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The Collated Aesthetic: Correspondences in the Interwar Work of Walter Benjamin and Humphrey Jennings

Leila Nassereldein

Thesis submitted for the degree of PhD in Arts and Humanities

Birkbeck, University of London

The candidate confirms that the work submitted is her own and that appropriate credit has been given where reference has been made to the work of others.

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Abstract

This thesis establishes unearthed correspondence in the interwar work of Walter Benjamin and Humphrey Jennings, two thinkers and cultural producers rarely considered in tandem. In identifying a commonality in the pair's historiographic practice, as demonstrated in *The Arcades Project* (1999) and *Pandaemonium* (1985), this thesis develops the notion of a 'collated aesthetic'. A heuristic term devised to describe Benjamin's and Jennings' shared technique of representing material conditions using a heterogeneity of evocative fragments, the 'collated aesthetic' is not quite montage, nor is it collage, but surpasses either definition. This thesis looks back to Benjamin's 1928 publication 'One Way Street' and Jennings' 1939 film 'Spare Time' as a means of understanding how the 'collated aesthetic', which repositions audiences toward new meaning making, first emerged as a means of critically representing contemporary material conditions. Later remobilised as a historiographic practice, this thesis makes clear that similar strategies of image-making to that established in the aforementioned works, are employed in their shared approaches to archival selection and deselection. Establishing the historiographic 'collated aesthetic' as that which has been re-imagined from its earlier realisation, this thesis explores the afterlives of Benjamin's and Jennings' collated aesthetic in the 21st century, with Danny Boyle's opening ceremony for the 2012 Olympic Games and the Jewish Museum of New York's 2017 exhibition 'The Arcades: Walter Benjamin and Contemporary Art'.

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Abbreviations

Full details of the works below are provided in the bibliography.

Benjamin

Arcades Project	*AP*
Selected Writings, 4 vols in 5	*SW*, I–IV
Correspondence of Walter Benjamin	*Correspondence*
Berlin Childhood Around 1900	*Childhood*
One-Way Street	*OWS*

Jennings

Pandaemonium 1660–1886: The Coming of the Machine as Seen by Contemporary Observers	*Pandaemonium*

Introduction

'Piecemeal — in an especially pregnant sense'.[1]

Walter Benjamin and Humphrey Jennings are rarely considered in tandem. Benjamin, an assimilated Jew born in Berlin in 1892, and Jennings, a child of the English Arts and Craft movement born in 1907 in the small village of Walberswick in Suffolk, never met or knew of one another.[2] A philosopher, essayist, collector, radio presenter, and literary critic, Benjamin, though he wrote profoundly on film, is seldom brought into analytic proximity with Jennings, a filmmaker whose involvement in the 1930s documentary film movement has almost entirely defined his contribution to twentieth-century arts and culture. The 'collated aesthetic' — a concept this thesis develops by reading Benjamin's and Jennings' interwar works alongside each other — illuminates an approach to representation that both have in common. A heuristic term particular to this thesis, the collated aesthetic offers a way of thinking about the similarities and productive differences between Benjamin's and Jennings's approaches as amounting to more than the legacy of either individual alone.

The concept of 'correspondence' mobilised in this thesis stems from Benjamin's 1924 essay on German Romanticism, 'Goethe's Elective Affinities',

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[1] Walter Benjamin, *The Arcades Project*, ed. by Rolf Tiedemann, trans. by Howard Eiland and Kevin McLaughlin (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999) p. 368; hereafter *AP*.

[2] Neither Benjamin's correspondence, nor biographical materials relating to Benjamin or Jennings, provide evidence of the pair having known of one another. British filmmaker Adam Kossoff worked alongside Esther Leslie, on a short film which depicts an imaginary meeting of Benjamin and Jennings at the 1937 Paris Expo (the *Exposition Internationale des Arts et Techniques dans la Vie Moderne*). *Through the Bloody Mists of Time,* dir. by Adam Kossoff, narrated by Esther Leslie (work in progress, screened at Birkbeck Cinema, London, 8 February 2019). Jennings did in fact visit Paris in 1937, along with Peggy Guggenheim, where the two engaged in a brief love affair. Benjamin, however, whilst living in Paris at the time, spent much of the period of the exhibition (25 May 1937–25 November 1937) abroad: he spent his summer vacation in San Remo, where he pursued research on Carl Jung for *The Arcades Project*, and later spent time in Boulogne. See, respectively: Kevin Jackson, *Humphrey Jennings* (London: Picador, 2004), p. 196; *The Correspondence of Walter Benjamin, 1910–1940*, ed. by Gershom Scholem and Theodor Adorno, trans. by Manfred Jacobson and Evelyn Jacobson (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), pp. 539–43, 546; hereafter *Correspondence*. There is no evidence to suggest Benjamin visited the 1937 Paris Expo; his oeuvre conveys a far greater interest in the historical expos of the 1800s than those occurring during his lifetime.

published in instalments through to 1925 in the newspaper *Neue deutsche Beiträge*.[3] In this essay, Benjamin uses the 1809 novel by Johann Wolfgang von Goethe as a means of allegorising his extramarital love affair with Jula Cohn, to whom the essay is dedicated. The novel, which explores the triumphs of marriage and monogamy amongst its characters, draws on a concept used by seventeenth- and eighteenth-century scientists, such as Isaac Newton, Robert Boyle, and Anthony Lavoisier, to describe a phenomenon in chemistry wherein certain substances show a preference for combining with others. As Nina Leacock explains, 'elements with innate "affinities" will choose, or "elect", to bond together, even if they must break out of previously formed unions in order to do so'.[4] Meditating on his and Dora's attraction to individuals outside their marriage — an attraction which ultimately lead to the pair's marital demise — Benjamin produces one of his earliest contributions to German studies.[5] 'This is just as important to me as an exemplary piece of criticism as it is as a prolegomena to certain purely philosophical treatises — what I have to say about Goethe is located somewhere between these two', he writes, in a November 1921 letter to Gerhard Scholem.[6]

The notion of correspondence which emerges in Benjamin's work on Goethe has been taken up as a methodology within Benjamin studies, to which this thesis contributes. This approach is illustrated in studies by Stanley Cavell, Matthew Rampley, James McFarland and Robert Lehman, which establish connections and previously buried affinities between Benjamin and Wittgenstein, Warburg, Nietzsche and Elliot, respectively.[7] Benjamin and Jennings, separated across both geographies and disciplines, are in this work brought out of their respective fields of (German) Literary Criticism and (British) Documentary Film Studies, and, in the establishment of common

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[3] 'Goethe's Elective Affinities', trans. by Stanley Corngold, in *SW*, I, 297–360.

[4] Nina Leacock, 'Character, Silence, and the Novel: Walter Benjamin on Goethe's "Elective Affinities"', *Narrative*, 10.3 (2002), 277–306 (p. 277).

[5] Dora announced her love for Ernst Schoen to Benjamin in 1921. 'Chronology' in *SW*, I, 507.

[6] *Correspondence*, p. 194.

[7] Stanley Cavell, 'Benjamin and Wittgenstein: Signals and Affinities', *Critical Inquiry*, 25.2 (1999), 235–46; Matthew Rampley, *The Remembrance of Things Past: On Aby M. Warburg and Walter Benjamin* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2000); James McFarland, *Constellation: Friedrich Nietzsche and Walter Benjamin in the Now-Time of History* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2013); Robert Lehman, *Impossible Modernism: T.S. Eliot, Walter Benjamin, and the Critique of Historical Reason* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2016).

ground, brought into new affinity. The correspondence between Benjamin and Jennings analysed in this thesis, therefore, 'breaks' either party out of their 'previously formed unions'.[8]

The correspondences between Benjamin and Jennings are most palpably emergent in the pair's prematurely truncated, posthumously published interwar historiographic projects. As Ben Jones and Rebecca Searle comment, the similarities between Jennings' *Pandaemonium* and Benjamin's *Arcades Project* are 'striking', both formally and in terms of the 'dialectical understanding of social and cultural change proffered'.[9] Furnished through a process of archival exploration, Benjamin and Jennings collect and assemble disparate fragments from publications found in libraries and public collections. In their most commensurate renderings of a collated aesthetic, Benjamin and Jennings undermine, in *The Arcades Project* and in *Pandaemonium*, the semblance of unity, of coherence, continuity, and the totality of meaning cardinal to nineteenth-century historiographic practice. [10]

With the discipline of history predominantly conforming to historicism — defined here as the tendency to view historical development as cumulative, linear and progressive — the collated aesthetic brought to bear in these publications frustrates the transmission of pre-established notions of causality and progress characteristic of the deterministic logic of classic historical narrativisation. Benjamin's and Jennings' readerships are subject to intentional disorientation on topics which are contested: the machine age in Britain and the nineteenth-century Parisian culture of commodification. The negation of singular meaning, the absence of authorial voice — indeed, of authority; the provocation of new perceptual experiences, the cognisance

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[8] Leacock, p. 277.

[9] Rebecca Searle and Ben Jones, 'Humphrey Jennings, the Left and the Experience of Modernity in mid twentieth-century Britain', *History Workshop Journal*, 75.1 (2013), 190–212 (pp. 194, 191).

[10] On historicism, see: Georg Iggers*, Historiography in the Twentieth Century: From Scientific Objectivity to the Postmodern Challenge* (Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 1997) and *New Directions in European Historiography*, rev. edn. (Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 1984); *International Handbook of Historical Studies: Contemporary Research and Theory*, ed. by Georg Iggers and Harold Parker (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1979). On history as a narrative genre, see Hayden White, *Metahistory: The Historical Imagination in Nineteenth-Century Europe* (USA: John Hopkins University, 1973). For contemporary challenges and alternatives to dominant disciplinary history which mobilise similar concerns, see especially Keith Jenkins, *Re-thinking History* (London: Routledge, 1991). See also: Keith Jenkins, *Refiguring History: New Thoughts on an Old Discipline* (London: Routledge, 2003); Alan Munslow, *Deconstructing History* (Abingdon: Routledge, 1997) and *Narrative and History* (London: Springer, 2007).

of new correspondence, and the cultivation of 'poetic knowledge' are salient features of Benjamin's and Jennings' historiographic approach. [11]

This introduction proposes a common context to Benjamin and Jennings' development of a collated aesthetic. The introduction inaugurates discussion of the thesis' key concept of a collated aesthetic, a concept that comes into view through the twin focus on Benjamin and Jennings. Addressing the formal touching points between Benjamin and Jennings, this introduction will now move to consider the ways in which correspondence between Benjamin and Jennings is registered.

Historiography, Technical Correspondence, and the Prematurely Truncated Lives of Benjamin and Jennings

Walter Benjamin and Humphrey Jennings died suddenly within ten years of each other, each in their forties, both leaving behind a great mass of archival fragments as the remains of their projects. Jennings fell to his death whilst on set in 1950, aged forty-two, filming in Greece for the European Economic Commission. Benjamin took his own life in 1940 at the age of forty-eight, following a failed attempt to flee Marshal Philippe Pétain's fascist administration in France, having lived in Paris since 1933 as a German Jew exiled from the Third Reich. Alongside working on various other projects — Benjamin working primarily in the field of philosophy and literary criticism, publishing largely in newspapers with some radio work; Jennings a documentary filmmaker for the General Post Office Film Unit (later the Crown Film Unit, part of the Ministry of Information) — they both, in the approximately thirteen years before their tragic deaths, collected archival fragments in their thousands.

They copied extracts by hand, with Jennings occasionally using a typewriter. Independently, and at times concurrently, they collected small sections of text from pre-published works, paying particular interest to texts of a literary nature: poems, stories, diaries, and letters; a focus which coexisted alongside their consultation of scientific publications on technology, economics, and architecture. Benjamin worked solely at the Bibliothèque nationale de France in Paris between 1927 and 1940;

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[11] The notion of poetic knowledge used here is taken from James Taylor, *Poetic Knowledge: The Recovery of Education* (New York: SUNY Press, 1998) and is addressed in greater detail in Chapter One.

Jennings worked across various locations in the United Kingdom, between 1937 and 1950. Without knowing of one another's projects, Benjamin and Jennings developed and pursued corresponding techniques of archival exploration, with novel consequences for their eventual contributions to historiographic practice.

Gaining an anglophone readership as *The Arcades Project* in 1999, over a decade and a half after its original German publication, Benjamin's collection of archival fragments appeared in English within fourteen years of Jennings' collection, which was posthumously published by André Deutsch in 1985 as *Pandaemonium 1660–1886: The Coming of the Machine as Seen by Contemporary Observers*. In its published form*, Pandaemonium* is the work of Jennings' friend and Mass Observation colleague, Charles Madge, and Jennings' daughter, Mary-Louise Jennings, who worked together to process the extensive fragments Jennings had collected down to a publishable number, representing approximately one third of the original text.[12] Jennings' unpublished manuscript, the unedited collection, 'Pandaemonium', is held in the archives of Pembroke College, University of Cambridge, and is also consulted in this thesis.[13]

Pandaemonium, which Jennings appears to have envisioned would ultimately take the form of several books published by Penguin, was printed in an unfinished state: as a collection.[14] Similarly, Benjamin's citations, which were hid for safekeeping in the vaults of the Bibliothèque nationale de France during World War Two by librarian George Bataille, were handled and brought to publication by Benjamin's mourning friends, Theodor Adorno, Gershom Scholem, and Hannah Arendt.[15] After appearing in 1982 as *Das Passagen-werk*, Volume Five of Benjamin's collected works in German, it was published by Harvard University Press as *The Arcades Project* in 1999.[16]

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[12] Humphrey Jennings, *Pandaemonium: The Coming of the Machine as Seen by Contemporary Observers, 1660–1886*, ed. by Mary-Louise Jennings and Charles Madge, rev. edn (London: Icon, 2012), p. xxviii; hereafter *Pandaemonium*.

[13] When Italicised, *Pandaemonium* refers to the published work; when appearing in quotation marks, 'Pandaemonium' refers to the unpublished project, which includes the manuscript and notes held by Pembroke College, Cambridge.

[14] Jackson, p. 364.

[15] Adorno, as staff of The Frankfurt School of Social Research, acted in a supervisory capacity to Benjamin during Benjamin's time working on the history of Paris.

[16] Walter Benjamin, *Gesammelte Schriften*, ed. by Rolf Tiedemann and Hermann Schweppenhäuser, 7 vols (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1972–89), v: *Das Passagen-Werk* (1982). In the conceptualisation of

The Arcades Project is comprised of fragments which pertain to the history of Paris as the 'capital of the nineteenth century'.[17] It focusses on the French capital city as the century's centre of global consumer capitalism, with Benjamin's title for the project illuminating his particular interest in the relationship between the cultural and technological character of the Parisian arcades (*les passages*): glass- and iron-constructed architectural wonders of nineteenth-century commodification. A collection of fragments from texts authored between 1660 and 1886, Jennings' *Pandaemonium* proffers a long history of the United Kingdom's Industrial Revolution, depicting change in and through the technological, scientific, and cultural shifts which characterise it. In terms of subject matter, these projects attest to Benjamin's and Jennings' shared interest in the history of modernity and the perceptual changes which come about through it, with both figures looking back into the past and gleaning from archives materials which attest to the cultural, sociological, aesthetic, intellectual, technological, and economic character of the epoch they were born into.

Voice

The found fragments published in *The Arcades Project* and *Pandaemonium* as collections, outweigh the authorial commentary of Benjamin and Jennings in either text. Benjamin and Jennings remain almost silent in their delivery of the past, marking a curious historiographic approach. Their techniques, while correspondent with one another, are unlike other historiographic approaches.[18] In lieu of proposing an analytic and interpretative narrative, both Benjamin and Jennings adopt approaches that are understood in this thesis as editorial, curatorial, and exhibitive. Jennings states that he will '"present", not describe or analyse' the past, while Benjamin writes: 'I needn't say

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a historiographic collated aesthetic undertaken in this thesis, the 2012 Icon Books edition of *Pandaemonium* and the 1999 Harvard edition of *The Arcades Project* are used. Since both projects were left as collections of citations — with Benjamin's citations replicated on numbered index cards grouped in thematic bundles, and Jennings' existing as a huge number of date-ordered extracts — the unpublished manuscripts of the projects do not offer the same interpretative potential for this thesis as do the published works.

[17] *AP*, p. 3

[18] Iggers, 'Classical Historicism as a Model for Historical Scholarship', in *Historiography in the Twentieth Century*, pp. 23–30.

anything. Merely show'.[19] An important parallel between the two figures is registered: display as a replacement for authorship.

As Harold Parker observes, 'characteristic of British history-writing is its strong narrative sense. British Historians love to tell a story'.[20] M. C. Lemon underscores the importance of narrative in history-writing across geographic regions, writing that it is narrative that makes an historian, an historian.[21] Classically, historians consult archives to find sources about the past. In and through their selection (or elevation) and deselection (or silencing) of perspectives found through such archival research, an explicit connecting story about the past is told with descriptive prose, critical analysis, and argumentation. Even very recent historical texts, such as Joel Mokyr's history of the Industrial Revolution *The Enlightened Economy* attest to the enduring nature of this classical, formal approach.[22]

Conversely, Benjamin's and Jennings' archival fragments appear collated in a list-like form. They therefore 'fail to relate fully to the ordinary intimations of the word history, […] a notion of a story of changing events'.[23] In so far as Benjamin's and Jennings' common authorial style subverts the potential for a cohesive and unified story of the past to be told, neither can easily be understood as an historian. Instead, *The Arcades Project* and *Pandaemonium* are 'historiographic' — a term which, for contemporary historian Keith Jenkins, refers to any writing about the past, be it fragmented or not.[24] It is this latter term, therefore, that this thesis uses to describe *The Arcades Project* and *Pandaemonium*.

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[19] *Pandaemonium*, p. xxxv; *AP*, p. 460.

[20] Harold Parker, 'Great Britain', in *International Handbook of Historical Studies*, ed. by Iggers and Parker, pp. 193–216, (p. 205).

[21] M. C. Lemon, *The Discipline of History and the History of Thought* (London: Routledge, 1995), p. 38.

[22] Joel Mokyr, *The Enlightened Economy: An Economic History of Britain 1700–1850* (London: Penguin, 2011).

[23] Lemon, p. 38.

[24] Jenkins, *Re-thinking*, p. 7.

Horizontality

Benjamin's and Jennings' voices arise sporadically amongst the hundreds of other voices wrenched from archival documents.[25] Their works publish the past in textual snippets: each passage appears as an unlinked paragraph, differentiated from the previous citation with a small strip of white space on the page. *Pandaemonium* provides titles for each numbered citation; *The Arcades Project* conveys each fragment's distinction in the white space alone. In *Pandaemonium* Jennings' words are printed in italics, while Benjamin's prose appears in *The Arcades Project* in a non-uniform manner, sometimes with a slightly different font, and other times in the same typography as those used for citations reproduced from other texts. The short authorial musings of Benjamin and Jennings become part of, and almost indistinguishable from, their wider collection of pre-published passages. In the 2012 edition of *Pandaemonium* or the 1999 edition of *The Arcades Project* – those which are used in this thesis – there is no hierarchical distinction, in terms of implied importance, between the comments of Benjamin and Jennings as authors, and those collected from archives.[26] The published texts of *The Arcades Project* and *Pandaemonium* both present their fragments horizontally, as Figures 1 and 2 illustrate. A multitude of voices, including Benjamin's and Jennings' own, exist together in a formal flatness.

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[25] While Benjamin's and Jennings' own words mostly exist as sparce annotations, in Konvolute N of *AP*, especially, Benjamin brings in many of his own fragmentary thoughts.

[26] Typographic choices made in the Harvard edition of *The Arcades Project* deliberately remove a suggestion of hierarchy present in the German edition, by using typefaces of different styles, rather than different size (as in the German text), to distinguish between 'entries containing significant commentary by Benjamin' and those not containing significant commentary. Howard Eiland and Kevin McLaughlin, 'Translator's Foreword', in *AP*, pp. ix–xiv (p. xiii).

Only someone who has grown up in the big city can appreciate its rainy weather, which altogether slyly sets one dreaming back to early childhood. Rain makes everything more hidden, makes days not only gray but uniform. From morning until evening, one can do the same thing—play chess, read, engage in argument—whereas sunshine, by contrast, shades the hours and discountenances the dreamer. The latter, therefore, must get around the days of sun with subterfuges—above all, must rise quite early, like the great idlers, the waterfront loafers and the vagabonds: the dreamer must be up before the sun itself. In the "Ode to Blessed Morning," which some years past he sent to Emmy Hennings, Ferdinand Hardekopf, the only authentic decadent that Germany has produced, confides to the dreamer the best precautions to be taken for sunny days.[9]
[D1a,9]

"To give to this dust a semblance of consistency, as by soaking it in blood." Louis Veuillot, *Les Odeurs de Paris* (Paris, 1914), p. 12. [D1a,10]

Other European cities admit colonnades into their urban perspective, Berlin setting the style with its city gates. Particularly characteristic is the Halle Gate—unforgettable for me on a blue picture postcard representing Belle-Alliance Platz by night. The card was transparent, and when you held it up to the light, all its windows were illuminated with the very same glow that came from the full moon up in the sky. [D2,1]

"The buildings constructed for the new Paris revive all the styles. The ensemble is not lacking in a certain unity, however, because all the styles belong to the category of the tedious—in fact, the most tedious of the tedious, which is the emphatic and the aligned. *Line up! Eyes front!* It seems that the Amphion of this city is a corporal. . . . / He moves great quantities of things—showy, stately, colossal—and all of them are tedious. He moves other things, extremely ugly; they too are tedious. / These great streets, these great quays, these great houses, these great sewers, their physiognomy poorly copied or poorly dreamed—all have an indefinable something indicative of unexpected and irregular fortune. They exude tedium." Veuillot, *Les Odeurs de Paris* ‹Paris, 1914›, p. 9. □ Haussmann □ [D2,2]

Pelletan describes a visit with a king of the Stock Exchange, a multimillionaire: "As I entered the courtyard of the house, a squad of grooms in red vests were occupied in rubbing down a half dozen English horses. I ascended a marble staircase hung with a giant gilded chandelier, and encountered in the vestibule a majordomo with white cravat and plump calves. He led me into a large glass-roofed gallery whose walls were decorated entirely with camellias and hothouse plants. Something like suppressed boredom lay in the air; at the very first step, you breathed a vapor as of opium. I then passed between two rows of perches on which parakeets from various countries were roosting. They were red, blue, green, gray, yellow, and white; but all seemed to suffer from homesickness. At the extreme end of the gallery stood a small table opposite a Renaissance-style fireplace, for at this

Figure 1. A typical page from The Arcades Project, showing the arrangement of five fragments, two of which are authored by Benjamin himself, labelled [D2, 2] and [D1a, 9]. *AP*, p. 104.

Effects of Light, almost as far as it is permitted for Man to know concerning them.

From The Elements of Sir Isaac Newton's Philosophy *by Mr Voltaire, translated and revised by John Hanna, 1738.*

41 **THE COLLIERS OF KINGSWOOD** November 1739

Few persons have lived long in the west of England who have not heard of the colliers of Kingswood; a people famous from the beginning hitherto, for neither fearing God nor regarding man: so ignorant of the things of God, that they seemed but one remove from the beasts that perish; and therefore utterly without desire of instruction, as well as without the means of it.

Many last winter used tauntingly to say of Mr Whitefield, 'If he will convert Heathens, why does not he go to the colliers of Kingswood?' In spring he did so. And as there were thousands who resorted to no place of public worship, he went after them into their own wilderness, 'to seek and save that which was lost.' When he was called away, others went into 'the highways and hedges, to compel them to come in.' And, by the grace of God, their labour was not in vain. The scene is already changed. Kingswood does not now, as a year ago, resound with cursing and blasphemy. It is no more filled with drunkenness and uncleanness, and the idle diversions that naturally lead thereto, It is no longer full of wars and fightings, of clamour and bitterness; of wrath and envyings: peace and love are there. Great numbers of the people are mild, gentle, and easy to be entreated. They 'do not cry, neither strive,' and hardly is their 'voice heard in the streets,' or, indeed, in their own wood; unless when they are at their usual evening diversion, singing praise unto God their Saviour.

From a letter to 'Mr D' by John Wesley, printed in Wesley's Journal, *edited by N. Curnock, 1909–16.*

HEATHENS. In this phrase resides the whole truth on England. Britain was seen as a colony – its people the savages to be exploited – its wealth the property of the conquerors – and its preachers the missionaries to dope and convert the natives.

42 **EASTER** 1742

April 1. Being Good Friday, I had a great desire to visit a little village called Placey, about ten measured miles north of Newcastle. It is inhabited by colliers only; and such as had been always in the first rank for savage ignorance and wickedness of every kind. Their grand assembly used to be on the Lord's Day, on which men, women, and children met together, to

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dance, fight, curse, and swear, and play at chuck-ball, span-farthing, or whatever came next to hand. I felt great compassion for these poor creatures, from the time I heard of them first; and the more because all men seemed to despair of them. Between seven and eight I set out with John Heally, my guide. The north wind being unusually high, drove the sleet in our face, which froze as it fell, and cased us over presently. When we came to Placey we could very hardly stand. As soon as we were a little recovered, I went into the Square, and declared Him who 'was bruised for our sins, and wounded for our iniquities.' The poor sinners were quickly gathered together, and gave earnest heed to the things which were spoken. And so they did in the afternoon again, in spite of the wind and snow, when I besought them to receive Him for their King; to 'repent and believe in the Gospel.'

On Easter Monday and Tuesday, I preached there again, the congregation continually increasing; and as most of these had never in their lives pretended to any religion of any kind, they were the more ready to cry to God, as mere sinners, for the free redemption which is in Jesus.

From the Journal *of John Wesley, edited by N. Curnock, 1909–16.*

43 **A LOVE OF SYSTEM** August 9, 1750

. . . my Studies can not furnish a Recommendation of many new Books to you. there is Defense de l'Esprit des Loix by Montesquieu himself. it has some lively Things in it, but it is very short, & his Adversary appears to be so mean a Bigot, that he deserved no Answer. there are 3 V: in 4to of, Histoire du Cabinet du Roi, by Mess: Buffons, & D'Aubenton. the first is a Man of Character, but (I am told) has hurt it by this Work. it is all a Sort of Introduction to Natural History. the weak Part of it is a Love of System, wch runs thro' it, the most contrary Thing in the World to a Science, entirely grounded upon Experiments, & that has nothing to do with Vivacity of Imagination. there are some microscopical Observations, that seem'd curious to me, on those Animalcula to wch we are supposed to owe our Origin; and wch he has discover'd of like Figure in Females not pregnant, & in almost every Thing we use for Nourishment, even Vegetables, particularly in their Fruit & Seeds. not that he allows them to be animated Bodies, but *Molecules organisées*. if you ask what that is, I can not tell; no more than I can understand a new System of Generation wch he builds upon it. but what I was going to commend is a general View he gives of the Face of the Earth, follow'd by a particular one of all known Nations, their peculiar Figure & Manners, wch is the best epitome of Geography I ever met with, & wrote with Sense, & Elegance: in short these Books are well worth turning over. . . .

From a letter of Thomas Gray to Dr Thomas Wharton.

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Figure 2. A typical page from *Pandaemonium*, showing the placement of three archival fragments. Below 'The Colliers of Kingswood', Jennings' annotations appear in italics. *Pandaemonium*, pp. 50–51.

Juxtaposition

Benjamin and Jennings innovate true historiographic polyvocality in their representation of the past, with a great breadth of contradictory perspectives from a large number of historical subjects included in each publication. Forming part of that non-harmonious polyvocality, the voices of Benjamin and Jennings appear critically and in conflict, in some cases, alongside voices of an even more multifarious and heterogeneous nature.

In *Pandaemonium*, Jennings collates citations that celebrate the ingenuity of early scientific discovery, as well as those that problematise its realisation. One report details the eighteenth-century development of electricity, recording a terrifying

experiment conducted on 'a boy between eight and nine Years of Age'.[27] Alongside passages which illustrate the collective excitement at the opening of the Northumbrian Railway in 1830, cited as 'a great monument of human labour', there are fragments which illustrate the exploitative conditions of production in the United Kingdom.[28] In one example from 1842, a child is brought close to death as a labour apprentice in the stone quarries of Huddersfield.[29] In a similar way, Benjamin depicts great nineteenth-century technological advancements in architecture, which allowed for iron and glass constructions such as the Crystal Palace — a magnificent structure built in London for the 1851 Great Exhibition of the Works of Industry of All Nations (hereafter the Great Exhibition) — with other citations suggesting that this, and the example proffered by the Parisian arcades, constitute '[g]lass before its time, premature iron'.[30]

The history of modernity is represented in *Pandaemonium* and *The Arcades Project* in and through the divergent opinions and perspectives collated. Different ways of seeing shaped by professional, personal, and political agendas, are placed incongruently in nearness with one another, with internal juxtapositions left unresolved. As such, implications of uncertainty manifest in each text's correspondent approach to egalitarian historiographic representation. The notion that historical writing should, through the analysis of documents and the production of an argument, realise totalised and conclusive truth in its singularity, is put into question in *Pandaemonium* and *The Arcades Project*, with a multiplicity of incompatible accounts working together to depict modernity as complicated and discordant.[31]

Image

Several hundred pages in length, *The Arcades Project* and *Pandaemonium* are almost entirely linguistically formed: the written word far outnumbers the infrequent illustrations. In Jennings' case, the illustrations which were printed in *Pandaemonium*

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[27] *Pandaemonium,* p. 47.

[28] *Pandaemonium*, p. 176.

[29] *Pandaemonium*, p. 214.

[30] *AP,* p. 150.

[31] For an influential statement of this view, see Geoffrey Elton, *The Practice of History* (London: Fontana, 1967), pp. 70–78.

in 1985 were selected posthumously by his daughter Mary-Louise Jennings. Jennings aspired to collect illustrations but did not do so.[32] Benjamin's correspondence evidences a desire to include illustrations in his project on the history of Paris, but the large album of photographs Benjamin had collated for the work, seen by Alfred Sohn-Rethel, had been lost by the time Rolf Tiedemann commenced work on the German edition of *The Arcades Project*.[33] Tiedemann sourced replacement illustrations from Benjamin's estate, including photographs taken in the 1930s by Benjamin's friend, the photographer Germaine Krull.[34] The term 'image', therefore, is used by both Benjamin and Jennings, not in reference to the posthumously selected illustrations that were ultimately included in the two publications, but in reference to their prioritised collation of textual fragments. The term illuminates a correspondence between Benjamin and Jennings in their conceptualisation of the repositioning of readers in a way which activates receptive imaginations to form independent meaning from their fragmented, clashing, polyvocal language-based collections.

When Jennings states, 'I prefer not to try to define its limits at the moment but to leave the reader to agree or not with the evidence which I shall place before him. I present it by means of what I call Images', he illuminates the way in which his preparation for a novel historiographic form, in and through the collation of images, critically reorients readers into a place of independent meaning-making.[35] This collector, who produced paintings, visual collages, and poetry alongside his paid career as a filmmaker, carries over the term image from the arts to refer to his historiographic collection of language-based fragments.[36]

Benjamin uses the term 'image' in conjunction with the term 'dialectical' to refer to the potential for *The Arcades Project* to afford readers, in its aggregation of

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[32] *Pandaemonium,* p. xx.

[33] Gretel Adorno and Walter Benjamin, *Correspondence 1930–1940*, ed. by Henri Lonitz and Cristoph Gödde, trans. by Wieland Hoban (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2008), p. 162; *Gesammelte Schriften*, V, 1323–25.

[34] *Gesammelte Schriften*, V, 1324.

[35] *Pandaemonium*, p. xxxv.

[36] On Jennings as a multidisciplinary artist, see: *Humphrey Jennings: Film-maker, Painter, Poet*, ed. by Mary-Louise Jennings (London: BFI, 1982); Anthony Hodgkinson and Rodney Sheratsky, *Humphrey Jennings: More than a Maker of Films* (Hanover: University Press of New England, 1982).

fragments, an open-ended and non-conclusive image or portrayal of the past.[37] 'The dialectical image is an image that emerges suddenly, in a flash', Benjamin writes: when encountering a 'dialectical image', '[w]hat has been is to be held fast — as an image flashing up in the now of its recognizability'.[38] The contemporaneity of reading — that is, the readership emergent within a particular and ever-changing historic context — is given a crucial role by Benjamin. This readership, which is in each moment repositioned by the historical circumstances of their reading, interprets the past from a non-totalised and inconclusive collection of fragments, in relation not to Benjamin's era of production, but to the conditions which shape their own. This moment, which is shaped in and through a reader's precise temporal condition, elicits, in its interpenetration with the past, what Benjamin referred to as a 'dialectical image'.

The Collated Aesthetic

A term emerging from the cinematographic experimentations of the early twentieth century, 'montage', in its most rudimentary sense, describes the practice of 'selecting, editing and piecing together separate sections of film to form a continuous whole'; it refers, according to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, to 'a sequence or picture resulting from such a process'.[39] Nevertheless, the term has been used, associatively, to describe *Pandaemonium* — as if the work falls within Jennings' filmography.[40]

As registered in notes written by Jennings that were used by Madge to form *Pandaemonium*'s introductory essay, the filmmaker himself likened his project to montage: 'just as the usual history does not consist of isolated events, occurrences', he remarks, 'so this "imaginative history" does not consist of isolated images, but each is in a particular place in an unrolling film'.[41] Similarly, Benjamin applies the term montage to *The Arcades Project*: 'method of this project: literary montage. I needn't

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[37] *AP*, p. 473.

[38] *AP*, p. 473.

[39] *Oxford English Dictionary Online*, s.v. 'montage, *n*. and *adj.*' <www.oed.com> [accessed 14 December 2020].

[40] Kevin Robins and Frank Webster, *Times of the Technoculture: From the Information Society to the Virtual Life* (London: Routledge, 1999), p. 39; Janine Marchessault, *Ecstatic Worlds: Media, Utopias, Ecologies* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2017), p. 94.

[41] *Pandaemonium*, p. xxxv.

say anything. Merely show'.[42] Elsewhere, Benjamin further explains that 'the first stage in this undertaking will be to carry over the principle of montage into history'.[43]

The translators of the English edition of *The Arcades Project*, Howard Eiland and Kevin McLaughlin, along with a range of other scholars, accept the term montage for Benjamin's collection.[44] '[T]he montage form' write Eiland and McLaughlin, 'with its philosophic play of distances, transitions, and intersections, its perpetually shifting contexts and ironic juxtapositions — had become a favourite device in Benjamin's later investigations'.[45] Listing Benjamin's works (*One-Way Street*, *Berlin Childhood around 1900*, 'On the Concept of History', 'Central Park', and *The Arcades Project*) as demonstrative of Benjamin's montage form, Eiland and McLaughlin — while understanding well the way in which the latter historiographic 'patchwork' generates 'significant repercussions for the direction and tempo of its reading' — do not consider the shortfalls of the term montage, when applied to Benjamin's examples of literary fragmentation and collation.[46]

The most basic definition of montage arose through the technical processes of film production. As used by Vsevolod Pudovkin in his 1929 writings on film technique, the French word 'montage' is carried over into his Russian as it is, with little to distinguish the meaning of the term from the English word 'editing'.[47] The implication, as reiterated in the most elementary conception of montage — the creation of a whole from a multiplicity of parts — is that editing is primarily concerned with the

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[42] *AP,* p. 460.

[43] *AP,* p. 461.

[44] See Rolf Tiedemann, 'Dialectics at a Standstill: Approaches to the *Passagen-Werk*', in *AP*, pp. 929–45 (pp. 931–37). See also: Theodor Adorno, 'A Portrait of Walter Benjamin', in *Prisms*, trans. by Samuel Weber and Shierry Weber (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1981), pp. 227–42 (pp. 239–40); Susan Buck-Morss, *The Dialectics of Seeing: Walter Benjamin and the Arcades Project* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1989), p. 73; Richard Wolin, *Walter Benjamin: An Aesthetic of Redemption* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), p. xi; Howard Caygill, *Walter Benjamin: The Colour of Experience* (Abingdon: Routledge, 1998), p. 70; Jonathan Hill, *Actions of Architecture: Architects and Creative Users* (London: Routledge, 2003), p. 178; Brigid Doherty, 'The "Colportage Phenomenon of Space" and the Place of Montage in *The Arcades Project*', *Germanic Review*, 81.1 (2006), 37–64 (p. 37); Martino Stierli, *Montage and the Metropolis: Architecture, Modernity and the Representation of Space* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2018), p. 250.

[45] Eiland and McLaughlin, p. xi.

[46] Eiland and McLaughlin, p. xi.

[47] Vsevolod Pudovkin, *Film Technique and Film Acting*: *The Cinematic Writings of V. I. Pudovkin*, trans. by Ivor Montagu (London: Vision Press, 1954), p. 179.

formation of a whole or construction of a totalising narrative.[48] Throughout the 1930s, the meaning of montage as a cinematic editing process is predominantly associated with the development of narrative progression from isolated strips of film.[49] Whilst such filmic montage may (but frequently does not) subvert narrative totality, Benjamin's, and Jennings' approach to narrativisation inherently does so. In this respect, the notion of a collated aesthetic is distinguishable from that of montage, defined as the creation of a whole from parts, because, in Benjamin's and Jennings' analogous practices, narrative totality is negated, avoided, and subverted.

The examples and core case studies examined in this thesis are wholes only in terms of their final published forms as films or books. Each fragment within each text maintains the semblance of singularity and the semblance of the incomplete, when brought together. The fragments used in *One-Way Street*, *Pandaemonium* and *The Arcades Project* existed as — or were previously parts of — wholes in themselves, prior to being repurposed by Benjamin's and Jennings' techniques of collation. The fragmentation of previously whole texts is therefore pivotal to conceptualising a collated aesthetic. Many of the fragments Benjamin collated for *One-Way Street* were previously published as newspaper feuilletons. As such, a fundamental aspect of Benjamin and Jennings' aesthetic of collation is the rejection of a totalised, complete, or seamless narrative. In both, the undesirability, indeed the impossibility, of such a narrative is intentionally foregrounded by the very nature of the contrasting fragments.

There exists, however — for instance, in the work of Sergei Eisenstein — a realisation of filmic montage that is antithetical to its seamless manifestation in early cinema, such as in D.W. Griffith's *Birth of a Nation* (1915).[50] In this U. S. feature-length film, montage is used to conceal the reality of the work's internal fragmentation and multiplicity — its creation from a variety of distinct scenes shot at separate times and in separate locations. Depicting the assassination of Abraham Lincoln, in the context of the Civil War and Reconstruction era, the film's fragments are organised in a way which is designed to allow the story to unfurl in a linear fashion: the totalised meaning

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[48] *OED*, s.v. 'montage, *n*. and *adj*.'.

[49] See, for example, sources cited in *OED*, s.v. 'montage, *n*. and *adj*.', sense A.1.a.

[50] *Birth of a Nation,* dir. by David Wark Griffith (Epoch Producing, 1915).

in Griffith's narrative continuity — the way in which the abolition of slavery brought about the freedom of an unruly mass, whose restraint came about only through the actions of a heroic Ku Klux Klan — emerges, not through the film's script, but from the ability of Griffith as a director, through his use of montage, to imbue the past with a racist narrative.[51] Eisenstein's *Battleship Potemkin* (1925), by contrast, applies montage in the context of Soviet film theory.[52] Consistent with some of modernism's ventures into fragmentation, discontinuity, polyvocality, and simultaneity, *Battleship Potemkin* undermines the notion of a linear precedent, as set by Griffiths and others, and destabilises the notion of film as that which creates an 'organically unified image'.[53] As a matter of revolutionary praxis, Eisenstein's cinematic montage creates a discontinuity in narrative to promote in its audience a shock-like sense of disruption. Eisenstein's 1923 essay 'Montage of Attractions' depicts 'the theatrical program of the Proletkult', as that which seeks the 'abolition of the very institution of the theatre as such, replacing it with a show-place for achievements in the theater or with an instrument for raising the standard of training of the masses in their day-to-day life'.[54] Having watched Eisenstein's *Battleship Potemkin* on his visit to Moscow in 1927, Benjamin remarked on the novelties of this work that very year, drawing particularly on the potentialities of its aesthetic.[55]

Instrumental rather than poetic, Eisenstein's image seeks to 'guide the spectator in the desired direction' through its appeal to heightened performativity: in *Battleship Potemkin*, the hyperbolic gestures of filmed participants aggrandises the events of 1905, conveying through physical action, an intended meaning.[56] Whilst

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[51] Lee Pfeiffer, 'Birth of a Nation', in *Encyclopaedia Britannica* <https://www.britannica.com/topic/The-Birth-of-a-Nation> [accessed 1 December 2020].

[52] *Battleship Potemkin*, dir. by Sergei Eisenstein (Amkino Corporation, 1925). For the theory, see Sergei Eisenstein, *Selected Works*, ed. by Richard Taylor and others, 4 vols (London: BFI, 1988–95), II: *Towards a Theory of Montage*, ed. by Michael Glenny and Richard Taylor, trans. by Michael Glenny (1991).

[53] Mark Wollaeger, *Modernism, Media, and Propaganda: British Narrative from 1900 to 1945* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006), p. 66.

[54] Sergei Eisenstein, 'Montage of Attractions: For *Enough Stupidity in Every Wiseman*', trans. by Daniel Gerould, *Drama Review*, 18.1, (1974), 77–84 (p.77). Born from the Revolution of 1917, *proletkult* (*proletarskaya kultura* — proletarian culture) was the name of an experimental arts serving the development of a new and revolutionary working-class aesthetic and funded by Soviet Russia's People's Commissariat for Education.

[55] 'Chronology', in *SW2.1*, p. 824; Benjamin, 'On the Present Situation of Russian Film', trans by Rodney Livingstone, in *SW2.1*, pp. 12–15 (p. 14).

[56] Eisenstein, 'Montage', p. 78.

Eisenstein's work corresponds in some ways to the evocative, imagetic juxtaposition of Jennings' collated aesthetic, his instrumentalised cinematography seeks to manipulate the frame of mind of spectators in a pre-determined direction.[57] This manipulation is the underlying principle of his Soviet montage. And though the notion of a 'construction that has impact' might appear to resemble the aims of Benjamin's and Jennings' political aesthetic, the radical potential of Jennings' film *Spare Time* — and of *The Arcades Project* and *Pandaemonium* as historiographic works — is the creation of open-ended narratives.[58] Their works produce 'poetic knowledge', and it is on this important issue that the collated aesthetic of Benjamin and Jennings is most clearly separable from the aesthetic principles of Eisensteinian and Soviet film work.[59]

Benjamin's and Jennings' collated aesthetic was developed between 1927 and 1937, at a time when, as Adorno notes in *Aesthetic Theory*, the method of montage held a peculiarly powerful potential to 'shock' through disrupting the authority of 'surreptitiously achieved organic unity'.[60] In terms of Benjamin's radio work and newspaper writing and Jennings' work as a documentary film maker, the collated aesthetic emerges out of a relationship with mass media.[61] It came about at a time when the metaphor of a hypodermic needle was being utilised by media theorists to describe a linear form of media communication, which was considered to 'inject representations and images into viewers' as a doctor's needle 'squirts drugs into the body'.[62] During the interwar period a broad consensus existed amongst researchers on both the 'right' and the 'left' that 'mass media exercised a powerful and pervasive influence'.[63] Such researchers believed that new printing press technologies, radio and

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[57] In this thesis, the term 'imagetic' is used to describe works that use visual plenitude and multiplicity to provoke readers' and viewers' imaginations. 'Imagetic' rather than 'imagistic' is used to avoid any association with Imagist poetics, according to which images ought to be precise and clear.

[58] Eisenstein, 'Montage', p. 78.

[59] The notion of poetic knowledge used here is taken from James Taylor, *Poetic Knowledge: The Recovery of Education* (New York: SUNY Press, 1998), and is addressed in more depth in Chapter One.

[60] Theodor Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory*, ed. by Gretel Adorno and Rolf Tiedemann, trans. by Robert Hullot-Kentor (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), pp. 155–56.

[61] For a dedicated work on Benjamin and radio, see: Walter Benjamin, *Radio*, ed. by Lecia Rosenthal, trans. by Jonathan Lutes (London: Verso, 2014).

[62] John Hartley, *Communication, Culture and Media Studies: The Key Concepts*, 3rd edn (London: Routledge, 2002), p. 81.

[63] James Curran, Michael Gurevitch, and Janet Woollacott, 'The study of the media: theoretical approaches', in *Culture, society and the media,* ed. by. Michael Gurevitch, Tony Bennett, James Curran, and Janet Woollacott (London: Routledge, 2005), p.6.

film, brought to bear, on an unprecedented scale, the mass production of communication and the formation of a mass audience.[64] An accompanying perspective, drawn from an understanding of a population disconnected from the anchoring social networks characteristic of pre-industrialised settlements, viewed the modern, industrialised and urban mass as 'volatile, unstable, rootless, alienated and inherently susceptible to manipulation'. [65] As is affirmed in Harold Lasswell's 1927 study *Propaganda Technique in World War 1,* political spin is predicated on the ability of the propagandist to 'evoke the desired response' from its recipients. [66] As such, a relationship is implied between the rise of Fascism between the two world wars and the instrumentality of media messaging in the 1920s and 30s.

As an example of the kinds of discussions emerging during the interwar period, from the milieu which also informed Benjamin's and Jennings' technique, the hypodermic needle theory can be understood to inform the development of projects which were devised to counter, to expose, and to provide alternatives to such indoctrination of audiences. It was perhaps Benjamin's and Jennings' recognition of the need to resist the intentions of propagandists that informs the deviation in Benjamin's and Jennings' work from an audience positionality that they conceive of as implicated in the blind acceptance of media messages towards one which promotes the imaginative engagement of audiences in processes of unlimited meaning-making.[67]

Susan Buck-Morss likens Benjamin's approach to representation to a 'photomontage', in which disparate pieces of photographic imagery are assembled together without regard to size and/or internal continuity; *One-Way Street* represents, in short, 'an avant-garde, modernist aesthetics'.[68] Related to early twentieth-century practices of montage and collage, of the kind practiced in Dadaism and Surrealism, the potentialities of this kind of aesthetic of collation, as raised by Adorno in *Aesthetic Theory* and also by Peter Bürger in his *Theory of the Avant Garde*, is different to those

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[64] 'The study of the media', p.6.

[65] 'The study of the media', p.6.

[66] Harold D. Lasswell, *Propaganda Technique in World War I* (Cambridge: The M.I.T. Press, 1971), p.195.

[67] Thomas Doherty, *Hollywood and Hitler: 1933–1939* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2013), p. 264.

[68] Buck-Morss, *Dialectics*, p. 18.

that are commonly understood to relate to its most elemental form, as the basis of film production.[69]

As a reaction to the dominance of Fascist authoritarianism in Germany, the photomontages of Hannah Höch and John Heartfield, for example, whilst being distinguishable from Benjamin's and Jennings' collated aesthetic, illustrate in a broader sense how an aesthetic of collation was used in the first part of the twentieth century to interrupt the power of the National Socialists.[70] Höch's 1924 photomontage *Mischling* ('Half Caste', or more literally, mixing) responds to the spread of racist narratives in the Weimar Republic by juxtaposing the mouth of a European woman with the face of an African woman, implying criticism in the way othered subjects are not legitimated to speak without recourse to a European intermediary to vouch for them.[71] The title of the work can also be seen to conceive of the mixing of cultures, genes, or DNA as a process of montage in itself. In mixing as depicted by Höch, something is gained, rather than lost, as was implied by Fascist narratives of blood purity. The incongruity of imagetic juxtaposition was used by artists to break up pre-existing meaning: interrupting the ideology of the Nazi Party, these gestures make space amongst audiences for critical and creative re-comprehension.

In addition to montage and photomontage, the term 'collage' appears as a frequent descriptor for *The Arcades Project*.[72] A term with its origins in paper-based mediums, collage is '[a]n abstract form of art in which photographs, pieces of paper,

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[69] There is a lag in time between the composition and the publication of both these texts. Adorno's *Aesthetic Theory* was written 1956–1969 and published posthumously in its original German in 1970. Adorno died in 1969, still drafting; many of the revisions took place in the years just before he died. The first English translation appeared in 1984. This is the same year as the English publication of Bürger's *Theory of the Avant Garde* (published in its original German in 1974). Peter Bürger, *Theory of the Avant-Garde*, trans. by Michael Shaw (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984).

[70] The exhibition 'John Heartfield: Photography plus Dynamite', at the Akademie der Künste, Berlin, presented rarely seen works, such as *Benütze Foto als Waffe!* [*Use Photo as a Weapon!*], 1929, photomontage, Akademie der Künste, Berlin <https://heartfield.adk.de/en/node/3284> [accessed 5 November 2021], which also provides a good example of how an aesthetic of collation can offer new perceptual experiences through the assembly of juxtaposition. 'John Heartfield: Photography plus Dynamite, 2/6/20–23/8/20', *Akademie der Künste* <https://www.adk.de/en/projects/2020/heartfield/exhibition.htm> [accessed 5 November 2021].

[71] Hannah Höch, *Mischling [Mixed Race]*, 1924, collage, photomontage, Institut für Auslandsbeziehungen, Stuttgart; *Women in Europe between the Wars: Politics, Culture and Society*, ed. by Angela Kershaw and Angela Kimyongür (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007).

[72] Campbell Edinborough, 'Constructing Dialectical Images in Sound and Space: Adapting Walter Benjamin's *The Arcades Project*', *Performance Research*, 21.3 (2016), 47–53 (p. 47); Anca Pusca, 'Walter Benjamin, a Methodological Contribution', *International Political Sociology*, 3.2 (2009), 238–54 (p. 239).

newspaper cuttings, string, etc., are placed in juxtaposition and glued to the pictorial surface; such a work of art'.[73] Collage has its origins in the artworks of the early twentieth century. Writing in 1936, Herbert Read identifies collage as a distinct process in the arsenal of modernist representative techniques, pioneered by Pablo Picasso and George Braque and predicated, as are montage and the collated aesthetic, on the assemblage of disparate components: 'the work of art made of any old pieces of string or newspaper'.[74]

As the example of Picasso and Braque's papier collés suggests, an aesthetic of collation referred to as collage had a long history. [75] From 1913, cubist artists collated fragments and pasted onto fresh paper an assortment of found cut outs. Later, these fragmentary aesthetics were redefined though a series of experimental literary works, such as Max Ernst's Surrealist novel in collage, *Une semaine de bonté (A Week of Kindness)* (1934) and Tristan Tzara's never-published anthology of Dada artworks and texts, *Dadaglobe*.[76] Tzara's Dada poems demonstrate the principal characteristics of collage: chance-like and occupied with found fragments, frequently presented in the order of their finding. Scissors are used to enact a constructive violence on pre-existing texts, which are cut up and brought together in a new and non-didactic formation.

Whilst affinities exist between the approaches of Benjamin and Jennings and those of the avant-garde artists — particularly with respect to their form of violent retrieval (cutting, fragmentation) and their processes of decontextualization/recontextualization — there is a key difference between the collated aesthetic and both the definition of collage put forward by Read and the example of collage proffered by Tzara. Benjamin and Jennings did not adopt chance as a principle of composition in their historiographic works. Rather, *The Arcades Project* and *Pandaemonium* are predicated on the precise curation of historical images.

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[73] *OED*, s.v. 'collage, *n*.'.

[74] Herbert Read, *Selected Writings: Poetry and Criticism* (New York: Horizon Press, 1964), p. 269.

[75] For representative examples, see: Pablo Picasso, *Bottle of Vieux Marc, Glass, Guitar and Newspaper,* 1913, printed papers and ink on paper, Tate, London; George Braque, *Fruit Dish and Glass*, 1912, charcoal and cut-and-pasted printed wallpaper with gouache on white laid paper; subsequently mounted on paperboard, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

[76] Max Ernst, *A Week of Kindness; or, The Seven Deadly Elements*, trans. by Stanley Appelbaum (New York: Dover, 1976). For more on Tzara's 1920–21 abandoned project, see Adrian Sudhalter, 'Tristan Tzara, literary montage, and Dadaglobe', in *Before Publication: Montage in Art, Architecture, and Book Design*, ed. by Nanni Baltzer and Martino Stierli (Zurich: Park Books, 2016), pp. 44–56.

Though meaning in *Pandaemonium* and *The Arcades Project* is indeterminate, cultivated through a constellatory arrangement of juxtaposed fragments, it is not refused entirely, because there remains in each case a logic of selection and deselection. The collated aesthetic puts meaning on trial: its fragmentary and discontinuous nature, as a historiographic principle, forces the story of the past to unfold in an imaginative and non-deterministic way. In their mediatory and historically orienting capacity as editors, Benjamin and Jennings prevent these texts becoming irrelevant, whilst maintaining, as collectors and collators, an open and non-edifying sense of meaning.

As well as setting a precedent for the use of an aesthetic of collation to break up meaning and subvert dominant narratives, the avant-garde collages of the artists thus far discussed illuminate the multiplicity of conflictual perspectives that exist within modern societies, in a way carried over into the polyvocal texts of *The Arcades Project* and *Pandaemonium*. In doing so, their works undermine principles of political despotism: whilst Höch and Heartfield produce an aesthetic of fragmentation which inhibits totalised meaning, their fractured images also become a signifier for their way of thinking about a heterogenous and incohesive social group. The way in which this process is taken up by Benjamin's and Jennings' collated aesthetic can be further clarified by considering Benjamin's writing on mimesis.

Mimesis, explored by Benjamin in two related texts, 'Doctrine of the Similar' and 'On the Mimetic Faculty' (1933), offers a notion of affinity through similarity. 'Nature produces similarities; one need only think of mimicry. The highest capacity for producing similarities, however, is man's', Benjamin writes, going on to address the human faculty, characteristic of child's play, where one learns about the world by imitating not only a 'shopkeeper or a teacher, but also a windmill and a train'. [77] Here, Benjamin develops an understanding of similarity, previously conceived through the terms 'microcosm and macrocosm'.[78] Benjamin's interpretation on the Leibnizian notion of Monadology, which features in his failed postdoctoral work *The Origin of German Tragic Drama*, addresses this kind of correspondence: 'every idea contains the image of the world. The purpose of the representation of the idea is nothing less than

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[77] 'On the Mimetic Faculty', trans. by Edmund Jephcott, in *SW*, II.2, 720–22 (p. 720).

[78] 'Mimetic Faculty', p. 720.

an abbreviated outline of this image of the world'.[79] A representation of material conditions using a collation of inconclusive fragments can thus be understood as mimetic, insofar as the collated aesthetic reproduces and represents the reality of perspectival heterogeneity and creates space for its discursive maintenance.

As noted by John Elsner and Richard Cardinal, collecting is about classification, about grouping things together based on principles of likeness: 'if classification is the mirror of collective humanity's thoughts and possessions, then collecting is its material embodiment'.[80] Sociologists Geoffrey Bowker and Susan Star explain that both sociology and history are concerned with classificatory relationships.[81] *The Arcades Project* and *Pandaemonium* apply a Surrealist framework in their depiction of industrial and/or technological histories, collecting irreconcilable experiences of everyday subjectivity and emotion, which remain unresolved in their collation alongside those of science and/or engineering. In doing so, Benjamin's and Jennings' historiographic projects critically potentialize the experience of confusion and disorientation as part of their epistemological framework, which is brought to bear through their shared rejection of guided, authorial narration.

A term usually endowed with pejorative connotations, the concept of confusion, in this thesis, is intimately related to the experience of a variegated collation — the bringing together of heterogenous entities, coupled with the absence of an overarching, totalised, or unifying story. The verb 'to confuse' means to 'mix up' or 'mingle', and — recalling the literal meaning of Höch's photomontage 'Mischling' — marks a process that throws its components into 'disorder, or confusion'.[82] In the context of this thesis, the term refers to a technique which stands in opposition to dominant, museological methods of collecting which rely on classificatory tools to separate and to order. In Benjamin's and Jennings' historiographic approach, previous systems of classification used in nineteenth-century historical texts are undermined, and new ones are devised, as such, it may prove difficult for readers to comprehend

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[79] Benjamin, *The Origin of German Tragic Drama*, trans. by John Osborne (London: Verso, 2009), p. 48.

[80] Quoted in David Banash, 'Virtual Life and the Value of Objects: Nostalgia, Distinction, and Collecting in the Twenty-Frist Century', in *Contemporary Collecting: Objects, Practices, and the Fate of Things*, ed. by Kevin Moist and David Banash (Lanham: Scarecrow Press, 2013), pp. 55–66 (p. 55).

[81] Geoffrey Bowker and Susan Star, *Sorting Things Out: Classification and its Consequences* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1999), p. 285.

[82] *OED Online*, s.v. 'confuse, *v*.'.

Benjamin's and Jennings' histories in relation to larger historiographic categories and trends.[83] This thesis contends, however, that this experience of confusion is potentially productive for it opens an opportunity, or perhaps a necessity, for the formation of new meaning. Linking to Benjamin's understanding of shock in relation to the fast-paced movement of film, the experience of confusion emerging from the collated aesthetic demands an 'intensified presence of mind'.[84]

The confusion of readers confronted by the unconventionalities, ambiguities, and contradictions emerging from the collated aesthetic, brings *The Arcades Project* and *Pandaemonium* into relation with the experiential character of (urban) modernity.[85] For Italian architectural historian Eleni Axioti, *The Arcades Project* is a 'city collage'.[86] Resonating with Graeme Gilloch's analysis of Benjamin's 'reading of the city-as-text' and 'writing of the text-as-city', Axioti's description draws on the relationship between the literary fragment and the fragmentary character of the city.[87] Such a notion makes productive the experience of the city as an 'aggregation of narrations' — a collective, and therefore contrasting, set of mutually irreconcilable stories.[88] Forming a part of such experiences are the multiplicity of disparate shop signs that characterise, as text, the variegation of street graphics, meanings, ideas, statements, and preoccupations, in a city's commercial district.

City experiences exist on a plane of open and non-totalised meaning: it exists in abundance and in a heterogeneous fashion. The city is a site stuffed with commodities, with its existence predicated on the flow of capital. There is a commonality between the city, therefore, which is ostensibly a confusion of entitles, and the commodity

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[83] The work of Iggers is useful here and is explored in more detail in subsequent chapters.

[84] 'The Work of Art in the Age of Its Technological Reproducibility: Third Version', trans. by Harry Zohn and Edmund Jephcott, in SW, IV, 251–83 (p. 281).

[85] Dominique Bouchet, drawing on Georg Simmel, illuminates this notion of confusing and bewildering modern urban experience in 'Information Technology, the Social Bond and the City: Georg Simmel Updated — About the Changing Relationship between Identity and the City', *Built Environment*, 24.2–3 (1998), 104–33 (p. 107).

[86] Eleni Axioti, 'The Arcades Project: The City Collage of Walter Benjamin', in *The City as Palimpsest: Tracks, Views and Narrations of the Complexity of Historical Urban Contexts,* ed. by Alfredo Buccaro, Francesco Capano, and Maria Pascariello, 2 vols (Naples: Federico II University Press, 2020), I: *Memories, Stories, Images*, ed. by Francesco Capano and Massimo Visone, pp. 859–64.

[87] Graeme Gilloch, *Myth and Metropolis: Walter Benjamin and the City* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1996), p. 5.

[88] Axioti, p. 861.

itself, which, according to Marx, is also confusing - 'a very queer thing'. [89] The idea of the city as a space of bewilderment resonates with the description of a Bourgeois world in Marx's *Capital*, according to which the commodity brought forth 'metaphysical subtleties and theological niceties': ambiguities, disorientation; a strange new world.[90] As Marx and Engels write in *The Communist Manifesto*, addressing the impact of industrial capitalism in Europe: 'All fixed, fast-frozen relations […] are swept away […] all new-formed ones become antiquated before they can ossify. All that is solid melts into air, all that is holy is profaned, and man is at last compelled to face with sober senses his real conditions of life'.[91] When modern urban space appears as a 'mix-up' of disparate entities, much like the outcome of Benjamin's and Jennings' collated aesthetic, the partial character of fragmented meaning, which cannot be harmonised or made whole, is associated with the experience of confusion and bewilderment.

The collated aesthetic generates a consideration of the relationship between form (strategies used for representation) and content (what is represented), recalling Benjamin's comment in *Berlin Childhood Around 1900*, that 'the form and the content, the wrapping and the wrapped, the gift and the bag, are one and the same thing'.[92] Benjamin's modernist mimetics, as interpreted by Michael Taussig and Beatrice Hanssen, realise the functions of copying in a broad and interconnected sense.[93] Drawing on the ways that different sensory experiences are actualised in modern media forms, both Taussig and Hanssen comment on a new phenomenology arising through the experience of the audience as a result of their perception of textual fragmentation, in imitation of the fragmentary conditions of the material world. A correspondence of imitation illuminates the relationship between the formal character and the thematic nature of the collated aesthetic, and between the collated aesthetic

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[89] Karl Marx, *Capital: A New Abridgement*, ed. by David McLellan, trans. by Samuel Moore, Edward Aveling, and David McLellan (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), p. 42.

[90] Marx, *Capital*, p. 42.

[91] Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *The Communist Manifesto* (London: Verso, 1998), p. 38.

[92] *Berlin Childhood Around 1900*, trans. by Howard Eiland (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006), p. 53; hereafter *Childhood*.

[93] Michael Taussig, *Mimesis and Alterity: A Particular History of the Senses* (London: Routledge, 1993), pp. 21–24; Miriam Hansen, 'Benjamin and Cinema: Not a One-Way Street', *Critical Inquiry*, 25.2 (1999), 306–43 (p. 334).

and the character of the cities within which Benjamin and Jennings came to conceive of a perception-shifting potentiality in its variegated and incongruous collation in three-dimensional space.

Neither collage, nor entirely montage, the collated aesthetic, which potentializes a critical form of audience engagement because of its fragmentary and open-ended nature, is related in genesis to both cinematic history and the aesthetic approaches of the avant-garde in the first half of the twentieth century. The collated aesthetic surpasses the conceptualisation of montage as an editing principle, whilst including some of the more developed, non-cinematically specific definitions of montage. It develops the associative meaning of collage: its paper-based medium, the literality of cut and paste, and the serendipitous framework of collation. The collated aesthetic focusses on the possibilities of collection as a mode of representation, and thus on the role of the collector, or curator, in a process of selection and deselection.[94] The collated aesthetic describes a complex relationship between collecting, editing, and narrative, as well as between image and narrative. It describes and anticipates the impact on audience positionality of both its internal arrangement and the nature of its composite parts. 'Piecemeal — in an especially pregnant sense', the collated aesthetic potentializes the collection and the fragment for critical audience repositioning: audiences are activated by Benjamin and Jennings' broken narratives to seek their own meaning from the jumbled constellations presented.[95] Radical and indeterministic possibilities in reception are made possible by Benjamin and Jennings' portrayal of the past, achieved in and through an assortment of incongruent, incomplete parts.

This thesis examines the shared approach and technique of Benjamin and Jennings as creative producers, who, within a shared milieu of surrealism, explored the potential of non-instrumentality in the representation of material conditions. The collated aesthetic is also defined by the particularities of Benjamin and Jennings' individual intellectual frameworks. In Jennings' case, the collated aesthetic describes the way his work, in the context of a distinctly British reception of Surrealism,

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[94] In this thesis the curator is understood as one who has the power of selection and deselection. The curator presents, rather than explains, using a 'process of selection' to '[bring] elements into proximity with each other', allowing 'different elements to touch' and so promoting conditions to 'incite the imagination of new possibilities'. Hans Obrist, *Ways of Curating* (London: Penguin, 2015), pp. 1–2.

[95] *AP*, p. 368.

overcame the rational didacticism of materialist representation, foregrounding emotion and imagination in both thematic content and formal technique. In Benjamin's case, the collated aesthetic describes the way his reception in exile of avant-gardist artistic practice foregrounded movement, travel, trips, the city, and a wider embodiment of modernity.

This thesis shows, in relation to its core case studies, *The Arcades Project* and *Pandaemonium*, how principles of representation are carried over from early twentieth-century art movements into the making of these two historical projects, thereby revealing the potentiality of the evocative juxtaposition of disconnected citations for writing history. As Chapter One makes clear, the collated aesthetic has its roots, not in the making of an historiographical archive, but in the contemporary cultural criticism of Benjamin's 1928 literary collection *One-Way Street*, and Jennings' 1939 poetic documentary *Spare Time*. In reading these two works together, the technical approaches and aesthetic devices developed by Benjamin and Jennings (evocation, variegation, juxtaposition) are laid out and examined, thereby creating a foundation for understanding some of the more nuanced aspects of the collated aesthetic as a strategy for inconclusive, non-instrumental materialist representation.

The particularities of Benjamin's and Jennings' development of a collated aesthetic for writing history calls for separate and individual analyses of *The Arcades Project* and *Pandaemonium*. Chapter Two, therefore, marks the first of two core case study chapters. It examines Jennings' concept of imaginative history and undertakes a critical assessment of its relationship, in practice, to the publication of Jennings' unfinished project on the Industrial Revolution. This chapter makes productive Jennings' unpublished notes on *Pandaemonium* as a means of understanding the philosophy of history which underpins his intervention into classical forms of historical scholarship. In Chapter Three, *The Arcades Project* is critically analysed in reference to Benjamin's concept of 'anthropological materialism' — a term Benjamin uses in *The Arcades Project* and in his writings on Surrealism to refer to a materialism of the body. Addressing the intersections of anthropological materialism, Benjamin's formation of critical historiographic work, and his understanding of historical materialism, this chapter examines the embodied practice of editing as central to the actualisation of Benjamin's collated aesthetic.

The Arcades Project and *Pandaemonium*, as vivid and variegated historiographic collections, were picked up over fifty years after their inception by cultural producers, who, working in a range of mediums and cultural platforms, mobilised the collated aesthetic in artistic experiments for the twenty-first century. Chapter Four critically assesses the place of the collated aesthetic in the 2010s, focussing on the opening ceremony to the 2012 Olympic Games in London, *Isles of Wonder*, and the 2017 exhibition at the Jewish Museum of New York, 'The Arcades: Contemporary Art and Walter Benjamin'. As part of Benjamin's and Jennings' historical legacy, these remobilisations of the collated aesthetic attest to the fact that entirely distinct forms of cultural production are used to realise *The Arcades Project* and *Pandaemonium* for a recent-present, contemporary audience.

Chapter One. The Collated Aesthetic in *One-Way Street* (1928) and *Spare Time* (1939)

Benjamin's compendium of self-authored passages, *One Way Street,* and Jennings' self-directed moving images, *Spare Time,* represent the realisation of a collated aesthetic, not for historiographic purposes, but as cultural critique delivered to a contemporary audience.[1] *Spare Time* and *One-Way Street* reveal Benjamin's and Jennings' understanding of the material immediacies of their own context, with the interwar character of the capitalist metropolis as a site of modern experience being focal in their representation of modern complexities.

In this chapter, the collated aesthetic of *One-Way Street* and *Spare Time* are understood to reveal Benjamin's and Jennings' interest in their own present, which becomes crucial to their historical undertakings in *Pandaemonium* and *The Arcades Project*. Since Benjamin's and Jennings' historical projects look back into the past in a way which is informed by their present-day concerns, it is only by starting with *One-Way Street* and *Spare Time* that this thesis can demonstrate how the formal and thematic lineaments of Benjamin's and Jennings' historiographic works emerge earlier, in their cultural critique, and therefore that the collated aesthetic encapsulates their interwar concerns. Following the publication of these earlier works, Benjamin and Jennings turned to think about the longer trajectories of modernity, employing a similar approach to materialist representation. In the texts and film studied in this chapter, however, the collated aesthetic is realised as cultural criticism, representing the interwar period surrealistically, for the repositioning of audiences in 1928 and 1939.

1.1 Introducing *One-Way Street* and *Spare Time*

Writing to his friend Gershom Scholem on 18 November 1927, Walter Benjamin cites the 1928 Rowohlt edition of *One-Way Street* as providing 'one of the most effective

[1] In this and subsequent chapters all quotations from *One-Way Street* are taken from 'One-Way Street', trans. by Edmund Jephcott, in *SW*, I, 444–88; hereafter *OWS*. In this chapter, reference is also made to the cover design by Sasha Stone for the 1928 volume *Einbahnstrasse* (Berlin: Rowohlt, 1928).

covers ever'.[2] Produced by Russian-born photographer Sasha Stone, the cover Benjamin endorsed for *One-Way Street* (Figure 3) is a photomontage comprised of street signs and photographic clippings of 1920s city life.[3] The everyday graphics of the metropolis appear in the form of a palimpsest layered over two disparate images of urban life. The municipal population appears crowded in these images: on foot, window shopping, and riding a double-decker bus. Whilst the architectural features represented on the front cover are nineteenth-century in style, the technologies of transport depicted allow us to date the photograph as one contemporary with the book's publication. The work's title and Stone's inclusion of the *Einbahnstrasse* street sign also provide contemporary markers, which as Andreas Huyssen highlights, cite the creation, in 1927, of the Weimar Republic's first ever one-way street.[4] Indicative of efforts to manage the growing complexity of working life in the city, *One-Way Street* takes its name from the instrumentality of traffic regulations, which, as an example of the rationalities of everyday life, are overturned by Benjamin in *One-Way Street* — a work which negates for its readership the experience of one-directional linearity.

The cover image to *One-Way Street* draws on then-contemporary technologies of reproduction, illuminating Stone's process of imagetic selection and deselection that is integral to his assemblage. The photographic fragments are arranged in a way which suggests that the bus's direction of travel corresponds to the direction that the road sign points in; on closer inspection, however, one sees an image filled with ambiguities.[5] It is difficult to comprehend where the image of the bus ends and where that of the high-street begins; whether the placing of the first road sign is true to its backdrop, or if it constitutes a post-production layering, as with those reproduced *ad infinitum* behind it. Confusion — 'the action of confounding, confusing, or throwing

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[2] 'Chronology', in *SW*, II.1, 826.

[3] Stone was at that time part of a group associated with the journal *G: Zeitschrift für elementare Gestaltung*. See *G: An Avant-Garde Journal of Art, Architecture, Design, and Film, 1923–1926*, ed. by Detlef Mertins and Michael Jennings (London: Tate Publishing, 2011) for translation and contextualisation of this journal.

[4] Andreas Huyssen, *Miniature Metropolis: Literature in an Age of Photography and Film* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2015), p. 150.

[5] Ambiguity is, in this chapter, understood as that which offers a multiplicity of meaning and resists a singularity of meaning. The term is therefore equated with the poetic. As William Empson, a friend of Jennings, wrote in 1930: 'the machinations of ambiguity are among the very roots of poetry'. *Seven Types of Ambiguity* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1949), p. 3. See also Jean Boase-Beier, *Poetic Compounds: The Principles of Poetic Language in Modern English, 1* (Tübingen: Niemayer, 1987), p. 131.

into disorder' — is palpably central to Stone's approach in this cover; an approach which is maintained throughout *One-Way Street*, with a depiction of concrete materiality that is uncertain, suggestive, and provocative.[6]

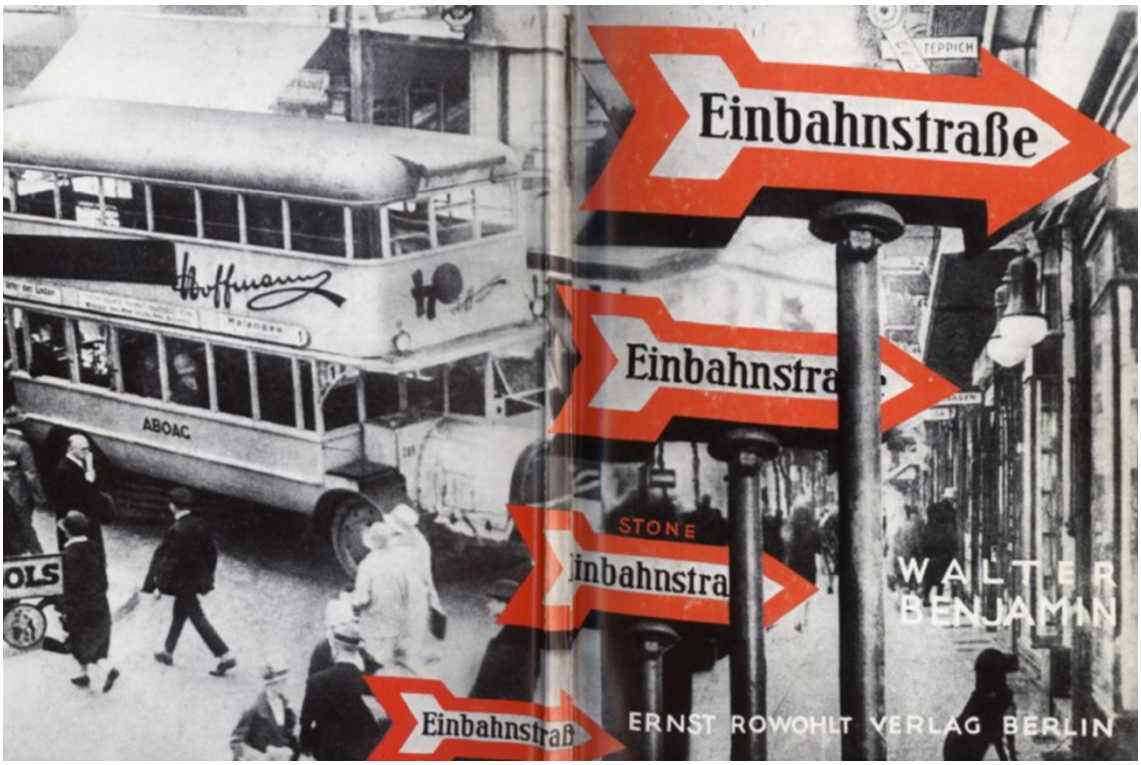

Figure 3. Sasha Stone, 1928 cover design for Walter Benjamin, *One-Way Street* (Berlin: Rowohlt, 1928).

Pointing in the direction of the internal pages, the *Einbahnstrasse* road sign on the cover to *One-Way Street* seduces readers to open the book, who then journey from this non-totalised photographic depiction toward a collation of non-linear fragments, which also portray Weimar Berlin. Varying in length and theme, the titles given to successive fragments imply a core concern with cultural criticism. 'Stand-up Beer Hall', 'Betting Office', 'Underground Works', 'Coiffeur for Easily Embarrassed Ladies', 'Office Equipment', 'Tax Advice', 'Doctor's Night-Bell', and 'Travel Souvenirs' suggest at first glance an interest in the banal and mundane aspects of everyday life. With many of these fragments having formed the Feuilleton section of the *Frankfurter Zeitung* — a newspaper to which Benjamin was a regular contributor — they

[6] *OED Online*, s.v. 'confuse, *v.*'.

constitute a form of non-realist reportage. Benjamin's aphoristic and enigmatic slithers of social commentary attracted a culturally interested interwar literati.

