perrier as *Walter Benjamin: Lumpensammler, Engel, and bucklicht Männlein* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2009), 929n14.
 66. Palmier, *Walter Benjamin: Lumpensammler*, 929n14 and 926.
 67. *Ibid.*, 961. One example (*ibid.*, 929n14) is Benjamin's private reflections in his diary on Roth's report on Moscow (later reprinted in *Panopticon*); see Benjamin, *Fragmente vermischten Inhalts. Autobiographische Schriften* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1985), 310ff.
 68. Palmier, *Walter Benjamin: Lumpensammler*, 573n365.
 69. Stéphane Symons, *Walter Benjamin: Presence of*

Mind, Failure to Comprehend (Leiden: Koninklijke Brill NV, 2013), 151.

70. Especially Roth's texts on the modern department store (n7), with their mention of the glasshouse, commodity fetish, human appetite, vertigo, dream, its failed attempt at hubris. Or this: *The Arcades Project* claims that the cultural core of early nineteenth century France (the Empire period) was born 'in the undignified company of small scale shop owners', of *Krämer*: in a 'würdelos[e] Krämergesellschaft' (Benjamin, *Arcades Project*, F5,2). *Panopticon* (my opening quote, n1): the phantasmagoria lurking behind modern industrial districts was born from 'the sad modesty of small scale shopkeepers', of *Krämer*.
71. Erica Bell, 'An elegy of love and tears, shame and foreboding' [review of Joseph Roth, *Wandering Jews*, translation by Michael Hofmann, Norton & Company 2001]. Accessed 25 June 2015. http://www.amazon.com/review/R3V68AQ8SR4JD9/ref=cm_cr_dp_title?ie=UTF8&ASIN=039332270X
72. Aply satirised in Roth (JW vol. 3, 229).

Biography

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