

THE NOMAD PAST:
GERMAN HISTORIES, ITALIAN JOURNEYS,
AND THE VISIBLE TEXTURE OF TIME

by

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For Mom

Acknowledgements

As the present work has sought to explore unconventional and nomadic landscapes of history and historiography, the itineraries of its writing have likewise required a nomadism similar to those of its subject matter. Yet while these explorations have required the crossing of oceans and national boundaries, while it has meant moving through disciplinary and methodological boundaries, and while it has often meant passing beyond the confines of my own expectations and uncertainties, this journey could not have been possible had it not been for the rich territories of goodwill, assistance and fellowship through which it passed. For as any traveler knows all too well, the significance of exotic destinations always seems to fade before the memory of those who joined us along the way, those friends and the mentors who, in the good times, shared the pleasures of the journey and, in the bad times, helped shoulder its burdens. Indeed, even the most stalwart of travelers – whether passing through windswept steppes or navigating the labyrinth of the archive – sometimes requires the encouragement of a friend, words of advice from a fellow pilgrim, and a place to rest a weary head. And if such a journey has any real reward, then its riches consist precisely in the people and places who made the wanderer feel at home.

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Table of Contents

Dedication	ii
Acknowledgments	iii
Abstract	ix
Introduction:	
The Territories of Historicism and the Visions of the Nomad	1
Part I - Fragments of Rome: Jacob Burckhardt and the Ruins of History	
Chapter One	
Basel, Berlin, Italy:	
Burckhardt's Early Itineraries in the Age of Historicism	61
Chapter Two	
The Subject as a Work of Art:	
<i>Anschauung</i> as Remembrance in the <i>Cicerone</i>	123
Chapter Three	
Rome, Capital of the Seventeenth Century:	
Burckhardt, Urban Space and Baroque Modernity	165
Part II - The Library and the Archive:	
Aby Warburg, Sigmund Freud and <i>Fin-de-Siècle</i> Italy	
Chapter Four	
<i>Per Monstrum ad Astra</i> :	
The Library of Aby Warburg and the Labyrinth of Italy	221
Chapter Five	
<i>Auch ich im Archiv</i> :	
Sigmund Freud and the Italian Scene of Writing	289

Part III - The Dialectics of Sightseeing: Walter Benjamin, German Historicism and a Little Red Book	
Chapter Six Let's Go!	
On the Road with Walter Benjamin and Auratic Historicism	336
Chapter Seven	
Walter Benjamin, Karl Baedeker and the Porous Theater of Naples	392
Conclusion	432
Bibliography	457

Abstract

This study examines the relationship between German historical thought and the travel cultures of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, and it investigates how mobile forms of visibility (art tours, sightseeing, urban experience) conditioned the reception of historical traces and historically resonant spaces. Organized around the work and travel of Jacob Burckhardt, Aby Warburg, Sigmund Freud and Walter Benjamin, the dissertation focuses on mobile and visual receptions of the Italian past, at both popular and elite levels, and how these challenged and complicated the landscapes of historical consciousness that had been shaped by nineteenth-century German historicism. By examining Burckhardt's *Cicerone* and his journeys to Rome, Warburg's reconstructions of the Italian Renaissance, Freud's Pompeian "archive", and Benjamin's Neapolitan *Denkbild*, this study reveals how Italian travel became an opportunity for exploration of alternative set of historical reconstructions. Furthermore, by simultaneously reading these phenomena alongside popular accounts of travel and visual culture – such as Baedeker guidebooks and literary magazines – the dissertation brings into relief an experience of history that emerged through encounters with material culture, through visual experience and various forms of mobility and displacement. Thus, where conventional approaches of the German historicist tradition – extending from Leopold von Ranke to Friedrich Meinecke - tended to produce historical landscapes organized around linear narrative forms and national geographies, the study reveals forms of historical representation that

emerged at the margins of these historicist practices/territories. In terms of theory, the dissertation borrows the concept of “nomadism” from Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, a concept that captures a form of mobile alterity in both conceptual and physical spaces, and shows how the work of Burckhardt, Warburg, Freud and Benjamin represented “nomadic” detours from the historiographical territories defined by German historicism. Furthermore, the dissertation shows how these mobile, visually-oriented and historical “nomadisms” manifested what Gilles Deleuze and Christine Buci-Glucksmann have described as baroque representational forms. Ultimately, the dissertation describes approaches that pursued historical experience not from within the methodological and conceptual territories of classical German historicism, but instead embraced modes of baroque historical experience whose representations were characterized by categories like theatricality, visuality, allegory, simultaneity, and historical rupture.

Introduction:
The Territories of Historicism and the Visions of the Nomad

The constructions of history are comparable to military orders that discipline the true life and confine it to barracks.

Walter Benjamin, *Passagen-Werk*, (S1a,3)

The yellowing, leather-bound volume had already seen much use by the time it was transformed into a child's scrapbook. In the past, it had been a register or ledger of sorts, its pages neatly filled with careful, businesslike entries spanning the years 1791 to 1798. Nearly four decades later, however, a new owner took possession of the volume, and conferred upon it both a new title and a new function. For the better part of three years, from 1833 to 1836, the book became an anthology—or *Sammelband* as Burckhardt described it—of historically oriented odds and ends that its youthful author would collectively entitled *Antiquities*. On pages once filled exclusively with the lines and figures of the accountant, new entries in the form of images, sketches and commentary now appeared. The volume became a registry of a different kind, a young man's collection of historical fragments and traces of various sorts. Coins, allegorical emblems, maps, architectural plans, heraldry and dynastic genealogies were all here patiently affixed and arranged in an attempt to organize, and render visible, the pieces of a past that

littered a young man's present. What had once been, in other words, an accountant's ledger had become a child's historical *Wunderkammer*, or cabinet of curiosities.¹

The book in question belonged to a young Jacob Burckhardt and is described in detail by Swiss historian Werner Kaegi in his seven volume biographical odyssey dedicated to the Basel historian. For Kaegi, the collection of *Antiquities* represents an illuminating glimpse into an early encounter between the youthful Burckhardt and the traces, marks and fragments of a past to whose study he would later devote his life. But whether or not such juvenilia can tell us much about the specific trajectory of Burckhardt's intellectual biography, it nevertheless remains a remarkably suggestive document, one that forces us to think about the ways in which relationships with the past have been, and can be, constructed, organized and perhaps even undermined. In other words, despite (or perhaps because of) its juvenile origins and its idiosyncratic character, Burckhardt's *Antiquities* represents a peculiarly dense example of a particular kind of relation to the past, one whose character is markedly at odds with the more conventional and more legitimate historical "imaginaries" of its era. Like Foucault's evocation of Borges' "Chinese Encyclopedia" at the opening of *The Order of Things*, Burckhardt's anthology prompts us to pause and ask exactly what organizing principle governs this fantastic collection. What are the criteria for inclusion and exclusion? What kind of past

¹ The *Wunderkammer*, or cabinet of curiosities, refers to a largely early modern practice of encyclopedic collection and display, a practice often deploying idiosyncratic categories of organization and presentation. A rich literature has emerged in recent years regarding the relation between the *Wunderkammer* and the development of modern forms of the museum. See for instance: Oliver Impey and Arthur MacGregor, *Origins of Museums: The Cabinet of Curiosities in Sixteenth and Seventeenth Century* (London: British Museum Pubs., 2000); Helmar Schramm, Ludger Schwarte and Jan Lazardzig eds., *Collection, Laboratory, Theater: Scenes of Knowledge in the 17th Century* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2005); Peter M. McIsaac, *Museums of the Mind: German Modernity and the Dynamics of Collecting* (University Park, PA: Penn State Press, 2007).

is here made visible, and perhaps rendered sensible, to the young man who patiently constructed this *Wunderkammer*?

In order to put such questions into perspective, however, we might recall that an historical collection of a very different sort was just then taking shape in the German academies to the north. Established in 1819 by Prussian reformer Karl vom Stein, the *Gesellschaft für ältere deutsche Geschichtskunde* undertook the enormous project of gathering, editing and publishing the extant sources of German medieval history. The result was the *Monumenta Germaniae Historica* which, after its first volume was published in 1826, was quickly recognized as one of the landmark achievements of nineteenth-century German historical studies.² Indeed, the *Monumenta* served as both a symbol and example of an approach to historical scholarship that would come to be known as German historicism, an approach that would achieve and maintain hegemonic disciplinary status well into the twentieth century. And while the governing principles of Burckhardt's juvenilia remain somewhat opaque, those that guided the specific project of the *Monumenta*, and the more general aims of the German school, were certainly not. With the rather unambiguous motto of *Sanctus amor patriae dat animum* ("Holy love for the fatherland gives the spirit"), and with its roots in the era of Prussian reform, the *Monumenta* openly declared itself a patriotic undertaking. Its task was that of salvaging and restoring a past to the German nation, of making possible a coherent national narrative where there had once been only mute fragments. To this end, such traces were to be gathered together and made available for the kind of rigorous, critical research then

² Harry Bresslau, *Geschichte der Monumenta Germaniae Historica: Im Auftrage ihrer Zentralkommission* (Hannover: Hahn'sche, 1976).

being pioneered by Leopold von Ranke and his seminar at the University of Berlin. What subsequently emerged from such seminars, and from projects like the *Monumenta*, was the establishment of an historiographical tradition that would not only play an enormous role in the construction of German national self-consciousness during the nineteenth century, but would go far in defining the methodological character and commitments of modern historical scholarship in Germany and beyond.

At the same time, while true enough as far as it goes, such a description of German historicism nevertheless remains squarely in the realm of the commonplace, both revealing too little and claiming too much about the tradition. Too little, because historicism was always more than a mere set of innovative methodological and institutional arrangements among German intellectual and academics. Too much, because the origins of a recognizably modern, ostensibly rigorous and institutionally legitimate study of the past are often crudely traced to those of an over-valorized German historical tradition. What usually goes missing in such narratives—whether found in antiquarian intellectual histories or in triumphalist quests for disciplinary origins—are the cultural and ideological dimensions of German historicism. The point here is the fact that historicism was a cultural and historical phenomenon, intimately linked to, and embedded within a larger and historically specific complex of social and political projects.³ While historicism was certainly an enormously successful and influential approach to producing a visible and usable past, it was nevertheless an invention and not a discovery, an

³ See, for instance, the expansive formulation of Annette Wittkau in *Historismus: Zur Geschichte des Begriffs und des Problems* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1992). “Im Laufe des 19. Jahrhunderts setzte sich dieses geschichtswissenschaftliche Erkenntnisverfahren nach und nach in allen Kulturbereichen durch: Politik, Recht, Wirtschaft, Moral und Religion, ja selbst Music und Kunst wurden mit Hilfe dieser Erkenntnismethode historisch erforscht. Die Geschichtswissenschaft wurde zur Leitwissenschaft des Jahrhunderts.”

invention designed to appropriate (and encourage the appropriation of) the past in a specific fashion for specific purposes. If History, therefore, can trace its origins as a modern discipline to the German school of the nineteenth century, then “discipline” must surely be understood in the Foucaultian sense. For in the methods, the institutions and the theoretical apparatus this tradition produced, there emerged a vision of the past that was enforced as much as revealed, and a vision whose cultural influence extended throughout the nineteenth-century academy and penetrated deeply into the historical cultures and consciousness of modern Germany.⁴

Historicism, from this perspective, was both a powerfully integrative social formation and a cultural optic through which territories of the past were to be

⁴ The literature on both the theories and practices of historicism is enormous, but it is also fragmented by the various ways in which the term has come to be defined and described – both as a set of historical institutions and as a body of thought that continues to play a role in contemporary discussions. One can see in the following how historicism still remains a very mobile topic, with works ranging from Ranke to the currents of the so-called New Historicism of the 80’s and 90’s. For a general institutional and intellectual introduction, see the still very useful: Georg Iggers, *The German Conception of History* (Hannover, NH: Wesleyan University Press, 1968). Also see Iggers’, “Historicism: The History and Meaning of the Term,” *Journal of the History of Ideas* 56, no. 1 (1995). Likewise useful are: Peter Koslowski, ed., *The Discovery of Historicity in German Idealism and Historism Studies in Economic Ethics and Philosophy* (Berlin: Springer, 2005); Arnaldo Momigliano, *Historicism Revisited* (Amsterdam: North-Holland, 1974). Paul Hamilton, *Historicism* (London: Routledge, 1996); Peter Hanns Reill, *The German Enlightenment and the Rise of Historicism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1975); Thomas Howard, *Religion and the Rise of Historicism: W.M.L. De Wette, Jacob Burckhardt, and the Theological Origins of Nineteenth-Century Historical Consciousness* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2000); Robert D’Amico, *Historicism and Knowledge* (New York: Routledge, 1989); Marjorie Levinson, *Rethinking Historicism: Critical Readings in Romantic History* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1989); Stephen and Catherine Gallagher Greenblatt, *Practicing New Historicism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000); Friedrich Engel-Janosi, *The Growth of German Historicism* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1944); Charles R Bambach, *Heidegger, Dilthey, and the Crisis of Historicism* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1995); Michael Birk, Monika Steinhäuser, and Verband für Kunst- und Kulturwissenschaften Ulmer Verein, *Geschichte allein ist zeitgemäß: Historismus in Deutschland* (Lahn-Giessen: Anabas-Verlag Kampf, 1978); Horst Walter Blanke, and Jorn Rusen, ed., *Von der Aufklärung zum Historismus. Zum Strukturwandel des historischen Denkens* (Paderborn: Ferdinand Schöningh, 1984); Erich Fülling, *Geschichte als Offenbarung. Studien zur Frage Historismus und Glaube von Herder bis Troeltsch* (Berlin: 1956); Thomas Nipperdey, “Historismus und Historismuskritik Heute 1976,” in *Gesellschaft, Kultur, Theorie, gesammelte Aufsätze zur neuen Geschichte* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht); Annette Wittkau, *Historismus: Zur Geschichte des Begriffs und des Problems* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1992); Roland Kamzelak, and Gotthart Wunberg ed., *“Historische Gedächtnisse sind Palimpseste”: Hermeneutik, Historismus, New Historicism, Cultural Studies* (Paderborn: Mentis, 2001).

constructed, made visible, and rendered useful. Whether in its methodological and theoretical innovations, or in its political and institutional commitments, historicism not only produced a set of temporal landscapes through whose mapping Germany could come to know itself, but also strictly governed the legitimate means by which such landscapes could be explored and exploited. To be sure, if historicism defined historical spaces that could be charted in relation to national, social and cultural discourses, in terms of both substance and method, one must admit that a work such as that of Burckhardt's anthology lies far outside its disciplinary boundaries. If the *Monumenta* is a defining milestone in the construction and surveying of an historicist past, the *Antiquities* can only appear at best as a child's fancy and at worst as a kind of dangerous alien artifact. In its provenance as the work of a child, its emphasis on visual traces of the past, its character as a palimpsest of overlapping narratives, its impulses towards collage, its resistance to a central and linear *telos*, Burckhardt's scrapbook pursues its exploration of the past in ways that would render it utterly senseless to the professionally trained, nationally oriented and philologically sensitive writers of the German historical school. And yet there the volume sits, quietly communicating with the past. It produces meanings and moves in grammars perhaps comprehensible only to a young Swiss teen, but it nevertheless represents, however obscurely, a relation or dialogue with the past. In this, the scrapbook represents a sort of insistent externality, a willful and *Eigensinnig* alterity in the face of the territorial regimes defined by historicism. Its landscapes lie resolutely beyond the boundaries prescribed by legitimately scientific history, and in territories defined by its own methods and its own movements. The scrapbook, in other

words, is a temporal outside that refuses to be brought within the disciplinary *Heimat* of “conventional” and “legitimate” historical practice.

What the scrapbook represents, to borrow a term from Gilles Deleuze, is a kind of “nomadism,” a sort of insistent externality that resists re-territorialization within the historical topographies defined by historicism. Indeed, if the territories of German historical consciousness in the nineteenth century were decisively shaped and informed by the discourses of academic historicism, the scrapbook of the young Jacob Burckhardt nevertheless bears witness to an ever-present possibility of movement, alterity and escape, an alternate *topos* of historical memory and reflection which persists beyond the boundaries of conventional methodologies and conceptual frameworks. In light of this, the aim of the present work is to explore several such historical “elsewheres” as they emerged in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, “elsewheres” whose alterity emerged both beyond and in relation to the territorial contours of historical consciousness that had been established and enforced by the powerful discourses of German historicism. The object, in other words, is not to recapitulate or rehearse the institutional and disciplinary history of German historicism, but to seek out and describe a set of historical interventions that emerged on its margins and in its shadow.

The present work therefore hopes to trace the movements and methods of what I have here called a “nomad past,” a mode of historical reflection that evades enclosure in conventional historiographical boundaries. To this end, the work is organized around a series of historical interventions and expeditions conducted by Jacob Burckhardt, Aby Warburg, Sigmund Freud and Walter Benjamin, and the first of several threads that the following chapters trace out emerges in the marginal position each occupied in relation to

their contemporary historical institutions. Indeed, while each devoted a significant portion of his intellectual efforts to questions of history, memory and temporality, none of them could truly claim full membership in the *Zunft*, or guild, of German historical scholarship. Taken together—from Burckhardt’s border outpost in mid-nineteenth century Basel to Benjamin’s last moments in 1940 on the frontier between France and Spain—these figures describe a persistent minor key and nomadic accompaniment to the powerful major chords of German historicism, as this latter developed from the zenith of influence in the mid-nineteenth century to its eventual decline in the twentieth.

Also tying these figures together, and forming a second thread that links the discussion that follows, is the centrality assumed by Italy and Italian travel in their professional careers and personal lives. Of course, for the author of *The Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy*, the affinity for and significance of Italy may seem self evident. In the course of periodic journeys from the late 1830’s to the early 1880’s, Italian travel remained a defining feature of the Basel historian’s career for nearly half a century. In similar fashion, the Italophilia of Freud has long been remarked upon by observers and commentators. Not only did Freud document his own “neurotic” fascination with the Italian South, emerging most prominently in recurring anxiety dreams involving travel to Rome, but the experience of Italy’s archeological landscapes also yielded a rich vein of metaphorical reflection that penetrated deep into the architecture of psychoanalytic consciousness. The Hamburg art historian Aby Warburg, Freud’s German contemporary, likewise found in Italy a source of ongoing inspiration and fascination. From his participation in August Schmarsow’s Florentine art historical seminar in 1888 until his 1929 death in Rome, Warburg’s career was defined by an interest in the migratory

patterns of images and ideas, whether these traversed the boundaries between antiquity and modernity or circulated in passages between Italy and Germany. And as Warburg's career was drawing to a close, Walter Benjamin's 1924 journey to Capri and Naples also represented a decisive moment in the development of his thought, a moment that would continue to resonate in his writings until his death in 1940. "One can speak of the origin of the *Passagen-Werk*," writes Susan Buck-Morss in the first paragraph of the *Dialectics of Seeing*, "in the simple historical sense of the time and place it was conceived. But if 'origin' is understood in Benjamin's own philosophical sense, as 'that which emerges out of the process of becoming and disappearing,' then the moment is arguably the summer of 1924, and the place is not Paris, but Italy."⁵ For all of these figures, then, each hovering on the margins of professional historical discourse, methodological and conceptual peregrinations seem intimately bound up with the spatial expeditions of Italian travel.