Themes of space and place, architecture, experience, perception, emotion, and dreams percolate in *One-Way Street,* co-existing without an overarching logic to their arrangement. Benjamin's sixty sections of prose are made distinct with bold headings. Neither alphabetised nor thematically arranged, these fragments are chaotically organised, illuminating a vast range of everyday perceptions related to the concrete materiality of the Weimar Republic and to Benjamin's experiences as he travelled in and out of the country during his peregrinations across Europe, from Germany to Paris, Italy, and the Island of Capri. An expansive understanding of everyday impressions is made horizontal by Benjamin's non-hierarchical approach to collation. Moving from a reference to the 'enemy bombs' of World War I to 'magic incarnations' within only four lines, the fragment entitled 'Number 113' serves to illustrate how individual fragments are chosen because they resist internal coherence.[7]

One-Way Street, like Benjamin's publications in general, is interruptive and subversive, undermining the classificatory impulse of modern rationality. As his essay 'The Life of Students' shows, Benjamin was questioning the role of discipline in separating and ultimately dissolving authentic knowledge through the imposition of regulated and ordered channels as early as 1915.[8] He had long been frustrated with formal writing styles and conventions and the broader demands placed upon knowledge production by academic scholarship.[9] The collated aesthetic of *One-Way Street* — its evocativeness, heterogeneity, and internal incongruity — is an expression of Benjamin's turning away from these formal and stylistic conventions.

One-Way Street exists as a single work, both despite and because of its organisational discontinuities. Whilst the consecutive fragments 'Flag' and '…at Half-Mast' gesture toward continuity in the way their titles hang together, conjuring the image of a state in mourning, the manifest contents of these fragments do not follow on from one another. 'Flag' is about temporary separation: it evokes the image of a

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[7] *OWS*, p. 445.

[8] Benjamin argues that 'the concept of "science" or scholarly discipline serves primarily to conceal a deep-rooted, bourgeois indifference', 'The Life of Students', trans. by Rodney Livingstone, *SW*, I, 37–47 (p. 38). See also *Correspondence*, p. 266.

[9] See Benjamin's 1916 letter to Martin Buber, *Correspondence*, pp. 79–81.

lover departing on a long, but non-permanent, trip, while '…at Half-Mast' speaks to regret, specifically that brought on when a loved one nears death, when the multitude of things we 'should have liked to share with him' come to mind.[10] The emotive qualities of these fragments do correspond, but the connections between them have to be understood contrastively: they represent two different forms of farewell, one impermanent, the other permanent. *One-Way Street's* aesthetic of collation, as instigated on the cover, brings together a heterogeneity of elements, which are chosen because of their difference.

Stone's cover, which is described by Benjamin as being 'effective' in his letter to Scholem, demonstrates an approach to representation viewed as powerful by Benjamin.[11] Benjamin perceives a similar approach to that of Stone's photomontage taking place in Franz Hessel's literary publication *Heimliches Berlin* (Secret Berlin), which 'responds to the city' using an aesthetic of collation.[12] Benjamin explains in his 1927 review, that Hessel's fragments are 'intercut contrastively' with others in stark incongruity.[13] The term 'intercut contrastively', then, reveals a correspondence between Hessel's literary publication and Stone's cover for *One-Way Street*.[14] Alluding to Plato's cave and his allegory of the shadows, Benjamin writes, with reference to the application of contrast in *Secret Berlin*, that 'housewives, artists, fashionable women, businessmen, scholars are all *intercut contrastively* with the shadowy outlines of Platonic and comic masks'.[15] For Benjamin, the kind of contrast employed in *Secret Berlin,* and by extension *One-Way Street,* brings forth a representation which has been deliberately convoluted, in order to bring new shape and — as this chapter will argue — promote in audiences an imaginative engagement with their material conditions. Aristotle describes comic masks as 'distorted' and insofar as 'distortion' describes a

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[10] *OWS*, p. 450.

[11] 'Chronology', in *SW*, II.1, 826.

[12] 'Review of Hessel', p. 70, my emphasis.

[13] Walter Benjamin, 'Review of Hessel's *Heimliches Berlin'*, trans. by Rodney Livingstone, in *SW*, II.1, 69–71 (p. 70).

[14] 'Review of Hessel', p. 70. A friend of Benjamin's, Franz Hessel, is, alongside Benjamin, responsible for bringing the French notion of the flâneur into German literature, with his 1929 book *Walking in Berlin*. Franz Hessel, *Walking in Berlin: A Flaneur in the Capital*, trans. by Amanda DeMarco (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2017).

[15] 'Review of Hessel', p. 70, my emphasis.

breach, a twisting or deformation to the 'natural' or expected order of things, *One-Way Street* can be understood as productively distorting, in its depiction of the real.[16]

Unpacking Benjamin's allusions to Plato's 'shadowy outlines' in his 'Review of Hessel's *Heimliches Berlin*' (p. 70), some scholars have attributed Plato's allegory of the cave (its shadow-covered wall) as an anticipation of cinematic illusion;[17] in Friedrich Nietzsche's work, Plato's allegory of the cave can be read as implicating a different kind of reality, a 'dream reality', which, whilst 'presented to us with the greatest intensity', still appears as an 'illusion'.[18] Further, as Susan Buck-Morss writes in *Dialectics of Seeing*, the 'allegorical mode' makes 'visibly palpable the experience of a world in fragments'.[19] Buck-Morss' insight enables a comprehension of *One-Way Street*'s fragmentary and conflictual representation as eliciting a reflective experience of modernity. Mimetically effective in its depiction of a world shattered by the 'destructive torrents and explosions' of the First World War, *One-Way Street* finds its formal elucidation in Benjamin's 1936 essay 'The Storyteller'.[20] A fragmented form of visual representation — which, as with the work of Hessel and Stone, exists across image and text — is the kernel of *One-Way Street*: the *contrastively intercut* ensures that 'psychological connections amongst the events are not forced on the reader. It is left up to him to interpret things the way he understands them', thus illuminating the potential of ambiguity.[21]

Writing in 'The Task of the Translator', that 'no poem is intended for the reader', Benjamin suggests that poetic writing is predicated on non-instrumental qualities.[22] Characterised by the vivid expression of feeling, the form's dependence on non-didactic, creative devices, brings about ambiguities in meaning. In *One-Way*

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[16] '[A] comic mask is ugly and distorted but does not cause pain'. *Poetics*, trans. by Anthony Kenny (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), p.22.

[17] Nina Power, 'Film', in *The Oxford Handbook of Atheism*, ed. by Stephen Bullivant and Michael Ruse (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), ebook <http://dx.doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199644650.013.041>.

[18] Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy*, ed. by Michael Tanner, trans. by Shaun Whiteside (London: Penguin, 1993), p. 15.

[19] Buck-Morss, *Dialectics*, p. 18.

[20] 'The Storyteller: Observations on the Works of Nikolai Leskov', trans. by Harry Zohn, in *SW*, III, 143–66 (p. 144).

[21] 'Storyteller', p. 148.

[22] 'The Task of the Translator', trans. by Harry Zohn, in *SW*, I, 253–63 (p.253).

Street, the relationship between poetic experience, open meaning, and the production of new meaning, is located in the experience of the child — a figure whose relationship to their world is not dictated primarily by function. As depicted in the fragment 'Enlargements', non-instrumental poetic experience is a privilege of those supposedly too young to fall victim to prescriptions of use. In the space of childlike wonderment, the child creates anew. Through the fragment's descriptions of a legion of encounters wherein children negate the intended functionality of things, we see, in 'Enlargements', how the sterile abode of the adult is creatively transformed in the poetic interactions children have with the material world around them.[23]

One-Way Street creates a fundamentally non-utilitarian experience for its readers. Benjamin's collation of variegated and incongruous fragments render an open-ended, ambiguous, and potentially confusing reading experience, one comparable with a child's early interaction with dresser drawers, as described in 'Enlargements'.[24] Here, Benjamin illustrates a form of collecting which is chaotic and figurative; '"[t]o tidy up" would be to demolish an edifice full of prickly chestnuts that are spiky clubs, tinfoil that is hoarded silver, bricks that are coffins, cacti that are totem poles, and copper pennies that are shields'.[25] Resonating with how Benjamin describes the effect of surrealist literature, as constituting the realisation of a truly poetic life, *One-Way Street* can be understood as echoing the literary activity of the avant-garde, which saw the production of texts as 'demonstrations, watchwords, documents, bluffs, forgeries, if you will, but at any rate not literature'.[26] As is established from the outset, by the cover image, *One-Way Street* cannot be understood in a transparently communicative sense: whilst the depiction is rooted in recognisable reality, it meddles with it.

One-Way Street realises Benjamin's rejection of the 'pretentious, universal gesture of the book'.[27] Taken from the book's opening fragment, 'Filling Station', this quotation illustrates how Benjamin foregrounds that the work stands against what he

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[23] *OWS*, p. 463–66.

[24] *OWS*, p. 465.

[25] *OWS*, p. 465.

[26] Benjamin, 'Surrealism: The Last Snapshot of the European Intelligentsia', trans. by Edmund Jephcott, in *SW*, II.1, 207–21 (p. 208).

[27] *OWS*, p. 444.

perceives as conventional literary activity. Writing that '[s]ignificant literary effectiveness can come into being only in a strict alternation between action and writing', Benjamin harnesses an avant-garde, modernist aesthetic in this work.[28] Resonating with much of what Benjamin told his friend Scholem, in 1924, about his early intentions for the text, *One-Way Street* actualises a type of writing which he compares with 'leaflets, brochures, articles and placards': forms which promote and provoke action.[29] Benjamin sought to realise the implications in his original title for the work, 'Plaques for Friends' — drawing on the French *plaquette*: 'a narrow, brochurelike, short, special issue containing poems or something similar — a bookdealer's terminus technicus'.[30] Accordingly, he instigated an influential approach to writing, one that intended to bring to fruition a kind of mental action, actualised by 'inconspicuous forms'.[31]

In the fragment 'This Space for Rent', Benjamin reveals his interest in the contemporaneity of consumerist modes of representation, specifically the advertisement. The advertisement, he writes, 'tears down the stage upon which contemplation moved, and all but hits us between the eyes'.[32] Calling to mind the way Benjamin describes the avant-garde of the early twentieth century, in his essay 'The Work of Art in the Age of Its Technological Reproducibility', the advertisement shares an affinity with Dada in the way it rejects 'contemplative immersion'.[33] Benjamin writes that 'from an alluring visual composition or an enchanting fabric of sound, the Dadaists turned the artwork into a missile. It jolted the viewer, taking on a tactile quality'.[34] Whilst Benjamin notes that it was Mallarmé who 'was the first to incorporate the graphic tensions of the advertisement in the printed page' with his *Coup de dés*, it was Louis Aragon's surrealist novel *Paris Peasant* (1926) that, with its

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[28] *OWS*, p. 44; Buck-Morss, *Dialectics*, p. 18.
[29] *OWS*, p. 444.
[30] *Correspondence*, p. 257.
[31] *OWS*, p. 444.
[32] *OWS*, p. 476.
[33] 'Work of Art', p. 267.
[34] 'Work of Art', p. 267.

incorporation of diverse, incongruous, and evocative fragments, provided such an intellectual shock for Benjamin.[35]

Reminiscing about his first experience with *Paris Peasant*, Benjamin describes, in a 1935 letter to Adorno, the palpitations he felt whilst lying in bed reading Aragon's text: 'what a warning!', he proclaimed.[36] Newspaper clippings and reproduced placards lay strewn throughout this publication.[37] Here, the advertisement — with its use of a variegation of co-existing yet disconnected evocative fragments — becomes a motor for what will shortly be illuminated as an instantaneously generative experience. 'How mankind loves to remain transfixed at the very doors of the imagination', Aragon declares, clarifying the role of his collation of enigmatic everyday graphics: to instigate a radically subversive, visionary experience amongst his readership.[38] Realising an approach that Benjamin thought 'equal to the moment', these fragments are reproduced for imaginative, rather than profit-based, ends.[39] Taking inspiration from these new literary forms, *One-Way Street*, though formed entirely from Benjamin's prose, is visual due to Benjamin's evocative writing style. Through engaging with Benjamin's use of metaphor and other poetic devices as an approach to image-production, readers experience *One-Way Street* in a perceptual, rather than purely communicative, sense. In its ability to induce shock — like that experienced by Benjamin himself through his engagement with *Paris Peasant* — this collection of imagetic fragments seeks to promote new thought and new meaning.[40]

As Jennings states, with regard to his mobilisation of the collated aesthetic for his *Pandaemonium* project, 'the method of poetry' is actualised for the purposes of audience 'illumination'; his technique creates 'moments of vision' for recipients, wherein, through their juxtaposition, contrasting intercut forces create a 'window-

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[35] Quoted in Uwe Steiner, *Walter Benjamin: An Introduction to his Work and Thought* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2012), p. 83.

[36] 'I could never read more than two to three pages by him because my heart started to pound so hard that I had to put the book down.'. *Correspondence*, p. 488.

[37] Louis Aragon, *Paris Peasant*, trans. by Simon Taylor (Boston: Exact Change, 1994), p. 100.

[38] *Paris Peasant*, p. 60.

[39] *OWS*, p. 444.

[40] In 1938, Benjamin writes to Scholem that one of his reviews for the *Zeitschrift für Sozialforschung* appeared in the form of an advertisement. *Correspondence*, p. 558.

opening quality' that is new for each reader.[41] Jennings describes modernity as an 'inexpressible uncapturable process'.[42] Together, the fragments which make up Jennings' film *Spare Time* are an attempt to represent poetically the complexities of modernity. It is to Jennings' film that this chapter now turns.

Just under 14 minutes in length, Jennings' documentary film *Spare Time* is composed of disparate images, which, assembled contrastively, promote an evocative mode of meaning-making.[43] Depicting the everyday life of working-class Britons in 1939, *Spare Time* incorporates very little voice-over narration. In the first part, entirely without voices, a scene of a milkman pushing a cart of bottles along a cobbled street is set against a scene of a child entering a sweet shop in a disused temperance bar. The child sets her dog at the door as she walks in and the camera lingers, in the absence of humans, on the window display and the large billboard advertisement which spans the length of the building. Meaning is made entirely through the film's arrangement of suggestive images. With no clear continuity between this image and those prior to it — as is the case throughout the film — the audience is assured a multitude of possible meanings. The only continuity between images in *Spare Time* exists in the factory chimneys and worker housing which provide a consistent backdrop to the foregrounded action. Allusions to the interwar capitalist economy are continuously summoned.

A black and white film, *Spare Time* was written and directed by Jennings and produced by the GPO Film Unit, a national filmmaking body established in 1933 which had its roots in the Empire Marketing Board. Established by the 'father of British documentary film', John Grierson, Jennings was hired to work there in 1933.[44] He was tasked with making primarily silent, instructional films for Post Office workers and other civil service department officials. Exemplary of Grierson's direction, these works display a realist streak. As 'simple and often blandly titled silent instructional films',

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[41] *Pandaemonium*, p. xiv.

[42] *Pandaemonium*, p. xxxvi.

[43] *Spare Time*, dir. by Humphrey Jennings (GPO Film Unit, 1939).

[44] This phrase appears in multiple publications, including Jörg Später, *Kracauer: A Biography*, trans. by Daniel Steuer (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2020), p. 93.

they can be seen to conform to the typical style of the Unit.[45] Jennings' inaugural triad of 1934 — *Post Haste*, *The Story of the Wheel* and *Locomotives* — for instance, reveal an approach to documentary which, based largely in the literal construction of photographs of museum models, is concerned above all with official representations of history. [46]

Spare Time was the first film produced by the unit following Grierson's departure. It best demonstrates Jennings' proximity to the Surrealist movement. The film depicts street semiotics, such as advertisements and placards; it depicts architectural details and forms, such as terraces, football stadiums, and glass window displays. In its depiction of domesticity, it offers up a culture of the dining table; of ballroom dancing, marching bands, and choir groups; of pub drinking; and of sporting activity, such as football, snooker, and dog racing. The themes of the film echo the themes of interwar Surrealist publications, such as Aragon's *Paris Peasant* and Andre Breton's 1928 novel *Nadja*, as well as works on the periphery of Surrealism, such as Benjamin's *One-Way Street*, and the photographs of Eugène Atget and Brassaï (see Figure 4 and 5). *Spare Time* shows that Jennings shares with Atget and Brassaï a proclivity for depicting familiar scenes of everyday life, particularly, as is seen in the collection of images below, commercial units. Made unfamiliar through a poetic approach to capturing the real, Jennings' images below depict window displays as alluring when crammed full of commodities. Some of Jennings' scenes in *Spare Time* are almost identical to the Surrealists' depiction of the spectacle of capitalism on display (see Figures 6–9).

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[45] Paul Swann, *The British Documentary Film Movement, 1926–1946* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), p. 66.

[46] *Post-Haste*, dir. by Humphrey Jennings (GPO Film Unit, 1934), *Locomotives* dir. by Humphrey Jennings (GPO Film Unit, 1934), and *The Story of the Wheel* dir. by Humphrey Jennings (GPO Film Unit, 1934).

Figure 4. Brassaï, *The Dream – Shop Window on the Boulevards*, c. 1924, photograph, from Jean-Claude Gautrand, *Brassaï: Paris*, trans. by Peter Snowdon (Cologne: Taschen, 2008), p. 124.

Figure 5. Eugène Atget, *Menswear Shop, Avenue des Gobelins*, 1926, photograph, from Andreas Krase, *Eugène Atget: Paris*, ed. by Hans Adam (Cologne: Taschen, 2008), p. 183.

Figure 6. Sweet shop and billboards, still from *Spare Time*, dir. by Jennings.

Figure 7. Men's clothes and a man, still from *Spare Time*, dir. by Jennings.

Figure 8. Male mannequins, still from *Spare Time*, dir. by Jennings.

Figure 9. Window display, still from *Spare Time*, dir. by Jennings.

Opening with one of the few lines given to him, the film's narrator Laurie Lee provides an introductory context for *Spare Time*: '[b]etween work and sleep comes the time we call our own: what do we do with it…?', he asks.[47] This question, left unanswered by Lee, recalls Jennings' Mass Observation project of 1937. In the publication *May the Twelfth*, Jennings' montaged collation of mundane and sometimes irreverent participant observations are presented in a chaotic assemblage, the meaning of which remains indefinitely open. There are an abundance of reports in *May the Twelfth* loosely classified only by geographical region (London; Not London) and published in a way that seeks to retain their raw form, thereby avoiding, as Jennings' writes, any 'attempt to suggest further possibilities of analysing the material'.[48] Jennings later employed this strategy of opening up potential for meaning in *Pandaemonium*. As Jennings states, this approach to collation realises an attempt 'not to try to define its limits at the moment but to leave the reader to agree or not', in order to place the reader in a position that opens up possibilities for action.[49]

In *Spare Time*, the potentialities of poetic meaning-making are realised in the field of documentary. For example, a scene of an amusement park in Wales appears directly after a scene of terraces at the foot of rolling hills. A slow dissolve between these two scenes contributes to an image where the light-bulb signage of Danter's Fairground appears overlaid upon the Welsh mines (Figure 10). The interpenetration of these two images, as the disjointed sound of the Welsh miners' shift siren, from the previous image, lingers over the following image, of local families gleefully entering this carnivalesque space of play, registers a bleeding of the capitalist forces that organise *work,* into the capitalist forces that organise *leisure*, evoking leisure as a constituent of the wider economic process of work. This scene raises doubts over the extent to which spare time can produce absolute freedoms, such as the anarchic experience of playtime.

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[47] *Spare Time*, dir. by Humphrey Jennings (GPO Film Unit, 1939); Keith Beattie, *Humphrey Jennings* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2010), p. 42.

[48] Humphrey Jennings and Charles Madge, *May the Twelfth: Mass Observation Day Surveys* (London: Faber and Faber, 1937), p. 347.

[49] *Pandaemonium*, p. xxxv.

Jennings read Breton's 1924 'Manifesto of Surrealism' upon its first pressing in French and one sees his proximity to the movement particularly well in this image.[50] Defining Surrealism as seeking 'the future resolution of these two states, dream and reality, which are seemingly so contradictory, into a kind of absolute reality, a *surreality*', Breton identifies the dream-like as a surrealist goal.[51] An example is provided in the 'surreality' of the Danter's Funfair image above: the mind wanders toward a dream-like circumstance, where those dwelling in these Welsh terraces have their sleep interrupted by the intrusive, dazzling light of the bulb-lit signage, which seems to hang, in an unfamiliar sense, above their beds.

Figure 10. Slow dissolve, still from *Spare Time*, dir. by Jennings.

The dreary, everyday surroundings of worker housing is made unfamiliar by the dream-world of the fairground, and vice versa. The ambiguous and momentarily confusing image interrupts the realist image of things, as, for example, is portrayed by the work of the Griersonian Film Unit. As Ben Highmore observes: Surrealism

[50] Jackson, p. 18.

[51] André Breton, 'Manifesto of Surrealism (1924)', in *Manifestoes of Surrealism* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1969), pp. 1–29 (p. 14).

generates a 'defamiliarizing of the everydayness of the everyday'.[52] He explains that, 'if everyday life is what continuously threatens to drop below a level of visibility, collage practices allow the everyday to become vivid again by making the ordinary strange'. [53] The image of Danter's Fairground is particularly useful, here, in so far as it demonstrates the nuance of the collated aesthetic, which, whilst including some of the fragmented and fragmentary tenets of collage, surpasses much of what Highmore identifies when he invokes the theory of collage.

In this example, rather than two images beside one another, as with collage, we have a single image made up of two images which are overlaid, in a gesture of obscuring ambiguity. It is not only the juxtaposition of fragments delivered in Jennings' cinematic montage — such as the example of the milkman merely followed by the scene of the child at the sweet-shop, or the way in which the image of Danter's Funfair is penetrated and congealed with that of terraces — which constitutes the mobilisation of a collated aesthetic in *Spare Time*, but also, quite importantly, the way individual images are formed creatively. In themselves evocative, with meaning which is both abundant and uncertain, the production of fragments in *Spare Time* bring to bear indefinite possibilities of meaning, even prior to their collage- or montage-like construction, by way of juxtaposition.

Whilst the focus of this film is suggested in the title of *Spare Time*, its antithesis, 'work time', is almost continuously called to mind. Writing to his wife Cicely Jennings in March 1939 whilst capturing scenes of the industrial heartlands for *Spare Time*, Jennings comments that the word '"Cotton", simply means *work*'.[54] Having spent time around the textile factories of Manchester, where the mills opened at eight in the morning and closed at five in the afternoon, and workers labour a half-day on Saturdays, Jennings documented the spare time of cotton workers, which takes place mostly on Sundays. Filming 'The Manchester Victorians Carnival Band', terraces and industrial smoke characterise the skyline in scenes representative of leisure. Commissioned for the New York World Fair of 1939, interrupted by the outbreak of Word War Two, Jennings' collection of images were due to be screened at an event

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[52] Ben Highmore, *Everyday Life and Cultural Theory: An Introduction* (London: Routledge, 2002), p. 87.
[53] Highmore, p. 46.
[54] *The Humphrey Jennings Film Reader*, ed. by Kevin Jackson (Manchester: Carcanet Press, 1993), p. 5.

about British Workers, with the theme 'Building a World of Tomorrow'. Travelling around the industrial regions of the North of England — Stockport, Manchester, Preston, Bolton, and Blackpool — Jennings' captured, instead, a 'peculiar kind of human misery'.[55] Released in June 1939, these vignettes contribute to a critical understanding of the socio-economic experience of everyday life in these northern towns, as configured by the pervasive instrumentality of time in a capitalist economy.

Addressing 'the way people spend their spare time, people in three British industries: Steel, Cotton and Coal', the 'misery' Jennings cites is to be found in the way the film depicts the workers' experience of temporality.[56] The time between shifts for miners in Wales, for example, is shown being within a dimly lit, domestic setting. Pictured beside his wife and son, reading a newspaper whilst smoking a cigarette, one miner sits for his lunch of Caerphilly cheese, bread and tea. The presence of Caerphilly cheese reminds the audience of the miners' need to replace the salts they lose through sweat while at work. Such details contribute to a portrayal of spare time as a mode of temporary rehabilitation, necessary due to the intensity of working life. Life is dissected and classified according to the demands of the capitalist economy. Cut up into pre-determined moments of existence, time is represented as eliciting only opportunities for labour and opportunities for respite, the latter always existing in a symbiotic relation to the former.

Benjamin saw potential in what this chapter will call productive ambiguity: a muddled and disordered collation acts not as an emptied tank but as a motor to 'spur on the spontaneity and energy of thought'.[57] Drawing on his experience of Naples, *One-Way Street* approximates a 'tightly packed multiplicity' of elements, wherein 'housekeeping utensils hang from balconies like potted plants'.[58] Full of disarray and mayhem, '[t]he stamp of the definitive is avoided' in *One-Way Street* as in the city of Naples.[59] For the reader '[n]o situation appears intended forever'.[60] Carried over from

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[55] *Reader*, ed. by Jackson, p. 5.

[56] *Spare Time*, dir. by Jennings, voiceover; *Reader*, ed. by Jackson, p. 5.

[57] Theodor Adorno, 'Benjamin's *Einbahnstrasse*', in *Notes to Literature*, trans. by Shierry Nicholsen, 2 vols (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991–92), II (1992), pp. 322–27 (p. 323).

[58] Benjamin, 'Naples', trans. by Edmund Jephcott, in *SW*, I, 414–21 (pp. 419–420).

[59] 'Naples', p. 416.

[60] 'Naples', p. 416.

phenomenological experience into the textual form of *One-Way Street*, the chaos of the city stimulates an immediacy of imaginative thought and prevents the reproduction of classificatory systems and customary techniques of knowledge production. As Adorno writes, the conflicting evocations in *One-Way Street* 'do not want to stop conceptual thought so much as to shock through their enigmatic form and thereby get thought moving, because thought in its traditional conceptual form seems rigid, conventional, and outmoded'.[61] Equally applicable to an understanding of *Spare Time,* the commonalities of Benjamin's and Jennings' approach instigate an 'intellectual short circuiting', insofar as the provocation of materialist insight emerges through the texts' shared mimicking of labyrinthine city forms and the experience of confusion therein.[62]

Benjamin describes the outcome of this approach in *The Arcades Project*, in a depiction which illuminates non-instrumentality as eliciting automatic thought: as something which is revived in the readers by the provocations of incongruous collation. It points directly to what Adorno describes as 'shock'. 'Where thinking comes to a standstill in a constellation saturated with tensions', Benjamin writes, 'the dialectical image appears'.[63] Found where the 'tension between dialectical opposites is greatest', an incongruous collection has the potential to explode the 'continuum' of history, that is, the continuity of tradition and of the schematics of knowledge which uphold it.[64]

Formative for both Benjamin's and Jennings' later historiographic projects, the collated aesthetic is developed in *One-Way Street* and Jennings' own representation of contemporary conditions, *Spare Time*. *Spare Time* and *One-Way Street* elucidate how a shared cultural moment contributed to the development of techniques for fragmentary representation, which, across the image/text divide, offer visual and imagetic depictions of everyday life. In doing so, they display potential for the liberation of audiences from the didacticism of instrumental communication. Laying a foundation for the rest of the thesis, then, this chapter examines the basis upon which

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[61] Adorno, '*Einbahnstrasse*', p. 323.
[62] Adorno, '*Einbahnstrasse*', p. 323.
[63] *AP,* p. 475.
[64] *AP,* p. 475.

Benjamin and Jennings devise an aesthetic of collation which interrupts everyday instrumentality. Evocation, variegation and juxtaposition are given as the core, correspondent features of Benjamin and Jennings' collated aesthetic. The chapter argues that the collated aesthetic in these works is designed to contribute to the interruption of modernity's strict functionality.

1.2. The Collated Aesthetic as a Non-Instrumental Mode of Contemporary Representation

Instrumentality — 'contributing to the accomplishment of a specified purpose or the realization of a specified result' — is a core theme of *Spare Time*.[65] Although the film concludes with Lee reading a statement that points to the non-instrumental possibilities of spare time — its final line: '*Spare Time* is a time when we have a chance to do what we like, a chance to be most ourselves', marks a utopian parting message that stands in contrast to the film's visual content. Offering up a series of images which detail the human experience of time as forever serving and maintaining capital, whether through consumption or worker rehabilitation, *Spare Time* has the potential to provoke anti-capitalist reactions in its audience.

Striking a chord with Benjamin's *One-Way Street*, which critiques the 'imperialist' instrumentalisation of technology in capitalist modernity, the theme of capitalist instrumentality is a unifying one across these contemporaneous works.[66] 'To the Planetarium', for instance, speaks to *Spare Time* in the way it critiques the functionality of technological progress. In reference to World War I, Benjamin writes that 'technology betrayed man and turned the bridal bed into a bloodbath'.[67] Mourning the death of the early potential of the twentieth century, destroyed through the forty million civilian and military deaths of the war, Benjamin writes that 'the last war' is demonstrative of the 'lust for profit of the ruling class [who] sought satisfaction

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[65] *OED Online*, s.v. 'instrumentality, *n*.'.

[66] *OWS*, p. 487.

[67] *OWS*, p. 487.

through it'.[68] Instrumentality transpires to be a defining feature of the experience of life during Europe's interwar period.

The chaotic approach to arranging imagetic fragments by way of contrast ensures a non-instrumentality in the audience experience of these two texts. The technique employed by Benjamin and Jennings proves to be opportune for engaging in the interpellation of audiences, suggesting ways in which audiences can be encouraged to consider new and different ways of being.[69] Through their non-instrumental arrangement, these works draw audience and readership into their critiques of instrumentalised time, instrumentalised moments, and instrumentalised technological progress. The collated aesthetic becomes one in which Lee's utopian allusion to the possibilities of not working, as an experience that elicits freedom to 'be most ourselves', is realised in the very processes of meaning-making offered to audiences.

Whether our intellectual interactions with creative, Surrealist-inspired pieces of cultural commentary, such as Benjamin's *One-Way Street* and Jennings' *Spare Time,* constitute knowledge production or not, is a contested point. The non-instrumentality of both image and collection provokes poetic meaning in a way which interrupts instructional methods of image-making. Benjamin's and Jennings' shared strategies of evocation, variegation, and juxtaposition provide an aesthetic, *sensory* dimension to domains such as documentary and reportage, which had generally been characterised as realist.[70] Offering a radical paradigm within which to situate the presentation of material realities — insofar as the breadth of interpretation offered is unlimited — the collated aesthetic of *One-Way Street* and *Spare Time* strikes a chord with the philosopher Alexander Baumgarten's observation that 'aesthetic knowledge is knowledge about the singular. It cannot be generalized into laws in itself, and it applies only to the unique, but it is knowledge nevertheless, and makes "truth" happen in a

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[68] *OWS*, p. 487.

[69] Louis Althusser, 'Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses (Notes towards an Investigation)', in *Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays* (London: Monthly Review Press, 1971), pp. 127–186, (p. 173).

[70] This conception of 'aesthetics' is also found in Susan Buck-Morss, 'Aesthetics and Anaesthetics: Walter Benjamin's Artwork Essay Reconsidered', *October*, 62 (1992), 3–41 (p. 6).

singular way'.[71] Looking back to such arguments made in the eighteenth century, the collated aesthetic can be understood as harking back to a cultural paradigm unconstrained by capitalist rationality.

In his 1998 study *Poetic Knowledge: The Recovery of Education*, James Taylor remobilises such arguments at the turn of the twenty-first century, advancing a kind of knowledge which is unpegged to singular definitions of truth. In rediscovering a pre-industrialised mode of knowledge, Taylor creates a concept which he names 'poetic knowledge', defined in and through the unique and 'sensory-emotional experience of reality'.[72] In contrast to the rational logic of the scientific methodologies which have prevailed in the modern age, Taylor presents a concept of rudimentary, foundational 'first knowledge', which he understands as a knowledge of the senses.[73] Taylor's term is useful for foregrounding the effect of a collated aesthetic as eliciting a 'nonanalytical' encounter.[74] Having the 'same surprise of metaphor found in poetry, but also found in common experience, when the mind, through the senses and emotions, sees in delight, or even terror, the significance of what is really there', Benjamin's and Jennings' works potentialize the generation of new and automatic insight.[75] The collated aesthetic repositions audiences toward 'a spontaneous act of the external and internal senses with the intellect, integrated and whole, rather than an act associated with the powers of analytic reasoning'.[76] The type of knowledge afforded by the collated aesthetic, therefore, is not the mastery of information, but instead one which promotes a restoration of intuitive knowledge for creative development.

Resonating with the way in which Surrealist techniques of representation subvert rationalist thought — the movement sought respite from the 'absolute rationalism' of the post-Cartesian world — *One-Way Street* and *Spare Time* proffer a

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[71] Peter Kivy, 'Aesthetics and Rationality', *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, 34.1 (1975), 51–58 (p. 51); Baumgarten quoted in Martin Schmidl, 'Realism Lineup – Artistic Research, Caricature, Ethnographic Turn, Political Art, Spurensuche: Research Methods by Artists in the Context of Realism', in *Aesthetics and Anthropology: Performing Life, Performed Lives,* ed. by Ina-Maria Greverus and Ute Ritschel (Berlin: Lit, 2009), pp. 129–44 (p. 132).

[72] Taylor, p. 5.

[73] Taylor, p. 71.

[74] Taylor, p. 5.

[75] Taylor, p. 6.

[76] Taylor, p. 6.

form of knowledge production amongst audiences which may be considered, in its most rudimentary and pure sense, 'the opposite of scientific knowledge'.[77] Whilst many of the adjectives used to describe Benjamin's and Jennings' disordered collections have been, and will likely continue to be, those which are dominantly utilised in a pejorative sense — 'ambiguous', 'chaotic', 'disharmonious', 'confusing' — these terms are here reclaimed for their creative potential, and used to describe the non-standard experience of Benjamin's and Jennings' audiences, who are implicated, or hailed, towards a sudden aesthetic and sensory encounter with the works.

1.3. Contextualising Evocation

The inclusion of evocative imagery in Benjamin's and Jennings' works is important for understanding the mechanics of non-instrumentality in their shared aesthetic of collation. Evocation is a perceptual experience, where emotional states are brought to the conscious mind through provocation.[78] It is a process which does not demand exertion or effort, analysis or interpretation, but is experienced mystically, in an immediate sense. Drawn from Romanticist continuities in the avant-garde, the role of evocative imagery in *One-Way Street* and *Spare Time* complicates post-Enlightenment rationality. Best understood through an appreciation of the relationship between conscious and unconscious modes central to Freudian psychoanalysis, evocation has played a role in literary and aesthetic trends, such as automatic writing. Whilst doubt exists surrounding the faithfulness of Breton's rendering of Freud, what is most important here is how popular trends in twentieth-century psychology become actualised in Surrealist works as poetics.[79]

From the mid-1920s onwards, Surrealism, defined in Breton's manifesto of 1924 as 'psychic automatism in its pure state', aroused the interests of Benjamin and

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[77] Breton, 'Manifesto', p. 9; Taylor, p. 6.

[78] True to Benjamin's German rendering of the term as *Ästhetisch,* 'aesthetics' is explored in this chapter through its relation to the Greek term *aisthetikos*: 'of or relating to sense perception, sensitive, perceptive', from *aisthanesthai*, 'to perceive'. *OED Online*, s.v. 'aesthetic, *n*. and *adj*.'. This non-Kantian understanding concerns, not matters of judgement or art criticism, but rather matters of perception and experience, expansively understood.

[79] Liliane Abensour, *Psychotic Temptation* (New York: Routledge, 2013), p. 116.

Jennings.[80] This notion of psychic automatism, 'by which one proposes to express — verbally, by means of the written word, or in any other manner — the actual functioning of thought', became pivotal to each of their comprehensions of a movement that was concerned with dream states and the workings of the unconscious mind.[81] As a mode of audience engagement, this was the idea that Jennings communicated to his friends in England, including William Empson, who was sent a letter by Jennings celebrating the 'dream symbols of the Surrealists' which provoke, above all, a 'new' mode of interaction.[82] Surrealism, for Jennings, embodied the overcoming of rationalist thought. It provided a means of resisting an increasingly logical way of experiencing the world.[83]

Jennings' interest in the Surrealists' evocation of unconscious states was shared by Benjamin. In a letter penned in July 1925, Benjamin celebrated the ways that Surrealism mobilises language as 'dream', forming a kind of literature which approaches its audience as if engaging in a mental 'conquest'.[84] Words themselves become automatic vectors for new association; free of pre-established meaning, they evoke new meaning through a multitude of potential configurations.[85] Benjamin wrote to Scholem, in 1924, of his desire to collate his own dreams in the *One-Way Street* publication, with 'Number 113' fulfilling this intention.[86] In this fragment, dream worlds are expressed in linguistic form. Recording a very different way of representing his memory of visiting Goethe's house in Weimar — as a dream — this fragment suggests that a compression of time and space is made possible in the world of dreams, allowing for the creation of a metaphysical experience, whereby Benjamin meets and dines with the eighteenth-century literary figure whom he read in his youth.[87] In this pre-rational world, the strength of the psychological connection with

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[80] Breton, 'Manifesto', p. 26.

[81] 'Manifesto', p. 26.

[82] Jackson, p. 390.

[83] For the relationship between modernity and rationality, see *Being Modern: The Cultural Impact of Science in the Early Twentieth Century*, ed. by Robert Bud and others (London: UCL Press, 2018).

[84] Benjamin to Rainer Maria Rilke, *Correspondence*, p. 274.

[85] This is especially reminiscent of Tristan Tzara's poetic experimentation.

[86] 'I intend to collect my aphorisms, witticisms, and dreams in several chapters, each of which will carry the name of someone close to me as its only heading'. *Correspondence*, p. 257

[87] *Correspondence*, p. 51.

Goethe that Benjamin felt is evoked. Describing how he holds Goethe's elbow, in a vision where he 'began to weep with emotion', 'Number 113' emphasises the emotive qualities of this sleeping evocation.[88]

Touched by the 'heroic phase of Surrealism', both Benjamin's and Jennings' Surrealist inspiration was born out of their engagements with the early phase of the movement, during which Surrealism showed continuities with Dada (Breton's involvement with Dada ran *c.* 1916 to 1924) and with anti-rationality and juxtaposition, culminating with the publication of the Surrealist manifesto of 1924.[89] Read by both Benjamin and Jennings, this manifesto covers the life of the movement from its beginning, in 1919, up to 1924 — a period described as 'the prehensile tail' of Romanticism.[90] As with Dada, this phase of Surrealism was anti-bourgeois and concerned with the juxtaposition of fragments as a means of promoting evocation. Whilst Dada reacted against military technologies of mechanised death, the Surrealists critiqued the hyper-mechanisation of everyday life, wherein human experience was shaped by scientific rationality. Frederick Taylor's *Principles of Scientific Management* (1911) illustrates the extension of Fordist factory production, which advanced the micro-control of workers as a means of increasing productivity.[91] Opposed to the everyday implications of scientific rationality advanced by Taylor, the movement which inspired Benjamin and Jennings was one characterised by the collages of Max Ernst, automatic texts, and the psychic experimentality of hypnotist René Crevel. Mystical and esoteric methodologies lead the group toward a series of investigations into perception and alternative mental states.

Jennings famously attracted the title of being the 'only real poet British cinema had produced', while Benjamin's means of 'thinking poetically' [*dichterisch denken*] is

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[88] *OWS*, p. 446.

[89] Margaret Cohen, *Profane Illumination: Walter Benjamin and the Paris of Surrealist Revolution* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), p. 173.

[90] Breton himself uses the phrase 'prehensile tail', in the 'Second Manifesto' of 1930. In Britain also, Herbert Read was keen to stress Surrealism as an extension of Romanticism, much to the dismay of Jennings. André Breton, 'Second Manifesto of Surrealism (1930)', in *Manifestoes*, pp. 117–94 (p. 153); Jennings, 'Surrealism', in *Reader*, ed. by Jackson, pp. 219–21.

[91] Frederick Taylor, *The Principles of Scientific Management* (New York: Harper, 1911; repr. New York: Dover, 1998).

evidenced across his works.[92] For Hannah Arendt, 'Benjamin "thought poetically" [*dichterisch dachte*] without being a poet'.[93] Whilst Benjamin worked primarily in the field of literary criticism, both academic and journalistic, Jennings was a published poet, alongside a painter and a filmmaker. Jennings' poems address themes of space and place and of technology and work. Written in the same year as *Spare Time*, 'Two American Poems' was featured in one of Britain's leading Surrealist Magazines: *The London Bulletin*.[94] This poem illustrates the ways Jennings' materialist concerns with nature, technology and the experience of the city were aspects of a wider programme of Surrealist image-production, in which 'the omnipotence of thought' is considered 'capable of freeing itself by means of its own resources'.[95] These resources, which concern the interplay between unconscious and conscious realms, can involuntarily provoke new insights.

Immersed in literary circles, Jennings associated with poets both before and after abandoning his PhD on Thomas Gray. His poetic interests were not solely aligned with his academic career in literature: from 1935, working alongside British Surrealist David Gascoyne on a series of translations from ex-Dadaist and co-founder of the French Surrealists Benjamin Péret, Jennings' poems, poetic prose 'reports', and translations of E. L. T. Mesens were published in Roger Roughton's magazine *Contemporary Poetry and Prose*, in addition to translations of Paul Éluard in 1936.[96] That Benjamin also translated poetry indicates a further correspondence between him and Benjamin and helps us to understand their simultaneous development of a collated aesthetic as emerging from a shared interest in literary image-making. From as early as 1914, Benjamin translated poems from Baudelaire's *Les Fleurs du Mal*; in

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[92] Lindsay Anderson, 'Only Connect: Some Aspects of the Work of Humphrey Jennings', *Film Quarterly*, 15.2 (1961), 5–12 (p. 5).

[93] Hannah Arendt, *Walter Benjamin, Bertolt Brecht: Zwei Essays* (Munich: Piper, 1971), p. 22.

[94] Humphrey Jennings, 'Two American Poems', *London Bulletin*, 11 (March 1939), p. 19.

[95] André Breton, 'What is Surrealism?', in *What is Surrealism? Selected Writings*, ed. by Franklin Rosemont (London: Pluto, 1978; repr. London: Pathfinder, 2018), pp. 171–213 (p. 177).

[96] Jennings' friendship circle contained numerous poets and he had graduated from Cambridge with a double first in English in 1929. Jennings' sustained interest in the poetic is evinced by the critical writing he produced during that period, as well as by his own verse. Jackson, pp. 165–66.

the 1920s, this pursuit became more intensive.[97] As influences on Benjamin's and Jennings' processes of imagetic evocation, Péret, Éluard and Baudelaire stand in congruence in that they all bring about the materialist poetics of the everyday. All three of these poets are associated with Surrealism: Baudelaire is cited as a precursor to the twentieth-century aesthetics of Péret and Éluard, who went on to form the Surrealists, alongside Breton, in 1924.[98]

In order to situate Benjamin and Jennings it is useful to assess the continuities as well as the distinctions between Romanticism and Surrealism, as these presented themselves to the two authors. For J. H. Matthews, the 'romantic poet persisted in seeing himself as the centre of the universe', while those who take for their inspiration the movement of Surrealism subscribe to the 'view expressed by Nicolas Calas, who reminds us that Surrealism "is not interested in the *author as such*"' in so far as '"the development of the individual is not essential"'.[99] The unconscious in Romanticism is accessed through, and experienced as, the intensity of subjectivity; the autonomy of the Surrealists lies in their interest in collective materialist change.

As Michael Jennings states in relation to *One-Way Street*: Surrealism is mobilised to 'offer ways to change life and transform the world'.[100] In considering *Spare Time,* Phillip Logan writes that Surrealism is wielded by Jennings to 'disabuse the viewer of the general notion, that "machines have made robots of us"'.[101] Indicated through the movement's association with communism, the aesthetic approaches of the Surrealists — collages, dream renderings and group hypnosis — unravel the belief that mechanisation has indefinitely eroded our humanness; they are not a set of inquiries into individual subjectivity, but instead a means of making the familiar unfamiliar, with the aim of re-visioning material conditions and so promoting social

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[97] Michael Jennings, 'Introduction', in Walter Benjamin, *The Writer of Modern Life: Essays on Charles Baudelaire*, ed. by Michael Jennings, trans. by Howard Eiland and others (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006), pp. 1–25 (p. 2).

[98] Charles Baudelaire is identified as a precursor of Surrealism by Keith Aspley, *Historical Dictionary of Surrealism* (Lanham: Scarecrow Press, 2010), p. 61.

[99] J. H. Matthews, 'Poetic Principles of Surrealism', *Chicago Review*, 15.4 (1962), 27–45 (p. 40).

[100] Michael Jennings, 'Walter Benjamin and the European Avant-Garde', in *The Cambridge Companion to Walter Benjamin*, ed. by David Ferris (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), pp. 18–34 (p. 32).

[101] Phillip Logan, *Humphrey Jennings and British Documentary Film: A Re-assessment* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2011), p. 106.

transformation, in and through emancipatory experience and new modes of perception.[102]

Key to the apparatus of Benjamin's and Jennings' technique of evocation is the use of poetic devices, such as simile, metaphor, atmosphere. Emotive close-ups in Jennings' *Spare Time* meet their literary equivalent in the durational linger of Benjamin's reflections. Appealing to emotion, poetic devices make the contemporary moment of interwar crisis intimately *felt*. What is crucial to Benjamin's and Jennings' innovative style is the way in which this poetic form was carried over into the field of representing everyday political concerns, thereby breaking with Romanticism and evidencing the implications of Surrealism as making materialist representation poetically non-instrumental.

As embodied and visualised in the minds' eye, Hannah Arendt explains that, 'metaphor had to be the greatest and most enigmatic gifts of language' for Benjamin.[103] As the next section of this chapter will examine, in relation to their equivalences in film, metaphor and reflection are used in the collated aesthetic to evoke the character of crisis. In a sense, metaphor is the very definition of the image: the creative representation of an object through the transference of one idea into a different domain for the purposes of advancing comprehension amongst audiences — something that was particularly applicable with respect to the audience contemporary to Benjamin's and Jennings' work in the interwar period, who were well versed in reproductive media.

1.4. Techniques of Evocation in *Spare Time* and *One-Way Street*

Techniques of evocation are central to the workings of the non-instrumental collated aesthetic in both *Spare Time* and *One-Way Street*. In *Spare Time*, the exploitative conditions of wage-labour in the mines of Wales are evoked through the depiction of atmosphere and emotion. In the fragment 'Imperial Panorama', *One-Way Street* demonstrates the mobilisation of evocation to the representation of socio-political

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[102] Breton, 'Manifesto', pp. 3–4.

[103] Arendt, *Benjamin, Brecht*, p. 22.

crisis. French and Belgian troops had occupied the Ruhr Valley, Germany's industrial region, seeking the confiscation of goods as a means of forcing the reinstation of debt repayments demanded as reparations following the First World War, unpaid by Germany since the autumn of 1922. Catastrophe permeated the Weimar Republic from 1921 and German hyperinflation amounted to considerably more than portrayed by the image of a wheelbarrow full of banknotes.[104] The French and Belgian military occupied coal mines, steelworks, factories and railways. A general strike was called. The government began to print money to support a policy of passive resistance, whereby workers in the Ruhr Valley were paid a wage to resist and refuse cooperation with occupying troops. The crisis of hyperinflation, however, was such that the wage paid became increasingly devalued.

Writing at the height of this crisis, in 1923, Benjamin confronts the impact of a capitalist means of production upon humanity, with an approach to writing which provokes emotion through its rich, if stark, visualisation of poverty:

> When there was work that fed a man, there was also poverty that did not disgrace him, if it arose from deformity or other misfortune. But this desperation, into which millions are born and hundreds of thousands are dragged by impoverishment, does indeed bring disgrace. Filth and misery grow up around them like walls, the work of invisible hands. And just as a man can endure much in isolation but feels justifiable shame when his wife sees him bear it or suffers it herself, so he may tolerate much so long as he is alone, and everything so long as he conceals it. But no one may ever make peace with poverty when it falls like a gigantic shadow upon his countrymen and his house.[105]

The matter of crisis is set into motion, mentally, with two counts of non-literal similarities. Baudelaire's 'representativeness' is apparent in Benjamin's use of the figurative language of emotion to depict everyday life and the material sources of

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[104] Bernd Widdig animates this often-cited image through reflecting on his own grandfather's memory of how, in 1923 'we had to fill up a whole wheelbarrow with banknotes when we went to town and tried to buy groceries'. *Culture and Inflation in Weimar Germany* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), p. 4.

[105] *OWS,* p. 452.

human experience.[106] The societal limitations placed upon liberty by the experience of poverty in 'Imperial Panorama', are emphasised here through Benjamin's nightmarish vision of a dirty incarceration, one which suggests the character of poverty to be so dehumanising, and terrifying that it features not just misery, but an inescapable material uncleanliness. Benjamin makes powerful his expression of the lives of the poor with his mention of sinister 'invisible hands', belonging to the character responsible for the actualisation of poverty.[107] This phrase is drawn from Adam Smith's *Enquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations* (1776), which explains the mechanisms of capitalism as 'led by an invisible hand to promote an end which was no part of his intention'.[108] The visual character of Smith's metaphor of an impenetrable and ungovernable capitalism is regenerated in Benjamin, expressing in this instance a systematic oppression. 'Like a gigantic shadow', Benjamin writes in the second instance: poverty looms over the proletariat during moments of economic crisis.[109] The implication is that poverty brings darkness, a metaphor which illuminates the bleak character of existence expressed in the fragment. According to Benjamin, destitution is totalising. The use of imagetic writing emphasises the ominous oppression of capitalism, in an embodied sense: Benjamin's technique advances empathy.

Drawing us closer to the immanence of crisis, emotion is used in Benjamin's and Jennings' images to realise the inevitable cycles of capitalist economics. They depict economic growth and shrinking by applying techniques which offer its viewers an aesthetic experience. Shooting *Spare Time* on location, Jennings documented Britain's harsh socio-political conditions in relation to wage-labour. Evocation is provoked through the application of critical principles of editing and the selection of emotive scenes. Filming coal-workers whilst they enjoy both outdoor and indoor leisure pursuits in their spare time, emotion is portrayed in Jennings' final selection of scenes in the way he shoots them entirely in the absence of daylight. The leisure time of coal miners is understood to be taken almost entirely at night. With the articulation

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[106] Jennings, 'Introduction', in Benjamin, *Writer of Modern Life*, p. 1.

[107] *OWS*, p. 452.

[108] Adam Smith, *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations*, ed. by Edwin Cannan, 2 vols (London: Methuen, 1904), I, 421.

[109] *OWS*, p. 452.

of light and its absence, the depiction of labour conditions in Wales highlights the influence Jennings derived from Surrealism (see Figures 11 and 12), specifically in the commonality between Jennings' film and the night-time shots produced by the surrealist observer of 1920s Paris, Brassaï, who captured the beautiful and marvellous in the shadowed and the luminous.[110] Jennings' technique of producing shots which arouse emotion for the audience is especially resonant in his night-time scenes, as illustrated by Figure 13, in which the lightbulb sign contributes to the evocation of excitement experienced by workers enjoying momentary play, at Danter's Funfair.

Figure 11. Shadow and light (Wales, coal industry), still from *Spare Time*, dir. by Jennings.

[110] Brassaï, *Paris by Night* (New York: Bulfinch Press, 2001).

Figure 12. Shadow and light (Wales, coal industry), still from *Spare Time*, dir. by Jennings.

Figure 13. Atmosphere, Danter's Funfair (Wales, coal industry), still from *Spare Time*, dir. by Jennings.

Further to the emotive character created by his atmospheric scenes, Jennings uses several close-up shots of the facial expressions of his subjects, as Figures 14, 15, and 16 show. According to Benjamin, in the 'Work of Art' essay, space expands with

the close-up.[111] Benjamin allows us to understand how Jennings' ability as a film-maker enables him to 'explode this prison-world with the dynamite of the split second'. [112] Jennings' decision to harness the stillness of the camera — as if fixated on the detail of a chosen scene — creates a durational pull of materialist significance. We are being provoked by Jennings towards conceptions of the socio-political reality of time in a capitalist economy. Benjamin explains that the duration and focus of the close-up 'brings to light entirely new structures of matter'; it 'not only reveals familiar aspects of movements, but discloses quite unknown aspects within them — aspects "which do not appear as the retarding of natural movements but have a curious gliding, floating character of their own"'.[113] Montaging through quotation within his own writing, Benjamin corroborates this argument, which is that a poetic drive brings *Spare Time* into fruition. This is film as art. Jennings' creative activity is most concerned with *evoking* audience perception. The realist cinematography common to the British documentary movement, on the other hand, was more concerned with instructing audiences. It is this distinction that makes Jennings an anomalous character within that movement.[114] An emotional intensity is actualised in Jennings' facial close-ups: the grooves in the skin, the weathered face of the worker, promote and provoke the imagination toward questioning the character of modern humanity.

As Figures 14, 15 and 16 illustrate, there is an emphasis, in *Spare Time*, on materiality, on the interaction of environment and circumstance with the body. Representing an embodied materialism — what the third chapter of this thesis will name 'anthropological materialism' — the collated aesthetic is intensified through the lingering of these physiognomic shots. Jennings fosters rumination through this reflective and at times dream-like suspense of beautiful images, which appear frozen and sedate when compared to the common temporality of the film: an alternating rhythm wherein certain scenes are reflective and ruminative, whereas others are less so.

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[111] 'Work of Art', p. 265.

[112] 'Work of Art'. p. 265.

[113] Work of Art', p. 266; Benjamin quotes Rudolf Arnheim, *Film als Kunst* (Berlin: Rowohlt, 1932), p. 138.

[114] Anderson, p. 5.

Figure 14. Emotion, close-up (Wales, coal industry), still from *Spare Time*, dir. by Jennings.

Figure 15. Emotion, close-up (Wales, coal industry), still from *Spare Time*, dir. by Jennings.

Figure 16. Emotion, close-up (Wales, coal industry), still from *Spare Time* dir. by Jennings.

The temporal quality of sustained duration produced by Jennings' long-takes in *Spare Time* find their literary equivalent in Benjamin's *One-Way Street*. The poetic is achieved, here, through an altered temporal engagement with what is being documented. In the fragment 'Imperial Panorama', persistence is attained in Benjamin's analysis of the phrase 'things can't go on like this', which is delivered in an enigmatic section of prose that presses against a swift apprehension of meaning.[115] There is a prolongation of representation in the writing surrounding this quote, which heightens the emotive and representative potential of the fragment, releasing imaginative meaning from a single phrase through sustained and intense focus. Offering twenty-nine lines of critical reflection upon a single clause — six words — Benjamin instigates reflection amongst his readership:

> In the stock of phraseology that lays bare the amalgam of stupidity and cowardice constituting the mode of life of the German bourgeois, the locution referring to impending catastrophe – "things can't go on like this" – is particularly noteworthy. The helpless fixation on notions of security and property deriving from past decades keeps the average citizen from perceiving the quite

[115] *OWS*, p. 450.

> remarkable stabilities of an entirely new kind that underlie the present situation. Because the relative stabilization of the prewar years benefitted him, he feels compelled to regard any state that dispossess him as unstable. But stable conditions need by no means be pleasant conditions, and even before the war there were strata for whom stabilized conditions were stabilized wretchedness. To decline is no less stable, no more surprising, than to rise. Only a view that acknowledges downfall as the sole reason for the present situation can advance beyond enervating amazement at what is daily repeated, and perceive the phenomena of decline as stability itself and rescue alone as extraordinary, verging on the marvellous and incomprehensible. People in the national communities of Central Europe live like the inhabitants of an encircled town whose provisions and gunpowder are running out and for whom deliverance is, by human reasoning, scarcely to be expected – a situation in which surrender, perhaps unconditional, should be most seriously considered. But the silent, invisible power that Central Europe feels opposing it does not negotiate. Nothing, therefore, remains but to direct the gaze, in perpetual expectation of the final onslaught, on nothing expect the extraordinary event in which alone salvation now lies. But this necessary state of intense and uncomplaining attention could, because we are in mysterious contact with the powers besieging us, really call forth a miracle. Conversely the assumption that things cannot go on like this will one day confront the fact that for the suffering of individuals, as of communities, there is only one limit beyond which things cannot go: annihilation.[116]

This fragment elicits multiple co-existing meanings. As with the durational pull of the emotive close-ups demonstrated in Jennings' work, Benjamin hangs before the audience this everyday phrase as a means of disclosing the 'quite unknown aspects within' it.[117] It calls to mind a comment he made in *The Arcades Project*: that 'hell is not something that awaits us, but this life here and now'.[118] The extract also calls attention to its own making: in a gesture of self-reflexivity, the fragment implicates the representation of hell in *The Arcades Project,* as that wherein the new is stuck in the ever same.[119] In this gesture of self-reflexivity, Benjamin foregrounds a phrase which approximates the 'eternity of hell', heightening our awareness of his literary technique

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[116] *OWS*, pp. 450–51.

[117] 'Work of Art', p. 266

[118] *AP*, p. 473.

[119] *AP*, p. 544.

of evocation.[120] The image freezes the statement, which opens with several lines providing inferences as to the act of freezing, and so also to the act of Benjamin's image-making. Words are used which suggest the notion of freezing — of fixing, of securing, of making stable — in a fragment which also *fixes* the reader, in a durational hold. Benjamin here demonstrates a mirroring: a turning back of thought upon itself in a moment wherein the technique of delivery is matched by the matter delivered. This self-reflexivity complements the passage's reflection (its enduring focus on a minute aspect of everyday experience). Whilst Benjamin strives for the everyday, he avoids cliché and instead provides a creative illumination of the mundane: the phenomenal world is elevated toward imaginative creativity. The phrase 'things can't go on like this' is held in a moment of arrest, forcing a confrontation with the idea.

This approach is comparable to that achieved cinematically by Jennings. In Figure 14, we see a coal miner taking a gulp of beer during his leisure time. This intense shot of the man draws our attention, not only to the moment of release interpretable through the capturing of his post-work drink, but to the depth of the furrows of his skin, evoking the work-hours endured before this experience became one which was frozen for audience cognition. Whilst Benjamin's opening paragraph of 'Imperial Panorama' suspends a phrase which is entirely linguistic, the analogies between that and the mobilisation of poetics in the cinematic practice of Jennings registers a shared interest in making the cultivation of audience emotion critically productive. Reflection in Benjamin is the literary equivalent of the durational pull of the close-up in Jennings.

Benjamin's strategy for suspension is crucial for understanding the evocative quality of his image. It contains the seed for the intensity of felt knowledge. In 'Imperial Panorama' — a fragment that is itself composed of fourteen smaller fragments — each fragment contains the semblance of reflection. Miniature or commonly overlooked aspects of modernity's everyday are always the focus of this temporal duration applied in Benjamin's literary image. After considering 'the stock of phraseology', Benjamin moves to ruminate on other societal miniatures: a 'curious

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[120] *AP*, p. 843.

paradox' is the focus of the second fragment.[121] Here, Benjamin maintains the self-reflexivity discussed earlier, by exploring an impotency in the collective, the very rationale for his image formation, with an image designed to address such an impotency.[122] It is here that the poetic potential of self-reflexivity meets that of reflection as a poetic device. Self-reflexivity, as the mirroring of thought, and reflection, as the endurance of thought, both possess the value of inducing heighted emotion. When Benjamin writes, 'in this society the picture of imbecility is complete: uncertainty, indeed perversion, of vital instincts; and impotence, indeed decay, of the intellect', he does so as the instigation of insight concerning both the content and the form of the image. [123] Reflection is an aesthetic quality: it is poetic, distinguishing it from rational thought, and its duration is as much a part of the critical function of the image as it is a direct diagnosis of the absence of insight.

It is only through a consideration of Benjamin's early principles on language use, that one can come to comprehend the role of reflection in *One-Way Street*. It is around the time of Benjamin's writing of 'Imperial Panorama' that his literary approach came to a critical head. In 1923, Benjamin's reflective approach led to his not being published in areas where he expected publication. In a letter to his acquaintance, Florens Christan Rang, Benjamin explained that 'Goethe's Elective Affinities' had been rejected by his desired publisher.[124] It had been judged too long, and its style excessive: according to Erich Rothacker, then editor of *Deutsche Vierteljahresschrift für Literaturwissenschaft and Geistesgeschichte* (German Quarterly for Literary Scholarship and the History of Ideas), the 'rank overgrowth of its reflection' was grounds for rejection.[125]

Benjamin's early work illuminates that considerations of temporality and reflection also serve a radical epistemology. Reflection is employed to sustain cognition upon that which is to be thought through. In 'Goethe's Elective Affinities', Benjamin applies reflection in his revelation as to the 'truth content of a work': it is

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[121] *OWS*, p. 451.

[122] Adorno, '*Einbahnstrasse',* p. 323.

[123] *OWS*, p. 451.

[124] Benjamin to Florens Christian Rang, 2 April 1923, *Correspondence*, pp. 207–08, (p. 208).

[125] Gershom Scholem, *Walter Benjamin: The Story of a Friendship*, trans. by Harry Zohn (New York: New York Review of Books, 2001) p. 141.

through reflection that one becomes closer to truth.[126] In this essay, he applies his method of criticism to Goethe's work and attempts to unlock that which lies beneath the material content of the text, anticipating the 'mystical presuppositions' upon which knowledge is based.[127] 'Goethe's Elective Affinities' advances a mode of critique linked with Romanticism, a method which also appears in Benjamin's *The Concept of Criticism in German Romanticism* — his conceptually, thematically, and temporally related PhD thesis. Here, Benjamin draws on the theological, insofar as creation is theorised as a material rendering of the divine word of God. On this basis Benjamin proposes that whilst everything is language, language is fundamentally mystical and esoteric; an understanding which, as will be seen, he shares with Freud and the Surrealists.[128]

Benjamin's approach to criticism anticipates and accepts the hidden and uses reflective writing and the instigation of a non-reasoned and automatic kind of cognition to support the unravelling of the mystical. Resting upon an epistemological concern, that 'there is no true knowledge and no known truth', a point made by Benjamin in 1920, the radical nature of reflection as evocative entails the immediate production of new forms of knowledge.[129] First developed in 'Goethe's Elective Affinities', Benjamin's language-use in *One-Way Street* circumvents conclusiveness through reflection, because to conclude would be to relinquish thought. Reflection, in 'Imperial Panorama', for instance, serves to open meaning. The esoteric also appears in the work of Jennings, as, for instance, in the long shots of *Spare Time.* There is an insistence, indicated by Jennings' temporal fixing, that authentic meaning cannot be attained in the absence of reflection — that formal quality which sustains and allows for the heightened experience of emotion amongst audiences.

The relationship between reflection and the poetic is also made evident in Romantic aesthetics, a key precursor to Surrealism. The release of *Spare Time,* in 1939, deepened Jennings' association with a movement of neo-romantics who looked back

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[126] 'Affinities', p. 297.

[127] Benjamin to Scholem, November 1918, quoted in Samuel Weber, *Benjamin's -abilities* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2008), p. 20.

[128] 'Affinities', p. 297.

[129] Benjamin, 'Truth and Truths/Knowledge and Elements of Knowledge', trans. by Rodney Livingstone, in *SW*, I, 278–79 (p. 279).

to William Blake and looked forward to contemporary movements similar in character.[130] Benjamin's *Concept of Criticism in German Romanticism* offers a rationale of the reflection that is evident in *One-Way Street*, and, to a certain extent, supports a theorisation of that which similarly exists in Jennings' work. Addressing the work of Schlegel and Novalis, Benjamin writes that:

> Romanticism did not base its epistemology on the concept of reflection solely because this concept guaranteed the immediacy of cognition, but did so equally because the concept guaranteed a peculiar infinity in its process. Reflective thinking won its special systematic importance for Romanticism by virtue of that limitless capacity by which it makes every prior reflection into the object of a subsequent reflection.[131]

Long-takes, emotive close-ups, slowness, and a sustained focus upon that which is overlooked, are crucial in both Benjamin's and Jennings' renderings of an emancipatory political approach to aesthetics. The emotive quality of reflection served the unknown, in its dependence upon a non-conclusiveness which forever evokes new meaning.

Benjamin's reflection is understood by some scholars, as being indicative of a 'Jew's' special attachment to the world of language', which, according to Scholem, 'might be traced to their thousands of years of occupation with sacred text, with revelation as the linguistic basic fact and its reflection in all spheres of language'.[132] Digression, as Esther Leslie has remarked — or a 'rank overgrowth in reflection', in the words of Rothacker's 1923 rejection — is a means of overcoming sustained rationality in areas of experience and our knowledge of it.[133] Benjamin chose a period of national crisis, imperialism, and war to cultivate a poetic, anti-rationalist aesthetic which sought to open up the doors of the imagination. In both Benjamin's literary image production and Jennings' cinematic image production, the poetic character of these contemporary representations is achieved through the promotion of imaginative thought.

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[130] Jennings, *Jennings*, p. 14.

[131] Walter Benjamin, 'The Concept of Criticism in German Romanticism', trans. by David Lachterman, Howard Eiland, and Ian Balfour, in *SW,* I, 116–200 (p. 123).

[132] *Friendship*, p. 131.

[133] Esther Leslie, *Walter Benjamin* (London: Reaktion, 2007), pp. 64–65.

As the examples provided have shown, figurative expression, such as metaphor, and the alternation of temporalities, such as duration and reflection, are used to enhance the critical potential of these works through their evocation of emotion. Distance is experimented with in Benjamin's use of metaphor, through the figurative likeness of two entities, in 'Imperial Panorama'; proximity is amplified through the way in which the image is arrested before us in Jennings' close-ups of the expressions of workers, and in the sustained and illuminatory focus of Benjamin's reflective writing. The everyday is both brought close and pushed back: distance and proximity, as we experience them in *Spare Time* and 'One-Way Street', become poetic categories. Embracing emotion and its relationship to the immediacy of altered perception, Benjamin and Jennings' works illustrate a rejection of rationality in favour of poetics as a means of producing new knowledge.

1.5. Multiplicity and Variegation in *Spare Time* and *One-Way Street*

Spare Time and *One-Way Street* are the products of collecting practices. Sixty fragments are gathered by Benjamin to form the literary collection *One-Way Street*, which is comprised of passages of varying lengths, no more than a couple of pages each. Thematically distinct from one another, titles include 'Imperial Panorama'; 'Filing Station'; 'Breakfast Room'; 'Chinese Curios'; 'Construction Site'; 'Minister of the Interior'; 'Post No Bills'; 'Fancy Goods'; 'Arc Lamp'; 'Travel Souvenirs'; 'Toys'; 'Mixed Cargo: Carriage and Packing'; 'Stamp Shop'; and 'Betting Office'. Fragments such as 'Travel Souvenirs', 'Stamp Shop' and 'Mixed Cargo' refer, in their titles, to the phenomena of collecting by drawing on popular forms of the collectorial: those of commerce and those of hobby. Existing as part of a collection brought together by Benjamin himself, we again see a self-referential quality (a modernist gesture) which references approaches to collecting within the act of collecting: another reflexive act of agency whereby capitalism and consumerism are critically brought into view,

through which Benjamin calls into question forms of everyday culture within his own milieu.[134]

Collecting is incorporated into a realm of critical discourse in Benjamin. He engaged in both the practice and the theorisation of collecting, as seen in works about his book collecting such as 'Unpacking my Library'. Benjamin was an avid collector, not just of his own literary fragments, as demonstrated in *One-Way Street,* or of fragments penned by others, as demonstrated in *The Arcades Project*, but as part of a personal passion which transgressed the literary. He collected picture postcards from places he had travelled to as well as wooden toys.[135] As is implied in the title of Benjamin's *One-Way Street* fragment 'Mixed Cargo', the bringing together of various contrasting entities is indicative of a technique which overcomes traditional forms of collecting, such as those affiliated with modernity's taxonomic impulse. The preference for categorisation and the establishment of museums are two archetypical features of the imposition of Enlightenment rationality on society and culture.[136] These eighteenth-century forms of exhibition were based on the aesthetics of similitude: consistency and the representation of continuity, with an understanding of historical development as progress, produced ordered collections bound by strict rules of inclusion and exclusion. Such an approach is complicated in Benjamin's examples of collecting, which, in realising a 'magic encyclopaedia' — wherein connections between elements brought together remain unspoken and perhaps non-existent — makes space for the miscellaneous.[137]

The approach to collecting demonstrated by Jennings in *Spare Time* is likewise discontinuous and diverse. In scenes filmed in Wales and the north of England, Jennings observes the heterogeneity of everyday experience, transregionally. Social

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[134] For more on the sociology of reflexivity, modernity, and critique, see Ulrich Beck, Wolfgang Bonss, and Christoph Lau, 'The Theory of Reflexive Modernisation', *Theory, Culture and Society*, 20.2 (2003), 1–33. Compare Adorno's understanding of Benjamin's approach to representation: 'The deluded and yet intelligible interweaving of modernity and its society, something which has intensified to become the alienated destiny of every individual, appears as precisely the myth that thought must approximate in order to gain control of itself and thereby break the spell of myth'. '*Einbahnstrasse',* p. 325.

[135] See Benjamin's postcard collection in *Walter Benjamin's Archive: Images, Texts, Signs,* ed. by Ursula Marx and others, trans. by Esther Leslie (London: Verso, 2015), pp. 177–86.

[136] Dianah Jackson, *Bodies of Enlightenment: Diderot, Science and Esthetics* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999), p. 226; Joanna Stalnaker, *The Unfinished Enlightenment: Description in the Age of the Encyclopedia* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2010), p. 114.

[137] 'Unpacking my Library: A Talk about Collecting', trans. by Harry Zohn, in *SW*, II.2, 486–93 (p. 487).

and personal space feature in a montaging of life at the racehorses, the dining table, the pub, choir practice, the dancehall, cycling, marching band practice, and the fairground. Exploring a series of prominent British industries in turn, Jennings collates vignettes of industrial Britain, starting with steel, then cotton, and finally coal. As with Benjamin's variegated book collection (which holds space for objects which are not books – 'booklike creations from fringe areas'; 'paste-in albums', 'family albums', 'autograph books', 'portfolios', 'pamphlets', 'religious tracts', 'leaflets', 'prospectuses', 'handwriting facsimiles', or 'typewritten copies of unobtainable books'), Jennings also shows an interest in difference and disorder in his filmic collection.[138] Jennings includes work scenes in his film about spare time: the Welsh scenes, for instance, include a clip of the miners returning to work, descending below ground. Since most of the depictions of spare time are based around consumerist activity, *Spare Time* also contains many depictions of the British working-class at work: manning the pubs, selling tickets for the races, pushing a milk cart. These representations inculcate an alternative, or disordered, approach to traditional or mainstream forms of collecting.[139]

As collections, then, *Spare Time* and *One-Way Street* avoid the impulse Jean Baudrillard refers to when, in *The System of Objects*, he writes that the singular does not suffice in a collection: 'the fulfilment of the project of possession always means a succession or even a complete series of objects'.[140] Since 'a whole series lies behind any single object', failure to follow suit with additional objects of similar type becomes the source of 'anxiety'.[141] This anxiety was not the experience of Benjamin or Jennings, but Baudrillard's identification of collectorial neuroses connects his work with that of Freud, who also understood collecting in psychological terms. Illuminative of popular discourse and the cultural milieu of Benjamin and Jennings, Freud discusses the collection in an allegorical sense, focusing on the relationships between what is mentally prominent and what lies deep beneath the surface. Whilst Baudrillard views a collector's failure to conform to continuity as a source of mental suffering, Freud's

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[138] Benjamin, 'Unpacking', p. 491.

[139] Benjamin explores the poles of order and disorder in 'Unpacking my Library'.

[140] Jean Baudrillard, *The System of Objects*, trans. by James Benedict (London: Verso, 1996), p. 92.

[141] Baudrillard, p. 92.

radical understanding of collecting brings it into association with the practice of psychoanalysis, in terms of the latter's rousing of disjointed pasts, and thus the matter of non-instrumentality in terms of collation.

The nature of Freud's practice is of an experience which anticipates, through repose and imaginative freedom, the prompt and automatic character of new associations, memories, and thoughts, as a focus for patients' treatment. Through conversation between patient and analyst, experiences, wishes, confessions and desires automatically come to mind; a circumstance that, in the introduction to his 'Parapraxes' lectures, Freud attributes to the residual 'magical power' of words and their capacity to 'provoke affects'.[142] In analysis, new and imaginative connections between disparate entities are brought together in a collection.[143]

Himself a collector, Freud drew an analogy between the contents of the mind and the antiquarian objects on display in his room. In 'Notes Upon a Case of Obsessional Neurosis', Freud illuminates the differences between conscious and unconscious realms by pointing to the objects he collected: 'everything conscious was subject to a process of wearing-away' he wrote, 'while what was unconscious was relatively unchangeable'.[144] Having collected 'objects found in a tomb', Freud mused that 'their burial had been their preservation: the destruction of Pompeii was only beginning now that it had been dug up'.[145] Freud frequently returned to the description of psychoanalysis as an excavation or archaeology of the mind; his antiques wrenched from a 'topological unconscious' in a practice which generated knowledge from the recently uncovered. [146] For Freud's patient, Fräulein Elisabeth von R., childhood memories were released like contents freshly yanked from a tomb. As with the phrase 'torso's in a collector's gallery' — to quote from Benjamin's 'Excavation and Memory' (1932) — many of Freud's allegories find their way into

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[142] 'Parapraxes (1916)', in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, ed. and trans. by James Strachey and others, 24 vols (London: Hogarth Press, 1953–74), XV: *Introductory Lectures on Psycho-Analysis* (1963), pp. 15–82 (p. 17)

[143] 'Parapraxes', p. 29.

[144] 'Notes Upon a Case of Obsessional Neurosis (1909)', in *Psychological Works*, X: *Two Case Histories: 'Little Hans' and 'The Rat Man'* (1955), pp. 153–318 (p. 176).

[145] 'Obsessional Neuroses', p. 176.

[146] See for example 'The Aetiology of Hysteria (1896)', in *Pyschological Works*, III: *Early Psycho-Analytic Publications* (1962), pp. 189–224 (p. 192); 'Case History of Fräulein Elisabeth von. R', in *Psychological Works*, II: Josef Breuer and Sigmund Freud, *Studies on Hysteria* (1955), pp. 135–82 (p. 139).

Benjamin's texts.[147] When Benjamin writes that 'he who seeks to approach his own buried past must conduct himself like a man digging', his proximity to Freud during this time becomes clear.[148]

Benjamin and Jennings mobilised this potential for critical, contemporary representation across the visual and literary outputs of *One-Way Street* and *Spare Time,* engaging indirectly with Freud, via Breton (who had read and absorbed Freud's writings while working at Saint-Dizier neuropsychiatric centre during the First World War) and the Surrealists. Whilst Freud worked as a therapist to promote the release of unconscious contents of the mind, Breton advanced the role of art as a provocateur. For the Surrealists, extending Freudian theories on the fruits of repose — pushing toward poetic knowledge formation and the development of their artwork — was less important than developing insight, vision, and the interaction between humans and the object world. For Breton, responding to non-instrumental stimuli in Surrealism is the only way to 'resolve, outside the economic plane, all the antinomies which, since they existed before our present social regime was formed, are not likely to disappear with it' because these antinomies imply 'a servitude even more profound and more final than a temporal servitude'.[149] Moving from a therapeutic to a materialist purpose, the Surrealists sought to understand the everyday aesthetically through the process of collecting, so inspiring Benjamin's and Jennings' cultivation of their audiences' critical thought, demonstrated in their collated aesthetics.

By the time of his death in 1966, Breton had assembled a collection far greater than Freud's. Breton worked within the ethnographic and artistic propensities of the time to collect objects from 'foreign' lands.[150] In 1931, Paris held an imperialist version of the series of world fairs which exhibited cultural artefacts plundered during colonial invasions and occupations. Condemning the exhibition in a publication entitled 'DO NOT VISIT THE COLONIAL EXHIBITION', Breton, along with twelve other surrealist signatories, including Éluard and Aragon, denounced the government's ethnographic

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[147] 'Excavation and Memory', trans. by Rodney Livingstone, in *SW*, II.2, 576.

[148] 'Excavation and Memory', p. 576.

[149] Breton, 'Limits not Frontiers of Surrealism', in *What is Surrealism*, ed. by Rosemont, pp. 227–41(p. 233).

[150] James Clifford, 'On Ethnographic Surrealism', *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 23.4 (1981), 539–64; Max Alfert, 'Relationships between African Tribal Art and Modern Western Art', *Art Journal*, 31.4 (1972), 387–96.

pillage, in a document which poured scorn on the use of forced labour and the exploitation of colonial lands and peoples.[151] That year, in the magazine *Le Surréalisme au Service de la Révolution* (Surrealism in Service of the Revolution), the group published a photograph of ethnographic figurines, alongside an image of a banner with a slogan from Marx: 'A people that oppress others cannot be free'.[152] In protest against the aforementioned exhibition, the Surrealists had organised an exhibition that same year, entitled 'The Truth About the Colonies', from which these images were taken. In 1936, the Surrealists produced a second exhibition of Eastern and African artefacts collated by the movement, this time, however, without the Marxist slogans.

Whilst affinities between this exhibition and the exhibition the group had opposed five years earlier are palpable in terms of the contents presented, the Surrealist salon served a political purpose of radical value, one which was intended to 'conjure disturbances that would linger in the body of the viewer'.[153] Janine Mileaf proposes that the Surrealists' eclectic mix of objects came closer to Surrealist political praxis than the collation of objects in the earlier exhibition, insofar as it did not fit into the pre-established conditions of exhibiting colonial objects, which often conveyed a narrative of civility versus barbarity. As a Surrealist, Breton's approach to collecting rested upon detournement, using a form of collecting that overturned pre-established values attributed to objects. It is this disruptive approach to collecting, realised by the Surrealists, that inform the work of Benjamin and Jennings, who disrupted classic taxonomies in their wake.

Spare Time and *One-Way Street* demonstrate an approach to collecting which is described by Benjamin, in his 1931 talk on book collecting, as the creation of a 'magic encyclopaedia'.[154] The collated items are 'detourned' in these examples, to draw somewhat anachronistically on Situationist vocabulary: they are re-routed, subverted, and hijacked. The items are divested of the meaning and use which has been commonly associated with them. Benjamin's rejection of utility in 'Unpacking my

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[151] Janine Mileaf, 'Body to Politics: Surrealist Exhibition of the Tribal and the Modern at the Anti-Imperialist Exhibition and the Galerie Charles Ratton', *Anthropology and Aesthetics*, 40 (2001), 239–55 (p. 243).

[152] Mileaf, p. 247.

[153] Mileaf, pp. 241, 254.

[154] 'Unpacking', p. 487.

Library' marks this surrealistic overturning of rationality.[155] He explains that there is nothing useful (practically purposeful) about a collection which dispenses pre-established categories of meaning and knowledge. As Benjamin writes in *The Arcades Project*:

> The interior is the asylum of art. The collector is the true resident of the interior. He makes his concern the transfiguration of things. To him falls the Sisyphean task of divesting things of their commodity character by taking possession of them. But he bestows on them only connoisseur value, rather than use value. The collector dreams his way not only into a distant or bygone world but also into a better one-one in which, to be sure, human beings are no better provided with what they need than in the everyday world, but in which things are freed from the drudgery of being useful.[156]

For Benjamin, the purpose of a collection is to release its objects from deterministic use. It is the pathway to authentic social transformation; it is — as he illuminates with 'The Destructive Character' (1931) — a practice of making new, in which 'destroying rejuvenates, because it clears away the traces of our own age'.[157] Collecting is a radical praxis because it reveals the potential for objects to be freed from their current material conditions. To collect is to reject utility; it is to form a new, anti-rationalist 'relationship to objects which does not emphasize their functional, utilitarian value — that is, their usefulness — but studies and loves them as the scene, the stage, of their fate'.[158]

In a similar manner, the surrealist influence in *Spare Time* is not solely emergent through its slow fades or the suggestion of dream sequences, but also in the way in which Jennings' collation of vignettes of leisure time in industrial towns subverts, through loose meaning, the educational thrust of the documentary tradition in Britain.[159] As one of the organisers of London's 1936 Surrealist exhibition, Jennings

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[155] 'Unpacking', p. 487.

[156] *AP*, p. 9.

[157] 'The Destructive Character', trans. by Edmund Jephcott, in *SW*, II.2, 541–42 (p. 541).

[158] 'Unpacking', p. 487.

[159] See Paul Rotha, *Documentary Film* (London: Faber and Faber, 1935); *The Projection of Britain: A History of the GPO Film Unit*, ed. by Scott Anthony and James Mansell (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan and BFI, 2011); Swann, *British Documentary Film Movement*.

practiced curation alongside Breton. The influence on Jennings' future work is clear. *Spare Time* is a film that may be viewed as a collection without instrumental or pre-determined use, while *May the Twelfth* similarly employed a surrealist approach to collecting. Whilst Jennings worked collaboratively with Charles Madge and Tom Harrison in creating this surrealist fusing of social research and anthropology, it was Jennings who oversaw research presentation.[160]

The disordered fashion in which *May the Twelfth* was published — a mass of loosely organised and unabridged fragments of participant observation surveys — hinders pre-established utility and the rationalisation of knowledge, as historically advanced through the gesture of collecting. In this radical form of collecting, shared by both Benjamin and Jennings, destruction is formative. They subvert dominant collectorial practices whereby 'some people pass things down to posterity, by making them untouchable and thus conserving them'.[161] Instead, both 'pass on situations, by making them practicable and thus liquidating them'.[162] Bringing into print a representation of the socio-cultural variegation of a single day in Britain in 1937, in *May the Twelfth*, Jennings cultivates an aesthetic befitting Benjamin's description of the pure excitement in the 'disorder of crates': an aesthetic that resists the categorisation typical of libraries and museums (what Benjamin calls the 'mild boredom of order'), wherein likeness appears stiffly in sequence, transmissible over generations.[163] *May the Twelfth*, *Spare Time,* and *One-Way Street*, for all of their dissimilarities in genre and form, have in common an aesthetic of a disordered collection: their objects are loosely arranged, uninterpreted, and presented without the imposition of pre-determined categories of knowledge. All of them aim for the cultivation of altogether new meanings and new associations in the experience of the recipient.

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[160] Tom Harrisson, Humphrey Jennings, and Charles Madge, 'Anthropology at Home', *New Statesman and Nation*, 2 January 1937, p. 12; Jennings and Madge, *May the Twelfth,* p. iv.

[161] Benjamin, 'Destructive Character', p. 542.

[162] 'Destructive Character', p. 542.

[163] 'Unpacking', p. 486.

1.6. Strategies of Incongruous Juxtaposition in *Spare Time* and *One-Way Street*

The incongruity of evocative fragments, juxtaposed against one another, in *One-Way Street* and *Spare Time,* is an aspect of non-instrumental materialist representation paramount to understanding Benjamin's and Jennings' aesthetics of collation. As the previous section has shown, 'Imperial Panorama' and the scenes of Welsh Miners do not exist in isolation, but in a discontinuous sense, rubbing up against other fragments in a state of friction. Jennings' shot of Barry Island Pleasure Park's lightbulb signage is unrelated to the scene that follows, which shows a woman playing piano, surrounded by male choir singers. The score that accompanies this image is produced by one of the last women to be seen in the film, which rarely portrays women at all. *Spare Time* represents a gender disparity in the allocation of labour, of labour time, and consequentially, in the entitlement to spare time. In the mining community of Wales, as depicted by Jennings, women's work is for the most part domestic work and seems not to elicit these breaks for respite, known here as *spare time*. Of course, domestic work is rarely understood in terms of shifts, and therefore, given Jennings focus on work shifts, we seldom see women enjoying spare time in the film. The score, produced by this female pianist, however, extends beyond this scene of choir practice, assuring a juxtaposition of image and sound in the scenes that follow. It lingers over a scene of men drinking beer in public houses, playing cards, and competing at snooker. Juxtaposing the rare, tempered, and instrumentalised depiction of the female pianist, with the more relaxed and abundant experience of spare time for the working men in the pub, the perception of contrast elicits one of contradiction. The sequence ends with a scene of a sweetshop on a cobbled street, in which we find a woman represented in a momentary dalliance with her lover. Jennings captures the pair only as silhouettes, outlined in the darkness of the miners' moment of allocated freedom: shadows and the luminescence of monochrome imagery appear as distinct from Jennings' subsequent representation, which, in a more mundane fashion, represents the descent of miners, on their return to work. These examples are paramount for formally comprehending the tensions in temporality made possible by Jennings' collated aesthetic.

In *One-Way Street,* Benjamin's 'Imperial Panorama' sits beside a very short fragment entitled 'Underground Works'. If moving in a linear fashion from one to the other, the reader is disturbed by the discrepancy in the assemblage, with the former fragment being 181 lines long, and the latter only four. In a surrealist gesture which further entrenches this experience, Benjamin brings into proximity two themes which are uncommonly brought into association. As this chapter has already detailed, 'Imperial Panorama' addresses the experience of poverty and economic decline during the Weimar Republic's 1923 crisis of hyperinflation. 'Underground Works', however, not only details the immaterial dreamscapes of Benjamin in the 1920s (as seen in other fragments, such as 'Number 113') but also addresses a place Benjamin had not materially experienced. The pairing creates an irregularity in what Michael Jennings characterises as a work representative of 'Benjamin's built environment'.[164] Whilst fragment 'Number 113' conforms to Michael Jennings' notion of *One-Way Street* — insofar as it relates to discrepancies between Benjamin's dreamworld of Goethe's house and his waking-life experience of actually visiting Goethe's house as a child — 'Underground Works', in contrast, represents Benjamin's dream of Central America. The streams of images presented in a materialist sense are juxtaposed with streams of images presented in a state of unconscious mental activity.

Revealing Benjamin's interest in what John Kraniauskas calls a 'myth-enshrouded Mexico', 'Underground Works' resonates with Breton's and Antonin Artaud's Surrealist intoxication with America's pre-animist civilisation.[165] In 1916, Benjamin took a university course on Aztec mythology offered by Walter Lehmann, a German ethnologist.[166] Benjamin reminisced on the content of those lectures in a celebratory reunion with Lehmann in November 1921, upon his appointment as a professor in Berlin.[167] Pre-colonial Mexico and the beliefs of the Mayans and Aztecs, therefore, were fresh in the mind of Benjamin while he was writing *One-Way Street*

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[164] Michael Jennings, 'Introduction', in Walter Benjamin, *One-Way Street*, trans. by Edmund Jephcott (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2016), pp. 1–20 (p. 2).

[165] John Kraniauskas, 'Beware Mexican Ruins! "One-Way Street" and the Colonial Unconscious', in *Walter Benjamin's Philosophy: Destruction and Experience,* ed. by Peter Osborne and Andrew Benjamin (London: Routledge, 1994), pp. 139–54 (p. 147).

[166] *Correspondence*, pp. 83, 153.

[167] *Correspondence*, p. 194.

(begun in 1923).[168] Whilst Artaud realised his desire to visit Mexico in 1936, Benjamin only experienced in sleeping states what Breton called, during a 1938 lecture given to the National University in Mexico City, the 'Surrealist place par excellence'.[169] A nation whose 'splendid funeral toys affirm it to be the chosen country of black humour', Breton understood Mexico as a place enriched by contradiction.[170] For Breton, the representation of contradiction was crucial to the philosophy of Surrealism.[171] An example of Benjamin's placing together of contrasting entities in incongruous juxtaposition, *One-Way Street* features not just his 'built environment', but also his perceptive forays into non-waking states of consciousness.[172]

Thematically, contradictions of work-time and spare time are broached in Jennings' film, whilst in Benjamin's publication, it is waking experience that is set into contrast with the experience of dreamworlds. Benjamin presents the structurally confined nature of *reality*; in 'Imperial Panorama', waking-life succumbs to the demands and imperatives of the economic system. Juxtaposed with the unbounded possibilities of the imagination in the pre-rational world of dreams, Benjamin releases a Mexican shrine from being hidden beneath a Weimar Marketplace in 'Underground Works'.[173] In *Spare Time* scenes of joy mingle with those of exhaustion, domesticity with the pub, English towns with Welsh; industries of steel, coal, and cotton all come together in the collated aesthetic, where, in an example of porosity, areas of knowledge traditionally separated mingle together in conflict and tension, to form something new.[174] What is produced, across these examples, is the perception of possibility and potentiality.

Providing a bulwark to the formation of singular meaning, potentialities emerge in both *Spare Time* and *One-Way Street* as non-instrumentalised forms of materialist representation. Elicited through their approaches to evocation and

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[168] *OWS*, pp.448, 455.

[169] Melanie Nicholson, 'Surrealism's "Found Object": The Enigmatic Mexico of Artaud and Breton', *Journal of European Studies*, 43.1 (2013), 27–43 (p. 29); Amy Winter, *Wolfgang Paalen: Artist and Theorist of the Avant-Garde* (Westport: Praeger, 2003), p. 72.

[170] André Breton, 'Anthology of Black Humour (Excerpts)', in *What is Surrealism?*, ed. by Rosemont, pp. 283–94 (p. 284).

[171] 'Limits not Frontiers', p. 234.

[172] Jennings, 'Introduction', in Benjamin, *One-Way Street*, p. 2.

[173] *OWS*, p. 452.

[174] Benjamin, 'Naples', p. 415.

variegation, through the tension, conflict and contradiction existent in their shared approach to juxtaposition, a productive form of ambiguity is activated. Returning to the 1936 Surrealist exhibition at the Galerie Charles Ratton, a mis-matching is evidenced in the Surrealist approach to collation. Previously analysed as exemplary of variegation, in what follows, this variegation is understood as eliciting stark incongruities through the proximity of assembled contrast. The exhibited objects, including artefacts from newly colonised territories, were designed to subvert the 1931 Colonial Exhibition containing similar content, not merely because of their new placement in a non-imperialist capacity, but because of their incongruous juxtaposition with modern artefacts.[175] Recalling the montaged placement of Marxist slogans against tribal objects the Surrealists' 1931 exhibition, 'The Truth about the Colonies', the practice of juxtaposition becomes one which is indicative of Surrealist political practice, foremost in the group's handling of '"cultural treasures"'.[176] As Clare Robins explains in her study on the 'pedagogic potential of artists' interventions, 'The Truth about the Colonies' marked a shift away from Dadaist interventions; from a critique of art's institutionality, to a critique on the 'unspoken ideologies of ethnographic curatorial strategies adopted by museums' which 'acted to legitimate and strengthen the political ends of the coloniser'.[177] The Surrealists enacted a politics of display — a 'curatorial activism' — by pairing artefacts or images of western modernity alongside those of traditional African import, therein forming an incongruous juxtaposition.[178]

In their 1936 exhibition at the Charles Ratton Gallery, the Surrealists used an arrangement which compromises the power of missions, colonial occupations, and the practice of forcibly converting those problematically categorised as *primitive* in the Western imperialist system. 'Pairing a "black" Madonna with a half-nude dancing figure', leverage was afforded to explode the dominant conception in which Europe

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[175] Mileaf, p. 247.

[176] Benjamin uses this phrase, also in quotation marks, in 'On the Concept of History', trans. by Harry Zohn, in *SW*, IV, 389–401 (p. 391); Benjamin warns that a historical materialist treats them with 'cautious detachment'.

[177] Claire Robins, *Curious Lessons in the Museum: The Pedagogic Potential of Artists' Interventions* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2013), p. 54.

[178] Maura Reilly, *Curatorial Activism: Towards an Ethics of Curating* (London: Thames and Hudson, 2018).

was portrayed as progressive and Africa as uncivilised.[179] In a rare and important analysis of the exhibition, Mileaf explains that:

> Between the Virgin and the whore stood an alms-begging figure of a type that was common in Europe at the time. Such statuettes of young black boys dressed in clerical garb held collection plates in their hands, begging donations to help support missionary activities. This ironic comparison mocks the European custom of translating Christian objects of worship into the racial types of tribal people, and suggests that money drives the dissemination of religious beliefs. Christian missions were furthermore notorious among European collectors of tribal arts for having destroyed indigenous arts in a crusade against idol worship. Here, the surrealists' comparison of liturgical and tribal statuary pointed toward the cruel irony of missionary zeal — a particularly poignant critique after the fire at the Dutch pavilion had destroyed so many irreplaceable works.[180]

Whilst, for Mileaf, the significance of this exhibition lies in its ability to mock or poke fun at the white supremacist ideology and plundering practices of the West, the exhibition's role in re-orienting audiences away from a place of bourgeois comfort is most noteworthy here. The Parisians' experience of security, which stemmed from the global dominance of Europe, was, in this exhibit, intentionally subverted. The mythic supremacy of the French nation was brought into question through an act of exhibitory juxtaposition, which served to confuse and upset the perspectives of patrons.

Whilst the practice of collecting as an act of defamiliarisation is the first step in eliciting productive ambiguity, it is the experience of disorientation and confusion ensuing from incongruity that is most consequential here. As the examples addressed earlier show, the incongruity of fragments placed beside one another — whether cinematographic or literary images — registers an ambiguity in a text's overall message. What is productive about this ambiguity, is that the conflict and tension that ensue can be understood allegorically —much as Buck-Morss understands the fragmentary character of *One-Way Street* as representing a 'world in fragments'.[181]

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[179] Mileaf, p. 248.

[180] Mileaf, p. 248.

[181] Buck-Morss, *Dialectics*, p. 18.

Here, the incongruity of juxtaposition represents the reality of conflict and tension in the experience of capitalist modernity. Global cultures are, in the arrangement offered by the Surrealists, instantaneously experienced as contradicting one another, with the emergence of conflictual attributions of meaning provoked by the placement of the objects, revealing tension in the historical moment.

As the movement's association with Marxist thought, and, at that time, with the French Communist Party (PCF), indicates, the Surrealists' objective was to provoke social transformation through the very act of appreciating and managing conflict.[182] Sociologically, conflict provides the fundamental structure of the capitalist political economy. On a most rudimentary and formative level it is the existence of class conflict: the conflict between the bourgeoise as the owners of the means of production, and the proletariat as workers, who are exploited in their creation of wealth.[183] Within the capitalist superstructure exist concepts, including those taken up by the Surrealists as being conflictual, such as rationality and myth. Where Marx and Engels write in *The Communist Manifesto* that '[t]he history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class conflict', the Surrealists, in their manifestos, write of the conflict between unconscious and conscious realms of human existence, to challenge the many borders and boundaries of everyday life, as a vital aspect of socialist revolution.[184]

A connection can be made, here, by expanding the often-cited experience of immediate sensory evocation depicted in Proust's famous madeleine episode. In 'On the Image of Proust', Benjamin, drawing on Max Unold, registers Proust's relationship with the banality, or '"boredom"', of everyday existence, as one which sees in the production of '"idle stories"'; a narrative so vivid, so imagetically rich, that the reader experiences the story not as the listener, but the daydreamer themselves.[185] Providing a juxtaposition of this kind, Proust narrates, in *Remembrance of Things Past,* that

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[182] 'The Truth About the Colonies' was organised together with the French Communist Party (PCF). Breton was a reader of Trotsky. Whilst Marxism is mobilised in Breton's Surrealist philosophy, the movement's association with the French Communist Party ended with expulsion in 1932, having started in 1927, with the French invasion of Morocco. Helena Lewis, *Dada Turns Red*: *Politics of Surrealism* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1990).

[183] Marx and Engels, *Communist Manifesto*, p. 34.

[184] *Communist Manifesto*, p. 34.

[185] 'On the Image of Proust', trans. by Harry Zohn, in *SW*, II.1, 237–47 (p. 239).

'[m]any years had elapsed during which nothing of Combray, except what lay in the theatre and the drama of my going to bed there, had any existence for me, when one day in winter, on my return home, my mother, seeing that I was cold, offered me some tea, a thing I did not ordinarily take'.[186] Here, we see how, through Proust's narration, juxtaposition elicits new association, sudden and in a sense automatic, due to the incongruence of rarity and commonality, as well as of the hot and the cold. Describing a sensory experience of co-existing and contrasting elements, Proust writes of how 'the warm liquid mixed with the crumbs' of the madeleine cake, in a manner which we can understand as an incongruous collation.[187] The embodied conflict of fluid and flake resulted in an aesthetic experience: 'a shiver ran though me', Proust writes; 'an exquisite pleasure had invaded my senses, something isolated, detached, with no suggestion of its origin'.[188] In the story, the character has long sought the memories of his childhood holiday home, memories which, once emergent, felt dead. For Marcel, something was lacking in the experience of the past, when summoned by a command in the present. In Proust's depiction, juxtaposition triggers an automatic retrieval of new thought, an experience approaching that of the collated aesthetic in *Spare Time* and *One-Way Street*.

The instance of involuntary memory transpiring from the sensuousness of collated incongruity in Proust is carried into Benjamin's 1931 talk on book collecting and into his ways of working from the mid-1920s onward.[189] Proust's example of incongruous juxtaposition came to Benjamin at a time when, for him, the poles of instrumentality and non-instrumentality were extreme in their divide, a time when he had just formally withdrawn his Habilitation submission after enduring a period of boredom, frustrated with the alienating character of work. This is evident in his 1926 letter to Jula Radt, penned on route to Paris, where he would start work on translating Proust's madeleine (and tea) episode. While translation was work, experiencing the outdoors of a city was not. The exertion, effort and focus demanded by engaging in formal translation was juxtaposed with phenomenological experience. 'I must get up

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[186] Marcel Proust, *In Search of Lost Time*, *Volume 1: Swann's Way*, trans. by Charles Scott-Moncrieff and Terence Kilmartin, rev. by Dennis Enright (New York: Modern Library, 1992), p. 60.

[187] *Swann's Way*, p. 60.

[188] *Swann's Way*, p. 60.

[189] 'Unpacking', p. 486.

early if I want my evenings free' he explained, 'when I am not busy writing, I can only do fun things. That is to say, I approach the city only in terms of its externals: the location of the streets, public transportation, cafés, and newspapers are what concern me'.[190] As his 1924 essay, co-written with lover Asja Lacis during a period of non-instrumentalised productivity on the island of Capri, shows, Benjamin had become enamoured at this time by the inherent contradictions in city-architecture. His experience of Naples was one of an incongruous juxtaposition of buildings, and a place where social spaces became 'a theatre of new, unforeseen constellations'.[191] Before returning to this concept of the constellation, it is necessary first to understand how a 'process of intermingling' which occurs in the co-existing multiplicity of contrasting elements, demonstrated in cafés, becomes the true laboratory of knowledge for Benjamin: something rejected by the strict separation of knowledge at the University of Frankfurt.[192] Hence, the concept of porosity becomes significant in Benjamin's intellectual work at this time, alongside the empirical observations made in his 1924 essay on Naples.[193]

Benjamin's failed Habilitation of 1925 was not a matter of his intellectual inability, so much as it concerned a problem of classification. The failure reflected the way the university separated knowledge into channels, disapproving of cross-contamination and any non-traditional merging of elements. With his *Origin of the German Trauerspiel* rejected by the department of German due to an epistemological dispute, before being transferred to the department of Aesthetics, and finally formally withdrawn, Benjamin confronted in his academic life the very problem he had theorised in the opening lines of the submission's Epistemo-Critical Prologue.[194] There, he claims a preference for the 'power of thought' over 'doctrine', with the latter presented as limiting the former.[195] 'Philosophy is in danger' Benjamin writes, 'of accommodating itself into a syncretism which weaves a spider's web between

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[190] *Correspondence*, p. 292.

[191] 'Naples', p. 416.

[192] 'Naples', p. 421.

[193] 'Naples', p. 421.

[194] Benjamin formally withdrew his Habilitation in 1925, before it was officially rejected. He descrbes the process in detail when writing to Scholem from Frankfurt (20–25 May 1925). *Correspondence*, p. 266.

[195] *Origin*, p. 27

separate kinds of knowledge in an attempt to ensnare the truth as if it were something which came flying in from outside'.[196] Writing against the totalizing 'pretentions', of most nineteenth century thought, Benjamin here defends a path later trodden with the collated aesthetic, with the digressive and incoherent organisational approach of *One-Way Street.*[197]

Benjamin's 1916 letter to Martin Buber marks his enduring frustration with formal academic conventions.[198] He shows concern with the semblance of objectivity, and thus the prohibition of poetics, demanded in political discourse in the magazine *Der Jude*.[199] By the 1920s, Benjamin was dreaming of a submission composed entirely of illustrative images; ambiguous, disturbed in narrative, and confusing to the reader.[200] Benjamin's proximity to the Surrealists in the 1920s spurred him to develop approaches antithetical to these traditional demands of scholarship. Whilst his early educational career was already fettered with unconventionalities, it was his French readings that brought forth new ways of seeing. From 1925, he made a conscious effort to engage in this surreal re-orientation, writing that, 'I must gradually familiarize myself with the technique of criticism', inspired by readings of Paul Valéry and the surrealists.[201] 'In France', he explains to Hugo von Hofmannsthal in June 1927, 'individual phenomena are engaged in something that also engages me'; citing Aragon 'especially', and above all the movement of 'surrealism', Benjamin's correspondence assures us that the 1920s were the turning point in his already critical association with prescribed forms of intellectual production.[202]

Whilst Benjamin's intended picture book was never realised, *One-Way Street,* which, in 1927, he also describes as a 'notebook' (a format he discovered in Paris), bears considerable resemblance to this concept of evocative disorder.[203] The affinity between the two projects lies in the display of non-continuous parts. Whilst the

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[196] *Origin*, p. 27.

[197] Martin Jay, *Marxism and Totality: The Adventures of a Concept from Lukács to Habermas* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), p. 248.

[198] *Correspondence*, pp. 79–81.

[199] *Correspondence*, p. 81.

[200] *Correspondence*, p. 237.

[201] *Correspondence*, p. 277.

[202] *Correspondence*, pp. 313–16 (p. 315), Benjamin to Hugo von Hofmannsthal, 5 June 1927.

[203] *Correspondence*, p. 315.

images in his 1928 publication are not visual, those in *One-Way Street* evoke mental imagery, to the extent that he succeeded in the formation of a jumbled and thus confused collection of images. The work possess the incongruities he described when in Naples, with the blurring of dominant parameters; 'just as the living room reappears on the street, with chairs, hearth, and altar, so, only much more loudly, the street migrates into the living room'.[204] While the incongruities of Benjamin's Habilitation left Hans Cornelius, in the department of Aesthetics, incapable of understanding his work, the practice of mixing disciplines through the formation of ambiguity, was, from around 1924, evident and productive in Benjamin's work.[205] 'All in all, I am glad', Benjamin wrote to Scholem in the summer of 1925: '[t]he Old Franconian stage route following the stations of the local university is not my way'.[206]

1.7. Conclusion

This chapter has addressed the collated aesthetic: an approach both Benjamin and Jennings used to represent the material and political conditions of the interwar period, focussing on the collated aesthetics' initial development in the film *Spare Time* and the literary collection *One-Way Street*, prior to its subsequent historiographic mobilisation in *The Arcades Project* and *Pandaemonium*. These earlier works focus on contemporary concerns, delivered to a contemporary audience, and demonstrate the immediate impact of Benjamin's and Jennings' shared milieu of avant-gardist experimentation. Insofar as magazine imagery, photographs, and newspaper cut-outs, of the kind used by Sasha Stone, are historically a crucial part of montage and collage, Benjamin's and Jennings' assemblage of slithers of reality, which inform their ambiguous constructions, substantiate a relationship between the collated aesthetic and documentary.

A consideration of the concept of 'poetic documentary', which can be viewed as unifying Benjamin's and Jennings' mode of non-instrumentalised representation,

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[204] 'Naples',p. 420.

[205] *Correspondence*, p. 266. See also Burkhard Lindner, 'Habilitationsakte Benjamin: Über ein "akademisches Trauerspiel" und über ein Vorkapitel der "Frankfurter Schule" (Horkheimer, Adorno)', *Zeitschrift für Literaturwissenschaft und Linguistik*, 53–54 (1984), 147–65 (p. 155).

[206] *Correspondence*, p. 276.

supports this attempt to realise a methodological affinity in Benjamin and Jennings on the matter of material representation. It also points towards the potential for further research, toward the continuities that are already in existence in the documentary tradition, such as John Grierson's 1926 review of Robert Flaherty's ethnographic film *Moana*, which, whilst coining the term 'documentary' to describe educational film, also underscores and stresses documentary as contributing to the evocation of 'intense poetic feeling'.[207] The concept of 'Poetic Documentary' is opportune, therefore, for drawing out the political aesthetics of Benjamin's and Jennings' interwar works, which are rooted in their poetic, open-ended, fragmentary and therefore evocative images.

Spare Time and *One-Way Street,* by challenging and breaking down the dominant polarities of worker/owner, receiver/producer, through their shared aesthetic of collation, re-position audiences in an altogether new capacity and stimulate an imaginative approach to meaning-making. As authors/auteurs, Benjamin and Jennings show no formal interest in controlling the reception of their creations. Rather, they provide an encounter, wherein meaning and knowledge becomes re-created, re-imagined, and wholly determined by the recipient audience. In understanding the collated aesthetic as a strategy for repositioning audiences toward a multiplicity of possible meanings, non-instrumentality has been located in the three core features of the collated aesthetic: 1) evocative fragments; 2) varied fragments; and 3) fragments which, when brought together, are situated in an assemblage of conflict, tension and contradiction. Defining the collated aesthetic through its apparatus — evocation, variegation and juxtaposition — the chapter provides the vocabulary and conceptualisation of the collated aesthetic that is necessary for the subsequent chapters. These features, which coalesce into one, contribute to a poetic experience of meaning-making. Through a reading of Taylor's *Poetic Knowledge*, we can understand the formation of poetic knowledge as contributing to the subversion of the rationality of scientific, factual, or objective definitions of knowledge.

Inspired by the movement of Surrealism, *Spare Time* and *One-Way Street* mobilise the Freudian energies of Breton's psychic automatism as the 'unconscious

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[207] John Grierson, 'Flaherty's Poetic *Moana'*, in *The Documentary Film Reader: History, Theory, Criticism,* ed. by Jonathan Kahana (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), pp. 86–87.

dictation of the Unconscious'.[208] Whilst the ideas of Freud percolate the philosophy of Surrealism, the aim of this chapter has not been to examine psychoanalysis, but instead, to trace, through an exploration of the theme of non-instrumentality, the point at which popular trends in psychoanalysis found their way into Benjamin's and Jennings' aesthetics of collation. Breton's 1924 definition of Surrealism, as 'psychic automatism' has, in this chapter, provided an allegorical means for understanding the theme of non-instrumentality in *Spare Time*, and, in a wider formal capacity, the means for understanding the non-instrumental mechanisms which unite Benjamin's and Jennings' interwar work, as that which repositions audiences toward the production of poetic knowledge.[209]

With dominant approaches to collecting subverted in the pair's aesthetics of collation, Benjamin and Jennings are concerned, not with the formation of a series — a homogenous depiction of similitude — but instead, with the cultivation of difference. A multiplicity of variegated fragments are brought together in *Spare Time* and *One-Way Street* to show the heterogeneity of everyday life, and, ultimately, to collapse dominant ways of thinking, such as those controlled by reason in rigid classificatory systems. Where the theoretical wealth of Benjamin's work outweighs that of Jennings, this chapter has illuminated, through a deep reading of Benjamin's intellectual history, the function of the collection as an explosive, meaning-abundant and illuminative, constellation.

As a foundation for the central concern of this thesis — the mobilisation of a collated aesthetic for historiography — this chapter has addressed works created prior to Benjamin's and Jennings' historical turn. Whilst the subsequent two chapters concern *The Arcades Project* and *Pandaemonium* as historical accounts of modern development, this chapter illustrates how the collated aesthetic was first used to portray the society surrounding Jennings and Benjamin. Whilst *Spare Time* is, today, helpful to the telling of a history of Britain, it is in Jennings later and unfinished work, *Pandaemonium,* that the experience of capitalism is unpacked through developing understandings of work and leisure time, by way of *longue durée*. Non-instrumental or

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[208] Jean-Michel Rabaté, 'Freudian Origins', in *Surrealism: Key Concepts*, ed. by Krzysztof Fijalkowski and Michael Richardson (Abingdon: Routledge, 2016), pp. 46–57 (p. 46).

[209] Breton, 'Manifesto', p. 26.

poetic forms of contemporary representation, as exemplified by *Spare Time* and *One-Way Street,* are distinct from the poetic representations of history — poetic historiographies — that the thesis will turn to next.

As this chapter has shown, Jennings terms the offspring of Surrealism and documentary, the product of a 'real poet', with 'human psychism' at play in this new process of discovery.[210] As Benjamin sees it, the union of reportage and Surrealism produces a 'profane illumination': not sacred, but materialist, stemming from the everyday, the familiar and sometimes banal, made unfamiliar.[211] This chapter has also illustrated how the approaches to collecting, used to actualise *One-Way Street* and *Spare Time* as poetic documentaries, manifest as sites of disorder. As indicated in Benjamin's 'Unpacking my Library', 'conspicuously present in the accustomed confusion of these books' is an altogether new way of thinking, an aesthetic means of furthering the cause of social revolution.[212] The point of Benjamin's book collection, as with the collections of *One-Way Street* and *Spare Time,* is the cultivation of new meaning and new associations in the minds of the audience. Distinct from traditional encyclopaedias, which adopt the imposition of pre-established categories of knowledge, *Spare Time* and *One-Way Street* work 'magically' (to use Benjamin's term). As non-instrumental examples of contemporary representation, they are wholly non-positivistic, provoking an undeterminable form of knowledge production, manifest in the collection's immediate, shock-like, spurring of knowledge construction. Chapter Three, focusing on Walter Benjamin, will commence with a consideration of this notion of shock. First, in Chapter Two, Jennings' *Pandaemonium* will be critically examined as that which, following Surrealist prompts, initiates an imaginative history, in and through an imaginative historiography.

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[210] Jennings, 'Surrealism', in *Reader,* ed. by Jackson, pp. 219–221 (p. 220).

[211] Benjamin, 'Surrealism, p. 209.

[212] 'Unpacking', p. 486.

Chapter Two. 'Imaginative History' and the 'Imaginative Historiography' of Humphrey Jennings' *Pandaemonium* (1985)

In 1937, Humphrey Jennings began compiling 'Pandaemonium' — a collection of hand- and type-written accounts of the Industrial Revolution. For thirteen years, until his sudden death in 1950, Jennings reproduced passages from pre-published texts found in libraries. Left unfinished, 'Pandaemonium' was reduced in size and brought to publication in the 1980s. A second edition was published in 2012, following Danny Boyle's use of the collection for his theatrical representation of British history at the London Olympics in 2012. This chapter examines the 2012 publication, along with Jennings' unpublished draft, including the manuscript and notes located in the basement of Pembroke College, University of Cambridge. By doing so, it brings into focus aspects of 'Pandaemonium' which were edited out from the final work.[1]

Following the publication of Kevin Jackson's 2004 biography *Humphrey Jennings*, little attention has been paid to the several bags of material sourced from Jennings' daughter which Jackson bequeathed to Pembroke College (Jennings' *alma mater*) after he had completed his biography. The mass of unpublished material is uncatalogued.[2] With no reference system to facilitate its use, few scholars have worked with Jennings' manuscript.[3] The research for this chapter has included the organisation of Jennings' unpublished papers with a useable index system, so that, together with the publication, the ramifications of Jennings' collated aesthetic as a historiographic practice can be examined.[4]

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[1] As noted in the Introduction, when Italicised, *Pandaemonium* refers to the published work; when appearing in quotation marks, 'Pandaemonium' refers to the unpublished project, which includes the manuscript and notes held by Pembroke College, Cambridge.

[2] Patricia Aske (librarian of Pembroke College), personal communication, 12 April 2017.

[3] Visitors as recorded in the book of visitors at Pembroke College. Aske commented that only one other visitor had consulted Jennings' archive in recent years: a filmmaker, focussing on the filmic side of Jennings' archive.

[4] My own reference system for this material is labelled and cited herein through an alphanumeric system; see the Bibliography for further details.

Pandaemonium represents the past through 372 fragments of text, which Jennings refers to as 'Images'.[5] As Jennings notes, the collection is comprised of 'passages — quotations from authors' writings of the period in question which appear to me to show a meeting (of whatever kind) of the imagination with some aspect of the Industrial Revolution'.[6] Each 'Image' excerpts writing produced in a moment where the interpretation of material conditions by an author takes on a creative mode. As such, Jennings conceived of 'Pandaemonium' as constituting 'neither the political history, nor the mechanical history, nor the social history, nor the economic history, but the *imaginative history'* of the Industrial Revolution.[7]

Taking its title from the name of hell's capital city in John Milton's *Paradise Lost* (1667), 'Pandaemonium' invokes a hellish vision of modernity as the age of the machine, whilst also registering a relationship in the work between imaginative writing and the experience of technological development.[8] For Jennings, the project serves to capture 'the fate of the imagination in the complex Scientific, Materialist Capitalist Society which was built up in Britain between the restoration (1660) and beginning of Imperialism (Lenin's sense of the word) in the 1880's'.[9] *Pandaemonium* draws on the mental 'personality' of populations contemporaneous to the period 1660–1886.[10] As Jennings states in his unpublished notes, 'Pandaemonium' deals 'not with things but with thoughts': individual thoughts, ideas, means of perception, and forms of consciousness.[11] Jennings' archival exploration focusses on personal, subjective narratives, and the text and collection can be seen to extend the interest in documenting the everyday taking concrete form in his film practice and his surrealist ethnographic project 'Mass Observation'.

Jennings extracted fragments from novels, memoirs, diaries, poems, and scientific reports, selecting sentences from authors such as Samuel Pepys, Thomas

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[5] *Pandaemonium*, p. xiii. When capitalised as 'Image', I refer to Jennings' 'Images', or Benjamin's 'Images', termed as such by Benjamin and Jennings. When uncapitalised, 'image' refers to images in a general sense.

[6] Jennings' Unpublished Notes, 2.c.

[7] *Pandaemonium,* p. xiii, my emphasis.

[8] *Pandaemonium*, pp. 3–5.

[9] Unpublished Notes, 2.c.

[10] *Pandaemonium,* p. 18.

[11] Cambridge, Pembroke College, Jennings' Unpublished Notes, 3.c.

Gray, William Wordsworth, Charles Darwin, Michael Faraday, Karl Marx, and John Ruskin. These citations bring to bear a polyvocality in historical narration. The text, taken as a whole, problematises the notion of a single narrative of the past. In its negation of an overarching or totalising story of British development, *Pandaemonium* retreats from the common-sense notion of *history*. As such, the text can only really be understood in terms of *historiography*.[12] As a historiographic project, *Pandaemonium* realises a collated aesthetic which potentializes the repositioning of audiences toward new and independent meaning-making. Moreover, these documents evidence the inspiration that Jennings' drew from the Surrealist movement.

Jennings' understanding of his historical project as an 'imaginative history' appears in the 'Introduction' of *Pandaemonium* as a passing comment, yet the Pembroke College archive reveals the concept to be an important foundational statement of Jennings' underlying philosophy of history, repeatedly rephrased in Jennings' scraps.[13] Publication and manuscript, taken together, indicate Jennings' methodological and ideological drive to subvert the empiricist foundations of dominant historiography, common in the 1930s. This dominant strand of historiography was characterised by its claim to a principle of scientific objectivity.[14] This scientific ideal of history is one of a 'methodologically and conceptually rigorous discipline', and has its roots in what Georg Iggers calls the professionalisation of history as a discipline.[15] Iggers traces the emergence of the discipline to Germany, to Leopold von Ranke and the University of Berlin in 1825, and this history of historiography provides an important context for this chapter's analysis of *Pandaemonium*. According to Keith Jenkins, in *Rethinking History*, 'every discipline is constituted by what it forbids its practitioners do'.[16] Such demands 'restrict thought and imagination and none is more hedged about with taboos than professional

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[12] Jenkins, *Re-thinking*, p. 7.

[13] *Pandaemonium*, p. xiii.

[14] Iggers, *Historiography in the Twentieth Century*.

[15] Georg Iggers, 'Introduction: The Transformation of Historical Studies in Historical Perspective', in *International Handbook of Historical Studies*, ed. by Iggers and Parker, pp. 1–14 (p. 8); Iggers, *New Directions in European Historiography,* p. 1.

[16] Jenkins, *Re-thinking*, p. x.

historiography'.[17] These 'taboos' were prominent in the period during which 'Pandaemonium' was produced, shaping the field of history. Whilst regional differences in historical scholarship, including those which viewed themselves as in opposition to Ranke's approach, certainly emerged and sustained themselves over a 100-year period, by 1930, Britain had joined the rest of Europe in conforming to the dominant general principles of historical scholarship.[18]

Michael Saler's approach to Jennings' writing situates *Pandaemonium* within a wider conversation about historiographic trends. However, Saler takes little from *Pandaemonium* as a publication, and chooses not to draw on Jennings' unpublished material. This prevents him from distinguishing between Jennings' approach to history as a collated aesthetic, and the conservative strain of British Whig history, which had very little impact on Jennings in the 1930s.[19] Whig History, which advances a notion of linear progress through its representation of British constitutional liberalism, had lost all vitality by 1914, well before Jennings started work on *Pandaemonium*.[20] Saler problematically situates *Pandaemonium* within a trend of 'continuity, tradition and nostalgia', despite Jennings' work to destabilise the implication of progress within historical narratives in and through his approach to archival exploration, collation, and the text's repositioning of audiences toward new, independent, and critical meaning-making.[21]

Drawing on authors such as Saler, who have interpreted *Pandaemonium* as a serious contribution to historical work, this chapter understands *Pandaemonium* as that which interrupts the notion of history (as an academic discipline). It has two aims. Firstly, the chapter engages with the complexities of Jennings' unpublished material: the sometimes-confused thoughts which show the working-through of classically historiographic concepts such as 'truth', 'reality', and 'fact', as they relate to his imaginative historical project. Here, the question of what is at stake in 'imaginative

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[17] Jenkins, *Re-thinking*, p. x.

[18] Iggers, *Historiography*, pp. 23–36.

[19] Michael Saler, 'Whigs and Surrealists: The "Subtle Links" of Humphrey Jennings's *Pandaemonium*', in *Singular Continuities: Tradition, Nostalgia, and Identity in Modern British Culture*, ed. by George Behlmer and Fred Leventhal (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000), pp. 123–42 (p. 126).

[20] Michael Bentley, *Modernizing England's Past: English Historiography in the Age of Modernism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), p. 242.

[21] Saler, pp. 126–42.

history' will be answered, exploring the concept raised by Jennings as a subversion of the empirical character of classical approaches to doing history. Secondly, the chapter will examine Jennings' strategy in action, observing his surrealistic 'gestures' in the bringing to bear of *Pandaemonium* as a collated aesthetic.[22] In analysing Jennings' means of doing history as a collection, this chapter will show how Jennings approached the task of producing *Pandaemonium*, drawing particularly on his process of selection and deselection, collation, and incongruous juxtaposition, before exploring the impact of multi-perspective narratives and dialogism in *Pandaemonium*.

2.1. A Surrealist Context

Surrealism is defined in the movement's 1924 manifesto in terms of its devotion to the possibilities and potentialities of the imagination, with its unbounded and 'unsparing quality'.[23] *Pandaemonium* bears the trace of Surrealism: its representation of the Industrial Revolution through a collation of fragments of the imagination resonates with Jennings' sustained interest in the avant-garde. Whilst Jennings gained inspiration from the Surrealists through proximity to the movement throughout the 1920s and 1930s, he never became an official member, remaining unsusceptible to the whims and excommunications of its founder, André Breton.[24] Jennings read Surrealist texts in French, before they had been translated into English, and they were pivotal to his intellectual development: he was seventeen in 1924, when he read the inaugural issue of *La Révolution Surréaliste*.[25] This twelve-part publication ran until 1929, and, as the

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[22] The critical relevance of the term 'gesture' is illuminated by Giorgio Agamben, who writes that 'politics is the sphere of pure means, that is, of the absolute and complete gesturality of human beings'. For Agamben, politics enacts *method*. Agamben's theory of the gesture supports my understanding of a need to seize technical potentiality *from* thought: the gesture is the vehicle through which thought nears actualisation in the material world; a type of action which *illuminates* a set of operations, or a process, rather than serving a pre-determined end. *Pandaemonium* is gestural in that Jennings' philosophy of history approaches its realisation through his act of collecting, collating, and demonstrating an alternative to the historiographic 'status quo'. Giorgio Agamben, 'Notes on Gesture', in *Means without End: Notes on Politics* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000), pp. 49–62 (p. 60).

[23] Breton, 'Manifesto', p. 4.

[24] On Breton's expulsions, see Gloria Duran, 'The Antipodes of Surrealism: Salvador Dalí and Remedios Varo', *Symposium*, 42.4 (1988), 297–311 and Breton, 'Second Manifesto', p. 164.

[25] Jennings, 'Surrealism', pp. 219–21.

official voice of the movement, it brought Jennings to an awareness of the work of Breton.[26] Although Jennings grew up on Britain's Suffolk Coast, he gained an elementary knowledge of French as well as proximity to the culture and language of Breton when accompanying his mother, Mildred, on trips to France to collect stock for the Walberswick Peasant Pottery Company, which she ran from the family home.[27]

The work of the Surrealists enticed Jennings in the 1920s, at a time when little was known about the movement in Britain.[28] The revolutionary rhetoric of Breton and his comrades captivated Jennings: writing in the 1930s, he reflected on the 'passion, terror and excitement, dictated by absolute integrity and produced with all the poetry of bare necessity, which emanated from *La Révolution Surréalist'*.[29] As a movement, Surrealism worked to represent human emotions, feelings and ideas, which is what is meant by Jennings by the term 'poetry'. The Surrealists held a passion which was unparalleled in the English literary scenes Jennings was aware of at that time; he interpreted the Surrealists as honouring poetics as an absolute aesthetic experience.[30] Their commitment to representing the internal came with a vitality and energy, as well as an orientation towards the new, which far surpassed the romantic tendencies of the Arts and Crafts movement, of which his parents were a part.

As Pat Kirkham states, the romantic radicalism of the Arts and Crafts design-cum-lifestyle movement 'encouraged looking to past societies for examples of preferred ways of living'.[31] Jennings spent his childhood in a Tudor home that had been reconstructed by his father, Frank, who was passionate about restoring neglected buildings.[32] The family were subscribers to the *New Age Magazine*, which asserted the value of the imagination and the aesthetic side of 'human life against the

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[26] In 1929, the publication was replaced by its more militant successor *Le Surréalisme au service de la revolution* (Surrealism in the service of the revolution). See: *Le Surréalisme au service de la revolution* (July 1930–May 1933) <http://www.revues-litteraires.com/articles.php?lng=fr&pg=1925> [accessed 1 December 2020].

[27] Jackson, p. 18.

[28] Neil Matheson, 'The Phantom of Surrealism: Photography, Cultural Identity and the Reception of Surrealism in England', *History of Photography*, 29.2 (2005), 149–62.

[29] 'Surrealism', p. 129.

[30] 'Surrealism', p. 129.

[31] Pat Kirkham, *Charles and Ray Eames: Designers of the Twentieth Century* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1998), p. 170.

[32] Jackson, p. 16.

deadening effects of industrialisation and urbanisation, bureaucracy and the machine'.[33] For Frank and Mildred, modernity had caused the devaluation of the imagination, conceived of as antithetical to the rational and logical.

Jennings was raised within the context of Frank and Mildred's own blend of nostalgia and socialist utopianism. The Jennings' house, which had been purposely selected for its distance from the city of London, amplified this perspective.[34] Walberswick offered everything that industrialised society did not: a childhood idyll of imaginative play, which for his mother and father, extended into adulthood.[35] For his family, modernity was understood as having been tied together with a set of principles which depleted the emotional and spiritual relationships of art practice, and of collective experience more generally. An appreciation of the alienation of factory work and mass-production informed their hostility toward capitalism. They rejected the mere accumulation of material at the expense of the immaterial, instead nourishing and providing space for the development of the human spirit. Their adoption of alternative modes of production, through the model of the workshop, was 'completely consistent with their social and moral aims' as guild socialists, who were dedicated to advancing the place of the human spirit in the everyday.[36]

However, in sharp contrast to the Surrealist movement, the Arts and Craft movement lacked a manifesto. As Jennings writes in his 1936 essay on Surrealism, the movement associated with Breton communicated with a vigorous philosophical expression which he found thrilling.[37] His parents' movement lacked the kind of political energy he craved. Jennings' reading of *La Révolution Surréaliste,* from 1924 to 1929, gave new meaning to and provided a contemporary resonance with some of the radical passions Jennings already held, as a child of the Arts and Crafts movement. He

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[33] Logan, p. 5.

[34] Walberswick is located on the Suffolk Coast, 116 miles away from London. The nearest town is approximately one mile away.

[35] Jennings' parents followed their passions in Walberswick, making their living through craft, the production of pottery, and the reconstruction of pre-modern buildings. Writing to Cicely Cooper (soon to be Jennings) in their early days of romance, Jennings recalls his idyllic and wild childhood 'almost alone on the seacoast'. The letter to Cicely shows that Jennings' early childhood was largely untouched by the machine age. Jackson, p. 11.

[36] S. K. Tillyard, *The Impact of Modernism, 1900–1920: Early Modernism and the Arts and Crafts Movement in Edwardian England* (London: Routledge, 1988), p. 15.

[37] Jennings, 'Surrealism', p. 129.

had read critiques of modernity and industrialisation, and about the potentials of the unbound imagination, prior to his encounter with Surrealism. While William Morris' work laid an important initial political foundation for Jennings, the Surrealist revolution offered him something different: a political aesthetic that shattered the traditions which came before it. In 1943, Surrealist scholar Charles Gauss wrote that the movement experienced an 'uninhibited and boisterous adolescence' in Jennings' day, which manifested itself as a 'revolt against the accepted traditional standards of art and criticism'.[38]

The front cover of the inaugural issue of *La Révolution Surréaliste* was brazen. A strong red formed the background, upon which black text stated the focus of the movement in bold capitals: 'IL FAUT ABOUTIR A UNE NOUVELLE DÉCLARATION DES DROITS DE L'HOMME'.[39] This first issue illuminated the Surrealist revolution as not merely focussed on art and criticism, but resistant, in a broader sense, to the revolution of the Enlightenment. The statement questions the nature of emancipation afforded by the *Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen*.[40] Produced in 1789 following the French Revolution, the declaration largely reflected the aims and aspirations of the middle class, omitting those of women, and of enslaved people. The justification for this decision was that rights were afforded only to those deemed capable of 'rational' thought.[41] Unlike the material accumulation of property, which was deemed a 'human right', emotional needs and those of the mind were afforded nothing in the declaration.[42]

Rationalism was salient in the Enlightenment project and fundamental in the making of modernity. For the Surrealists, rationality denied the epistemological validity of emotional responses; the Surrealist manifesto of 1924 reactively rejected

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[38] Charles Gauss, 'The Theoretical Backgrounds of Surrealism', *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, 2.8 (1943), 37–44 (p. 37).

[39] *La Révolution Surrealiste*, 1 (December 1924), cover <https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k5844543r/f11.item.zoom> [accessed 17 November 2020].

[40] *Déclaration des Droits de l'Homme et du Citoyen de 1789* <https://www.conseil-constitutionnel.fr/le-bloc-de-constitutionnalite/declaration-des-droits-de-l-homme-et-du-citoyen-de-1789> [accessed 17 November 2020].

[41] *OED Online*, s.v. 'rational, *adj*. and *adv.*': 'characterized by reasoning, as opposed to emotion, intuition'.

[42] Georg Jellinek, *Declaration of The Rights of Man and of Citizens; a Contribution to Modern Constitutional History*, trans. by Max Farrand (New York: Holt, 1901; repr. London: World Library Classics, 2009), p. 9.

rationality. The movement questioned this division between objective and subjective worlds, which, as they perceived, created a hierarchy in which truth was to be found through objectivity alone. This ideological subordination of the imagination as irrational and therefore illegitimate impacted upon the everyday experience of individuals.[43] Accordingly, the first Manifesto of Surrealism that Jennings read in 1924 presents the image of humanity as pacing 'back and forth in a cage'.[44] Breton argues that under the pretence of modern civilisation the imagination has been held captive by rationality: 'imagination which knows no bounds is henceforth allowed to be exercised only in strict accordance with the laws of an arbitrary utility'.[45] Similarly, Jennings also notes that hegemonic discourse sees little epistemological value in the imagination, leaving no reason to protect it 'except money, snobbery, propaganda or escapism'.[46] For both, the imagination is either instrumentalised or devalued in modern society.

Scholar of Surrealism and executor of Breton's estate, Jean Schuster observed in 1966 that rationalism, 'generally regarded as an emancipating force', was, for Breton and his comrades, 'the most thorough system for oppressing thought'.[47] The Surrealists' concept of liberty was inherently dependent upon the mind and its faculties. In 1925, an official declaration from the movement stated that the objectives of Surrealism were to be achieved through 'the total liberation of the mind *and all that resembles it*'; they declared: '[w]e are firmly determined to create a Revolution'.[48] The response of the Surrealists was to dwell in, to perceive, represent and cultivate the irrational, the internal, and the imaginative.[49]

In 1929 Jennings wrote to his friend William Empson, expressing great enthusiasm for the political aesthetics of the Surrealists. He had read all twelve issues of *La Révolution Surrealiste* by this time and was beginning to advance a Surrealist aesthetic amongst friends who had less knowledge of the movement. Jennings faulted

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[43] Breton, 'Manifesto', p. 10.

[44] Breton, 'Manifesto', p. 10.

[45] Breton, 'Manifesto', p. 5.

[46] *Pandaemonium*, p. xviii.

[47] Schuster's address quoted in J. H. Matthews, 'Surrealism, Politics, and Poetry', *Mosaic*, 3.1 (1969), 1–13 (p. 1).

[48] Matthews, p. 2.

[49] Breton, 'Manifesto', p. 14.

a dominant 'state of mind' in his letter to Empson and referred to the way that demands for rationality pressed so closely upon the human spirit.[50] He declared a need for new ways of thinking and sought to develop an aesthetic practice which would prompt cognitive change. He emphasised the potential of the uninhibited mind to perceive new associations and to cultivate poetic knowledge, writing that 'what is wanted is certainly a new system, but it can't be found lying about', and suggesting that 'the difficulty of finding it, the battle against ourselves for it' was of the utmost political concern. Jennings wrote that the 'dream-symbols of the Surrealists & of Alice in Wonderland' demonstrated a new mode of thought that was needed for societal change: one that respected the internal and honoured its representation as ambiguous. Jennings' reference to Lewis Carroll is significant, in that it was made at a time when Louis Aragon had prompted conversations about Carroll's relationship with Surrealism, following his 1929 translation of *The Hunting of the Snark*.[51] Jennings appears to take up Aragon's argument that there exists a revolutionary spirit in Carroll and that his aesthetics were a precursor to the Surrealist movement in Britain.[52]

As a means of bridging the gap between waking and dream states, between dominant understandings of logic and the illogical, rational, and irrational, the Surrealists developed techniques which allow for the representation of the unconscious reality of humanity. For Jennings, these 'dream-symbols' are acts that subvert the epistemological demands of modern empiricism. It was the internal workings of the human mind that fascinated the Surrealists and energised their protest about what they perceived as the hegemony of empiricism and the kind of perception it championed, which validates only that which is perceptible through the five senses and, as such, is narrower than the scope of Surrealist representation, which validates unobservable entities or processes beyond 'macroscopic' objects of perception.[53] The representation of thoughts, visions, dreams, and all that which concerns the mental domain as hidden, even to ourselves, preoccupied Breton and his Surrealist

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[50] Jackson, p. 390.

[51] Lewis Carroll, *La chase au Snark: Une agonie en huit crises*, trans. by Louis Aragon (Chapelle-Réanville: Hours Press, 1929).

[52] Wim Tigges, *An Anatomy of Literary Nonsense* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1988), p. 117.

[53] Jarrett Leplin, 'Surrealism', *Mind*, 96.1 (1987), 519–24 (p. 524).

movement.[54] This articulation of liberation in and through the representation of a Surrealist understanding of perception gripped Jennings, who, throughout the rest of his life, maintained a lasting association with the Surrealists.

In 1936 Jennings helped to curate London's first International Exhibition of Surrealism. Working alongside Salvador Dalí, Édouard Léon Théodore Mesens, Man Ray, Paul Éluard, and André Breton in curating the New Burlington Galleries exhibition in Mayfair, Jennings represented a British faction of surrealists that included Herbert Read, Hugh Sykes Davies, David Gascoyne, and Roland Penrose.[55] Jennings' intellectual association with the Surrealists was firmly established in the 1930s when he formed a working relationship with Breton, after reading his publications for over a decade.[56] The exhibition brought Jennings face-to-face with Surrealist approaches and Jennings exhibited his own collages alongside those of Pablo Picasso, Max Servais, Paul Nash, Joan Miró, E.L.T Mesens, David Gascoyne, and P. Norman Dawson.[57]

In the preface to the 1936 exhibition catalogue, Breton extends the argument made against the Enlightenment on the cover of *La Révolution Surréaliste* in 1924. He criticised rationalism and empiricism and argued for the 'historic necessity of eliminating [the] boundaries' that limit thought, the imagination, and thus experience and its representation.[58] He writes:

> The greatest benefit that surrealism has derived from this kind of operation up till now has been that of having succeeded in reconciling dialectically these two terms which are so violently contradictory for adult man: *perception, representation*; and in bridging the gap that separates them.[59]

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[54] Breton, 'Manifesto', p. 11.

[55] The un-capitalised 's' in surrealism, here, refers to those like Jennings not officially forming a part of the movement (and so not susceptible to Breton's whimsical excommunications and demands to 'toe the party line'). See Duran, 'Antipodes of Surrealism'.

[56] *The International Surrealist Exhibition, Thursday, June 11th to Saturday, July 4th, 1936* (London: Women's Printing Society, 1936).

[57] Few of Jennings' paintings, drawings, or collages are held in public collections. Many are still in existence, held by private collectors, such as Jennings' youngest daughter Charlotte Jennings (Jennings and Daly Collection) and formerly Mary-Louise Jennings.

[58] André Breton, 'Preface', trans. by David Gascoyne, in *International Surrealist Exhibition*, pp. 6–8 (p. 6).

[59] Breton, 'Preface', p. 8.

Surrealist literature and painting sought to *represent* the irrational 'mental personality' of the artist in his perception of the world.[60] For audiences, it often brought about an unfamiliar representation of something familiar: a subjective rendering of something previously viewed as objectively concrete. Paul Nash's *Landscape at Large* (Figure 17) provides a useful example of collage from the 1936 exhibition. The collage, constructed out of found fragments (an orange envelope, a piece of bark, shale) is not a realist one — it does not approximate the British landscape as it appears — but how it was perceived, or imaginatively interpreted, by Nash.[61] Perception and representation dialectically inform each other in Surrealist work, as the two are synthesised in a single project. Nash's work is filtered through representational techniques which prompt direct associations with nature. Whilst his landscape undermines notions of a realist portrayal of a landscape, it uses found fragments from the earth to create the scene: not only a representation of nature, but a literal presentation of it, too. The Surrealist approach Nash employs involves a mode of representation initiated by the perception and imagination of the artist or producer when interacting with the material world.

One of Jennings' own contributions to the 1936 exhibition reveals how an imaginative representation of perception potentializes the formation of *new* and critical audience perceptions. The collage, *Le Minotaur*, showed Herbert Kitchener, 1st Earl Kitchener, Former British Secretary of State for War, wearing a Fez, with a tiny portrait of a child hanging upside-down from his torso, in place of his medals.[62] The Fez is a direct reference to Kitchener's role in Sudan and Egypt, where he wore the Fez of an officer in the Egyptian Army, and, following the battle of Omdurman (1898), was given the title Lord Kitchener of Khartoum.[63] Kitchener was Secretary of State for War when Jennings was a child and the Fez was no longer part of his attire, yet Jennings' 1934 satirical representation of him — assembled from disparate, historical fragments and appearing almost twenty years after Kitchener's death, in the year of the second

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[60] Breton, 'Preface', p. 7.

[61] Paul Nash, *Landscape At Large*, 1936, collage, Tate, London.

[62] The collage is unavailable for reproduction here, a description of it can be found in Jennings' biography by Kevin Jackson. Jackson, p. 107.

[63] See *Lord Kitchener of Khartoum: A Biography* (London: [n. pub.], 1914)

Empire Games tournament in London — reactivated politically relevant associations between this major historical figure and British Imperialism.

Le Minotaur provoked criticism: there were '[v]iolent responses from patriots'.[64] Jennings was also attacked by a member of the Royal Miniature Society, who claimed that an image of her son had been stolen and reproduced by Jennings. In response, Jennings stated that he was 'not interested in other people's views'; arguing that, as 'a Surrealist […] everything in the world is material to create imagery'.[65] Jennings was staunchly anti-imperialist and not, as some commentators have suggested, a blind patriot.[66] Whilst Jennings' collection of extracts concerning empire were curiously removed from the *Pandaemonium* publication, works such as these illustrate his willingness to question the dominant perceptions as to the historic role of the British Empire.[67]

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[64] Jackson, p. 41.

[65] Jackson, p. 71.

[66] In the Q&A following the 2019 screening of his film *Through the Bloody Mists of Time*, at Birkbeck Cinema, London, Adam Kossoff argued for what he views as the uncritical character of Jennings' patriotism.

[67] Jennings' manuscript shows that *Pandaemonium* once held a working title of 'The Decline and Fall of the British Empire'. Jennings himself was a staunch anti-imperialist, as evinced by an article published in the *Times Literary Supplement* in 1948, ten years after the commencement of the 'Pandaemonium' project, in which Jennings adduces as evidence for his assertion that 'the English are in fact a violent, savage race', the ruthlessness of the English in America — including their near 'extermination' of indigenous peoples and the horrors they inflicted on those forced into slavery — and 'the burning of Hamburg'. Given that an entire box held at Pembroke College, is dedicated to materials that speak clearly to this working title, it is fascinating that *Pandaemonium's* 1985 editors chose to take out direct references to Empire: a clear act of de-politicisation. Humphrey Jennings, 'The English', in *Reader*, ed. by Jackson, p. 236.

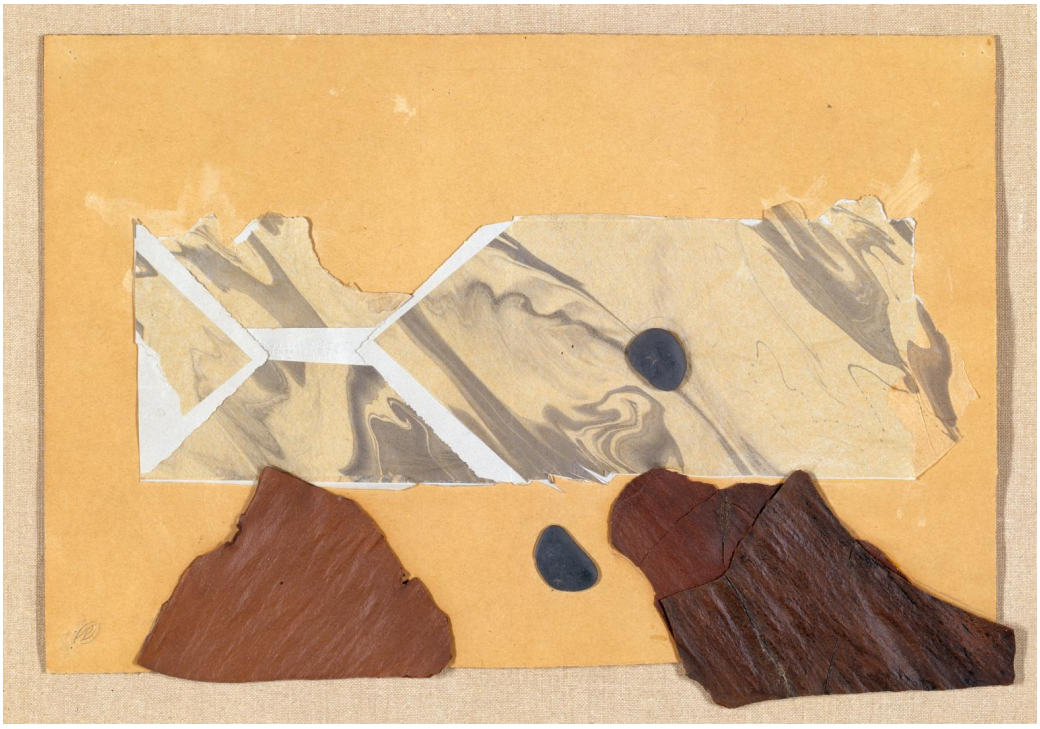

Figure 17. Paul Nash, Landscape at Large, 1936. Paper, pine and shale on paper, used pictorially.

In the collages *Le Minotaur* and *Landscapes at Large*, both perception and representation exist as part of the same project: they exist simultaneously as a methodological necessity. Ambiguity serves to foreground the emergence of previously unrealised or non-dominant relations between things, bringing the production and experience of viewing Surrealist artwork into an ongoing, iterative cycle of rejuvenating perception and its representation. With twenty-one individual collages, the New Burlington Galleries represented the imagination of an International Surrealist Group in and through the ambiguities of collage, therein potentializing the cultivation of an imaginative opportunity amongst receptive audiences.[68] As the curators' commitment to collage in the 1936 exhibition shows, the process of juxtaposing disparate fragments was a fundamental aspect of a Surrealist aesthetic. Both Nash's image of the landscape of Britain and Jennings' image of Lord Kitchener demonstrate the means through which Surrealist techniques seeks to dislodge, challenge, and complexify prevailing notions of meaning and representation. As such, these types of works foster new meaning-making, for the act of viewing another's

[68] *International Surrealist Exhibition*, pp. 14–30.

subjective representation of our material world stimulates the production of alternative insight.

Whilst there is a sense in which all artwork engages with ambiguity, Surrealist artwork can be understood as intentionally prompting a productive ambiguity for its critical potentiality. The term 'productive ambiguity' has been used by Keith Beattie in his book examining Jennings' filmic output. Beattie uses the term to reinvent the discourse around Surrealist collage, in which he claims ambiguity has been all too often 'cast as a negative characteristic of the creative text'.[69] He specifically proposes that 'ambiguity, as demonstrated in the effects of collage, is a productive practice': Surrealism's intention was to advance a 'multiplicity of meaning', which is 'informed by productive ambiguities'.[70] A similar term, 'fruitful ambiguity', has been used by Roger Caillois in his exploration of the Surrealist approach through consideration of two types of images, those which he calls '"infinite images" or "null images"' and others which are called '"blocked images"'.[71] Caillois argues that whilst those images in the former category do 'not *want* to mean anything, or rather they want to say nothing, at the same time as they imply everything'. '"[B]locked images"', however, 'include any form of tightly coded formal structure, such as *kenningar*, or allegory, that has lost its key'.[72]

There is great diversity in the use of ambiguity as employed by individual artists within the movement, and Jennings' work opens a new form of ambiguity, where what Caillois calls 'reverie traps, confusion machines' or '"null images"' are given potential in repositioning audiences through their muddling of preestablished notions on the past.[73] Ambiguity is made productive when an artist accepts the plurality of meanings which are possible in any given work. Productive ambiguity invites the imaginative engagement of audiences and enables the internal firing of new connection, potentializing new perspectives.

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[69] Beattie, p. 28.

[70] Beattie, p. 28.

[71] Roger Caillois, 'Fruitful Ambiguity' in *The Edge of Surrealism: A Roger Callois Reader*, ed. by Claudine Frank, trans. by Claudine Frank and Camille Naish (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003), pp. 322–25.

[72] Claudine Frank, 'Introduction to "Fruitful Ambiguity"', in *Callois Reader*, pp. 320–21 (p. 321).

[73] Quoted in 'Introduction to "Fruitful Ambiguity"', p. 321.

2.2. Jennings' Concept of 'Imaginative History'

An empirical strain dominated British history at the time Jennings produced 'Pandaemonium'.[74] The *International Handbook of Historical Studies* well illuminates what Jennings was pushing up against with his development of an 'imaginative history'. Whilst the professionalisation of historical work was gradual in Great Britain, the period within which Jennings worked was one characterised by an academic study of the past.[75] *The English Historical Review* established and disseminated professional frameworks within historical scholarship. Jennings, who was never an historian, however, worked at a distance from the 'so-called historical method' which 'consist[ed] of little more than the injunction to "get the story right"'.[76] An echo of the often-cited demand of Ranke to 'describe how things were – *wie es eigentlich gewesen*', historical scholarship during Jennings' time sought the representation of truth, of reality, and thus a concrete experience which meets the standards of empirical enquiry.[77]

Jennings' interest in documenting the conflictual nature of the Industrial Revolution establishes a commonality with the project of Marxist historians working around the time of Jennings. The objective historical experience represented in the work of Communist Party historians, however, whilst pushing up against dominant bourgeois traditions, makes very little mention of the imagination.[78] Whilst ideology is of course a category of the mind, ideology is not what Jennings means when he refers to 'mental events': these are instead a category of subjective, emotional, and conceptual processing.[79] Harold Parker explains that historians trained at either Oxford or Cambridge, including Oxford-trained Communist Party historians Christopher Hill

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[74] Harold Parker, 'Great Britain', in *International Handbook of Historical Studies*, ed. by Iggers and Parker, pp.193–216 (p. 193).

[75] Parker, p. 193.

[76] Jenkins, *Re-thinking*, p. x.

[77] George Gooch, *History and Historians in the Nineteenth Century* (London: Lowe and Brydone, 1952) pp. 96–97.

[78] Christopher Hill, *The English Revolution, 1640: An Essay* (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1940); Rodney Hilton, *The Economic Development of some Leicestershire Estates in the 14th and 15th Centuries* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1947); E. P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class* (London: Gollancz, 1963).

[79] *Pandaemonium,* p. xxxv.

and Rodney Hilton, were educated in 'the idiom of English empiricism and in that special orbit of English empiricism known as academic history', which shaped a particular standard for historical scholarship. [80] He continues, they:

> were educated to see history as a sequence of connected events and factors over time; they were reared in the practice of reading historical reality through intense, critical scrutiny of documents, and they were associating with mentors, colleagues, and reviewers who were insisting that they get their concrete facts straight, they bring each noun, verb, adjective, adverb, and preposition to the empirical test of correspondence to what had occurred.[81]

Jennings' enrolment at Cambridge's Pembroke College, as a student of the English Tripos, had placed him closer to the arts than was the case with these Oxbridge historians. Jennings spent much of his time at Cambridge on theatrical pursuits, pressing toward a career in the arts. When, in 1937, Jennings decided to formulate an alternative history — a '*real* history of the British people' — he did so more as an artist, a poet and a filmmaker than as a traditional historian. [82]

Jennings' literary background involved a consideration for the role of the poet in society — which, following his abandonment of his thesis on Thomas Gray in 1930, gave Jennings the firm belief that 'poetry had been expropriated' from the people.[83] As with Benjamin, Jennings appeared destined for a career in academia, but never quite made it. His never-completed thesis, supervised by I. A. Richards and truncated for financial reasons, sought to uncover the changing role of the poet, and is, in this sense, a real part of the 'Pandaemonium' project. [84] A solitary figure, producing a bewilderingly small number of works, despite evident skill, Gray was known as one of the most important poets of the eighteenth-century, but on account of his reluctance to publish, he was also often viewed as the most disappointing.[85] Gray, who insisted on

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[80] Parker, p. 202.

[81] Parker, p. 202.

[82] Jennings' Unpublished Notes, 3.p, my italics.

[83] Jennings' Unpublished Notes, 5.o.

[84] Jennings abandoned his thesis on Thomas Gray when facing pressure to support his wife and child. Jackson, p. 111.

[85] 'Thomas Gray', *Poetry Foundation* (2019) <https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poets/thomas-gray> [accessed 8 February 2019].

being a gentlemen, not a tradesman, and abhorred the idea of selling his literary work, represented a larger issue for Jennings: artists relinquishing a social role for their work.[86]

Addressing the Institute for the Study of Fascism in 1934, Benjamin shows concern for the role of the poet or writer in society during the same period as Jennings. Benjamin contends that, in the form of education, the bourgeois class instilled an elitist, educational privilege in the writer, thereby de-politicising the vocation and weakening its ties with the working-class.[87] The 'Introduction' to *Pandaemonium* laments the place of the arts in the modern age as 'a commodity for Bond Street, or as a piece of snobbery in Mayfair, or as a means of propaganda in Bloomsbury, or as a method of escapism in Hampstead'.[88] Jennings criticises specific regions in London for each maintaining a separation between art and life. With the societal function of the imagination downgraded in modernity, the poet, for Jennings, is no longer viewed as able to 'provide unifying myths for the people and instead was transformed into a specialized producer of artefacts for the elite'.[89] Jennings thus looked upon the eighteenth century as a golden age, in which the poet held a social function, and grieved the decline of the public role of art. Gray's stunted legacy represented the start of that era, with Jennings living firmly within it. The concept of 'imaginative history', therefore, serves to re-establish the importance of imaginative work.

Whilst Jennings repeatedly returns to the character of the socially functioning poet as symptomatic of an earlier age, Jennings' collection places little importance on rhythm, verse, or style: *Pandaemonium* contains poems from William Blake's *Songs of Experience*, Milton's *Paradise Lost*, and William Wordsworth's *Miscellaneous Sonnets*, among others, but there is a greater emphasis on imaginative prose — also referred to in this thesis as 'poetic'. *Pandaemonium* represents vision through the collation of works which place human subjectivity, thought, feelings, and the imagination at the fore.

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[86] Heidi Thomson, 'The Poet and the Publisher in Thomas Gray's Correspondence', *Yearbook of English Studies*, 28 (1998), 163–80 (p. 163).

[87] Benjamin, 'Author as Producer', trans. by Edmund Jephcott, in *SW*, ii.2, pp. 768–82.