For all these figures, Italy came to represent an "elsewhere", a heterotopia that could be located not only as a spatial elsewhere, but in all the various dimensions and fields of alterity in which a nomad could wander: beyond national historiographies, disciplinary institutions, methodological boundaries, familial expectations, and many more. Central to the present argument, then, is a conception of nineteenth-century cultures of travel and mobility that possessed not only a well-documented imperial and expansive dimension, but also harbored parallel and countervailing, even if brief, impulses towards de-territorialization. And in this respect, Italian travel represented a unique and mobile laboratory for the kind of historical nomadism that we have described.

⁵ Susan Buck-Morss, *The Dialectics of Seeing: Walter Benjamin and the Arcades Project* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1989), 8.

Italy, in other words, presented a unique set of both problems and opportunities for the German historical imaginary. Even before crossing the Alps, for example, the German traveler confronted an array of discourses that had settled like sediment in and around the concept of Italy and the *Italienische Reise*. On the one hand there was the humanist Italy, born from the pens of Winckelmann and Goethe, and extending its influence well into the twentieth century. At its cultural zenith, this tradition transformed the Italian journey into an obligatory pilgrimage for the German *Bildungsbürgertum*, a pilgrimage whose object was largely one of aesthetic and sensual self-discovery or re-invention.⁶ Alternately, in the course of the nineteenth century, such travel often took the form of a more scholarly pursuit, with first the connoisseur and then the researcher approaching Italy as an object of scientific investigation. Still later, Italy would be invited to shed its aestheticized aura and emerge as an object of political reflection, initially as a laboratory and collection of various political systems and later as a means of meditating on processes of national unification. Ultimately, Italy would become associated with a recognizably modern regime of leisure in which the Italian journey was transformed into a holiday or a vacation. Likewise, confessional and regional concerns added still further variety to possible orientations towards Italy. Whatever the case, however, the German vision of Italy, with its rich variety of competing and conflicting discourses, was distinctly overdetermined long before one reached the Brenner Pass. It was a place burdened by a

⁶ For the relations between the eighteenth-century humanistic traditions and the broader cultures of education and *Bildung* in the nineteenth century see: Suzanne Marchand, *Down from Olympus: Archaeology and Philhellenism in Germany, 1750-1970* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003).

tangle of personal memories, political histories, visions of utopia and omens of tragedy—a place both outside history and yet a place irreducibly historical.⁷

Indeed, the experience of Italian travel itself presented special problems for the German historical imaginary whose repertoire was governed by imperatives of narrative, textuality, a linear perspective, and national memory. In the first instance, the brute density of the material and cultural traces of the past in Italy seemed to demand, and yet nevertheless resist, the impulse towards conventional linear historical narrative. The Italian landscape was inundated not with history, but with histories; every surface that tells a story conceals another surface that tells a second, while confessional, political, cultural and individual histories were indissolubly bound together in a single, distinctly non-linear landscape. At the same time, the Italian experience was almost uniformly represented as an intensely sensual and affective phenomenon, the past and its traces emerging with the immediacy of an intense visual spectacle. Thus, although textual

⁷ For classic and somewhat neglected statements on the general issues of travel and tourism, see Siegfried Kracauer's "Travel and Dance" in *The Mass Ornament*, and Hans Magnus Enzensberger's 1964 "Eine Theorie des Tourismus" [A Theory of Tourism]. Examples of more recent research might include works such as the following: *Reisekultur: von der Pilgerfahrt zum modernen Tourismus* (München: Beck, 1991) edited by Bausinger, Beyrer and Korff; James Buzard's *The Beaten Track: European Tourism, Literature and the Ways to Culture, 1880-1918* (1993); James Clifford's *Routes: Travel and Translation in the Late Twentieth Century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997); Hall and Pierce's *The Geography of Tourism and Recreation Environment, Place and Space* (London: Routledge, 1999); *Tourism, Commercial Leisure and National Identities in 19th and 20th Century Europe and North America* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2000) edited by Shelley Baranowski and Ellen Furlough. Examples of more recent monograph and essay literature include works such as Inderpal Grewpal's *Home and Harem: Nation, Gender, Empire and the Cultures of Travel* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1996); Maura O'Connor's *The Romance of Italy and the English Political Imagination* (New York: Macmillan, 1998); and Rudy Koshar's *German Travel Cultures* (Oxford: Berg, 2000); Christopher Hennig, *Reiselust. Touristen, Tourismus und Urlaubskultur* (Frankfurt a.M.: 1997); David Crouch, and Nina Lübbren, ed., *Visual Culture and Tourism* (Oxford: Berg, 2003); J. Culler, "The Semiotics of Tourism," in *Framing the Sign: Criticism and Its Institutions* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1988); Christine Keitz, "Die Anfänge des modernen Massentourismus in der Weimarer Republik," *Archiv für Sozialgeschichte* 33 (1993); Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, *Destination Culture. Tourism, Museums and Heritage* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998).

records and fragments of the Italian past were legion, and were dutifully collected and examined, such traces often seemed to pale before the kaleidoscopic jumble of the visual and the sensual. Likewise, the movement of the traveler himself seemed to encourage a resistance to the establishment of a stable frame of reference. As in Benjamin's reflections in his essay on Naples, conventional boundaries between various temporalities and spheres of life seem to become unstable and dissolve before the moving spectator. In other words, to risk an art historical metaphor, the German traveler often brought what might be called a "Renaissance" sensibility, to a "Baroque" Italy. Where the former sought out a kind of a kind of realism carefully framed in point perspective, what was encountered was a landscape of strange curving lines, encrusted with ornament, delighting in illusion, and encapsulated in allegory.

The third, and final, thread which weaves its way through these nomadic explorations manifests itself in a mode of historical reflection profoundly influenced by visual and sensual encounters with traces of the past. If the edifice of German historicism had been built, at least in part, on a foundation of philology and hermeneutics, a foundation whose bedrock could be located in the interpretation and evaluation of written texts, the historical meditations of Burckhardt, Warburg, Benjamin and, to lesser extent, Freud all generate a past that comes alive in the form of images, and in contours defined by visuality. "Where I can't proceed from visual contemplation or observation," as Burckhardt once remarked for example, "I accomplish nothing."⁸ Furthermore, as Walter Benjamin's investigations of nineteenth- and twentieth-century visual cultures revealed, the technological and cultural imperatives of modernity summoned images and icons to

⁸ Jacob Burckhardt, *Die Kunst der Malerei in Italien*, ed. Christine Tauber (Basel: Schwabe, 2003).

life on vast new scales of production and reproduction, a process that in turn yielded a visible past that crowded incessantly into the present. From various forms of architectural historicism to the advent and advance of photographic technologies, Benjamin's nineteenth century saw the past summoned into its various presents in increasingly powerful scopic ways. As Benjamin recognized, such visual apprehensions of the past—in a modern moment saturated with historical icons and imagery—could have profound implications for modern historical consciousness in general and historiography in particular. Indeed, if the study of history had never fully relinquished its familial relations with other genres of literature, and if modern historiography recognized itself in the production of coherent narratives and the interpretation of texts, Walter Benjamin was no less certain that such textual and narrative imperatives had to be revisited in light of a past that seemed ever more visible. The past, in other words, had to be understood not merely as series of textual narratives which are collected, evaluated and narrated by the historian, but instead as an ever moving constellation of images, a constellation whose arrangement required new methods and whose geometries yielded new histories. "History decays into images," he would declare with typical gnomic concision, "not into stories."⁹

⁹ The Literature on the historical dimensions of visual culture is likewise enormous and growing. For our purposes, however, the following have been influential and useful: Hal Foster, ed., *Vision and Visuality* (Seattle: Bay Press, 1988); Crouch, ed., *Visual Culture and Tourism*; Aruna D'Souza and Tim McDonough, ed., *The Invisible Flâneuse: Gender, Public Space, and Visual Culture in Nineteenth-Century Paris* (New York: Manchester University Press 2006); Teresa Brennan and Martin Jay ed., *Vision in Context: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives on Sight* (New York: Routledge, 1996); Jonathan Crary, *Techniques of the Observer: On Vision and Modernity in the Nineteenth Century* (Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press 1990); Martin Jay, *Downcast Eyes: The Denigration of Vision in Twentieth-Century French Thought* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994); Michael Levin ed., *Modernity and the Hegemony of Vision* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993); Dianne Harris, and D. Fairchild Ruggles, ed., *Sites Unseen : Landscape and Vision* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburg Press, 2007); Stephen Melville and Bill Readings, ed., *Vision and Textuality* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1995); Griselda Pollock, *Vision and Difference: Femininity, Feminism, and Histories of Art* (London: Routledge, 1988); Gary

But for the many observers of nineteenth and twentieth century European culture—and particularly for that critical tradition that extends from Baudelaire to Benjamin, Kracauer and others—an understanding of the visual dimensions of modernity was not complete without a recognition of its ephemeral, fleeting, and mobile dimensions. And in this sense, the threads of travel and visuality, which we have detected in the reflections of Burckhardt, Warburg, Freud and Benjamin, find themselves closely wound about one another. Baudelaire's modernity, for instance, as announced in critical works like *The Painter of Modern Life* and the poetry of *Flowers of Evil*, is a historical era best captured in its refusal of capture. It is a moment, for Baudelaire, of fleeting encounters, serendipitous correspondences, imagined exotic journeys and actual urban explorations, and the modern subject assembled itself in the midst of such ceaseless circulations and peregrinations. The figure of the *Flâneur*, as it was later picked up and interrogated in the work of Walter Benjamin, became the allegorical representative of this visually-informed species of nineteenth-century subjectivity, a model of modern self-construction which finds its constitutive elements and experiences in the urban wanderings of a modern male gaze. Such movements and mobilities, of course, likewise found echo in the development of modern and mobile representational forms, a development that extended from the crude movements of early nineteenth-century panoramas to the emergence of motion picture technology before the beginning of the

Shapiro, *Archaeologies of Vision: Foucault and Nietzsche on Seeing and Saying* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003); Anke Gleber, *The Art of Taking a Walk: Flânerie, Literature, and Film in Weimar Culture* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999); Rudolph Arnheim, "Space as an Image of Time," in *Images of Romanticism: Verbal and Visual Affinities*, ed. Karl and William Walling Kroeber (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1978); Patrick Maynard, *The Engine of Visualization: Thinking through Photography* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1997); Nicholas Mirzoeff, ed., *The Visual Culture Reader* (London: Routledge, 1998); Vanessa R. Schwartz, ed., *The Nineteenth-Century Visual Culture Reader* (London: Routledge, 2004).

twentieth. In the gyrations and movements of such representations, modern subjects and consumers of visual culture discovered a reflection that mirrored their own experience in increasingly mobile modernity. Indeed, whether wandering the alleys and byways of nineteenth-century Paris, or in the darkened spaces of the motion picture palace of Weimar Germany, the experience of such mobile visuality seems to recur as a central motif in modern subjectivity's attempts at self-constitution.

But if such mobile visual encounters did indeed become defining moments in the construction of subjectivity, if such gestures of collection and reassembly form an essential element of modern experience, then the phenomena of nineteenth and twentieth century of travel and sightseeing reveal themselves as a related set of activities. Thus, if Baudelaire's *Flânerie* constructed an identity from the journeys through the streets of Paris, and if Baudelaire's short youthful trip to Mauritius expanded into a personal mythology of exotic travel, the mobile gaze of the tourist or sightseer can be understood in a similar manner. Like the *Flâneur* at home in Paris, Berlin, or London, the movements of the traveler explored the boundaries between territories defining various identities—personal, familial, national, historical—as well as the regions of disorientation and de-territorialization that lay beyond. As Rudy Koshar writes in his *German Travel Cultures*, and in a passage that could likewise describe experience of the nineteenth-century *Flâneur*:

Tourism...is a form of leisure that potentially allows the individual to make sense of an existential fact of modern life: the consciousness of displacement. In other words, tourism may be a direct and tangible path to the feeling of being unsettled, but in a pleasurable manner, without the physical and psychological costs that displacement has for involuntary travelers.¹⁰

¹⁰ Rudy Koshar, *German Travel Cultures* (Oxford: Berg, 2000), 8.

Tourism, travel and sightseeing thus orbit around the same intriguing dialectical tension between order and disorder that Walter Benjamin located in the pursuits of the collector, that other allegorical figure inhabiting the landscape of nineteenth century Europe.¹¹ And if travel, like collecting, was often aimed at conventional destinations or conventional objects, the agency and subjectivity of its practitioners nevertheless emerged in the unique and serendipitous manner in which its elements were arranged and rearranged. “The national-liberal travel culture rested on the metaphorical figure of the collector traveler,” continues Koshar in relation to turn of the century travel, “a specific kind of traveler who had a quasi-mythical relationship with the sites and objects encountered on tour. Traveling was an important source of collective (and collecting) identity, but even when leisure travel aided the individual’s attachment to a social group or nation, it always had a deeply personal character.”¹²

Therefore, while the visual and sensual dimensions of travel could carry with them the baggage of familiar modes of identification—in the class-coded compartments of the train or in hotels and restaurants favored by a particular nationality—they also created spaces for highly personal experiences and individual interpretations, a field of potential nomadic exploration that escaped the well defined boundaries of the homeland. The present work will follow a similar set of visually and sensually inflected movements, a collection of modern mobilities whose trajectories moved through the careers and works of Jacob Burckhardt, Aby Warburg, Sigmund Freud and Walter Benjamin. And while these figures also carried with them, and felt the weight of, a rich variety of cultural and territorial baggage, their Italian travels nevertheless revealed a certain porousness in

¹¹ Ibid., 21.

¹² Ibid., 27.

such territorial demarcations, boundaries and demands. What resulted, therefore, was not merely a set of fleeting memories to be enjoyed at a later moment of rest, as the *Flâneur* might over an evening glass of absinthe, but the opening of a space in which a nomadic exploration of history—inflected by mobility and visibility—could accelerate beyond the disciplinary territories that defined German historical thought in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

Before climbing aboard the train ourselves, however, and following the Italian journeys of Burckhardt, Warburg, Freud and Benjamin, it is necessary to pause for moment and define the disciplinary territories and historical homelands that marked the point of their departures. For as the curves and epicycles of the planets make sense only in relation to the gravitational forces exerted by the nearest star, so too do the nomadic journeys of our various figures emerge only in relation to the methodological and conceptual hegemonies of German historicism. As is doubtless already evident, the present study relies on conceptual frameworks inspired by Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, in the figures of the territorial domain and the movements of the nomad. But at the same time, the powerful gravitational influence of nineteenth-century German historicism is perhaps best configured if we link Deleuze to the insights of his colleague Michel Foucault.¹³ For a closer look at the intellectual contours and institutional frameworks of professional history in general, and those of nineteenth-century German historicism in particular, reveals a constellation of phenomena whose outline is brought most clearly into focus by the Foucaultian concept of discipline.

¹³ See Michel Foucault, “Introduction” in Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. Mark Seem Robert Hurley, and Helen R. Lane (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1983). See also: Gilles Deleuze, *Foucault*, trans. Sean Hand (London: Continuum, 2006).

Of central importance, for the purposes of the present work, is the way in which the concept of disciplinarity collapses conventional distinctions between theory and practice, between intellectual and social phenomena. For where Foucault's earlier work had focused on spaces produced through influence and rupture of various epistemic discourses, the later work of *Discipline and Punish* and the *History of Sexuality* volumes yielded an approach more sensitive to the mutually reinforcing character of discursive phenomena and concrete practices. From this latter perspective, in other words, the disciplinary formations of modernity—its schools, its prisons, its clinics—could be reduced neither to the operations of concrete social formations nor to the discursive fortunes of a particular epistemic moment. The model of the discipline is one in which the experiences of the body and the reflections of the mind take shape in one and the same process; indeed, for Foucault, disciplines are precisely those conjunctions of concrete spaces and discursive formations in which things like bodies and minds may emerge as concepts at all. The architecture and institutional organization of the prison, for instance, is inextricably and dialectically linked to the discourses of surveillance it generates, and vice versa. What Foucault presents, in other words, is an understanding of human institutions that resists reduction to either intellectual or concrete social categories. And from this vantage point, the histories of medicine, psychology, carceral practices—and, yes, history itself—cannot be so easily contained in territorial categories like base and superstructure, but may bleed or metastasize into the larger milieus of the culture.

And yet, when one surveys the literature relating to the history of the historical discipline, territorial bifurcations of theory and practice clearly define the scholarly

terrain. Not surprisingly, this topography has been largely conditioned by ongoing developments of, and interactions between, the traditions of social history and the emerging trends of cultural history. And while each of these currents has produced extremely valuable and insightful additions to the discussion of history's disciplinary development, the conversation has too often been conducted in two different languages and with widely divergent conceptual outlooks. On the social history side of the ledger, the study of the discipline has naturally tended to focus on the social and ideological milieus in which the production of history emerged, the institutional and class formations in whose orbit the theories and practices of professional historiography took shape.¹⁴ On the other hand, however, disciplinary studies informed by what we would now call cultural history have long gravitated towards critical and linguistic treatments, surveying and reformulating the discipline as a relatively well-ordered body of literatures and rhetorics.¹⁵ If, in the former case, the historical discipline seemed to resonate in the key of ideology, the latter current reveals history in the tones of discourse.

¹⁴ Examples of this current can be found in Georg Iggers more "history of ideas" inflected *Concept of German History*, but also in more socially and institutionally inclined works like Fritz Ringer's, *The Decline of the German Mandarins: The German Academic Community, 1890-1933* (Wesleyan University Press, 1990).