[88] *Pandaemonium*, p. xvii.

[89] Saler, p. 128.

For Jennings, the gradual development of modernity involved the gradual subjugation of the people by the ruling classes. The commodification of art in Bond Street points us toward a poverty in modernity: the co-option of spiritual needs by industrial capitalism. Jennings' selection of quotations evidences an interest in subjugation since 1660, framed through commentary on Parliamentary Acts, in particular land laws, as instigating a depletion of that which feeds the 'emotional side of our existence'.[90] An archival fragment, written *c*. 1930, reads:

> when the enclosures forced the country-dwellers off the land they not only expropriated the people but also expropriated poetry, which has its roots in the emotional links of man to the land and of man to man in a common society.[91]

Jennings clearly perceived a negative relationship between bourgeois governance and collective interests. For him, both the material *and* the imaginative potentials of the people suffered in the period since 1660 — and 'Pandaemonium' represents a change in value given to the role of the imagination, as opposed to the habitually represented material changes of the industrial period. [92]

Pandaemonium exists as an anomaly in terms of its content and form. The rationalising process of modernity has limited the scope of historical scholarship; it was Jennings' location in the arts which provided him with sufficient exposure to the Surrealists to envisage an alternative approach to doing historical work. The rationalising process of modernity, represented in *Pandaemonium*, is part of the wider story of modernity as a paradigm shift. Jennings begins his project with the formation of the Royal Society in 1660, drawing on the changes in perspective which came about in its wake. Jeremy Bentham's panopticon is, for Jennings, a 'culmination of the rationalism of the eighteenth century'.[93] Jennings believed that the example from Bentham of an internalisation of authority was emblematic of cognitive change in modernity. The Surrealists protested this bourgeois rationality of modernity, and

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[90] Jennings' Unpublished Notes, 2.i.

[91] Jennings' Unpublished Notes, 5.n.

[92] Enclosure has been prominent in radical thinking more recently, including in that of Peter Linebaugh, *Stop, Thief! The Commons, Enclosures, and Resistance* (Oakland: PM Press, 2014).

[93] *Pandaemonium,* p. 98.

similarly, this chapter conceives of the 'Pandaemonium' project as a means of subverting the effects of this rationality upon historiography.

For Jennings, the problem with the work of the British Communist Party in the 1920's and 1930's (as also with the Marxist historians appearing in Jennings' wake), was that they neglected what Jennings described as the '*Means of Vision',* focussing solely on '*Means of Production'*.[94] Referring to the extracts which populate *Pandaemonium* as 'Images' — fragments of the imagination — Jennings developed the concept of 'The Means of Vision' as a foundational aspect of his work, as sketched in *Pandaemonium's* 'Introduction':

> *The Means of Vision* – matter (sense impressions) transformed and reborn by Imagination: *turned into an image.*
>
> *The Means of Production* – matter is transformed and reborn by *Labour*.[95]

The quote articulates Jennings' dual understanding of what propels change. It also implies that the 'means of vision', or the imagination, are independent of the 'means of production' — something denied in Marx.[96] When Jennings writes of 'The Means of Production', he refers to the ways in which we produce and re-produce the necessary conditions of life: our sustenance, shelter, and energy. The quote describes that necessary relationship between resources and work — 'matter transformed by labour'.[97] The phrase is from Marx, but a similar relationship is conveyed by a quote from Milton in the opening extract to *Pandaemonium*: 'incessant toyle'.[98] Jennings criticism of the means of production associated with the paradigm shift of modernity is even stronger in the unpublished material, where his notes describe the workers of Britain as 'slaves of the oppressors'.[99] For Jennings, industrial relations during his

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[94] *Pandaemonium*, p. xvii.

[95] *Pandaemonium,* p. xvii.

[96] Karl Marx, 'Preface', *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy* (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1977), n.p. <https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1859/critique-pol-economy/preface.htm> [accessed 1 November 2020].

[97] *Pandaemonium,* p. xvii.

[98] *Pandaemonium,* p. 3.

[99] Jennings' Unpublished Notes, 4.a.

lifetime predominantly served the incessant accumulation of capital. On opening the book of *Pandaemonium* one reads: 'riches grow in Hell'. For Jennings, whilst such a society may be rich in resources, something vital of human experience is lost, as expressed in his consequent 'Images' of hellish modernity.[100]

'Vision' for Jennings is perception: the imaginative faculty of every individual. It is how we *see*, our mental vision, how we conceive — the fundamental building blocks of thought. Vision is recorded in *Pandaemonium* through Jennings' selection of fragments, drawn from archives. Jennings depicts the vision of many individuals in *Pandaemonium* — a sample — which together contribute to the representation of an historic population writing between 1660 and 1886. Jennings was most interested in *the impact of the machine on vision*, and vice versa: the interrelation between technology and perception.[101]

Jennings' conceptualisation of history in *Pandaemonium*, begins with the recognition of an epistemological paradigm shift, which is the founding of the Royal Society: the second extract 'Memorandum' is taken from the *Journal of the Royal Society*, and appears in the first section of *Pandaemonium,* entitled 'Observations and Reports'.[102] While it was originally written in 1660, Jennings found it in a book published in 1944, making it one of the later additions to his collection.[103] The extract reveals that a group of men met at Gresham College, on 28 November 1660 to hear a lecture from a 'Mr Wren'.[104] Christopher Wren was one of the founders of the Royal Society, who, as an astronomer, physicist, and architect, customarily gave lectures. Following the meeting, during 'mutualle converse', the topic of advancing 'Physico-Mathematical Experimentall Learning' arose, and it was this discussion that led to the

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[100] *Pandaemonium*, p. 3.

[101] The interrelation between technology and perception is also important for Benjamin and will be explored in Chapter Three. See also Sara Danius, *The Senses of Modernism: Technology, Perception and Aesthetics* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2002).

[102] *Pandaemonium*, p. 5.

[103] The fact that this is a later addition to the collection is inconsequential. Jennings added and deleted extracts throughout the whole process of collecting and maintained an interest in the Royal Society from the outset. It is likely that this image replaced another image pertaining to the Royal Society: this period of Jennings' research was the most intense and a great deal of editing work was involved.

[104] *Pandaemonium,* p. 5.

commitment being made to advance materialist learning through the founding of a college: The Royal Society.[105]

The Royal Society analysed and studied forces of nature. They studied electricity via thunder and lightning, forces which had previously been associated with God, a creator, or supernatural forces. Wren himself studied the microscope and undertook experiments to advance navigation, which involved lunar observation, developing an eleven-foot telescope with Paul Neile. Wren's work, developing tools which were designed to advance the capabilities for human observation, meant he was of particular interest to Jennings, whose central regard for 'Vision' left him with a peripheral interest in the development of scientific tools for clarifying human observation. Jennings' personal archive is scattered with comments and notes from this period which show an interest in the optic, in 'new modes of observation' developed during the seventeenth-century.[106]

Whilst the Society's work to develop scientific tools is, of course, significant to societal changes in vision, Jennings' interest in the Royal Society stems more from the changes in *intellectual* vision, which occurred *before* the development of these observational tools.[107] Before experimental research could be done on the forces of nature and on the planetary system, a 'radically new attitude had to be developed towards them, and to all natural phenomena. One of strict realism'.[108] Thus, Jennings begins his history with an early change in vision which he associated with the Royal Society: 'strict realism' and the adherence to 'Physico-Mathematical Experimentall Learning'.[109]

This new materialist perspective advanced by the Royal Society would come to change collective vision over time. This alteration is represented as irreversible in *Pandaemonium*, but also gradual, with a mixing of ways of seeing manifest in the extracts that document the process of this change. The turn to empiricism in Britain came about as a central aspect of a wider break with traditional modes of perception.

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[105] *Pandaemonium,* p. 5.

[106] Jennings' Unpublished Notes, 5.c.

[107] On vision and the development of modernity, see Claudia Olk, *Virginia Woolf and the Aesthetics of Vision* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2014).

[108] Jennings' Unpublished Notes, 5.d.

[109] *Pandaemonium,* p. 5.

What Jennings calls 'strict realism' is a philosophical doctrine that asserts that matter, as the object of perception, exists 'in reality' and is neither reducible to a universal spirit, nor dependent on the particularities of the agent who perceives it. Theological explanations of phenomena had begun to play a lesser role in the intellectual life of seventeenth-century Britain, with doctrines of empiricism rejecting knowledge derived from anything other than that experienced by the senses. For Jennings, the relationship between such alterations in vision and the Industrial Revolution is that the former lead to the latter, through their formulation of a new concept of nature.

Part of *Pandaemonium's* Section One 'Observations and Reports', '34 — Effects of Lightening in Northamptonshire', provides an example of developing materialist philosophy: 'a cold, inch-by-inch analysis and reportage of the effects of a thunderstorm equally without reference to God or man'.[110] Taken from a 1725 contribution to the Royal Society's *Philosophical Transactions* by J. Wasse, the extract illustrates a fundamental difference in vision when it is compared with '7 — To Command the Rain'.[111] Taken from *The Diary of Samuel Pepys*, 'To Command the Rain' also appears in Section One, and Jennings' uses the excerpt to suggest that a materialist philosophy of weather was not immediately accepted by the populace upon the formation of the Society in 1660. Writing in 1663, Samuel Pepys provides an indication of a pre-modern 'Means of Vision', pondering, with confusion, upon the passing of a king on a barge in the rain: 'me thought it lessened my esteem of a king, that he should not be able to command the rain'.[112]

The outlook of Pepys is characteristic of Jennings' concept of a pre-modern 'Means of Vision', which dissolves as we encounter the triumph of a realist 'Means of Vision'. We have lost 'Magical systems', according to Jennings; systems overridden by the philosophy of materialism and the men of Gresham College. Jennings writes that:

> At a certain period in human development the means of vision and the means of production were intimately connected — or were felt to be by the people concerned — I refer to the Magical systems under which it was not possible to plow the ground without a prayer

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[110] *Pandaemonium*, p. 38.

[111] *Pandaemonium,* p. 9.

[112] *Pandaemonium*, p. 9.

> — to eat without a blessing, to hunt an animal without a magic formula. To build without a sense of glory.[113]

Jennings writes nostalgically about the pre-modern, the 'Magical Systems' which brought a totality to experience, a kind of harmony through the unity of vision and production. However, he chose not to represent them in *Pandaemonium*. Instead, he began in 1660, with the clash of systems providing the only remnant of the old. The words of Pepys share little in the way of magic: the powers of divinity appear broken, with the Imaginative 'Means of Vision' framing perspective.

Jennings' ideological connection to an earlier time shapes his historiographic practice, and thus the character of his 'imaginative history'. As a phrase, 'The Means of Vision' is indicative of 'ways of seeing', with Jennings' representation of two contrasting 'ways' in *Pandaemonium* providing the foundation for his concept of 'imaginative history'. Jennings perceives that a materialist 'Means of Vision' instrumentalises the imagination for invention, productivity, and profit. Imagination, therefore, is the enabler of industrial development, but it is also, in its instrumentalised sense, that which prevents the development of its alternative. Once a central component of 'magic', allowing the mind to fill the gaps and leap beyond the empirical, the imagination, in the modern age, appears anchored to the prevailing materialist system. Such an epistemological position, which negates the validity of the unseen, is an obstacle to the imagination, to its fruits, and to the possibilities of 'magic', conceived of as that which is beyond the senses.

Jennings understood the modern period to have weakened the role of a socially imaginative 'Means of Vision'. With the attendant gradual dissolution of 'Magic Systems' as a collective means of perspective, the rate of, and commitment to, *production* in society, rose. A *materialist* 'Means of Vision' holds greater potential for developing the means of production, towards mechanised and centralised production. To 'plow the fields without a prayer' is exemplary of the possibility of 'strict realism' — paving the way for the promotion of accelerated agricultural production.[114] Through his collated extracts, Jennings represents the relationship between vision and

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[113] *Pandaemonium*, p. xvii.

[114] *Pandaemonium,* p. xvii.

production by showing the interrelated role of both the imaginative *and* materialist 'Means of Vision' in the making of the modern world: the creative act of invention preceding creation; and the realist view of nature sanctioning its subjugation as a resource for production. However, the targeted and methodological drive behind Jennings' 'Pandaemonium' project is the destabilisation of such empiricism.

Jennings' ultimate concern is thus with the modern fortunes of our non-instrumentalised *imaginative* vision, the faculty that takes us into the metaphysical, following his understanding that an Enlightenment philosophy of materialism erodes the imagination. It is this orientation of imaginative vision which he portrays as under threat in *Pandaemonium* — metaphorically losing in a war of binaries: the imagination versus empiricism. For Jennings, in *Pandaemonium*, this struggle exists as formative — indeed, it is the vehicle which propelled his work over thirteen years of incessant collecting. Jennings' project shows how the imagination can be used to think about history and its representation, whilst also inferring that an alternative society might have been developed if the breadths of imagination were to flourish.

The 'Means of Vision' and the imagination are not the same thing for Jennings. His unpublished papers reveal an understanding of the imagination as a transformer — a revolutionising agent which works to make new our experiences of the world.[115] Our vision channels our perspective, with our 'Means of Vision' being the way that we perceive. Thus, our 'Means of Vision' serves to inform and focus our 'vision', which, in turn provides the material for our 'imagination' to work on (which in its turn feeds our vision (and 'Means of Vision'), in an ongoing iterative cycle). Jennings raises his concern for the 'emotional side of our nature', which he argues needs to be 'fed', 'kept alive', and 'satisfied'.[116] Accordingly, he develops a way of presenting a history of the 'machine', as it was imagined by those who were its contemporary observers. *Pandaemonium* becomes a means of representing the ignored.

Jennings' concept of 'imaginative history' strategizes against further loss of our imaginative capacity. He warns:

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[115] Jennings' Unpublished Notes, 2.i.

[116] Jennings' Unpublished Notes, 2.i.

> Man as we see him today lives by production and by vision. It is doubtful if he can live by one alone. He has occasionally however tried. Dr Ure speaks of a factory as ideally 'a vast automaton composed of various mechanical and intellectual organs, acting in an uninterrupted concern for the production of a common object, all of them being subordinated to a self-regulated moving force (this is in Marx's *Capital*). At the other extreme we have the Tibetan living naked in the caves of the Himalayas, eating only nettles and devoting himself to contemplation, and turning green in consequence. But in fact the factory man is living in the vision of others and the Buddhist Yogi on the production of others.[117]

Jennings weaves his philosophy of 'vision' and a politics of the imagination into a historiographic approach for 'Pandaemonium'.[118] 'Imaginative history' seeks to avoid a separation between 'vision' and 'production', and thus any attempt to 'live by one alone', through nourishing our 'vision' and 'production' as one.[119] Jennings' methodology incorporates both the representation *and* cultivation of the imagination.

Whilst so far this section has addressed *Pandaemonium* as an alternative historiography, the following paragraphs address the centrality of protest in Jennings' concept of 'imaginative history'. Jennings insisted that his work is 'the imaginative history of the Industrial Revolution. Neither the political history nor the Mechanical History, nor the Social History', but the notes in the archive show that it goes well beyond that and stands as a work of protest or resistance.[120] Jennings makes clear that *Pandaemonium* is in principle a different kind of history, one which not only refuses to conform to the dominant manifestation of history, but which subverts the very process upon which such history has been grounded.[121] An unpublished note states that:

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[117] *Pandaemonium,* p. xvii.

[118] The term 'politics of the imagination' is here devised to underscore the socially transformative role played by the imagination in Jennings.

[119] *Pandaemonium,* p. xvii.

[120] Jennings' Unpublished Notes, 2.c.

[121] As the feminist movement of Her-story suggests, 'history' is a process of telling, oftentimes related to power, and who gets to speak. Whilst Jennings' history does not collate only women's voices, it is voiced through the words of others, and as such, Jennings can be seen to removes the '*his'* from history, in so far as he abstains from authorial narrative. As explained by Parker, p. 205: 'British Historians love to tell a story…'. June Sochen, *Herstory: A Woman's View of American History* (New York: Alfred Publishing,

> many books have already been written or compiled of the Industrial Revolution in Britain — but they [are] books dealing with each of them interpreting it from a different point of view: from the point of view of
> Economics
> Politics
> Social Welfare
> Machinery
> Trade-Unionism and so on.[122]

Jennings' work illustrates his concern for the habitual, the 'done and dusted'. He wished not to revisit histories which were already, in Jennings' mind, 'completed'.[123] The diverse viewpoints of Economics, Politics, Social Welfare, Machinery, and Trade Unionism share a focus on material history and a neglect of the imagination and the intangible. The concept of 'imaginative history' subverts these empirical demands: it does not ignore the material domains but represents the immaterial as impacted by the material. The publication's subtitle, *The Coming of the Machine as Seen by Contemporary Observers*, suggests that the projects' central concern is with objective change as conceived of by those who witnessed and experienced it.

Jennings asserts that the 'imagination is a part of life', and as such, 'Imaginative history' attempts to encapsulate existence in its entirety: it captures the thoughts of a people whether they are conducting mechanical work, writing-up a science report, going for a walk, or reciting a vision experienced whilst unconscious. [124] 'Imaginative history' represents only the imaginative, visual, or visually descriptive aspects of a text, extracting prose which fundamentally transgress the borders and boundaries placed around theme and subject in dominant or academic historical scholarship. Jennings' 'Images' represent a 'Unifying experience', a coalescence of

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1974); Antonia Navarro Tejero, 'Telling (Her)story: An Overview of Subaltern Studies', *Feminismo/s*, 4 (2004), 85–96.

[122] Jennings' Unpublished Notes, 3.h.

[123] The note sits within a wider context of Jennings' conceptualisation of 'imaginative history' as distinct: it shows that an intentional and self-conscious deviation from the norm established by earlier historiographic trends preceded the project, integral to which was this point of interruption, rejection, and experimentation.

[124] *Pandaemonium*, p.xxxix.

experience which Jennings considers overlooked by economic history or other materialist histories.[125]

A fragment held in the Pembroke Archive describes *Pandaemonium* as a text that subverts 'the breakdown of history into events'.[126] This quote resonates with a criticism made by Benjamin in 1940 of the historian who tells a 'sequence of events like the beads of a rosary'.[127] Rejecting an approach to history which manifests as linear or suggests an inevitable evolutionary development over time, Benjamin's comment is situated within the wider context of his criticism of Historicism for its adherence to a vision of progress, derived from the Enlightenment philosophy of history associated with Ranke.[128] The representation of the past through a series of events is achieved through a blind determinism to interpret historical occurrences as having causal connections. Whilst this approach offers a vision of coherence, through a 'unified' explanation of historical phenomena, it only succeeds in doing so through the interpretative narrative of the historian. For similar reasons to Benjamin, Jennings intentionally distances himself from the use of such interpretive historical narrative in 'Pandaemonium'. Both Jennings and Benjamin avoid creating the kind of interpretative text which strings together primary sources as if there is an inevitable logic which connects them; both remained 'silent' in their historical projects, to avoid 'locking' the events they had chosen to present into a connecting 'series'. Another note extends Jennings' argument. He suggests that the use of interpretative narrative on the part of historians fundamentally destabilises the basis upon which history can claim truth. 'But the "truth"', he asks, 'how stable has it proved to be? Your history needs rewriting every generation'.[129] The extent to which professional histories can maintain a tight hold of the 'truth' is an enigma for Jennings, who perceives the voice of the historian, in such texts, as re-imagining that which had already been written or said in a manner which places question marks over the 'truth status' of that which came before it.

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[125] Jennings' Unpublished Notes, 3.a.

[126] Jennings' Unpublished Note, 3.l.

[127] 'Concept of History', p. 397.

[128] 'Concept of History', pp. 389–400.

[129] Jennings' Unpublished Notes, 2.a.

However, Jennings places the term 'truth' in inverted commas in this context, drawing attention to his non-standard usage of it. The context from which the excerpt is taken is one in which the phrase is contested and challenged. Jennings problematises the basis upon which a history can really be considered less 'true' or 'real' than empirical histories. Jennings asks: 'how do you propose to describe to me the original events. *By words also.* What difference then is there between these two sets of words — between economic history and what we are to call it — Imaginative History.'[130] The *words*, for Jennings — the interpretation of the historian — are built out of the same imaginative matter as literature, great novels, and works of poetry. Jennings continues: 'You are concerned with truth perhaps. Not with facts which is impossible — but with truth arising from them?'.[131] Jennings' differentiation between the meanings of 'truth' and 'fact' is integral to understanding the character of the imaginative and his approach to history.

Pandaemonium is based in fact insofar as it represents events which have been witnessed collectively. Whilst *Pandaemonium* is composed of subjectively-rendered facts, the epistemological significance of these facts is clear to Jennings, who sought to illuminate the ways that historical events have been experienced by individuals, *emotionally.*[132] However, since Jennings' 'facts' have been ruminated upon, conceived of, and become mental ideas — 'Images' — they cannot be deemed, in and of themselves, accurate, or given the label 'true'. In an unpublished note Jennings sheds further light upon the distinction between what is 'true' and what is 'factual':

> There is history which consists of the actual events […] which occur at their one time and of which in fact we have no record: nothing less than their total reconstruction could record them — too complex are they. But we have innumerable references to them — we believe we are capable of measuring the causes and results of these actions of even deducing laws according to which historical events develop and so on.[133]

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[130] Jennings' Unpublished Notes, 2.a.

[131] Jennings' Unpublished Notes, 2.a.

[132] Pandaemonium, p. xxxv.

[133] Jennings' Unpublished Notes, 2.a.

The extract suggests that without the actual (impossible) reconstruction of an event, all we have is the *record* of events. Jennings fundamentally criticises the existence of historical forms which claim a 'truth status'. For Jennings, it is an impossibility to write, or to record, without having one's subjectivity colour the representation of reality. The Pembroke archive illuminates that, for Jennings, there is little substantive difference between what Collingwood accepts as the 'historian's imagination' and what Jennings captures as 'the coming of the machine *as seen by contemporary observers'*.[134]

2.3. Reality and Social Conflict in *Pandaemonium*

Jennings writes that *Pandaemonium* is the 'real history of the British people'.[135] This statement forms part of a wider passage in his notes, in which Jennings' proposal for the 'Pandaemonium' project is raised to an almost urgent level, due to the 'disgusting and ridiculous "Histories of England", which present the last three hundred years as a glorious marching on of the Drum and Colours'.[136] When Jennings uses the phrase 'drum and colours', he is borrowing from Shakespeare's 1606 play *King Lear*, and the stage directions pertaining to Cordelia's re-emergence onstage in a military context. The image is of British powers marching forward: the terms 'drum and colours' usually indicates a 'readiness for battle and are part of a show of power'.[137]

Jennings' disdain for dominant histories of England is articulated as a disdain for the symbol of constitutional power. Whist Jennings pushes up against an Empiricist strain in British historiography with his Surrealist retort, he is also aware of the Whiggish publications on the history of England, which, whilst largely published before he commenced work on *Pandaemonium*, were still numerous in the bibliographies of British history, during his time. Jennings choses to undermine Whiggish history in and through his historiographic destabilisation of the notion of progress, brought to bear in the collated aesthetics' mutual representation of irreconcilable narratives.

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[134] R. G. Collingwood, *The Idea of History*, p/b edn (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1961), p. 59.

[135] Jennings' Unpublished Notes, 2.p.

[136] Jennings' Unpublished Notes, 3.p.

[137] Alan Dessen and Leslie Thomson, 'Colours', in *A Dictionary of Stage Directions in English Drama, 1580–1642* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p. 53.

An intriguing dialectic is presented in Jennings' comment on the existing histories of England and his own 'real' project of 'imaginative history'. Jennings usurps common definitions of the 'real', to include the imaginative; he affirms the imagination as *lived*, and thus 'real'. Unlike Breton, Jennings did not coin a new phrase to describe his notion of the 'real'. In common discourse, 'reality' means the state of things as they exist, as opposed to an idealistic or notional idea. However, the label of the *sur-real* did not appeal to Jennings. Whilst Breton and his comrades sought to break down the binary between sleeping and waking life, consciousness and unconsciousness, Jennings' work was much more geared toward making valid, and addressing as *real*, that which has been labelled *invalid*. [138]

Jennings' cultural milieu was shaped, not just by Surrealist literature, but also the popular resurgence of the Logical Positivists, who re-articulated the work of David Hume throughout the 1920s and 1930s.[139] Jennings' unpublished notes show how often he returned to concerns of the 'real', considering the movement's adherence to logical reasoning and empirical experience. One note reads: 'the essential thing about these Images is that they are bona fide material — they were actually written by the people concerned at the time or very near it'.[140] This quote suggests that, for Jennings, what is *real* is tied to ones' temporal proximity to the event represented.

An undated but lengthy passage written by Jennings on a single scrap of paper further illuminates Jennings' understanding of the role of truth and imagination in the writing of history. It reads:

> A book is usually expected to be 'about something' in the sense of explaining it — of making a case — of trying to prove something. But this is not necessary nor has it always been so — the Iliad does not prove anything in particular. Ah but you say, that is poetry. — it is a work of the imagination… what are the books which are not works of the imagination — perhaps you could call them books of fact. This seems easy enough but actually the division of fact from imagination is not so simple as that — there are after all facts in works of imagination — and imagination has played a great part in the books

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[138] Breton, 'Manifesto', p. 14.

[139] Michael Friedman, *Reconsidering Logical Positivism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p. xii.

[140] Jennings' Unpublished Notes, 3.l.

> which simply try to explain things. This is because in life itself fact and imagination do not seem to be easily separable or perhaps at all separable.[141]

Whilst Jennings maintains that the dominant form of history fails to meet its own ideological demands to uphold 'truth' and 'fact' as they are objectively perceived, his main focus is to highlight the impurity of notions of 'truth' and 'fact' in general. *Pandaemonium* does not *claim* the status of being true, because Jennings understood the impossibility of truth claims in history, which can only ever produce subjective renderings of objective truths. *Pandaemonium,* instead, represents the relationship between fact and the imagination in Britain, 1660–1886. Jennings' 'Images' are not recruited to communicate the 'truth' of 'the first two hundred years of the industrial revolution', but a subjective rendering of the *fact* of its development. [142] For Jennings, this is the best approximation that can be achieved of a 'real history of the British people'.[143]

An early title page labels *Pandaemonium* 'an index to the consciousness of the British people during the Industrial Revolution'.[144] Jennings' label suggests a close interrelation between 'Images' and consciousness. 'Images', for Jennings, are indicative of perception, cognition, and interpretation, while 'imaginative history' entails the representation of changing mentalities and imaginations. Jennings makes clear his specific interest in the relation of imagination to the material conditions of life. Before moving on to examine consciousness, it is necessary to first provide a closer look at the formal nature of conflict within Jennings' philosophy of history. In the 'Introduction', Jennings suggests that images show clashes and conflict with 'extra clearness' so that, through that clearness, they can stand as 'symbols for the whole inexpressible uncapturable process'.[145] For Jennings, literary images are more apt than modes of visual communication for the purpose of representing the character of

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[141] Jennings' Unpublished Notes, 3.e.
[142] Jennings' Unpublished Notes, 3.e.
[143] Jennings' Unpublished Notes, 2.g.
[144] Jennings' Unpublished Notes, 1.d.
[145] *Pandaemonium,* p. xxxvi.

conflict. 'Imaginative history' (and the truthful representation of conflict) thus rests upon an imagetic but also linguistic rendering of history.

Pandaemonium represents growing class consciousness in Britain. Jennings conceived *Pandaemonium's* purpose as representing a 'growing consciousness of […] conflicts by the people most nearly involved in them: principally the newly formed working class'. [146] While Jennings was not a Marxist, his politics remained firmly on the side of the down-trodden for much of his life and he held sensitivities toward proletarian politics.[147] Jackson's biography describes Jennings as being a 'loyal, if idiosyncratic, partisan of that noble strain within British left-wing politics that has been inspired by [Guild Socialists] and by other literary critics of capitalism'.[148] Furthermore, the inspiration Jennings took from the Surrealists, whose party-politics have historically held a contestable association with the principles of Marxist-Leninism (members having a history of on-off membership of the Communist Party), brings Jennings into association with class-based politics.[149]

Jennings' sensitivities to the situation of the working class became more pronounced after he gave a series of lectures to miners in a small Welsh community in 1942.[150] Prior to that, around the time of *Pandaemonium's* inception, Jennings had spent time in the northern town of Bolton, which he called 'Worktown'.[151] Whilst stationed in an unemployed spinner's house, Jennings avidly examined 'classics like Engels' *Condition of the Working Class in England'* whilst investigating the customs of the Lancashire working class.[152] According to George Pitman, who acknowledged Jennings as 'someone quite special' among film directors, this was 'perhaps the most important turning point' in his life.[153] Jennings' sensitivity to the plight of the working class in Britain shaped him as a particular kind of state film-maker, one keen to

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[146] Jennings' Unpublished Notes, 2.e.
[147] *Pandaemonium*, p. vii.
[148] Jackson, p. 30.
[149] Lewis, *Dada Turns Red*.
[150] *Pandaemonium*, p. vii.
[151] *Pandaemonium*, p. vii.
[152] G. A. H. Pitman, 'Men in our Time: Humphrey Jennings', *Our Time*, 8.3. (1944), 12.
[153] Pitman, p. 12.

dedicate substantial time to the collation of matter pertaining to their experience — as *Spare Time* attests.

Pandaemonium is suggestive of an alternative to orthodox Marxist historiography. One of Jennings' handwritten notes proclaims *Pandaemonium* to be the 'application of Marxist (dialectical materialist) principles'.[154] Whilst Jennings' approach to 'Dialectical Materialism' is distinct from the works of orthodox Marxists, such as those who (from 1946) constituted the Communist Party Historians Group, in that Jennings collates the non-empirical and refuses sustained narration in his own voice, *Pandaemonium* resonates with Marxist historiographers in its conceptualisation of conflict as a motor of change.[155] One of Jennings' notes states that 'an event properly speaking is the peak moment (the leap) of conflict which in turn is — the whole stream of history'.[156] This statement reveals affinities between Jennings and Marx's proclamation in the *Communist Manifesto* that 'the history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles'.[157]

Class conflict is represented in *Pandaemonium* through a string of extracts which show the development of political consciousness in the population, starting with extract seventy, 'The Mob'. Taken from a letter written by Josiah Wedgwood to Thomas Bentley on 9 October 1779, 'The Mob' illuminates the emergence of collective political mobilisation and the political conflict between those with power, and those with less power. The latter had no fire-arms to match the wrath of a landowner who, with the support of his neighbours, had 'two of the mob […] shot dead upon the spot,

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[154] Jennings' Unpublished Notes, 3.q. Friedrich Engels' *Condition of the Working Class in England* does not mention Historical or Dialectical Materialism. It is probable that Jennings came across Marxist dialectics in another text. Indeed, the phrase, 'dialectical materialism' was never used by Marx or Engels. Marx spoke of the 'Materialist Conception of History', while Engels used the phrase 'Historical Materialism' in *Socialism: Utopian and Scientific* (1880; translated into English in 1892). In *Dialectics of Nature*, Engels expounds the 'materialist dialectic'. This text was published posthumously, in 1925 (German/Russian) and translated into English in the 1930s; it is probable that Jennings knew of both. *Dialectics of Nature* (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1934) and *Dialectics of Nature*, ed. and trans. by Clemens Dutt (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1940); *Socialism: Utopian and Scientific*, trans. by Edward Aveling (London: Sonnenschein, 1892).

[155] For more on experiments in historical materialism, see Benjamin, 'On the Concept of History'. On 'history from below' and the Communist Party Historians' Group, see Edwin Roberts, 'From the History of Science to the Science of History: Scientists and Historians in the Shaping of British Marxist Theory', *Science & Society*, 69.4 (2005), 529–58.

[156] Jennings' Unpublished Notes, 3.l.

[157] Marx and Engels, *Manifesto*, p. 34.

one drowned, and several wounded', although the mob had 'not done much mischief; they only destroyed a small engine or two near Chowbent'.[158] The perspective of the writer here, is important, in so far as it promotes an understanding of an event, through a multiplicity of perspectives, including a perspective from the exploited class.

The history of the Industrial Revolution, as presented by *Pandaemonium*, is one of contestation, mixed feelings, and alienation, brought to bear through a consciousness of conflict. Long before Jennings began to arrange extracts in the 'montage-like' form he thought befitting for the illumination of conflict, he had been selecting and deselecting potential extracts based on their individual illumination of conflict. Dispensing with the demands of empiricism, Jennings represents clashes and conflict as they are conceived of and thought about: it is not the *number* of protests, riots, or mobs which represent conflict, but the 'descriptions and accounts of facts and events'.[159] For Jennings, it is only through 'Images or mental events […] this history is built', and it is for this reason that Jennings compiles *Pandaemonium* using them. [160]

Conflict between the 'Animist Systems and the Materialist Systems', are crucial in *Pandaemonium*, as this chapter has already discussed in relation to Jennings' philosophy of vision.[161] For Jennings, this conflict is fought in the everyday, through our differing perspectives on and thus relations to valid knowledge — 'truth' and 'reality'. In Jennings' work, the ideological battle that shaped the history of Britain from 1660 is one fought between poets and scientists: 'the poets are the guardians of the animistic system, the scientists of the materialist system'.[162] It is evident, from Jennings' archival notes, that he fights on the side of the poet, who, for him, epitomised the potential of imaginative representation. However, it is not a simplistic rejection of materialism that Jennings calls for.

The 'materialist system' to which Jennings refers excludes images (or ideas) which are produced in the mind as sources in the construction of knowledge. Such a system is conceived by him, in its conflation with reason, with science and an

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[158] *Pandaemonium,* p. 76.
[159] Jennings' Unpublished Notes, 2.a.
[160] Jennings' Unpublished Notes, 2.a.
[161] *Pandaemonium*, p. xvi.
[162] *Pandaemonium*, p. xxvii.

opposition to animism, as a kind of rationalism; to take from Breton, a 'closed rationalism which is killing the world'.[163] Breton associates the Rationalist system (Jennings' 'Materialist System') with an unconscious affirmation of exploitation and human suffering.[164] An understanding of rationalism as a system which reverberates into the crevices of everyday life informs Jennings' 'imaginative history', as that which is composed entirely of the active work of image-makers, who creatively transform the everyday through representation.

A note held at Pembroke College underscores the reason for Jennings' interest in the creative visionary: the poet 'makes a subjective ascent to 37,000 feet and endeavours to record his feelings'.[165] While many of the extracts collected are drawn from the writing of scientists, it is telling that Jennings extracts only from their memoirs and letters — writings in which a scientist may retreat from the mere recording of data. Whilst Jennings remains fascinated with the figure of the poet in his conceptual work, this fascination is representative of something wider than the act of writing poetry itself. *Pandaemonium* is made up of several different kinds of writing styles. The image-making faculty of the poet is manifest in their special ability to represent their innermost sensibilities, rather than their ability to write in verse.

Jennings refers to these sensibilities as 'events of the heart', which are not the exclusive possession of poets'.[166] In *Pandaemonium*, Jennings quotes James Glaisher, the English meteorologist and innovative balloonist who took a literal ascent in the pursuit of a new kind of knowledge on 5 September 1862:

> Up to this time I had taken observations with comfort, and experienced no difficulty in breathing, while Mr. Coxwell, in consequence of the exertions he had to make, had breathed with difficulty for some time. Having discharged sand, we ascended still higher; the aspirator became troublesome to work, and I also found a difficulty in seeing clearly.[167]

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[163] André Breton, 'Excerpts from an Interview with André Breton (1940)', *Radical America*, 4.1 (1970), 7–10 (p. 10).

[164] Breton, 'Interview', p. 10.

[165] Jennings' Unpublished Notes, 5.z.

[166] Jennings' Unpublished Notes, 2.a.

[167] *Pandaemonium,* p. 294.

Jennings drew on the record of Glaisher's most famous trip, which broke the world record for altitude at that time. Glaisher passed out due to a lack of oxygen before making a reading of the temperature or humidity of the atmosphere.[168] This fragment is a prime example of the kind of material Jennings collected, in its communication of feelings, emotions, and perception.

Whilst Jennings' concept of 'imaginative history' closely associates the (mental) visual representation of perception with the work of the artist or the poet, extracts like these show that Jennings finds the emotional and imaginative in other, disparate, places which exist as part of empirical observation. In fact, Jennings reveals the commingling of materialist and imaginative domains, as suggested through Jennings' attention to those scientists most invested in the 'vision-altering' strides taken by the Royal Society from 1660. These figures are not *forgotten*, or, in themselves, historical debris, but aspects of their work, as collected by Jennings, certainly are. When reading Isaac Newton, James Watt, or Michael Faraday, Jennings copies that which is ignored or buried in the archives.

'A Stream of Golden Cloud' is a perfect example of Jennings' compilation of images found in science. Taken from Faraday's diary, the extract was written in 1850:

> A balloon went up on Saturday […] from Vauxhall. The evening was very clear and the Sun bright: the balloon was very high, so that I could not see the car from Queen Square, Bloomsbury, and looked like a golden ball. Ballast was thrown out two or three times and was probably sand; but the dust of it had this effect, that a stream of golden cloud seemed to descend from the balloon, shooting downwards, for a moment, and then remained apparently stationary, the balloon and it separating very slowly […] If a cloud of dusty matter, as powered chalk or road dust, were purposely poured forth under these circumstances, it would give a fine effect both to those on earth and those in the balloon.[169]

Faraday uses visually descriptive language to create this imagetic piece of prose. He adopted a very different kind of reportage than he would have in a scientific document, engaging with quantitative data. His diary is an example of material which

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[168] *Pandaemonium,* p. 294.

[169] *Pandaemonium,* p. 249.

captures moments that fall outside institutional demands, since it yields little in the way of empirical data. Faraday is most concerned, here, with communicating the potential of an aesthetic experience being afforded to passers-by, as the golden dust creates a sight of beauty; the extract chosen by Jennings is a rare portrayal of Faraday's poetics.

So far, this chapter has introduced the surrealist context of Jennings' work and outlined in brief its correspondences with the contemporaneous work of Walter Benjamin, addressing their shared debt to surrealist practices of collage and collection. The chapter has explored the conceptual implications of Jennings' notion of 'imaginative history' with regards to broader historiographic trends and the philosophies of history which underpin them. Furthermore, it has examined the realisation of 'imaginative history' to the representation of reality and social conflict in *Pandaemonium*. The following section of the chapter ties these aspects together by examining in more detail Jennings' approaches to collation and its political and historiographic implications.

2.4. Approaches to Archival Exploration

Pandaemonium demonstrates the identification and collation of fragments which are seemingly uninteresting, or pointless from the perspective of the rationalist. These fragments extend the ways in which ostensibly irrelevant information was collated and made productive by Jennings and his team in their surrealist Mass Observation representation of a single day in 1937.[170] Musings, memories, dreams, and subjective judgements are selected and saved by Jennings, invoking for readers of *Pandaemonium* the rescue of what is omitted from classical history, and therefore conceived of by Benjamin as 'debris', cast aside in the onward advancement of progress.[171] Three examples demonstrate this point:

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[170] Jennings and Madge, *May the Twelfth*.

[171] Benjamin, 'Concept of History', p. 392.

> On the first night of this year I dreamt a very remarkable dream, which when I now recall to mind, at this distance of time, I cannot but think that there was a cast of prophecy in it.[172]
>
> One Middletown wakes, as I remember, I, a mere child, sat on the steps of my father's dwelling, watching the holyday folks draw their rush-carts towards the church. They went close past our door; very grand and gaudy the drawers and carts were, with ribbons, and streamers, and banners and garlands, and silver ornaments, and morrice bells, and other music, quite joyous and delightful.[173]
>
> I am, & ever have been, a great reader — & have read almost everything — a library cormorant — I am *deep* in all out of the way books, whether of the monkish times, or of the puritanical aera — I have read & digested most of the Historical Writers; but I do not *like* history. Metaphysics & Poetry and 'Facts of Mind, (i.e. Accounts of all the strange phantasms that ever possessed your philosophy-dreamers; from Thoth, the Egyptian to Taylor the English pagan,) are my darling Studies. — In short, I seldom read except to amuse myself — & I am almost always reading — Of useful knowledge, I am a so-so chemist, & I love chemistry — all else is *blank* — but I *will be* (please God) an Horticulturist and a Farmer.[174]

These extracts, from the personal journaling and correspondence of Galt, Samuel Bedford, and Samuel Coleridge, respectively, seemingly go nowhere and lead to nothing. Jennings' historiography is composed of unusual matter for historical scholarship: underdeveloped comments containing the kinds of minor, lived experiences for which the 1930s academic historian would have little use.[175]

Collecting letters shared between friends, such as the many penned by Coleridge, Jennings' technique demonstrates his interest in ephemera and other habitually discarded materials possessing short-lived use or purpose. With a life of ill health, rheumatism, and a disorder attributed to his being bi-polar, Coleridge possessed, for Jennings, a rare ability to communicate the banalities of life in a way that was not attended to by scholars of Coleridge in Jennings' time.[176] Jennings'

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[172] *Pandaemonium*, p. 99.

[173] *Pandaemonium,* p. 101.

[174] *Pandaemonium*, p. 108.

[175] See Georg Iggers, 'From Macro- to Microhistory: The History of Everyday Life', in *Historiography in the Twentieth Century*, pp. 237–321.

[176] *Pandaemonium*, p. 113; Kay Jamison, *Touched with Fire: Manic-Depressive Illness and the Artistic Temperament* (London: Free Press, 1994).

gesture to glean materials with unrealised potential resonates with that of *The Arcades Project,* which also refers to Coleridge, in its citing of the hidden links between his work and that of French poet Baudelaire.[177]

Pandaemonium represents 'debris' as an important aspect of British history. Examining the array of sources consulted by Jennings (some canonical, most not), one notices that he gleaned from a wide range of texts: 'nearly all extracts [taken] from books or memoirs, contemporary accounts, letters, poems, newspapers, novels, [with] extra cuts from almost every kind of publication – pamphlets, reports [and] biographies'.[178] Jennings' 1000-page collection of historical 'debris' is a work that collects from the work of others through the mobilisation of an avant-gardist strategy, a Surrealist technique; the first of many to be drawn on, leading ultimately and collectively to the generation of a collated aesthetic.

Benjamin ruminates on the figure of the ragpicker — a collector with nineteenth-century resonance — as the *gleaner* of modernity. Historically, gleaning refers to the act of collecting leftover crop following a harvest; gleaners remain dependent on leftover produce as a means of sustenance, with access to such being considered an 'ordained right', with a Biblical basis.[179] It is in its drawing upon extracts that speak to events of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, that the image of gleaning — a forgotten public right to collect from what has been rejected — appears and resonates in *Pandaemonium* as a technique, represented as a radical form of collecting.[180]

Jennings increases the scope of his technique for collecting historical debris, by expanding the temporal parameters of his work. Jennings began his account of the Industrial Revolution around 100 years further back than most, including Arnold Toynbee's influential history.[181] *Pandaemonium's* broad temporality facilitates a view

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[177] *AP*, p. 973.

[178] Jennings' Unpublished Notes, 3.h.

[179] Leviticus 19. 9-10, *Bible Gateway* <https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Leviticus+19:9-10> [accessed 22 September 2017].

[180] Similarly, *The Arcades Project* references figures who demonstrate various approaches to collecting. Chapter Three addresses the Collector (in Convolute H, 'The Collector') and the Ragpicker (in Convolute J, 'Baudelaire'), *AP*, pp. 203–11, 228–387.

[181] For historical studies that begin in the 1760s see Arnold Toynbee, *Lectures on the Industrial Revolution in England: Popular Addresses, Notes and Other Fragments* (London: Rivingtons, 1884);

of intellectual change and the non-material — factors uncommon in histories of material development. Jennings presents a *longue durée*, and in doing so he places focus upon the minutia and on the measured, yet slight ways in which the Industrial Revolution was experienced or observed by those living through it. *Pandaemonium* contests the widely-held belief that the eighteenth century was the start-date for Britain's great paradigm shift, instead placing the genesis of the Industrial Revolution within early 'natural philosophy' circa 1660, as explored above.[182]

Jennings' *longue durée* differs from that associated with the Annales school circa 1960, in that French historians narrated the past with authorial voice, whilst Jennings' gesture is exhibitory — he merely presents it. The Annales method was pioneered by historians such as Fernand Braudel, who examined events which occur almost imperceptibly over a long duration of time.[183] This approach illuminates slowly changing relationships between individuals and the world, and, in a sense, is inferred in Jennings' subtitle 'the coming of the machine as seen by contemporary observers'. *Pandaemonium* does not represent a single event, 'The Industrial Revolution', but a gradual unfolding of adapting perception, charting a form of consciousness that changes over 200 years.

In 1954, Cambridge University Press rejected the original *Pandaemonium* manuscript due to its size: Jennings' commitment to preserving historical debris left the work initially 'unpublishable'.[184] As a historiographic technique, however, Jennings' method of collection severed classificatory divisions and problematised relationships between 'histories' and temporalities. For example, Milton's seventeenth-century depiction of hell in poetic verse exists in the *same* collection as T.H Huxley's *nineteenth*-century letter to his son concerning the demise of beauty in the Lake District. Crossing traditional disciplinary periodisation, *Pandaemonium* demonstrates

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Mabel Buer, *Health, Wealth and Population in the Early Days of the Industrial Revolution* (London: Routledge, 1926); Charles Beard, *The Industrial Revolution* (London: Swann Sonnenschein, 1901). Henry de Beltgens Gibbins, *The Industrial History of England* (London: Methuen, 1890), pp. 99–108 includes a chapter on the Revolutions sixteenth-century origins, but is focus is proto-industry rather than changes in vision.

[182] *Pandaemonium*, p. 5.

[183] J. H. Hexter, 'Fernand Braudel and the *Monde Braudellien...*', *Journal of Modern History*, 44.4 (1972), 480–539.

[184] Jackson, p. 366.

the potential of the long perspective for revealing associative links and previously unrecognised connections between events. Milton's opening line, 'There stood a Hill not far whose grisly top Belch'd fire and rowling smoak', resonates with the words of Huxley, from some 200 years later, opposing the increased 'engineering or mining work […] which will really destroy the beauty of the Lakes'.[185] The *longue durée* reveals that there is more at stake in the 'coming of the machine' than the facts and figures of industrial growth from the mid-eighteenth century onwards.

Pandaemonium reveals connected layers of experience hidden within sedimentations of time, with a synchronic, rather than a diachronic, representation modern development. Predicated on *Pandaemonium*'s size and durational breadth, Jennings' method in action serves the representation of temporally disparate connections. Jennings was resolute in overcoming the separation in the study of established disciplines and categories, and thus the extracts collated have 'no political or economic or social homogeneity'.[186] The work's temporal scope allows for the presentation of gradually developing and immaterial ideas rather than inventions - as Jennings states: 'This is a book dealing not with things but thoughts'. *Pandaemonium* widens the window through which we view this thing called the 'Industrial Revolution', and, in doing so, challenges 1930s hegemonic accounts of modern industrial development. [187]

2.5. The Collated Aesthetic

Throughout the 1930s, Jennings experimented with archival retrieval by metaphorically cutting and slicing through complete texts; a method which has its origin in his film practice. His historiographic work challenges the whole/fragment binary: *Pandaemonium* does not include a reproduction of the *whole* library document consulted, but an extraction pertaining to that which is visual, ambiguous, or poetic in terms of its representation of historical change. In this sense, the collated aesthetic

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[185] *Pandaemonium*, p. 354.

[186] *Pandaemonium*, p. xiv.

[187] Jennings' Unpublished Notes, 3.c.

shows a continuation from the poetic cuts formed cinematographically in *Spare Time*. The fragment Jennings cut from the larger whole becomes the only part of the work reclaimed; it becomes a new whole, with its own parameters. This suggests something quite particular about the boundaries of the Image and the words which included as part of it. Judiciously eliminating that which is unwanted, Jennings presents a historiography comprised of crucial sections of imagistic literature found within existing works. The method of fragmentation, as an extension of finding, is crucial to *Pandaemonium*. Jennings evokes destruction in a process that counters the dominant desire for collectors and curators to preserve the past.[188]

Jennings' method can be metaphorically understood as 'wrenching' a small part from a wider whole, as he ultimately discards the wider whole. One may encounter a feeling of sadness, looking upon an item that has been so violently *wrenched* from its surrounds that it appears severed. However, such sadness emerges from a specific view of the whole and the fragment and the relationship between them. Things that appear to us as 'wholes' do so by suggesting a totality which is perceived as natural.[189] The notion of the 'whole', including its perception and detection, comes about through singular or unified meaning being applied to a collation. It is only then that the semblance of totality emerges as 'complete' and thus whole. The finalised *Pandaemonium* appears as a 'whole' only because it is presented as such, despite it always being tantamount to a composite of fragments — albeit with varying levels of seamlessness added in the completion of works. Seamlessness and the semblance of the whole support the maintenance of the status quo in history, attesting to a natural order of things. Whilst modernists such as Theodor Adorno have theorised fragmentation as that which rejects the 'organic whole of the pre-modern, bourgeois work of art', it is crucial to recognise that the whole survives as a concoction, a construction resembling totality.[190] Whilst the published version of *Pandaemonium* appears as a 'whole', the fragment is immanent, as evidenced by the

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[188] Susan Pearce, *On Collecting: An Investigation into Collecting in the European Tradition* (London: Routledge, 1995).

[189] Against Lukács, Bloch questions the reality of the supposed totality that 'has always thriven in idealist systems, including those of classical German philosophy'. Ernst Bloch, 'Discussing Expressionism', in Theodor Adorno and others, *Aesthetics and Politics* (London: New Left Books, 1977), pp. 16–27 (p. 22).

[190] Nanni Baltzer and Martino Stierli, 'Montage Reader', in *Before Publication*, ed. by Baltzer and Stierli, pp. 4–9 (p. 4).

bundle of type written notes, today held at Pembroke College, which were never compiled into a coherent whole. Jennings' method of fragmentation effectuates an experience wherein 'Images' stand in singularity amid a wider work.

'History writing is ever tied to the fragment', Siegfried Giedion writes:

> The known facts are often scattered broadcast, like stars across the firmament. It should not be assumed that they form a coherent body in the historical night. Consciously then, we represent them as fragments, and do not hesitate, when necessary, to spring from one period to another.[191]

History is inevitably and necessarily fragmentary. Thus, there is both a critical and honest potential in fragmentation. The difference between Jennings and academic historians lies in the fact that Jennings does not smooth out the unavoidable gaps in research and archival knowledge.[192] By deliberately avoiding the narrative flow that would be provided by the original and complete document, Jennings' method strategizes against the didactic transmission of singular or totalised meaning from society to the individual. *Pandaemonium's* aesthetic of fragmentation sees extraction and partial presentation as a critical means of presenting the past. A work of history that appears as a comprehensive representation of the past is a barrier to the formation of alternative historical accounts. *Pandaemonium* becomes found material for its readership, which, having been invited by the breaks between excerpts to make new meaning, cultivate their own interpretation of the past.

However, it is crucial to note that Jennings' fragmentation is by no means chaotic, unlike the use of the fragment in some other avant-garde examples. Providing instructions for the creation of a Dadaist poem, Tristan Tzara in 1920 called for haphazard collation by way of drawing out random words, cut from a newspaper

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[191] Siegfried Giedion, *Mechanization Takes Command: A Contribution to Anonymous History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1948), p. 3.

[192] On the philosophical problems associated with dominant historical scholarship, see Whitaker Deininger, 'Some Reflections on Epistemology and Historical Inquiry', *Journal of Philosophy,* 53.14 (1956), 429–42.

article, selected only for the desired word-count.[193] With an alternative and critical approach, Jennings clearly set out to identify what he viewed as apposite within existing works. Given this system of extraction, Jennings made it known that under no circumstance should an extract be shortened for publication by a custodian of the collection in the event of his death. In a letter to Charles Madge, dated 22 January 1951, Dillon Barry, Jennings' assistant, explained that Jennings had tried to condense his found material by shortening the extracts, but found that 'in doing this, seemingly irrelevant facts were cut out, and then in the light of his later work he found that these seemingly irrelevant facts formed a vital part of the extract'.[194] By prohibiting any further cutting of extracts in his collection, Jennings suggests the importance of a constructed, though, fragmentary text.

Jennings' archival training emerged in the context of his role as a film-maker during the 1930s, when he was hired to create low budget war-time propaganda movies out of existing stock footage (as opposed to creating new film reserves); he spent much of his time sorting through existing images, selecting the most appropriate parts for re-use.[195] Jennings first experimented with archives after learning how to 'cut film' as a technician at the GPO. However, this time- and cost-effective process was not directly carried over to the *Pandaemonium* project. Whilst some have suggested 'Pandaemonium' to be notes for a film, Jennings did not shoot *Pandaemonium*, and research indicates that he never intended to either.[196] Rather, the collated formation indicates a methodological inspiration drawn from the editing technique of film production. Responsible for a canon of state-sponsored film, beginning with *Post-Haste* in 1934, Jennings worked almost continuously for the GPO Film Unit (renamed the Crown Film Unit in 1946) alongside the likes of John Grierson, the 'father of British Documentary Film', and Brazilian-born Alberto de Almeida Cavalcanti.

Whilst working at the GPO, then, the propensity to use montage as an editing technique for film production pressed closely upon Jennings, who already held an interest in the similar technique of collage, evidenced by his Surrealist cut and paste

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[193] Tristan Tzara, *On Feeble Love and Bitter Love: Dada Manifesto*, trans. by Domenic Stansberry and Gillian Conoley (San Francisco: Molotov Editions, 2016), p. 39.

[194] Jackson, p. 365.

[195] Beattie, pp. 11, 63.

[196] Jackson, p. 364.

artworks.[197] The proximity of Jennings' circle to avant-garde practice and the contemporary work of the Surrealists, suggests that the technique of compilation has a double resonance when it appears in *Pandaemonium*. His approach to collecting and arranging found-footage for a project on history was born out of both his training as a film practitioner and his affiliation with the avant-garde.

Jennings had seen these two aspects of inspiration fused in the work of Cavalcanti, who, prior to working with Jennings, was part of a Parisian group of young avant-gardists in the 1920s. As director of the GPO Film Unit 1936–1940, Cavalcanti's avant-gardism provided space and encouragement for Jennings to experiment with documentary film without attracting the criticism of colleagues in the GPO.[198] However, this experimental licence did not prompt Jennings to use the methods most associated with Surrealist film, such as techniques facilitating dream-like sequences with slow motion dissolves or superimposition. Instead, Jennings' films manifest as 'surrealistic', through a use of found footage and archival experimentation. Jennings' collated aesthetic — carried over to the *Pandaemonium* project — is referred to, often interchangeably, as collage or montage.

Collage, as the 'appropriation and assemblage of disparate fragments reworked within and through juxtapositions', expresses the much wider method of collation used by Surrealists and non-surrealists in a variety of art forms, including drama, painting, photography, poetry, ballet, and film.[199] Montage however, is a term emerging in cinematography, from the French, translating as 'to mount'.[200] Since montage is a vital and necessary part of film editing, there is a sense that the particulars of avant-garde practice become subsumed under the general use of the term. Film scholar Brian Henderson provides a useful distinction, important for our continuing analysis of *Pandaemonium*, since it places a question mark over the use of the term 'collage':

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[197] Jackson, p. 164.

[198] Ian Aitken, *Alberto Cavalcanti: Realism, Surrealism and National Cinemas* (Trowbridge: Flicks Books, 2000). p. 49.

[199] Beattie, p.27.

[200] *OED Online*, s.v. 'montage, *n.* and *adj.*' and 'mount, *v.*'.

> Montage fragments reality in order to reconstitute it in highly organized, synthetic emotional and intellectual patterns. Collage does not do this; it collects or sticks its fragments together in a way that does not entirely overcome their fragmentation. It seeks to recover its fragments as *fragments* [...] it seeks to bring out the internal relations of its pieces, whereas montage imposes a set of relations upon them and indeed collects or creates its pieces to fill out a pre-existent plan.[201]

Pandaemonium straddles Henderson's line of differentiation. Having a logic to his selection and an eye for arrangements that communicate clashes and conflicts, Jennings' published collation is tantamount to montage: it is 'organised' (with four title pages as section breaks, along with a strict adherence to chronology and the maintenance of intact extracts) and follows 'intellectual and emotional patterns' according to which the machine is presented as taking something away from our lives. Insofar as Jennings leaves space for the reader to think, embracing the ambiguity of anti-narrative techniques, *Pandaemonium* prompts its readership to bring out the internal relations of its pieces, facilitating a critical readership, as with Henderson's notion of collage. The experimental nature of Jennings' art practice, as well as the experimental nature of his historiography, as inspired by the Surrealist avant-garde, resists the pre-defined binaries of existing terminology, which is why the term 'collated aesthetic' — comparable to, but distinguishable from, both montage and collage — is most appropriate to describe it. This term allows Jennings' collection to be understood, without having to impose upon it the character of collage or montage.

In the art world, which is complicit in the creation of Jennings' *Pandaemonium*, an aesthetic of collation appears as the curatorial. The curatorial, in the discipline of history, is the archival: it is the process of preserving and presenting works for public access. The curatorial is a useful means of understanding *Pandaemonium* as the creation of 'imaginative history', which selects, deselects, and 'exhibits' an individual's creative output, whilst also cultivating the visionary potential of its audiences. Jennings remains 'silent' in *Pandaemonium*, acting more as a collector of fragments and a curator of an imagetic past than as a traditional historian. Multiple early title pages reveal an interest in the curatorial (before the onset of the curatorial as applied to

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[201] Brian Henderson, 'Toward a Non-Bourgeois Camera Style', *Film Quarterly*, 24.2 (1970), 2–14.

every aspect of contemporary life); 'Images of the Industrial Revolution in Britain *Chosen and Presented by Humphrey Jennings*' introduces *Pandaemonium* as a project of exhibition, with a focus upon the collector or curator as chief selector.[202] It is through this notion that we can understand Jennings' politics as transpiring though a curatorial process of inclusion and omission, not through authorial narrative. Acting curatorially, therefore, Jennings presents a contested past, highlighting conflict as characteristic of British history since the dawn of the machine age. Ultimately, this selective approach allows Jennings to demonstrate an example of dialectical materialism, expressive of the inherent contradictions of thought in the changing material landscape of Britain.

Jennings' contestation of historiographic authorship destabilises the very nature of the genre of as implicating the historian's voice, to the extent that his project may be considered an 'anti-history'. Narrative is omitted in the historical account presented in *Pandaemonium*; primary source evidence takes up the role of storytelling. Jennings' authorial reticence is not a demonstration of political apathy or neutrality, but of a political strategy in action. Jennings seeks to generate an imaginative surplus in audiences. His distance prompts readers to creatively imagine *through* the ambiguity. Jennings hoped that the practice would enable social transformation by provoking changes in the way we form meaning. When he writes in the 'Introduction', that he 'prefers not' to define the limits of thought, 'but to leave the reader to agree or not with the evidence' presented, he is offering readers the utmost liberty in judgement.[203] Jennings' early engagement with the Surrealists served to centre the importance of such approaches. A constant pre-occupation for Jennings (at least since his 1929 letter to Empson) was the development of approaches which rejuvenate the existing, oppressive 'state of mind'.[204] 'Pandaemonium' utilised methods of ambiguity and openness, inviting readers to formulate their own meaning from the material presented.

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[202] Jennings' Unpublished Notes, 1.b, 1.e, italics in Jennings' manuscript; *The Curatorial: A Philosophy of Curating*, ed. by Jean-Paul Martinon (London: Bloomsbury, 2013).

[203] *Pandaemonium*, p. xiii.

[204] Jackson, p. 390.

The construction of *Pandaemonium* involved the creation of a patchwork of interwoven perspectives as told by numerous historical characters. It is a horizontal text, where multiple experiences are heard at equal level with equal authority. Having rescinded the role of the historian as the interpreter of the past, Jennings' collection of found material places the voice of a *multitude* of historical actors before his own. Jennings' approach to historiography is one that re-situates authority by expelling the author as narrator. Whilst Jennings honours other authors through his commitment to proper citation, *Pandaemonium* remains a work of appropriation, deliberately reworking material written by others. Consequentially, *Pandaemonium* demonstrates a structure through which a plurality of voices passes.

Mikhail Bakhtin examines a similar achievement in the work of Russian novelist Fyodor Dostoyevsky, whom he celebrated for creating the quintessentially polyvocal novel. Bakhtin's work is not commonly associated with the production of history.[205] However, given Jennings' use of English literature to drive his representation of the Industrial Revolution, 'Pandaemonium' already sits at a distance from dominant forms of narrating the past and can be understood as mobilising dialogism for historical representation. For Bakhtin, as 'creator of the polyphonic novel' Dostoyevsky forms characters who are not *objects* but *subjects,* with ideological autonomy.[206] Dostoyevsky's work 'creates not voiceless slaves […] but free people, capable of standing alongside their creator, capable of not agreeing with him, and even of rebelling against him'.[207] As an aesthetic technique, this dissolves the monologue of the traditional European novel and enables the interruption of the centralised power of the single writer, albeit in the fictional accounts of a story's characters. The way Jennings uses curated collection as a method for historiography resonates with the novelist's method: both Dostoyevsky and Jennings destabilise the power of the single authorial voice or narrative, through allowing their 'characters' to take over the process of narration.

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[205] Nonetheless, in *The Politics and Poetics of Transgression* (Ithaca: Cornell University press, 1986), Allon White and Peter Stallybrass use the work of Bakhtin to illuminate an ongoing presence of the carnivalesque across social history.

[206] Mikhail Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, ed. and trans. by Caryl Emerson (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984), p.7.

[207] Bakhtin, p. 6.

In 1969, Michel Foucault posed a question which, whilst beguiling literary theorists, failed to attract the attention of professional historians.[208] The question '[w]hat is an author?', posed within literary studies, also speaks to concerns over the role of the author in historical writing.[209] Historians claim that they seek to overcome their personal biases in an attempt to be 'objective'. As a key demand of academic or classical history, suspicions of non-objectivity are levied at those unable to demonstrate a purging of bias. This demand, to construct an objective and cohesive historical narrative derived from archival evidence, comes alongside a demand to adhere to that which the original source materials communicate. Thus, historians imply that they are the mere communicator of the facts uncovered in the archive.[210] The notion of the historian as an instrument, or a medium is one which problematically misdirects questions of authorship. For Foucault, authorship is the 'privileged moment of individualization in the history of ideas, knowledge, literature, philosophy, and the sciences', it is the 'making-mine' of what is derived from the collective experience of all things: a claim of ownership. [211] Jennings' collation retreats from this claim, consciously abandoning the historian's authority, through foregrounding the polyvocality of his found material.

The 'montage' of voices heard in *Pandaemonium* poses questions of objectivity and subjectivity. Since the work is without a single, overarching authorial narrative, the purging of personal bias is less of a concern: the extracts 'speak for themselves'. Whilst it is certainly the case that an element of the curatorial has informed the very selection and deselection of citations, shaping the interpretation of audiences, it is, for the time

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[208] As Allan Megill notes, in 'The Reception of Foucault by Historians', *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 48.1 (1987), 117–41, a 'gulf' has separated Foucault's work 'from "disciplinary history"', one emphasised by Foucault, who, for Megill 'stands apart from the generally unquestioned conceptual and methodological assumptions that define [history's] boundaries' (p. 117). Megill explores historians' antipathy towards Foucault through the example of Hayden White, 'Foucault Decoded: Notes from Underground', *History and Theory*, 12.1 (1973), 23–54, in which, Foucault is labelled an '"antihistorical historian"' (Megill, p. 129).

[209] Michel Foucault, 'What Is an Author?', in *Aesthetics, Method, and Epistemology: Essential Works of Foucault (1954–1984), Volume Two*, ed. by James Faubion, trans. by Robert Hurley and others (New York: New Press, 1994), pp. 205–22.

[210] Carl Becker, *Detachment and the Writing of History: Essays and Letters* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1968), p. 54.

[211] Foucault, p. 206.

being, important to work through the way in which Jennings' authorial approach decentralises history, allowing for the emergence of a non-singularity in narrative.

Foucault addresses the subject of authorship as that which allows for an 'opening'. He develops the question of authorial death in Barthes, or authorial disappearance, as seen in Mallarmé, Flaubert, and Joyce, and asks how one can 'follow the distribution of gaps and breaches' in the author's absence, and make profitable the 'openings this disappearance uncovers'.[212] An air of authorial immortality is attained with *Pandaemonium* in the publisher's desire to avoid attributing an equal share of the work to editors, evidenced in the way in which 'Humphrey Jennings' appears in bold typeface across the front and in prime position along the spine of the 2012 publication. Whilst Jennings worked laboriously on the collection for thirteen years, his work as a collector is but a foundation, subsequently built upon by the editorial work of his daughter and his colleague. Jennings' literal death in 1950 made room for the work of editors, but these individuals are not honoured on the front of the publication. Frank Cottrell Boyce, however, who channelled Jennings' *Pandaemonium* into the mainstream by gifting the text to Danny Boyle (director of *Isles of Wonder*, as Chapter Four will explore), is recognised on the cover of the publication, as author of the work's foreword.[213]

Directly preceding the text's 'Foreword', is an untitled page with biographical information relating to Jennings himself, his daughter Mary-Louise and Boyce. Madge is absent. We may understand this as a potential nod to those viewed as authors — Boyce for the 'Foreword', Mary-Louise Jennings for her short essay on her father, and Jennings, as the project's historic initiator. Madge's task of constructing an introduction from the notes left by Jennings was deemed insufficient to attribute such partial authorship to him. The paratextual arrangement that fails to acknowledge Madge is telling of the way in which 'editing' sits much lower down the creative hierarchy than 'writing', communicating to the reader that the montage-maker lacks the importance or the integrity of an 'author'. The attribution of authorship to Jennings for his collation of fragments chimes with the approach which emerged in the 1980s, whereby individuals hired to preserve, select, and exhibit works at galleries

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[212] Foucault, p. 209.

[213] Frank Cottrell Boyce, 'Foreword', in *Pandaemonium,* pp. vii–xii.

were given star-like status as 'celebrity curators'.[214] Yet, Madge's gesture is a microcosm of the wider gesture of collecting, the wider gesture of Jennings in the 1930s, and the wider gesture of *Pandaemonium* — which, at every stage, from cover to cover, is the work of editors.

Each fragment collated by Jennings in *Pandaemonium* facilitates an aesthetic of cacophony. The juxtaposed narratives engage in a never-ending conversation that attests to the presence and significance of a multitude of perspectives. The reader experiences the collaborative telling of the past through *Pandaemonium*, which illuminates the heterogeneity of collective experience. The work of Dostoyevsky enables Bakhtin to attest to the primacy of consciousness, in its plurality. What was previously perceived as the role of the author is fundamentally interrupted: Dostoyevsky's dialogism rejects the monopolisation of meaning. In the same way, Jennings' historiography is the antithesis of homophonic 'monologism': the voices heard in *Pandaemonium* do not echo the narrator-as-collector's personal ideology, as is made evident by the extent of juxtaposition. For instance, Jennings includes the starkly contrasting views of Charlotte Brontë and Gideon Mantell. Brontë writes, during the period of the exhibition, of the Crystal Palace's appeal as being not 'one thing, but in the unique assemblage of all things'; amazed, she continues: 'it seems as if only magic could have gathered this mass of wealth from all the ends of the earth'.[215] Mantell dwells on the 'vulgar, ignorant, country people' littering the space. The inclusion of two such differing perspectives serves to illuminate difference, not only with regard to the other extracts collated, but also with regard to the ideology of Jennings himself.[216] In this regard, Jennings' collection can be seen to extend the dialogic approach of Dostoyevsky.

The polyvocality inherent in Jennings' work prevents the suppression of historical actors for the mere purpose of ensuring a unified and coherent narrative of the past. As with the monologic novel, a monologic historiography posits as 'true' a singular subjective construction. *Pandaemonium,* in providing a critical alternative,

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[214] Paul O'Neill, *The Culture of Curating and the Curating of Culture(s)* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2012), pp. 9–49 (p. 16).

[215] *Pandaemonium*, p. 262.

[216] In a letter to Dillon Barry, Jennings explains that he did not pick the extracts according to his own political views. Jackson, p. 364.

affords space to the heterogeneity of experience. As if working to curate a collection in line with the words of Bruce Altshuler, who urges exhibition makers to consider the 'formally outside' — by avoiding a display of one thing followed by something similar as if presenting a progressive story — Jennings' *Pandaemonium* incorporates difference in opinion, illustrating his rejection of demands for the exhibition of a 'singular work'. [217] We may understand the meaning of *Pandaemonium* to be open; as readers, we are each given a stake in its formulation, since there are a multitude of perspectives through which to gain insight and illumination.

2.6. Conclusion

Jennings was completely immersed in Surrealism from 1924, when he first read *La Révolution Surréaliste*. In the 1930s a concept of social transformation emerging in and through the perception and representation of the imagination became a shared kernel of the thinking and work of Jennings and the wider movement of Surrealism — to which *The Arcades Project,* as Chapter Three addresses, also belongs. The increasingly rationalistic character of existence in the twentieth century pressed closely upon Jennings, who experienced two world wars and was employed by the British government to produce propaganda films. Spending his leisure time engaging in independent creative pursuits, Jennings was first and foremost an artist: the 'only real poet that British cinema has yet produced'.[218] He was a painter, a poet and a filmmaker and embodied all these identities when experimenting with what it meant to be an historian. Jennings' commitment to imaginative, creative, aesthetic experience is the methodological driver of *Pandaemonium*.

This chapter has shown how Jennings' *Pandaemonium* demonstrates an actualisation of Surrealist aesthetics in historical representation. *Pandaemonium's* Surrealism dislodges the demands of the discipline of history: to maintain a scientific ideal, to advance mythic visions of progress, and to exclude all that which fails to meet the criteria of the empiricist. Jennings' contribution to the field of historiography is

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[217] Bruce Altshuler, 'A Canon of Exhibitions', *Manifesta Journal*, 11 (2010), 4–12.
[218] Anderson, p. 5.

substantial. There were no histories of the imagination as impacted by the Industrial Revolution before Jennings', and the making of *Pandaemonium* overcame limitations set by a discipline known for its demands and lists of 'taboos'.[219] Jennings' practice of history manifests an overlooked and unconventional philosophy of history which this chapter has uncovered and illuminated through an exploration of the mass of Jennings' unpublished notes. As it stands, there is no scholarship analysing what Jennings called 'imaginative history'; much of this chapter's undertaking has been to begin that work, preparing the ground for conversation regarding a new genre of historical representation.

Approaching the history of Britain with a sensitivity as to the means of thought, as opposed to a focus on the means of production, Jennings' history of the Industrial Revolution provides an alternative to conceptions of historical materialism as exemplified in Marxist histories. This chapter has examined the way in which Jennings advances a politics of the imagination, through his notion of a changing 'Means of Vision' across an Industrial Revolution conceptualised and understood through a long view of change and development. Jennings' sensitivity to the seventeenth-century scientific revolution and to the Age of Reason brings forth questions of epistemology, through the study of *Pandaemonium* as a historical text.

Pandaemonium challenges the character and nature of 'truth' and 'fact' through the integrated character of Jennings' two-pronged methodology. Both the content and form of *Pandaemonium* challenge empiricist demands, through their focus on the imagination. The content is composed entirely of fragments of the imagination — extracts cast-out from dominant empiricism. Self-reflexively, the extracts record this 'ousting' as part of the story of Britain, with this 'ousting' being the very thing which make works like Jennings' necessary and urgent. Jennings does not just represent the imagination; he provokes the generation of imaginative engagement in readers. With its origins in montage, the collated aesthetic involves Jennings' retreat from the traditional place of the historian as narrator. Viewing history as a collated aesthetic comprised of disparate fragments is an aesthetic experience for readers, who come to develop their own interpretations or meanings of history, in the absence

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[219] Jenkins, *Re-thinking*, p. x.

of Jennings' authorial voice. In resisting dominant historical trends during Jennings' time, *Pandaemonium* creates an alternative form of communication, as aesthetic communication. Ambiguity is productive of independent meaning-making in *Pandaemonium*: Jennings demands, above all, that readers engage their imagination to make modernity for themselves.

This chapter has made Jennings' *Pandaemonium* visible in ways that it was not before. Building on foundations laid down by Searle and Jones in 'Humphrey Jennings, the Left and the Experience of Modernity in mid twentieth-century Britain', this chapter contributes to an understanding of the 'open-ended radicalism of *Pandaemonium'*.[220] The socially transformative character of the project has, in the most part, been obscured beneath scholarship that has sought not to illuminate *Pandaemonium's* political potential, but to examine its filmic potential. Scholars indebted to the filmic legacy of Jennings have either not noticed or not examined the evidence that indicates the formal and thematic character of *Pandaemonium* as being related to a broader philosophy of history. *Pandaemonium* is not and was not intended to be a film. The socio-political potential of Jennings' posthumously published work lies in its *historiographic* import — the means by which it demonstrates a fundamentally distinct approach to the representation of our past, engages readers in a creative way, and destabilises the historical status quo in terms of classical conceptions of linear, onward advancement.

A consequence of *Pandaemonium's* collated aesthetic is that it creates an open conversation regarding history. *Pandaemonium* exemplifies the dialogic in history: Juxtaposed, contradicting viewpoints interact, creating a historical text with no single narrative. As a core element of *Pandaemonium*, the collation of incongruent perspectives from the past, constitutes a significant methodological approach on the part of Jennings. Working in the field of history, Jennings produces a view of the past, which is only made possible by piecing together remnants he found in archives. *Pandaemonium's* experimental aesthetic reflects the character of doing history: Jennings presents the past complete with cracks, gaps, and missing links. He prompts more questions in readers than he answers to such an extent, that they themselves

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[220] Searle and Jones, p.192.

become historians: navigating through a collection of historical fragments to find meaning in the past. Whilst a conceptual antithesis has separated thought from action as two logically distinct categories of human behaviour, *Pandaemonium* disrupts this separation. Jennings' historiography forces a simultaneity in thought and action. Jennings' historiographic approach engenders an interaction between the reader and the text, and thus with the past itself.

Chapter Three. Embodiment, Anthropological Materialism and the Role of the Editor in Walter Benjamin's *The Arcades Project*

A dichotomy is established in Benjamin's writings on history: an ideological polarisation of historicism and his interpretation of materialist history. As Thesis I of 'On the Concept of History' makes clear, Benjamin's materialism is not the 'vulgar' materialism of Marx — which is in Benjamin akin to historicism — but a different kind of materialism, which this chapter understands as anthropological materialism: a materialism of the body.[1] The development of a collated aesthetic for *The Arcades Project* saw Benjamin immersed, intermittently for thirteen years, in the collections of the Bibliothèque nationale de France. Stationed in the reading rooms of the library, Benjamin selected and consulted texts; he used his pen to take notes and reproduce quotations, before leaving the building, and setting off back to his abode. This labour continued sometimes for days at a time.[2] Benjamin's bodily presence in archival exploration is in this chapter critically examined as a progenitor to what this thesis proposes as the repositioning of readers of history. As this chapter explores, a readers' reception of *The Arcades Project* as a publication also involves a bodily presence. The embodied activation of the reader is not akin to the editorial exertion of Benjamin, however — who reached out to select and bent low to re-group citations reproduced on index cards. In the absence of an authorial narrative and in perceiving history as a collection, Benjamin's readers are theoretically thrust into new paradigms of cognition in their perceptual exploration of Benjamin's open and non-conclusive historical representation.[3] This chapter expands the theoretical conditions of bringing to bear a collated aesthetic, with particular reference to Benjamin's surrealistic interpretation of anthropological materialism — which is here understood as the intellectual wellspring of *The Arcades Project*. It reads *The Arcades Project* as demonstrative of a radical materialist historiography, which serves to reorient readers away from classical

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[1] Benjamin, 'Concept of History', pp. 389, 393. Benjamin also uses the phrase 'vulgar Marxism' in his writings on Baudelaire, 'The Paris of the Second Empire in Baudelaire', trans. by Harry Zohn, in *SW*, IV, 3–92 (p. 64). For anthropological materialism, see Benjamin, 'The Present Situation of the French Writer', trans. by Rodney Livingstone, in *SW*, II.2, 744–67 (p. 760).

[2] *Correspondence,* pp. 485, 491, 492, 519.

[3] Benjamin, 'Concept of History'.

historicism as a mode of historical reception and towards an embodied, anthropological materialist experience which Benjamin called 'profane illumination'.[4] The sudden, irrational, cognitive experience of profane illumination — anticipated in Chapter One with reference to poetic knowledge formation, i.e. the Proustian Madeleine — is afforded to the readers of Benjamin's imagetic arrangement of variegated archival clippings through the inherent ambiguity of the fragments brought together as a single work. As this chapter argues, Benjamin's dialectical presentation of Paris in the age of industrialisation, consumerism, and architectural innovation, 1830–1870, puts readers in a place of sensory interruption: a moment of perceptual rupture. Marking an important foundation to the thesis' subsequent exploration of the body in Chapter Four, in relation to the afterlife of Benjamin's collated aesthetic in 'The Arcades: Contemporary Art and Walter Benjamin', the present chapter anticipates the way in which a collated aesthetic repositions audiences using emancipatory paradigms of sense perception.[5]

3.1. *The Arcades Project*

As discussed in the Introduction, the full text of *The Arcades Project* was only made available to anglophone readers through Howard Eiland and Kevin McLaughlin's translation at the turn of the twenty-first century. Prepared on the basis of the German volume edited by Rolf Tiedemann, *The Arcades Project* includes various supplementary papers and notes, which are, for the purposes of this thesis, considered distinct from the 'Convolutes' themselves. Benjamin's two 'Exposés' (1935 and 1939) are complete works, documents produced as sketches, which Benjamin

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[4] Iggers, *Historiography*, p. 25; Benjamin, 'Surrealism', p. 209.

[5] The notion of sense perception here is in accord with Susan Buck-Morss' interpretation of Benjamin, drawing on Terry Eagleton: 'As Terry Eagleton writes: "Aesthetics is born as a discourse of the body". It is a form of cognition, achieved through taste, touch, hearing, seeing, smell — the whole corporeal sensorium. The terminate of all of these — the nose, eyes, mouth, some of the most sensitive areas of skin — are located at the surface of the body, the mediating boundary between inner and outer. This physical-cognitive apparatus with its qualitatively autonomous, nonfungible sensors (the ears cannot smell, the mouth cannot see) is "out front" of the mind, encountering the world prelinguistically, hence prior not only to logic but to meaning as well'. Buck-Morss, 'Aesthetics and Anaesthetics', p. 6.

used as guides as he worked toward the completion of *The Arcades Project*.[6] These broad plans — variations on the title 'Paris, Capital of the 19th Century' — feature headings delineating five or six sections which corresponded to chapters to be written and published in book form.[7] Although these documents support our comprehension of Benjamin's project, they represent, insofar as the intended book was never written, unrealised chapterisations. These supplements to Benjamin's history by way of collection are part of a wider 'trash aesthetic' continued by the editor of the publication, who knew well of Benjamin's understanding of his collecting as a process of making productive the '"refuse" and "detritus" of history'.[8]

In addition to these early chapterisations, Tiedemann brought together Benjamin's 'First Sketches' and 'Early Drafts': 'Arcades', 'Arcades of Paris' and 'The Ring of Saturn'.[9] Whilst the suggestion is made by Tiedemann that Benjamin failed in his completion of a work so well sketched, this chapter focusses on what constitutes *The Arcades Project* today: a collection of fragments taken from a range of sources consulted at the Bibliothèque nationale de France from 1927 up to Benjamin's final departure from Paris in 1940.[10] These extracts, which vary in size, from single sentences to more substantive passages, are organised non-hierarchically and interspersed with Benjamin's own musings, often in the form of very short sentences. Often contradictory, these fragments appear of equal worth in their illumination of Paris in the nineteenth-century.

Benjamin's collation of disconnected and incomplete parts emerge through his exploration of what he considered to be Paris' most important architectural form: the covered passageways which, from 1822, provided an extension to the burgeoning commodity culture of the time in the once empty spaces between buildings. Instigated by the city's flourishing textile trade and brought into being through then-contemporary trends in iron construction, the Parisian arcades became the trade nucleus for luxury goods. Drawing on an illustrated guide to Paris in his Exposé of

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[6] 'Paris, the Capital of the Nineteenth Century' and 'Paris, Capital of the Nineteenth Century', in *AP*, pp. 3–13, 14–26.

[7] Tiedemann, 'Dialectics', p. 931.

[8] Eiland and McLaughlin, 'Translators' Foreword', p. ix.

[9] *AP*, pp. 871–87

[10] Tiedemann 'Dialectics', p. 931

1935, Benjamin illuminates the contemporary admiration for these new buildings and the cultures they spawned:

> These arcades, a recent invention of industrial luxury, are glass-roofed, marble-panelled corridors extending through whole blocks of buildings, whose owners have joined together for such enterprises. Lining both sides of these corridors, which get their light from above, are the most elegant shops, so that the passage is a city, a world in miniature.[11]

Benjamin confronted these structures for their interpretative value as small-scale emblems of the century's modern and economic cultural phenomena. In formulating an historical text which responds to the arcades of Paris, Benjamin brings to bear a work which potentializes the interpretation of an age in and through its microcosmic referents. His interest of the arcades, an extension of his fascination of the minuscule, generates the possibility, as with his glass globes, for a digested encapsulation of the world to be held between his hands. Made 'handy' through his collection of short snippets of prose, the nineteenth-century become tangible.[12]

However, by the time Benjamin took a critical interest in Parisian architecture in the late 1920s, the arcades were places frequented for reasons not mentioned in the description above.[13] Wandering the dilapidated ruins of the Parisian arcades, Benjamin shared his milieu with the Surrealists, who did the same.[14] According to Benjamin, the Paris-born movement of Surrealism was the 'first to perceive the revolutionary energies that appear in the "outmoded"'.[15] These sites were, by the 1920s, no longer the pinnacle of industrial luxury, or the then-contemporary culture of consumption. The arcades instead stood as a mere vestige of a past, incompatible with

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[11] *AP*, p. 3.

[12] Benjamin describes his interest in 'those wonderful snow globes' in a letter to Jula Radt, 8 April 1926, *Correspondence*, p. 297. See also Peter Szondi, 'Introduction', in *Childhood*, pp. 1–33 (p. 21).

[13] Whilst a letter to Ernst Schoen in 1913 shows that Benjamin visited France in his youth, his description of this early trip is somewhat prosaic, greatly focussed on the museums and tourist sites, mentioning nothing of note of the arcades themselves. *Correspondence*, p. 53

[14] Aragon, *Paris Peasant*.

[15] André Jansson, '"This Is Not Ruin Tourism": Social Media and the Quest for Authenticity in Urban Exploration', in *Ruin Porn and the Obsession with Decay*, ed. by Siobhan Lyons (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), pp. 217–34 (p. 219).

the formation of the city's department stores and the breadth of boulevard in Haussmann's new Paris. As sites of precarity the arcades contributed to the development in Benjamin of a political and aesthetic imaginary. Broadly, such sites offer a means through which a society can perceive of itself as having an irreconcilable history and future, which can only be understood dialectically.[16] These decaying spaces and the cultures which they spawned, evoked for Benjamin a preponderance of lost dreams, ghostly suggestions of what was, and partial inferences of what could have been.

Furthermore, these dilapidated arcades appeared to Benjamin, in a more literal sense, as being composed of multifarious, incongruous elements, akin to a rebus — a puzzle of combinations.[17] These once-luxury spaces held together, simultaneously, under the banner of consumer capitalism, a conflictual array of experiences and visions: a 'palm tree and feather duster, hairdryer and Venus de Milo, prostheses and letter-writing manual'.[18] The narrative of cohesion particular to these spaces had in Benjamin's time been broken, forming instead, for the arcades, a confusing context of incohesion. Productively, however, '[a] world of secret affinities opens up within'.[19] The notion of unknown correspondences, derived from Benjamin's own experience of these spaces, informs a new historiographic blueprint. For Detlef Mertins, *The Arcades Project* is shaped by Benjamin's 'appropriations and transformations of modernist architectural history and theory'.[20] Drawing on contradictions already manifest in these iron-wrought and glass-roofed buildings, therefore, Benjamin reworks a heterogeneity of library extracts to construct an conflictual image of the past, in a way which corresponds to the arcades themselves.[21] *The Arcades Project* is structured like these arcades.

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[16] *AP*, p. 544

[17] *AP*, p. 540.

[18] *AP,* p.540.

[19] *AP*, p. 540.

[20] Detlef Mertins, 'Walter Benjamin and the Tectonic Unconscious: Using architecture as an Optical Instrument', in *The Optic of Walter Benjamin*, ed. by Alex Coles (London: Black Dog Publishing, 1999), pp. 196–221 (p. 196)

[21] Benjamin referred to the Eiffel Tower, built in 1889, as the first instance of montage. *AP*, p. 160.

3.2. The Collated Aesthetic

Benjamin realises the potential of nineteenth-century industrial production historiographically. *In The Arcades Project* he captures the non-instrumental possibilities of the arcades, thereby potentializing the release of a 'latent physiognomy of technical forms' in the works' activation of a particular reading experience.[22] As with the workers who built these sites, Benjamin implies that the non-capitalistic possibilities of these spaces have been supressed by the bourgeoise. That which is concealed or dormant in their social and technological realisation, is, in and through a reading of *The Arcades Project,* proffered for re-comprehension. Whilst 'few things in the history of humanity are as well known to us as the history of Paris', Benjamin writes, *The Arcades Project* is a radical contribution to the 'tens of thousands of volumes […] dedicated solely to the investigation of this tiny spot on the earth's surface', in its tendering of a more critical opening-up of history and historical interest.[23]

Benjamin's 'Convolutes' illuminate the economic and social phenomena of the nineteenth-century, not through totalised narrative or argumentation, but through bundles of extracts reimagined together thematically. The thirty-six 'Convolutes' relate to subjects which are born out of the architectural form described above, tangentially or specifically, revealing the peculiarity of a history of Paris. Collecting fragments and grouping them in 'Convolutes' entitled 'Sales Clerks', 'Fashion', 'Fourier', 'Mirrors', 'Idleness', 'Lithography', 'Marx', 'Prostitution, Gambling', the 'Flâneur', and 'Conspiracies and Modes of Lighting', Benjamin brings popular socio-cultural phenomena together with literary and/or philosophical material. The 'Convolutes' entitled 'Boredom, Eternal Return' and 'Saint Simon, Railroads' convey the connections of 'high' and 'low brow' matter, and a sweeping-up and seizing of the least-recorded matter, marking a fundamental breakdown of pre-existing historical themes and interests. That which was selected and represented by Benjamin fulfils 'the image of history in the most inconspicuous corners of existence': a collection of

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[22] Mertins, p. 197.
[23] *AP*, p. 83.

'trash', which realises a representation of nineteenth-century Paris using archival fragments which have been overlooked, forgotten, cast aside, or rarely brought together.[24]

Benjamin brings his selection of archival fragments into convolutes which between them register an incongruous arrangement. Internal incongruences are also apparent within each thematic bundle, with citations convoluted together in conflict. Accordingly, the reader is repositioned to understand the past as both filled with tension and prematurely rendered detritus. *The Arcades Project*'s mobilisation of a collated aesthetic for history negates the idea of inevitable progress — and of totalising narratives more broadly.[25] Through dissolving the politics of historicism, which serves to legitimate the present by reiterating the forms of the past by means of a developmental linearity, Benjamin's collated aesthetic in *The Arcades Project* demonstrates the realisation of lost dreams, as a means of potentializing radical transformation through collective experience.

The Arcades Project's collated aesthetic disorients readers who are familiar with, or who have been socialised to understand, the past in and through classical historiographic trends.[26] As Chapter One explored, Benjamin's principle of construction had its initial mobilisation as 'poetic documentary' in *One-Way Street* (1928). Here, the classical notion of documentary as that which is didactically narrated is given a new sense with Benjamin's poetic and metaphor-filled account of interwar Germany. In *One-Way Street*, readers experience Benjamin's aphoristic-like snapshots of contemporary crisis through the collated aesthetic — a term describing Benjamin's interwar practice of juxtaposing imagetic fragments as an editing principle for the dialectical presentation of material conditions. This aesthetic instigates a narrative meaning so broad and ambiguous that the role of documentary spectatorship for *One-Way Street* is one wherein the formation of meaning is provoked through a sudden, perceptual or 'aesthetic' encounter with the text, which Benjamin refers to as

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[24] Benjamin to Gerhard Scholem, 9 August, *Correspondence*, pp. 504–05 (p. 505).

[25] Georg Iggers, 'Classical Historicism as a Model for Historical Scholarship', in *Historiography in the Twentieth Century*, pp. 23–114.

[26] See Iggers, *Historiography*, pp. 23–114.

'shock'.[27] *The Arcades Project* shows a reformulation of the collated aesthetic for historiographic use. Here, Benjamin's existent practice for instigating an aesthetic provocation of materialist knowledge is applied to his representation of the history of Paris.

The Arcades Project brings to bear a new perceptual experience for readers, insofar as the arrangement draws out, rather than closes off, the possibilities for poetic historical knowledge formation.[28] Representing Paris, the work uses techniques derived from the Parisian movement of Surrealism to provoke changes in reader perception, bringing to bear what the Surrealists understand as the 'lived poetics' of aesthetic experience, as a historiographic principle.[29] *The Arcades Project* subverts the rationality of fixed meaning, with poetic devices which correlate with those discussed already in reference to the evocation and juxtaposition of *One-Way Street* and *Spare Time*. The poetics of *The Arcades Project*, therefore, is not predicated on verse, but surrealistically, on the poetics of the everyday: coincidence, dialectics, analogy, are brought to bear as the work's organisational principle.

As the first chapter of this thesis explained, new meaning emerges in the collated aesthetic through a figurative relationship of that which is depicted either imagetically or in metaphor. The dizzying aesthetic potential of Surrealism created something novel for Benjamin: 'demonstrations, watchwords, documents, forgeries, if you will, but at any rate not literature', he writes of these Surrealist publications, wherein the written word takes on new possibilities in audience repositioning. Such 'writings are concerned literally with experiences, not with theories and still less with phantasms'.[30] In *Dialectics of Seeing* Susan Buck-Morss refers to the kinds of aesthetic interventions found in imagetic collation as having 'a healing potential'; they create 'synthetic realities'. Quoting Benjamin, she describes new 'spatio-temporal orders wherein the "fragmented images" are brought together "according to a new law"'.[31]

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[27] 'Work of Art', p. 267.

[28] See also Michael Löwy, *Fire Alarm: Reading Walter Benjamin's 'On the Concept of History'*, trans. by Chris Turner (London: Verso, 2005), pp. 107–16.

[29] Abigail Susik, 'Chicago', in *Surrealism Beyond Borders*, ed. by Stephanie D'Alessandro and Matthew Gale (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2021), pp. 108–15 (p. 109).

[30] Benjamin, 'Surrealism', p. 209

[31] Buck Morss, *Dialectics*, p. 268.

The 'political point', she states, of this 'reconstructive' activity, wherein the fragmentation and re-organisation of the material world is appropriated in literary form, 're-establishes the connection between imagination and physical innervation that in bourgeois culture has been snapped apart'.[32] As *The Arcades Project* reveals, Surrealism advanced the potential for reading to become a perceptual encounter, so as to evade the predicament of a writer's societal passivity and in doing so to reformulate writing as praxis, posing a radically transformative encounter through creating new expectations of readership. It is here, therefore, that intellectual, mental, or cognitive reception becomes action-oriented, creative and *physical*, rather than merely contemplative or passive.

3.3. Sensory Interruption

Profane illumination, Margaret Cohen argues, 'was how Walter Benjamin formulated the kernel of Surrealist Marxism in an essay that remains arguably the most important assessment of the political and theoretical objectives of the movement to date'.[33] The work in question here is Benjamin's 1929 essay, 'Surrealism: The Last Snapshot of the European Intelligentsia', in which he describes profane illumination as a 'materialistic, anthropological inspiration, to which hashish, opium, or whatever else can give an introductory lesson'.[34] Such substances, which change, through bodily absorption, the experience of perception, are related in kind to the notion of anthropological materialism, and thus revolutionary change. 'Anthropological materialism', Benjamin writes — of the kind derived by the Surrealists from the poetics of Lautréamont and Rimbaud — also makes possible the fundamentally 'Surrealist experience' that he had encountered as 'profane illumination' in the French literature he read during the 1920s.[35]

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[32] Buck Morss, *Dialectics*, p. 270.

[33] Cohen, *Profane Illumination,* p. 3.

[34] Benjamin, 'Surrealism', p. 209.

[35] Benjamin, 'French Writer', p. 760; 'Surrealism', p. 209.

Louis Aragon in *Paris Peasant* (1926) and Andre Breton in *Nadja* (1928) are likewise for Benjamin, provocateurs of profane illumination.[36] In these works, dream worlds extend into the literary domain. For Benjamin 'life seemed worth living only where the threshold between waking and sleeping was worn away in everyone as by the steps of multitudinous images flooding back and forth'.[37] In the literary dream-spaces of Aragon and Breton, 'language seemed itself only where sound and image, image and sound, interpenetrated with automatic precision and such felicity that no chink was left for the penny-in-the-slot-called "meaning"'.[38] In a letter to Adorno, Benjamin cited an intense physical and intellectual response to such a devaluation of totalised meaning.[39] This inability to grasp definite meaning in Surrealist works can be understood as Benjamin's precipitative moment of profane illumination, which he later extended through city exploration and the consumption of hallucinogens.

In his 1971 essay 'Propaedeutics of Profane Illumination', Hermann Schweppenhäuser notes that we find Benjamin's most concrete expression of profane illumination in his historiographic work.[40] Whilst *The Arcades Project* itself makes no mention of profane illumination in note or citation form, the methodology of its construction as a collated aesthetic is its embodiment. Drawing on the context of Benjamin's most dedicated theorisation of profane illumination in his 1929 essay on Surrealism, Schweppenhäuser refers back to Benjamin's own experiments with mind-altering substances.[41] He argues that the kinds of experiences we see revealed in Benjamin's 'Protocols of Drug Experiments' are formative of his development of Surrealist aesthetics for the repositioning of audiences, such as that which is proffered by *The Arcades Project* as a historiographic practice.[42]

In his essay on Surrealism, Benjamin locates the 'revolutionary energies' of the movement in the dialectics of intoxication, which can be more broadly understood in

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[36] 'Surrealism', p. 209.

[37] 'Surrealism', p. 208.

[38] 'Surrealism', p. 209.

[39] *Correspondence*, p. 488, discussed in Chapter One.

[40] Hermann Schweppenhäuser, 'Propaedeutics of Profane Illumination', in *On Walter Benjamin, Critical Essays and Recollections*, ed. by Gary Smith (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1988), pp. 33–50, (p. 34).

[41] Benjamin, 'Hashish in Marseille', in *On Hashish*, ed. by Howard Eiland, trans. by Howard Eiland and others (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006), pp. 117–26.

[42] Benjamin, 'Protocols of Drug Experiments (1–12)', in *On Hashish*, pp. 17–104.

terms of everyday oscillations between states of consciousness.[43] These experiences of awakening are not limited to drug or dream experiences, Benjamin notes, but are also found as the *Rausch* (intoxication) of 'the reader, the thinker, the loiterer, the flaneur', no less than in the 'opium eater, the dreamer, the ecstatic'.[44] Art and life become one for the Surrealists, and also for Benjamin, whose historical intervention is realised in their wake. It is through his deepening experimental intensity with the mind-altering potentials of narcotics, of the city, and with digressions of thought from the late 1920s on, that Benjamin further develops the ambiguous presentation of an historiographical collated aesthetic. As Schweppenhäuser writes, the

> *Passagen-werk* whose prospecting forays, with their lightening-like illumination of things, bringing bits and pieces to the surface, have much in common with what Benjamin set down in the notes on intoxication and the experimental protocols, formulated as they are as discontinuous, utterly concise, and at the same time painfully incisive fragments.[45]

Given the mimetic relation between life and textual representation in Benjamin's work, we can see how his reference to the experience of mind-altering substances characterises profane illumination as primarily a sensory experience. Thus *The Arcades Project* can be best understood with reference to lived and embodied aesthetic experiences: such as those afforded by the psychoactive experiences of mescaline, hashish, and getting lost amid the architectural formations of the urban environment.[46] It is these experiences and the perspectives they opened up which are brought to bear on Benjamin's historiographic collated aesthetic.

Drawing on one of Benjamin's 'First Sketches' for *The Arcades Project*, one can discern the proximity of synchronically produced works, such as the unpublished essays 'Doctrine of the Similar' and 'On the Mimetic Faculty' (1933), to Benjamin's thinking on historiographic method.[47] Drawing on his mimetic theory in these notes,

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[43] 'Surrealism', p. 210.

[44] 'Surrealism', p. 216.

[45] Schweppenhäuser, p. 35.

[46] See Benjamin, *OWS* and 'Naples'.

[47] *AP*, p. 1038.

Benjamin writes that 'similarity is the organon of experience [*Erfahrung*]'.[48] From its original sixteenth-century use, the term 'organon' denotes a bodily organ (the relation of meaning and word remain more or less intact across German/English translations).[49] Benjamin brings us toward a conversation concerning organs, the body, and esotericism as a means of reading that which has never been written.[50] 'Doctrine of the Similar' and 'On the Mimetic Faculty' explore an ancient form of reading which, in existing prior to 'language', helps us to understand the aesthetic interaction of the reader with *The Arcades Project* as a historical text. From 'coincidences', to 'entrails, the stars or dances', to 'runes' and 'hieroglyphs', Benjamin writes that reading developed over time from what he considers 'occult practices', to the legitimated world of modern linguistic communication.[51] Benjamin understands this as an example of 'magic', for it occurs in a capacity which cannot be comprehended empirically. The gift to language that these forms of mimetic reading have left behind, is 'the most perfect archive of nonsensuous similarity'; that is, a comprehensive collation of historical clippings, based entirely in language, for which a metaphorical 'web' is actualised.[52] Within such a non-linear network of connections, history becomes apparent as an image, through the shocks to the system by way of a bodily innervation.

Whilst Benjamin's proximity to lived poetics and the profane illumination of Surrealist texts helped him to formulate what this chapter understands as an aesthetic form of reading for historiographic purposes, his friend Gerhard Scholem notes that as early as 1918 Benjamin 'occupied himself with ideas about perception as a reading in the configurations of the surface, which is the way prehistoric man perceived the world around him, particularly the sky'.[53] These conversations between Benjamin and Scholem are the genesis of what is subsequently reflected upon in his 1933 writings on mimetics. 'The origin of the constellations as configurations on the sky surface was',

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[48] *AP*, p. 1038.

[49] The term 'Organon' appears in place of 'organon' in the original German edition.

[50] 'To read what was never written', see Benjamin, 'Mimetic Faculty', p. 722.

[51] Benjamin, 'Doctrine of the Similar', trans. by Michael Jennings, in *SW*, II.2, 694–98 (p. 697).; 'Mimetic Faculty', p. 722.

[52] Benjamin, 'Doctrine', p. 697.

[53] Scholem, *Friendship*, p. 163.

Scholem writes of Benjamin, 'the beginning of reading and writing, and this coincided with the development of the mythic age'.[54] This mythic age — reactivated by capitalism, according to Benjamin, as a 'natural phenomenon with which a new dream-filled sleep came over Europe' — was to be dissolved through the spatial rendering of history that Benjamin's principle of incongruous construction realised in *The Arcades Project*.[55] The sky and its stars shaped Benjamin's understanding of reading as an aesthetic, pre-rational experience, wherein distance and proximity are core elements, sedimented in practice. The collated aesthetic produces what this chapter understands, therefore, as a 'constellatory reading'.

Astrology, it is crucial to understand, directs our attention to similarities relating to the most fleeting and transitory relations of the stars to earth, between the matter of our moment and location of birth and the internal relations and positionality of the constellations above. As Benjamin writes, 'the reference to astrology may already suffice to make comprehensible the concept of a nonsensuous similarity'; this example is used multiple times.[56] In his essay 'On Astrology' however, Benjamin references other perceptual resemblances, such as those 'in people's faces'.[57] Here, the place of the body in the representation of history is indicated. The mimetic sense of physiognomic resemblance, popular in the nineteenth century, is, in *The Arcades Project* employed as a method of historiographic practice.

To reiterate, Benjamin proclaims in 'Convolute N', entitled 'On the Theory of Knowledge, Theory of Progress', that 'to write history is to give dates their physiognomy'.[58] It is to depict, with reference to physical externals and features, the historical conditions of materiality — its appearance. Benjamin's proclamation on physiognomy occurs in a work which realises the very method of constellatory reading through its physiognomy of dates. Benjamin's dialectical process of 'doing history' perceives the historical image (an element caught in the aforementioned web of fragments) as 'dialectics at a standstill': a moment of arrest, wherein that which moves

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[54] Scholem, *Friendship*, pp. 163–64

[55] *AP*, p. 391. By spatial, I offer here a concept of physical duration, or time understood by way of physical comprehension.

[56] Benjamin, 'Doctrine', p. 698. See also 'Mimetic Faculty', p. 721.

[57] Benjamin, 'On Astrology', trans. by Rodney Livingstone, in *SW*, II.2, 684–85 (p. 684).

[58] *AP*, p. 476.

becomes suddenly fixed for comprehension, albeit fleetingly.[59] Benjamin interrupts our understanding of relation between the past and the present as temporal to one which is spatial, configured in montage.

Benjamin's understandings of what history is necessitates a spatial actualisation of historical time, one which is dialectical (contradictory, oppositional, juxtaposed), for the authentic means of representing history.[60] His constellatory form , his physiognomy of history (described as the proper actualisation of history) takes as its inspiration that ancient form of reading which is pre-modern, magical and non-empirical.[61] 'To read what was never written' — what is not, and cannot be made, legible through rational communication — is achieved, Benjamin writes, despite it involving the collation of empirical data, in a non-empirical encounter in *The Arcades Project.* The collation of data — real fragments pertaining to industry and invention, rescued from 'the most inconspicuous corners of existence' and actualised by way of the philosophies of Surrealism — brought forth in Benjamin an approximation of the psychic encounters, or experiences provoked by words alone, which he first encountered in Breton and Aragon.

The Arcades Project draws on an mystical and overlooked aspect of nineteenth-century philosophical materialism, which, as this chapter interprets, centres on the body. As Richard Wolin comments, 'revolution is less of a question of socialising the means of production' when realised as an anthropological materialism, and more 'a matter of *bodily* collective exaltation'.[62] It is through this body-centred materialism that Benjamin is most able to dislodge the implications of orthodox Marxism's scientific materialism, in and through perceptual change. It is through a dialectical understanding of embodiment that the audience positionality of *The Arcades Project* culminates in a perceptual experience, for which the term 'physiognomy' becomes wholly appropriate.

Critically examining *The Arcades Project* as a realisation of anthropological materialism for the purposes of reorienting readers toward a Surrealistic constellatory

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[59] Tiedemann, 'Dialectics', *passim*.

[60] See Matthew Rampley, 'Archives of Memory: Walter Benjamin's *Arcades Project* and Aby Warburg's *Mnemosyne Atlas*', in *Optic of Walter Benjamin*, ed. by Coles, pp. 94–117.

[61] *AP*, p. 476.

[62] Wolin, p. xxvii.

reading of history, this chapter explores how Benjamin's dialectical presentation of a nineteenth-century Parisian culture of consumption, implicates both Benjamin and his readership in an embodied form of historical materialism. Benjamin's anthropological materialism generates a practice of selecting and assembling archival scraps. Its reception as 'profane illumination' offers readers a perceptual experience — an enlightenment. Continuing in three core parts, this chapter commences with its own physiognomic sketch of Benjamin as an editor, describing Benjamin's approach to construction whilst seated at the Bibliothèque nationale de France in Paris.

3.4. Historical Materialism and the Practice of Editing

Benjamin's historiographic project is not the work of an author, but of an editor. Benjamin forms his book not as an interpreter of primary source evidence but as a bricoleur, mobilising fragmentary scraps of the past.

Gisèle Freund's photograph of Benjamin at work in the Bibliothèque Nationale in 1937 (Figure 18) depicts the editor gathering small chunks of text through a process of copying by hand. Splattered ink stains illustrate his fervour — a garnish to the public desks upon which Benjamin rests his open publications. Benjamin's editorial labour in generating *The Arcades Project* was energetic and vigorous. With a multiplicity of spines pressed flat against the table-top, Benjamin uses his limbs dynamically: they are the apparatus of the editor. A forearm works both as a book weight and a book-mark and fingers stretched out as page-holders indicates Benjamin's multiple co-existing points of focus, as he wrenches and records, producing facsimile after facsimile. Index cards and ink — the chosen tools for recording a heterogeneity of quotes, citations, ideas, concepts, critiques, statements — suggest that, above all, the structural openness of his project demanded Benjamin manage a great miscellany of matter.

Figure 18. Gisèle Freund, Benjamin at the Bibliothèque Nationale de France, working on *The Arcades Project* in 1937, photograph, from AP, p. 889.

Benjamin writes of *The Arcades Project*, 'I needn't *say* anything. Merely *show*'.[63] He imitates the activity of the curator, a role which demands its own physiognomic figuration, as the premier social type mediating the public experience of art.[64] Curators in Benjamin's day operated behind the scenes as workers employed for the conservation of artworks, their exhibition, and public dissemination; they were publicly unknown.[65] Whilst Benjamin's labour concerned the exhibition of pre-existing works rather than the formation of prose, he has attracted an almost authorial association to that which is exhibited.[66] In 1931, Benjamin produced a physiognomic sketch for the *Frankfurter Zeitung* entitled 'The Destructive Character'. It is, in a sense, a self-portrait. He writes 'the destructive character sees nothing permanent'.[67] Whilst this approaches description of the curator (exhibitions are assembled and de-

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[63] *AP*, p. 460.

[64] O'Neill, p. 35.

[65] Terry Smith, *Thinking Contemporary Curating* (New York: Independent Curators International, 2012), pp. 177–246. See also Hans Ulrich Obrist and others, *A Brief History of Curating* (Geneva: JRP Ringier, 2008), p. 27.

[66] The title page of *The Arcades Project* brings Benjamin's name, not the names of those he cites, into focus – and thus, the semblance of the author.

[67] Benjamin, 'Destructive Character', p. 542.

assembled), the reference to impermanence brings us toward a consideration of scholarly rebellion.

Benjamin wrote 'The Destructive Character' during a period of scholarly rebellion. From the mid 1920s he wrote fragmentary feuilleton for local newspapers and the notion of providing something resembling a complete or 'whole' work was symbolic for him of academic orthodoxy.[68] In 'The Writers Technique in Thirteen Theses' (one of many fragments published as *One-Way Street* a year after his failed Habilitation) Benjamin wrote that '[t]he work is a death mask of its conception'.[69] Articulating a schism between the intention of the author and the meaning derived by the reader, Benjamin enacts a kind of violence on the history of academia, a history which associates an enlightened genius with the writer of the work and not with the imaginative potential of its reader. Taking up the role of editor from 1927 with *The Arcades Project*, Benjamin occupies a space which, whilst significant in the production of scholarly material, is peripheral to the scholarly accreditation of genius.[70] Joris van Zundert illuminates that 'it is pivotally important who speaks, who authors' in academic scholarship.[71] Working to reframe the historical opinions and ideas of others, Benjamin's authorial value collapses, in so far as he does not write *The Arcades Project*. Taking on the role of the editor avoids scholarly accreditation, the presentation of work as a death mask. Benjamin took his own life whilst fleeing the Nazis in 1940, just two years after the photograph above was taken, at a time when 'The Arcades Project' existed only in bundle-form. Today, it remains demonstrative of a work wherein the structure is explicitly anti-narrative. There is a reluctance in Benjamin's work to pin down as truth the interpretations of a single individual caught in a contextual moment of flux.

When Benjamin fled the city of Paris in 1940, George Bataille hid his index cards in a closed archive in the Bibliothèque nationale, where they were discovered

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[68] Benjamin to Gerhard Scholem, 1 February 1923, *Correspondence*, pp. 205–06.

[69] *OWS*, p. 459.

[70] For more on this, see Joris van Zundert, 'Editor, Author, Engineer—Transformation of Authorship in Scholarly Editing?', paper presented at *Authorship in Transition*, Lorentz Workshop, Leiden, 23–27 February 2015 <http://jorisvanzundert.net/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/EditorAuthorEngineer.pdf> [accessed 2 December 2020].

[71] van Zundert, para. 6 of 16.

after the war. An 'archive' stored within an archive, Benjamin's collection of quotes elicits a space where historical documents exist and speak as if unmediated. Nothing that passes the editor is unmediated, however, and Benjamin worked according to an overarching principle: 'Some people pass things down to posterity, by making them untouchable and thus conserving them; others pass on situations, by making them practicable and thus liquidating them. The latter are called the destructive'.[72] Fulfilling the latter role, Benjamin acts as a proto-situationist, a surrealist experimenter working to make history into an experience, to annihilate visions of progress, and, above all, to make the past *handlich.*[73] Liquidating the stiff and unmovable narratives of history (humanity's incessant and inevitably unfurling progress) demands the cross-examination of humanity's non-progression as its antithesis. Benjamin's bringing into play histories of conflict and of oppression serves his historical methodology, and vice versa.

Despite Benjamin being an avid collector of books, toys, postcards, and citations, he rejects the notion of conservation in 'The Destructive Character', written the same year as his talk on book collecting published in 'Unpacking my Library'. As an editor, Benjamin understands that conservation prevents the making-practical of the past: one cannot re-imagine, re-form, or juxtapose a work against another in provocation of new ideas if the work is to be conserved. Conservation is diametrically opposed to destruction. In relation to his book collection, Benjamin stresses the need to own, rather than to conserve, items collected.[74] He explains that 'even though public collections may be less objectionable socially and more useful academically than private collections, the objects get their due only in the latter'.[75] Within the role of the owner exists the possibility of re-framing: 'the most profound enchantment for the collector' Benjamin writes, 'is the locking of individual items within a magic circle in which they are frozen, as the final thrill, the thrill of acquisition, passes over them'.[76] This possibility, of complete omnipotence, which is approximated in the role of the

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[72] Benjamin, 'Destructive Character', p. 542.

[73] German, meaning, usable/manageable/*handy.*

[74] Benjamin, 'Unpacking', pp. 491–92.

[75] 'Unpacking', pp. 491–92.

[76] 'Unpacking', p. 487.

editor, is not at all possible in the role of the curator. Working within a gallery-setting, the artworks exhibited by the curator are either on loan or owned by the gallery, not owned by the exhibitor. This possibility (that which is reserved for one who owns) is a fundamental part of Benjamin's historical technique, which begins with text appropriated and transferred onto movable index cards, which are, once thus 'owned', convoluted within a new framework. As Benjamin writes, such collecting is the 'renewal of existence'.[77]

Wohlfarth uses the Baudelairian/Benjaminian social type of the ragpicker to illuminate the historiographic approach of *The Arcades Project*.[78] For him, Benjamin's practice is of collecting and collating 'everything the big city has thrown away, everything it has lost, everything it has scorned, everything it has crushed under foot'.[79] However, 'Convolute E' suggests that Benjamin's process of selection and deselection is more complex than Wohlfarth suggests: it is also a means of contesting contemporary accounts of Parisian history. First published in 1936, Carlton Hayes' history of nineteenth-century Paris examines the city-planning of Haussmann in a historicist manner. He writes that under the direction of Louis Napoleon, Haussmann 'spent years of hard work and huge sums of money in laying out parks and broad boulevards in Paris, rendering the whole city a suitable setting for public monuments'.[80] Hayes' history is one of several works published during the making of *The Arcades Project* that suggests Haussmannisation contributed to societal progress. Chester Penn Higby also published a history book in 1932 that describes Hausmann's boulevards as 'the evolution of European society from the National Risings Against Napoleon to the Present Day'.[81]

In these works, the rationalization of the city is framed within the authorial interpretation of their writers. Hayes stresses Haussmann's role in 'making the French capital the most beautiful and attractive city in the world', while Higby views

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[77] 'Unpacking', p. 487.

[78] Irving Wohlfarth, 'Et Cetera? The Historian as Chiffonnier', *New German Critique*, 39 (1986), 142–68.

[79] Benjamin, 'The Paris of the Second Empire in Baudelaire', in *Writer of Modern Life*, pp. 46–133 (p. 108).

[80] Carlton Hayes, *A Political and Cultural History of Modern Europe, Volume Two*, rev. edn (New York: MacMillan, 1939), p. 114.

[81] Chester Higby, *History of Modern Europe: A Survey of the Evolution of European Society from the National Risings Against Napoleon to the Present Day* (New York: Century Company, 1932), p. 170.

Haussmann as having 'carried to completion the imperial schemes for the embellishment of the city' (including improvements to the Louvre, the central market, traffic management, and wide boulevards facilitating grand approaches to public buildings).[82] Haussmann's city planning is portrayed as having a meaning which is of greater quality in relation to human excellence than the city planning that came before it. In contrast, Benjamin's history of Paris explores, as expressed in the convolute titles and their contents, 'Haussmannization' alongside 'Barricade Fighting'. There is no mention of barricade fighting in either Hayes or Higby, which suggests that Benjamin's practice of editing is not merely a matter of selecting the detritus of history, but of bringing into association, through proximity, aspects of the past that serve to illuminate the forgotten or the missed, and so to contest contemporary historical narratives.

Benjamin's bundles of citations are more sophisticated than the bag of rags the chiffonier acquires by the end of his day. Even the term used to describe the individual bundles forming the 'central portion of the manuscript of *The Arcades Project*' suggests the inadequacies of the ragpicker physiognomy for understanding Benjamin's method.[83] Speaking directly to the manuscript, Eiland and McLaughlin describe Benjamin's work in its pre-published state:

> *The Arcades Project* consists of 426 loose sheets of yellowish paper, each folded in half to form a 14 x 22cm folio, of which sides 1 and 3 are inscribed in Benjamin's tiny handwriting, with sides 2 and 4 left blank. These folios are gathered into thirty-six sheafs (the German word Konvolut means "sheaf" or "bundle") in accordance with a set of themes keyed to the letters of the alphabet.[84]

What is not explored by Wohlfarth is the technique of Benjamin's construction: his arrangement, which occurs after the process of selection and deselection. Wohlfarth does not address the issue of the 'Convolutes' – a word which, in English, brings about associations of confusion, ambiguity, or a matter difficult to follow. Formally, Benjamin's Convolutes roll together and bring into proximity with one another aspects

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[82] Hayes, *Political and Cultural History*, p. 130; Higby, *History of Modern Europe*, p. 170.

[83] Eiland and McLaughlin, p. 958.

[84] Eiland and McLaughlin, p. 958.

of the past which have previously not been juxtaposed. These juxtapositions are a matter of re-framing the past. Just as a collector of books re-frames the notion of the book when his collections includes family photo albums, Benjamin's editing process in creating *The Arcades Project* is disruptive.[85] As he writes, reflecting on his book-like creations collated alongside *The Divine Comedy* and Spinoza's *Ethics*: 'strictly speaking, these do not belong in a bookcase at all'.[86] Benjamin's editorial gesture transgresses and problematises the parameters of classification and genre.

'Convolute E' provides a useful example of Benjamin's editorial principle. Imperial city planning is juxtaposed against revolutionary praxis, contesting the uniformity of Hayes' and Higby's accounts of the past. The aforementioned history books fail to bring into representation the thesis-antithesis; yet the resistance descended on Paris from all over the nation to engage in the formation of barricades during the Paris commune.[87] Hayes and Higby negate, in their authorial omission of the context of resistance within which Haussmann's work was commissioned, a dialectical registering of the past. In contrast, Benjamin's 'rolled-up' fragments of polarised historical accounts elicit a new comprehension of the past — one which resists singularity in meaning, and instead, offers the potential for a diverse array of perspectives to emerge. It is not merely the securing of Paris against civil war that is depicted through the collection, but also the aestheticisation of a city.[88] Haussmann's project sought to secure Paris against revolution: both civil war and class war. The breadth of the boulevards was designed to prevent the successful building of street barricades, which had previously been formed using rope, as well as overturned omnibuses emptied of passengers and with their horses untied. The width of the new streets of Paris structurally impeded the potential for these revolutionary practices.[89] Haussmann's streets were deliberately straight and clear, affording the military clear sight of their targets when shooting.

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[85] Benjamin, 'Unpacking', p. 491.

[86] Benjamin, 'Unpacking', p. 491.

[87] Kristin Ross, *The Emergence of Social Space: Rimbaud and the Paris Commune* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1988).

[88] *AP*, pp. 120–49.

[89] *AP*, pp. 142, 124.

Work and leisure are coexistent themes in Benjamin's representation of city planning. Haussmann's work in the latter half of the nineteenth-century is understood both through his beautification of the city and his role in controlling the possibilities for the working-classes. Of course, the latter group were brought from all areas of France to help to build the new street layout.[90] Benjamin includes Fourier's statement on the building of barricades as 'non-salaried but impassioned work', along with it is one of the few visual images in *The Arcades Project*: an illustration by an unnamed artist that is included for the way it depicts the basic tools used by Haussmann's workers in the pre-mechanical phase of landscape architecture, illuminating the role of the working class in the creation of a topography aimed at their demise. [91]

In 1830 the oppressed 'had only to rip up the pavement and then pile up various objects: furniture from neighboring houses, crates from the grocer's, and, if need be, a passing omnibus' in the battle against the military for the streets; from 1864 however, following Haussmann's anti-working-class speech before the National Assembly, the poor were co-opted to work to make luxurious items for the enjoyment of others, their once inhabited spaces.[92] As Dubech and d'Espezel explain, the newly constructed environ did not 'suffice to accommodate the expropriated', and the doubling of rent forced many out of Paris, forming an enclave for the elite.[93] Benjamin's work maintains the dialectic of this history: tussle, conflict and contradiction during the era of Napoleon III is represented as a constellation, produced by Benjamin's textual appropriation as a simultaneity of contending factors.

Benjamin's exposés, early drafts, sketches, and annotative notes frequently refer to Haussmannisation as '[t]he strategic embellishment of Paris'.[94] By including Engels in 'Convolute E' (drawing on his experiences in Manchester and London), Benjamin casts light upon the gentrifying role in projects of modern urban development across Europe:

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[90] As one citation shows, 'they say that the city of Paris has condemned itself to forced labor, in the sense that, if it ever ceased its various construction projects and forced its numerous workers to return to their respective provinces, from that day forward its toll revenues would diminish considerably'. *AP*, p. 130.

[91] *AP*, pp. 142, 134.

[92] *AP*, p. 12.

[93] *AP*, pp. 131–32.

[94] *AP*, pp. 915, 914, 913, 901, 897, 91,.23.

> In reality the bourgeoisie has only one method of settling the housing question after *its* fashion — that is to say, of settling it in such a way that the solution continually poses the question anew. This method is called 'Haussmann'. By the term 'Haussmann' I do not mean merely the specifically Bonapartist manner of the Parisian Haussmann — cutting long, straight, broad streets right through closely built working-class neighborhoods and lining them on both sides with big luxurious buildings, the intention having been, apart from the strategic aim of making barricade fighting more difficult, to develop a specifically Bonapartist building-trades proletariat dependent on the government, and to turn the city into a luxury city pure and simple. By 'Haussmann' I mean the practice, which has now become general, of making breaches in the working-class neighborhoods of our big cities, particularly in those which are centrally situated […] The result is everywhere the same: the most scandalous alleys […] disappear to the accompaniment of lavish self-glorification by the bourgeoisie […], but — they reappear at once somewhere else, often in the immediate neighborhood.[95]

Benjamin adds, 'with this goes the prize question: Why was the mortality rate in London so much higher in the new working-class districts (around 1890?) than in the slums?'. Extending the annotation in 'Convulte E', Benjamin suggests that 'people went hungry so that they could afford the high rents. And Peladan's observation: the nineteenth-century forced everyone to secure lodgings for himself, even at the cost of food and clothing'.[96] The project of Haussmann is the programme of modernity, which is why histories of 'embellishment', of beautification, form a co-existing narrative in the history of the city, which, in contrast to depictions of labour, illuminate the tensions between contrasting interpretations of Haussmann's development.[97] It has also been claimed that the widening of the boulevards was necessitated by the crinoline, the broad petticoat worn by women of the nineteenth-century leisure class luxuriating in the abundance of such fabrics, registering a change predicated on the interests of the bourgeoise.[98]

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[95] Friedrich Engels 'On the Housing Question' (1872), quoted in *AP*, p. 145.

[96] *AP*, p. 145.

[97] *AP*, p. 129.

[98] *AP*, pp. 133, 120.

From 1852, the city of Paris changed dramatically, in a manner indicative of the trajectory of European urbanisation more generally. A flâneur, writing in 1868, reports that 'until then, it had been possible to leave this great city in its state of dilapidation, but now it became necessary to deal with the matter'.[99] It was 'by a fortuitous coincidence that France and the countries around it were completing the construction of those long lines of railroad tracks which crisscross Europe'.[100] New visitors descended upon the city, while residents had their existing routes of travel intersected. By juxtaposing Benjamin's historiographic practice with those who smooth out the tumults of the past into a positive account of progress, the particular potential of *The Arcades Project* to expose the complex struggles for social space in the nineteenth century becomes evident.

The Arcades Project is non-prescriptive: it is edited so as to allow the reader freedom to read in any direction. The tags, which connect one fragment with another fragment collated into another Convolute, allow readers to hop from one bundle to the next, and back again. In this respect, the form resonates with the emerging train networks in central Europe. There are ten routes into other Convolutes from 'Convolute E': from page 121 there is one 'hash-tag' per page, to draw on another anachronism from the language associated with contemporary computing.[101] For example, routes exist between 'Convolute E: Haussmannization, Barricade Fighting' and 'Convolute M: The Flâneur', provoking conceptions of the human experience of the modernist terrain, of walking and of the changing perceptions of the city.[102] As with 'Dust and Rain', 'Industrial Development', 'Plush' and 'Secret Societies', many of the tags lead nowhere.[103] However these are not so much cul-de-sacs as the provision

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[99] *AP*, p. 129.

[100] *AP*, p. 129.

[101] Hash-tags are metadata tags prefaced by the hash symbol (#) common to contemporary internet use, particularly prevalent on social media sites, such as Tumblr, Twitter, Reddit, YouTube and Instagram. As a user-generated system of tagging, the hash-tag allows for cross-referencing of themes and subjects, across pages, and therefore creates non-linear associations between various items.

[102] This citation is from George Laronze who writes of the 'the visual effect' which 'was thus very striking, with the swirling branches of the fifty-six great streetlights along the avenue – the reflections from the surfaces below, and the flickering of flames from the five hundred thousand jets of gas'. *AP*, pp. 128–29.

[103] *AP*, pp. 121, 125, 131.

of an infinite corridor. Benjamin's tags open thought on matters related to, but not specifically implicating, other Convolutes.

Benjamin uses the metaphor of the road and the dangers upon it in *One-Way Street* when he describes the purpose of these collated quotes, which 'are like wayside robbers who leap out, armed, and relieve the idle stroller of his conviction'.[104] Benjamin is fascinated with the potential of disruption to bring about new perspectives; to initiate revolutionary action. His writings on Bertolt Brecht celebrate interruption, an illuminating idea when one considers that Benjamin's methodology brings together quotes so conflicting that their proximity creates ambiguity and contradiction, raising questions.

Benjamin calls these interruptions 'gestures'. The 'Quotable Gesture [*Gestus*]' involves a laying bare of what has been uttered, a pause — distance — between that and the next utterance.[105] The pause between sentences in Brecht has a similar effect to that of the distance between citations brought together in Benjamin's Convolutes. Benjamin remains mostly silent (acting as director); the utterance comes in the form of citations ('actors') whose words come before anticipation, which is 'prolonged until the audience had carefully weighed the sentences'.[106] As he writes of Brecht: 'interruption is one of the fundamental devices of structuring […] it goes far beyond the sphere of art. To give only one example, it is the basis of quotation. Quoting a text entails interrupting its context. It is therefore understandable that the epic theatre, being based on interruption, is, in a specific sense, a quotable form of drama. There is nothing special about the quotability of its texts. The difference lies in gestures which are built into the play'.[107] Benjamin edits *The Arcades Project* in a way which leaves open such gaps as spaces to think.

Benjamin's methodology has its roots in that period of his scholarly ambivalence circa 1924, when he encountered the Bolshevik theatre director Asja Lacis, who, whilst working as a personal assistant to Brecht, became Benjamin's lover during their time on the Island of Capri. Whilst there is a sense that Benjamin brought

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[104] *OWS*, p. 481.

[105] 'What is Epic Theatre? (II)', trans. by Harry Zohn, in *SW*, IV, 302–09 (p. 305).

[106] 'Epic Theatre (II)', p. 305.

[107] 'Epic Theatre (II)', p. 305.

the method of Brecht into his portrayal of history, it is likely that it was Brecht's proximity to Soviet theatre, through Lacis, which ultimately brought Benjamin close to Eisenstein and Soviet montage theory. Originally published in 1923 in the journal *Lef*, Eisenstein's essay 'Montage of Attractions', as discussed in the Introduction, depicts 'the theatrical program of the Proletkult'.[108] He explains that his work seeks the 'abolition of the very institution of the theatre as such, replacing it with a show-place for achievements in the theater or with an instrument for raising the standard of training of the masses in their day-to-day life'.[109] Disruption — 'shock' — was, for Eisenstein, a matter of revolutionary praxis, although, insofar as the audience encapsulates the essence of theatre, the function for Eisenstein is to 'guide the spectator in the desired direction'.[110] To manipulate the frame of mind of spectators is the principle of Eisensteinian montage and while Eisenstein's principle may resonate with Benjamin's work, *The Arcades Project*, with its networks of avenues and multiplicity of perspectives, ultimately refuses Eisenstein's soviet didacticism in favour an indeterminate polyvocality that the collated aesthetic assures.

3.5. Surrealism and Constellatory Reading

Deviating from Wohlfarth, who focusses on the Baudelairian method of 'ragpicking' as a key antecedent for *The Arcades Project*, this chapter advances the prominence of Surrealism, rather than the poetic *Lumpensammler,* in the making of *The Arcades Project* and its alternative historiographic method.[111]

Benjamin claimed that the 'father of Surrealism was Dada; its mother was an arcade'.[112] However, it is not only the fact of the Surrealists having met for their meetings in a cafe in the Passage de I 'Opera that provides a methodology for Walter Benjamin, but also the literature produced by its members. Bringing both these themes together, Aragon's *Paris Peasant* (1926) illuminates the history of the

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[108] Eisenstein, 'Montage', p. 77).
[109] Eisenstein, 'Montage', p. 77.
[110] Eisenstein, 'Montage', p. 78.
[111] Wohlfarth, 'Et Cetera?', pp. 142–68.
[112] *AP*, p. 82.

movement itself, and its interest in 'debris'. As described in *Paris Peasant*, Breton (active in both Dada and Surrealism) and Aragon decided, in 1919, to change their regular meeting spot from the arty environs of Montmartre and Montparnasse on the left-bank, to the Passage de l 'Opera. Breton and Aragon deliberately chose a precarious space, an arcade which only continued to exist as such for another six years after the move.[113] Drawn by the ambiguity of these near-derelict spaces of historical luxury, Breton and Aragon began discussing Surrealism in a space soon to be cleared for the extension of Boulevard Haussmann and Rue Chauchat. Breton's later contribution to Surrealist novels, *Nadja* (1928), also depicts the Surrealist interest in the precarious, the overlooked, and the fragmentary. In *Nadja,* Breton describes his visit to Saint Ouen Flea Market, searching for objects which were not to be found anywhere else: 'old-fashioned, broken, useless, almost incomprehensible', Breton describes his psychoanalytically-informed experience of navigating through meaningless spaces, fondling meaningless objects. Breton seemingly cherishes these items, even the 'worthless books' containing pencilled annotations of little mainstream worth.[114] These two key texts document an unorthodox value attributed to the otherwise rejected as a central aspect of Surrealist theory and Surrealist action. Cherished for their aesthetic potential and their ability to offer a sensory experience with indeterminate meaning, Breton and Aragon are both drawn to histories which are obscure; obscured.

The literary references to the detritus of history in Aragon and Breton informed Benjamin's understanding of history from the late 1920s onwards. Whilst Wohlfarth argues that the poetry of Baudelaire is responsible for Benjamin's turn to detritus, the association between Benjamin and the Surrealists in the latter 1920s suggests a more palpable inspiration, influencing both his action and approach, emergent from his reading of books such as *Nadja* and *Paris Peasant*. Of course, *The Arcades Project* is a collection composed almost entirely out of the 'refuse of history'.[115] So whilst Wohlfarth is correct – Benjamin did come upon the identity of the *chiffonier* in his translations of Baudelaire's *The Ragpickers' Wine* and Baudelaire was a significant

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[113] Aragon, *Paris Peasant*, p. 74.

[114] André Breton, *Nadja*, trans. by Richard Howard (New York: Grove Press, 1960), pp. 52, 55.

[115] *AP*, p. 461.

figure for Benjamin in the making of *The Arcades Project* – it is integral to recognise that this nineteenth-century figure was illuminated in Benjamin's twentieth-century context through his encounters with Surrealism. As Benjamin writes in his 1929 essay on Surrealism, Breton was elementary in his recognition of the critical potential of the 'first iron constructions, the first factory buildings, the earliest photos, objects that have begun to be extinct, grand pianos, the dresses of five years ago, fashionable restaurants when the vogue has begun to ebb from them'.[116] This is not a concept Benjamin finds to be true in the work of Baudelaire.

The pace of change experienced by Benjamin during his lifetime is to be understood materially, rather than abstractly. It is Benjamin's interest in 'stuff' discarded and accumulating in the context of overproduction that informs his practice.[117] The 1920s was a period rich in technological advancements and consumerism. Otto Dix's paintings of Berlin illustrate the culture of consumption that existed between the two world wars. *Metropolis* (1928) is a triptych, depicting three night-time scenes of luxury and indulgence.[118] Whilst Dix's characteristic reference to trauma and post-war social-disorientation occupies the left panel (depicting a war victim crippled wearing wooden pegs as prosthetic legs, as women in silks, furs, and chiffon sweep past in haste on route to a party), the middle and right panels reveal the bourgeoise at play. The intense shine of the polished wooden floors reflects and focusses our attention on the motif of men and women dancing before a jazz band: workers employed to entertain a refined population rich in material resources, adorned with trending textiles. Fashion was a prime focus of consumption, for it increased sales in clothing. The effect of rapid developments in style and consumption, as depicted by Dix, is realised in Benjamin, and also in Aragon and in Breton, as the turning toward that which is rejected as trash.

Benjamin wrote to Gershom Scholem in 1935 that *The Arcades Project* 'represents both the philosophical application of Surrealism — and thereby its sublation [*Aufhebung*] — as well as the attempt to retain the image of history in the

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[116] Benjamin, 'Surrealism', p. 210.

[117] For more on this, see the fascinating work on radical materialism by Mauriza Boscagli, *Stuff-Theory: Everyday Objects, Radical Materialism* (London: Bloomsbury, 2014).

[118] Otto Dix, *Großstadt [Metropolis],* 1928, painting; mixed technique on wood, Kunstmuseum, Stuttgart.

most inconspicuous corners of existence — the detritus'.[119] Benjamin's letter stresses not the role of Baudelaire but of Surrealist philosophy, which is not, in this instance incorporated at 'face value', but mediated and re-imagined. The term Benjamin uses is *Aufhebung*. Whilst the translation into English is given as 'sublation', Benjamin's relation to Surrealism is not simply a matter of assimilation. Benjamin was not absorbed by Surrealism and he is not synonymous with the movement.[120] It is worth stressing the multiplicity of meanings in the word *Aufhebung*: *Aufheben* can mean 'abolishment', 'invalidation', and 'suspension', but also 'preservation' and 'elevation'. Whilst Benjamin's essay on Surrealism praises, above all else, the *'revolutionary* energies that appear in the "outmoded"', as perceived and actualised by Breton, the text also criticises the movement.[121] Whilst the Surrealists, understood as successors to anthropological materialism, opened up an integral space within which to represent the image of the body and the embodiment of modernity, Benjamin characterises the movement as 'a little like a gathering of experts at a spring who, after lengthy deliberation, arrive at the conviction that this paltry stream will never drive turbines'.[122] 'Intellectual currents', Benjamin wrote, however, 'can generate a sufficient head of water for the critic to install his power station on them'; it is here that Benjamin's relationship to Surrealism can be understood as *Aufhebung* in all of its many senses. [123]

The Surrealists and Benjamin are united in their method of 'reading esoterically' or 'reading constellations'. In constellatory works, a world of associations may appear hinted at, brought together with varying distance between them, and left in a space of proximity for the active interpretation of the reader. Whilst there are affinities between this approach and the ideas percolating within the Surrealist movement (magic; the theoretical space of psychoanalysis and Freud; practices of automatic writing; the focus on dreams and chance-like encounters and the notion of the constellation), and although it actualises the thread of psychic experience within

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[119] *Correspondence,* p. 505.

[120] Despite suggestions by Manfred and Evelyn Jacobson in *Correspondence*, p. 505.

[121] 'Surrealism', p.210; my italics.

[122] 'Surrealism', p. 207.

[123] 'Surrealism', p. 207.

Surrealist philosophy, Benjamin's conception of the constellation pre-dates his first encounter with Surrealism.[124] Rather, these ideas emerge in *Origin of the German Trauerspiel*, his failed Habilitation submitted to the University of Frankfurt in 1925 and published by Rowe in 1928. The *Trauerspiel*'s 'Episto-Critical Prologue' states that:

> [i]deas are to things as constellations to stars. This is to say, first of all: they are neither their concepts nor their laws. They do not serve the knowledge of phenomena, and in no way can the latter be the criterion determining the existence of ideas. Rather, the meaning of phenomena for ideas is exhausted in their conceptual elements.[125]

Taking a contemporary cue from Surrealism in the mid/late-1920s, the constellation is brought to bear on historiographic representation. In doing so, Benjamin illuminates the past using a communicative approach predicated on disparate fragments, which exist as a free-flow of movable and non-linear entities. With a fundamental horizontality in the constellation, a relationship which negates a hierarchy of meaning or the categorisation of notions as unmovable and fixed is entrenched. Constellations, therefore, re-position Benjamin's readers of history in an altogether new relationship with text; they make opportune readings over and above those in orthodox modes of writing history.

As a technique of realisation, the constellation was carried over from *One-Way Street* into *The Arcades Project.* With a theoretical history pre-dating Benjamin's realisation of it in *One-Way Street*, the constellation is an important aspect of Benjamin's pre-materialist thinking, and it is only in the late 1920s that he re-imagines it for historiographic mobilisation in *The Arcades Project*, thus bringing about its materialist use. As Benjamin writes in 'On the Concept of History', '[m]aterialist historiography […] is based on a constructive principle' (p. 396). Construction is the heaping together of elements selected specifically out of the possibilities of many. The term has architectural connotations: it is the action of assembling a composite. Thesis number seventeen in 'On the Concept of History' explores the formation of an anti-

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[124] Guy Girard, 'Hermeticism and the Magical Tradition', in *Surrealism*, ed. by Fijalkowski and Richardson, pp. 36–45 (p. 37); Rabaté, pp. 45–57.

[125] Benjamin, *Tragic Drama*, p. 34.

historicist historiography through this notion of construction. For Benjamin, proper history depends upon a principle of assembling antithetical components which do not have a homogeneous nature. The constellation is understood as a representative strategy actualising anti-historicism, in that it resists entirely a linearity based on dates.[126]

The constellation avoids assumptions derived from a causal connection between things: 'the historian who proceeds from this consideration ceases to tell the sequence of events like the beads of a rosary', and instead, 'he grasps the constellation into which his own era has entered, along with a very specific earlier one.[127] The key, for Benjamin here, is to avoid the semblance of inevitable progress present in other historical forms and to prompt instead the realisation of altogether new associations across time. In history writing, the constellation avoids fixing the comprehension of one age and forcing it into commentary on subsequent ages, since the act of meaning-making is always held in the ever-present: the world of the reader, in their confrontation with an array of 'loose and untethered rosary beads'. Following the demand 'to read what was never written', Benjamin's application of surrealist philosophy demands, in *The Arcades Project,* that his readership 'reads esoterically'.[128]

The Arcades Project is realised as a collection of matter, a bringing together of fragments whose relation to one another is to be perceived, not through Benjamin's own words, but through the form of the collection itself. The fragment 'Perception is Reading' (written 1917) presents some of the pre-materialist groundwork for this notion. Benjamin plays on the German word for perception (*Wahrnehmung*) which contains the word 'true' (*wahr*).[129] Benjamin poses that '[m]adness is a form of perception alien to the community'.[130] His proto-Surrealist suggestion is an indicator of his materialist interest in non-conventional ways of seeing, specifically those rejected by 'rationalist enquiry'.[131] Adorno describes Benjamin's work as revolutionary praxis

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[126] 'Concept of History', p. 397.

[127] 'Concept of History', p. 397.

[128] Benjamin, 'Mimetic Faculty', p. 722.

[129] Benjamin, 'Perception is Reading', trans. by Rodney Livingstone, in *SW*, I, 92.

[130] 'Perception is Reading', p. 92.

[131] Proto-Surrealist, because this is before the formation of the Surrealists and its roots in Dada did not explore insanity. Surrealist artists incorporated insanity in their doctrine of anti-rationality and explored

that approximates and actualises the objective reality of capitalism: 'the deluded and yet intelligible interweaving of modernity and its society, something which has intensified to become the alienated destiny of every individual, appears as precisely the myth that thought must approximate in order to gain control of itself and thereby break the spell of myth'.[132] *The Arcades Project* brings together a multiplicity of ideas and notions —like highstreets with their variegated shopfronts — and the reader is placed in a position of distraction, akin to the form of participation expected of citizens of modernity, described in Benjamin's 'Artwork' essay. [133]

Benjamin demands distracted participation, a distracted way of seeing, in *The Arcades Project*. Whilst Benjamin's friend Siegfried Kracauer conceived of distraction as a negative aspect of the culture of the commodity — criticising the interior decoration of Berlin's picture palaces as a 'total artwork of effects' which 'assaults all the senses using every possible means' — Benjamin, by contrast, shows his commitment to the *potentialities* of distraction in his 'Artwork' essay, claiming that it cultivates an 'evaluating attitude in the audience': an ability to judge and to approach one's own meaning.[134] Benjamin's new formulation rests on the methodology that 'it's not that what is past casts its light on what is present, or what is present its light on what is past; rather, image is that wherein what has been comes together in a flash with the now to form a constellation'.[135] It is not progress, linearity, or causality which advances meaning in the Parisian history as constructed by Benjamin, rather, through a different form of reading, it negates the power of the author in determining meaning.

Writing in 1927, Benjamin detected a formal quality in the Parisian arcades that was characteristic of the pre-Haussmann topography of Paris. However, it was in 1924

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the potentials of neurodiversity, as revealed in their manifestos. The movement was not the first, however, to appraise madness. As John MacGregor shows, the intensity of emotion and the glorification of imaginary states in Romanticism brought forth the notion that artistic genius and insanity are closely related. John MacGregor, *The Discovery of the Art of the Insane* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992), pp. 67–90.

[132] Adorno, '*Einbahnstrasse',* p. 325.

[133] Benjamin, 'Work of Art', p. 269.

[134] Siegfried Kracauer, 'The Cult of Distraction: On Berlin's Picture Palaces (1927)', in *The Mass Ornament: Weimar Essays*, ed. and trans. by Thomas Levin, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1995) pp. 323–28 (p. 326); Benjamin, 'Work of Art', p. 269.

[135] *AP*, p. 462.

that he first documented this formal quality, in relation to the Italian city of Naples.[136] At that time, Naples was experiencing an influx of theorists associated with what would later be known as 'Critical Theory'. Just two years prior to the writing of Benjamin's Naples essay, Adorno first visited the city, on his 23rd birthday, with Kracauer.[137] Adorno did not write about Naples, however, and it is Benjamin's essay, co-authored with Lacis, that gets to the very heart of an aspect of Adornoian philosophy that he himself missed theorising during or after his trip to Naples. The constellation — which, in Adorno, is an epistemological category that best brings about truth — is 'opposed to identity thinking, which abstracts from objects when it subsumes them under concepts'.[138] For Adorno, constellations (subjective orderings of concepts) illuminate 'the specific side of the object, the side which to a classifying procedure is either a matter of indifference or a burden'.[139] Here, the constellation is a unifying moment of horizontality: a potential of the collated aesthetic which, whilst found in language for Adorno, is in Benjamin first formed architecturally.

The notion of the constellation is common to both Benjamin's telling of a history of a specific city (Paris) and his experience of a particular city (Naples). According to Benjamin and Lacis, the world of distracted possibility flourishes in the southern space of Naples, and the city's porousness becomes the focus of their jointly authored work.[140] The definitive channels upon which a certainty of passage is assured or prescribed in hyper-rationally structured Berlin are non-existent in Naples.[141] As Benjamin and Lacis write, getting lost and encountering the unexpected is a possibility as certain in Naples as is efficiently finding your destination in Berlin; in Naples 'the

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[136] Indeed, it first makes its appearance in Benjamin's biographical writings — the way he describes getting lost in the labyrinth of Tiergarten. See *Childhood*, p. 54.

[137] See Martin Mittelmeier*, Adorno in Naples: The Origins of Critical Theory* (London: Verso, 2019).

[138] Deborah Cook, 'Theodor Adorno: An Introduction', in *Theodor Adorno: Key Concepts,* ed. by Deborah Cook, (Abingdon: Routledge, 2008), pp. 3–20 (p. 12)

[139] Theodor Adorno, *Negative Dialectics*, trans. by E. B. Ashton (London: Routledge, 2004), p. 162. Adorno probably first read the term 'Constellation' in Benjamin's *Trauerspiel*, since it was only in *Negative Dialectics*, written in the late 1960s, that Adorno began to consider this notion of the constellation. Benjamin, *Tragic Drama*, p. 34; Adorno, *Negative Dialectics*, p. 53.

[140] 'Naples', p. 416

[141] See Elizabeth Strom, *Building the New Berlin: The Politics of Urban Development in Germany's Capital City,* (Minneapolis: Lexington Books, 2001).

stamp of the definitive is avoided'.[142] Whilst not named as such, Benjamin's historical representation is born out of a tabulating of this city experience.

It is most useful to compare Benjamin's experience of Naples with the experiences he describes of living in Berlin. Cherishing the experience of getting lost as a child, Benjamin acknowledges the structural prohibition of this possibility in his hometown, as depicted 'Tiergarten', in Berlin Childhood Around 1900. In this autobiographical fragment, Benjamin writes that 'to lose one's way in a city, as one loses one's way in a forest, requires some schooling'.[143] Crucially, the loss of oneself in a city like Naples, whose forms developed very differently from the trajectory of most cities in Western Europe, requires no schooling.[144] It is a place where sites are concealed, they are 'hidden, built in', getting lost is caused by a structural reality of not being able to orient oneself using the usual markers (door numbers, etcetera).[145] Benjamin writes of difficulties in self-orientation, 'for the typical Neapolitan church does not ostentatiously occupy a vast square, visible from afar […] high domes are often to be seen only from a few places, and even then it is not easy to find one's way to them, impossible to distinguish the mass of the church from that of the neighbouring secular buildings'.[146] The hidden is a formal quality in Naples, part of the culture of the city, which Benjamin places in orbit with the camorra. When Benjamin writes that 'the inconspicuous door, often only a curtain, is the secret gate of the initiate', he marks not just a Neapolitan comfort with topographical disorientation, but also the realities of a 'secret, scattered world', revealing a Neapolitan history of gangsters and their subterranean networks.[147] References to the inconspicuous are so multiple in the Naples essay that its relation to *The Arcades Project* — as a history of detritus, to be read esoterically, like the stars in a constellation - is resolute and worth pursuing.

If the notion of the constellation is conceived of architecturally in the 'Naples' essay, Benjamin's concept of the constellation is more often explored in relation to

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[142] Benjamin, 'Naples', p. 416

[143] *Childhood*, p. 53.

[144] Over time, rather than after a clearing away of the old.

[145] 'Naples', p. 416.

[146] 'Naples', p. 416.

[147] 'Naples', p. 416.

collection and the figure of the collector within *The Arcades Project*, illuminating the correspondence between collection and constellation. The collection is literally the result of one's gathering, but culturally, the collection is most commonly associated with the museum and the gallery. In 'Convolute H: The Collector', Benjamin's physiognomy of the nineteenth-century figure who accumulates antiques and curiosities is juxtaposed against the ragpicker, each type of collector representing extreme poles of culturally determined value on materialist planes of object relations.[148] In Benjamin's 'Artwork' essay, the modern gallery space is explored as being one which brings about the distracted viewer, in the sense of one whose proximity to a reproduced artwork demands nothing of one's faculties of concentration.[149] When we unpack this notion, however, it stands in direct contrast to the notion of distraction as presented in his 'Naples' essay. Whereas, in the 'Artwork' essay, it is the artwork's duplication — its formation as simulacrum, in essence, a similitude — which dislodges the viewer from concentrated focus, the direct opposite is the case of Naples' essay architectural difference: if Naples were an artwork, it would possess the qualities of Dada work; the quality of distraction of which, for Benjamin, lies in their ability to make their works the 'centre of scandal': scandal as chaos, a multiplicity of difference, visual cacophony.[150]

Variegation in the built environment of Naples elicits distraction for Benjamin and Lacis. Benjamin and Lacis describe the city as 'craggy'.[151]

> Seen from a height not reached by the cries from below, from the Castell San Martino, [Naples] lies deserted in the dust, grown into the rock. Only a strip of shore runs level; behind it, buildings rise in tiers. Tenement blocks of six or seven stories, with staircases climbing their foundations, appear against the villas as skyscrapers. At the base of the cliff itself, where it touches the shore, caves have been hewn. As the hermit pictures in the *Trencento*, a door is seen here and there in the rock. If it is open, one can see into large cellars,

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[148] *AP,* pp. 203–11.

[149] See Carolin Duttlinger, 'Between Contemplation and Distraction: Configurations of Attention in Walter Benjamin', *German Studies Review*, 30 (2007), 33–54.

[150] Benjamin writes 'Dadaist manifestations actually guaranteed a quite vehement distraction by making artworks the center of scandal. One requirement was paramount: to outrage the public'. 'Work of Art', p. 267.

[151] 'Naples,' p. 416.

> which are at the same time sleeping places and storehouses. Farther on steps lead down to the sea, to fishermen's taverns installed in natural grottoes. Dim light and thin music come up from them in the evening.
>
> As porous as this stone is the architecture. Building and action interpenetrate in the courtyards, arcades, and stairways. In everything they preserve the scope to become a theatre of new, unforeseen constellations.[152]

The topography of Naples is a composite of fragments: buildings of different eras, pressed up against one another; organic/inorganic; a place of sleep/a place for work — it is urbanisation upon an ancient site. This illuminates an overlooked aspect of the Naples essay: it nears an understanding of the city-as-montage. It is this aesthetic of collation, seen in the modern city — this conglomeration of disparate matter, a consequence of intense yet uneven development — which prepares us, perceptually, to receive montage, to view its actualisation in film (as a technique of selecting, editing and bringing together separate sections of film to form a continuous whole), and to perceive it holistically, as a single story. Benjamin's 'Naples' meets Döblin's *Berlin Alexanderplatz* (1929) by showing how perceptual change, aligned with the city's spatio-temporal intensity, is a necessary pre-condition for surviving the twentieth-century: a poetics of distraction is precisely what modernity offers.

Turning to Benjamin's 'Theory of Distraction' (1936), we can see that despite the potential of variegation being highlighted in his 1924 piece – as the realisation of 'new, unforeseen constellations', distraction — which, for Döblin's Franz is a matter of over-stimulation — is, for Benjamin, still related to reproduction.[153] There is a tension in Benjamin between, on the one hand, phantasmagoria as the intoxicating experience of intense variegation, and on the other, distraction as pegged to reproduction and so sameness.[154] Benjamin's analysis is counterintuitive: one would assume that the copy would culminate, as replication, in the singularity of directed thought, for it is a repetition and one cannot be distracted by the ever same. However, for Benjamin,

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[152] 'Naples', p. 416.

[153] 'Naples', p. 416.

[154] 'Naples', p. 416; Benjamin, 'Theory of Distraction', trans. by Howard Eiland, in *SW*, III, 141–42 (pp. 141–42).

who wrote his piece on 'distraction' the same year of his second sketching out of 'The Work of Art in the Age of Its Technological Reproducibility', the experience of distraction comes about through the loss of aura: the 'effect of the work of art once its power of concentration has been eliminated'.[155] This conception of a single pathway between person and artwork, its aura, is interrupted by the reproduction, and thus concentration and focus is diminished. Aura is immersion — concentration; distraction is 'absorption' — ingestion [*Einverleibung*]. It is an embodiment, rather than mere cognition. Distraction, for Benjamin as for Döblin, is a 'physiological phenomenon'.[156]

As 'the basis for real humanism', the physiology of distraction illuminates the philosophical foundations that make possible Benjamin's reorienting of readers toward the felt-experience of *The Arcades Project* as an aesthetic experience.[157] As Terry Eagleton and Susan Buck-Morss both argue, Benjamin's understanding of the aesthetic adheres to the earlier, etymological meaning of aesthetics as a perception of the everyday, rather than aesthetics as a mode of experience restricted to 'art'. For Buck-Morss, the aesthetic is a form of cognition achieved through the whole corporeal sensorium: aesthetics allows the world to be encountered 'prelinguistically, hence prior not only to logic but to meaning as well'.[158] Brought into the realm of aesthetics with its non-instrumental, constellatory representation of disparate and unnarrated fragments, *The Arcades Project* registers a relation between the aesthetic and historiography. 'Born as a discourse of the body', as Eagleton writes, aesthetics is a matter to be explored in and through the physical-cognitive apparatus of humanity, therein potentializing Benjamin's historiographical intervention as historiographical 'innervation'.[159] Critically exploring how *The Arcades Project* as a collated aesthetic can be understood, this chapter will now turn to the concept of anthropological materialism.