¹⁵ Literatures of this sort have coalesced around discussion of the literary dimensions of history and the historical dimensions of literature. Historicism here emerges as an historical hermeneutic rather than a set of concrete institutions. See: Hayden White, *The Content of the Form : Narrative Discourse and Historical Representation* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1987); Hayden White, *Metahistory: The Historical Imagination in Nineteenth-Century Europe* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1973); Greenblatt, *Shakespearean Negotiations: The Circulation of Social Energy in Renaissance England* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988); Timothy Bahti, *Allegories of History: Literary Historiography after Hegel* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992). Jörn Rüsen and his colleagues have in some ways narrowed these divergent approaches in a variety of works. See: Jörn Rüsen, *Begriffene Geschichte: Genesis und Begründung der Geschichtstheorie J. G. Droysens* (Paderborn: Schöningh, 1969); Jörn Rüsen, *History: Narration, Interpretation, Orientation* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2005); Jörn Rüsen, *Konfigurationen Des Historismus: Studien Zur Deutsche Wissenschaftskultur* (Frankfurt a.M.: 1993); Jörn Rüsen, *Für eine erneuerte Historik: Studien zur Theorie D. Geschichtswiss* (Stuttgart-Bad Cannstatt: Frommann-Holzboog, 1976); Jörn Rüsen, ed., *Meaning and Representation in History* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2006).

A second and vital dimension of Foucault's concept of disciplinarity is its role in the production of knowledge and in the construction of subjectivity. While the later volumes of the *History of Sexuality* explore the possibilities of aesthetic self-construction, the more jaundiced textures of *Discipline and Punish* present subjectivity as an effect, rather than agent, of disciplinary intervention. The self-representations of the subject, along with all the categories by which it brings the world around it into visibility, are shaped and invited by the forms and operations of disciplinarity. The structures and spaces of clinical observation thus correspond to a certain configuration of subjectivity, a self whose body requires the intervention and colonization of medical knowledges and expertise. Indeed, the self here emerges most immediately through the forms and visibilities yielded by the production of such medical knowledge. Or alternatively, the subject of early penal incarceration is vastly different from the self-surveilling subject that moves through the dystopic carceral society that Foucault invokes at the end of *Discipline and Punish*. Indeed, if Foucault might wonder at the beginning of *The Order of Things* what sort of discursive apparatus could produce a collection like that in Borges' Chinese Encyclopedia, only several years later he would focus on the configurations of discipline and power that could generate such a menagerie. For if the old saying suggests that knowledge is power, Foucault seems to reverse the directionality of the dictum. It is not knowledge that yields power, but power in disciplinary form that produces and makes visible the objects of knowledge—from the most abstract categories of human science to the most intimate contours of the lived self.

By configuring the institutional history of German historicism in terms of Foucaultian disciplinarity, we may therefore approach it from another perspective, and

with another set of questions. Viewed from this angle, in other words, the relatively discrete phenomenon of the German Historical School may emerge in its fullness as both a set of concrete social institutions and an accretion of various bodies of expertise and knowledge. Furthermore, the disciplinary configuration of historicism permits us to see the ways in which such knowledges and institutions conditioned the patterns of historical consciousness and self-consciousness in the broader cultural spheres of nineteenth and twentieth-century Germany. Indeed, such a configuration immediately produces a new set of questions with which to interrogate the history of historicism. We might ask, for example, what knowledges historicism constructs, what territories does it define, what objects does it make visible and what forms of subjectivity does it enforce (or invite)?

In the first instance, then, and as with its counterparts in the human sciences, the novel visibilities yielded by German historicism were accompanied by a set of strict territorial regimentations, a process by which the historian, as well as history itself, had to submit to disciplinary organization and observation. As a set of concrete social institutions and professional milieus, the German historical *Zunft* that developed under the auspices of historicism was extremely diligent in patrolling its territorial borders and policing its members. In this way, the institutions of the German historical profession were coordinated by strictly regulated systems and spaces of patronage and solidarity, eventually coalescing as the most well-defended and uniquely influential territory in the disciplinary landscape of the German academy. For example, the career and well-documented (mis)fortunes of historians Karl Lamprecht—whom we will revisit in one of the following chapters—is an illuminating example of the professional resistance and personal vituperation that deviations from the legitimate practices of the *Zunft* could

produce.¹⁶ And although the last decades of the nineteenth century saw fissures developing in both the theoretical and institutional edifices of historicism, German academics—but particularly historians—with the rank of full professor continued to enjoy exalted professional status and exercised formidable powers both within the discipline and beyond. Furthermore, that such powers persisted into the controversies and conversations of the twentieth century is borne out by the example of Eckart Kehr, an example that wove its way likewise into the later lore of social science history in the twentieth century. As told from this latter perspective, the controversy generated by Kehr's work—his socio-economic readings of German foreign policy and navalism—becomes a damning case study in the ideological backwardness and historiographical conservatism of the educated middle classes and elites of Wilhelmine Germany, of which the historical *Zunft* was a powerful and stalwart armature.¹⁷ But while such ideological concerns may indeed have been operative, the more proximal cause was the disciplinary power and self-policing apparatus of the historical profession. Without these instruments, without the intricate systems of disciplinary influence and patronage, the ideological terrain of educated Germany—whether conservative or no—could have exerted little influence on the fate of Kehr.

The historical community in Germany during the era of historicist hegemony was thus a remarkably cohesive and well organized social territory. But such structural

¹⁶ Roger Chickering, *Karl Lamprecht: A German Academic Life (1856-1915)* (New Jersey: Humanities Press, 1993); Luise Schorn-Schuetze, *Karl Lamprecht: Kulturgeschichtsschreibung zwischen Wissenschaft und Politik* (Goettingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1984); Matti Viikari, *Die Krise der "historistischen" Geschichtsschreibung und die Geschichtsmethodologie Karl Lamprechts* (Helsinki: Suomalainen Tiedeakatemia, 1977).

¹⁷ Hans-Ulrich Wehler, "Einleitung" in Eckart Kehr, *Der Primat der Innenpolitik*, ed. Hans-Ulrich Wehler (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1965), 21. See also Georg Iggers, *The German Conception of History* (Middletown, Conn., 1968), 237-238.

solidarities, and their sometimes ruthless corollaries in disciplinary self-surveillance, protected more than the institutional status and position of the (highly status conscious) historical profession. They also managed and maintained the theoretical and methodological legacies handed down within tradition of Rankean historicism, and these in turn were the categories and concepts that produced the distinctly historicist historical optic. If the church of historicism had its institutions, then it also had its catechism. Like any catechism or creed, however, the varied doctrines which have been ascribed to the German School do not form a smoothly coherent system and landscape of thought. Indeed, if the work of Jörn Rüsen has deployed the Kuhnian term paradigm to characterize the intellectual phenomena of historicism, then it is partly due to the internal tensions that developed within its model of historical reflection. And to this day the basic intellectual contours of what has come to be known as German historicism are still the subject of debate. “In the last few years,” Georg Iggers could declare as late as 1995, “a considerable number of books and articles have appeared in Germany, the United States, and Italy on the topic. There is, however, no consensus in this literature on the meaning of the term.”¹⁸

That the historical discipline of nineteenth century Germany, however, represented a discrete and relatively well bounded approach to historical reflection and research is generally accepted; and it is in relations to the boundaries of this tradition and its territories that the Italian journeys of Jacob Burckhardt, Aby Warburg, Sigmund Freud and Walter Benjamin represent methodologically nomadic alternatives. Indeed, while precise details of German Historicism’s constitutive intellectual apparatus are still open

¹⁸ Georg Iggers, “Historicism: The History and Meaning of the Term,” *Journal of the History of Ideas*, Vol. 56, No. 1, 129.

to question, its broader contours can be sketched out for purposes of further analysis and orientation. For the present discussion, therefore, we may outline three fundamental and relatively well documented principles that coordinated the conceptual territories of German Historical School. In the first instance, then, and woven into the fabric of its founding, is an understanding of history as an interpretative discipline, a hermeneutic science that recognizes language and texts as the meaningful expressions of the historical eras it seeks to illuminate. Alternatively, a second general pattern lies in the concept of history as an individualizing science. In distinction from the natural sciences, which seek to discover a field of ever more abstract and fundamental laws, historicism recognized its objects in a landscape of individualities, a landscape of singular and unrepeatable events and personalities. Finally, and in some tension with the former principles, there was a commitment to a fundamental order of development and unfolding in the movements of history. Thus, although history directed its gaze at a past composed not of laws, but of individualities, there nevertheless remained a faith that a necessary order of some kind lay behind the trajectories of such historical individuals and entities.

Of course, such a list is by no means exhaustive, and there remains a number of other extremely important features that were essential the character of historicism. The doctrines and discussion of methodological “empathy” could easily be included here, as well as the vision of history as an essentially immanent process, a process whose movements and order could be glimpsed in their unfolding through the historical record. In some ways, however, these latter can also be conceived as conceptual and methodological corollaries of the first three principles we outlined. The interpretive interventions of “empathy”, for example, can be linked to the hermeneutic tradition

which accompanied the development of historicism, and it emerges as the methodological response to a historical field conceived in terms of discrete individual entities. Empathy, in other words, is that hermeneutic tool by which the *difference* and *otherness* of respective individuals and epochs is overcome and penetrated.¹⁹ In similar fashion, furthermore, the principle of immanence is also a corollary of an individualizing science. For if history obeys certain patterns of unfolding and development, such patterns emerge from the nature and character of the individuals embedded within the historical field. No appeal, in other words, to metaphysical or metahistorical phenomena was necessary to represent the past “as it really was.” Lastly, the long recognized historicist emphasis on political and international history likewise rests on the precise identification of the individuals that emerged as the true subjects of historicist thought. From this perspective, and again in response to a Western European tradition wedded to natural law and mechanical social thought, the true subjects of German historicism were found not in the atomized individuals of social contract theory, but in the suprapersonal entities of the historical peoples, spiritually expressed in language of the *Volk* and in the institutions of the state.

¹⁹ The history of the concept of empathy, or *Empfindung*, lies beyond the scope of this work. On the other hand, however, some of its key figures intersect with our interests here. For instance, the term appears to have been coined by Robert Vischer (whose work we will meet in a later chapter on Aby Warburg), and was later developed in its aesthetic dimensions by Conrad Fiedler and Adolf Hildebrand. It also developed in another direction, motivated primarily by the work of Wilhelm Dilthey, where it became a key to a hermeneutical tradition that went on to influence the philosophy of historical thought and the many currents of twentieth century phenomenology – from Husserl to Heidegger. In relation specifically to Dilthey see: Austin Harrington, “Dilthey, Empathy and Verstehen A Contemporary Reappraisal,” in *European Journal of Social Theory*, Vol. 4, No. 3, 311-329, 2001; Rudolf A. Makkreel, *Dilthey: Philosopher of the Human Studies* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992). With regard to its earlier and more limited aesthetic applications see: Robert Vischer, et al. *Empathy Form Space: Problems in German Aesthetics, 1873-1893*. Translated by Harry Francis Mallgrave and Eleftherios Ikonomou (Santa Monica, CA: Getty Center for the History of Art and the Humanities, 1994). For the relation to literary historicism and hermeneutics see: Paul Hamilton’ discussion in *Historicism* (London: Routledge, 1996).

In the first place, then, we have drawn attention to the hermeneutic dimensions that formed a characteristic feature of German historicism, dimensions that were linked to still older traditions of textual and documentary interpretation. These latter traditions may have their ultimate source in the Protestant—especially Pietist—approaches to biblical exegesis, and in commitment to the revelatory sufficiency of scripture.²⁰ More proximally, this tradition emerges with special relevance in the critical reflections of figures like Herder and Schleiermacher. While the former went far in outlining a history of discrete cultural individuals, manifest in the linguistic singularity of various historic peoples, the latter contributed a theological model of textual criticism that would influence the currents of both historicism and Romanticism. Schleiermacher's influence was manifest in a variety of forms, but most profoundly in the historicity of documents and in the empathetic methods by which they could be made to speak. This latter thrust, for instance, was taken up later and most explicitly in the historical philosophy of Dilthey where the concept of empathy becomes a decisive point of differentiation between the natural and historical sciences. These various hermeneutic threads, however, were first and most conspicuously crystallized in the work of Leopold von Ranke, perhaps immediately influenced by theologian Wilhelm Martin Leberecht de Wette, a student of Herder and colleague of Schleiermacher. In Ranke's hands, therefore, the close reading and evaluation of textual evidence became the *sine qua non* of a rigorous historiographical methodology. Indeed, if the Protestant bible was the adequate container and vessel of theological knowledge, the creed of *Sola Scriptura* was similarly embraced

²⁰ See: Peter Hanns Reill, *The German Enlightenment and the Rise of Historicism*. Thomas Albert Howard, *Religion and the Rise of Historicism: W.M.L. De Wette, Jacob Burckhardt, and the Theological Origins of Nineteenth-Century Historical Consciousness*.

as a principle of Rankean historical methodology. The world of the past could indeed be reconstituted and rendered sensible or legible, but only through the careful and meticulous reading and evaluation of the textual traces in which historical individualities found linguistic expression.

The hermeneutic tradition that influenced the early historicism of Ranke, however, had a variety of competing valences and its categories were deployed in a number of spheres. In its Romantic formulations, those of Novalis and Friedrich Schlegel, it could easily emerge in a nagging vision of texts as perpetually incomplete fragments, perpetually evolving in the course of their interpretive histories. The hermeneutic reflections of Dilthey, by contrast, would themselves become decisive in the twentieth-century phenomenologies of Husserl and Heidegger. For the one-time student of de Wette, Jacob Burckhardt, the question of close reading and documentary evidence became acute when it came to exploring the means by which visual, rather than textual, documents were to be interpreted. Thus, while each of the above outlined principles of historicism made territorial demands on each of the figures we will examine, the opening section devoted to the Basel historian perhaps best captures the tensions between textual and visual interpretation. In this way, Burckhardt's many journeys to Italy represent significant gestures of displacement, not only in spatial terms, but also in relation to the disciplinary commitments of German historical scholarship. For in these travels, Burckhardt's unique—and insistently marginal—vision of historical methodology (and the temporalities that it reveals) finds expression in his singular attention to a past manifest in visual traces and documents. In his visual apprehension of the past—from his navigations through Italian museums to his mobile and visual collecting in Italian urban

spaces—we will see how Burckhardt explores a region beyond the textually valenced territories of historicism. The interpretation of visual documents, in other words, produces a kind of acceleration that takes Burckhardt beyond the linear, narrative and textual imperatives of his German colleagues. Put differently, a visual hermeneutic grounded in *Anschauung* gradually resolves Burckhardt's history into a form more granular and fragmentary than the smooth linear continuities of the Rankean school, and it finds the Swiss historian gravitating towards the synchronic or cross-sectional approach that would come to characterize his distance from historicist practice.

The self-representation of the German Historical School as the study of discrete individualities and historical subjects, in distinction from the natural law approaches of the eighteenth century, forms a second and likewise decisive current of the tradition. While the initial impact of Enlightenment universality and cosmopolitanism was weathered in Rankean historiography and German Romanticism, producing in its wake a self-consciously independent tradition of German thought, the nineteenth century nevertheless saw defenders of German *Kultur* on perpetual watch for encroachments from Western *Zivilization*. Foremost among these defenders was the German historical *Zunft*, and it was against the atomism and positivism of Britain and France, historicism deployed the concepts of its individualizing science. In his twentieth-century reflections on the nature of, and tensions within, the traditions of German historicism, theologian Ernst Troeltsch (1865-1923) explained the significance of such an individualizing perspective:

Of decisive importance is the mystical-metaphysical sense of this concept of individuality as in each case a particular concretion of the divine spirit in unique persons and supra-personal communal organizations. The basic constituents of reality are not similar material and social atoms and universal laws...but differing

unique personalities and individualizing formative forces... This results in a different idea of community: The state and the society are not created from the individual by way of contract and pragmatic construction, but from the suprapersonal spiritual forces which emanate from the most important and creative individuals, the Volk spirit or the religious aesthetic idea.²¹

A little more than a decade after the more critical descriptions of Troeltsch, Friedrich Meinecke amplified the significance of this current of historicism by placing it at the center of his 1936 *Entstehung des Historismus*, a work which traced the origins of the tradition up until its nineteenth-century institutionalization. What is clear, however, especially in Meinecke's intervention, is the way in which the disciplinary territories of historicism were inextricably bound up with a conception of the cultural, intellectual and political autonomy of Germany in the face of "Western" categories of universality and cosmopolitanism.

In a significant sense, then, historicism represented a potent contributor to the establishment of those concepts associated with a German special path or *Sonderweg*, here in its earlier and more positive formulations. Indeed, given the perceived threat of Western cultural and intellectual imperialism in the form of positivism, empiricism and enlightened rationalism, the category of history became the decisive means by which Germany and her human sciences could maintain their independence and national character. History, in other words, and the institutions and methodologies of historicism, constituted a vital bulwark against the mechanisms of *Zivilization* and the encroachments of cosmopolitanism. However, while Aby Warburg was convinced that "der Liebe Gott steckt im Detail," the devil, of course, may be found in the details too. In this case, the

²¹ Quoted from Ringer, *The Decline of the German Mandarins: The German Academic Community, 1890-1933*. 101.

devil emerged in the nature of the individuals identified by historicism as the proper subjects of history. For, as Troeltsch describes it, an essential component of historicism was its rejection of social theories built upon a foundation of “social atoms and universal laws,” a framework in which individual human beings form the atomistic premise of subsequent, and mechanically ordered, social bodies. On the contrary, historicism’s emphasis on the cultural and historical integrity of *Volk* and language demands an emphasis on historical subjects which express and embody these totalities. Such commitments, therefore, reveal the intellectual foundation for the singular emphasis placed on politics and the state in the conceptual framework of historicism. As with the neighboring intellectual landscapes of German Idealism—a neighboring relationship that was often fraught with tension—historicism held the state, as the expressive representative of *Volk* consciousness, to be the true subject and individual agency of history. The historical unfolding of the state, in relation to its people and in relation to other states, thus became the natural focus for an individualizing and nationally oriented German Historical School.

The question of individuation is picked up with particular resonance in the second section of the present work, a section which treats the temporal reflections and Italian travels of Aby Warburg and Sigmund Freud. Of course, as we pointed out above, all of these currents are operative in all of the cases we examine, but the work of Warburg and Freud seems particularly relevant in relation to the various “individualities” that may be mapped out and produced by the territorial interventions of history. If we follow Rudy Koshar’s reading of travel as a phenomenon linked to collecting, a phenomenon that participates in Benjamin’s “dialectical tension between the poles of order and disorder,”

then the journeys of Freud and Warburg reveal an experience in which various forms of individuation—historical, national, psychological, confessional and disciplinary—are captured within a similar dialectical tension.