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[155] 'Distraction', p. 141.

[156] 'Distraction', pp. 142, 141.

[157] Wolin, p. xxviii.

[158] Buck-Morss, 'Aesthetics and Anaesthetics', p. 6.

[159] Terry Eagleton, 'The Ideology of the Aesthetic', *Poetics Today*, 9.2 (1988), 327–38 (p. 327), quoted in Buck-Morss 'Aesthetics and Anaesthetics', p. 6.

3.6. Anthropological Materialism

Understanding the shortfalls of historical materialism during his time, Benjamin develops his politically-oriented approach with the concept of anthropological materialism. In doing so, Benjamin is able to write the body, gesture, and lived experience back into history-telling in a concrete way. Whilst the phrase 'anthropological materialism' appears in *The Arcades Project* somewhat cryptically, it forms the basis of his collated aesthetic. Used as the title of one convolute, there exists no clear definition of this theoretical tradition of materialism within 'Convolute P' itself.[160] To understand the relevance of anthropological materialism for *The Arcades Project*, we can look to the relevant material scattered across Benjamin's works, especially his writing on Surrealism.

In 'Surrealism: the last snapshot of the European Intelligentsia' (1929), Benjamin presents the Surrealists as heirs to a neglected tradition of anthropological materialism.[161] As its inclusion in *The Arcades Project* suggests, anthropological materialism was popular in the nineteenth century. It is only through Benjamin's interest in Breton, Aragon, and the Surrealist movement of the 1920s and 30s that anthropological materialism gains methodological significance in Benjamin's oeuvre. Benjamin writes that the Surrealist movement opened up a 'an image space, and more concretely, a body space': the '"best room"', he says, 'in which political materialism and physical creatureliness share the inner man, the psyche, the individual, or whatever else we wish to throw to them, with dialectical justice, so that no limb remains untorn'.[162]

In his 'Surrealism' essay, Benjamin points to materialist perspectives which fail to properly recognise the body as a fundamental part of experience. Without naming either physiognomy or physiology, he makes clearer the case for anthropological materialism through its antithetical incarnation in the 'metaphysical materialism' of

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[160] *AP*, p. 807.

[161] 'Surrealism', p. 217.

[162] 'Surrealism', p. 217.

Carl Vogt and Nikolai Bukharin.[163] For Benjamin, the dialectical materialism of Bukharin owed little to everyday experience or its revolutionary transformation. Five years after the publication of 'Surrealism', in 'The Present Social Situation of the French Writer', Benjamin expanded upon his distance from such materialism while defending the Surrealists, whose political potential was denied because it originated from the literary circle around Apollinaire, rather than from politics proper.[164] Benjamin found within the movement the 'home of a classless society', something which was lacking in the experiential austerity of dominant left ideology of the time.[165] 'It may well be that the promise of such a society' Benjamin remarks, 'owed less to the dialectical materialism of a Plekhanov or a Bukharin, than to an anthropological materialism derived from their own experiences, and from the earlier experiences of Lautreamont and Rimbaud'.[166]

In Joseph Bochenski's *Soviet Russian Dialectical Materialism*, 'metaphysical materialism' is defined as that which 'fails completely to take human activity into account' and 'which submerges completely in the object because it forgets that knowledge is the result of a relationship between subject and object'.[167] This epistemologically fallacious exclusivity is also attributed to Vogt by Benjamin in 'Surrealism'.[168] Vogt, a left-wing representative in the Frankfurt Parliament , is accused by Marx in *Herr Vogt* (1860) of being secretly in receipt of funds paid out by Napoleon.[169] In addition to this proximity to, and assumed support of, Bonapartist authoritarianism, Vogt's scientific materialism promotes racism through a distortion of

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[163]' Surrealism', p. 217. Bukharin's name appears only once and Benjamin's engagement with his work is largely subterranean. A prominent leader of the Communist International (Comintern), Bukharin had published three works prior to Benjamin's writing of 'Surrealism': 'The Economics of the Transitional Period', 'The ABC of Communism' and the 'Theory of Historical Materialism'. A concern for the means of production is the beginning and end of his materialism. Advancing Lenin's New Economic Policy (NEP), Bukharin was a Bolshevik who, until his execution by Stalin (along with the virtual eradication of the entire 'old guard'), oscillated with rhythms of a more dominant materialist philosophy.

[164] 'French Writer', p. 759.

[165] 'French Writer', p. 760.

[166] 'French Writer', p. 760.

[167] Joseph Bochenski, *Soviet Russian Dialectical Materialism [Diamat]*, trans. by Nicolas Sollohub (Dordrecht: Reidel, 1963), p. 71.

[168] Benjamin, 'Surrealism', p. 217.

[169] Karl Marx, 'Karl Marx on Herr Vogt: Timely Excerpts from a Classic (1860)', no trans., *The New International*, 10. 8 (1944), 257–60 <https://www.marxists.org/history/etol/newspape/ni/vol10/no08/marx.htm> [accessed 13 December 2020].

the work of Darwin. A polygenist argument for evolution, published in his 1864 *Lectures of Man,* proposes a division within the human species, wherein 'Negroes' and 'Whites' are extreme opposites.[170] Given Benjamin's interest in anthropological materialism as legitimating a breadth of human experience, the racist and essentialising notions Vogt drew around humankind are problematic. Whilst Benjamin uses the term 'metaphysical materialism' to describe Vogt's writings, his work is more accurately a 'mechanical materialism'.[171] In Vogt's *Physiological Letters* (1847), he writes that human subjectivity is a mere by-product of internal mechanics; 'thoughts stand in the same relation to the brain as […] urine to the kidneys'.[172] The issue here is that in Vogt's ontological statements, 'the seat of consciousness, the will, and thought […] must be sought only and exclusively in the brain', and are drawn, not from experience, but from 'pure conceptual reasoning'.[173]

Anthropological materialism is an awkward companion to historical materialism because Vogt's thesis, if adopted uncritically, leads ultimately to a deterministic negation of agency. And yet Benjamin's historical materialism makes use of the epistemological insights of anthropological materialism, specifically its perspective on embodied experience. The crux for Benjamin is that historical materialism is contingent upon anthropological materialism insofar as historical materialism seeks to change the superstructure of society through a transformation of the way its economics are organised. Benjamin sought a 'physical creatureliness': a materialism where 'in all cases an action puts forth its own image and exists, absorbing and consuming it, where nearness looks with its own eyes, the long-sought image space is opened, the world of universal and integral actuality'.[174] This is the true materialism of radical politics in which revolution becomes an immediate necessity. Anthropological materialism is a response to mortality and the weariness of the body. As Benjamin

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[170] Carl Vogt, *Lectures on Man: His Place in Creation, and in the History of the Earth, ed. by James Hunt* (London: Longman, Green, Longman, and Roberts, 1864; repr. Charleston: Nabu Press, 2010), p. 30.

[171] Carl Vogt, *Physiologische Briefe für Gebildete aller Stände* (Stuttgart and Tübingen: Cottascher Verlag, 1846), p. 322.

[172] Vogt, *Physiologische Briefe*, p. 322.

[173] Vogt, *Physiologische Briefe*, p. 322; Cat Moir, 'Abysmal Humanity: Anthropological Materialism', *Benjamin, Adorno, and the Experience of Literature,* ed. by Corey McCall and Nathan Ross (Abingdon: Routledge, 2018), pp. 76–90 (p. 78).

[174] 'Surrealism', p. 217.

perceives in his essay on the Surrealists: 'They exchange, to a man, the play of human features for the face of an alarm clock that in each minute rings for sixty seconds'.[175] Winning the 'energies of intoxication for the revolution', the Surrealists stress an urgent political materialism: a corporeal battle against structures of power, which Benjamin refers to through his image of the clock-faced man. [176]

In his essay on Surrealism, Benjamin cites the names of four materialists whose ontology he shares: 'Hebel, Georg Büchner, Nietzsche and Rimbaud'.[177] To interpret anthropological materialism's role in *The Arcades Project* an examination of these four figures is necessary. As the latter two have been incorporated into a Surrealist body of work, their anthropological materialist nature is implied. As Breton testifies, 'Rimbaud is Surrealist in the way he lived'.[178] In a 1935 speech given to the Congress of Writers, Breton presented Rimbaud as an agent of revolutionary social transformation, of 'historical materialism', placing him in association with radical historical perception.[179] Benjamin's reference to Rimbaud as proximate to a Surrealist anthropological materialism is discussed amply in the works of Breton. Rimbaud's radicality is also cited by Benjamin, largely in relation to his support of the Paris Commune, which, as Kristin Ross argues, was in orbit with his poetic verse and his commentaries on urban space.[180] As with Baudelaire, one can presume that Rimbaud's poetry directed Benjamin's thought to the city. Benjamin includes a snippet taken from Rimbaud's *Illuminations* in 'Convolute J'. It opens: '*City*. I am an ephemeral and not-too-disconnected citizen of a metropolis obviously modern because every known taste has been avoided in the furnishings and in the outsides of houses, as well as in the layout of the city'.[181] Anti-modern, Rimbaud's city poetics is a reaction to Haussmann's channelling of bodies down pre-defined routes: an imposition of the inorganic upon the organic and a seismic shift in the perception of movement in modern urbanism.

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[175] 'Surrealism', p. 218.

[176] 'Surrealism', p. 215.

[177] 'Surrealism', p. 217.

[178] Breton, 'Manifesto', p. 27. In the 'Second Manifesto' (p. 177) Breton also associates Rimbaud' derangement of the senses with the Surrealist project.

[179] André Breton, 'Speech to the Congress of Writers', in *Manifestoes of Surrealism*, pp. 234–42 (p. 239).

[180] *AP*, pp. 13, 39; Ross, *Emergence of Social Space,* p.75.

[181] *AP*, p. 371.

Nietzsche is another inspiration for the Surrealists, and as such, for Benjamin too.[182] In *Nadja*, Breton writes of the value of a 'pencilled series of reflections on Nietzsche'.[183] Nietzsche writes vividly on the matter and experience of the everyday. Hinting of a problem within his time, a problem also mentioned in Benjamin's 'Convolute P' in relation to Firmin Maillard's *La légende de la femme emancipée*, Nietzsche contends that there is a bourgeois current which suggests matters of the body to be uncivilised and not part of the remit of the 'educated'. In a fragment labelled 'Long live physics', Nietzsche illuminates his anthropological materialism further, bringing about its political and/or social transformative credence.[184] He suggests that it is part of the mission of humanity to become 'the best learners and discoverers of everything that is lawful and necessary in the world' and thus 'we must become physicists in order to be able to be creators in this sense'.[185]

The last two on Benjamin's list of four materialists whose ontology he shares, is German dramatist Georg Büchner, who was physician, a lecturer in anatomy and a political activist, and Johann Peter Hebel, a German short-story writer. Benjamin wrote about Hebel in his 'Children's Literature' (broadcast on radio in 1929 by *Südwestrundfunk Rundfunk*) and in two pieces titled 'Johann Peter Hebel' in 1926. Büchner is featured in Benjamin's oeuvre only once at any length, in his piece 'German Men and Women', which includes a letter from Büchner to Gutzkow (the latter cited fleetingly by Benjamin as another disciple of anthropological materialism).[186] Benjamin collated this letter along with others (between Nietzsche and Keller), and added commentary, with the intention of publishing these as a series in the *Frankfurter Zeitung,* in the mid 1930s.[187] The final statement of Büchner's letter underscores embodied experience as evidence of free will, with historical experience and its carnal actuality key: 'it is easier for me to beg in rags than to hand over a petition in a

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[182] Nietzsche plays a major role in Benjamin's history of Paris, appearing largely in relation to experience, boredom, and eternal return. See *AP*, 'Convolute D'.

[183] Breton, *Nadja,* p. 55.

[184] Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*, trans. by Walter Kaufmann, (New York: Vintage Books, 1974), p. 267.

[185] Nietzsche, *Gay Science*, p. 266.

[186] Benjamin, 'German Men and Women: A Sequence of Letters Selected and Introduced by Detlef Holz', trans. by Edmund Jephcott, in *SW*, III, 167–235 (pp. 207–08; *AP*, p. 633.

[187] *AP*, p. 633.

tailcoat' he writes 'and almost easier to demand, pistol in hand, "La bourse ou la vie!" [Your money or your life!], than with trembling lips to whisper, "May God reward you."'[188] These images in Büchner of a 'political materialism and physical creatureliness' is the affirmation of his anthropological materialism, with resonance for Benjamin and its Surrealist realisation in his work.[189]

Similar images of embodied experience are represented by Hebel. In his first piece on Hebel, written on the centenary of his death in 1936, Benjamin applauds Büchner's 'narration of incident'.[190] There is a consistency here, in what Benjamin praises in these figures; an interest in the sensual representation of experience. Of Hebel, Benjamin writes that his 'repertoire encompasses the entire gamut of human experience, from the lowest horse trader to acts of the greatest generosity'.[191] Like Balzac, Hebel 'was not the man to overlook the element of the demonic in bourgeois business life'.[192] Balzac — cited in *The Arcades Project* as 'the first to speak of the ruins of the bourgeoise' — is an integral figure for our understanding of anthropological materialism. Benjamin sees Balzac's project of literary physiognomy as extending into that of the Surrealists, with the movement having 'first opened our eyes to' experience in its embodied and heterogeneous sense, as depicted in *The Human Comedy*.[193] With 'human figures larger than the streets they move in', the poetics of Balzac (we can extend this to Hebel too), amplify and swell the human condition, making its episodes rich in imagetic and imaginative detail.[194]

Focused on revolutionary possibilities, Benjamin's 1929 essay on Surrealism makes the claim that Surrealism allows for discovery 'in the space of political action the one hundred percent image space'.[195] Distinguishing image from metaphor, Benjamin stresses that the space of the image is not the space of bourgeois poetry with its rudimentary appeals to aesthetics ('a bad poem on springtime').[196] Rather, it is

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[188] 'German Men and Women', p. 208.
[189] 'Surrealism', p. 217.
[190] Benjamin, 'Johann Peter Hebel (I)', trans. by Edmund Jephcott, in *SW*, I, 428–31 (p.430).
[191] 'Hebel (I)', p. 430.
[192] 'Hebel (I)', p. 430.
[193] *AP*, p. 13.
[194] *AP*, p. 245.
[195] Benjamin, 'Surrealism', p. 217.
[196] 'Surrealism', p. 216.

an embodied, corporeal space, not a space that exists only contemplatively. There is a distinction, here, between bourgeois poetry and the poetry which influenced the Surrealists: Lautréamont, Rimbaud, and Apollinaire have in common an attention to the everyday encounters of existence and its changing nature; it is this, for Benjamin, which brings their poetry into the service of anthropological materialism. Within it, the collective emerges as a single aggregated body, and it is the physicality of individuals which overcomes the purely 'intellectual predominance of the bourgeoise'.[197]

Anthropological materialism opens up the possibility, intellectually, to realise social change, physically. Whilst it is clear that historical materialism is dependent upon an anthropological foundation because of its illustration of experience (the body grown tired, the gestures of work), dominant conceptions of historical materialism, such as those associated with Marx, fail to make a revolutionary agenda possible.[198] As Benjamin recalls in his notes surrounding 'On the Concept of History', historical materialism as it had previously been conceived, is a formulaic path of stages, wherein the plight of the exploited is diminished only in its latter stage. This 'vulgar' historical materialism is actualised, not as revolution, but in the form of the architectural space designed especially for bodies in waiting. Where Marx's historical materialism culminates in the image of the waiting room, Benjamin's anthropologically informed historical materialism culminates in the gesture and the movement of embodied action. One of Benjamin's most illuminative images on this matter is not the 'Angel of History' but the train, and the passengers upon it, who must realise their anthropological mission to activate the emergency break.[199]

Anthropological materialism brings to bear, in *The Arcades Project,* a true, actualised aesthetics. The human body is the site of aesthetic experience, and it is therefore only through this ontology of the body that historical change may be actualised. Adorno acknowledges Benjamin's advancement of the sensuous origins of the notion of the aesthetic in his 1936 critique, as opposed to aesthetic being more

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[197] Benjamin, 'Surrealism', p. 216.

[198] Gesture is an appropriate term because it is anthropologically based: it is a movement; it works in opposition to the mechanical materialist notion that matter is a response of consciousness. Gesture is a movement, which, through its motion, signals something immaterial.

[199] Benjamin, 'Paralipomena to "On the Concept of History"', trans. by Edmund Jephcott and Howard Eiland, in *SW*, IV, 401–11 (p. 402).

commonly approached as a matter of artistic judgement and the appreciation of beauty. Whilst Benjamin's anthropological materialism suggests an understanding of aesthetics which is corporeal, his interest in the modern experience of art reveals an interest in both aesthetics as sensory experience and aesthetics as pertaining to our engagement with art and artworks. However, Benjamin is uninterested in conversations about the appreciation of beauty. When exploring the history of art, Benjamin does so from the standpoint of an original notion of the aesthetic: that which is '"perceptive by feeling"'; 'the sensory experience of perception'.[200] Benjamin's anthropological materialism is his turn to aesthetics in its original sense. Concerned with the body, it sits at a distance from the structures of meaning which preside over cultural knowledge. As Buck-Morss contends, 'the senses maintain an uncivilised and uncivilisable trace, a core resistance to cultural domestication'.[201]

In 'Theory of Distraction', Benjamin makes clear the relationship between distraction and that which has 'consumer value'; his remarks tell us something about the sensory experience of the city, which, as a site structured on the basis of consumer value, registers, in its culmination of modern life, a new way of being.[202] For Benjamin, distraction is inherent to the culture of consumption: it is rare for that which has pedagogic value to also have consumer value.[203] Distraction is an interruption experienced by the self and an interruption to the self — a moment wherein a planned path is intercepted. Distraction is a sensory interference or cognitive intrusion, as Döblin in *Berlin Alexanderplatz* depicts, whilst there was, as experienced by Franz, speed and motion that was inorganic, there was also the fetishization – the lure – of the inanimate.[204] Such distraction leads to disorientation. A chaos is registered by Döblin, in his depiction of the new order of the 1920s. Confusion — the synchronicity of diversity, the diachroneity of similitude, as depicted by Franz — is seized on by Benjamin, not just as the focus of his critique, but as a representative approach. It is Benjamin's focus on the distracted subject and the critical potential of overstimulation

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[200] Buck-Morss, 'Aesthetics and Anaesthetics', p. 6.
[201] Buck-Morss, 'Aesthetics and Anaesthetics', p. 6.
[202] Benjamin, 'Distraction', p. 142.
[203] Benjamin, 'Distraction', p. 142.
[204] Alexander Döblin, *Berlin Alexanderplatz* (Berlin: Fischer Verlag, 1929), pp. 4–5.

that provides the basis for understanding his anthropological materialism (expanded below in relation to the potential of the collated aesthetic, the collection, and the reading of 'unforeseen constellations').[205]

Benjamin addresses the experience of phantasmagoria in *The Arcades Project*, which is defined as 'a framework in which use value recedes into the background'; society becomes a '*Blendwerk,* a deceptive image designed to dazzle'.[206] Phantasmagoria transpires as the whole production process of capitalism; as brought into the cityscape and the everyday it appears as an 'ambiguity peculiar to the social relations and products of this epoch'.[207] A fantastical relation between things and humans pervades this phantasmagoria of civilisation. Benjamin's work places nineteenth-century Paris at the source of the ideological expression of the 1920s, which became manifest as 'dialectical fairyland'.[208] Those 'theological niceties and metaphysical subtleties' inherent in Marx's interpretation of the commodity, appear in Döblin as mature and in full bloom. Confronted by the physical-cognitive experience of phantasmagoria, the modern man 'surrenders to its manipulations while enjoying his alienation from himself and others' — as becomes the fate of Franz.[209] As Benjamin shows in *The Arcades Project*, distraction — the lure of a phantasmagoria of illusion — is, as a contemporary manifestation, secured in the precipitates of aesthetic sensuosity which characterise the modern built environment, such as the reflective surfaces which expand space as if by magic.[210]

Before exploring this methodological potential drawn from the city's apparatus of phantasmagoria, it is necessary to comprehend the political reasons that this significance is raised to a methodological, or even theoretical point, and for that we must turn to Benjamin's most famous work: 'The Work of Art in the Age of Its

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[205] For urban 'overstimulation', see Georg Simmel, 'The Metropolis and Mental Life', in *On Individuality and Social Forms: Selected Writings*, ed. by Donald Levine (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1971), pp. 324–39 (p. 329). Benjamin, 'Naples', p. 416.

[206] *AP*, p. 7; Tiedemann, 'Dialectics', p. 938.

[207] *AP*, p. 10.

[208] The phrase 'dialectical fairyland' refers back to an earlier title which Benjamin considered for *The Arcades Project*. *AP*, p. 873.

[209] *AP*, p. 7.

[210] *AP,* p. 225.

Technological Reproducibility. [211] In this essay, first drafted in 1935, Benjamin makes clear the political ramifications of a commodity culture which elicits the most fundamental alienation, from oneself and from others. To draw out the most crucial aspects of this essay, it is necessary to focus on the notion of a political aesthetic and its antithesis, the aestheticisation of politics.[212] Benjamin associates the latter with a fascist management of the technological transformation of society toward their own aims, as is illustrated in the work of Döblin and Atget. He associates the former with the response of communism, as necessary for the advancement of left-wing revolution. In his consideration of war and the role played by political allies in the world of art, specifically with reference to the occupation of Ethiopia by Mussolini in 1936, Benjamin concludes that the *Manifesto of Futurism* realises a Fascist application of technological change for their own ends. The rupture of the organic or mechanisation of life is, for Benjamin, found in Marinetti's *Manifesto of Futurism*: 'War is beautiful because it inaugurates the dreamed-of metallization of the human body'.[213] As Buck-Morss notes, Benjamin's project, which is to be understood as the politicisation of aesthetics, seeks to '*undo* the alienation of the corporeal sensorium, to *restore the instinctual power of the human bodily senses for the sake of humanity's self-preservation,* and to do this, not by avoiding the new technologies, but by *passing through* them'.[214] Buck-Morss further highlights the need for a materialist perspective that brings to bear the most foundational responses of the body. It is only through the

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[211] There are three versions of this essay; the first was drafted in the autumn of 1935, the second, which was a complete publishable draft was produced in 1936, though it was not published in Benjamin's lifetime. The third version of the essay, referenced earlier as having opened with a quote from Valéry, was completed in 1939. As the notes on the 1939 version state, it was this final and heavily amended version which formed the basis of the 1955 publication. Benjamin, 'Work of Art', p. 270.

[212] Benjamin, 'Work of Art', p. 269.

[213] Other than, as here, in Benjamin, this quote cannot be found anywhere else, and it is unclear in which of Marinetti's publications it originates. Marinetti's 1909 *Manifesto of Futurism* does contain a series of inflammatory and fascistic statements, and Marinetti did go on in 1919 to join the Fascist party, becoming an enthusiastic supporter of Mussolini. This manifesto, as published, opens with 'We want to sing about the love of danger, about the use of energy and recklessness as common, daily practice.' It proceeds, 'We wish to glorify war — the sole cleanser of the world — militarism, patriotism, the destructive act of the libertarian, beautiful ideas worth dying for, and scorn for women.' Filippo Tommaso Marinetti, `The Foundation and Manifesto of Futurism', in *100 Artists' Manifestos*, ed. by Alex Danchev (London: Penguin, 2011), ebook.

[214] Buck-Morss, 'Aesthetics and Anaesthetics', p. 5. Buck-Morss' reference toward a *passing through* of new aesthetic structures is explored later in this chapter of the thesis, along with the very structure of *The Arcades Project* and the concept of constellatory-reading.

body that history's emancipatory reconstruction is possible and in relation to bodily experience — suffering and material need — that a perception of the problematics of modernity can be realised. Benjamin's embodiment archives of Paris elicit not merely a reference point for the physical act of historiographic construction, but furthermore, the representation of historical physical woes.

We must now confront Benjamin's concept of 'innervation', which concerns how he speaks about the biological process of the nerve supply to organs of the body, through a focus on his pivotal 'Work of Art' essay. Benjamin is most concerned here with how the technological reproduction of art fundamentally alters traditional subject-object interactions. Articulated as the 'loss of aura', Benjamin surmises that the modern relationship with art has changed drastically in line with new technological processes, which re-position the viewer in an altogether new perceptual experience. Because of the new possibilities for creating copies of artworks which were once valued primarily on the basis of their singularity, and the notion of 'genius' therein, the reality that artworks now appear in multiplicities creates a situation whereby a distracted engagement replaces one of contemplation.[215]

Deeply concerned with the embodied impact of new technology on the collective, Benjamin explores physiognomy as a means of depicting that manifestation upon the embodied experience of humanity. The notion of physiognomy when brought to bear on historical representation anticipates a rendering of the past in and through the appearance of its human characteristics. Accordingly, Benjamin's history of Paris is made physically concrete through the ragpicker, the collector, the whore — all physiognomies which elucidate the nineteenth century through social type. It is through vivid descriptions of embodied experience and the body in movement that a cross-directional changing relationship between the sensory perception of man and the objects around him, come into focus on the matter of the period.[216] It is on this basis that innervation and physiognomy become most clearly related: with the latter shining light upon the character of the former. When Benjamin sketches the scene of critical capitalist overproduction, the movements of the ragpicker are cited: his '"jerky gait"', as Benjamin describes, is 'not necessarily due to the effect of alcohol. Every few

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[215] Benjamin, 'Work of Art'.

[216] Technology forms us; we form technology.

moments, he must stop to gather refuse which he throws into his wicker basket'.[217] So much is cast aside in the most rapidly developing era of the twentieth century that the physiognomy of the ragpicker must necessarily be one which represents this motion in his movement. [218]

Figure 19. The embodiment of refuse collection. Eugène Atget *Un chiffonnier le matin dans Paris, avenue des Gobelins,* 1899–1901, albumen silver print, from Gordon Baldwin and others, *In Focus: Eugène Atget – Photographs from the J. Paul Getty Museum* (Los Angeles: J. Paul Getty Museum, 2000), p. 24

Periodically hinged, the ragpicker is inveterately bent and made crooked due to the nature of his work. Whilst Benjamin does not include a visual representation of the ragpicker, Atget's *Un chiffonnier le matin dans Paris* (Figure 19) reinforces the

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[217] *AP*, p. 364.

[218] The motorisation of waste management collection and transportation occurred in the 1920s. Closed-cover trucks with lever mechanisms to collect litter were introduced in this period.

embodiment of this social type, approximating and contributing to an understanding of physiology: how the work impacts on the body, and the body impacts on the work. There is a trace of this kind of work/body relationship in Benjamin's biographical writing, showing that these ideas concerning a responsivity to technological form came in part from his ideas on childhood development, as well as his ideas on mimetics.

Benjamin's literary illustrations of the body during the 1930s have a great deal of sociological and political potential. However, perplexingly, he failed to account for the wider socio-political context, which will not go ignored here. Benjamin's references to physiognomy are from Balzac, whose writing incorporates detailed descriptions and sketches of social types.[219] Dickens also falls within this tradition of literary physiognomy.[220] It is through this visual physiognomy that one is able to approach the socio-cultural and political battleground that provides vital contexts for understanding Benjamin in the time of the Weimar Republic. Whilst Benjamin cites the relation of physiognomy and/or physiology to socialist utopia (as in his writings on Fourier) he fails to cite the relation of physiognomy and/or physiology to the Fascist production of an imagined racial type. Written in 1931, Benjamin's 'Little History of Photography' mentions 'sudden shifts of power such as now overdue in our society can make the ability to read facial types a matter of vital importance'.[221] It is clear from sentiments such as these, that Benjamin's fascination with physiognomy does not begin and end with Balzac and Dickens but concerns a much more urgent anxiety particular to the twentieth century: changing national borders and demographics. Problematically, Benjamin fails to illuminate Sander's fate as a photographer of physiognomy; a fate which documents the blurring of boundaries in popular documentary and photographic approaches to representing the great sociological changes of the century — changes which have been illuminated technologically, economically, and politically, in this chapter.

Published in 1929, with an introduction by Döblin, Sander's *Face of our Time* holds a poetic title in its original German (*Antlitz der Zeit*), for which 'countenance' is

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[219] *AP*, p. 21.

[220] *AP,* pp. 57, 208.

[221] Benjamin, 'Little History of Photography', trans. by Edmund Jephcott and Kingsley Shorter, in *SW*, II.2, 507–30 (p. 520).

perhaps closer to the original meaning. The work does not immediately suggest affinities with wider currents in physiognomy, such as those co-opted by German nationalists during the time of its publication, born from Johan Casper Lavater's eighteenth-century ideas on the relationship between the body and the personality, or soul.[222] Sander's work, described by Benjamin as being 'in no way inferior to the tremendous physiognomic gallery mounted by Eisenstein and Pudovkin', is understood as akin to the creative productions of these Soviet filmmakers, in which meaning is not fixed.[223] The link between Soviet film and physiognomy helps us to understand the tensions between the poetic and the non-poetic strands of physiognomy and portrait photography in Weimar Germany, tensions between the ideological positions of right and left.[224] The close-up shots of individuals in Eisenstein's *Battleship Potemkin* (1925) suggest that it is not only montage, but the interplay between it and physiognomy, which brings about the aesthetic of Soviet film in the 1920s. Pudovkin's *Mother* (1926) also includes a vast array of facial shots, which help us to understand physiognomy in its widest, and non-fascistic, form.[225]

The Nazi destruction of Sander's printing plates for *Face of our Time* is indicative of the politics of vision and representation which, in Sander, was a subversion of the agenda of fascism. Sander's images included portraits of a range of people, 'non-Aryans', for instance. Rather than depicting the face in isolation, Sander's works were of full-length bodies; they illuminated work and labour rather than genetic structure, feature, or race, which was the interest of the Nazi party at the time. There is conflict between the categories of social type as depicted by this kind of

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[222] See Lavater's 'The Science of Physiognomy' for essentialist remarks; also see Hans Günther's pseudo-scientific physiognomy, later used by the Nazi party. See also Ludwig Ferdinand Clauss for more on the racialisation of physiognomy as used by the Nazi Party. Johann Casper Lavater and Giambattista della Porta, *The Pocket Lavater; or, The Science of Physiognomy* (New York: Van Winkle and Wiley, 1817); Hans Günther, *The Racial Elements of European History* (New York: Dutton, 1927); Ludwig Clauss, *Rasse und Charakter* (Frankfurt am Main: Diesterweg, 1936).

[223] Benjamin, 'Little History', p. 520.

[224] Important to consider in relation to early film aesthetics and physiognomy is Hugo Münsterberg, *The Photoplay: A Psychological Study* (London: Appleton, 1916).

[225] I am not suggesting that the editing techniques of Eisenstein are repeated by Pudovkin. The latter's editing realises narrative, rather than complicating it. For this reason Pudovkin is considered by some to be the forefather of Hollywood film. Eisenstein, however, is considered here to be the father of disruptive historiographic technique. See, for an accessible read: Jonathan Jones, 'The Silent Revolutionary', *The Guardian,* 31 August 2001 <https://www.theguardian.com/film/2001/aug/31/artsfeatures1> [accessed 7 December 2020].

photography and racial type as depicted in physiognomy's 'scientific' sister, phrenology. Extended into the representation of racial characteristics in the period's study of eugenics, the photography of Erna Lendvai-Dircksen has some rudimentary affinities with the images of social type produced by Sander in Germany. Photographing for *Volk und Rasse* (a popular magazine, first published in 1925), Lendvai-Dircksen's work promoted racial purity and the physical virtues of the purportedly superior 'Aryan-race'. The 1936 issue contains material on racial exhibitions which espouse an ideological problematic of cross-heritage reproduction as responsible for a 'weakening' of the German race. The relationships, tensions, and boundaries between physiognomy and eugenics in the Weimar Republic is illuminated by the simultaneous publication of such magazines as *Volk und Rasse* and the depiction of changing social types in Sander and Atget. Revealing this contextual nuance in Sander's practice — which may for some be indicative of portraiture and not physiognomy — Benjamin's 'Little History of Photography' (1931) charts this 'sociologically oriented project, which included images of peasants, workers, artisans, capitalists and artists, among many others'.[226] It is from this legacy that Benjamin elevates the role of physiognomy in *The Arcades Project.*

3.7. Conclusion

Working primarily as an editor, Benjamin's contribution to *The Arcades Project* as an author is minimal. Whilst Benjamin's voice pierces the collection of others' momentarily as annotations (notes above or beneath citations, never conclusive), Benjamin's historiographic role is principally one of selection and deselection: what, in a curatorial sense, to bring inside his 'magic circle' of historical representation, and what to reject.[227] Nevertheless, *The Arcades Project* is a bundle of notes. Benjamin's form, eliciting the ambiguities of the city, is not directly manipulative or controlling. It has the potential to bring confusion to bear upon audiences.

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[226] 'Little History', p. 529.

[227] Benjamin, 'Unpacking', p. 487.

As this chapter has illustrated, Benjamin's editorial process was one of re-framing: he worked to carefully assemble convolutes that would shock, using an organizational principle that would jolt the reader into new perceptions of the past. Benjamin does not seek to channel or direct our thought (as in Eisenstein's practice of montage), but rather, to advance experiences of independent thought and subjective sense perception. The Surreal is key to Benjamin's historiographic practice, which, akin to Jennings in *Pandaemonium,* is focused on imaginative freedom. Benjamin promotes and provokes open-ended perceptual change for readers of *The Arcades Project*. In this way, his experimentation with Surrealism brought about a focus within his work on revolutionary praxis; cultivating independent meaning-making, in the text's absence of analytical explanation.

The Arcades Project creates a formal correspondence between historical text and the materialist reality of the city. Networks of perspectives are overlaid in the work, creating a mesh of intersections, a mimetic response to the crisscrossing routes of modern Paris. Henry Sussman describes Benjamin's technique well:

> *The Arcades Project* is Talmudic in its obsession with registers of signification and commentary, in its fascination with the spatial zones, vertical as well as lateral, of Paris, its commerce and its activities, legitimate or not; it is encyclopedic in the sheer range of factors and materials surrounding Paris's (also known as modernity's) development, achievements, and political vicissitudes that it takes in; it is hypertextual to the degree to which the individual Convolutes supplement and enlarge upon one another.[228]

Sussmann uses an anachronism when he points to the 'hypertextual' character of *The Arcades Project*. Hypertext — a word originating in computing and used primarily in relation to the user-experience of the post-1996 commercialised internet — refers to the way Benjamin's editing creates the possibility of crisscrossing within and through the text: a matter which is realized in the contemporary reception of *The Arcades Project* to which this thesis will move to in the next chapter.

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[228] Henry Sussman, 'Booking Benjamin: The Fate of a Medium' in *Walter Benjamin and the Architecture of Modernity*, ed. by Andrew Benjamin and Charles Rice (Melbourne: re.press, 2009), pp. 9–36 (p. 34).

The Arcades Project is a historical text which repositions readers away from the didacticism of reading pre-interpreted and linearly narrated prose, toward taking on the role of creative agents engaged in an iterative process of meaning-making, in ongoing confrontations with the work's unfixed, ever movable parts. The schism between the Surrealists and Benjamin, as revealed in his 1929 critique of the movement, sheds light on the meaning of the term *Aufhebung* as used by Benjamin in his claim that *The Arcades Project* 'represents both the philosophical application of Surrealism — and thereby its sublation [*Aufhebung*] — as well as the attempt to retain the image of history in the most inconspicuous corners of existence — the detritus'.[229] *The Arcades Project* is not a mere 'sublation' or assimilation of Surrealism. Rather, it is its negation: its elevation *and* its conservation, brought to bear on the making of a history composed entirely of juxtaposed historical scraps, and thus we can see a far more complex engagement with Surrealism in Benjamin's history of Paris, than the English translation would suggest. In doing so, overlooked themes in Benjamin's work, such as anthropological materialism and physiognomy, become extremely productive in our comprehension of a collated aesthetic; integral, so to speak, in understanding the way in which the collated aesthetic is realised not just intellectually, but physically.

Balanced between the inspirations of Brecht, Baudelaire, Breton and many more, *The Arcades Project* has, in this chapter, been explored as an experimental demonstration of historical materialism, one necessarily built upon an anthropological rather than a mechanical or metaphysical materialism. It is not that *The Arcades Project* explores the tenets of anthropological materialism, but that the work embodies what it means to produce an account of the past, in light of anthropological materialism. Benjamin's own archival labour, his building of a new historiographical construction, contributes to this meaning, as does his representation of modernity as an embodied experience. His activation of a new kind of reader, who encounters a depiction of the past non-instrumentally, initiates a reader who is attuned aesthetically, rather than intellectually.

An understanding of the entire corporeal-sensorium and the embodied experience of materiality drives Benjamin's historiographic technique.

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[229] Benjamin to Scholem, August 1935, *Correspondence,* p. 505.

Transformational political change cannot occur without reference to the body (politics inevitably concerns the collective body), and it is the body politic, the collective embodiment of modernity by humanity, which depends so intimately on a negation of orthodox, or rather 'vulgar', materialism.[230] With metaphysical materialism being primarily inconsistent with a drive to transform society, this chapter has shown how the epistemological base and technical structure of *The Arcades Project*, with reference to this neglected tradition of anthropological materialism, physiognomy, and constellatory reading, does provide the necessary base for such societal transformation. The collated aesthetic, therefore, rests upon the physical labour of the editor, and upon the reader's ability to realise their body as functioning as part of a wider matrix of revolutionary forces.

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[230] Benjamin, 'Concept of History', p. 393.

Chapter Four. Afterlives of the Collated Aesthetic in 'The Arcades' (2017) and *Isles of Wonder* (2012)

The term *afterlife* has theological undertones. In religious studies, the term refers to the survival of the soul following the termination of spiritual embodiment. In this chapter, the term refers to an historical materialist notion of legacy raised in the work of Walter Benjamin. Afterlife here is both concept and strategy, a way of understanding or even instigating a sudden emergence of the past in the present, in a way that illuminates the character of the present moment within which the past is cited. The term describes a mode of legacy for works of art, ideas, and concepts, within which their reinterpretation is informed by the present. Adopting afterlife as methodology, this chapter mobilises the notion in its critical examination of two examples from the 2010s, which show a creative reception of the collated aesthetic: the opening ceremony to the 2012 Olympic Games in London, *Isles of Wonder*, and the 2017 exhibition at the Jewish Museum of New York (JMNY) 'The Arcades: Contemporary Art and Walter Benjamin' (abbreviated as 'The Arcades').[1]

As a heuristic, the *collated aesthetic* establishes correspondence in the work of Benjamin and Jennings. In this chapter, following the posthumous English publication of *The Arcades Project* and *Pandaemonium* in 1999 and 1985 respectively, the collated aesthetic is set forth into the world, instigating an historically contingent public reception, which has been creative, innovative, and multi-medial. The collated aesthetic is made new: these two examples illuminate the possibilities of newness associated with the collated aesthetic when handled by twenty-first century cultural producers. These possibilities are integral to the collated aesthetics' realisation as an approach that is pegged not to a single moment in chronological time but rather to moments of social crisis.

This chapter argues that the contemporary moment within which the collated aesthetic finds its recent appearance calls for a reconsideration of the interwar technique developed by Benjamin and Jennings and that the two recent examples are

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[1] *Isles of Wonder*, dir. by Danny Boyle (Olympic Stadium, London, 27 July 2012), online video recording, YouTube <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4As0e4de-rI> [accessed 1 December 2020]; 'The Arcades: Contemporary Art and Walter Benjamin', Jewish Museum of New York, New York, 17 March–8 August 2017.

in some sense unrecognisable from the technique's earlier mobilisation as an historiographic principle in *The Arcades Project* and *Pandaemonium,* from which they draw formal and thematic inspiration. Danny Boyle explicitly names *Pandaemonium* as a work from which *Isles of Wonder* derives, and the JMNY makes clear its realisation of Benjamin's *The Arcades Project* in the thematic focus and strategic realisation of its exhibition.[2] Whilst these two contemporary examples both reimagine the collated aesthetic within just a few years of one another, the extent to which they differ drastically from the literary forms of their source texts calls for a sequential examination of each case, for correspondences are not present between the two new cases.

The scope of this chapter reflects the complexities of afterlife — a complexity which necessitates a focus on themes previously unexplored in this thesis. The chapter is long: it unpacks the newness of these two examples in ways that attest to the convolutions in thought enabling a movement from literary and filmic forms of the collated aesthetic to new forms with spatial and performative dimensions. This chapter also addresses a different context to 1930s Europe. It examines the collated aesthetic in a distinct period, which the chapter names *the contemporary moment*. The chapter first defines the term 'afterlife' in Section One before examining the notion of *historical legacy* in Section Two, drawing on examples that explain the decision to select *Isles of Wonder* and 'The Arcades' as examples of *afterlives* over various other cultural events of the 2010s, which, although they also recall Benjamin's and Jennings' interwar practice, are better regarded as examples of *historical legacies*. The chapter then introduces its two core examples, *Isles of Wonder* and 'The Arcades' in sections three and four, before attending to the distinct differences in their contemporary realisations of the collated aesthetic in Sections Five and Six.

4.1. Afterlives

What makes an *historical legacy* an *afterlife*? Benjamin's essay 'Eduard Fuchs: Collector and Historian', published in Autumn 1937 in *Zeitschrift für Sozialforschung*,

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[2] Boyce, 'Foreword', p.vii

the journal of the Frankfurt School of Social Research in New York, answers this question.[3] The essay proffers little about Fuchs: 'a relatively insignificant Social Democratic intellectual'.[4] A German-Jewish Marxist scholar, Fuchs (1870–1940) was a collector and the literary executer of Franz Mehring, who as a senior theoretician of the German Social Democratic Party (SDP), called upon Fuchs to prepare an appendix for Mehring's biography *Karl Marx: The Story of His Life* (1918).[5] Frequenting socialist circles from the turn of the century until his death in Paris in 1940, shortly before the German invasion of France, Fuchs had been an acquaintance of the director of the Frankfurt School, Max Horkheimer.[6] Benjamin had met Fuchs several times while both lived in exile in Paris, and the commonalities of their fraught historical circumstances led to a request from the institute in 1933, for Benjamin to write about Fuchs.[7] Benjamin's publication, described in his correspondence as a work 'less pleasurable' than his study of the arcades, which he hoped to 'sidestep […] indefinitely' — a bore of a commission from Horkheimer, for which 'no god can save' him — was nevertheless 'greeted with great acclaim' upon its completion.[8] The work did not focus on Fuchs himself so much as on the possibilities Benjamin saw in his collectorial pursuit: a dialectical historical practice engaging critically with the Marxian notion of historical process.

In Fuchs, Benjamin found a critical historical materialist: a 'pioneer of a materialist consideration of art', who in collating the historical remnants of caricature, erotic art, and the genre picture, did so with a 'clear feeling for the historical situation

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[3] The Institut fur Sozialforschung (Institute of Social Research) at the Goethe University Frankfurt, Germany, often referred to as the 'Frankfurt School' or the 'Frankfurt School of Critical Theory' emigrated from Germany in 1935, after a brief period in Geneva, Switzerland, due to the anti-intellectualism of the Nazi period. They existed in exile in New York City from the mid-1930s, during Benjamin's writing of this essay, becoming part of the University of Colombia.

[4] Editors' note to Benjamin, 'Eduard Fuchs: Collector and Historian', in *The Essential Frankfurt School Reader*, ed. by Andrew Arato and Eike Gebhardt (Oxford: Blackwell, 1978), pp. 225–53 (p. 225).

[5] Franz Mehring, *Karl Marx: The Story of his Life* (London: Routledge, 2003), ebook.

[6] Frederic Schwartz, 'Walter Benjamin's Essay on Eduard Fuchs: An Art-Historical Perspective' in *Marxism and the History of Art: From William Morris to the New Left*, ed. by Andrew Hemmingway (London: Pluto, 2006), pp. 106–22 (p. 107).

[7] *Correspondence*, p. 416.

[8] *Correspondence*, pp. 416, 418, 490, 444, 479, 504, 538.

in which he saw himself'.[9] Benjamin's commission came at a time when Fuchs' collection had been confiscated by the Gestapo. The collection had been partially destroyed in 1933, and later, at the time of Benjamin's writing and just after the works' publication, many of the remaining items Fuchs collected were sold by German authorities at auctions in 1937 and 1938.[10] The fate of Fuchs' collection of 'satire, fashion, the illustration of manners, Chinese art, the work of Daumier and, most notoriously, erotic art', coincides with a German era of hostility surrounding modern art.[11] This hostility led to the policies implemented by the National Socialist Party (Nazi Party), aimed at controlling the nation's aesthetic production and dissemination, illustrated most notoriously in the widespread burning of books (including those written by Fuchs) and in the Nazi exhibition, 'Degenerate Art'.[12] Held in Munich between 19 July and 30 November 1937, 'Degenerate Art' made a public spectacle of 650 confiscated works deemed to 'insult German feeling, or destroy or confuse natural form'.[13] It is within this politically tense era, as Benjamin's conception of historically contingent engagement highlights, that Fuchs developed an approach to historical representation which Benjamin deemed both critical of and crucial for life under fascist oppression.

As a collector, Fuchs developed a form of cultural history which, in its non-causality, subverted trends in historical work and narrativisation. The items Fuchs collected illustrated how he had 'strayed into border disciplines' and in disrupting canonical themes, radically contributed to 'the ruin of clichés in traditional art history' at a time when a competing 'classicist conception of art' dominated.[14] Benjamin explains that the SDP, of which Fuchs was a member, had internalised a prevailing

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[9] Benjamin, 'Eduard Fuchs: Collector and Historian', trans. by Howard Eiland and Michael Jennings, in *SW*, III, 260–302 (p. 261); all subsequent references to 'Eduard Fuchs' are to this edition.

[10] Staatsgalerie, 'Der Sammler und seine Arbeitsgrundlage', *Looted Art* <https://www.lootedart.com/web_images/pdf2016/The%20Eduard%20Fuchs%20Collection%20-%20The%20Collector%20and%20his%20working%20basis%20Anya%20Heuss.pdf> [accessed 20 September 2021]; Correspondence, p. 542.

[11] Schwartz, p. 107.

[12] Ulrich Weitz, 'Recently Identified Asian Objects from the Eduard & Margarete Fuchs Collection', *Journal for Art Market Studies*, 4.2 (2020), 1–15 <https://doi.org/10.23690/jams.v4i2.127>.

[13] Friedrich Spotts, *Hitler and the Power of Aesthetics* (London: Random House, 2002), p. 163.

[14] 'Eduard Fuchs', p. 268. For more on the concept of the canon in art history, see: Anna Brzyski, 'Introduction: Canons and Art History' in *Partisan Canons*, ed. by Anna Brzyski (Durham: Duke University Press, 2007), pp. 1–25.

epistemology in its lecture programme, convinced that 'the same knowledge which secured the domination of the proletariat by the bourgeoisie would enable the proletariat to free itself from this domination' (p. 265). Accordingly, the SDP advanced the notion of a natural unfurling of history towards the demise of capitalism, with a 'vulgarisation of the theory of surplus value and the theory of evolution' (p. 264). Indicative of the paradigm of positivism which Fuchs set himself against, the SDP claimed an historical perspective which asserts a linearity between the past and the present, and pre-empts the potential for a critical historical materialism to realise revolutionary possibilities in the ever-present: of *every* present. Fuchs was understood by Benjamin to temper the detrimental ideology disseminated amongst the masses of workers who joined the party during the German rise of fascism in the 1930s.[15]

The Fuchs essay opens with a reading of a letter sent from Friedrich Engels in 1893 to Mehring, which takes as its object of criticism an approach to intellectual history, which locates relations of direct contingency between thinkers and their historical legacies. Engels writes, '[w]hen Luther and Calvin "overcame" the official Catholic religion, when Hegel "overcomes" Fichte and Kant, and when Rousseau indirectly "overcomes" the constitutional work of Montesquieu with his *Contrat Social*', this 'represents a stage in the history of these disciplines and in no way goes outside of these disciplines themselves'.[16] In this passage, Engels shows concern for an approach to thinking about the past which forecloses the possibility of non-linear historical thought and prohibits interdisciplinarity. Engels speaks against the historical interpretation of an object or idea as predicated on its relationship to, and with, that which came directly before or after it. This is a convention which considers the unfurling of the past into the present in and through limited and closed terms such as 'development', 'reaction', or 'overcoming', as Benjamin highlights (p. 261), and thereby veils the possibility of a new emergence in the history of ideas. Benjamin's reading of Engels does not, however, suggest that an historical materialist understanding of ideas ought to be entirely dislocated from the material world, the ideas abounding within it, or the economic base around which those ideas percolate

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[15] 'Eduard Fuchs', p. 264.

[16] Engels cited in Benjamin, 'Eduard Fuchs', p. 261.

— as Benjamin's understanding of Fuchs' present-day-informed approach to collecting illustrates.

In a passage which is integral to the methodological framework of this chapter, Benjamin explains, through a close eye on the practices of Fuchs, an historical materialist position for ideas and artworks which stands in opposition to the conventional historizing of intellectual or creative matters — both in the SDP, and in the Nazi Party. 'For the person who is concerned with works of art in an historically dialectical mode, these works integrate their pre- as well as post-history; and it is their post-history which illuminates their pre-history as a continuous process of change', Benjamin writes, underscoring the importance of the present rather than the past in the analysis and interpretation of historical works.[17] Benjamin continues, '[w]orks of art teach that person how their function outlives their creator and how his intentions are left behind' (p. 262), announcing in his work on Fuchs a critical preoccupation for the historical materialist to attribute and interpret ongoing, non-conclusive, and ever-changing, present-day-informed meaning to historical works.

Benjamin explains that the analysis of artworks shows that artwork's reception 'by its contemporaries becomes a component of the effect which a work of art has upon us today. They further show that this effect does not rest in an encounter with the work of art alone but an encounter with the history which has allowed the work to come down to our age'.[18] Benjamin posits an interpenetrative, dialectical relationship between the past and the present, informed by critical inadequacies in the educational programme of the SDP, which, in some senses, lacked a radical severance from that of the German fascists. What Fuchs achieved in his critical historical materialism was a rejection of a chronological account of how *that* spawned *this*, or how *this* became developed through *that*, and instead, how an object finds itself part of a constellation saturated with tensions, in which, suddenly, an object, idea, or artwork is, for time-specific reasons, juxtaposed with the present.

Benjamin's reading of Engels illuminates a precedent for the notion of afterlife in historical materialism. Benjamin's anthropological materialism — his materialism of the body and his conception of the embodiment of modernity — is evoked in his

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[17] 'Eduard Fuchs', p. 261.

[18] 'Eduard Fuchs', p. 262.

definition of historical materialism in the Fuchs piece, which extrapolates from his approach to collecting a definition of '[h]istorical materialism [which] comprehends historical understanding as the afterlife of that which has been understood and whose pulse can be traced in the present'.[19] Here, Benjamin proffers the notion that the past is immortal; it never ceases in its rhythmical throbbing. Such vibrations in the human body are, in Benjamin's thought, brought to a figurative level, analogising history's taking shape in and through the present. The term 'afterlife' also appears in Benjamin's 1921 essay, 'The Task of the Translator'. In this earlier publication, Benjamin explains that an 'afterlife' is marked, not through a work's mere reception, which is always historically disconnected from its moment of production, but in and through a necessary process of reconstruction: 'the original undergoes a change', a 'transformation and a renewal'.[20] In the Fuchs essay, Benjamin's ideas transgress the linguistic reconstruction of texts and establish a broader conception of afterlife as any reimagining of an historical text which loosens it from the 'continuum of history'.[21]

The methodology of afterlife is also demonstrated in Benjamin's own collectorial practice. *The Arcades Project* is exemplary of an historical undertaking which cannot be divorced from the specific demands of its age. Between 1933 and 1937, Benjamin worked simultaneously on *The Arcades Project* and 'Fuchs'. His registering, in the latter, of an historical approach which rebels against existing German cultural history, influences in the former a deviation from impotent forms of historical materialism, such as that demonstrated by the SDP. Benjamin seeks to 'brush history against the grain' in *The Arcades Project,* thereby mitigating against the development, during his time, of German fascism.[22]. As Friedrich Nietzsche phrases it in 'On the Advantage and Disadvantage of History for Life' (which Benjamin read), the critical historian 'swims against the historical waves'.[23] A radical afterlife is that which

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[19] 'Eduard Fuchs', p. 262.

[20] 'Task of the Translator', p. 256.

[21] 'Eduard Fuchs', p. 262.

[22] 'Concept of History', p. 392.

[23] Nietzsche, 'On the Uses and Disadvantages of History for Life', in *Untimely Mediations*, ed. by Daniel Breazeale, trans. by J. R. Hollingdale, 2nd edn (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), pp. 57–124 (p. 106). Benjamin's reading of Nietzsche is made clear in several of his works; he cites directly from 'On the Advantage and Disadvantage of History for Life' in Thesis XII. 'Concept of History', p. 394.

is formed in and through currents oppositional to predominant historical trends, which conceptualise the past as linear and causal.

The notion of an afterlife emphasises the importance of forming a present-formed conception of the past during a time of crisis. What is significant in the designation of afterlife is the possibility of historically specific meaning. The potential for newness in interpreting historical works afresh, with reference to the critical demands of each epoch, marks the work's interpretation as having broken free from the predictable, closed direction of historicism. A work possesses an afterlife when it allows the past to appear suddenly and with explosive novelty, as part of a time-specific constellation in the present, foregrounding the contemporaneity of its emergence over that work's previous reception in the historical moment from which it arose.

4.2. Historical Legacies

Not every historical legacy can be labelled an 'afterlife'. *Isles of Wonder* and 'The Arcades' have been chosen for analysis in this chapter because they offer examples of *afterlife* for *Pandaemonium* and *The Arcades Project,* respectively — a point that will be argued throughout the chapter. In each example, the collated aesthetic is *remobilised* and brought to bear in new cultural endeavours. Of course, Benjamin's and Jennings' interwar oeuvre has received critical interest beyond these two individual examples. The full range of cultural producers who, in the 2010s, realised events, texts, or other disseminative cultural engagements on Benjamin and Jennings, however, are not analysed here, either because they do not remobilise the collated aesthetic, and so do not constitute its afterlife, or because the afterlives they offer are minor and so their interpretative potential is insufficient to form part of this chapter.

As if mourning the calamity of Benjamin's failed, near-arrival in the city of New York — the destination he set out to reach in 1940 while fleeing France — both Kenneth Goldsmith and David Kishik, two New York natives currently residing in the city, published historical legacies in 2015 which make productive the specifics of New

York City (NYC).[24] These examples, which do not constitute afterlives for Benjamin's collated aesthetic in the terms outlined in this thesis, nevertheless correspond to the thematic of NYC brought to bear in 'The Arcades'. It is therefore productive to address them, in order to illuminate the distinctive character of afterlife and to provide a context for the way in which a contemporary reception of Benjamin has elevated the role of the city in his work.

Kenneth Goldsmith's *Capital: New York, Capital of the 20th Century* (2015) realises in its replication of 'Benjamin's identical methodology', not an afterlife for *The Arcades Project*, but a corpse — a *pastiche.*[25] As Fredric Jameson contends,'[p]astiche is, like parody, the imitation of a peculiar or unique, idiosyncratic style, the wearing of a linguistic mask, speech in a dead language'.[26] Goldsmith states that his intention with the text is to 'maintain as perfect as possible a mirror of Benjamin's project', with the text itself attesting to this intention.[27] Goldsmith publishes a lustrous, gold-bound homage to *The Arcades Project,* applying a historiographic technique of archival exploration similar to Benjamin's. He presents, in lieu of a cohesive authorial narrative, a sprawling mass of cultural, political, literary, and philosophical fragments collected from newspaper articles, novels, government documents, emails, and memoirs.

Goldsmith's *Capital* takes the structure of thematic sub-sections and fills them with his own selection of quotations. *Capital's* fifty-two interpretative categories revise the thirty-six convolutes which in *The Arcades Project* depict nineteenth-century Paris: 'Dream City', 'Mundane', 'Body', 'Street', 'Loneliness', 'Architecture', 'Grid', 'Times Square', 'Psychogeography', 'Drugs', 'Central Park', '1964 World's Fair'. In doing so, Goldsmith represents a polyvocal and non-totalised history of NYC. Whilst the contents comprising the collated aesthetic in *Capital* are modernised and address an alternative geographical region, the term *pastiche* or *homage* is most apt to describe

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[24] The Brooklyn Institute of Social Research, established in 2012, contributes to an historical legacy for Benjamin in New York City, generating new knowledge through teaching themes arising from Benjamin's *The Arcades Project.* See: https://thebrooklyninstitute.com/.

[25] Kenneth Goldsmith, 'Rewriting Walter Benjamin's *The Arcades Project*', *Poetry Foundation* (2011) <https://www.poetryfoundation.org/harriet-books/2011/04/rewriting-walter-benjamins-the-arcades-project> [accessed 1 December 2020] (para. 5 of 6).

[26] Fredric Jameson, *Postmodernism, or, The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* (Durham: Duke University Press: 1991), p. 16.

[27] Goldsmith (para. 2 of 6).

Goldsmith's gesture in *Capital*, which enacts an 'affectionate tribute' to the stylistics of Benjamin's interwar modernism.[28] *Capital* repeats the historiographic technique developed by Benjamin in the 1930s.[29] It is on this basis that the work cannot be understood as an afterlife.

Nonetheless, Goldsmith brings to bear what James McFarland might describe as the 'provisional, nonbinding, and yet intimate and immediate traces that archives harbor', carrying forward into *Capital* the semblance of the incomplete and the unfinished in *The Arcades Project*. [30] Forming an assemblage composed entirely of quotations, the concept Goldsmith raises is to 'facilitate and to fail' the impossibility of communicating, in a totalised sense, the city space of New York. Similarly, Kishik brings into play the notion of the incomplete and the unfinished in *The Manhattan Project: A Theory of a City* (2015). Kishik imagines a counterfactual world where Benjamin successfully crossed into Spain and arrived by ship in the USA. His life and work were not prematurely truncated, this Benjamin works in the sorting office of the *New York Daily Mail*. This example of historical legacy imagines an afterlife for Benjamin in a literal sense, but not in the sense with which this chapter is concerned, for the collated aesthetic is not remobilised.

In Kishik's historical revision, Benjamin works on his sequel to *The Arcades Project,* taking as its focus the island of Manhattan.[31] The alternative title for the *Manhattan Project,* proposed by Kishik's fictional Benjamin, adapts the title the real Benjamin used in his two exposés for *The Arcades Project — Paris: Capital of the Nineteenth Century*. Dispensed with by Kishik's imaginary Benjamin, a tweaked version of this title finds its contemporary application in the aforementioned work of Goldsmith — a thousand-page work which is concerned less with finishing that which remains unfinished than with paying homage to Benjamin's gesture to collect as a means of representing NYC as a fragmented and discordant 'megapolis'.[32] In seeking

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[28] *OED Online*, s.v. 'homage, *n*.'.

[29] Future research may address Kenneth Goldsmith's 1996 founding of 'UbuWeb' — an online archive of pirated avant-garde material, which collates through appropriation, videos, music, images, and written material, poetry and lyrics, presenting diversely variegated cultural fragments together, juxtaposed for the critical reinterpretation of online audiences — as an afterlife of the collated aesthetic.

[30] McFarland, *Constellation*, p. 227.

[31] David Kishik, *The Manhattan Project: A Theory of a City* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2015).

[32] Kenneth Goldsmith, *Capital: New York, Capital of the 20th Century* (London: Verso, 2015).

to extend Benjamin's Parisian 'theory in situ', Kishik sees Benjamin attempting a 'philosophy that makes sense in the boundaries of New York'.[33] The commonality of interest in Kishik's and Goldsmith's raising of an historical legacy for Benjamin suggests that the phenomena of the metropolis and particularly the space and place of NYC informs Benjamin's contemporary and creative reception in the 2010s.

Michael Keith set out an early anticipation of this kind of legacy for Benjamin in 2003, observing that 'the more recent flush of interest in the work of Benjamin might loosely be identified with the cultural turn in mainstream writing about contemporary cities'.[34] This notion however, overlooks the context within which Benjamin worked, which brought to bear a great number of works on the cities of Paris and Berlin, including Louis Aragon's *Paris Peasant* (1926), Alexander Döblin's *Berlin Alexanderplatz* (1929), and Franz Hessel's *Walking in Berlin: A Flaneur in the Capital* (1929), along with the Weimar essays of Siegfried Kracauer, written in the 1920s, and the earlier lectures given by Georg Simmel (author of 'The Metropolis and Mental Life' (1903)), which Benjamin attended in 1912.[35] It is important to recall that Benjamin's development of a collated aesthetic for historical representation is a remobilisation of his experience of the city. *The Arcades Project*, a 'text-as-city', brings to bear in Benjamin a literary form of representation which emulates his experience of the 'city-as-text', a concept explored in this Chapter.[36] Benjamin's reception in the 2010's draws heavily on an understanding of modernity as encapsulated in the city, and precisely *New York City,* as a possible intellectual object for Benjamin, had he joined his colleagues from the Frankfurt School in 1940.

A comparable legacy does not exist for Jennings, whose historiographic project underscores negative elements of city experience. Its title, *Pandaemonium*, is drawn from a poem which critiques the city as a vortex of capitalist instrumentality (an afterlife of Milton's *Paradise Lost*). An exhibition at First Site in Colchester, entitled

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[33] Kishik, p. 22.

[34] Michael Keith, 'Walter Benjamin, Urban Studies, and the Narratives of City Life', *A Companion to the City,* ed. by Gary Bridge and Sophie Watson (Oxford: Blackwell, 2000), pp. 410–29 (p. 411).

[35] 'Chronology: 1892–1926', in *SW*, I, 495. Aragon's *Paris Peasant* is discussed throughout the thesis. For Kracauer's 'Cult of Distraction' see Chapters One and Three; for Hessel see Chapter One; for Simmel and Döblin see Chapter Three.

[36] Gilloch, *Myth and Metropolis*, p. 5.

'Humphrey Jennings: Painting, Collage, Film', ran from 8 September to 25 November 2012 and formed a reception for Jennings which drew on his multidisciplinary oeuvre. In this exhibition, Jennings' paintings of rural landscapes, such as *Harvest Field* (1947) — which depicts, through the abundant use of green tones, an idyllic form of nature, illuminating the precarious place of pastures at the time of its production — gesture towards his romanticisation of pastoral space. The literature disseminated as part of the exhibition generates a reception for Jennings which is focussed on the conflict of nature and technology. The thematic relationship between *Pandaemonium* and the exhibition, however, does not render it an afterlife, for Jennings' approach to archival material, which underpins the collated aesthetic, does not form part of Michelle Cotton's curatorial approach. However, it marks a contrast to the city-based reception of Benjamin.

B. F. Taylor, author of *The British New Wave* published a curious ode to *Pandaemonium* via the video streaming website, Vimeo, in 2013: *Phantasmagorical with an F*.[37] This film of five minutes and forty seconds overlays a series of quotations taken from *Pandaemonium* onto a rural landscape scene extracted from Ben Wheatley's 2013 depiction of the English Civil War in 1642–43, *A Field in England*.[38] Engaging with the strategies of fragmentation and archival exploration developed by Jennings in the 1930s, the film invokes not just *Pandaemonium* but *Mass Observation* and Jennings' 1942 film *Listen to Britain,* too.[39] Providing a minor afterlife for Jennings' non-linear and poetic depictions of material conditions founded on both collectorial and image-making practices, the limited interpretative possibilities of such a short film with a low profile is the reason Taylor's contribution is not examined here. This chapter will now introduce the two chosen afterlives, sequentially, as works which, unlike those considered in this section, constitute, in their creative remobilisation of

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[37] B. F. Taylor, *'Phantasmagorical with an F' – Humphrey Jennings meets Ben Wheatley*, Vimeo, 2013 <https://vimeo.com/82199890> [accessed 11 March 2021]. See B. F. Taylor, *The British New Wave*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2006).

[38] *A Field in England*, dir. by Ben Wheatley (Rook Films, 2013).

[39] *Listen to Britain*, dir. by Humphrey Jennings and Stewart McAllister (Crown Film Unit, 1942). See Jim Leach, 'The Poetics of Propaganda: Humphrey Jennings and *Listen to Britain*', in *Documenting the Documentary: Close Readings of Documentary Film and Video*, ed. by Jim Leach and Barry Grant (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1998), pp. 154–70.

collated aesthetic, afterlives of Benjamin and Jennings' interwar approach to representation.

4.3. Introducing 'The Arcades: Contemporary Art and Walter Benjamin'

Unfurling out of *The Arcades Project,* 'The Arcades: Contemporary Art and Walter Benjamin' exhibits a cultural history of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries using the collated aesthetic as its structural and thematic lens. The 36 convolute titles used in *The Arcades Project* are exactly copied to construct a non-linear, physically engulfing presentation of the past, realised spatially on the walls and vitrines of the exhibition. Constellated loosely around subject headings including 'Fashion', 'The Stock Exchange', 'Mirrors', 'Panorama', 'Dream City', 'Iron Construction, 'Idleness', 'The Flâneur', 'Prostitution, Gambling', 'Daumier', and 'Social Movement', an assortment of artworks and literary fragments invite visitors to respond to a diversity of aesthetic, social, political, and economic histories. The experience of a meandering city observer, whose phenomenological epistemology is produced in dialogue with the range of artworks and literary fragments the space contains, is carried over from Benjamin and re-worked as curatorial strategy.

The Jewish Museum of New York (JMNY), located in the Warburg Mansion on 1109 Fifth Avenue at 92nd Street, opened its doors to the public for the five month-long exhibition on 17 March 2017. Situated along 'Museum Mile', a short strip of cultural institutions which includes the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum and the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Jewish Museum is said to be 'one of the world's preeminent institutions devoted to exploring art and Jewish culture from ancient to contemporary'.[40] Whilst the Museum's interest in Benjamin relates to him being an eminent figure of Jewish intellectual history, also tied into the Museum's function of delivering a publicly engaging programme of events is its role in the wider economic structures of NYC, building revenue as part of Manhattan's cultural sector.

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[40] Jewish Museum of New York (JMNY), 'Press Release: Contemporary Art Seen through the Lens of Walter Benjamin's Magnum Opus on 19th Century Parisian City Life', Jewish Museum of New York, 9 March, 2017, p. 3 < https://thejewishmuseum.org/press/press-release/walter-benjamin-announcement-release> [accessed 11 March 2017].

The exhibition capitalises on the fame of 'Walter Benjamin, the influential German Jewish philosopher and cultural critic', inviting visitors to view their exhibition at $15 per adult ticket.[41] The curator of the exhibition, author and editor Jens Hoffman, is said to have selected Benjamin on account of him being 'widely regarded as one of the most astute commentators on Early European modernity'.[42] In this sense, Hoffman, who previously resided in London — teaching at Goldsmiths, University of London, whilst acting as director of exhibitions at London's Institute of Contemporary Art (ICA), between 2003 and 2007 — applies his knowledge of the theory and history of European modernity. Catering to a predominantly North American audience in NYC, he re-imagines Benjamin's focus on Paris as the cultural and commercial capital of the nineteenth century, forming a site-specific afterlife for *The Arcades Project*. At the time of the exhibition's opening, NYC was the number one Global Financial Centre in the world.[43] NYC is a capital of international commerce, so that by 'transposing Benjamin's Paris to New York', as Hoffman writes, the essential locus of today's phantasmagoric and alluring capitalist world, with its associated 'evils of exploitation, injustice, alienation and the diminution of human experience', is brought to bear on 'The Arcades'.[44] In the exhibition catalogue, Hoffman draws on the precise character of his location as the Deputy Director of the JMNY from 2012 to 2017, illuminating his engagement with Benjamin, not just as an influential figure of Jewish history, but as an individual who explored the relationship between space, place, and capital.

In his mobilisation of *The Arcades Project,* which is made new again in his realisation of it as a curatorial approach for NYC, Hoffman explains that:

> *The Arcades: Contemporary Art and Walter Benjamin* is as much a reconsideration of Benjamin's *The Arcades Project,* his most important contribution to twentieth-century thought, as it is a curatorial experiment that understands the exhibition space as a microcosm of our neo-liberal capitalist society. It is a co-authored

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[41] JMNY, 'Contemporary Art' p. 1. Opportunities existed on Saturday and Thursday evenings to enter at a reduced cost.

[42] JMNY, 'Contemporary Art', p. 1.

[43] London is ranked in second place in Duc Hong Vo and Nhan Thien Nguyen, 'Determinants of a Global Financial Center: An Exploratory Analysis', *Borsa Istanbul Review*, 21.2 (2021), 186–96.

[44] Jens Hoffman, 'The Return of the Flâneur', in Jens Hoffman and others, *The Arcades: Contemporary Art and Walter Benjamin*, ed. by Jens Hoffman (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2017), pp. 12–19 (p. 16); Gilloch, pp. 1–2; Vo and Nguyen, 191.

> space, in the sense that it is collaboratively and dynamically constructed anew by the visitor upon each viewing, and thus proposes ways to upend normative ways of thinking about art and exhibitions. Perhaps visitors will be inspired to carry this attitude with them as they leave the museum, reassessing their position in society and hopefully realizing that the world is not a fait accompli but a transformable situation. In this spirit, the exhibition follows Walter Benjamin's main objectives: to inspire political agency, to foster critical awareness, and to advance critical thinking.[45]

Hoffman's statement alludes to the pressing urgencies of exhibition-making in a space of aggressive neoliberal transformation. A form of 'curatorial activism' (in Maura Reilley's phrase), the exhibition emerges out of an explicit problematisation of the material and social world.[46] Hoffman seeks to alter the perception of visitors in and through his display, carving out a space of independent meaning-making and capitalist critique, for which the collated aesthetic is mobilised.

Before analysing the contents and themes of the exhibition it is important to understand how Hoffman's instrumentalisation of Benjamin's collated aesthetic in 2017 relates to the capitalist instrumentalisation of space in NYC itself. This fee-paying exhibition, as Hoffman states, 'understands the exhibition space as a microcosm of our neo-liberal capitalist society': it extends the neo-liberal capitalist character of NYC into a constructed space designed to reflect this character.[47] It is not only the inauguration of conservative Republican Donald Trump as President of the United States on 20 January 2017, shortly before the exhibition's opening, that illuminates the rationale behind Hoffman's mobilisation of *The Arcades Project's* critical potential to destabilise neoliberalism, but, additionally, the historic neoliberal instrumentalisation of land and services in NYC that the name 'Trump' conjures. In the post-war era, NYC built public outdoor leisure facilities, schools, colleges, a library system to rival that of private universities, housing, and transport systems.[48] Known especially for its impressive range of democratised, and in some instances, non-profit public services — with, at its peak, 'a network of twenty-four municipal hospitals, along with dozens of

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[45] Hoffman, p. 18.

[46] Reilly, Curatorial Activism.

[47] Hoffman, p. 18.

[48] Kim Phillips-Fein, Fear City: New York's Fiscal Crisis and the Rise of Austerity Politics (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2018), pp. 56–57.

neighbourhood primary care and paediatric clinics' — NYC has been reshaped and restructured away from common use by property developers since the 1970s fiscal crisis.[49] Informing Hoffman's construction of a *microcosm* of NYC, this history marks the very character of contemporary urban space in Manhattan, which Hoffman mediates as a curator in his mobilisation of a collated aesthetic for radical cognitive expansion.

As this chapter will show, an experience of the city as a complex battleground of capitalist instrumentality and the subversive possibility for non-elite classes is deployed in the reworked collated aesthetic for 'The Arcades'. This case offers itself, not merely as an afterlife of Benjamin's *theoretical* explorations of urbanity that are central to *The Arcades Project*, but of Benjamin's formal techniques of fragmentation and collation, and the sensory impact of such forms. The city's economic base is mapped visually in the exhibition through various artistic references to the area's wider instrumentalisation of space and people, for labour and consumption, 1938—2016 (the period Hoffman takes as contemporary for this exhibition). The exhibition also draws on the collated aesthetic to create a space that one must navigate while facing competing and multifarious pulls for attention. Whilst the space of the gallery is restricted to five rooms — Heller; Offit; Bloomberg; Kaplan; Hurts and the narrow corridor Spitzer — the exhibition, as Figure 20 shows, allows movement in non-linear ways. One may loop incessantly through four rooms via the passage that is Spitzer, or turn in on oneself in Offit, as if a *cul-de-sac*, from which one must rotate and return, registering what Hoffman understands as opportune for a 'return of the Flâneur'.[50]

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[49] Phillips-Fein, pp. 56, 929. See also Samuel Delaney, *Times Square Red, Times Square Blue* (New York: New York University Press, 1999), p. 7.

[50] Hoffman, pp. 12–19.

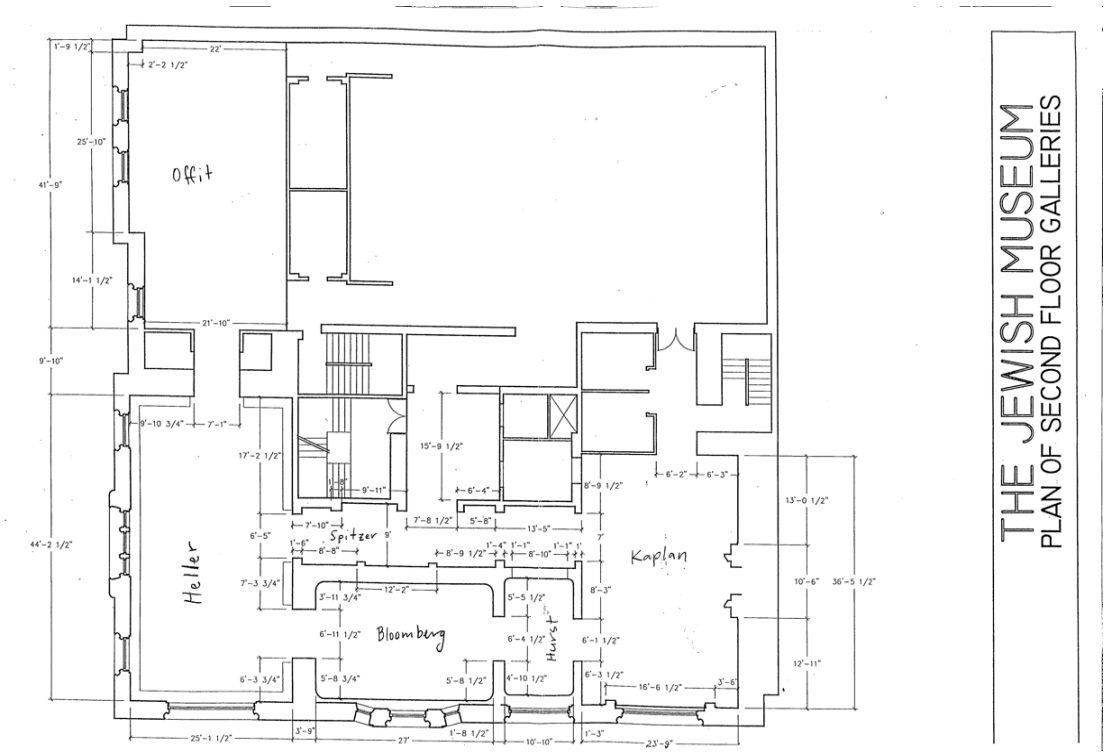

Figure 20. The Jewish Museum, plan of second floor galleries showing the internal break-up of the display across five rooms and a corridor.[51]

The exhibition's formation of a city-like experience generates possibilities for what Hoffman calls an 'embrace' of the 'everyday disorder and confusion' of the city, and thus brings to bear upon its visitors the 'sensory overstimulation' of the modern city, eliciting an ambiguous and generative experience of materiality.[52] 'The Arcades' offers an opportunity for meaning-making in its selection and organisation of both visual art and literary fragments, which — chosen largely from *Capital* and made into shapely constructions as concrete poetry by Goldsmith — facilitate the possibility of co-authorship (as Hoffman puts it): not merely in the collaboration of Goldsmith and the curators, but, fundamentally, in the opportunities the exhibition affords its visitors for open-ended and inconclusive meaning-making.[53] The presence of *co-authorship* is not an oxymoron in a constructed microcosm of the neoliberal city, but an elevation of a possibility existent, historically and presently, within NYC. Even amid the towering

[51] Part of a set of unpublished, internal materials requested and received from the Jewish Museum of New York, held in author's private possession.