On the one hand, such tensions are immediately visible in a motto adopted by Aby Warburg that seems to describe the forces of identification and dispersal that suffused his life and work: “Ebreo di Sangue, Amburghese di Cuore, d'Anima Fiorentino.”²² At the same time, though, Aby Warburg’s conflicted sense of self-identity was mirrored by similarly contending forces—of dispersion and reassembly—in his art historical work and Italian travel. Thus, despite his perpetual and ongoing attempts to situate his insights into a cohesive historical, psychological and anthropological framework, Warburg’s fascination with the details, the fragments and marginalities represented a countervailing and centrifugal force within his work. But as we shall see, this gesture of outward radiation and expansiveness also results in what we characterize as an insistent historical nomadism whose migrations follow documents and fragments across, beyond and through a variety of historical territories—national and disciplinary alike. On the other hand, Freud’s Italian reflections and obsessions similarly represent moments of potential dispersion—of self, of confession, of psychoanalysis, of temporality. But here such gestures of de-territorialization tend to yield to the centripetal imperatives of Freud’s textual practice, and are perpetually reconfigured and resituated in a new territory defined by the psychoanalytic project. Thus, where Warburg’s dialectical needle always hovers near the pole of constructive disorder, Freud’s compass unflinching

²² “Jewish by blood, Hamburger at heart, Florentine in spirit.” In Gertrud Bing, “Aby Warburg,” in *Aby Warburg. Ausgewählte Schriften und Würdigungen*. Dieter Wüttke and Carl Georg Heise eds. (Baden-Baden: V. Koerner, 1979).

leads him back to the orienting landscapes of his psychoanalytic texts and his Viennese home and habitus.

Rounding out the conceptual and methodological apparatus of German historicism, we find the third and final element of historicist doctrine in a commitment to history as fundamentally coherent and expressive of an underlying order. Its original expression, best captured in Ranke's well known dictum that all peoples are equal before God, reveals its author's faith that historical research, like the revelatory power of biblical interpretation, may disclose (even if indirectly) the underlying and meaningful patterns that guide the movements of human history.²³ The distinction, however, between this vision and that of the various German Idealisms emerging at the same time should not be overlooked. For where Hegel and his subsequent followers claimed to deduce the movements of the world spirit through the rational exercises of speculative philosophy, Ranke by contrast held that such a direct and immediate apprehension of historical forces was impossible. Ranke, in other words, had no doubt that the mind of God moved behind the motions of history, but if his patterns were to be perceived in history, then this could only be glimpsed through the dark glass of careful research and documentary interpretation. Indeed, while subsequent generations within the German historical school would be less immune to the currents of Hegelianism—Droysen for instance—the two traditions nevertheless maintained a careful and well cultivated distance from one another. For while both tended to hold an optimistic vision of history,

²³ See the introduction to: Leopold von Ranke, *History of the Latin and Teutonic Nations from 1494 to 1514*, trans. Philip Arthur Ashworth (London: Bell and Sons, 1887). See also Leonard Krieger, *Ranke: The Meaning of History* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1977); Theodore H. von Laue, *Leopold Ranke: the Formative Years* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1950); Georg G. Iggers and James M. Powell, ed., *Leopold Von Ranke and the Shaping of the Historical Discipline*, 1st ed. (Syracuse, N.Y.: Syracuse University Press, 1990).

a vision in which the Prussian state played an important, if not world historical role, the speculative and rationalistic dimensions of Idealism could not appeal to German historians who understood their practices as an interpretive science. If history was to be understood, then its meanings would be revealed not in a Berlin philosophical seminar, but in the careful and collective interpretive research of a rigorous historical science.

But in ways similar to Idealism, historicism also understood history as an immanent process of unfolding, a natural process in which the individualities and subjects of history developed with a necessity born of their originary *Ursprung*, or mode of becoming. From this, furthermore, the historiography of historicism developed motifs of historical mission and linear necessity that mirrored those of Hegel and Marx. Burckhardt, for example, would take issue with Droysen's history of Alexander the Great for its critical treatment of the Greeks who failed to recognize, and yield to, an historical moment clearly represented by an emergent Macedon. Burckhardt, in other words, could not so easily accept that the compass needle of history points in any inevitable and unequivocal direction. Alternatively, Heinrich Treitschke's virulently nationalist histories and polemics in the latter half of the nineteenth century were informed by a *Kleindeutsch* faith in the historical mission of the Prussian state and the Hohenzollern dynasty. So while it was rarely announced in the crude forms famously assaulted by Karl Popper in his *Poverty of Historicism*, the German Historical School nevertheless embraced a model of historical progression that tended to valorize the most "successful" individuals as those most capable of realizing their fullest expression.²⁴ In practice, however, this slipped easily into the doctrine that seems to say: whatever circumstances

²⁴ Karl Popper, *The Poverty of Historicism* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1961).

pertain at a particular historical moment, are precisely the circumstances that must be the case, given the necessities and immanence of historical unfolding. Think here of Candide's good Doctor Pangloss—but wearing a Prussian *Pickelhaube*. And thus here again we see the powerful links that joined the discipline of historicism to whatever political institutions with which it found itself confronted—in this case the Prussian Monarchy and the German Empire. Since these had emerged victoriously in the course of the nineteenth century, then it stood to reason that these were the necessary and unavoidable instruments of historical necessity of that contemporary moment. But whatever its ultimate intentions and incentives, the tradition understood the movements of history as a process of necessary and linear development, a suprapersonal process involving not individual human beings but characterized by the spiritual expressions and interactions of peoples and states.

In this fashion, however, the links between past and present could only be conceived in terms of supercession and obsolescence. And while the past could be resurrected in the empathetic hermeneutics of historicist analyses, its true legacy in the present was confirmation of the necessity of “what is.” In this, furthermore, another dialectical tension arises in the curious posture the German historical school adopted in relation to the past, a posture in evidence as early as Ranke's first historical interventions and bound up with the hermeneutic tradition as a whole. On the one hand, there were powerful gestures of proximity, impulses to eliminate the distance between historian and historical object through empathetic recovery and penetration. On the other hand, there was an insistence on the *otherness* of the past, its inscrutable otherness and externality to present historical configurations. In some ways, the historicist past emerges in the form

of the auratic object of art as described by Walter Benjamin. Returning the gaze of the historian with a Sphinx-like gaze of its own, it confronts the beholder in the form of a singular subjectivity, and its magical allure rests to some extent on this distance. For to dissolve this auratic distance is to transform such historical *otherness*, and reify it in the form of a material relic or *objet d'art*. The reception of the past thus seems to shuttle back and forth between reified or objectified nearness and a distance that preserves the impenetrability of the historical *other*. It is this dialectic—between a past locked away in the contours of its linear progression and a past that erupts in the material culture of the present—that we examine most extensively in the final section of the present work. In this instance, we follow an early journey in the peripatetic career of Walter Benjamin, an expedition in the form of his 1924 journey to Capri and Naples. Walter Benjamin's *Italienische Reise* took place at a pivotal moment in his career and personal life, an unhappy marriage was its unflattering but immediate impetus, and the completion his *Habilschrift* on Baroque *Trauerspiel* was its ostensible purpose. And while it was also a moment of steep decline for German historicism, for both its institutional foundations and its intellectual influence, this decline was mirrored by a profoundly modern and novel pattern of historical reception. This pattern, visible here in the modern forms of historical tourism, completes the process by which the past becomes an object of collection, reproduction and commodification. "One of the old men leads, and holds the lantern close to a fragment of an early Christian fresco." writes Benjamin in relation to a past that has become a commodified fetish, "Now he utters the centuries-old magic word 'Pompeii.' Everything that the foreigner desires, admires, and pays for is 'Pompeii.' 'Pompeii' makes the plaster imitation of the temple ruins, the lava necklace, and the

louse-ridden person of the guide irresistible. This fetish is all the more miraculous as only a small minority of those whom it sustains have ever seen it.”²⁵

However, it is not the progressive process of commodification and reproduction of the past that is most striking about Benjamin’s Neapolitan *Denkbild*. Instead, the more intriguing dimension of the essay is revealed in the complex spatial and temporal geographies that Benjamin generates as he navigates the city with his collaborator, Asja Lacis. Not only do these mobile, and visually inflected, explorations and reflections prefigure the later work of the Arcades project, but they also map out a more porous vision and experience of historical time, one whose secret passages and hidden compartments undermine the strict polarity defined by history’s proximity and history’s *otherness*. In other words, the porous character of Naples emerges for Benjamin as a metaphor for a more porous understanding of history, neither locked away in auratic distance nor fully objectified and pacified in the commodity form. And by undermining such strict territorial and conceptual boundaries, Benjamin’s nomadic travels through Naples describe an alternate set of spaces where the past may emerge immediately in all its strange otherness, a past whose insistent vibrations may be amplified into revolutionary shockwaves within an otherwise complacent historical present.

As with other nineteenth-century disciplines that marked out territories and organs in geographical, medical or psychological terms, German historicism produced similar maps that were likewise criss-crossed with boundaries, borders, insides, outsides, utopias and heterotopias. Like the body of the earth and the body of the patient, the body of time underwent a process of categorization, registration and archivization, a process

²⁵Walter Benjamin and Asja Lacis, “Naples” in *Walter Benjamin: Selected Writings Volume 1*. Howard Eiland, Michael W. Jennings, and Gary Smith eds. (Cambridge, MA: Belnap Press, 1996), 415.

administered by the historical knowledges and expertise of a set of disciplinary institutions. Thus, the past emerges as an assemblage of organs, always already ‘organized’ into distinct territories, regions, periods, methods and disciplines. For German historicism, these territories emerged most clearly within the careful preserved circle that enclosed its concrete institutional framework and reinforced its conceptual and methodological apparatus. The visible contours and objects of the past that historicism yielded were thus decisively informed by the contours of its central concepts—by its textually oriented hermeneutic, its self-conception as an individualizing science, and by the necessities of a linear unfolding of historical phenomena. To be sure, of course, any meaningful encounter with the past necessarily involves such territorial arrangements and orientations, and a rational survey of any field demands the imposition of frames of reference, boundaries of significance, and hierarchies of phenomena. But as the contemporary literatures of geography, urban design and many other disciplines have reminded us in recent years, the organization of space is deeply implicated by regimes of cultural, political and social power. And in the same way, the body of time has also been the object of a certain disciplinary and disciplining gaze; its territories, its organs and its movements have likewise been congealed into objects and summoned into visibility by the clinical observations of its own doctors and surveyors. And as with other institutions of disciplinarity, modern historiography—and the German Historical School in particular—has similarly constructed its objects and knowledges, though here in territorial configuration of time.

Visuality, Mobility and History

A Preparatory Exploration of Concepts and Methods

Our train, then, is preparing for departure, and its tracks will follow the spatial movements and temporal explorations of Burckhardt, Warburg, Freud and Benjamin. As we have seen, however, our itinerary takes us into territories beyond those prescribed and inscribed by the disciplinary cartography of the German Historical School. The destinations and stations through which this train will move define, in other words, a set of nomadic encounters with Italy and history, encounters that cross and re-cross a variety of boundaries in a number of different dimensions. Most conspicuously, these journeys move through national and cultural boundaries, from the spaces of Germany in the north to the landscapes of Italy in the south. At the same time, however, these travels manifest themselves likewise in a set of movements and transgressions that traverse—both through and beyond—the temporal territories established by German historicism. As we prepare to follow these movements and mobilities, our fellow travelers may wish to have a better idea where these tracks are leading, what sort of territories come into focus through the “nomad pasts” of Burckhardt, Warburg, Freud and Benjamin, and how these nomadic spaces diverge from the temporal territories of German historicism.

While many of these issues must wait for the more sustained explorations of the following chapters, it may be helpful to supply a brief guide to the concepts and terminology that inform the itineraries of the present work, a *Baedeker* that outlines the general theoretical contours of the landscapes we are traversing. In the context of the present discussion, and as with any guidebook, the inclusion of this guide may aid the traveler in initial moments of conceptual and territorial orientation, but it is nevertheless a problematic undertaking in view of the theoretical regions it proposes to describe. It is

likely evident that the concept of a “nomad past” draws heavily on the theoretical interventions of Gilles Deleuze and his colleague Felix Guattari. Indeed, more specifically, while we draw on a number of themes and metaphors inspired by the work of these figures, the focus here is primarily on the reflections of Deleuze as they emerged in the 1972 *Anti-Oedipus*—co-written with Felix Guattari—in its accompanying volume *A Thousand Plateaus* (1980), and in *The Fold: Leibniz and the Baroque* (1988).²⁶ The almost willful difficulty of these works is notorious, and it is for this reason that a brief overview of the topographies described by Deleuze may be helpful in the present context. While Deleuze and Guattari’s concepts emerge in what resembles a stream-of-consciousness style of writing, it is made more difficult by the fact that this consciousness adopts a posture of schizophrenic polyvocality, endlessly producing thoughts that multiply, diverge and radiate in many different directions. At the same time, however, the seemingly willfully opaque and elliptical style, the curious patterns of structure and organization, must be understood as enactments of the kind of philosophizing Deleuze seeks to explore and describe. The style of Deleuze, in other words, emerges as the textual embodiment of a philosophy of becoming, a philosophy of differentiation through mobility, movement and nomadism. Put a different way, Deleuzian thought is not so much concerned with erecting, establishing and tracing a coherent set of conceptual territories as it is with accelerating thought through and beyond such categories.

²⁶ Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987); Gilles Deleuze, *The Fold: Leibniz and the Baroque*, trans. Tom Conley (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993).

What Deleuze attempts to produce, in other words, is a body of thought without organs, a body whose flows are not limited by an already present and confining conceptual territory. But it is these imperatives that make the mappings and tracings of a guidebook—a *Let's Go: Deleuze!*—particularly problematic. For it is precisely this kind of mapping—or tracing, in the terminology of Deleuze—that the form and content of his work aspire to escape. Indeed, as it is described in *A Thousand Plateaus*, the figure of the nomad represents exactly these gestures and enactments of de-territorialized and de-territorializing movement, a mode of thought defined, above all, by mobility rather than congealed in abstract categories. Nevertheless, perhaps we may follow the example of Wittgenstein and supply ourselves with a ladder to climb up and quickly survey the general features of the Deleuzian landscape. Then, once we have been able to "see the world rightly" from this more elevated position, we may likewise follow the author of the *Tractatus* and dispense with such provisional and artificial aids. Or, to put it differently, it may be helpful to pause for a moment as the train begins to leave the station, leaf through our tourist guidebook, and trace out the most conspicuous sites and landmarks that describe our destination. But once we are on our way, and certainly once we arrive, such a guidebook may be safely stowed in our luggage or left behind at the hotel.

In *The Anti-Oedipus*, then, the first volume of a two volume work entitled *Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, the primary focus (or targets) for Deleuze and Guattari are the institutions and categories of psychoanalysis. The critique that emerges there attempts to reveal what—in Foucaultian terms—might be called the disciplinary imperatives embedded in both the theories and practices of the psychoanalytic tradition. Since Deleuze and Guattari hold that there is no pre-existing deep structure within the

psyche—its primitive state is rhizomatic and nomadic—the structures of subjectivity and consciousness are always the effect, not the cause, of discursive and disciplinary territorialities. The stable configurations and categories of self-representation, in other words, represent gestures of territorialization, a process of definition and coming to rest in conceptual framework, much as a hermit crab might grow into its shell. From this perspective, however, the interventions of psychoanalysis represent not so much the restoration of equilibrium within the economy of psychological forces, as they do an imposition of a new set of artificial territories and categories upon the analysand. The emotional investments and geometries of the oedipal triangle—as Deleuze puts it, “Mommy Daddy and Me”—are revealed as simply another means by which subjects are invited (or pushed) to coordinate their psychological landscapes in a particular fashion, a fashion that is in turn consonant with the ideological demands of modern capital.

In *A Thousand Plateaus*, Deleuze and Guattari broaden the scope of *Anti-Oedipus* to examine a more expansive field of social and psychological formations. To this end, they begin by distinguishing between two opposing representational strategies that define the territorial configurations of both subject and socius: an ‘arborescent’ model or logic that they associate with psychoanalytic interventions, and a ‘rhizomatic’ form that they link to their own model of schizoanalysis. In relation to the former or tree-like logic, growth and becoming are understood according to a strict genealogical and representational model. What is *becoming* the case, in other words, can always be defined in terms of what *has been* the case; the leaves can be situated by their relation to branches and the branches in turn can be understood in relation to the trunk. The being or phenomenon of any one part of the tree is thus always defined in terms of a pre-existing

model or template of the tree. Furthermore, from this arboreal perspective, there is always already a deep structure whose unfolding is represented in the growth of the tree. In the case of the human psyche, such structures are reproduced in development and made explicit through psychoanalysis. As Deleuze and Guattari put it in their insistently irreproducible style:

All of tree logic is a logic of tracing and reproduction. In linguistics as in psychoanalysis, its object is an unconscious that is itself representative, crystallized into codified complexes, laid out along a genetic axis and distributed within a syntagmatic structure. Its goal is to describe a de facto state, to maintain balance in intersubjective relations, or to explore an unconscious that is already there from the start, lurking in the dark recesses of memory and language. It consists of tracing, on the basis of an overcoding structure or supporting axis, something that comes ready-made. The tree articulates and hierarchizes tracings; tracings are like the leaves of a tree.²⁷

Seen from this angle, Freud's psychoanalytic cartographies are not simply voyages of enlightened discovery, but active attempts to trace these phenomena from a pre-existing model. Put differently, Freud's psychoanalytic surveys emerge in the tracing and reproduction of an abstract model, a template from within which the tree or the psyche—or even an Italian journey—may be rendered meaningful. In Freud's arborescent French garden, whenever a daydream or a neurosis emerges as an unruly new growth or phenomenon—say, in a neurotic preoccupation with Rome—the gardener appears to prune its wild forms back into the pleasing form of the ideal tree and the satisfying geometry of the Oedipal triangle.

In place of this arborescent model of reproduction—understood in terms ranging from the biological/genealogical to the representational—Deleuze and Guattari propose

²⁷Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, 12.

what they call a “rhizomatic” logic. If the reproductive model of the tree sharply defined and delimited the functions and possibilities of each constituent element (leaf, branch, trunk), all governed by the deep structure and nature of the tree, the root-like rhizome presents another set of reproductive possibilities. In this instance, any and all points on the surface structure of the rhizome may emerge as sites of new growth, tendrils and roots erupting in apparently random fashion from various sites on the original root.