[52] Hoffman, pp. 13–14.

[53] Hoffman, p. 18.

office blocks, exclusive bars, and streets dedicated to consumption, the city has enigmatic spaces of 'play', or non-instrumental activity. Reflective surfaces which extend space as if by magic, and winding streets which counterpose the wider rationalisation of space in the city's grid, proffer a beguiling and perceptually potent involvement with space.

4.4. Introducing *Isles of Wonder*

In 2012, Icon Books published the second edition of Humphrey Jennings' *Pandaemonium* occasioned by its centrality in Danny Boyle's *Isles of Wonder* performance for the opening ceremony of the 2012 Summer Olympic Games. Jennings' 'imaginative history' entered the public psyche as if out of nowhere, following years of 'near dormancy'.[54] As Diana Athill (editor at André Deutsche) remarked in October of that year, 'when factory chimneys reared up during the Olympic opening ceremony I thought at once: "*Pandaemonium* — he must have read it" — then "Oh nonsense, it was published almost 30 years ago and one never sees it around nowadays"'.[55] But as the cover of the 2012 publication establishes with a quote from Boyle, *Pandaemonium* is the 'biggest single inspiration for the Olympics Opening Ceremony'.[56] As Frank Cottrell Boyce explains in his Foreword, Boyce's spontaneous gifting of the long out-of-print 1985 edition of *Pandaemonium* to Boyle in 2011, whilst Boyle was directing *Frankenstein* for the National Theatre, instigated the work's twenty-first century reception. The text came with a demand from Boyce for Boyle to 'read it'.[57] With the former appointed as Writer for the ceremony, and the latter as Creative Director, *Isles of Wonder* came about as if out of nowhere, due to the sudden fact of its gifting.

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[54] Diana Athill, 'The book that inspired Danny Boyle's Olympics vision', *The Guardian,* 12 October 2012 <https://www.theguardian.com/books/2012/oct/12/diana-athill-pandaemonium-inspired-danny-boyle> [accessed 20 August 2021].

[55] Athill.

[56] Icon Books, '"*Pandæmonium* was the biggest single inspiration for the Olympics opening ceremony" – Danny Boyle', Icon Books, 14 September 2012 <https://iconbooks.com/2012/09/pandaemonium-was-the-biggest-single-inspiration-for-the-olympics-opening-ceremony> [accessed 20 August 2021].

[57] Boyce, p. vii.

Boyce writes in his Foreword that *Pandaemonium* is 'the backbone of the first section of the Opening Ceremony'.[58] Whilst, as this Chapter will show, the relationship between the content of *Isles of Wonder* and the content of *Pandaemonium* is most explicit in the opening acts, Jennings' technique of collating and presenting non-empirical Images as a means of depicting a history of the United Kingdom is brought to bear on the whole of *Isles of Wonder*, to introduce the host of the thirtieth Olympiad: the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. Following the opening acts 'Green and Pleasant Land' and 'Pandaemonium', 'Happy & Glorious', 'Second to the right, and straight on till morning', 'frankie & june say… Thanks Tim', also expand the cited relationship between *Pandaemonium* and *Isles of Wonder*, marking an afterlife for Jennings' collated aesthetic in a series of non-genre-specific, imaginative fragments.[59] Authors, characters from children's literature, movies, dancing, nightclub culture, video games, and cloud-stored photographs projected into the stadium portray, in their chronological organisation, an ever-developing history of the United Kingdom.

Boyle sets into motion his reception of Jennings' interwar collated aesthetic in a realisation of *Pandaemonium*'s variegated and evocative form. Enlisting a choir of children to launch the ceremony with a song composed of partial sections of historically and politically significant hymns, Boyle presents the nation's competing team as a composite of four distinct nations, through national songs associated with each.[60] A purely choral version of 'Jerusalem' (an alternative 'national anthem for England') comes first, which, stripped of the music Hubert Parry composed for it in 1916, evokes a peaceful vision of England's 'pleasant pastures'.[61] This choral contribution morphs into an audio-collage including Ireland's ballad 'Danny Boy', the

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[58] Boyce, p. vii.

[59] London Organising Committee of the Olympic Games and Paralympic Games (LOCOG), *London 2012 Olympic Games Opening Ceremony Media Guide* (London: London Organising Committee of the Olympic Games and Paralympic Games, 2012), p. 1 <https://library.olympics.com/Default/doc/SYRACUSE/60858/media-guide-london-2012-olympic-games-opening-ceremony-the-london-organising-committee-of-the-olympi?_lg=en-GB> [accessed 9 December 2021].

[60] The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland will herein be referred to as the United Kingdom or UK.

[61] Mary Johnson, '*Milton* and its Contexts', in *The Cambridge Companion to William Blake*, ed. by Morris Eaves (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), pp. 231–50 (p. 237).

Welsh hymn 'Bread of Heaven', and 'Flower of Scotland', shaping a patriotic focus for *Isles of Wonder*.

According to the media guide to the opening ceremony, *Isles of Wonder* takes its audience 'through great revolutions in British society — the Industrial Revolution, the revolution of social attitudes that began in the 1960s and the digital revolution through which we're living now'.[62] Comprised of the acts 'Green and Pleasant Land' and 'Pandaemonium', the first section of *Isles of Wonder* reimagines the four stanzas of William Blake's 'Preface to Milton' (1808), presented in *Pandaemonium* as image number 128 under their familiar title 'Jerusalem' (in the section entitled 'Revolution').[63] From the second stanza, Boyle takes the phrase 'dark Satanic mills', and from the fourth, 'England's green and pleasant land', developing these into two separate acts which, Section Six will argue, contribute to a mythical image of conflict-free historical progress.

A staged mythologisation of pre-modern English life constitutes the first act, 'Green and Pleasant Land'.[64] A scene set within a British meadow alludes, with its central mound, to Glastonbury Tor in Somerset, a site associated with the medieval legends of King Arthur, currently under the care of the National Trust.[65] This proffers an English folk image of people following traditional rural pursuits: agricultural work is depicted alongside games and sporting activities. An ethnically diverse cast of villagers engage in what the media guide describes as the experience of a 'countryside we all believe existed once. It's where children danced around the maypole and summer was always sunny. This is the Britain of *The Wind in the Willows* and *Winnie-the-Pooh*'.[66]

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[62] LOCOG, p. 11.

[63] William Blake, 'Preface to Milton' in *The Complete Poems*, ed. by W. H. Stevenson, 3rd edn (Harlow: Longman, 2007), pp. 501–03 ('pleasant pastures' at p. 502). In Jennings' *Pandaemonium*, these verses appear under the title 'Jerusalem'; however, they should not be confused with Blake's poem *Jerusalem, Emanation of Giant Albion* — which was published along with *Milton*, as part of 'The Prophetic Books'. *Complete Poems*, pp. 648–890; *Pandaemonium*, p. 127.

[64] Colin Bell and Rose Bell, *City Fathers: Town Planning in Britain from Roman Times to 1900* (New York: Praeger, 1969), p. 119.

[65] National Trust, 'Glastonbury Tor' <https://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/glastonbury-tor> [accessed 15 August 2021].

[66] LOCOG, p. 20.

The second act takes as its namesake Jennings' historiographic project 'Pandaemonium'.[67] It opens with the entrance of Northern Irish actor Kenneth Branagh on a horse-drawn cart. Branagh, playing nineteenth-century British civil engineer Isambard Kingdom Brunel, is joined on stage by several other top hat-wearing Victorian industrialists. He reads a section from Shakespeare's *The Tempest*, alluding to the magical, imaginary island of the play: 'be not afeared. The isle is full of noises. Sounds, and sweet airs, that give delight and hurt not'. The lines announce the start of a great theatrical spectacle, suggesting through Shakespeare's description of an innocent, island-located tumult, a metaphor for Britain's turbulent industrial development. Congregating at the foot of a grass-covered mound, Boyle's suited directors of change stand juxtaposed and outnumbered by a congregation of men and women, the workers of the nation, who emerge from a crater at the centre of the hill, dirty, stern, and over-worked. This chapter will examine the meaning of this contrasting image, as Boyle goes on to tell the story of urbanisation and the attendant rapid break in humans' relation to the land between the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

Brunel and the genesis of a global Industrial Revolution are followed in the Ceremony by other important developments in the United Kingdom's nineteenth- and twentieth- century cultural history. Soldiers from the First World War stand in mourning: servicemen are captured out of focus in the streamed camera image, stood between symbolic poppies. Suffragettes enter the stage, representing those who in 1918 won the right to vote for property-owning women over the age of thirty. The men who marched from Jarrow to London in 1936 to protest unemployment join the parade, along with migrant Caribbean workers who in 1948 entered the United Kingdom on HMT *Empire Windrush* at the request of Prime Minister Winston Churchill, who sought to alleviate the post-war labour shortages in his rebuilding of the nation. Chelsea Pensioners and the British brass Colliery bands associated with community industry also march, along with a group of London's Pearly Kings and Queens, marking the pageants' condensed representation of a history of working-class and other marginalised people. Popular musical referents, including a typical 1970s decorated DJ

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[67] Boyce, p. vii.

float and a representation of The Beatles dressed in the costume they wore on the cover of their 1967 album *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band* bring the second act to an end.

The opening tune to Mike Oldfield's *Tubular Bells* (1973) provides a soundtrack to the third act, 'Second to the right and straight on til morning', which celebrates the 1948 establishment of the NHS under Clement Atlee. A volunteer cast of nurses drawn from the NHS dance amid hundreds of hospital beds. They lay down their child patients and read to them. Combining celebration of national literature and universal medical provision, J.K. Rowling appears in the Stadium, reading aloud the story of *Peter Pan.* Building on the references to *Winnie-the-Pooh* and *Wind in the Willows* in the opening act, an atmosphere of fantasy brings to bear the staged manifestation of a childhood imaginary, with a series of villains, including Cruella de Vil (of *The Hundred and One Dalmatians*) and the Child Catcher from *Chitty Chitty Bang Bang*. These fantasy *baddie*s are then ushered away by the quintessential *goodie*, the Disneyfied nanny Mary Poppins, who, played by multiple different actors, dances with each of the children.

The final act, 'Frankie and June say…thanks Tim' constitutes the longest part of the ceremony, at just under twenty-one minutes. In its portrayal of an 'ordinary' middle class family home, Boyle uses a staged life-size replica of a typical living room to move from the history of production to a celebratory history of cultural consumption.[68] The dual heritage, cross-generational actors portray a family's practices of consumption through music, television, and technology.[69] Digital culture and social media are seen to reshape everyday life, particularly young love and relationships, with Tim Berners Lee's invention of the world wide web depicted as facilitating the formation of social attachments. Representing nightclub culture contemporary to the event, a pre-recorded film portraying teenagers' enjoyment of it incorporates a virtual depiction of the development of music across several decades, presenting a condensed history of modern leisure pursuits.

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[68] LOCOG, p. 31.

[69] 'Dual heritage' is preferred over 'mixed race', perceiving it to overcome the lack of biological basis in the social construct that is race, which lends itself to the perpetuation of racist narratives. See *Johann Friedrich Blumenbach: Race and Natural History, 1750–1850*, ed. by Nicolaas Rupke and Gerhard Lauer (Abingdon: Routledge, 2019).

As stipulated by the governing body of the Olympic Movement, the International Olympic Committee (IOC), in its *Technical Manual*, the purpose of *Isles of Wonder* — as with other Opening Ceremonies — is to 'capture the flavour and culture of the host nation'. Emphasising culture over sport, the opening ceremony represents a 'chance to highlight the people and traditions of a city, region and nation'.[70] Appointed in 2010 as Creative Director for the opening ceremony, Boyle's representation of national history in *Isles of Wonder* conforms to a set of pre-established principles outlined by the Olympic Charter. The concepts behind the ceremony were approved by the IOC a year in advance, with the full script formally assessed and accepted by the governing body three months before its live performance at the specially built Olympic Stadium at Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park, on 27 July 2012.[71]

An 'adherence to political neutrality' is amongst the 'Fundamental Principles of Olympism' to which Boyle's *Isles of Wonder* is bound.[72] Nonetheless, *Isles of Wonder* attracted immediate criticism from parliamentarians, with Conservative MP Aiden Burley tweeting that the performance amounted to 'leftie multicultural crap'.[73] From the perspective of the Charter Boyle and his team committed themselves to a recognition of the autonomy of sports in society and the value of 'good governance'.[74] Nevertheless, the ceremony attracted a great deal of attention, which placed *Isles of Wonder* within a wider history of Olympian political debate. Following the appointment by the London Organising Committee of the Olympic Games and Paralympic Games (LOCOG) of one of the largest private security firms in the world, G4S, in March 2011, as official security provider, discourses of privatisation and

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[70] International Olympic Committee (IOC), *Technical Manual on Ceremonies* (Lausanne: International Olympic Committee, 2005), p. 27 <http://www.gamesmonitor.org.uk/files/Technical_Manual_on_Ceremonies.pdf> [accessed 9 November 2017].

[71] Stephen Wagg, *The London Olympics of 2012:* Politics, Promises and Legacy (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), p. 63.

[72] International Olympic Committee, *The Olympic Charter* (Lausanne: International Olympic Committee, 2020), p. 11 <https://stillmed.olympic.org/media/Document%20Library/OlympicOrg/General/EN-Olympic-Charter.pdf> [accessed 9 November 2021].

[73] Nicholas Watt, 'Olympics Opening Ceremony Was 'multicultural crap', Tory MP Tweets', *The Guardian*, 28 July 2012 <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2012/jul/28/olympics-opening-ceremony-multicultural-crap-tory-mp> [accessed 2 January 2022].

[74] IOC, *Olympic Charter*, p. 11.

contemporary neoliberal policy formed part of the critical reception of the Games, as will be examined in Section Six.[75]

4.5. Analysing 'The Arcades: Contemporary Art and Walter Benjamin' (2017)

'The Arcades' is a site-specific exhibition which this chapter understands in relation to the city, the street, the building, and the room within which it is located. In each of these constructions, the collated aesthetic is perceptible in coexisting visual referents, juxtaposed in proximity, therein achieving a simultaneity of disparate historical entities. This section critically examines the way in which 'The Arcades' mobilises *The Arcades Project* as a collated aesthetic by exploring Hoffman's understanding of the strategic relationship with the city. As part of the museum's programme for 'The Arcades', Hoffman and Goldsmith accompanied gallery visitors on a walking tour through the streets of Manhattan entitled 'New York Flânerie'.[76] For Benjamin, the great cities of his time, including Paris and Berlin, existed as contradictory sites: 'a source of exhilaration and hope on the one hand and of revulsion and despair on the other'.[77] The social totality of capitalism is made miniature and concrete in the metropolis, constituting what Benjamin describes in *Origin of the German Trauerspiel* as a 'monad', in so far as 'the representation of phenomena rests preestablished in it'.[78]

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[75] The issue of gentrification and the privatisation of space triggered in the development of the Olympic Park is an ongoing concern. See, for example: Felicity Clarke, 'Olympic Legacy in East London: Displacement and Gentrification', *Rio on Watch*, 25 January 2013 <https://rioonwatch.org/?p=6600> [accessed 20 August 2021]; Penny Bernstock, 'London Olympics has Brought Regeneration, but at a Price Locals Can't Afford', *The Guardian*, 30 August 2016 <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2016/aug/30/london-olympic-regeneration-but-price-locals-cant-pay> [accessed 20 August 2021]. See also, *The London Olympics and Urban Redevelopment: The Mega City Event*, ed. by Gavin Poynter, Valerie Viehoff and Yang Li (London: Routledge, 2016).

[76] JMNY, 'Press Release: Programs in Conjunction with The Arcades: Contemporary Art and Walter Benjamin at the Jewish Museum', *Jewish Museum of New York*, 22 March 2017 <https://thejewishmuseum.org/press/press-release/arcades-program-release> [accessed 19 August 2020].

[77] Gilloch, p. 1

[78] In *Origin of the German Trauerspiel,* trans. by Howard Eiland (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2019), p. 98, Benjamin writes that 'the construction of the idea, as stamped by totality in contrast to its own inalienable isolation, is monadological. The idea is a monad. The being that enters into it with

It is clear from Benjamin's actions that he was attached to the city, leaving Berlin only at the most pressing of points with the rise of the National Socialists in 1933, and leaving Paris only by force in 1940, after a series of internments under Pétain's regime.[79] Benjamin writes in 'Convolute N' of *The Arcades Project* that 'every city is beautiful to me'. Such was the 'pathos of this work', he writes: 'there are no periods of decline', and likewise, there are no periods of progress: merely an endless repetition of capitalism's workings as *boom and bust*.[80] The potential for Benjamin's collated aesthetic to support a critical understanding of 'metropolitan urbanity as he saw and experienced it' are reimagined by the exhibitions team at the JMNY, making possible in *The Arcades Project's* afterlife an examination of the present 'era's capitalist metropolis'.[81]

Hoffman explains in the exhibition catalogue, that Benjamin's formal approach 'embraces everyday disorder and confusion'; that Benjamin acknowledges 'the impossibility of universal truth' and brings to bear upon his work the 'sensory overstimulation' of the modern city, as a disorienting, ambiguous, and non-conclusive experience of materiality.[82] *The Arcades Project* represents Benjamin's literal 'exploration of the urban formation'.[83] Of course, *The Arcades Project* relates to Benjamin's first-hand experience of Paris, where he displaces it as a purely historical site, experiencing in its dilapidated arcades the nineteenth century as ruin. But Benjamin explored several other cities, too, which he illustrates throughout the 1920s in the production of city sketches including 'Naples' (September/October 1924); 'Moscow' (winter 1926–27); 'Weimar' (June 1928), and 'Marseille' (October 1928–January 1929).[84]

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its fore- and after-history gives, in its own hidden figure, the abbreviated and obscured figure of the rest of the idea-world, just as, with the monads in *the Discourse on Metaphysics* of 1686, all are given obscurely in each'.

[79] 'Chronology', in *SW*, IV, 442–45.

[80] *AP*, pp. 458, 460.

[81] Hoffman, p. 16.

[82] Hoffman, pp. 13–14

[83] Hoffman, p. 16.

[84] See, respectively, Benjamin, 'Naples'; Benjamin, *Moscow Diary*, ed. by Gary Smith, trans. by Richard Sieburth (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1986); 'Weimar', trans. by Rodney Livingstone, in *SW*, II.1, 148–50; 'Hashish in Marseille'.

Benjamin's texts on the nature of urban experience can be read as the source from which the structural juxtaposition and perceptive ambiguities of the collated aesthetic emerge. The modern city's architectural montage of buildings, spaces, and communities was sometimes enhanced with mind-altering substances such as hashish.[85] It was whilst ingesting hashish in a Berlin apartment that Benjamin first conceived of the notion of a colportage phenomenon of space: an intoxicating simultaneity of incongruent entities.[86] Becoming a core motif of Benjamin's surrealist-inspired work, the experience of the city (with or without narcotic stimulation) is carried over into Hoffman's realisation of the historiographic collated aesthetic. [87]

By drawing specifically on the collated aesthetics' roots in the city, Hoffman activates a particular audience.[88] This section will address the potential role and experience of this audience, by exploring the character of the Warburg Mansion itself as an emblem of the city's inharmonious architectural styles and transfigured spaces. The analysis will then move onto the relationship between the NYC street, and how that proffers an example of a collated aesthetic which is brought to bear on Hoffman's construction of a microcosmic reworking of *The Arcades Project.* The experience of drift will be also addressed, as that which contributes to an afterlife of the collated aesthetic in making possible the spatial characteristics of 'The Arcades' in its arrangement of displayed artworks. Finally, the visual mapping of the economic identity of NYC in the exhibition will also be explored, as that which makes opportune new 'techniques of seeing'.[89]

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[85] 'Hashish in Marseille'; see also 'Protocols of Drug Experiments (1–12)' and 'Myslovice-Braunschweig—Marseilles', in *On Hashish*, pp. 17–116

[86] 'Protocols', in *On Hashish*, p. 23.

[87] Benjamin, 'Surrealism'.

[88] Some of the foundations of a collated aesthetic can be found, not just in Benjamin's idea that architectural structures such as the Eiffel Tower constitute the earliest demonstrations of montage (*AP*, p. 160); but also, in the way Naples, and other cities, manifest as never-completed architectural assemblages: 'nothing is concluded' marking an open-ended state which, with the 'porosity' of Naples in particular, sees the constant interpenetration of building and action. This state, replicated in the state of the collated aesthetic, facilitates 'a theater of new, unforeseen constellations', inviting new meaning and new associations in every encounter. 'Naples', p. 416.

[89] Exhibition Graphics folder, unpublished internal materials provided by Jewish Museum of New York.

4.5.1 Interior

Benjamin perceived the collated aesthetic in the Eiffel Tower, a gigantic structure of conjoined parts, and likewise in the Parisian arcades, glass and iron *temples* of nineteenth-century consumer luxury.[90] 'Corresponding to these phantasmagorias of the market are the phantasmagorias of the interior', Benjamin writes, 'which are constituted by man's imperious need to leave the imprint of his private individual existence on the rooms he inhabits'.[91] The plush nineteenth-century bourgeois interior, with its various historical *imprints*, collected and assembled, takes on an important role in Benjamin's scoping out of non-linear historiographic strategies.

In *The Arcades Project,* Benjamin makes known the significance of embodiment and sensory perception in his analysis of interior space.[92] His optical engagement with various objects, materials, and technologies in a concentrated space, and the haptics of his movement through such spaces, establishes an experience of the collated aesthetic which is not restricted to the pages of a book. The spaces described by Benjamin in *The Arcades Project*, which house the internal and private lives of metropolitan populations, are as integral to comprehending the collated aesthetics' realisability across various three-dimensional mediums, as the cityscape and the architectonics which characterise its external features. [93]

The JMNY itself as a building illustrates how the collated aesthetic in Benjamin's afterlife makes a return to the interior. The association in *The Arcades Project* between Benjamin's montage-like presentation of history, and his desire to 'render the image of those salons where the gaze was enveloped in billowing curtains and swollen cushions, where, before the eyes of the guests, full-length mirrors disclosed church doors and settees were gondolas upon which gaslight from a vitreous globe shone down like the moon', is made clear in 'Convolute I' — 'The Interior; The Trace' — where Benjamin depicts the nineteenth-century interior as acting, in its chaotic simultaneity of variegated forms, as a stimulus to dream-like perceptual

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[90] *AP*, pp. 61, 160–61.
[91] *AP*, p. 14,
[92] *AP*, p. 418–19.
[93] *AP*, pp. 213, 216.

shifts.[94] In this subcollection, Benjamin explains how traces of the past exist and interpenetrate magically within nineteenth-century residential interiors and the commercial ventures which, in design, take after them: '[o]ne need only study with due exactitude the physiognomy of the homes of great collectors. Then one would have the key to the nineteenth-century interior. Just as in the former case the objects gradually take possession of the residence, so in the latter it is a piece of furniture that would retrieve and assemble the stylistic traces of the centuries'.[95] A collated aesthetic is realised through the temporal simultaneity brought to bear in elaborately furnished interior spaces.

Prior to the 2017 mobilisation of the collated aesthetic as a curatorial approach, the Warburg Mansion, constructed in 1908, already contained many of the elements Benjamin associated with middle-class dwellings and conveyed much of the qualities of a collated aesthetic. In its earliest history, the Mansion was the residence of American-Jewish banker Felix Warburg, cousin of German-Jewish art historian Aby Warburg. This space, which was designed in oppositionality to Warburg's workplace, saw in the 'arrangement of his private surroundings', a suppression of the concerns of work.[96] As such, the Warburg Mansion as a domicile was said to resemble an art gallery, with its collection of Rembrandt and Cranach etchings.[97] And '[f]rom this derive the phantasmagorias of the interior', as Benjamin explains, 'which, for the private individual, represents, in its collection, the universe. In bringing together 'remote locales and memories of the past', Warburg's interior established a multifarious abode, rich with imaginative potential.[98]

Designed by architect Charles Pierrepont Henry Gilbert, the Warburg Mansion, which looks over Manhattan's adjacent Central Park reservoir, is a revival of Late Gothic/Early Renaissance architecture. The external features of the building evoke 'remote locales and memories of the past', today just as at the time of its construction.

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[94] *AP*, pp. 461, 212–27.

[95] *AP*, p. 218.

[96] *AP*, p. 19.

[97] As described in the New York-based mobile phone application *A Walk Through Gilded NY*, an audio and visual tour of the city, including other prominent examples of twentieth-century architecture. Espro Acousticguide Group, *A Walk Through Gilded NY*, iOS tablet and smartphone app <https://apps.apple.com/us/app/a-walk-through-gilded-ny/id1158924495> [accessed 13 July 2021].

[98] *AP*, p. 19.

The style of the building has its predecessor in the Loire Valley, France, where such great historical monuments were once the homes of nobility and retreats for fifteenth- and sixteenth-century kings. A montaging of the past with the present is illustrated in the Warburg Mansion, juxtaposed with the Island's latter-day architectural styles (the 1930s Art Deco of the Empire State and Chrysler Buildings, as well as modern skyscrapers) as one of the last remaining gilded mansions in the area (Figure 21).

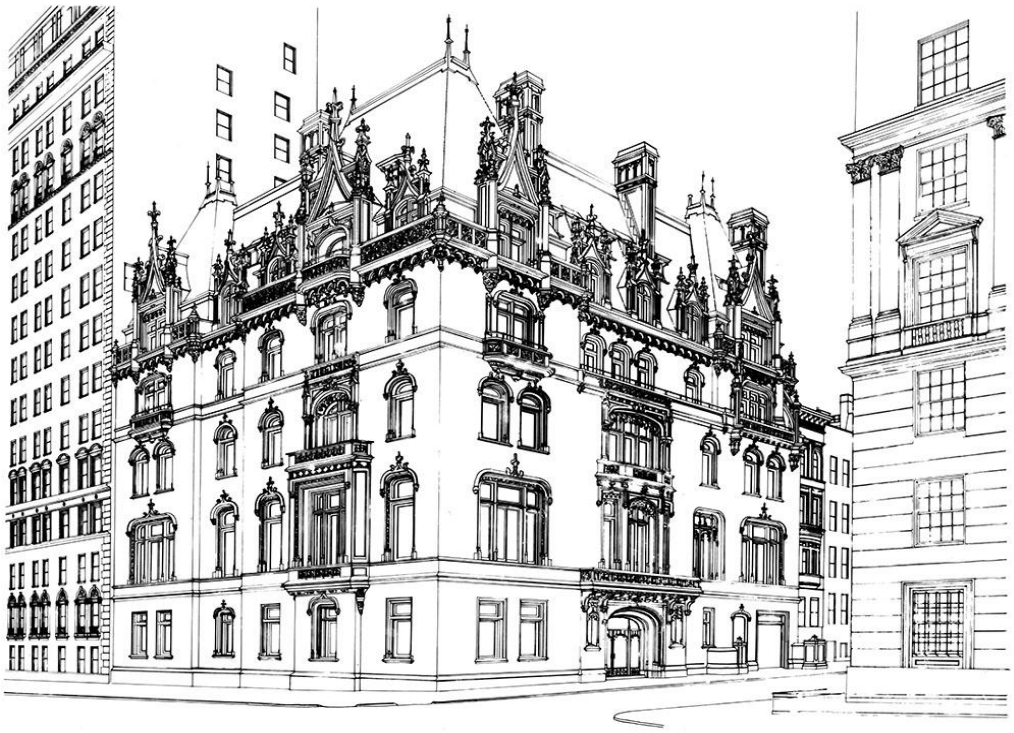

Figure 21. *Line drawing of the Warburg Mansion with Roche Addition*, n.d., drawing, The New York Preservation Archive Project, courtesy of The Jewish Museum of New York <https://www.nypap.org/preservation-history/warburg-mansion> [accessed 2 January 2022], showing the distinctiveness in architectural style of the Jewish Museum of New York alongside its neighbouring buildings.

The kind of residential Gilded Age architecture represented by the Warburg served a conceptualisation of the mythic American Dream in the developing urbanisation of New York.[99] For nineteenth-century European immigrants to Manhattan, the chateau-esque style reimagined in the Warburg Mansion signified the grand castles and palaces of concentrated socio-economic and religious power in their

[99] Ada Nitz, 'The American Chateau: How Residential Gilded Age Architecture Impacted the Conceptual American Dream' (unpublished masters thesis, University of Colarado, Denver, 2016).

continental homelands. The industrialists and businessmen of the nineteenth century, known informally as robber barons, idealised the American egalitarian ideology which suggested that monetary success was possible through hard work and sound morality.[100] They made publicly visual their own rags-to-riches tales in their construction of homages to old money. Gilded Age architecture, which housed the century's American aristocracy, served as an emblem for the idea of universal class mobility. To present-day visitors, the building's Renaissance features appear as if out of nowhere.

At the time of its construction, Warburg's home was one of many mansions to be constructed on Manhattan's millionaire's row, at the northern end of Fifth Avenue. Today, the area of premier real estate is known as 'Museum Mile'.[101] The Mansion became the permanent site of the JMNY in the mid twentieth century, after its donation to the Jewish Theological Seminary in 1947. Spanning over 4,000 years of Jewish culture, the Museum's current collection boasts over '30,000 works of art, Judaica, and antiques from around the world'.[102] The JMNY contributes to New York's abundant and diverse art-viewing opportunities. A saturation of collections within a dense spatial zone, this portion of Fifth Avenue conveys its particularities as a culturally rich and imagetically diverse topological site.

Such a phenomenon of compressed cultural institutionality recalls what Adorno describes as the 'schema' of mass or popular culture. Museum Mile offers an 'endless bureau of information which forces itself upon the hapless visitor and regales him with leaflets, guides and radio recommendations, sparing each individual from the disgrace of appearing as stupid as everyone else'.[103] With hundreds of descriptive panels across various institutions, hung beside innumerable paintings by a multitude of artists, which, in plentiful styles, find their place in the development of art across the ages, across which thousands of visitors are ushered from *this* collection to *that* collection, the immediate locale of 'The Arcades' is home to an abundance of

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[100] Also see: Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, trans. by Talcott Parsons (London: Routledge, 1992).

[101] *The New York Times Guide to New York City, 2005* (New York: New York Times Books, 2004), p. 184.

[102] The Jewish Museum of New York <https://thejewishmuseum.org/> [accessed 1 January 2020].

[103] Theodor Adorno, *The Culture Industry: Selected Essays on Mass Culture*, ed. by J. M. Bernstein, trans. by Nicholas Walker and others (London: Routledge, 1991), p. 82.

perspectives to consider and cultural objects to stand before. This instigates what Adorno describes as the potential for a 'radical alienation between the consumer and the inescapable proximity of the product'.[104] The location of 'The Arcades', both its avenue and the larger administrative district, brings to bear a polyvocal cacophony.

The visual sensations of the metropolis continue behind the doors of the JMNY. The simultaneity of previous ages, perceived in the city's outer architectonics, is also true of the internal structural and decorative features of the gallery spaces. Whilst the furnishings of middle-class security have long been removed from the exhibition rooms, 'the original architecture of our building', as Shira Backer, museum curator reiterates, 'is preserved in the mouldings and in the disposition of the spaces in the second-floor galleries (i.e. the walls of the rooms are as they were when the building was a house)'.[105] Ornamental dark wood panelling and decorated ceiling coving placed alongside the specialist gallery furniture — touch tables, artefact cases, screens, information panels, and signage — contribute to an immediately discernible visualisation of the speed of twentieth-century development in this locale (Figure 22).

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[104] Adorno, *Culture Industry*, p. 82.

[105] Shira Backer (Assistant Curator, Jewish Museum of New York), private correspondence.

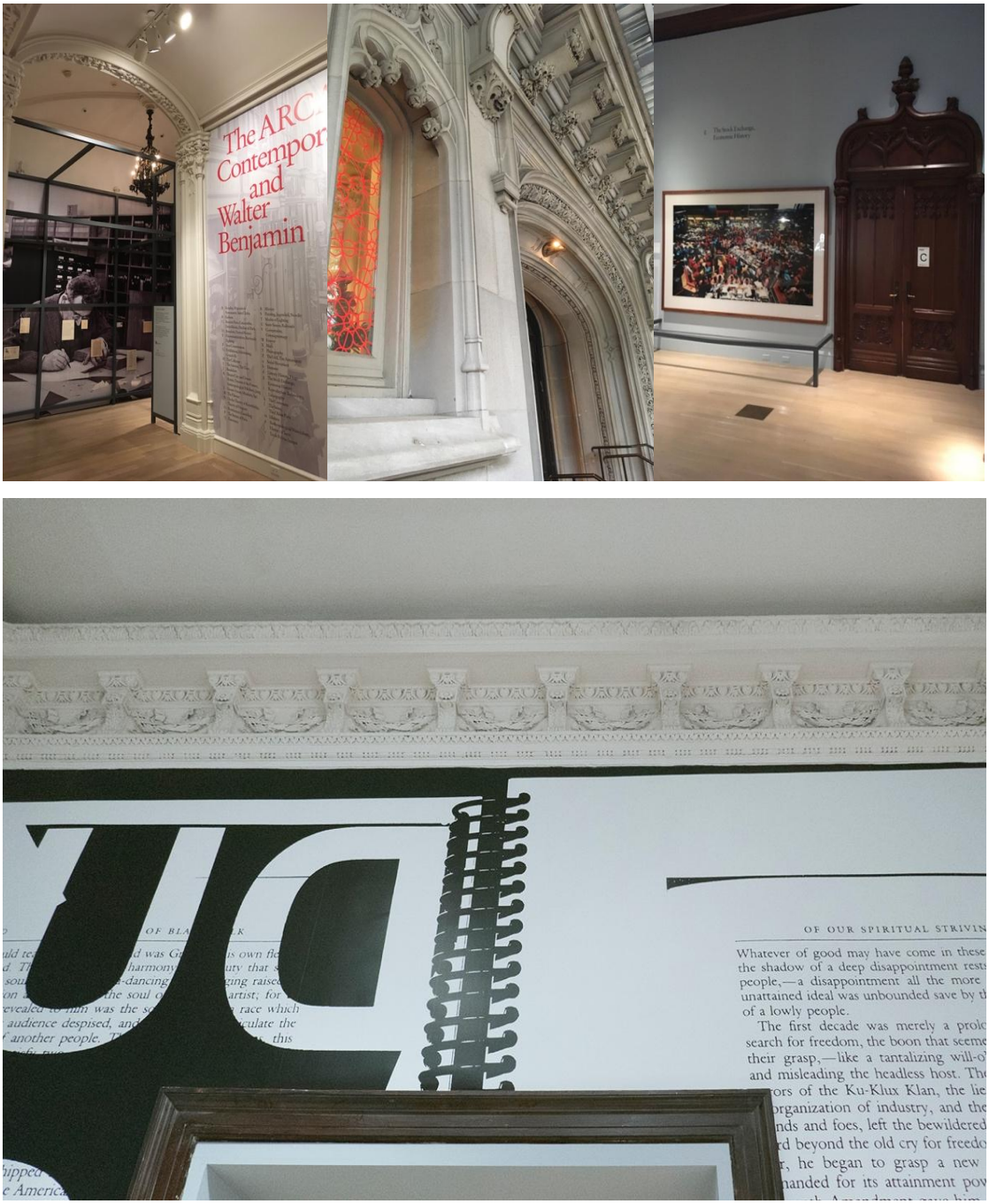

Figure 22. Illustrations showing the remaining features of the once-residential site of the Warburg Mansion, now the Jewish Museum of New York, n.d., photographs, from 'The Arcades: Walter Benjamin and Contemporary Art', *The Print Club Journal* <https://jointheprintclub.com/journal/thearcadesatthejewishmuseum> [accessed 13 November 2021].

As Mark Kingswell writes, 'Manhattan is finally, and irreversibly, what most of us now consider it, a thick palimpsest of newness and sometimes greatness, a city

forever erected anew on the bones and dust of the past'.[106] James McCourt explains in writing about NYC how '[t]he street evolves over decades into a post-modern, non-linear cluster fuck event construction'.[107] Coexisting visual referents to the past, such as elaborate coving, arches and ornate wooden doors, enable the various historical natures of the Warburg Mansion to be perceived. Historical epochs intersect in the present-day use of the gallery, offering a conception of temporality which overcomes the linearity of time. Located just opposite a huge stretch of landscaped greenery established in 1858, and toward the heavily built-up district of Harlem on the Upper East Side of Manhattan established in 1660, the JMNY contributes to NYC's wider palimpsest aesthetic.[108] It realises a space made perceptively curious by the co-existing yet irreconcilable interior insignia: historic domestic architectural features exist alongside those of a contemporary cultural and commercial nature, indicative of the pace of development. The notion that the past no longer exists in the present, is refuted.

4.5.2 Street

'The Arcades' takes on the semblance of a main shopping street, with multifarious distinct and unrelated stores. Hoffman and his curatorial team invite visitors to negotiate an irregular ordering of artworks, which, whilst placed in small subject-headed sections, problematise the realisation of a broader thematically arranged logic when considered together in their proximity with one another. There is no clear rationale to explain the meaning which allows for the transition between each title theme area, other than the exact copying of the index card system used by Benjamin in the Bibliothèque Nationale (translated in *The Arcades Project* as the alphabetised ordering of convolutes). Just as one may pass from a pet store to an organic wholefood outlet, and then onto a cosmetics shop, the relation between themes in the

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[106] Mark Kingwell, Nearest Thing to Heaven: The Empire State Building and American Dreams (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006), p. 6.

[107] James McCourt, Queer Street: Rise and Fall of an American Culture, 1947–1985 (New York: Norton, 2004), p. 29.

[108] Jeffrey Kroessler, 'The City as Palimpsest', Working Paper, John Jay College of Criminal Justice, CUNY (2015) <https://academicworks.cuny.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1042&context=jj_pubs> [accessed 10 November 2021].

exhibition is as that between a precinct's commercial ventures. Since there is no correspondence between the alphabetised letter and the theme in Benjamin, the same absence of classificatory rationality exists in 'The Arcades', in the sequential and proximate arrangement of 'T Modes of Lighting', 'Z The Doll, The Automaton', 'H The Collector', 'L Dream House, Museum, Spa', and 'U Saint-Simon, Railroads' (Figure 23).

Figure 23. An installation view of 'The Arcades' display, Will Ragozinno, 2017 photograph, from JMNY, 'Finding Inspiration and Identity in Paris: Walter Benjamin and Amedeo Modigliani' <https://stories.thejewishmuseum.org/finding-inspiration-and-identity-in-paris-walter-benjamin-and-amedeo-modigliani-a2eca3d7e70f> [accessed 1 November 2020].

'The Arcades' displays temporalities thematically, rather than sequentially. The exhibition makers did not structure the display according to a linear chronological development: they structured it like a city. The city, which makes possible the experience of visually perceiving in one space a great historical simultaneity, is continued in the gallery's arrangement of artworks and artefacts, which rejects rationalised conceptions of cause-and-effect in its representation of twentieth and

twenty-first century history. Artworks from 2009 sit beside those of 1982, for instance, as shown in a constellation of literary and visual entities named after Karl Marx.[109] The collated aesthetic, with its unarticulated temporal relation between themes, artworks, and media, brings to bear, with the superimposition of various temporalities in one representation, an interruption to historicist conceptualisations of linear history.

Through correspondence with the JMNY and following an examination of unpublished materials produced during the pre-planning phase of the exhibition, it is evident that the ordering of artworks for 'The Arcades' was reimagined during set-up. This open determination of artwork's placement at the point of installation means that the 'Elevations' document used by exhibition makers, is not a record of how 'The Arcades' looked upon opening. As Backer reiterates, 'these elevations are not documentation of the installation — I know there are at least a small handful of things that shifted position when we actually hung the show'.[110] Whilst curators used a 'Floorplan' to consider and map the space which the exhibition was to occupy, their curatorial approach avoided the plotting of a definitive ordering of components, resulting in a display which maintains some of the serendipity of everyday life. Visitors experience a coincidental and seemingly unpremeditated arrangement of artistic subject and theme. Recalling how Maxim Gorky describes the topographical nature of NYC in 1904 as an '*absurd jumble* of straight lines of wood'; '[d]ozens of white buildings, *monstrously diverse*', there is a sense that NYC's absurdity is brought to bear on 'The Arcades' as a site-specific curatorial strategy.[111] The exhibition invites visitors to traverse a haphazard topography, as if modelling itself on the unforeseen irregularities of a walk across Manhattan (streets made uneven by 8,225 potholes recorded in the immediate locale of the exhibition in 2017).[112] The city's undetermined

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[109] Milena Bonilla, *Stone Deaf*, 2009, graphite on paper, five-minute HD Video loop and rubbing, Kadist, San Francisco; Marshall Berman, *All That is Solid Melts into Air: The Experience of Modernity* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1982).

[110] Shira Backer (Assistant Curator, Jewish Museum of New York), private correspondence.

[111] Maxim Gorky, 'Boredom', *The Independent*, 8 August 1907, pp. 309–17; my italics.

[112] Using data collected by NYC Open Data, Diamond Injury Law investigated NYC's potholes examining what the City has done about them. Diamond Injury Law, *New York City's Pothole Problem* (28 February 2018) < https://www.diamondinjurylaw.com/blog/2018/02/28/nyc-pothole-problem/> [accessed 19 September 2020].

territorial miscellany is realised in the variegated and irrationally organised elements curated in its image.

Within the exhibition's individual, convoluted themes, a visual, associative, spatial, and imaginative organisational method is employed, which holds the potential to expand the consciousness of the audience. Drawing a closer eye to the wall text (which by its nature, is ephemeral and exists today only as reproduced in the exhibition catalogue), spatial concepts oversee the arrangement of the exhibition's linguistic components. Figure 24 shows Kenneth Goldsmith's approach to textual display for the 'Photography' section. A concrete poet, whose dual visual and literary endeavours have long merged in the intermedial production of writing that is as much visual as it is textual, Goldsmith places his chosen words in a square-shaped arrangement, with a straight line of text protruding from the top of the square, with two lines emerging in opposition at either side of it.[113]

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[113] Desereè Martinez, 'Kenneth Goldsmith's Life in 600 Pages: No. 111 2.7.93-10.20.96, Part 1', (unpublished senior thesis, Princeton University, 2001) <http://writing.upenn.edu/epc/authors/goldsmith/martinez/martinez01.html#_edn5> [accessed 1 December 2020]; Kenneth Goldsmith and Joan La Barbara, *73 Poems* (New York: Permanent Press, 1993). For intermediality, see *ImageScapes: Studies in Intermediality*, ed. by Christian Emden and Gabriele Rippl (Oxford: Peter Lang, 2010).

Figure 24. Kenneth Goldsmith, Photography Poem, from *Convolutes, Annotations by Kenneth Goldsmith*, Jewish Museum of New York < https://thejewishmuseum.org/exhibitions/the-arcades-contemporary-art-and-walter-benjamin> [accessed 20 August 2020].

The optical arrangement of words placed in a constellation headed by the title 'Photography' work together to conjure the shape's detection as a photograph frame, or the box-like appearance of an early Kodak camera. But with the necessarily open-ended meaning offered by the image, one may equally locate a topological quality in the arrangement: a city square, perhaps (Time Square, Union Square, Tompkins Square Park, and Madison Square), breached by a central avenue, with two streets and a truncated alley emerging from either side.[114] The late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century development of camera-based media accelerated alongside the

[114] An exhibition was held in 2003 on the city squares of New York. 'Central to the City: Manhattan Squares', The Arsenal Gallery at Central Park, New York, 19 July–5 September 2003.

development of the city itself: one sees evidence of this in Walter Ruttmann's *Berlin: Symphony of a Metropolis* (1927), Dziga Vertov's *Man with a Movie Camera* (1929), and Robert Florey's *Skyscraper Symphony* (1929), as well as in the earlier photographic depiction of architectural and everyday Parisian urban landscapes by Eugéne Atget and Brassaï.[115] Taken from Vilém Flusser's *Towards a Philosophy of Photography*, the words, read in a linear sequence, explore the relationship between image and text. Binaries, limitations, and confluences in literary-visual and optical-visual experiences are not just a concern of Flusser in this single fragment, but a matter mediated formally in Goldsmith's application of concrete poetry as a curatorial pursuit.

4.5.3 Drift

Jens Hoffman describes the opportunities for unrestricted movement throughout the exhibition rooms as '[t]he return of the Flâneur'.[116] 'The assemblage of many parts', Hoffman writes, 'is intended to encourage viewers to look at our own moment via the author's prescient reflections' of nineteenth-century flânerie.[117] The exhibition catalogue suggests that the arrangement of displayed items activates a particular kind of viewer with its variegation of evocative, imaginative components, one imagined by Hoffman as being akin to the leisurely wanderer of nineteenth-century literary fantasy, drawn from the work of Edgar Allan Poe and Charles Baudelaire. Illustrated by Benjamin as having a temporality in his stride dictated by the tortoises he mimicked (more easily done 'in the arcades than on the boulevards'), the place of the flâneur in the exhibition is decontextualised from its origins, becoming incongruent with the contemporary North American city that the gallery inhabits.[118] It is perhaps not the flâneur that Hoffman realises for a twenty-first century audience in New York, but another, more modern city explorer — to which this chapter will return.

In the display section 'The Flâneur', site-specific city imitation is perceptible in Goldsmith's arrangement of twenty-one short fragments of text. These literary scraps

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[115] *Berlin: Symphony of a Metropolis*, dir. by Walter Ruttmann (Fox Film Corporation, 1927); *Man with a Movie Camera*, dir by Dziga Vertov (VUFKU, 1929); *Skyscraper Symphony*, dir. by Robert Florey (1929).

[116] Hoffman, pp. 12–19.

[117] Hoffman, p. 18.

[118] *AP*, p. 106.

are arranged in a way that illustrates the drifting experience of the city loiterer, lured by an array of distracting, partial possibilities. Such an experience of NYC is addressed descriptively in Goldsmith's *Capital*, which helps to illuminate audience positionality in 'The Arcades'. Citing James McCourt's *Queer Street* (2004), Goldsmith registers the experience of being distracted by co-existing, attractive entities in NYC.[119] 'Think about what happens to you during any two minutes spent walking on a city street', *Capital* states, 'the flood of sensations, perceptions, and feelings that courses through you, most of them hardly deserving your attention'.[120] Attaining one's attention nevertheless, the 'multiplicity and density of detail' in NYC 'is far greater than even the richest collection of verbalized thoughts or conversations with yourself that may have been going on at the same time', McCourt writes.[121] The 'process by which the world impinges on us at all times and the constantly shifting apprehension of our relation to it are too enormous for us to fully grasp'.[122] McCourt's description of an over-stimulatory and distracting NYC experience highlights the place as being characterised by a chaotic collation of sensory perceptions, composed of multifarious fragmented elements. It is this experience that is conveyed visually in Goldsmith's arrangement of archival text in 'M The Flâneur' (Figure 25).[123] The audience experiences not a sequential or straightforward display of words and sentences in a series, but the image of drift: the overstimulation of multiple pulls for attention. The placement of the words represents the path of a distant yet engrossed, aimless urban traveller.

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[119] Goldsmith, *Capital*, pp. 647–48.

[120] McCourt, p. 7.

[121] McCourt, p. 7.

[122] McCourt, p. 7.

[123] Jens Hoffman and others, *The Arcades*, ed. by Hoffman, p. 62

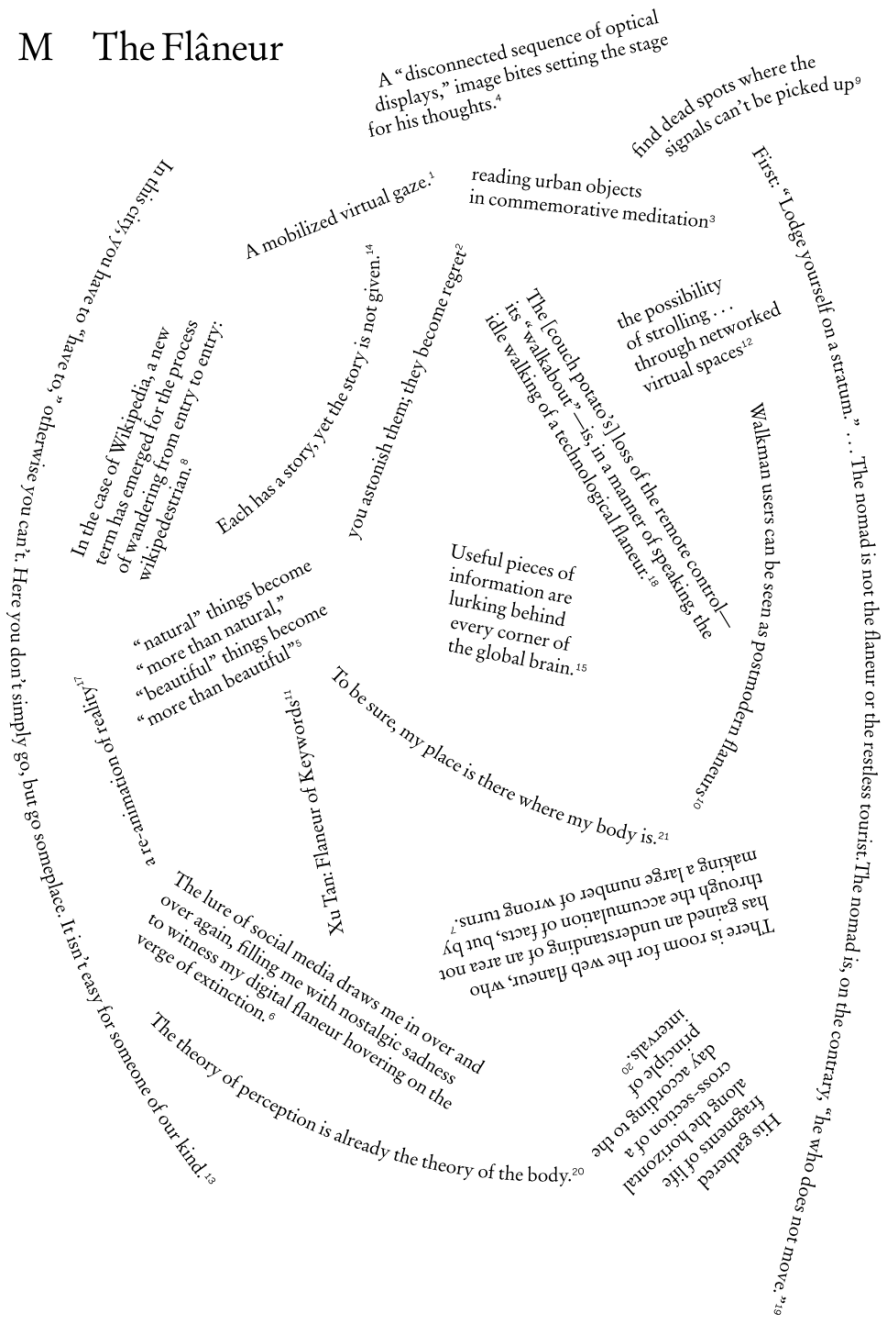

Figure 25. Kenneth Goldsmith, 'The Flâneur', wall text, from Jens Hoffman and others, *The Arcades*, ed. by Hoffman, p. 62.[124]

Aiming to bring Benjamin into the twenty-first century, the afterlife of *The Arcades Project* attempts to connect the experience of nineteenth-century Paris with

[124] It is worthwhile to note the similarities between Goldsmith's concrete poetry and Benjamin's doodles and drawings. Hoffman and his team consulted Benjamin's archive in Berlin, and it may be assumed that the role played by Goldsmith's arrangement of literary fragments emerged from their noticing of Benjamin's own shapely jottings: an afterlife of the coalescence of image and text can be gleaned by comparing Goldsmith's poetic annotations and Benjamin's spatial renderings of thought. *Benjamin's Archive*, pp. 231–54.

the contemporaneity of online experience. The content of the textual fragments chosen by Goldsmith convey what may be understood as a modern form of flâneurial activity, alluded to in the constellation as that which exists in digital space. A quote by Alexander Halavais, arranged in *The Flaneur*, states that '[i]n the case of Wikipedia, a new term has emerged for the process of wandering from entry to entry: wikipedestrian'.[125] The twentieth-century commercialisation of the internet enables the experience of cross-referencing related sections of text and associated graphic material, indoors, at one's own home computer. As such, Goldsmith's patchwork of citations for 'The Arcades', which incorporates a greater literalness to graphic material than that afforded in *The Arcades Project,* with its related and proximate display of visual culture, offers a mediation on the character of modern online hypertext, as a contemporary form of flânerie, uprooted from the street.

A similar making-modern of the flâneur was articulated by Adorno, who suggested that the behaviour of radio listeners, switching stations, offered a kind of 'aural flânerie'.[126] Furthermore, Susan Buck-Morss suggests that '[i]n our time, television provides it in an optical, non-ambulatory form. […T]he format of television news-programs approaches the distracted, impressionistic, physiognomic viewing of the flâneur, as the sights purveyed take one around the world. And In connection with world travel, the mass tourist industry now sells flânerie in two and four week packets'.[127] Adorno and Buck-Morss offer, with Goldsmith, a means of comprehending what aimless drift might mean today.

The notion that any of these experiences or practices approximate to that of flâneur, however, is fallacious. Wandering the cityscape, negotiating a non-linear collection of literary fragments, or meandering throughout gallery rooms in the JMNY offers a visual simultaneity non-existent in the former examples. The experience of the 'wikipedestrian' elicits the perception of literary fragments in a sequential fashion. 'The Arcades', however, welcomes visitors into a space which offers an opportunity, in the collection's simultaneity, to perceive correspondences and new associations

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[125] Goldsmith, 'The Flâneur', quoting Alexander Halavais, *Search Engine Society* (Cambridge: Polity, 2009), n.p.

[126] Buck-Morss, *Dialectics*, p. 345.

[127] Buck-Morss, *Dialectics*, p. 345.

between and amongst the various disconnected and fragmented pieces of text and imagery that are represented.

The idea of considering the flâneur in modern terms is nevertheless crucial to the concept of the afterlife. One must recall the demise of the flâneur, almost two centuries ago, and consider to what extent the notion of the flâneur is appropriate to describe the non-instrumental movement across a city today. In Benjamin's history the flâneur did not survive the broadened boulevards of Haussmann, the demolition of the arcades, or the popularisation of motorised vehicles which cast the leisurely walker out of his covered walkways and toward the dangers of the busy street. Whilst the flâneur - who, in Benjamin, possesses a distinct temporality, a 'nonchalance nothing other than an unconscious protest against the tempo of the production process' - is perceptible in the stop-start visualisation of wall text in 'The Arcades', there is a sense that such a pace is uncommon in todays' cityscape, especially in the financial capital of the world, NYC, where 'time is money'.[128]

Hoffman's essay in the exhibition catalogue 'Return of the Flaneur', demonstrates his wistful longing towards Benjamin's topic of historical study. The flâneur was a subject, not of Benjamin's present, but of his archival work into the nineteenth century. Seduced by the figure, Hoffman indicates the type as somehow integral to the audience's comprehension of their own movement throughout the gallery and their understanding of the gallery's organisational method, as non-rationalised drift. Writing at the end of the twentieth century, Buck-Morss focusses on the sandwich man in her understanding of the redundancy of the nineteenth-century flâneur, explaining that 'the flaneur […] becomes existent only by exploding into a myriad of forms, the phenomenological characteristics of which, no matter how new they may appear, continue to bear his traces, as *Urform*'.[129] Working anachronistically, Hoffman's mobilisation of the flâneur in 2017 is nostalgic, and indicates his succumbing to a Kracaurian form of distraction. Reiterating Buck-Morss, it is not that aimless wandering, and the aesthetic perceptions of the individual doing so, no longer exist, it is that this activity deserves a new, modern designation.

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[128] *AP*, p. 338; Goldsmith, *Capital,* pp.1678–79

[129] Susan Buck-Morss, 'The Flaneur, the Sandwichman and the Whore: The Politics of Loitering', *New German Critique*, 39 (1986), 99–140 (p. 105).

Whilst there may be some useful correspondences in the way that the flâneur is described by Benjamin and the way audiences are positioned in 'The Arcades', there is a crucial irreconcilability in what the flâneur offers in the nineteenth century and what Hoffman hopes to achieve in nostalgically applying it. Hoffman explains that the collated aesthetic is realised in the JMNY 'to inspire political agency, to foster social awareness, and to advance critical thinking'.[130] However, the flâneur, a disengaged observer of the city, is ultimately non-political. One can complicate the concept of the flâneur to the point of its total irreconcilability with any project of non-instrumentality, too, when one understands that the flâneur walks for work. 'Loitering (*Müssiggang*) is his trade', as Buck-Morss puts it.[131]

The flâneur's movements across the city cannot be incorporated critically into Hoffman's work, in so far as the latter seeks, in the context making a microcosm of neoliberalism, to create a space and a moment of political criticality. [132] As Buck-Morss writes, 'the figure […] does not act in contradiction with the demands of capitalism but supports it'. Because he needs money, 'his protests against the social order are never more than gestures': [133]

> In order to survive under capitalism he writes about what he sees, and sells the product. To put it plainly: The flaneur in capitalist society is a fictional type: in fact, he is a type who writes fiction. Flânerie promoted a style of social observation which permeated 19th-century writing, much of which was produced for the feuilleton section of the new mass newspapers. The flaneur-as-writer was thus the prototype of the author-as-producer of mass culture. Rather than reflecting the true conditions of urban life, he diverted readers from its tedium.[134]

Buck-Morss highlights his existence as both idealised in literature and being the producer of that literature. The flâneur, ill-fitted in 'The Arcades', is a nostalgic ideation today, with little real-life, radical bearing.

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[130] Hoffman, p. 18.

[131] Whilst *Müßiggang* is more accurately rendered 'idleness', 'loitering' is Buck-Morss' translation. Buck-Morss, 'Flaneur', p. 112.

[132] Hoffman, p. 18.

[133] Buck-Morss, 'Flaneur', pp. 111–12.

[134] Buck-Morss, 'Flaneur', p. 112.

In 'The Arcades', audiences are invited into an enclosed space which facilitates the temporary subversion of New York City's rationalised grid system: an outcome of the collated aesthetic mobilised as a city mimetic. The way in which 'The Arcades' makes visual the drift-like movement of the city wander in 'M The Flâneur' (Figure 25), is elevated beyond its mere image as concrete poetry and made into a bodily experience for the gallery visitor. Inside the Warburg Mansion, an illogical, aesthetically based meander becomes opportune, which protests, as part of the exhibition, an attempt by the city to impose instrumental journeying, with a predictable matrix of streets and a subway system that drops passengers at pre-established and non-negotiable geographical intervals. The collated aesthetic offers a different way of moving.

Of course, with the grids' many intersections, the city offers, within and despite of its linearised cartography, serendipitous opportunities for 'momentary disorientation, intimate exposure, physical contact with strangers, pratfalls, public humiliations', as John Kasson explains.[135] McCourt acknowledges that 'Broadway's on the diagonal!'; illuminating a fissure in the rationality of urban planning, he jokes: '[t]he diagonal, they'd been taught in geometry, is in relation to the straight sides of irrational incommensurate, as is the square root of two'.[136] Exemplary of the cracks in the City's rationalist imposition, which enables 'The Arcades' to exist as a 'microcosm' of it, there are areas in NYC where the grid-like system of streets ceases, making opportune, for example, the experience of getting lost amongst the gallery sale of art in Chelsea ('a confused knot of streets [that] could certainly be termed […] a queer geography').[137] Such directional interruptions and irregularities account for the site-specific imposition of irrationalities in Goldsmith's wall display text.

Mimetically, the city is extended into the display, bringing to bear an anthropological materialism of historiographic reception. Archival fragments flung apart invite readers into a physical twisting: a literal turning. As such, the exhibition promotes a form of movement which gleans historical meaning as an embodied

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[135] McCourt, p. 244; John Kasson, Amusing the Million: Coney Island at the Turn of the Century (New York: Hill & Wang, 1978), p. 61.

[136] McCourt, p. 80.

[137] Hoffman,p. 18; David Carter, *Stonewall: The Riots That Sparked the Gay Revolution* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2004), p. 13.

encounter. Movement and the perception of space is a crucial part of Goldsmith's collated aesthetic, with exhibition visitors convoluting their bodies to read the displayed assortment of found fragments placed upside down and sideways. Each aspect of the exhibition necessitating a physiology of historical reception. Sensory experience implicates an ontology of the body, here, with the exhibition endowing demonstrative meaning to a phrase weaved into Goldsmith's 'The Flâneur' assemblage: a 'theory of perception is already the theory of the body', bringing together ways of seeing, ways of conceiving, and ways of moving. [138]

Recalling the Situationist International's post-war experimentations with movement, which address the relationship between corporeality and architectural landscapes, and promote the ability to shift rational conceptions of the body toward less linear compositions, Goldsmith's display represents an avant-gardist activation of modern embodiment, which finds its roots, before Debord, in the drug-induced, city travels of Benjamin.[139] Lying smoking on the bed of his hotel, Benjamin becomes suddenly invited into the outdoors, in 'Hashish in Marseille', by his window 'view of the belly of Marseille'.[140] Taking flight, almost without intent, into the city streets, Benjamin moves irrationally across the city, walking from café to café, to the harbour, and to a restaurant, where he sits at a number of tables, before settling upon one, at a time when the kitchen had already closed (pp. 118–19). Benjamin writes how in Marseille, he 'already had this wonderful lightness and sureness of step'; his perceptual shift 'transformed the stony, unarticulated earth of the great square that I was crossing into the surface of a country road along which I strode at night like an energetic hiker' (p. 119). His physical experience created a city imaginary, instigating a change to his city encounter. The Museum's mobilisation of Benjamin's collated

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[138] Goldsmith, 'The Flâneur', quoting Alexander Graf, 'Paris, Berlin, Moscow: On the montage aesthetic in the city symphony films of the 1920s', in *Avant Garde Film*, ed. by Alexander Graf and Dietrich Scheunemann (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2007), pp. 77–91 (p.88).

[139] Guy Debord, 'Theory of the Dérive', in *Situationist International Anthology*, ed. and trans. by Ken Knabb, (Berkeley: Bureau of Public Secrets, 1981), pp. 50–54. See: Guy Debord, *The Naked City*, 1957, collage, reproduced in *The Situationists and the City*, ed. by Tom McDonough (London: Verso, 2009), p. 89, where the psychogeographical currents of the post-war Situationist International are made visual in the psychogeographical map of Paris. The image uses a cut-and-paste arrangement of cartographic fragments and arrows, discordantly laid, to offer an image of the kind of metropolitan confusion described by McCourt, and alluded to visually, in the 'Flâneur' display text.

[140] Benjamin, 'Hashish in Marseille', in *On Hashish*, p. 118.

aesthetic involves, in its realisation of Benjamin's theory of a city — wherein the physical body, perception, and the cityscape all become informative of new experience — the provocation of new audience positionalities in and thorough a spatial and psychedelic arrangement of text. Andy Warhol's narcotic escapades, which contribute to Goldsmith's representation of NYC in *Capital*, provide a description of the effect of the collated aesthetic in three-dimensions. Having consumed LSD to enhance his perceptual experience of the metropolis, Warhol writes how the space became '*more* confused'.[141] This recalls Benjamin's notions of interpenetration and porosity, perceptions gained from his phenomenological activity in cities.

In *The Arcades Project,* Benjamin addresses the notion of interpenetration in relation to architecture. Citing Siegfried Giedion, Benjamin registers modern architecture as making into a 'sober reality' the interpenetrative tendencies of street and residence in nineteenth-century Paris; 'a detail of anonymous engineering, a grade crossing, becomes an element in the architecture'.[142] Here, a country home, 'a villa', infused with railroad tracks registers, in its standardisation, a sobering merging of disparate materials.[143] As Nani Balzer and Martino Stierli state, the montaging of forms 'has often been called a guiding structural principle of the age of modernity, even modernity's "symbolic form"'.[144] In Benjamin's fragment on Paris' Place du Maroc, even city and open air are 'entwined' and 'intertwined' — 'something ordinarily reserved for intoxicants'. [145] As Benjamin suggests, the commonality of mere mixing may have lost its ability to shift perceptions.

4.5.4 Optics

Beside the non-linear, fragmented assortment of text thematically related to 'The Flâneur', the museum curators placed two 2011 gelatine silver prints from American-born photographer Lee Friedlander, entitled *New York City* (Figure 26). Documenting a typical Manhattan main-street scene, the images show the visual perception of

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[141] Goldsmith, *Capital*, p. 443, my italics.
[142] *AP*, p. 423
[143] AP, p. 423
[144] Baltzer and Stierli, 'Montage', p. 4.
[145] *AP*, p. 518.

materiality to be unclear and ambiguous, when ascertained through the reflected and mirrored surfaces of the shopping districts. People stand small and insignificant in Friedlander's photographs, which juxtaposed against the human replicas, contributes to a representation of the metropolis dominated by lifelessness. Ambiguously, entities are blended; office blocks appear as if inside the store; humans are vaguely reflected within the motif of towering dummies, which take centre stage.

Figure 26. Lee Friedlander, *New York City*, 2011, gelatine silver print, from Jens Hoffman and others, *The Arcades*, ed. by Hoffman, p. 63.

The photographs resemble the work of Atget and Brassaï, who captured distorted depictions of the human form in the context of the capitalist city (compare Figures 4 and 5). The images also show their affinity with the poetic documentary style of Jennings' *One Way Street,* capturing everyday phenomena in a style that opens-up meaning. The breakdown of assured differentiation in spaces of distinction and the melting and blending of indoor/outdoor, street/room binaries, forming

overlapping spheres of contradiction, recalls what Susan Buck Morss describes as 'spatial anarchy'.[146] Friedlander's images acknowledge both the reflective and transparent surface of the shop window, which work together to create an uncertainty made concrete in the image. Evoking the city as that which is disorienting, with its strange and '"disconnected sequence of optical displays"', the museum's collated aesthetic charts a contemporary experience that, tethered to the cityscape, is productive of a perceptively strange experience.[147]

The transparency of glass in Friedlander's photographs enable the exhibition's modern revitalisation of Benjamin's preoccupation with a nineteenth-century history of commodity culture, where '[m]annequins become the model for imitation'.[148] In Friedlander, these humanoid figurines continue their role in affirming the city's capitalist base, in their role as dummies used to display clothing for sale. In the exhibition, the curators understand contemporary opportunities to catch a momentary and partial view of the commodities on offer in NYC as part of the experience of the flâneur. An individual's catching sight of extruded, vertically positioned figures in wigs, freshly-adorned each season with the latest in pattern design, holds the potential to turn the Manhattan 'native' into a 'foreigner', as the wall text broken off from David Holmes's *Communication Theory* reads.[149] In *The Arcades Project*, one of the fragments explains how the flâneurial pursuit was at one time impossible in Brussels, precisely due to the absence of glass fronts.[150]

Benjamin's early sketch of the project in a short essay entitled 'Arcades' describes how the glass door of a casino 'permits a glimpse of something like a ticket booth with prices of seats posted'.[151] Hessel describes one of the connections between twentieth-century Berlin, Paris, and London with the phrase a 'gallery of

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[146] Buck-Morss, *Dialectics*, p. 26.

[147] Goldsmith, 'The Flâneur', quoting Lucy Lippard, 'Scattering Selves', in *Inverted Odysseys: Claude Cahun, Maya Deren, Cindy Sherman,* ed. by Shelley Rice (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1971), pp. 27–42 (p.40).

[148] *AP*, p. 78.

[149] Goldsmith, 'The Flâneur', quoting David Holmes, *Communication Theory*: *Media, Technology and Society* (London: Sage, 2005), p. 198.

[150] *AP*, p. 411.

[151] *AP*, p. 871–72.

glass'.[152] Its abundant application in luring the collective from the streets into spaces of consumption, whilst soliciting imaginative engagement, also indicates in Benjamin what is suggested to be the inadequacies of the social world: '[g]lass before its time', he writes.[153] It all 'molders under spurious constructions' with the realisation of plate glass for commodity culture.[154]

In the absence of grand constructions pegged to revolutionary cultural renewal of the sort discussed by Paul Scheerbart in his utopian *Glass Architecture* (1914), which provides the opportunity to overturn a society entrenched in the tradition of closed interior spaces, 'The Arcades' illuminates the potential to think anew in the metropolitan framework of the present.[155] The curators identified the transparent surfaces of NYC as integral to their realisation of Benjamin's ambiguous and evocative collated aesthetic in their early stages of planning. The first page of the planning matter entitled 'Elevations' establishes the importance of such surfaces in its construction of a 'microcosm of our neoliberal society'.[156]

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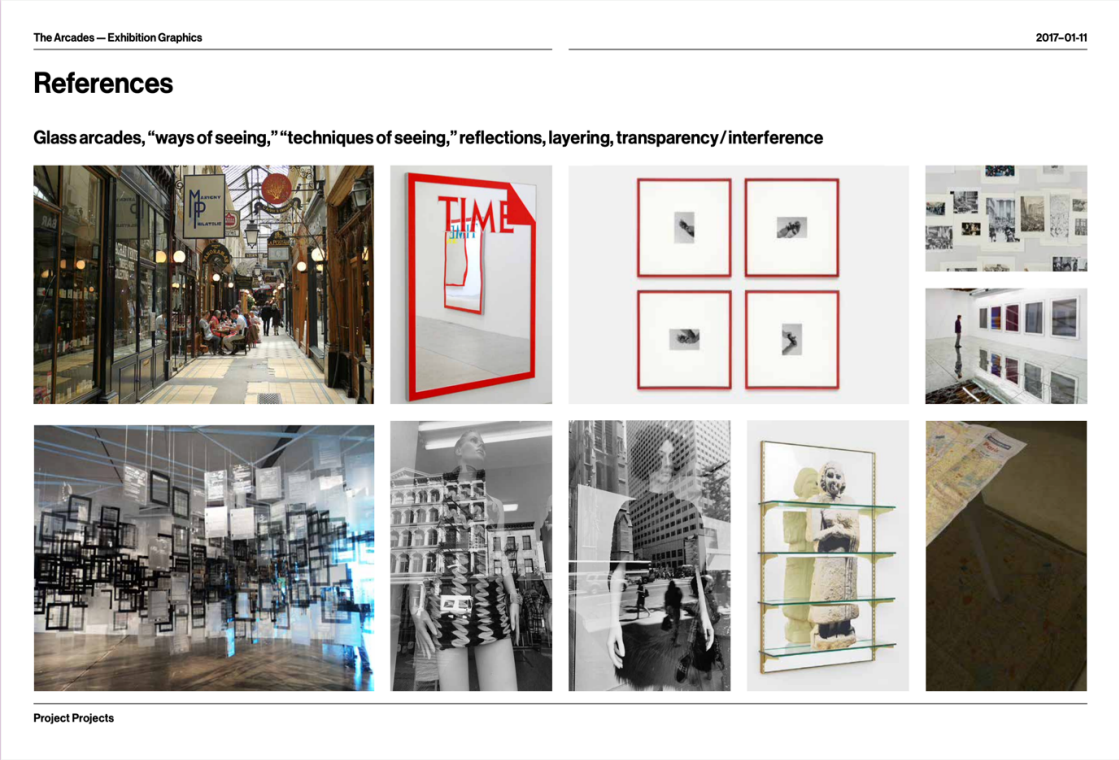
[152] *AP*, p. 87.

[153] *AP*, p. 150.

[154] *AP*, p. 156.

[155] Paul Scheerbart, *Glass Architecture*, trans. by James Palmes (New York: Praeger, 1972). For more on this see Benjamin's 'Expose of 1935' and 'Surrealism' (1929), where he writes that 'to live in a glass house is a revolutionary virtue par excellence'. *AP*, p. 5; 'Surrealism', p. 209.

[156] Hoffman, p. 18.



The Arcades — Exhibition Graphics 2017–01-11

References

Glass arcades, "ways of seeing," "techniques of seeing," reflections, layering, transparency/interference

Project Projects

Figure 27. Unpublished internal material provided by the Jewish Museum of New York, detailing the sources consulted in the planning stage of 'The Arcades', illuminating the team's interest in 'Glass arcades, "ways of seeing", "techniques of seeing", reflections, layering, transparency/interference', from 'Elevations', p. 1, author's private possession.

As the page reproduced above shows (Figure 27), the exhibition's provocation of new optics is drawn from the kinds immediate to its location. In addition to the 'transparency' of glass, the 'reflections' of mirrors and the 'layering' of materials are realised in the exhibition alongside their approximations of commercial window displays as opportunities for shifting perception. The textures of the metropolitan environment immediate to the JMNY are raised here to a curatorial level.

Mirrors form part of two works exhibited in 'The Arcades', one in 'R Mirrors', and the other in 'P Anthropological Materialism, History of Sects'. The former is by Mungo Thomson, a 2012 installation *June, 25, 2001 (How the Universe Will End) March 6, 1995 (When did the Universe Begin?)* (Figure 28). The work shows a privileging of the immediacy of new and ever-changing image creation in the use of a mirror as the background to the work, which invites into it the portrait of the visitor who stands before it. Caught at a slight slant, the work discloses new perspectives on the room within which the visitors find themselves, including other artworks, or visitors. Opportune for online public engagement in a social media space currently

characterised by the selfie, the exhibition curators invite visitors, or 'digital flâneurs', to submit Instagram images of themselves reflected in the work (Figure 29).[157] The work, which attests to the artist's fascination with time, creates the possibility of arresting a person's moment in the exhibition, as part of a new image-making process. In the exhibition catalogue's reproduction of the artwork, the word 'TIME' appears five times until the internal process of reflection scuppers its readability. In personalised snapshots, individuals captured appear numerous as if falling into a new expanse or corridor — a new type of arcade or an arcade of type. The work shows how reflection may reverberate to the point of upending linguistic meaning entirely and duplicating the singularity of one person, which furnishes ever new ways of seeing.