Furthermore, such tendrils and roots themselves become the foundation for likewise randomly erupting growths, all resulting in a reproductive phenomenon whose structure cannot be understood in terms of a pre-existing or ideal model. For obvious reasons, the tracings of arborescence must fail as a means of representing or reproducing these rhizomatic processes. Instead, Deleuze and Guattari here distinguish ‘tracing’ from what they come to call ‘mapping’, and describe the difference in a passage worth quoting at length:

The rhizome is altogether different, a map and not a tracing. Make a map, not a tracing. The orchid does not reproduce the tracing of the wasp; it forms a map with the wasp, in a rhizome. What distinguishes the map from the tracing is that it is entirely oriented toward an experimentation in contact with the real. The map does not reproduce an unconscious closed in upon itself; it constructs the unconscious. It fosters connections between fields, the removal of blockages on bodies without organs, the maximum opening of bodies without organs onto a plane of consistency. It is itself a part of the rhizome. The map is open and connectable in all of its dimensions; it is detachable, reversible, susceptible to constant modification. It can be torn, reversed, adapted to any kind of mounting, reworked by an individual, group, or social formation. It can be drawn on a wall, conceived of as a work of art, constructed as a political action or as a meditation. Perhaps one of the most important characteristics of the rhizome is that it always has multiple entryways; in this sense, the burrow is an animal rhizome, and sometimes maintains a clear distinction between the line of flight as passageway and storage or living strata (cf. the muskrat). A map has multiple entryways, as opposed to the tracing, which always comes back "to the same." The map has to do with performance, whereas the tracing always involves an alleged "competence." Unlike psychoanalysis, psychoanalytic competence (which confines every desire and statement to a genetic axis or overcoding structure, and

makes infinite, monotonous tracings of the stages on that axis or the constituents of that structure), schizoanalysis rejects any idea of pretraced destiny, whatever name is given to it—divine, anagogic, historical, economic, structural, hereditary, or syntagmatic. (It is obvious that Melanie Klein has no understanding of the cartography of one of her child patients, Little Richard, and is content to make ready-made tracings—Oedipus, the good daddy and the bad daddy, the bad mommy and the good mommy—while the child makes a desperate attempt to carry out a performance that the psychoanalyst totally misconstrues.)²⁸

The Deleuzian understanding of the psyche thus identifies a fundamental, and deeply problematic, flaw in the conceptual framework and interventional commitments of traditional psychoanalysis. For if the psyche resembles the rhizome rather than the tree in its various transformations, developments, blockages and becomings, psychoanalysis is bound to impose a normative structure rather than produce a descriptive structure. Instead of thus ‘mapping’ a field of unpredictable investments and psychological structures, Melanie Klein insists on re-tracing and re-inscribing a “ready-made” Oedipal image on the rhizomatic processes of the boy’s psyche. Indeed, it is this image of violence that motivates Deleuze and Guattari in their critiques of Freud and the logic of psychoanalysis, a violence where every psyche must submit its growths to the dictatorship of arborescence and the careful pruning of the French gardener Freud.

From such distinctions between arborescent and rhizomatic logics, the significance that Deleuze and Guattari attach to metaphors of territoriality, nomadism cartography and representation may begin to emerge with greater clarity. For while the logic of arborescence always proceeds from a blueprint or tracing of an underlying structure or topography, the logic of the rhizome cannot be represented in such a deductive fashion. The radiations of the rhizome, like the movements of the nomad, obey the commandments—or invitations—of no pre-existing and abstract model. The

²⁸ Ibid., 12-13.

territories they describe are exhausted in the becomings and movements of their concrete movements. The rhizome and the nomad, in other words, are pieces on a chessboard in which all the squares have become indistinct or invisible, a board that is only marked by the lines and figures drawn by the comings and goings of the pieces themselves.

The metaphor of the nomad, therefore, becomes a significant figure in *A Thousand Plateaus*. In a chapter entitled, “Treatise on Nomadology”, the spatial consciousness of the nomad and his ‘war machine’ is distinguished from the socio-geographic understanding described by the authors as the settled, sedentary spaces of the ‘State apparatus’. Where the limits, the organs and the operations of the latter take shape in relation to reproductive, representational and forms of legal, administrative and scientific territories, the spaces of the nomad take shape in the concrete actuality of movement and mobility. Indeed, if the reproductive action of tracing—whether understood in geographical, psychological, legal or sexual terms—is the ever present abstract image that makes the spaces of the State apparatus meaningful, the material processes, variabilities and peregrinations of Deleuzian ‘mapping’ define the exterior passages of the nomad. Where the State defines its forms and spaces in terms of the arborescence of the law, the nomad determines itself in the actuality of its own rhizomatic mobility. Deleuze and Guattari, for instance, explore the difference between the sciences of the State and the ‘ambulant’ knowledges of the nomad, and investigate the distinction between the ‘reproducing’ forms of the former and the ‘following’ modes of the latter:

A distinction must be made between two types of science, or scientific procedures: one consists in "reproducing," the other in "following." The first involves reproduction, iteration and reiteration; the other, involving itineration, is the sum of the itinerant, ambulant sciences. Itineration is too readily reduced to a

modality of technology, or of the application and verification of science. But this is not the case: following is not at all the same thing as reproducing, and one never follows in order to reproduce. The ideal of reproduction, deduction, or induction is part of royal science, at all times and in all places, and treats differences of time and place as so many variables, the constant form of which is extracted precisely by the law [...] Reproducing implies the permanence of a fixed point of view that is external to what is reproduced: watching the flow from the bank. But following is something different from the ideal of reproduction. Not better, just different. One is obliged to follow when one is in search of the "singularities" of a matter, or rather of a material, and not out to discover a form; when one escapes the force of gravity to enter a field of celerity; when one ceases to contemplate the course of a laminar flow in a determinate direction, to be carried away by a vortical flow; when one engages in a continuous variation of variables, instead of extracting constants from them, etc. And the meaning of Earth completely changes: with the legal model, one is constantly reterritorializing around a point of view, on a domain, according to a set of constant relations; but with the ambulant model, the process of deterritorialization constitutes and extends the territory itself.²⁹

The nomad thus derives his or her knowledge in the actions of following and mapping, actions informed by no external and abstract *logos* or *nomos*. Or put another way, the law and knowledge of the nomad is coextensive with its own concrete movements, not in relation to the traced and reproducible territories defined by the State. The nomad comes to represent, in other words, the possibility of those minor sciences, minor literatures and minor historiographies whose movements resist and traverse imperial boundaries defined by the territorial abstractions of the State apparatus.

What then is the nature this strange territory of de-territorialization that is described by the rhizomatic mappings and peregrinations of the nomad? "It is in this sense that nomads have no points, paths, or land," write Deleuze and Guattari,

even though they do by all appearances. If the nomad can be called the Deterritorialized par excellence, it is precisely because there is no reterritorialization afterward as with the migrant, or upon something else as with

²⁹ Ibid., 372.

the sedentary (the sedentary's relation with the earth is mediatized by something else, a property regime, a State apparatus). With the nomad, on the contrary, it is deterritorialization that constitutes the relation to the earth, to such a degree that the nomad reterritorializes on deterritorialization itself. It is the earth that deterritorializes itself, in a way that provides the nomad with a territory. The land ceases to be land, tending to become simply ground (sol) or support. The earth does not become deterritorialized in its global and relative movement, but at specific locations, at the spot where the forest recedes, or where the steppe and the desert advance. [...] The nomads inhabit these places; they remain in them, and they themselves make them grow, for it has been established that the nomads make the desert no less than they are made by it. They are vectors of deterritorialization. They add desert to desert, steppe to steppe, by a series of local operations whose orientation and direction endlessly vary.³⁰

The nomad is present wherever a rhizomatic becoming or growth erupts and escapes from the imperial models of arborescent law and science. Wherever a thought, a literature or a desire territorializes precisely on the processes of deterritorialization, wherever difference in itself is opened up as a territory to be mapped rather than traced, there is the space of the nomadic war machine. By contrast, wherever thought reinscribes and re-traces the contours and geographies that define the territory of State power, wherever the abstractions of tree-logic are deployed to prune back rhizomatic growth and return their energies to established images of territoriality, it is there that thought becomes complicit with a sedentary imperium. In an example that could easily refer to the territorial ambitions of German historicism, Deleuze and Guattari write:

Ever since philosophy assigned itself the role of ground it has been giving the established powers its blessing, and tracing its doctrine of faculties onto the organs of State power. Common sense, the unity of all the faculties at the center constituted by the Cogito, is the State consensus raised to the absolute. This was most notably the great operation of the Kantian "critique," renewed and developed by Hegelianism. Kant was constantly criticizing bad usages, the better to consecrate the function. It is not at all surprising that the philosopher has become a public professor or State functionary. It was all over the moment the State-form inspired an image of thought. [...] In modern States, the sociologist succeeded in replacing the philosopher (as, for example, when Durkheim and his disciples set

³⁰ Ibid., 381-2.

out to give the republic a secular model of thought). Even today, psychoanalysis lays claim to the role of *Cogitatio universalis* as the thought of the Law, in a magical return. And there are quite a few other competitors and pretenders.³¹

Indeed, it is against these well-drawn territories of thought—against a thought that forever seeks to inscribe nations and organs onto the smooth surfaces of “dark continents” like the human body and human history—that the nomadic war machine emerges as a resolute exteriority of thought, an unruly and ambulant outside that refuses to be settled within the *Limes* of the State apparatus and its sciences.

Ultimately, the work of Deleuze and Guattari in *The Anti-Oedipus* and *A Thousand Plateaus* is not a prescription for absolute becoming, a plea for a schizophrenic leap into the flows of the nomad and the rhizome. Instead, it is reminder to look for those moments of social becoming and psychological *otherness* that are ceaselessly emerging, but almost always re-territorialized within conventional arborescent logics. In the same fashion, and in relation to the territories of historicism, the nomadism of Burckhardt, Warburg, Freud and Benjamin is always only partial or provisional. It moves beyond and through conventional historical topographies, but its movements always feel the pull and influence of incipient territoriality, either in the gravity exerted by traditional forms or in the allure of new continents that must likewise submit to territorial organization. For Deleuze, absolute nomadism emerges more as a limiting concept—a paradoxical gesture of adopting deterritorialization as one’s territory—and to travel that path in actuality, or to pursue it to its ultimate terminus, would be to plunge into a sphere of absolute *Ekstasis* that would be indistinguishable from madness.

³¹ Ibid., 376.

In the present work, therefore, we merely hope to trace gestures of nomadism that emerge in the temporalities and travels of our figures, those significant and perhaps fleeting moments when a line of historical thinking reaches escape velocity and lifts away from the gravity of historicism. But if we have seen how such metaphors—and actualities—of movement, mobility and travel inform the works of Burckhardt, Warburg, Freud and Benjamin, we have also noted the ways in which their reflections were inflected by an emphasis on visuality and the visible traces of the past. And indeed, it is in this attention to what we now might call visual culture that the historical nomadism of our respective figures becomes most conspicuous and insistent. But if this is the case, then how might we characterize—at the risk of borrowing Wittgenstein’s ladder once again—a mode of visuality that plays at the margins of territories and the adjacent spaces of deterritorialization? What sort of scopic practice is it that hovers at the boundaries between the representable and the unrepresentable, the material and the spiritual, the *Heimlich* and the *Unheimlich*? What visual territories, in other words, emerge in the gaze of the nomad?

In this relation, Deleuze may once again be of service. For in his later works, from the 1980 publication of *A Thousand Plateaus* until his death in 1995, Deleuze’s critical attention was increasingly drawn to philosophical issues of art and aesthetics. Alongside his two volume meditation on the epistemology of cinema and his work on the art of British painter Francis Bacon, Deleuze also published a set of reflections on the aesthetic and philosophical dimensions of the Baroque, entitled *The Fold: Leibniz and the*

Baroque.³² In some ways, this work represented a return to, and culmination of, themes and issues that he had explored in the 1960's, in earlier theoretical works on Spinoza and Leibniz. But in *The Fold*, Deleuze also sets out more explicitly to configure the Baroque as a counter-modern epistemological and aesthetic model. Indeed, with *The Fold* Deleuze was entering territory that was already resonating in post-structuralist discussions regarding counter-enlightenment possibilities inherent in Baroque deployments of space, in its fondness for repetition and quotation, and in its extravagant use of parody and irony. The Baroque, with all its emphasis on playful artifice, with its unsettled ambivalence between illusion and reality, with its material richness coexisting with a deep spiritual uncertainty, appeared to resonate for many as an historical model and mirror of a contemporary post modern condition. The Baroque, in other words, represented the visual and aesthetic corollary of the nomad and the rhizome; it was an expansive aesthetic—extending from the colonial statements of Latin American architecture to the ramified ironies of Cervantes—that playfully shuttled back and forth between the imperial gestures of territorialization and the dispersive impulses of deterritorialization.

Furthermore, and not accidentally, the theme of the Baroque (and its Renaissance other) runs like a red thread through the works we will explore in the following chapter. For it was precisely in the era of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries that the once derided aesthetic of the Baroque began to receive new interest among historians of art and culture, an interest that set out to revise the jaundiced vision of the Baroque that

³² See: Gilles Deleuze, *Cinema 1: The Movement Image* (London: Athlone Press, 1986); Gilles Deleuze, *Cinema 2: The Time-Image* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1989); Gilles Deleuze, *Francis Bacon: The Logic of Sensation* (London: Continuum, 2003).

had been presented through the lens of German neo-classicism. Indeed, this latter tradition emerged in Winckelmann's critique of the perceived extravagance and voluptuousness of the Baroque and Rococo, and long occupied a hegemonic influence in judgments of taste and receptions of art history. By the end of the nineteenth century, however, the orthodoxies of neoclassicism and the doctrines of "stille Größe" were being challenged with increasing frequency. In this same period, for example, Burckhardt himself began to show an increasing fascination with the Baroque as a cultural phenomenon. Letters and writings from the 1860's to the 1890's show the emergence of an almost grudging interest in the era, an interest that developed from an unenthusiastic sense of professional responsibility to one born of a deep and genuine personal fascination.³³ Foremost among these writings was his posthumously published *Erinnerungen aus Rubens*, an extended meditation on a mode of expression very different from that of the High Renaissance. However, while Burckhardt confined his sentiments to posthumous works and epistolary pronouncements, sentiments that he described as *Ketzerisch*, a scholarly literature devoted to the Baroque began to emerge in the generation that followed. Prompted in part by the early efforts of Heinrich Wölfflin and Cornelius Gurlitt, scholarly work on the aesthetic culture of the Baroque underwent a period of enormous expansion in the first decades of the twentieth century.³⁴ The earliest efforts, in consonance with the disciplinary trends of art history, were directed towards the study of the Baroque as moment in the history of style. In the hands of a Wölfflin,

³³ "In Sachen des Barocco werde ich immer ketzerischer. Schon ganz am Anfang unserer Reise erquickte mich in der Kirche zu Feldkirch der genialste Barocco-Beichtstuhl den ich je gesehen, und es hieß sogleich: Wenn doch der Max das sähe! — Hier in Mailand kann man in Barocco schwelgen." Jacob Burckhardt, *Briefe; vollständige und kritisch bearb.*, ed. Max Burckhardt (Basel: Schwabe, 1949-1994). Vol. 6, 96.

³⁴ Heinrich Wölfflin, *Renaissance and Baroque*, trans. Kathrin Simon (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1966); Cornelius Gurlitt, *Geschichte des Barockstiles in Italien* (Stuttgart: Verlag von Ebner and Seubert, 1887).

and with a method announced most famously in *Principles of Art History: The Problem of the Development of Style in Later Art*, the Baroque represented a set of stylistic forms that developed within a historical continuum, the Renaissance at one terminus and Rococo at the other. The Baroque could be defined in terms of a set of formal characteristics whose development was conditioned by previous forms and that likewise conditioned the stylistic forms of subsequent eras. From this perspective, in other words, the earliest art historical configuration of the Baroque was in the mode of a strict stylistic historicism. The art of the seventeenth century was a distinct, individual and organic totality whose formal expressions were governed by their position at a unique historical moment of artistic style.

Yet if the first half of the twentieth century saw increasing challenges to the notion of art history as “history of styles”, the definition of the Baroque likewise underwent reevaluation. Indeed, in this period, it could be said that the concept of the Baroque not only escaped the confines of a history of forms, but also escaped the bounds of the art historical discipline. The result, during the 1920’s and 1930’s, was an expansion of the concept not only into new territories of art historical scholarship, but also into the domains of literature, history and aesthetics. Indeed, it was in this context that Walter Benjamin published his 1925 *Die Ursprung des deutsche Trauerspiels*, a reflection on a literary Baroque in the form of seventeenth-century German tragic drama. Far from a purely historicized phenomenon, the Baroque here began to reveal a set of resonances and relations with nineteenth- and twentieth-century modernities. In the cultural impulse to allegory, for example, an impulse that Benjamin would explore further in the *Passagen-Werk*, there emerged an almost uncanny resemblance between the

representational constellations of the Counterreformation and those of capitalist modernity.

Appearing shortly after Benjamin's work, and more immediately influential, was art historian Henri Focillon's 1934 *Vie des formes*.³⁵ Responding to the still dominant art historical historicization of style, Focillon presented a more structural interpretation of the Baroque, an interpretation that posited the history of art as a series of cyclical developments. From this perspective, the Baroque emerged not as a singular historical phenomenon, but a more or less repeatable (and repeated) moment in which a given "classicism" enters a period of decadent self-referentiality and extravagance. From this perspective, the Baroque became disentangled from its seventeenth-century setting and described a syndrome common to a variety of places and times. In similar fashion, and also influential for contemporary theorists, Catalan writer Eugenio d'Ors' 1935 *Lo Barocco* amplified the notion of the Baroque as a trans-historical constant or type, recurring in many times and many places. "He even indulges," Renee Wellek wrote somewhat unsympathetically of d'Ors in a 1947 survey,

in drawing up a table of the different variant or subspecies of *homo barocchus*, where we find an archaic baroque, a Macedonian, an Alexandrian, a Roman, a Buddhist, a Gothic, a Franciscan, a Manuelian (in Portugal), a Nordic, a Palladian (in Italy and England), a Jesuit, a Rococo, a romantic, a *fin-de-siècle* and some other varieties of the baroque. It pervades all of art history from the ruins of a Baalbek to the most recent modernism, all literature from Euripides to Rimbaud, and all other cultural activities including philosophy as well as the discoveries of Harvey and Linné.³⁶

³⁵ Henri Focillon, *The Life of Forms in Art* (London: Zone Books, 1992).

³⁶ Rene Wellek, "The Concept of Baroque in Literary Scholarship," *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 5, no. 2, Special Issue on Baroque Style in Various Arts, Dec. (1946); Eugenio d'Ors, *Du Baroque* (Paris: Gallimard, 1935).

What thus began in the early century as a province of largely Germanophone art historical investigation—including works by Wölfflin, Gurlitt, Riehl, Schmarsow and Dehio—thus quickly expanded following the First World War into fields and disciplines far beyond its origin.

In the era after the Second World War, perhaps channeled by contemporary Spanish discussions of the concept, the Baroque emerged as a focus of debate among Latin American critics regarding the cultural legacy of colonial histories. The issue here revolved around the question of how to situate the Baroque in relation to the politics of cultural emancipation in Central and South America. Propelled primarily by authors and critics such as Jorge Luis Borges, Octavio Paz and Carlos Fuentes, these reflections ranged from a rejection of the Baroque as an imported expression of Spanish colonial hegemony to positions that saw a Baroque that could be (and had been) appropriated and counter-deployed in unique Latin American hybridizations. It was in these latter perspectives that the tradition reemerged with some of the same culturally deconstructive possibilities that Benjamin had identified several decades earlier, possibilities that emphasized the inherently de-centered, poly-valent and disruptive qualities of the tradition. For example, while discussing Baroque urban spaces and architecture in a 1972 *Diacritics* interview, Cuban born critic Severo Sarduy could remark:

The canonical structure of the Church was decentralized; in place of a central aisle leading the worshiper from the entrance to the high altar, it took the form of a building without specific entrances and exits, and whose plan was opened, just as the urbanism of the baroque city was opened. In other words, the baroque city was no longer a center around the cathedral, around the dome, but rather a decentralized organization - "polysemous" shall we say - with various comings and goings, with various interior sections. Thus we see here that there exists a kind of underlying battle - which interests me much more than those battles and those treaties that the biographers point out - between two forms characteristic of

our western civilization: the circle and the ellipse. This struggle of circle and ellipse has various manifestations; it is fought in several fields.³⁷

In other words, while Baroque could be seen as an instrument of cultural hegemony, it could also contain, within its own formal imperatives, the possibility for movements, actions and agencies that undermined the social spaces constructed in accordance with colonial power. The forms of the Baroque could be embraced and arrayed against the very forces that wielded them as an instrument of power. The de-centeredness of the tradition, in other words, presented an aesthetic regime that contained within itself spaces for divergent movements of irony and self-parody. As Sarduy goes on to say, “There is no baroque without parody; parody is a distancing, grafting, and as we have already seen—and you alluded today to Calderon's *Life is a Dream*—the Baroque stems from an image which contradicts itself, which hollows itself out. The baroque is the blind spot of the king.”³⁸

From the 1960's through the 1980's, the idea of the Baroque was further amplified in the emerging literatures of post-structuralism and in the burgeoning theorization of post-modernity. Sarduy's own association with Tel Quel circles in France merged with an already growing interest in the seventeenth-century and eighteenth-century as decisive periods in the birth of a reevaluated European modernity. As we have already seen, for instance, figures such as Michel Foucault and Gilles Deleuze showed an ongoing fascination with the ways in which knowledge and power found expression in

³⁷ Severo Sarduy, "Interview: Severo Sarduy," *Diacritics* 2, no. 2, Summer (1972). See also: Severo Sarduy, "The Baroque and the Neobaroque," in *Latin America and Its Literature*, ed. Cesar Fernandez Moreno (Madrid: Siglio XXI Editores, 1978); Severo Sarduy, *Barroco* (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1975); Francisco Cabanillas, *Severo Sarduy: The Flight of Desire (Severo Sarduy: El Vuelo Del Deseo)* (Ann Arbor: UMI Research Press, 1992).

³⁸ Ibid.

representational and scopic regimes of the Baroque era. And indeed, if subsequent years saw a gradual cooling of the controversies related to post-structuralism, the literature of the Baroque nevertheless continued to grow. Christine Buci Glucksmann's important 1984 *La Raison baroque. De Baudelaire à Benjamin* picked up the theme of the baroque as a representational "other", persisting alongside hegemonic ideologies of modernity and marked by differentiations of class and gender. Omar Calabrese, on the other hand, explored the semiotics of the Baroque and its contemporary manifestations in the 1992 *Neo Baroque: Sign of the Times*, drawing an explicit link between patterns of signification in the baroque and those of modern mass media and culture. Indeed, more recent work, such as Angela Ndaljian's *Neo-Baroque Aesthetics and Contemporary Entertainment* (2004), Greg Lambert's *The Return of the Baroque in Modern Culture* (2005), and Lois Parkinson Zamora's *The Inordinate Eye: New World Baroque and Latin American Fiction* (2006) has focused precisely on the links between modern culture and Baroque aesthetic and representational sensibilities.³⁹

³⁹ The literature on the Baroque and its connections with modern representational forms is surprisingly large, and it continues to grow, perhaps amplified by recent interest in visual culture and the colonial cultures of Latin America. See: Christine Buci-Glucksmann, *Baroque Reason: The Aesthetics of Modernity*, trans. Patrick Camiller (London: Sage, 1994); Stephen Calloway, *Baroque Baroque: The Culture of Excess* (London: Phaidon, 1994); Omar Calabrese, *Neo-Baroque: A Sign of the Times*, trans. Charles Lambert (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992); Timothy Hampton, "Introduction: Baroques," *Yale French Studies*, no. 80, Baroque Topographies: Literature/History/Philosophy (1991); Robert Harbison, *Reflections on Baroque* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000); Robert Huddleston, "Baroque Space and the Art of the Infinite," in *The Theatrical Baroque*, ed. Larry Norman (Chicago: 2001); Gregg Lambert, *The Return of the Baroque in Modern Culture* (New York: Continuum, 2004). Lois Parkinson Zamora, *The Inordinate Eye: New World Baroque and Latin American Fiction* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006); Jose Antonio Maravall, *Culture of the Baroque: Analysis of a Historical Structure*, trans. Terry Cochran (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986); Cesar Augusto Salgado, "Hybridity in New World Baroque Theory," *The Journal of American Folklore* 112, no. 445, Summer (1999); Angela Ndaljian, *Neo-Baroque Aesthetics and Contemporary Entertainment* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2004); Georges Teyssot, "Baroque Topographies," *Assemblage*, no. 41, Apr. (2000); Peter Wollen, "Baroque and Neo-Baroque in the Age of Spectacle," *Point of Contact* 3, no. 3, April (1993); Christopher Braider, *Baroque Self-Invention and Historical Truth: Hercules at the Crossroads* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2004); Elizabeth Armstrong, and Victor Zamudio-Taylor, *Ultrabaroque: Aspects of Post-Latin American Art* (San Diego: La Jolla, CA: Museum of Contemporary Art, 2002).

Of course, there is no clear and distinct path that leads unambiguously from Burckhardt's almost grudging appreciation of the Baroque to Walter Benjamin's explorations of the German *Trauerspiel* and eventually into contemporary critiques of modernity. For most of Burckhardt's professional career, for example, the concept of the Baroque was still a relatively indistinct set of ideas, its usage vaguely denoting the set of stylistic movements ranging from Mannerism to Rococo. Largely, though not exclusively, confined to the realms of fine arts in general and architecture in particular, the Baroque had not yet become a term associated with the broader landscapes of literature, philosophy, or even cultural history. However, as we've seen in its relevance to critiques of modernity, the Baroque of Burckhardt nevertheless shares a number of important resonances with its genealogically related post-modern manifestations. This is by no means to say that either Burckhardt's or Benjamin's reception of seventeenth century culture represents post-modern critiques of modernity *in nuce* or *avant la lettre*. But in their respective understandings of and reflections on the Baroque, early threads of a genealogical relation emerge with some clarity, threads that combine and recur over the course of a century, and present the Baroque as a conceptual vantage point from which modernity may reflect upon itself.

Put another way, the theorization of the Baroque brings into relief a fundamental de-centeredness and ironic non-identity that seems to lie at the heart of the project of modernity. To use a set of circular metaphors that we will encounter once again in relation to Burckhardt and Warburg, the Baroque captures that sense of self-reflective curvature that aims at a nostalgic, circular and well-framed identity (depicted most

powerfully in the “classical” aesthetic of the Renaissance) but it is also a curve that can never quite bring the arc to completion as a circumference. Thus, in relation to the legacy of Spanish Gongorism, Severo Sarduy uses the geometrical metaphor of the ellipse to describe the nature of the Baroque.⁴⁰ Where the circle possesses the radial symmetry of a single central point, a symmetry that Sarduy also links to Renaissance representation and Raphael, the ellipse is a polycentric figure that recurs in the Baroque, from the frescos of Pietro da Cortona to the planetary motions described by Kepler. The Baroque curve is the reflective folding by which modernity turns on itself and looks for its own reflection. From this perspective, in other words, the Baroque is not the antithesis of the “classical” but represents a field of self-reflective and self-citational tension that may open up in any tradition. And it is in these porous spaces, pondered by such diverse figures as Wölfflin, Benjamin, and Deleuze, that the Baroque inheres and manifests itself, in porous spaces that open up between the points of the ellipse, between the literal and the ironic, between the territorial state and the nomad. In other words, a primary source of fascination in the Baroque has been the way in which it embraces, and attempts to represent, a tense simultaneity of traditional territoriality and transgressive nomadism.

In these curving motions, then, and in these elliptical patterns of a baroque modernity, our train has finally lurched into motion, and a new landscape emerges into visibility through the windows of our compartment. And as we accelerate out of the territories defined by historicism, the following chapters will follow our fellow travelers—from Jacob Burckhardt to Walter Benjamin—as they explore a set of historical landscapes inflected by modern forms of visibility and mobility. And if, as we shall see,

⁴⁰ Sarduy, "Interview: Severo Sarduy."

such accelerations yielded novel and disorienting experiences of space and visibility, so too did such movements trace out new conceptions and intimations of time and history.

In any case, however, the train is in motion and the next stop is Italy.

Part I

**Fragments of Rome:
Jacob Burckhardt and the Ruins of History**

Chapter 1

Basel, Berlin, Italy: Burckhardt's Early Itineraries in the Age of Historicism

While it would be impossible to draw a straight line between Burckhardt's juvenile experiments and the corpus of his mature historical works, the *Antiquities* could be described as the first notes of a leitmotif that runs not only throughout his intellectual biography, but also through the subsequent reception of his scholarship. For in both the life of the Swiss historian, and in the "afterlife" of his works, Burckhardt remains strangely resistant to the institutional categories and lineages with which historians describe their disciplinary past. During an historical career that spanned over fifty years, and in an age with a wide array of movements, schools, and increasingly centralized institutions, Burckhardt assiduously cultivated the role and position of disciplinary outsider. Though he enjoyed, for much of his career, the exalted status of *Ordinarius*, with all the benefits and power such a position conferred, he nevertheless insisted on remaining in his Basel chair, far from the centers of historical research in Berlin and other German schools.⁴¹ Indeed, despite being honored by the invitation to assume the chair

⁴¹Burckhardt's sense of frustration and alienation from his German colleagues is evident in a letter written to Gottfried Kinkel from Berlin in April 1847: "Es giebt aber nichts Einfältigeres unter der Sonne als die Gelehrten dieser Nation. Der liebe Gott will auch bisweilen seinen Jocus haben, und dann macht er Philologen und Geschichtsforscher von einer gewissen Sorte, welche sich über die ganze Welt erhaben dünken, wenn sie wissenschaftlich ermittelt haben, daß Kaiser Conrad II am 7. Mai 1030 zu Goslar auf den Abtritt gegangen ist und dergleichen Weltinteressen mehr. Es sitzt hier eine rechte Clique dieser Art beisammen und gönnen sich vor Neid den Sonnenschein nicht. Die gräulichsten Philister haben die Archäologie in Händen, sie können aber nichts machen, was nicht styllos und jämmerlich herauskäme. Es ist in dieser deutschen Studirstubenwelt [...] ohne Gleichen. *Das* wissen diese und andere Leute nicht mehr, daß wahre Geschichtschreibung ein Leben in jenem feinen, geistigen Fluidum verlangt, welches aus Monumenten aller andern Art, aus Kunst und Poesie ebensogut dem Forscher entgegenweht, wie aus den eigentlichen Scriptoren." Jacob Burckhardt, *Briefe; vollständige und kritisch bearb.*, ed. Max Burckhardt, 10 vols. (Basel: B. Schwabe, 1949-1994), Vol VI, 68.

vacated by Ranke, Burckhardt remained true to his home city and refused the appointment.⁴² Confronted with the opportunity to take his seat at the very pinnacle of German historical discipline, the Swiss *Ordinarius* chose to remain rather at its fringes, far distant from the professional and political tempests that regularly swept the Prussian capital and its university.

In similar fashion, despite near universal recognition from subsequent historians, Burckhardt's works and historical reflections likewise occupy a curious periphery. For even as he carefully held the disciplinary milieus of his mentors and contemporaries at arm's length, he is likewise conspicuous in leaving behind no distinct school or movement to historical posterity. While he could claim such subsequently distinguished students as Heinrich Wölfflin and Paul Heyse, and enjoyed significant associations with art historian Wilhelm Bode and Basel colleague Friedrich Nietzsche, there nevertheless exists today no body of research, no school of thought, no "ism" that explicitly bears his name. As with the younger Nietzsche, it might be said that while he clearly influenced many, he belongs in the last analysis to none.

Even in what we might call his posthumous existence, therefore, Burckhardt seems to insist on standing alone, a square peg called to, but never quite accepting full membership in, the pedigrees of subsequent historians. Nonetheless, within the historical discipline, it would be hard to argue that Burckhardt's place in the canon is anything but secure. He is universally recognized as both a founding practitioner and a model of

⁴²Beginning in the mid 1860's, Burckhardt's name began to appear as a possible candidate, first in Tübingen and subsequently in relation to Heidelberg and Berlin. Burckhardt went out of his way to make his lack of interest discretely known before any formal offers were made. Interestingly, the position at Heidelberg was eventually filled by Treitschke, who would likewise fill Ranke's chair three years later after Burckhardt again showed no interest in the Berlin post. Werner Kaegi, *Jacob Burckhardt; Eine Biographie*, 7 vols. (Basel: B. Schwabe, 1947-1982), Vol 4, 18-31.

cultural history, paving the way for an historical methodology that emphasizes the synchronic over the diachronic dimensions of the past, a methodology that stresses cultural space rather than temporal direction and narrative. Likewise, his diagnosis of contemporary political and historical trends in *Weltgeschichtliche Betrachtungen* would become a classic of cultural historical criticism, its oft times dark, pessimistic view of modern political life seemed astoundingly prescient to historians and critics of the following century. However, even while works such as *Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy* remain celebrated classics to this day, lauded for their stylistic and methodological qualities, their substantive conclusions have in many cases long been rejected. A brief glimpse at contemporary Renaissance scholarship reveals the continuing presence of and admiration for Burckhardt; he remains a founding figure who must be approached and engaged, even if only as a point of departure⁴³. And indeed, it is precisely in the form of such a departure that Burckhardt is manifest in such works. Though persisting as an important founding figure, his significance is often measured in the distance that the field has traveled away from his initial conclusions and perspectives.

Likewise, if the history of art also claims Burckhardt as a seminal founding figure, here too the relationship is not without its strains. Burckhardt no doubt counts as an enormously influential precursor to the modern discipline of art history, but he nevertheless seems to remain precisely that—a precursor. His canonical position is

⁴³See: August Buck ed., *Zu Begriff und Problem der Renaissance* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1969); Wallace Ferguson, *The Renaissance in Historical Thought* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1948); Wallace K. Ferguson, *Renaissance Studies* (New York: Harper & Row, 1970); J. B. Bullen, *The Myth of the Renaissance in Nineteenth-Century Writing* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994); Peter Ganz, "Jacob Burckhardts 'Kultur der Renaissance in Italien' und die Kunstgeschichte," *Saeculum* 40 (1989); E. M. Janssen, *Jacob Burckhardt und die Renaissance* (Assen: Van Gorcum, 1970); Anthony Hughes, "Interpreting the Renaissance," *The Oxford Art Journal* 11, no. 2 (1988); Volker Reinhardt, *Jacob Burckhardt und die Erfindung der Renaissance. Ein Mythos und seine Geschichte* (Bern: Akademie der Geistes- und Sozialwissenschaften, 2002).

surely not in dispute, yet it nevertheless assumes secondary significance behind more proximal figures such as Riegl, Wölfflin, Morelli, Warburg, and Panofsky. Burckhardt, in other words, takes his place here just on the threshold of a discipline that emerged formally only at the end of his career. Thus, although universally recognized—a confrontation with Burckhardt seems unavoidable and obligatory for historians of many stripes—he is also extremely difficult to place within the disciplinary categories and currents that have taken shape since the end of his career.

In terms of reception, Burckhardt's star has always traced a rather elliptical orbit within the larger system of the historiographical cannon, an orbit determined in large part by the historical events outside the academy. With the publication of the great works of the 1850's – *The Age of Constantine* (1853), *The Cicerone* (1855), and the *Civilization of the Renaissance* (1860), Burckhardt had secured a position of profound—if not unqualified—respect among his fellow members of the German historical *Zunft*, and had achieved a wide and long lasting recognition as author of the popular 1855 guide to Italian art.⁴⁴ In the decades that followed, however, Burckhardt's apparent interest in disciplinary recognition, institutional advancement or even further publishing during his lifetime dramatically waned. While his relationship to the city of his birth would remain complex and ambivalent, the 1860's found him reconciled to the deep ties that bound him to Basel, and increasingly satisfied with a quiet life of scholarship at the provincial Swiss university. Despite regular invitations to conferences, lectures, and symposia of every kind (like the 1872 offer to fill Ranke's Berlin chair), Burckhardt politely, yet resolutely,

⁴⁴ Jacob Burckhardt, *The Age of Constantine the Great*, trans. Moses Hadas (New York Pantheon, 1949). Jacob Burckhardt, *Der Cicerone: Eine Anleitung zum Genuss der Kunstwerke Italiens* (Stuttgart: Kroener, 1986). Jacob Burckhardt, *The Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy* (Oxford: Phaidon, 1995).

refused in the name of loyalty to the people and intellectual milieu of his home city. By the time of the publication of *Civilization of the Renaissance* in 1860, and after the better part of two decades trading time between Basel, Berlin, Zürich and Rome, Burckhardt had settled for good at the University of Basel as Professor of History and Art History, positions he would hold into the 1890's and commitments towards which he would devote the majority of his energies for the rest of his life. Thus, while his reputation as a scholar and an historian remained significant during the second half of the nineteenth century, his personal reticence, his later emphasis on pedagogical obligations, and his resistance to publication all worked to limit and circumscribe the influence of his scholarship until his death in 1897.