Figure 28. An audience perspective of Mungo Thompson, *June, 25, 2001 (How the Universe Will End) March 6, 1995 (When did the Universe Begin?)*, 2012, enamel on low-iron mirror, poplar, anodized aluminium, 74 x 56 x 21 cm, from Jens Hoffman and others, *The Arcades*, ed. by Hoffman, p. 73.

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[157] JMNY, 'Art in the Age of Digital Reproduction: Visitors Respond to The Arcades' <https://stories.thejewishmuseum.org/art-in-the-age-of-digital-reproduction-visitors-respond-to-the-arcades-2fef73086288> [accessed 20 August 2020].

Figure 29. Visitors who have taken and in uploading online, made accessible to Jewish Museum of New York, their own experience of viewing Mungo *Thompson's June, 25, 2001 (How the Universe Will End) March 6, 1995 (When did the Universe Begin?)*, from JMNY, 'Art in the Age of Digital Reproduction'.

The exhibition demonstrates in the photographic example what is named separately in the 'Elevations' document as the perceptual shift elicited through 'layering'.[158] It is a process demonstrated more consciously in Taryn Simon's 2012 artworks *Folder: Handshakes* (Figure 30) and *Folder: Swimming Pools* (Figure 31), which form part of 'N On the Theory of Knowledge, Theory of Progress'. This section opens with Benjamin's pivotal quote: 'Method of this project: literary montage. I needn't say anything. Merely show. I shall purloin no valuables, appropriate no ingenious formulations. But the rags, the refuse — these I will not inventory but allow, in the only way possible, to come into their own: by making use of them'.[159] Placed nearby, the Simon piece depicts a board which brings together numerous photographic images of, in one case, mostly outdoor, southern clime swimming pools, and, in the other, mostly famous politicians, sportsmen, and society people engaged in handshakes.

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[158] Author's private possession.

[159] *AP*, p. 460.

Figure 30. Taryn Simon, *Folder: Handshakes*, 2012, archival inkjet prints, 120 x 168.1 cm, from 'Elevations', author's private possession.

Figure 31. Taryn Simon, *Folder: Swimming Pools*, 2012, archival inkjet prints, 120 x 168.1 cm, from Jens Hoffman and others, The Arcades, ed. by Hoffman, p. 65

The overlaying of images collated by Simon culminate, in their mixing, into something new. Some scenes are made invisible while others appear as a continuation from the former. Whilst this nature is discussed by Benjamin in his analysis of cities — '[t]he intoxicated interpenetration of street and residence' — and in his reading of architect Siegfried Giedion — where '"a grade crossing, becomes an element in the architecture" (that is, of a villa)' — such blended forms are part of Simon's practice, in ways they are not in Benjamin's keeping distinct of each of his collated elements. Nevertheless, as part of the afterlife of the collated aesthetic, this example shows the perceptual opportunities brought to bear in the act of layering. As Hoffman explains in the exhibition catalogue, the mimetics of the city are realised to instigate new ways of thinking; in the collated aesthetic, an instigation predicated on ambiguity, on an uncertainty in meaning, made so in the *con-fusion* of entities.

The exhibition illuminates this city characteristic in the section entitled 'Daumier', where two gelatine silver prints, produced by American photographer and photojournalist Walker Evans, document the diversity of personal and conflicting economic experiences within a single space. Constellated around the name of French painter, printmaker, and caricaturist Honoré Daumier (b. 1808), the section recalls Daumier's focus on sociological concerns in *The Arcades Project.* Daumier wandered the streets of France during a century characterised by rapid social transformation.[160] Applying his visual art to the representation of his own social observations, a world in flux became illuminated through Daumier, as satirical lithography and cartoons published in newspapers, including political visual jokes and gags about the King, produced amid a rapidly-changing society in which ideas of the revolution reverberated in a struggle for the Republic.[161] One of Evans' images feature two men dozing in the shadows of a subway cart (Figure 32). Taken at close range, this photograph, *Subway Portrait* (1938), recalls the kind of post-work weariness that we see in the images provided by Jennings, in his documentary *Spare Time*, produced just one year later.[162] In the exhibition, Evans' photographs become representative of

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[160] *AP*, p. 741.

[161] Michèle Hanoosh, *Baudelaire and Caricature: From the Comic to the Art of Modernity* (University Park, PA: Penn State University Press, 1992), p. 114.

[162] There is no scope in this thesis to explore Jennings' involvement in the Mass Observation project on Bolton, dubbed 'worktown' by Thomas Harrison, but a resonance between *Spare Time, Subway*

NYC's everyday social experience; mundane subway travel is captured poetically, with open-ended and non-didactic meaning.

Figure 32. Walker Evans, *Subway Portrait*, 1938, gelatine silver print, 12.7 x 18.7 cm, Fisher Collection, San Francisco, from Jens Hoffman and others, *The Arcades*, ed. by Hoffman, p. 93.

Figure 33. Walker Evans, *Subway Passengers, New York City: Woman in Velvet Collar with Arm Around Child*, 1938, gelatine silver print,11.7 x 16.5 cm, Fisher Collection, San Francisco, from Jens Hoffman and others, *The Arcades*, ed. by Hoffman, p. 93.

Passengers, and the work town photos is clear. Bolton Worktown: Photography and Archives from the Mass Observation <https://boltonworktown.co.uk/photo-collection> [accessed 12 January 2022].

These interwar images are very different from the images of work in Boyle's opening ceremony. The coal-faced workers of Olympian patriotism offer a representation of great bodily achievement, masking the negatives of worker fatigue and exploitation. Their faces recall a fragment by Blake collated and presented as part of Jennings' *Pandaemonium*. Blake, who wandered his native city of London circa 1793 states in the transcription of his sensory experience how he notes in every face he meets, '[m]arks of weakness, marks of woe'.[163] Having passed out in a public space, these two workers look macabre in their buttoned-up shirts and blazers, invoking the suited unanimated corpses of open-casket encounters, common at North American funerals.

In a brighter image of subway travel, however, Evans captures another scene which sits in contrast to the former. A mother cradling her young son, who, resting on her bosom, also looks wearied; perhaps, as indicated by the dress of the woman, her occasion hat and the small parcel upon her lap, these two individuals are travelling home from a social engagement (Figure 33). Juxtaposed beside one another, these two images, one of the weariness of leisure, and the other the weariness of work-time, are brought together in close proximity. Together, they address the socio-economic range of New York inhabitants, existing in the same place, at a similar point in time.

Accounting for the architectural topography and everyday experience of working-class people living in the immediate surrounds of the Museum itself, a pair of 2016 sculptures by Nicolas Buffon, *The Bar Downstairs* and *FDR 99 Cent Slice Pizza* realise, through constructions of foam, glue, paper, and paint, three dimensional miniatures of modern consumer spaces (Figures 34 and 35). Buffon's small-scale imitations of NYC recall Benjamin's own interest in a 'world in miniature' — a phenomenon he perceived in the Parisian arcades.[164] Benjamin charts as part of his history of Paris, the development of the diorama by Louis-Jacques-Mandé Daguerre (inventor of the daguerreotype in 1839) who, with his co-worker Charles-Marie Bouton, opened an exhibition in Paris that he called the Diorama in 1822.[165] These spaces 'serve the epoch's will to expression', Benjamin writes, and offer a far larger

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[163] *Pandaemonium*, p. 101.

[164] *AP*, p. 15.

[165] *AP*, p. 1025.

and immersive precursor to Buffon.[166] Daguerre's three-dimensional scenes *virtually* transported viewers to historical battle scenes, far-flung cities, and rural vistas.[167] Along with the World Exhibitions of the same century, the Diorama offers an example of a multimedia entertainment spectacle, which was at the time of its opening hailed as an alternative for international travel.[168] The device gave rise to the *pleorama,* established in Berlin in 1832, which seated its immobilised audience in a ship, with the illusion of onward movement made perceptible with the movement of canvas-painted scenes. Whilst the phantasmagoric nineteenth century gave rise to passive wonder, the visual mapping of NYC in 'The Arcades' is predicated, in the most part, on the critical realisation of the city's contradictory economic conditions, to which the contributions of Buffon, Friedlander, and Evans attest. Benjamin's collated aesthetic is reimagined in a way which registers its potentiality as a critical, site-specific curatorial approach for the capital of twenty-first-century consumer capitalism. 'The Arcades' embodies an afterlife for *The Arcades Project,* wherein the thematic focus of Benjamin's collated aesthetic and the technical or strategic approaches used in its realisation are remobilised for a contemporary audience, so that the opening-up of historical meaning is potentialized.

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[166] *AP*, p. 124.

[167] Anna Friedberg, 'The Mobilised Virtual Gaze in Modernity: Flâneur/Flâneuse', in *The Visual Culture Reader*, ed. by Nicholas Mirzoeff, 3rd edn (London: Routledge, 2013), pp. 409–10.

[168] Friedberg, p. 409.

Figure 34. Nicolas Buffon, *FDR 99 Cent Slice Pizza*, 2016, foam, glue, paper, paint 52.1 x 33 x 31.8 cm.

Figure 35. Nicolas Buffon, The Bar Downstairs, 2016, foam, glue, paper, paint, 142.2 x 63.5 x 12.7 cm.

4.6. Analysing *Isles of Wonder* (2012)

The Arcades Project and *Pandaemonium* have an afterlife in 'The Arcades' and 'Isles of Wonder' respectively; reading these examples in relation to their former lives prompts the question of what remains of Benjamin and Jennings' collated aesthetic, in terms of contemporary historical work and the positioning of audiences therein. Attention now turns to *Isles of Wonder* because the afterlife tells us something about the history of social democracy and welfarism, but also allows us to measure what is still living, and what is dead, in the creative reception of Jennings' poetic historical approach.

4.6.1 'Second to the right, and straight on til morning'

Neoliberal attacks on public welfare provide a common backdrop to the 'The Arcades' and *Isles of Wonder*. Trump's attempt to repeal the Affordable Healthcare Act with the 2017 American Healthcare Act just a few weeks before the opening of the exhibition, finds equivalence with the United Kingdom's 2012 Health and Social Care Act, which brought about a greater marketisation of the NHS.[169] The latter act continues trends established by the Private Finance Initiative implemented by Conservative Prime Minister John Major, which, having mushroomed under the subsequent New Labour governments of Tony Blair and Gordon Brown (1997–2010), advances large-scale privatisation strategies to reshape the NHS and undermine provision of healthcare free at the point of delivery.[170] Symptomatic of a wider Thatcherite programme of privatisation, what was once considered in the United Kingdom 'a right of citizenship'

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[169] For one year, certain federal funds may not be made available to states for payments to certain family planning providers (e.g., Planned Parenthood Federation of America)'. *H.R.1628: American Health Care Act of 2017* <https://www.congress.gov/bill/115th-congress/house-bill/1628> [accessed 3 December 2021]. Chris Ham and others, *The NHS under the Coalition Government. Part One: NHS Reform* (London: The King's Fund, 2015) <https://www.kingsfund.org.uk/sites/default/files/field/field_publication_file/the-nhs-under-the-coalition-government-part-one-nhs-reform.pdf> [accessed 3 December 2021]. See also Nicholas Timmins, Never Again? Or, The Story of the Health and Social Care Act 2012: A Modern Drama in Five Incompleted Acts (London: The King's Fund, 2012).

[170] James Barlow, Jens Roehrich, and Steve Wright, 'De Facto Privatization or a Renewed Role for the EU? Paying for Europe's Healthcare Infrastructure in a Recession', *Journal of the Royal Society of Medicine*, 103.2 (2010), 51–55; Maggie Nelmes, 'Letter: The Health and Care Bill – The Final Nail in the Coffin for the NHS',

On the Wight, 26 August 2021 <https://onthewight.com/letter-the-health-and-care-bill-the-final-nail-in-the-coffin-for-the-nhs/> [accessed 3 September 2021].

is, in the twenty-first century, dislodged from the needs of people, enabling a greater accumulation of profit for private medical companies.[171] In 'Second to the right and straight on til morning', the contested issue of the NHS's liberalisation can be seen to be mediated through Boyle's mobilisation of the collated aesthetic.

Michael Silk writes that Boyle's celebratory NHS scene constitutes a 'thinly veiled critique of neoliberal British Conservatism'.[172] The scene which memorialised the 1948 establishment of universal healthcare reportedly left some members of the cabinet vexed, with Secretary of State for Health Jeremy Hunt attempting to prevent the scene being aired.[173] With private health companies constituting some of the party's leading donors, the inclusion of a tribute to the NHS in Boyle's island story caused controversy amongst architects of privatisation.[174] 'Britain's sentimentality over its health system', *The Mail on Sunday* wrote just a week after the event, 'which will intensify now Boyle has decreed it to be an official strand of our island story — is preventing real reform, a damaging and ultimately self-defeating national tragedy'.[175] With right wing commentators such as Ian Birrell criticising Boyle's casting of attention toward public services in the process of neoliberal reform, the journalistic coverage surrounding *Isles of Wonder* implies that the collated aesthetic, which is used by Boyle to evoke the founding principles of the NHS, is tantamount to activism in the Olympic arena.[176]

The BBC commentator for *Isles of Wonder*, Barry Davies, repeated the 1952 words of developer of the National Health Service Aneurin Bevan over the live stream

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[171] Allyson Pollock and others, *NHS plc: The Privatisation of Our Health Care*, rev. edn (London: Verso, 2005), p. 34.

[172] Michael Silk, '"Isles of Wonder": Performing the Mythopoeia of a Utopic Multi-ethnic Britain', *Media, Culture & Society*, 37.1 (2015), 68–84 (p. 73).

[173] Denis Campbell, 'Jeremy Hunt under Fire for Stance on NHS Tribute, Homeopathy and Abortion', *The Guardian*, 4 September 2012 <http://www.theguardian. com/politics/2012/sep/04/jeremy-hunt-nhs-tribute-homeopathy> [accessed 19 November 2020].

[174] Wagg, p. 83; James Lyons, 'NHS Reform Leaves Tory backers with Links to Private Healthcare Firms Set for Bonanza', *Mirror*, 19 January 2011 <http://www. mirror.co.uk/news/uk-news/nhs-reform-leaves-tory-backers-105302> [accessed 20 March 2021].

[175] Ian Birrell, 'The London 2012 Opening Ceremony, and a Night that Set NHS Reform Back Years', *Mail on Sunday*, 3 August 2012 <http://www.dailymail.co. uk/debate/article-2183440/London-2012-opening-ceremony-The-night-set-NHS- reform-years.htm> [accessed 19 November 2020]; Wagg, p. 83.

[176] Wagg, p. 83; Birrell.

of 'Second to the right and straight on til morning'. [177] Over a scene of 600 volunteers dressed in nurse's costumes dancing the Lindy Hop and Charleston, Davies stated that 'no society can legitimately call itself civilised if a sick person is denied medical aid because of lack of means'.[178] Whilst the comment from Davies makes vocal his support for the NHS, its placement within a wider sentimental longing for the post-war period constitutes an example of what Siegfried Kracauer calls the 'glue of sentimentality'.[179] Boyle's NHS performance evokes, through post-war cultural signifiers including trends in music, dance, clothing, and institutional history, what Owen Hatherley characterises as 'austerity nostalgia'.[180] A term drawn from his 2016 study of the 'Keep Calm and Carry On' phenomenon (whereby, following the 2008 banking crisis, a rare and previously never officially used poster, designed by the Ministry of Information in 1939, was suddenly mass produced for the first time in 2009),[181] 'austerity nostalgia' is realised not just by Davies, but the wider phenomenon of the phrase's utterance, which today, sees the quotation taken from Bevan and turned into a slogan, reproduced on tea towels and mugs.[182] The retro mawkishness of *Isles of Wonder*, such as that depicted in the exaggerated post-war dance (Figure 36), disguises the acts' lack of relation with the material world.

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[177] See Bevan's 13 March 1952 speech, 'A Free Health Service', in Aneurin Bevan, *In Place of Fear* (London: Heinemann, 1952), pp. 73–92.

[178] *Isles of Wonder*, dir. by Boyle.

[179] Kracauer, 'Cult of Distraction', p. 326.

[180] Owen Hatherley, *The Ministry of Nostalgia* (London: Verso, 2016), p. 82.

[181] Hatherley, pp. 42–49. See also Stuart Hughes, 'The Greatest Motivational Poster Ever?', *BBC News Magazine*, 4 February 2009 <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/magazine/7869458.stm> [accessed 19 November 2020].

[182] See, for example, 'Aneurin Bevan tea towel', Radical Tea Towel Company <https://radicalteatowel.co.uk/tea-towels/aneurin-bevan-tea-towel> [accessed 19 November 2020]; 'NHS Mugs', Stokes Croft China <https://www.prscshop.co.uk/products/nhs-mugs> [accessed 19 November 2020].

Figure 36. Two images of *Isles of Wonder*, depicting Boyle's incorporation of 1940s dance — the Lindy Hop and the Charleston — in his representation of the 1948 establishment of the NHS. *Isles of Wonder*, dir. by Boyle, YouTube screenshot.

The phenomenon of austerity nostalgia has arisen in the context of post-war Britain characterised by food rationing and is an apt means of understanding the period of economic austerity which characterises the context of *Isles of Wonder*. Present-day austerity has its roots in the 'financial crisis caused by property speculation and *derivatives* [which] culminated in massive state bailouts of the largest banks, followed by an assault on what remained of the public sphere after thirty years

of neoliberalism'.[183] The economic context of 2012 leads Hatherley to read the sudden appearance of 'Keep Calm' posters following the recession as constituting a 'largely right-wing phenomenon': a smug commodification 'of a particularly English malaise' which 'almost seemed to luxuriate in its own parsimony'.[184] For Hatherley, the *Isles of Wonder* NHS scene is an example of the left trying to 'produce their own version of austerity nostalgia and turn it to political ends'.[185] For Hatherley, *Isles of Wonder* sits alongside Ken Loach's *The Spirit of '45* (2013), Skip Kite's *Will and Testament* (2014), and avant-gardist Luke Fowler's exploration of E. P. Thompson, *The Poor Stockinger, the Luddite Cropper and the Deluded Followers of Joanna Southcott* (2012) as works which 'lay claim to the legacies of the welfare state, and try to will them back into being, or at best, remind people of their existence and their possibility' even as these legacies were being dismantled by the Coalition government.[186]

However, there is a sense in which Hatherley's important work on the 'Keep Calm' phenomenon places too much comfort in Boyle's working class, Lancashire-Irish roots. To what extent is the NHS scene different from the 'Keep Calm' posters; to what extent does it really advance a left-wing agenda? These are questions unanswered by Hatherley, guided, not by formal, technical, or strategic concerns, but by his interpretation of the ceremony alone. For Hatherley the assimilation of British Rail iconography for 'ruthless vultures' on the public sector such as E.ON or Thames Water is 'particularly sick and sarcastic'.[187] Yet, Hatherley accepts Boyle's commercialisation of Jennings' avant-garde project for the purposes of commodified national image-making. As Boyle himself remarks in his published interviews with Amy Raphael, the opening ceremony was 'beyond politics': whilst others view it as having a 'Marxist view of history', 'it didn't. Not at all. Isambard Kingdom Brunel was not a Marxist. Nor is Tim Berners-Lee'. *Isles of Wonder* is about things 'held true as part of a stable, progressive, courageous country'.[188] Pressed by Raphael to speak on his relation to the left, Boyle

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[183] Hatherley, p. 13.

[184] Hatherley, pp. 82, 33–34.

[185] Hatherley, p. 111.

[186] Hatherley, pp. 116, 82.

[187] Hatherley, p. 96.

[188] Danny Boyle and Amy Raphael, *Danny Boyle: Creating Wonder. In Conversation with Amy Raphael* (London: Faber and Faber, 2013), Google ebook, n.p.

responds to the interviewer's instigation that 'a right-wing artistic director would hardly have projected the "NHS" onto the floor of the stadium' with the statement: 'I really do disagree'.[189]

Figure 37. The acronym 'NHS' (National Health Service) is formed during *Isles of Wonder* by volunteer dancers, perceptible only by at home audiences, with an ariel-camera view, YouTube screenshot.

Figure 38. The acronym 'GOSH' (Great Ormond Street Hospital) spelled out by Boyle's cast, *Isles of Wonder*, dir. by Boyle, YouTube Screenshot.

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[189] Boyle and Raphael, n.p.

4.6.2 The founding of the NHS and Two Forms of Wish Image

Staging the historical virtues of the NHS, Boyle enlists contemporary hospital workers from Great Ormond Street Hospital (GOSH) for an act which diverts attention away from the problematics of their first-hand experience with nation-wide reductions in resources. The *Isles of Wonder* audience is kept 'above water' (Kracauer), by the 'life buoys' of nostalgia.[190] Only 178,841 out of the original 478,841 hospital beds, were available in the United Kingdom at the time of their performance, yet a great number of theatrical hospital beds flood the stage, forming at one point the aerial view letters NHS and GOSH (Figures 37 and 38), including healthcare staff in the production of a fantastical celebratory image of medical resource abundance, markedly at odds with the situation beyond the parameters of the stadium.[191]

Pointing to the dream-like character of commodities, out of the concreteness of which emerge non-physical appearances ('metaphysical subtleties and theological niceties', as Marx writes in *Capital*), Benjamin's concept of phantasmagoria describes the concealment of exploitative class relations, as a sociological phenomenon.[192] Phantasmagoria is not a replacement for the suppression of class consciousness by false consciousness, but a phenomenon materialized in 'space, objects and practices', as Irving Wohlfarth explains.[193] Phantasmagorical and concealing class relations, 'Second to the right and straight on till morning' is a work which, in a Kracauerian sense, distracts the masses away from their own woeful reality.[194]

Kracauer's perspective on distraction is at odds with the conception of it levelled thus far in this thesis, however. The character of distraction in *The Arcades Project* and *Pandaemonium* emerges in the pulling of meaning asunder: a consequence of the deluge of co-existent but conflictual perspectives which positions

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[190] 'Cult of Distraction', p. 326.

[191] Fréderic Michas, 'Annual Number of Hospital Beds in the United Kingdom (UK) from 2000 to 2020', Statista, 10 November 2021
<https://www.statista.com/statistics/473264/number-of-hospital-beds-in-the-united-kingdom-uk/> [accessed 3 December 2021].

[192] Marx, *Capital*, p. 42.

[193] Irving Wohlfarth, 'Smashing the Kaleidoscope: Walter Benjamin's Critique of Cultural History', in *Benjamin and the Demands of history*, ed. by Michael Steinberg (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1996), pp. 190–205 (p. 199).

[194] Kracauer, 'Cult of Distraction', p. 326.

recipients to form their own meaning in the cracks and ravines of that which is densely collated. Like the twentieth-century Berlin movie theatres Kracauer writes about in 'Cult of Distraction' (1926), the collated aesthetic developed by Boyle to realise the NHS scene can be said to 'rivet the viewers' attention to the peripheral, so that they will not sink into the abyss'.[195] Kracauer contends that Berlin's lavishly ordained picture houses elicit 'stimulations of the senses [which] succeed one another with such rapidity that there is no room left between them for even the slightest contemplation' (p. 326). Could *Isles of Wonder* constitute, with its exaggerated and bustling ode to the post-war period, what Kracauer writes in his essay on Berlin's picture houses as the raising of 'distraction to the level of culture'?[196]

The NHS scene is a contemporary example of what Benjamin describes in *The Arcades Project* as a wish image of abundance. Reading Benjamin's dense and enigmatic definition of a wish image alongside the NHS scene, one can understand the ceremony as '[c]orresponding to the form of the new means of production' (neoliberalism) 'which in the beginning is still ruled by the form of the old' (social democracy). Existing 'in the social superstructure, wish images [are brought to bear when] the new' (*laissez faire* reform) 'and the old' (universal healthcare) 'interpenetrate in fantastic fashion'.[197] Benjamin goes on: '[t]his interpenetration derives its fantastic character, above all, from the fact that what is old in the current of social development never clearly stands out from what is new' (the reforms are gradual, still free at the point of delivery), 'while the latter, in an effort to disengage from the antiquated, regenerates archaic, primordial elements' (democratised healthcare provision indicative of a collective longing for classlessness). 'The utopian images which accompany the emergence of the new always, at the same time, reach back to the primal past', Benjamin explains:

> In the dream in which each epoch entertains images of its successor, the latter appears wedded to elements of primal history. The reflections of the base by the superstructure are therefore inadequate, not because they will have been consciously falsified by

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[195] 'Cult of Distraction', p. 326.

[196] 'Cult of Distraction', p. 324.

[197] *AP*, p. 893.

> the ideologues of the ruling class, but because the new, in order to take the form of an image, constantly unites its elements with those of the classless society. The collective unconscious has a greater share in them than the consciousness of the collective. From the former come the images of utopia that have left their trace in a thousand configurations of life, from buildings to fashions. [198]

Figure 39. Abundant hospital beds, *Isles of Wonder*, dir. by Boyle, YouTube Screenshot.

Figure 40. More abundant hospital beds, *Isles of Wonder*, dir. by Boyle, YouTube Screenshot.

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[198] *AP*, pp. 893–94.

Benjamin's conception here is brought to bear in the afterlife of Jennings' collated aesthetic, which is commodified and applied commercially. Whilst the image of the NHS itself is indicative of a longing for collectivity, its phantasmagoric character demands what Beatrice Hansen calls the most 'mimetically gifted readers' to perceive the relationship between this example of cultural expression and the unconscious desires of he who produced it, and those who receive it.[199] In so far as the capitalist system is maintained through the ideological repression of classlessness, the wish image is predominantly manifest like this: as an aspect of, and hidden within, cultural commodification.

Benjamin's nineteenth-century houses of consumer luxury are also a wish image: 'the arcades as dream- and wish-image of the collective'.[200] Benjamin's notion of the wish image, however, attracted the resolute criticism of Adorno, who stated in his correspondence to Benjamin, that since commodity fetishism is not a 'fact of consciousness' but a myth, the dialectical image cannot be the way fetishism is conceived in the collective consciousness.[201] For this reason, Benjamin's concept of the wish image was theoretically abandoned.[202] The notion of the wish image, however, can be made productive in a reading of Boyle's ceremony, as the idea of repressed economic and social desires emerging in the consciousness of the collective as a phantasmagorical wish image of abundance (Figures 39 and 40).

Like Hatherley's conceptualisation of austerity nostalgia, Benjamin's notion of the wish image also comes with an example from the left, in the French utopian socialism of the Saint-Simonians.[203] The movement, which advocated for the industrialisation of society as a means of bringing an 'abundance of material blessings to all the people on the earth', offers a wish image of abundance tied to a

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[199] Miriam Hansen, Cinema and Experience: Siegfried Kracauer, Walter Benjamin, and Theodor W. Adorno (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012), p. 148.

[200] *AP*, p. 905.

[201] *Correspondence*, pp. 495, 263.

[202] *AP*, p. 943.

[203] *AP*, p. 540.

revolutionary agenda.[204] An 1832 fragment taken from a Parisian theatrical production, and included in The *Arcades Project*, illustrates this dream of plenty:

> Yes, when all the world from Paris to China
> Pays heed to your doctrine, O divine Saint-Simon,
> The glorious Golden Age will be reborn.
> Rivers will flow with chocolate and tea,
> Sheep roasted whole will frisk on the plain,
> And sauteed pike will swim in the Seine.
> Fricasseed spinach will grow on the ground,
> Garnished with crushed fried croutons;
> The trees will bring forth apple compotes,
> And fanners will harvest boots and coats.
> It will snow wine, it will rain chickens,
> And ducks cooked with turnips will fall from the sky.[205]

This theatrical image uses irony to demonstrate societal desires for sustenance, food, and French cuisine, symptomatic of the movement's left-wing, anthropological materialist, emancipatory tilt on a discourse of plenty.[206] The mobility of commodities in this Saint-Simonian wish image overcomes the poor distribution of the existing market economy. This example may suggest a precedent for critical potential in the evocation of a desire for the sound management of public resources.

However, as Benjamin's collection shows, the wish image of abundance in Saint Simon is flawed. Soviet historian Vyacheslav Volgin explains that Saint Simon's 'ideal is considerably closer to state capitalism than to socialism' since 'there is no talk of the abolition of private property, of expropriations'.[207] So Benjamin contends, those on the left who propagated the wish image of abundance 'anticipated the development of the global economy, but not the class struggle'.[208] The question here, therefore, is whether applying Benjamin's example of a nineteenth-century wish image to support Hatherley's idea that the NHS scene makes a crucial aspect of capitalism's

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[204] Robert Jones and Robert Anservitz, 'Saint-Simon and Saint-Simonism: A Weberian View', *American Journal of Sociology*, 80.5 (1975), 1095–1123 (p. 1118).

[205] *AP*, p. 171.

[206] Adrien Lutz, 'On Commercial Gluts, or When the Saint-Simonians Adopted Jean-Baptise Say's View', *Journal of the History of Economic Thought*, 41.2 (2019), 209–36.

[207] *AP*, p. 581.

[208] *AP*, p. 7.

development more visible can establish the possibility for a critical repositioning of audiences, despite its problematic idealism.

The mobilisation of Benjamin must find grounds upon which *Isles of Wonder* invites an opportunity for a momentary recognition of the crisis in social management to 'suddenly burst apart' the overarching phantasmagoric character of the event.[209] For Benjamin, it is '[a]mbiguity' that makes fruitful meaning-making in the dialectical rendering of wish images.[210] This ambiguity, he explains, is the 'law of dialectics at a standstill', which, in theory, is opportune for critical recognition. Like the image of the prostitute, who in Benjamin represents 'seller and sold' in one, the NHS image, which is also 'afforded by the commodity per se: as fetish', may underscore the inherent ambivalence of a capitalist subversion of capitalism.[211] The critical potential Benjamin speaks of, however, only exists when the 'image goes together with the recognition [amongst audiences] of the "now" in things'.[212] If *Isles of Wonder* establishes itself as a constellation — a presentation of multiple acts, 'saturated with tensions' and brought together esoterically with sufficient space between them that the audience is engaged in a process of meaning-making — then Boyle's image of the 1948 establishment of the NHS will, if Benjamin is correct, collide with the present to such an extent that awakening — a sudden understanding of material conditions — is potentialized.[213]

The conditions for awakening are not opportune in the ceremony, however, because the performance approximates a Whig interpretation of history; that which, as Herbert Butterfield writes in 1931, emphasises 'certain principles of progress in the past', 'producing a story which is the ratification if not the glorification of the present', realised using 'certain methods of historical organization and inference'.[214] Whilst Michael Saler's analysis of Jennings' *Pandaemonium* implicates Jennings in the production of a Whiggish history, it is Boyle, not Jennings, who realises that ill-founded

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[209] Kracauer, 'Cult of Distraction', p. 327.

[210] *AP*, p. 10.

[211] *AP*, p. 10.

[212] *AP*, p. 865.

[213] *AP*, p. 462.

[214] Herbert Butterfield, *The Whig Interpretation of History* (New York: Norton, 1965), p. v. Boyle's ceremony registers some of the key features of classical, 19th century historicism, the critical character of Jennings' work is Boyle's instrumentalisation of it, divested of its ability to liquidate the semblance of a progressive, linear, and cumulative image of progress.

claim, in 'invoking the past — particularly the British past — as inspiration for further British glory'.[215] As Jennings' notes elucidate, *Pandaemonium* sought to interrupt the 'disgusting and ridiculous "Histories of England" — which present the last three hundred years as a glorious marching on of the Drum and Colours'.[216] Pivoted on a discerning display, Boyle's technique, in contrast, brings to bear in Jennings' afterlife an illustration of Butterfield: with a new ethos to his methods of selection and deselection, a purely developmental account of the past is formed. [217]

The NHS is historicised in *Isles of Wonder*. Its celebratory realisation locked firmly in the culture of the 1940s and 50s, Boyle's representation of Atlee's socialist incarnation is undifferentiable from that of the period's other cultural signifiers. Progress in *Isles of Wonder* moves at such a pace (each act marking the incremental point in a wider developmental narrative) that, as with the opening scene of pastoral activity, the NHS can be perceived as archaic, an historical fact, just one part to Boyle's listing of the centuries' *canonical* events. Boyle's progressive island story — a linear history, causally told — allows for little revolutionary potential.[218]

4.6.3 From a 'Green and Pleasant Land' to 'Pandaemonium'

Boyle presents a manipulation of the past in *Isles of Wonder*, constructing an historiographic linearity. Especially indicative of this manipulation is the way in which Boyle engages with William Blake for the opening two acts, 'Green and Pleasant Land' and 'Pandaemonium'. At the start of the ceremony, as noted in Section Four, a choir of children sing verses from Blake's 'Preface to Milton' (reproduced in *Pandaemonium*):[219]

> And did those feet in ancient time
> Walk upon England's mountains green
> And was the holy Lamb of God
> On England's pleasant pastures seen?

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[215] Searle and Jones, p. 197; Saler, p. 126.
[216] Jennings' Unpublished Notes, 3.p.
[217] Butterfield, pp. 25, 103.
[218] 'Concept of History', p. 397.
[219] *Pandaemonium*, p. 127.

And did the Countenance Divine
Shine forth upon our clouded hills?
And was Jerusalem builded here
Among these dark Satanic mills?[220]

In the background, 'Green and Pleasant Land' (the phrase taken from stanza four of Blake's poem) realises a montage of activity depicting a fanciful utopia, wherein the co-operation of fraternal beings, working together toward a common and cordial everyday existence, recalls the apocryphal notion in Blake that a young Jesus travelled to Glastonbury in England, generating a temporary heaven on earth. Men play football and cricket, whilst boys contribute to a mixed-gender dance around a maypole, suggesting a congenial, playful, and conflict-free society (Figure 41). A pair of contented women dressed in historical costume cheerfully throw apples (Figure 42).

Figure 41. Children playing around a maypole amongst lush greenery, wooden fencing, and a thatched-roofed cottage, *Isles of Wonder*, dir. by Boyle, YouTube screenshot.

[220] *Complete Poems*, p. 502.

Figure 42. Women jovially throwing apples, *Isles of Wonder*, dir. by Boyle, YouTube screenshot.

Printed in 1810, Blake's verses portray a perfect mythical Albion, unrealisable amid nineteenth-century industrialisation. For Jennings, Blake represents one of the few poets who 'found a point in their work where it met so to speak the current economic and political and social revolutions on equal ground and where they were capable of recording the conflict'.[221] Written as a critique of England's new social order, Blake's hopeful pastoral vision is inextricably linked to the industrial tempestuousness of the age within which he wrote; they reveal the liminal utopian impulses of the century's dreaming collective. Only in its unsevered nature — its true contextualisation — can Blake's vision be read this way, as a wish image which 'deflect[s] the imagination […] upon the primal past'.[222] Boyle's village scene (Figure 41), however, uses Blake in a way which overcomes the poem's original, critical character.

[221] Jennings Unpublished notes, 2.e.

[222] *AP*, p. 4.

Figure 43. Boyle's depiction of Blake's green and pleasant land, *Isles of Wonder*, dir. by Boyle, YouTube screenshot.

Figure 44. Boyle's depiction of Blake's dark satanic mills, *Isles of Wonder*, dir. by Boyle, YouTube screenshot.

Boyle applies Jennings' Blakean fragment 'Jerusalem' to inform an historically progressive image of Britain, with *Isles of Wonder* jumping from a pre-modern world of myth and children's fiction ('green and pleasant land') to a known 1820s period of industrialisation ('dark satanic mills') (Figure 44). The proximate representation of utopia and hell in Blake's *Jerusalem*, maintained in Jennings' carrying over of the

verses into *Pandaemonium* intact, offers the representation of an historiographic duality, with material and imaginary worlds co-existing.[223] With both visions existing simultaneously in a single fragment, Jennings' conscientious approach to *cutting* contributes to and extends the poem's social critique, disbanded in Boyle. What was conceived of as a simultaneity in Blake, portraying the togetherness of imagined and material experiences, as two sides to the Industrial Revolution, has been translated in *Isles of Wonder* into historical linearity, in a way that serves Boyle's suggestion of progress and contributes to what this chapter reads as a mythical image of historical progress. The performance discontinues Blake's potential to provoke critical perception amongst his readership, with his complex, non-singular nineteenth-century historical experience, fracturing narrative totality.

Progress is an organisational principle continued by Boyle throughout the performance, with each epoch depicted presenting a development on the next, suggesting to audiences a law of history that assures continual improvement. This is achieved, not merely on account of the chronological structure — which Jennings himself uses — but in the way in which, unlike Jennings, Boyle leaves out the histories of conflict and disharmony which characterise historical development. As Jennings' notes explain, the representation of conflict constitutes an integral aspect of his historiography.[224] '[W]hat conflicts?', the note head asks:

> 1. Class conflicts – in their simplest form Luddite riots – Peterloo
> 2. The conflict of Animism and Materialism
> 3. The conflict of the expropriated individual with his environment
> 4. Conflicts of ideas
> 5. Conflicts of systems — Religious systems
> Political systems
> Moral systems.[225]

Jennings goes on to describe modernity as 'a process (conflict) which culminated between 1660 and 1880'; 'the peasants were destroyed and the land capitalised — the

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[223] Pandaemonium, p. 127.

[224] Jennings' Unpublished Notes, 2.d. Handwritten note, grammatical errors in original.

[225] Jennings' unpublished notes, 3.k.

power of money — capital — substituted for the power of the Crown and religion'.[226] That Jennings' collated aesthetic not only involves conflict in its representation of modernity, but defines modernity *as* conflict, makes clear by contrast that Boyle's portrayal of history works on the notion of progress. Modernity appears as harmonious: drastic change unmet by resistance.

Jennings' historiographic collated aesthetic is used to depict the awe of the long Industrial Revolution — 'the scientific discoveries and inventions which contributed to it and which it brought into being' — as well as the narratives of social critics, such as 'Corbett, Swift, Carlyle, Ruskin, Arnold — who made it their business of life to comment on the conflicts they saw in front of them'.[227] In organising a representation of the past from the viewpoint of the nation, Boyle's opening ceremony selects only the wonderful aspects of British history (weary workers generate wonder at their bodily achievement). Boyle's reimagining of the collated aesthetic changes the *spirit* of *Pandaemonium's* afterlife. His omission of critical images collected by Jennings excludes from *Isles of Wonder* the past illuminated in a 1843 fragment by Thomas Carlyle, who writes that 'England is full of wealth, of multifarious produce, supply for human want in every kind; yet England is dying of inanition'; '[w]ith unabated bounty'.[228] Carlyle's description of industrialisation as supplying benefits which are not equally or universally experienced — a part of Jennings' historiographic collated aesthetic — is eliminated, accepted, and even celebrated in Boyle's reworking of it, as part of the processes of social progress.

Boyle shows his disinterest in the conflicts of animism and materialism charted in Jennings' collated aesthetic, in the opportunity missed in the staging of Glastonbury Tor. A literary framework for 'Green and Pleasant Land' is established in the media guide which references children's stories as the inspiration for 'Green and Pleasant Land'. The ancient mysteries of the hill are unmentioned.[229] Actualising a bucolic, twentieth-century pastoral imaginary, Boyle's opening act calls upon idylls of the sorts conceived by English authors Kenneth Grahame and A. A. Milne. Milne's *Winnie-the-*

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[226] Pandaemonium, p. xxxvii.

[227] Jennings' Unpublished Notes, 2.e.

[228] Pandaemonium, p. 216.

[229] LOCOG, pp. 20–21.

Pooh (1926) falls out of the temporal scope of Jennings' *Pandaemonium*, but the children's classic shares a similarity with the fragments collected by Jennings, which cast light on social conflict, in visualist, imaginative works. The landscape portrayed by Milne is based on Five Hundred Acre Wood in East Sussex's Ashdown Forest, and references a place of a contestation and expropriation of land. Fictionalised as Hundred Acre Wood in its inhabitation by the anthropomorphic animals illustrated by E. H. Shepard, Five Hundred Acre Wood was sold to Buckhurst Park estate in 1678. No longer physically accessible to the public, access is confined to the imagination, hinting, therefore, at a much broader national conflict.[230]

The trend of silencing the conflictual parts of histories established in Act One continues in a later scene, 'Memorial Wall'. Here, cloud computing — which involves the instrumentalisation of land for its use as server farms — is promoted by Boyle as a contemporary demonstration of technological progress. The presentation of digital images of 'loved ones who couldn't be with us tonight', omits the use of land for an ever-growing, global stock of personal photographs.[231] The environmental sacrifice of digital technologies informs Boyle's wider depiction of an automatic and cumulative progress. The historic and ongoing expropriation of land by the elite, who oversee civil engineering programmes such as those depicted in the role of Brunel and his associates, contribute to the opening ceremony's totalised depiction of historical change. As Boyle's staging of the nineteenth century in 'Pandaemonium' acknowledges, the class structure of feudal society was not interrupted by a freedom amongst the populace to seek paid labour.[232] However, Boyle's commitment to a progressive historicism depicts industrial workers as enacting a wilful sacrifice mandated as part of the development of British history: there is no reference to the history of a striking, aggrieved, and unified working class. Jennings' collated aesthetic is re-imagined in a way which bars the inclusion of disharmony and the conflictual images that are methodologically integral to Jennings' collated aesthetic.

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[230] There are two footpaths which are public rights of way, one of which is part of a long-distance footpath, the Wealdway, which crosses through the wood and may be used by members of the public.

[231] LOCOG, p. 32.

[232] Alessandro Stanziani, Bondage: Labour and Rights in Eurasia from the Sixteenth to the Early Twentieth Centuries (New York: Berghahn Books, 2016), p. 36.

Boyle and his team realised *Isles of Wonder* by assembling several motifs of national experience and identity.[233] Using selection criteria which differed from that applied in *Pandaemonium*, the team departed from Jennings' approach of assembling critically provocative fragments (Luddite riots, the Peterloo massacre, or clashes of religious systems and moral conflicts) and instead chose what Stephen Wagg calls 'the most attractive and least contentious motifs of Britishness'.[234] Whilst it would have been unusual for an event which customarily celebrates the host country to inculcate a critical portrayal of Britain, the effect of Boyle's omissions is a collated aesthetic which represents rural England, industrialism, the monarchy, the National Health Service, media culture, popular music, and the possibilities of the internet age collectively as 'a tribute to the things that TRULY make Britain great' (as British tabloid the *Mirror* had it).[235]

Sunder Katwala, director of British Future, a think tank dealing with issues of 'immigration, integration and national identity', expresses concern for the omission of imperialism in the *Isles of Wonder* story in an article which labels Boyle's work as 'irresistibly British'.[236] Boyle's theatricalization of the Industrial Revolution and his use of dual heritage teenagers to depict a typical family in 'Frankie and June say…thanks Tim' make Boyle's erasure of histories of colonialism especially glaring. The Industrial Revolution was dependent on the United Kingdom's imperial expansion; and the place of 'Frankie' and 'June's' children in the United Kingdom suggestive of it too.[237] Such a decision by Boyle invites controversy: '[t]here are two distinct stories about Britain's place in the world', Katwala writes, 'and this show chose to prioritise one of them, the forge of the industrial revolution, but perhaps to duck the other, the story of a global

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[233] Also included in the artistic team is Frank Cottrell Boyce, Suttirat Anne Larlarb, Mark Tildesley; Rick Smith; Paulette Randall; Sacha Dhillo; Tracey Seaward; Temujin Gill; Kenrick Sandy; Adam Gascoyne; Toby Sedgwick; Sunanda Biswas, and Thomas Heatherwick. LOCOG, p. 44.

[234] *Pandaemonium*, p. xxxvi; Wagg, p. 67.

[235] Andy Dawson 'Boyle Command Performance is hampered by not-so-clever Trevor', *Mirror*, 28 July 2012 <https://www.mirror.co.uk/tv/tv-reviews/bbcs-trevor-nelson-stumbles-but-danny-1177361> [accessed 20 August 2020].

[236] British Future, 'About Us: What We Do', <https://www.britishfuture.org/about-us/what-we-do/> [accessed 20 August 2020]; Sunder Katwala, 'An Island Story: Boyle's Olympic Opening was Irresistibly British', *Open Democracy*, 31 July 2012 <https://www.opendemocracy. net/ourkingdom/sunder-katwala/island-story-boyles-olympic-opening-was- irresistibly-british> [accessed 16 November 2014].

[237] J. R. Ward, 'The Industrial Revolution and British Imperialism, 1750–1850', *Economic History Review*, 47.1 (1994), 44–65.

island's imperial expansion and Commonwealth contraction, and how that was to change Britain irreversibly'.[238] This omission works faithfully with the posthumous publication of *Pandaemonium,* which also omits the history of the United Kingdom's colonial past. Both the 1985 Andre Deutsch edition and the 2012 Icon Books edition work with an edited down version of Jennings' 'Pandaemonium' which fails to include the fragments that Jennings collated in regard to this past, although Jennings himself was a staunch anti-imperialist (as discussed in Chapter Two).

The archive still provides access to what is omitted in the published version of *Pandaemonium.* One of Jennings' early working titles for 'Pandaemonium' - 'The Decline and Fall of the British Empire' – elicits questions of whether the omission of all referents to Empire in the published version constitute a deliberate gesture of de-politicisation, which is then continued by Boyle. As the Pembrooke archive illuminates, imperialism is conceptualised as part of Jennings' understanding of the economic system of the United Kingdom:

> …?
> Exotic
> Marx
> (Natives??)
> 'slaves of the oppressors the working class as the natives'.[239]

The proletariat is conceived of in reference to empire, a global comradeship which unites the workers of the United Kingdom with enslaved people in its colonised lands, and supports the internationality of revolution, a part of Jennings' work omitted by Boyle.

4.6.4 Whose History is This?

Whilst the proletariat and Windrush migrants are represented in the 'Pandaemonium' act, the narratives of exploitation included in *Pandaemonium* (such as George Oldfield's description of his 'Yorkshire Childhood' under the cruel control of his

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[238] Katwala, n.p.

[239] Jennings Unpublished Notes, 4.a.

master) are omitted.[240] Despite the hopeful interpretation of Catherine Baker, who sees the ethnic diversity of Boyle's cast as constituting a 'mosaic' informed by a 'multiplicity of biographical narratives', Boyle's 'exercise in public history', demonstrates instead the problematics of a common notion that diversity is a matter of representation, rather than one which depends on people's inclusion in narrative production.[241] Baker compares the work of Boyle to that of the Swedish tourist board, who invite a new person each week to manage their Twitter feed @sweden, realising on one single page, a variegated and sometimes contrasting vision of life in Sweden.[242] This is not the same logic as that realised in *Pandaemonium*. While 'a nation composed of a mosaic of voices which are diverse, multicultural and sometimes contradictory' is Boyle's inspiration, it is not realised in his production.[243]

Boyle's editorial manipulations of the past show disregard for the stories of those who have been cast under foot in a nation's march of progress ('whoever has emerged victorious participates to this day in the triumphal procession in which current rulers step over those who are lying prostrate').[244] Boyle appears as if part of a 'triumphal procession' in silencing and making appear uncontentious the nation's marginalised people, who are in *Isles of Wonder* depicted as unquestioning of that trajectory. *Isles of Wonder* portrays the past from the vantage point of the victor.

Benjamin writes in 'On the Concept of History' that such an approach indicates history's instrumentalisation by the ruling class.[245] As Jackie Hogan writes, the Olympic competition has a definitive set of winners, reproduced every time; one sure winner is the socially dominant groups who produce the history being told, 'groups who are socially dominant on the basis of such characteristics as class, gender, ethnicity, national origin, or religious affiliation'. 'Discourses of national identity', such as Boyle's, 'mirror relations of dominance' and 'potentially legitimize and help sustain long-

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[240] *Pandaemonium*, pp. 214–15.

[241] Catherine Baker, 'Beyond the Island Story? The Opening Ceremony of the London 2012 Olympic Games as Public History', *Rethinking History*, 19.3 (2015), 409–28 (pp. 412, 409); Dana Brownlee, 'The Dangers Of Mistaking Diversity For Inclusion In The Workplace', *Forbes*, 15 September 2019 <https://www.forbes.com/sites/danabrownlee/2019/09/15/the-dangers-of-mistaking-diversity-for-inclusion-in-the-workplace/?sh=20636a314d86> [accessed 20 August 2020].

[242] Baker, p. 421.

[243] Baker, p. 421.

[244] 'Concept of History', p. 391.

[245] 'Concept of History', p. 391.

standing hierarchies of power in each nation'.[246] Silk similarly reiterates that the Olympic opening ceremony often works to 'simplify, amplify, (de)politicize and (re)invent nation; [such performances] act as spaces for the assertion and affirmation of particular discursive constructions of nation that readily reflect and reproduce social hierarchies', constructions that, he attests, 'by their very nature, are acts of inclusion and exclusion'.[247]

The citational technique used in Jennings' archival exploration ensures the inclusion of a multiplicity of historic voices, 'intersecting at a thousand different angles, setting up vibrations across the epochs of recent history', achieving diversity through narrative formation and representation for those who lived and died without power — from the perspective of capitalist social dynamics.[248] Boyle overturns Jennings' overturning of historiography's pervasive establishment of a singular and totalised vision of history. Central to Jennings' afterlife in Boyle is the elimination of polyvocality. From the point of view of Jennings, the variegation of voices included in his collection make clear that the history of the United Kingdom is not monological; it is not a place with one, agreeable perspective, dream and/or experience.

Boyle hints at this, albeit in a flawed fashion, in the audio collage he produces for the ceremony's opening, which portrays the non-homogenous character of the United Kingdom. The special character of the United Kingdom as a multi-country composition can perhaps be understood as edging toward the breaking up of a single, homogenous notion of nationhood. Including four songs, reflecting each of the four named components of the United Kingdom with specific references to the languages particular to each place, Boyle realises the sentiment of Tony Blair in 2003, who as Prime Minister, branded the sovereign state as 'countries within a country'.[249] Chosen perhaps, to re-establish the monarchical connotations of *Jerusalem* as demonstrated just one year previously in the televised royal wedding of Prince William and Kate

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[246] Jackie Hogan 'Staging the Nation: Gendered and Ethnicized Discourses of National Identity in Olympic Opening Ceremonies', *Journal of Sport and Social Issues*, 27.2 (2003), 100–23 (p. 119).

[247] Michael Silk, The Cultural Politics of Post-9/11 American Sport: Power, Pedagogy and the Popular (London: Routledge, 2012), p. 119.

[248] Eiland and McLaughlin, p. xi.

[249] 'Prime Minister's Office', 10 January 2003, *National Archives Web Archive* <https://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20080909013512/http://www.number10.gov.uk/Page823> [accessed 25 September 2020].

Middleton, a 'national anthem for England' is chosen over others for the start of the ceremony.[250] In doing so, Boyle implies the primacy of England, and reiterates the asymmetrical bilateral actions which brought the United Kingdom into formation, as England absorbed Wales in the sixteenth century, and unions with Scotland in 1707 and Ireland in 1801.[251] England is, with the Olympic Stadium held in London, the host country within which the ceremony was held — a hierarchy implicated in the ordering of Boyle's collection.

The diverse tapestry of non-national identities and allegiances in *Pandaemonium,* is a quality of the collated aesthetic also existent in *Spare Time*'s attention to the cultural and economic particularities of Bolton, Manchester, Sheffield, and Pontypridd, and in Jennings' Mass Observation project *May the Twelfth*.[252] Whilst Boyle represents the countries that make up the United Kingdom in the opening national anthems, regional contributions are omitted from the rest of Boyle's nationalistic, selective assemblage. Boyle makes no mention at all of the smaller entities that make up England, Wales, Scotland, and Northern Ireland, nor of the last remnants of the British Empire or Crown Dependencies, for which the British Government is responsible in defence and political representation.[253]

4.7. Conclusion

In this chapter's reading of the afterlives of Benjamin and Jennings, a contrast in the different notions of topographical experience, derived from *Pandaemonium* and *The Arcades Project,* makes productive an understanding of the critical role of the collated aesthetic and its relationship to urban experience. In Benjamin's 2017 afterlife, *The Arcades Project* is received by the JMNY as a city-text, which, in its formal imitation and

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[250] *The Royal Wedding – Jerusalem (HD)*, online recording, YouTube, 29 April 2011 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4yIWBO_7nio&ab_channel=pishposhx> [accessed 1 December 2020]; Johnson, p. 237.

[251] The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland became The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland in 1927, following the departure of much of Ireland in 1922.

[252] *Pandaemonium*, fragment numbers 88, 270, 271, pp. 95–97, 262–63.

[253] Anguilla; Bermuda; the British Antarctic Territory; the British Indian Ocean Territory; the British Virgin Islands; the Cayman Islands; the Falkland Islands; Gibraltar; Montserrat; Saint Helena, Ascension and Tristan da Cunha; the Turks and Caicos Islands; the Pitcairn Islands; South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands; and Akrotiri and Dhekelia on the island of Cyprus.

thematic expression of its subject of Paris, brings to bear what Gilloch calls a 'text-as-city'.[254] The collated aesthetic, which formalises the fragmented character of the modern city is, in the hands of the museum curators, developed and modernised to suit its contemporary surrounds. 'The Arcades', as an exhibition with site-specificity relating to NYC, makes several alterations to Benjamin's collated aesthetic, which formalise the particular experience of the city within which it is located, delivering what Hoffman refers to as a 'microcosm': a rendering of urban experience within the four walls of the gallery space.

In bringing external and internal features of the cityscape to bear on the Museum in a mimetic form of site-specific curating, Hoffman and his team advance the imaginary potential of urban space, as part of the collated aesthetics' stirring of new meaning. The city becomes integral in the exhibition's provocation of poetic knowledge. In doing so, 'The Arcades' registers a significant point of contrast with the potentiality of space and place suggested in Jennings' *Pandaemonium*, which, in its collection of quotes, equates urbanisation with a loss of imaginative experience. Jennings explains, in *Pandaemonium,* that '[w]hen the enclosures forced the country-dwellers off the land they not only expropriated the people but also expropriated poetry'.[255] As such, Jennings shows in his critique of 'The Enclosures', that England's free rural landscapes are the 'country's pride' — a pride which is channelled into Boyle's patriotic opening ceremony in his Blakean depiction of a quintessentially English, bucolic, pre-enclosures, utopian idyl.[256]

For Jennings, the romanticist narratives of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries 'speak of the countryside as an area of holiness, connected with childhood — a garden of Eden which has been lost. It is the recovery and saving of this lost land that is behind very much of the imaginative writing of this period'.[257] The development of industrialisation, however, which involved the instrumentalisation of communal land for the purposes of capitalist production, depended on the success of enclosure. The city, which suggests itself to be a contemporary incarnation of the enclosures and

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[254] Gilloch,p. 94.

[255] Jennings' Unpublished Notes, 5.o–p.

[256] *Pandaemonium*, p. 110.

[257] Jennings' Unpublished Notes, 5.o–p.

a mark of their enduring success, is understood as opportune for critical activity in Benjamin's afterlife but disregarded in Jennings'.

Stuart Hodkinson explains that 'enclosure was and remains, in many respects, the midwife of the capitalist city', in a statement which draws out the context of enclosure from early modern Britain to the 'new world' of colonial expansion and the development of the city therein.[258] Jennings' *Pandaemonium* maps the coordinates of early modern Britain and the start of British imperialism with Queen Victoria's ascension of the throne as Empress of India, with its start and end date at 1660 and 1887. The naming of New York City by the British in 1664, following a maritime war between the British and the United Provinces of Netherlands, seeking control of the trade of enslaved people in West Africa,[259] contextualises the relationship between enclosures and NYC. The fact that the contemporary character of NYC continues the enclosures' wresting of the 'peasant producer from the means of production […] propelling over time a mass landless proletariat into the swelling ranks of the industrialising and urbanising centres', does not take away the potential of the city, or its realisation in 'The Arcades', to provoke critical, conscious expansion.[260]

As explored, the city complexifies the means-end relationship in space, forms, textures, surfaces, and experiences, including the winding roads and intersecting passageways circumventing Manhattan's dominant rationalisation of road travel. Within confusion — natural or drug-induced — there is space to re-think and re-imagine the city and its wider meaning, itself, a potential realised by Hoffman and his team. Whilst another Blake fragment which appears in *Pandaemonium,* describes the city's 'charter'd streets' manifesting '[m]arks of weakness, marks of woe', in Hoffman, after Benjamin, the streets bring to bear the possibility of irrational moments of subversive and interruptive modes of perception.

The critical potential released by Hoffman, Backer, and Goldsmith in 'The Arcades' exists, along with *Isles of Wonder*'s place in the 2012 opening ceremony, within the instrumentalisation of the collated aesthetic for purposes of capitalist gain.

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[258] Stuart Hodkinson, 'The New *Urban* Enclosures', *City,* 16.5 (2012), 500–18 (p. 500).

[259] Daniel Hulsebosch, Constituting Empire: New York and the Transformation of Constitutionalism in the Atlantic World, 1664–1830 (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2005), p. 43.

[260] Hodkinson, p. 500.

This instrumentalisation of the collated aesthetic reflects the broader history of avant-garde forms in general, insofar as the post-war historical avant-garde, in moving to NYC, became subsumed in the wider global agenda of commodity production. The instrumentalisation of the collated aesthetic within both the JMNY and the 2012 Olympic Games is a fact of its commercialisation as part of the culture industry. The analysis of these two examples shows, however, that the commercialisation of the historiographic collated aesthetic changes the original form of the collated aesthetic: as is the nature of *afterlife*. It is also clear, however, that this instrumentalization is not indicative, in a universal sense, of the collated aesthetics' critical redundancy.

As Esther Leslie explains, commenting on the historical avant-garde in *Hollywood Flatlands* (2004), '[c]ritical art had to be mimetic, mapping the objectification and alienation of the social world, but that mimesis had to be torn from a natural immediacy through the integration of a constructively rational moment. Expression, vivid mimeticism, is shot through with self-conscious moments of reflection'. In this respect, Leslie cites Klee and Picasso's *Guernica* as exemplary.[261] *Guernica*, itself a commission by the Spanish Republican Government for the Spanish Pavilion at the 1937 World's Fair in Paris, overcomes the pre-established purpose of its creation, in becoming an enduring image of Picasso's criticism of the violence of war.[262] In a similar sense one can consider the commercialisation of Benjamin's avant-garde approach to historical representation in 'The Arcades' as making opportune critical thought. The exhibition's wrenching of the characteristics of the high-street, and its placement of such phenomena in the space of the gallery, brings to bear in its construction, a 'vivid mimeticism' which engenders 'self-conscious moments of reflection'.[263]

'The Arcades' offers new opportunities to think about the relationship between the collated aesthetic and three-dimensionality and between domestic space and the cityscape; to think about the collated aesthetic, the criticism of linear forms of historical narration, and the nature of history in the public domain, as that which has

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[261] Esther Leslie, Hollywood Flatlands: Animation, Critical Theory and the Avant-Garde (London: Verso, 2002), p. 166.

[262] 'Rethinking Guernica', Museo Nacional Centre de Arte, Reina Sofia <https://guernica.museoreinasofia.es/en#investigacion> [accessed 12 December 2021].

[263] Leslie, *Flatlands*, p. 166.

the power to re-position audiences towards new ways of seeing. The exhibition offers an example of how the capitalist city may contain spaces able to facilitate its own re-evaluation: a reconsideration of the vulgar Marxist approach that registers the seed of capitalism's demise in temporal terms, in the linear unfolding of predetermined historical epochs.[264] The example offers insight, therefore, into how the collated aesthetic can be used to both historical and political ends. The afterlife of *The Arcades Project* elicits an open conversation, not just on historiographic practice, but on the formal issues of the collated aesthetic itself, and how they are re-mediated post-publication, three-dimensionally.

In Hoffman, the collated aesthetic enables a provocative, imaginative encounter with history; its collation holds the potential to inform the production of new meaning and the formation of poetic knowledge with a non-linear, physically embodied engagement with the past — illuminating a unity in anthropological materialism and historical reception. This chapter has shown the ways the ceremonial context of Jennings' collated aesthetic plays a role in Boyle's undermining of Jennings' non-totalising, conflictual, and open-ended depiction of British history. Similarly, it has shown that the site-specificity of the exhibition at the JMNY facilitates an imaginative experience for audiences of 'The Arcades: Contemporary Art and Walter Benjamin'. The chapter therefore suggests that the contemporary critical potential of *The Arcades Project* and *Pandaemonium* is dependent on the cultural producers and institutions who mine the projects for inspiration. The work of the JMNY does not only suggest that capitalist instrumentality may still offer space for its own subversion, but that the city, even the global capital of finance, may create opportune space for revolution.

Boyle's opening ceremony significantly contorts the character of its original nature, particularly its original rejection of the idea of progress in history. The example shows that, whilst some of the formal and stylistic approaches of Jennings' *Pandaemonium*, such as the use of imaginative and literary sources to represent the past, are maintained in *Isles of Wonder*, the overall openness of meaning potentialized when these types of sources were handled by Jennings, is discontinued in Boyle. Whilst ambiguity remains, as analysed in relation to the NHS scene, the fundamental

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[264] Benjamin, 'Paralipomena', pp. 401–11.

horizontality of the collated aesthetic does not exist in *Isles of Wonder*, making the perception of a *now* difficult for even the most 'mimetically gifted readers'.[265] This points to the importance of polyvocality, of the construction of history in and through different perspectives. Jennings' collection of conflictual narratives on the Industrial Revolution supports readers in their independent thought. To transpose the words of Hoffman onto Boyle, *Isles of Wonder* did not achieve, in its use of the collated aesthetic, the representation of a world so entrenched in contradiction that it is open to change. *Isles of Wonder* makes difficult the perception that 'the world is not a fait accompli but a transformable situation', in its fixed, linear depiction of history, as cause and effect.[266]

Boyle's ceremonial, nationalistic, and patriotic instrumentalisation of Jennings reiterates through its depiction of a progressive, linear, and developmental history, the very problematics of the nineteenth-century historicism that Jennings subverted with the collated aesthetic of *Pandaemonium*. As Hogan's analysis supports, the Olympic Movement makes space only for three winners, and in no case are these the audience. The winners of the 2012 Olympic Games, as with all editions of the Games, include capitalism, socially dominant groups, and the state — all of which have an internal relation, and complicity with one another.[267] The collated aesthetics' incorporation into the Olympic Movement meant that revolutionary classes — whilst having a historical precedent in making great political gestures in the public domain — could never win. To conclude, the specific cultural context for which the interwar historiographic collated aesthetic is instrumentalised, plays a significant role in shaping audience positionality and critical potential. Boyle appropriates motifs and concepts found in *Pandaemonium* without making productive the revolutionary potential described in the thesis, as being an outcome of the collated aesthetic. Untapped potential, therefore, remains for Jennings' interwar collated aesthetic to *activate* audiences, to reorient audiences of history, in a polyvocal and internally discordant representation of the Industrial Revolution and its ever-unfurling social ramifications.

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[265] Hansen, Cinema and Experience, p. 148.

[266] Hoffman, p. 18.

[267] Hogan, p. 119.

Conclusion

This thesis has brought British documentary filmmaker Humphrey Jennings together with German critic and philosopher Walter Benjamin in what is, to date, the only at-length consideration of the pair's correspondences. As this thesis has shown, Benjamin and Jennings offer more than the sum of their individual parts when brought into analytic proximity. Their togetherness has led to the development of a new concept: the collated aesthetic, distinct from both collage and montage. The concept of a collated aesthetic provides a new way of understanding and exploring the production of a fragmentary, juxtaposed, and variegated form of representation, which was developed almost simultaneously by Benjamin and Jennings between the two world wars. Whilst the concept includes within it a process of editing, which is drawn from the influence Benjamin and Jennings took from twentieth-century avant-garde approaches to representation, the concept of a collated aesthetic illuminates and accounts for something *more* than that which is addressed by definitions of collage and montage, in isolation or in combination.

In Benjamin's and Jennings' demonstrations of a shared methodology, the selection of poetic and ambiguous fragments is paramount. These two practitioners show a concern for the power of single fragments to imbue an open-ended form of meaning. As the technique's development in *Spare Time* and *One-Way Street* registers, the collated aesthetic, from its very inception, is constructed using fragments, which in themselves invite audiences into a non-instrumental, imaginative form of textual engagement. Open-ended in character, even prior to their being situated in a wider, non-totalising collated arrangement, the shots and paragraphs which make up *Spare Time* and *One-Way Street* respectively are eminently 'poetic'. Such a notion of the poetic is not predicated on verse or rhyme, but, instead, on how Benjamin and Jennings' proclivities toward creation culminate in a complication of didactic communication. The collated aesthetic started out with the making of poetic elements, from which multiple meanings can be derived.

In *One Way Street* and *Spare Time*, Benjamin and Jennings engage in self-production, as the author/auteur of their own fragments. As *The Arcades Project* and *Pandaemonium* both reveal, the propensity for Benjamin and Jennings to *create* a

certain type of fragment is carried over into their curatorial selection and deselection of extracts located in pre-published texts. Their historiographic projects reveal an approach to historical research which is governed by an enduring concern for literary, poetic, and philosophical perspectives, wherein meaning is non-foreclosed. *The Arcades Project* and *Pandaemonium,* therefore, offer an example of an approach to historical representation which is uninterested in reason, rationality, or the verifiable logic of empiricism, and instead makes critically opportune the potentials of conjecture and inexactness.

What is crucial in the distinction between montage, collage, and the collated aesthetic, is that the poetic character of the latter is not solely located in its assemblage, but instead, in the inherent quality of each individual fragment. Benjamin and Jennings' collated aesthetic, therefore, is dependent on the creation or archival selection of suggestive, resonant, expressive, and graphically poignant scraps, which are strategically reworked as a critical approach to materialist representation. Accordingly, the collated aesthetic also registers an organisational approach, which, bearing similarities with classic definitions of montage, can be understood as an editing principle. The assemblage of specially selected evocative fragments offers a creative experience for recipient audiences, which deepens and extends the experience of non-instrumentality provoked in the complications to coherence afforded by juxtaposition. These collections are variegated, composed of fragments extracted from a broad range of genres. This approach has a direct relationship to the context of collagist experimentation, within which Benjamin and Jennings worked. Crucially, however, the collated aesthetic is not reducible to variegation, as in collage, or the mere juxtaposition of these elements, as in montage.

The collated aesthetic assembles fragments of a disparate nature as a means of presenting, rather than narrating or explaining, contention, opposition, contradiction, or mere variance within the histories of industrialisation and commodification. The incongruous collation of fragments, which are in themselves already resistant to singular meaning, is a foundational gesture which provides 'building blocks' for the pair's typical mode of construction. This actualisation further develops the approaches to representation already acknowledged as part of avant-garde practice. Brought into common proximity, the scraps collected by Benjamin and Jennings elicit conflicts and

incongruences. The past appears unresolved, complicated, and filled with an abundance of incompatible beliefs and experiences expressed in a variety of genres. This multiplicity of unresolved perspectives is formative of a confusing or disorienting representation of the past and promotes debate.

As non-coherent, non-rationalised collections, these works facilitate the power for an uncontrollable spontaneity of feelings and emotions to shape the experience of imaginative meaning-making. The collated aesthetic, in its representation of material conditions using a heterogeneity of expressive literary or visual fragments, potentializes, as a collection, the evocation of that which lies beyond the text; that which is unwritten. Such a potential does not form part of existent definitions of collage and montage but is significant in the comprehension of Benjamin's and Jennings' correspondent practice as a collated aesthetic.

As Chapter One argues, the collated aesthetic must be considered in terms of critical evocation. The collated aesthetic proffers an undetermined emotional experience. The arousal of feelings, driven in and through the non-totalising construction of already imaginative scraps, offers — as is the crux of this new theoretical perspective on Benjamin and Jennings' correspondence — an important development in historiography. In a close and separate engagement with each figure, Chapters Two and Three show how even within the particularities of Jennings' and Benjamin's work, the collated aesthetic is predicated on a shared outcome which institutes a new kind of historiographic practice *and* a new kind of historical engagement. The anthropological materialism of Benjamin's *The Arcades Project* compels the audience to think, but not what to think; it positions readers to recognise the physical, the physiognomic, and the physiological. The shock of perceptual shifts become palpable as a non-linear neurological experience. Promoting a sudden realisation, the body is actualised in the profane illumination of Benjamin's historiographic collated aesthetic. As Chapter Three addresses, *Pandaemonium* represents the imagination across time through the literary remnants it left behind. These fragments nourish an imaginative surplus amongst readers. An open conversation of history is produced, eliciting a freedom to conceive outside of the parameters of instructive communication. The activation of a bodily phenomenon along with an intellectual one through the unification of perception and

representation in *Pandaemonium* also energises, in correspondence with Benjamin, the embodiment of history, as a textual experience, making anthropological materialism as method a common strand across both texts.

Resonant through its initial development in *Spare Time* and *One-Way Street*, the collated aesthetic critiques the culture of capitalism: the everyday norms and values which serve to maintain capitalism's economic base. These early, non-historiographic examples of cultural criticism are significant, in that they make palpable the way in which the collated aesthetic is born out of and responds to the contemporary experience of Benjamin and Jennings between the two world wars. The explicit focus on contemporaneity in these two examples — on the lived experience of a capitalism which is represented as being all-encompassing in its limitation of everyday imaginative potentiality — informs both the formal and thematic character of the collated aesthetic. Even the experience of time's passing, with which the film *Spare Time* engages, is an indicator of capitalist instrumentality: the objects which surround us, such as window displays designed to allure us, as Benjamin explains in his critique of technology in *One-Way Street*, are instruments mobilised for the ruling classes — a utensil wielded in the 'lust for profit'.[1]

The collated aesthetic is informed by critiques of the surrealists, which in the novels Benjamin read during the 1920s and the magazines Jennings read as a teenager, actualise a release of imaginative potential. Associating in avant-garde circles, Jennings' organisation of the first International Surrealist Exhibition in London in 1936, alongside a British contingency of surrealists as well as an international grouping, including Andre Breton, is imperative to understanding Jennings' bringing to bear of a collated aesthetic. While the inaugural exhibition of British Surrealism at London's Dulwich Picture Gallery in 2020 omitted Jennings' contribution to surrealism, his life conveys a surrealism in his works' form, approach, and his event participation and management. Benjamin's meeting of Louis Aragon, Robert Desnos and Leon-Paul Fargue in Paris, December 1930, marks a further correspondence with Jennings, insofar as both figures passed through surrealist circles in their development of the

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[1] *OWS*, p. 487.

collated aesthetic.[2] The role of the imagination for these groupings was not only an artistic pursuit, but a central component to their perception of revolutionary activity as socio-cultural, economic, and political transformation.

The collated aesthetic, initially developed by Benjamin and Jennings for their contemporary moment, was subsequently evolved, by both, to become a historiographic mode — a means of realising the historical character of their contemporary recognition of a crisis of the imagination. Benjamin and Jennings dispensed of their previous authorial roles (writer, filmmaker) in their historiographic mobilisation of the collated aesthetic, revealing themselves in a new guise, as alternative 'historians'. Here, they create a technique whereby the past speaks through their construction. With the visual character of scraps drawn from a wide range of media providing a unifying feature of their interwar work, their book-based historical projects involved selecting only the most imagetic fragments from publications on science, technology, architecture, economics, philosophy, literature, and poetry, carefully carving out the most enigmatic and evocative slithers of text as a means of activating audiences, in a non-edifying sense, toward poetic meaning-making. Their approach, which focused on selecting and deselecting archival fragments, is approximate to the role of editor or of curator, suggesting something pertinent in the present, for optimising critical audience engagement in the gallery, museum, or magazine space.

As Chapter Four shows, however, something new happens with the historiographic collated aesthetic in the contemporary moment. Re-interpreted by new practitioners and instrumentalised in new cultural paradigms, what was anticipatory in the interwar period becomes chiefly conservative in the example of Boyle. Whilst Boyle re-works *Pandaemonium* in a way which draws on the experience of ambiguity, bringing to bear a series of theatrical acts which use imaginative and non-empirical historical works to depict the past, the Britain-boosting context of the Olympic opening ceremony jeopardises the radical and critical potential of ambiguity, realised in the original collated aesthetic. Meaning is closed in Boyle's iteration of *Pandemonium*: each act is part of an arrangement which tells a linearised,

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[2] Benjamin, 'Paris Diary', trans. by Rodney Livingstone in *SW*, II.1, 337–54 (pp. 350–51).

developmental story of the past. The chronological structure of Jennings' collated aesthetic in *Pandaemonium* avoids the perception of automatic progress, precisely due to its inclusion of conflictual perspectives on industrialisation set within a collated proximity. This is disbanded in Boyle, however. He severs Jennings' fragment of Blake's 'Preface to Milton' (*Jerusalem*), tearing the socially critical image of a bucolic paradise from its context as a wish image within the treacherousness of his industrial age. Boyle's chronology prevents the representation and inclusion of alternative meaning, which in Blake, is existent within the same epoch. *Isles of Wonder* serves the patriotic representation of Britain as ever-improving in and through Boyle's silencing of critical historical voices. Boyle portrays social cohesion in his representation of change, with the proletariat depicted as willingly sacrificing their bodies in a wider process of advancement.

'The Arcades: Contemporary Art and Walter Benjamin', however, in quite a different reception, realises Benjamin's profane illumination as an embodied experience. Goldsmith and his team elevate the critical potential of the collated aesthetic as a spatial gallery rendering. The movement of visitors across and within the exhibition continues Benjamin's original engagement with modernity as an ontology of the body. It is through physical convulsions and a non-rationalist spatial experience that a cultural history of modernity and modernism is made open, maintaining the rejection of totality and didacticism as a characteristic of the collated aesthetics' radicality.

It is only in the original collated aesthetic that Benjamin's and Jennings' approach to materialist representation reveals its correspondences. It is from an interwar, socio-political perspective that Benjamin and Jennings critique the formal attributes of linear narrative and totalised, didactic communication. 'Showing and not telling', *The Arcades Project* and *Pandaemonium* negate narrative commentary. As this thesis has shown, there is a shared muting of authorial voice across Benjamin and Jennings. Both figures flatten subjects and themes, with an over-stimulatory horizontality of elements. Their placing of irreconcilable fragments in such proximity engenders, in their representation of discordance, a critical experience of confusion which brings to bear an epistemological opportunity to make meaning anew. In a sense, that which unites these two creatives amounts to a kind of formalist criticism,

whilst equally enacting the socio-political and cultural criticisms often overlooked in formalist movements. Perhaps it is better to say, that the historiographic collated aesthetic has the semblance of a formal set of principles, but is in fact, a protest against the apparatus of tradition, continuity, and progress.

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