It was only in the later years of the nineteenth century that the first signs of what has since become an enormous secondary literature began to emerge. The posthumous German publication of works such as *Erinnerungen aus Rubens* (1898), *Griechische Kulturgeschichte* (1898-1902), and *Weltgeschichtlichen Betrachtungen* (1906), in combination with an increasingly voluminous and well-developed literature related to all things “Nietzsche,” sparked a revival of interest in Burckhardt. Within this context, and along with his ill-fated younger colleague, Burckhardt emerged in the role of early prophet of cultural and historical pessimism, and fashionable precursor of aestheticist *Renaissancismus*, articulating a set of anxieties relating to modernity that would become manifest in the decades before the First World War. And it was precisely in these years, just before the outbreak of the war, that a genuine monograph literature began to develop around the work of Jacob Burckhardt, a literature that would continue to gain momentum

in the next decades with works by Karl Joel, Emil Dürr, Otto Markwart and Carl Neumann.⁴⁵

But if the reception of Burckhardt took its first impetus from enthusiastic former students and was reflected in the aura of burgeoning Nietzsche studies, the historian that reemerged in the years just after the war appeared in a somewhat different guise. In the 1920's and 1930's, while interest in his work remained undiminished, the qualities that made his work essential for historians of cultural and modernity had subtly shifted. Instead of the proto-Nietzschean cultural pessimist, the Burckhardt that emerged in works like those of Walter Rehm and Karl Loewith is that of the committed (if melancholy) cosmopolitan with grave uncertainties about the nature of nationalist politics, the character of the modern *Machtstaat* and industrial modernity.⁴⁶ This is a Burckhardt deeply concerned that about the fate of European culture in a world conditioned by the ruthless forces of power politics and modern materialism. Indeed by the mid 1930's, given the general tenor of Burckhardt's inter-war reception, it is not entirely surprising that the Third Reich found little use for the Swiss historian in National Socialist historiography.

In another sense, however, the Third Reich had a profound impact on the Burckhardt's historiographical fortunes. In the forced exile and emigration of large portions of the German historical community to the Anglo-American world, the German nation exported not only many of its best and most promising historical talents, but also

⁴⁵Emil Dürr, *Freiheit und Macht bei Jacob Burckhardt* (Basel: Helbing & Lichtenhahn, 1918). Karl Joel, *Jacob Burckhardt als Geschichtsphilosoph - Festschrift zur Feier des 450-Jährigen Bestehens der Universität Basel* (Basel: Helbing und Lichtenhahn, 1910); Otto Markwart, *Jacob Burckhardt: Persönlichkeit und Jugendjahre* (Basel: Schwabe, 1920); Carl Neumann, *Jacob Burckhardt, Deutschland und die Schweiz* (Gotha: Verlag Perthes, 1919).

⁴⁶ Andreas and Lionel Gossman Cesana, ed., *Encounters with Jacob Burckhardt: Centenary Papers* (Basel: Schwabe, 2004).115.

exported its most prominent historiographical monuments and traditions. Thus, while Burckhardt was by no means an insignificant figure in the English-speaking scholarly world prior to the Second World War, his place within the canon was greatly expanded in the course of the 1940's and 1950's. At the same time, however, if the Burckhardt that had spoken to the generation after the First World War had shown an ability to shift his colors, the protean historian yielded a new set of fascinations for a generation confronting the aftermath of Nazism and the early frosts of the Cold War. The Burckhardt that emerged at this point, in an intellectual landscape inhabited by various totalitarianisms and “mass men”, was the besieged and pessimistic liberal, valiantly manning the ramparts of traditional bourgeois/aristocratic culture against the onslaughts of socialized ideologies and “cultural leveling”. With the new atavisms of ideological tribalism unleashing the struggles of Fascism and Stalinism, many historians in the era of Cold War consensus found in Burckhardt an engaging vision of historian as liberal bulwark against the material and ideological tides of his day, an intellectual *Einzelgänger* and a committed opponent of “massification”.⁴⁷

By the end of the 1960's, however, the reputation of Burckhardt and his place within historiographical discussions were once again undergoing a series of shifts. On the one hand, even as Burckhardt achieved a degree of canonical centrality in fields such as History and Art History, the 1950's and 1960's saw a gradual yet consistent reassessment of Burckhardt's central theoretical and substantive contributions. By the

⁴⁷ This is Burckhardt that begins to emerge with Friedrich Meinecke's late appreciation in: Friedrich Meinecke, *Ranke und Burckhardt; Ein Vortrag, Gehalten in der Deutschen Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Berlin* (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1948). In this connection, see also: J.L. Herkless, "Meinecke and the Ranke-Burckhardt Problem," *History and Theory* 9, no. 3 (1970); Heinz Angermeier, *Ranke und Burckhardt* (AKG 69, 1987); Felix Gilbert, *History: Politics or Culture?: Reflections on Ranke and Burckhardt* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1990).

mid-twentieth century, Burckhardt's understanding of the Renaissance had undergone a long process of sustained critique and revision to the point of seeming obsolescence, the concepts and practices that characterized his art history were quickly exchanging methodological significance for historiographical interest. On the other hand, even as the historical *content* of Burckhardt's work began to exercise less and less fascination for historians, the late 1960's saw not the dimming of Burckhardt's star, but its transformation into a figure of primarily *formal* and *structural* interest. In the hands of Hayden White and Peter Gay, for example, it is Burckhardt the stylist and Burckhardt the writer that comes to the fore.⁴⁸ And if the latter understands the import of historical style in rather more conventional terms than does the former, the interest for both lies less in what Burckhardt had to say than in how he went about saying it. Of vital importance, with regard to this development, is the way in which Burckhardt's reception would become henceforth linked to the broader methodological crises that would unfold in the 1970's and 1980's, and in which the interventions of historians like Hayden White would form important early chapters. And while White takes issue with the "ironic realist" that emerges in the pages of *Metahistory* for an ostensible and irresponsible political quietude, there is no lack of later critics who would find, in Burckhardt's methodological idiosyncrasies and resistance to theoretical totalization, a model and precursor of a possible post-modern historiography.⁴⁹

⁴⁸Peter Gay, *Style in History* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1974). Hayden V. White, *Metahistory: The Historical Imagination in Nineteenth-Century Europe* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1973). Interesting to note here the way White is reacting rather more to the Burckhardt as understood by the immediately preceding generation of American academics.

⁴⁹Egon Flaig, "Ästhetischer Historismus? Zur Asthetisierung der Historie bei Humboldt und Burckhardt," *Philosophisches Jahrbuch* 94 (1987). Randolph Starn, "A Postmodern Renaissance?," *Renaissance Quarterly* Spring (2007).

In most varieties of reception, however, Burckhardt is manifest both as an icon of modern historiography, and as the voice of a critical and perennial “outside”. Even White, who constructs a rather unsympathetic portrait of Burckhardt, produces this image precisely because of the Swiss historian's ironic and self-imposed detachment from the social and cultural issues of his era. Indeed, it is perhaps this very stubborn externality or alterity, this resistance to neat categorization and self-identity that seems to generate the perennial interest in Burckhardt among modern historians. Regardless of the period of reception, in other words, Burckhardt continually reappears as *the* historian of crisis, a scholar whose critical and ironic posture with regard to his own era appeals to later historians confronting their own political, cultural, theoretical and methodological crises.

From this perspective, Burckhardt's persistence as a figure of historiographical interest has as much to do with his structural location within a landscape defined by the historical discipline of the nineteenth century and beyond, as it does with the specific nature of his political, social and cultural views. Unfortunately, much of the secondary Burckhardt literature seems geared towards identifying these latter elements, finally determining whether the Swiss historian was, in the last analysis, conservative or liberal, anti-Semitic or not, or in nailing down his precise attitude about the nature of European modernity. But if his younger Basel colleague, Friedrich Nietzsche, could declare that the national identity of the German people consisted precisely in the perennial search for such a national identity, one could also claim something similar about the ideological and theoretical essence of Burckhardt's historical interventions.⁵⁰ It may be true that every

⁵⁰ “...the Germans are more incomprehensible, more comprehensive, more full of contradictions, more unknown, more incalculable, more surprising, even more frightening to themselves than other peoples are - they elude *definition* and are for that reason alone the despair of the French. It is characteristic of the

figure of historiographical interest manifests an irreducible complexity and ambiguity that the categories of scholarship have difficulty in apprehending and representing, but Jacob Burckhardt seems to insist on such ambiguity even more stubbornly than most. Therefore, rather than trying to resolve such ambivalences and ambiguities, rather than trying to discover or rehabilitate an essential (e.g. liberal, conservative, Nietzschean, Romantic, anti-Semitic) Burckhardt, perhaps a more adequate picture is presented in the structural and formal dimension defined by the Swiss historian's deployment of the ironic mode. From this perspective, Burckhardt is best characterized by his stubborn and ironic resistance, in both his lived career and the “afterlife” of his posthumous reception, to subsumption within a stable set of historiographical categories. Put another way, it is precisely the critical irony and ambiguity of Burckhardt's essential political and theoretical views that may paradoxically constitute the essence and value of Burckhardt's historiographical untimely timeliness. For Burckhardt, in other words, the various displacements described above (national, disciplinary, personal, ironic/stylistic) represent far more than a set of superficial and accidental features that can be divorced from his historiographical practice and outlook. Instead, in the insistent extra-territoriality that suffuse both his life and work, the Basel historian resembles a tile that fits within no mosaic, a nomad who rejects sedentary settlement, and a fragment that refuses the integrating whole.

On multiple levels, therefore, from the most contemporary issues of reception to the early historical experiments of the *Antiquities*, one quickly notices a recurring Burckhardtian theme that describes an uneasy “*Schwebende*” (undetermined, provisional,

Germans that the question 'what is German?' never dies out among them.” Friedrich Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, trans. R.J. Hollingdale (New York: Penguin, 1973), 155.

hovering) relation between topos and heterotopos, between fragment and whole, between dissolution and integration.⁵¹ And yet these formal qualities of alterity, nomadism, and fragmentation were neither personal idiosyncrasies nor mere stylistic gestures, but existed instead in a constitutive and organic relation with his substantive historical, theoretical and methodological commitments. If the Swiss historian's formal dispositions often placed him in a curiously oblique relation to the disciplinary practices of his contemporaries, these same formal dispositions secured him a certain historical vantage point that was denied to other historians. As with the anthology of his youth, Burckhardt's methods and commitments may have often diverged from those embraced by the gathering hegemonic currents of German historicism, but precisely because of this they permitted a set of relations with the past that were likely closed to those writing from within more conventional "territories".

But while the *Antiquities* anthology presents us with a metaphorical model for a history—self-consciously constructed from fragmentary traces—such a fascination with the “historical fragment” should not be entirely surprising. Historians are perpetually confronting an array of often disjointed and incomplete territories and temporal constellations whose construction, documentation, and reconstruction are precisely the object of their work. Indeed, foremost among such constellations is the fragmentary field of documentary evidence that every historian encounters, and from whose uncertain,

⁵¹“Schwebend” is used here to draw a link between Burckhardt and the critical vocabulary of Friedrich Schlegel. By extension this connects with Benjamin's interest in Schlegel in *The Concept of Criticism in Romanticism*. “Schwebend” describes a kind of provisional critical hovering between text and interpretation, being and discourse. Manfred Frank, *Friedrich Schlegel and the Emergence of Romantic Philosophy*, trans. Elizabeth Millan-Zaibert (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2007). See *The Concept of Criticism in Romanticism* in Walter Benjamin, *Walter Benjamin: Selected Writings*, ed. Howard Eiland Michael W. Jennings, and Gary Smith, 4 vols. (Cambridge, MA: Belnap Press, 1996-2003), Vol 1., 116-200.

partial signals the latter seeks to recreate a temporal whole. This confrontation of historian with historical fragment is one of the most primitive *ur*-relations in the professional documentation, appropriation and representation of previous times. At the heart of every such enterprise, we invariably discover a relation where a subject of historical reflection is seeking to make sense of a necessarily fragmentary body of evidentiary objects. And while the reaction between these two elements may produce a child's anthology of cut-outs and pastiche, a multi-volume history of Rome, or nothing more than a moment's reverie, the primal dyadic relation between present subject and fragment of the past is always its pre-condition and determining factor.

What is important, therefore, is not that the practice of history or other less formal modes of reflection must represent and reconstruct a past that is present (in varying degrees) only in fragments. Instead, the historiographical distinctiveness of Burckhardt lies rather in the way he understands and represents this relation between whole and fragment, and how this understanding became manifest in the theories, methodologies, and substantive conclusions of his historical representations. What is at issue is the way in which any attempt to reconstruct the past must understand its task in relation to a fragmentary body of evidence. What is the precise significance and signifiatory status of the objects that mediate this confrontation with the past, and how are these objects taken up and situated in a reconstructed historical continuum in the representations of the historian? Thus, what makes Burckhardt's approach, in the *Antiquities* and beyond, curiously compelling is the insistently visual manner in which he takes up, organizes, and communicates with a set of historical and graphical fragments. So while Burckhardt's anthology selects and discursively arranges its evidentiary fragments as any other history

would, it does this in a visual medium with formal imperatives and structural consequences that are likely very different from those generated by conventional narrative and textual genres like the historiographical essay, the monograph, or the journal article. In other words, the striking thing about the anthology is not that its constitutive elements are fragments, but rather the way in which these fragments are situated in a representational medium defined by visual rather than textual characteristics.

But what sort of history is it that emerges from a source base and representational framework that is committed to a visual appropriation of the past? Joining a broader current of contemporary reflection on history and the visual, the present chapter seeks to investigate the ways in which the formal historiographical embrace of a visual and envisioned past conditions substantive historical conclusions and outlooks. Using the example of Burckhardt in relation to the disciplinary milieu of his era, I hope to demonstrate that a visual appropriation of the past yields not simply a new and complementary means of surveying an already well explored domain of historical objects, but carries with it a set of imperatives and orientations that may produce temporal landscapes very different from those that take shape within the realm of textual discursive and narration. The past that is seen, in other words, is perhaps very different from the past that is read and written. In more specific terms, we might ask how Burckhardt's well known emphasis on the optical or scopic experience of the past helped determine the contours and conclusions of his historical works. What novel fragments does it discover through its optical apparatus, and how does the organization and arrangement of these manifest themselves in a representational framework decisively conditioned by visibility?

Another way to think about such questions is perhaps to borrow some terminology from the work of Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari. From this perspective, we might ask how a Burckhardtian commitment to vision destabilizes and dissolves the methodological and theoretical “territories” established by the practices of German historicism, and how such a commitment involves a re-territorialization of historical phenomena in relation to another principle of differentiation.⁵² However, in order to grasp these processes in a less abstract fashion, to bring into relief the ways in which a visually oriented appropriation of the past can deconstruct and reconfigure a textual/narrative approach, we may wish to deploy the Deleuzian terminology of territory not only in its metaphorical significance, but also embrace it quite literally in its concrete spatial meaning. For while Burckhardt's visual commitments (his political views, his personal predilections) locate him as an extra-territorial in a variety of metaphorical senses, such “nomadic” transgression was mirrored in, and reinforced by, a variety of similar movements and experiences in physical spaces.

Geography, in other words, here intersects with intellectual biography, and transitions in space become associated with, and reflect, transformations of political, theoretical, methodological commitments. Both *literally and figuratively*, different spaces yield different visions, and territories of space are intimately bound up with territories of vision. Indeed, Lionel Gossman's *Basel in the Age of Burckhardt* is premised to a great degree on this conjunction of various geographic spaces—political, cultural, disciplinary—and how these conditioned the intellectual micro-climate of Basel

⁵² See for instance the selection on ‘nomad thought’ in Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987), 374-380.

in the mid-nineteenth century, molding the intellectual biographies of figures like Burckhardt and Bachofen.⁵³ Thus, for example, we are unsurprised Burckhardt's peripheral status within the Prussian-centered German historical *Zunft* is reflected in his embrace of a Basel identity bound up with a *Grossdeutsch* provincialism, an identity defined by its position just beyond the reach of powerful political and disciplinary territories. Conversely, if Berlin tempted initially as a lively metropole of politics and scholarship, it later came to represent a less congenial atmosphere determined by careerism and urban philistinism.⁵⁴ And where Köln would form an emotional and biographical counterpart to experiences in Berlin, a brief idyll of *Vormärz* (pre-1848) enthusiasm alongside friends like Gottfried Kinkel, an older Burckhardt took care not to be overwhelmed by the (perhaps naive) passions he associated with it. For Burckhardt, in other words, territories of space, territories of thought, and territories of affect, were intimately and inextricably bound to one another. To move in one dimension was invariably to travel in another.

Burckhardt would eventually reconcile himself to the extra-territorial (in all the senses we have described) advantages of his Basel perch on the upper Rhine, and reject

⁵³ Lionel Gossmann, *Basel in the Age of Burckhardt: A Study in Unseasonable Ideas* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002). Gossmann's presentation of the intellectual milieu of nineteenth century Basel of course is part of a larger constellation of works that take the space of a particular region as a starting point for Burckhardtian style cross-sectional history. Others include Carl Schorske, *Fin-de-Siècle Vienna: Politics and Culture* (New York: Vintage Books, 1981); Scott Spector, *Prague Territories: National Conflict and Cultural Innovation in Franz Kafka's Fin de Siècle* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002); Bernd Roeck, *Florenz 1900: Die Suche nach Arkadien* (München: C.H. Beck, 2001).

⁵⁴Already in 1847, and with possibilities of a post secured by mentor Franz Kugler dwindling, Burckhardt shows little love for Berlin in a letter to Eduard Schauenberg: "Armer Junge! ich glaube gern, daß Siegen noch schlimmer ist als Berlin, obschon das viel sagen will. Glaubst Du mir, daß ich am Sonntag nur schon deshalb ungern spazieren gehe, um nicht Berlinern en masse zu begegnen? Drei Vierteile dieser Gesichter sind bittersauer und gedrückt, der letzte Vierteil phi-" liströs gemästet. Rom ist doch auch arm, aber welche Schönheit, Klarheit und Charakterfülle in diesen Gesichtern! mager zum Teil, auch alt und verwittert hie und da, aber alles entschieden, ehern, nichts a priori Skrophulöses, Schwammiges, Formloses." Burckhardt, *Briefe; vollständige und kritisch bearbeitet*. Vol. II, 62-63.

the intellectual biographical spaces defined by Berlin and Basel, however, there remains another set of territories that persisted as a source of professional and personal inspiration throughout his adult life. For even as the compass arrow of Burckhardt's youthful and student years had been directed largely to the north, to professional development in Berlin and personal commitments in the Rhineland, that same arrow could already be seen wobbling with equal urgency towards regions in the south, towards an Italy that would remain an important territory for Burckhardt throughout his life and career.⁵⁵ It was Italy, after all, and the domains of the south, with all its Goethean and Romantic associations and resonances, that would initially draw a young scholar on early tentative exploratory journeys. It was Italy that would beckon Burckhardt over and over again in his professional capacity as historian, scholar and researcher. And it was Italy where Burckhardt found a peculiar personal equilibrium between an interest in historical time and a passion for aesthetic experience. Indeed it was precisely this heterotopic and extra-territorial “elsewhere” that became the space in which Burckhardt would explore the mutually defining relation between the presentations of the visual and the representations of the historical.

⁵⁵In 1838, shortly after his first student tours of northern Italy, Burckhardt would write to Johannes Riegenbach of the place the experience of the South had come assume: “Erst jetzt taucht die Erinnerung von meiner Reise ganz in ihrer Größe und halb als Ideal umgestaltet vor mir auf. Die Masse des Unangenehmen verschwindet im Gedächtniß und nur die großen himmlischen Bilder bleiben und werden mein alier-eigenstes Erbtheil. Dann und wann träume ich des Nachts von dem Gesehenen und sehe es noch viel ungeheurer, noch viel wunderbarer.” *Briefe*, Vol. I, 99.

By 1881, during a stay in Genoa, he could look back on his relation to Italy as a form of elective affinity: “Regt sich in mir der verdünnte Tropfen italienischen Geblütes, den ich durch diverse Mütter hindurch seit dem XVI. Jahrhundert in mir habe ? genug, daß mir Alles so verwandt und selbstverständlich erscheint was ich vor mir sehe. Mein Geschick will ich gar nicht tadeln; ich bin ein nicht ganz unnützer Basler geworden und wäre doch nur ein unzulänglicher Italiener, aber es ist mir doch lieb daß ich hier das Gefühl der Fremde nicht mehr habe. Es ist mir hier reichlich so heimisch zu Muthe als in Frankfurt oder in Dresden und ich habe es leichter, mit den Leuten in Verkehr zu treten.” *Briefe*, Vol. VII, 261.

Furthermore, despite the many intellectual and aesthetic lures of the rest of the peninsula, it was clearly Rome that had the most profound impact on the Basel scholar, and it is in relation to this “eternal city” that the rest of this chapter will seek to trace a peculiarly Burckhardtian, visually-oriented reconstruction of the past. In this fascination with Rome, of course, Burckhardt would be neither the first visitor nor the last to be captivated by the city so defined and marked by its own antiquity and historicity. While other “capitals of the nineteenth century”, such as Paris and London, had busily and continually built upon and concealed their ancient foundations, and where cities like Berlin were the mere juvenile offspring of modernity by comparison, Burckhardt's Rome could still be characterized as ruins containing a city rather than a city containing ruins.⁵⁶ In similar fashion, if the physiognomy of Rome was defined by the fragments, traces, and ruins of an astonishingly rich antiquity, the city posed both challenges and opportunities to those who would seek to understand and make sense of its spaces from a historical perspective. Thus, if Paris were a blackboard, from which Hausmann could erase the *romance* of the medieval city and rewrite it as an *epic* of modernity, Rome remained throughout most of the nineteenth century a city in the form of a jumbled and crowded palimpsest, a city whose history was perpetually written and rewritten on a single, seven-hill page. Where the physiognomies of Paris and London were great geographical narratives of imperial power and modernization, and where such narratives could only

⁵⁶The modern reception of the urban spaces of Rome has not seen the same attention as, for instance, nineteenth-century Paris. However, there has been a literature developing around European experience of Italian cityscapes, such as Catharine Edwards, *Roman Presences: Receptions of Rome in European Culture, 1789-1945* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1999); Catharine Edwards, *Writing Rome: Textual Approaches to the City* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996). For review of the transformation of Rome's physiognomy in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries see John Agnew, *Rome* (New York: Wiley, 1995). For a look at the reception of Florence as well as the modernization of its urban spaces, see Bernd Roeck, *Florenz 1900: Die Suche nach Arkadien* (München: Beck, 2001).

partially conceal schizophrenic social geography, Rome by contrast seemed to delight in its own historical schizophrenia and insist upon the never complete coincidence of its many identities.

In many ways, to be sure, it is precisely this plenitude of the past, this thoroughly overdetermined field of historical significance, that would not only attract the fascination of visitors from Martin Luther to Goethe, but would also exercise a nearly overwhelming impression on the historically attuned traveler of the nineteenth century. This very plenitude of historical, aesthetic, and political signs, narratives and spaces could open up territories of interpretive exploration that could not be found in places where temporal valences were more rigidly determined and policed. In other words, as a city quite literally existing in historical fragments, Rome was also a domain whose meanings and significance were both in perpetual decay and in perpetual renewal. And for every visitor like Martin Luther who was horrified by this *urbis mirabilis* a “city of man” reduced to an all too human process of ruination and fragmentation, there were many such as Goethe who encountered Rome’s historical fragmentation as an opportunity of enormous creative potential—whether aesthetic, intellectual, erotic, or even historical.⁵⁷ For some, in other words, the jumbled narratives of Rome—the city of Augustus, the city of Peter, and the city of Victor Emmanuel—could yield nothing more than an ongoing staging of a tragedy, an eternal and almost sacred symbol of historical dissolution. For others, Rome

⁵⁷For Luther’s jaundiced response to Rome see: Russel Lemmons, “If there is a Hell, then Rome Stands upon it’: Martin Luther as Traveler and Translator,” in Carmine Di Biase ed. *Travel and Translation in the Early Modern Period* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2006). For the impact of Goethe on German travel to Italy see: Richard Block *The Spell of Italy: Vacation, Magic and the Attraction of Goethe* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2006). Also, see the early survey of the varied phenomena of German interest in the south by Wilhelm Waetzoldt, *Das Klassische Land: Wandlungen der Italiensehnsucht* (Leipzig: Seemann, 1927).

emerged as a grand urban staging of a Benjaminian *Trauerspiel*, an ongoing work of perpetual fragmentation always requiring the interpretive participation of its players and audience. Rather than a mythical *symbol* of decay, Rome could here present itself as an *allegory* of history, a living jumble of allegorical fragments that insist upon, and yet always elude, the interpretive completion or totalization of those who witness its spectacle.

This peculiarly Roman constellation of historical fragmentation thus poses both a particularly daunting problem and a welcome opportunity for the historian whose task is one of gathering together traces of the past and arranging them in a coherent and representative whole. While the density of historical traces, records, documents, monuments, and narratives is fertile ground for the practice of history, it is also a landscape lushly covered over with growths of every conceivable time and era, a fecund space where even the most careful historical arrangements are easily overwhelmed. Rome thus generates a set of methodological and theoretical issues that, while not unique to the city or region itself, arise there with particular clarity and starkness. But how, then, does the historian disentangle that crowded jumble of narratives inscribed within and through the urban space? How can this often dissonant chorus of temporalities—in narratives, documents, signs, traces and fragments—be assembled in a coherent whole without doing injustice to the individual elements of which it is composed? Is it even possible to adequately represent Rome in the textual, narrative, linear and sequential forms that became the methodological standard for the nineteenth-century practice of professional history, and whose use was pioneered in part by the great representatives of the German historical school?

Such questions would not deter figures like Leopold von Ranke or Theodor Mommsen, whose great historical works on Roman history—the *History of the Popes* (1834-1836) and the *History of Rome* (1854-1856) respectively—would be recognized by contemporaries as monuments of modern historical scholarship. And yet one senses, particularly with regard to Mommsen, that the fragmentary and unfinished state of his Roman history had as much to do with the density of his chosen object as it did with its extensiveness. Whether such density was present in an already crowded historiographical field populated by giants like Gibbon and Niebuhr, or whether such density could be found in the ever accumulating mass of fragments collected in Mommsen's *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum*, a history committed to post-Hegelian, Prussian School linearity and necessity could no longer synthesize such a vast field of historical fragments into a coherent and sequential narrative.⁵⁸ In this respect, Mommsen in particular, and German historicism in general, resembled the figure of a collector whose collection had enlarged beyond his narrative capabilities to define, encompass and adequately represent. Or, like the great “unfinished” modernist novels of the twentieth century—say, Kafka's *Das Schloß* or Musil's *Der Mann ohne Eigenschaften*—the historicist narratives of the nineteenth century discovered that subject matter of sufficient density and extensiveness must necessarily exhaust the formal capacities of the narrative form itself. And while this

⁵⁸ In relation to Theodor Mommsen, *The History of Rome* and *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum* see: Lothar Wickert, *Theodor Mommsen: eine Biographie*, 4 vol. (Frankfurt a.M.: Klostermann, 1959-1980); Lothar Wickert, *Drei Vorträge über Theodor Mommsen zum 70. Geburtstag* (Frankfurt a.M.: Klostermann, 1970); Stefan Rebenich, *Theodor Mommsen: eine Biographie* (München: Beck, 2002); Josef Wiesehöfer, *Theodor Mommsen: Gelehrter, Politiker und Literat* (Stuttgart: F. Steiner, 2005); Peter Kopf, *Die Mommsens: von 1848 bis Heute: die Geschichte einer Familie ist die Geschichte der Deutschen* (Hamburg: Europa Verlag, 2004); Joachim Fest, "Theodor Mommsen: Zwei Wege Zur Geschichte - Eine Biographische Skizze," *Frankfurt Allgemeine Zeitung*, July 31 1982; Albert Wucher, *Theodor Mommsen, Geschichtschreibung und Politik* (Göttingen: Musterschmidt, 1956); Karl Friedrich Wilhem Zangemeister, *Theodor Mommsen als Schriftsteller: ein Verzeichnis seiner Schriften* (Hildesheim: Weidmann, 2000).

may have been precisely the point for the modernist novelist intent on probing the limits of twentieth century literary forms, it posed serious methodological and theoretical issues for nineteenth-century historians committed to the narrative reconstruction of the past.

However, the recognition of this problem of representation, particularly with respect to the historical landscapes of Rome, was by no means a discovery of the twentieth, or even the nineteenth century. Since at least the eighteenth-century, visual artists had struggled to represent the historical plenitude and schizophrenic non-identity of Rome in ways that satisfied the formal demands of their own representational media. But where some sought to visualize a lost classical or Christian wholeness—in nostalgic visions of a “golden age”, for example, in the late-Baroque Claude Lorraine, or in restored traditions of medieval sacred painting in the later “Nazarenes” circle—others would foreground the fragmentary character of Rome, highlighting a city composed of cracks, fissures and ruins. The eighteenth-century Roman *Vedute* of Giovanni Piranesi, reconstructs a Rome not rendered whole by situating it in a real or imagined historical continuum, but by visually representing the past as a constellation of fragmentary elements situated in a synchronic present. Piranesi experiments with the ways in which a present Roman whole—in both its spatial and temporal character—can be presented while still preserving and foregrounding a variegated, fragmentary character. Indeed, from the perspective of a visually-oriented synchronic moment, the various strands of the historical continuum manifest themselves almost necessarily as fragments (what Burckhardt would later associate with his famous historical cross-sections). The vision of the city is not imagined through appeal to a wholeness that exists in some distant past or future, but as it takes shape in a present defined by the ruinous coincidence and inter-

penetration of many times and many narratives. What the visualized historical landscapes of Piranesi bring into relief is a sense of an essential yet fragmentary simultaneity, a snapshot conjunction between past and present, or between various dimensions of one historical moment. Indeed, carrying this process one step further, many of Piranesi's *Vedute* self-consciously present themselves as fragments of fragments, as incomplete visual slices through a spatial and historical continuum that cannot be totalized or fully apprehended by either artistic or historical representation. In the end, Piranesi's visual documentation of traces of the Roman past not only produces a fascinating rethinking of the historical representation—in terms of synchronization, simultaneity, and representational irony—but seems also to challenge, dissolve and undermine the posited continuities of more linear and diachronic approaches, continuities and formal imperatives central to what would become nineteenth-century German historicism.

Likewise inspired by the spaces of Rome, Edward Gibbon's famous account of his 'Capitoline Vision' is perhaps the most famous example of a historian's visual encounter with the past, an encounter that captures both an historical and an historiographical moment "It was at Rome," he would write some years after the fact in his memoirs, "on the 15th of October 1764, as I sat musing amidst the ruins of the Capitol, while the bare-footed fryars were singing vespers in the temple of Jupiter, that the idea of writing the decline and fall of the city first started to my mind."⁵⁹ Describing a moment of Gibbon's continental tour and visit to Italy in the 1760's, subsequent readers have marveled at this

⁵⁹Edward Gibbon, *Memoirs of Edward Gibbon* (Boston: J. R. Osgood & co., 1877). See also Stephen Bann, "Envisioning Rome: Granet and Gibbon in Dialogue," in Catherine Edwards ed. *Roman Presences* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999); Catherine Edwards, ed., *Writing Rome: Textual Approaches to the City* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

compact visual miniature as the “experience” that could be said to have launched a million words in the form of the British historian's monumental, multi-volume work, *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*. For our purposes, however, what springs to the fore is not so much the relation of such an event, whether real or invented, to a celebrated work of history which it ostensibly inspired. Rather, what is here particularly fascinating is the way it serves to encapsulate and exemplify an experience of historical time in the form of a spatialized scene—whether that space is described visually or verbally. In this brief passage, in other words, this mere sketch of just a few lines, Gibbon envisions a dense tableau for his readers in which all the strange relations between past and present, between historian and historical trace, are congealed into a single image.

Such an image, of course, and the relations of which it speaks, are themselves artifacts of a particular time and place, and the envisioned remembrances of Gibbon must themselves be historicized and understood from the perspective of a particular personal and disciplinary moment. After all, the image described by Gibbon, in which we find him “musing” on the Capitoline Hill, clearly announces its Enlightenment provenance, displaying the same critical characteristics that would determine the contours of the subsequent historical work. On the one hand, for example, Gibbon looks on as the flock of “fryers” passes before his critical eye, the clerics ironically inhabiting the ruined remains of Empire whose downfall *Decline and Fall* would ascribe to the rise of the Roman Church. Thus clearly marked for an age of enlightened and critical historiography, committed to demystification on every front, the Roman ruins represent a rich human narrative that has become buried beneath the encrustations of a dogmatic and superstitious millennium. On the other hand, Gibbon takes the curious yet highly

significant step of situating himself in his own tableau. The scene describes not only an uncanny vision in which monks pass through the fossilized remains of an empire laid low by the solvent of emerging Christianity, but it also describes Gibbon's own presence within this vision. Indeed, as it is constructed, the vision underscores less the monks themselves than Gibbon's observation of them; what the reader sees is not merely ruins and monks, but *Gibbon* seeing these ruins and monks. The immediate effect is a curious re-framing of the historical moment in which Gibbon's own reflective moment is placed within the historical tableau, and the result is a critical thematization of historical representation itself, a thematization in consonance with Gibbon's larger Enlightenment and critical commitments. Thus, while Gibbon's vision of the Capitoline Hill might contain a host of other visual cues regarding historical methodological and theoretical outlooks—and we will have more to say on this below—it may suffice for the moment to simply recognize the ways in which historical practices and ideologies are intimately bound up with the ways in which we conceive of and represent space and the traces of the past within it. In short, our experience of time conditions our representation of space, and our experience of space influences our representations of time.

In some ways, the views outlined above closely resemble the discussion that has taken place over the last several decades regarding the formal dimensions of historical literature, and how the various rhetorics of such literature may or may not affect the truth claims of historical representation.⁶⁰ This is neither the time nor place to revisit those

⁶⁰For this literature see Hayden White, *The Content of the Form: Narrative Discourse and Historical Representation* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1987); Hayden White, *Metahistory: the Historical Imagination in Nineteenth-Century Europe* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1973); Timothy Bahti, *Allegories of History: Literary Historiography after Hegel* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992); F.R. Ankersmit, *Historical Representation* (Stanford: Stanford University

debates in depth, debates which have ended more often in the exhaustion of partisans than in a true consensus regarding the nature of historical prose. But to the degree such a consensus has been established, it probably involves the rather grudging acceptance that a certain “exceptionalist” understanding of historical representation is no longer tenable, that historical narratives, like any other, are at least influenced, if not determined, by formal linguistic and verbal imperatives. However, as Gibbon (or indeed any visual artist) might remind us, every reflection or representation is made under the influence of experiences and rhetorics that extend beyond the limited categories defined by written or spoken language. If history involves a “tropics” of writing to some degree, we might also wish to explore how historical representation is likewise penetrated by “grammars” or “rhetorics” of visuality and spatial organization. In much the same way that the appearance of an author in his or her own narrative implies an ironic gesture as it undermines the boundaries between narrative and narrative space, spatial representation carries with it a similar set of possibilities and structures, formal properties that determine the relation between observer and observed, and the contours of a space that implies a temporal organization. Thus, while we might wish to be wary of over-burdening the verbal analogies implied by terms like “grammar” and “rhetoric”, the formal imperatives of visuality—imperatives which are themselves historically grounded and according to which any physical spaces can be conceived or constructed—decisively condition what and how historical time can be represented.

Press, 2001); F.R. Ankersmit, *History and tropology: The Rise and Fall of Metaphor* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994); Jörn Rüsen, *History: Narration, Interpretation, Orientation* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2005).

However, if the space of historical reflection, in Gibbon's formulation, is so clearly an artifact of its Enlightenment context, what sorts of spatial “musing” might result if we were to invite another historian, perhaps from a later milieu or generation, to the Capitoline perch. What sort of image would, for example, a Leopold von Ranke or a Johann Gustav Droysen produce under similar circumstances? Would the elegiac mood implied by Gibbon’s moment of autumn vespers be replicated in the imagined scene of a Droysen or a Mommsen, those some time students of Hegelianism, historical necessity, and progress? Might we find Ranke—whose historical method hovered near a denial of subjectivity in the face of the historical object—similarly peeking out from within the frame of his own vision? Clearly, and this should not be overly surprising, the visualized spaces that would likely emerge from the German historical imagination of the early nineteenth century would be quite distinct from those of Gibbon and the Enlightenment. But indeed, how might we conceive of historicist principles of representation in visual terms, and what principles of spatial organization correspond with the representational nature of their temporal commitments?

In *Between History and Literature*, Lionel Gossman takes up some of these issues in a way that might illuminate the relations between various forms of representation—whether they be fictional or non-fictional, verbal or visual—and explores their implications for historical writing. Following the structuralist linguistics of Emile Benveniste, Gossman distinguishes two dimensions of writing, *discours* and *histoire*. Where the former denotes the level or time of narration and the latter corresponds to the time of what is being narrated. *Discours* is thus the temporality of the narrator of historical events, and *histoire* is the temporality of the narrated events. Furthermore, as

Gossman continues, eighteenth-century prose tended to hold these two planes apart, creating a situation of “ironic displacement” or distance between the narrator and what is being narrated. Indeed, such ironic distancing finds its way even into the historical prose of Voltaire, Hume, and Gibbon. “The Enlightenment historian,” writes Gossman:

tells his tale under the same conditions as the eighteenth-century novelist, and, like him, engages the reader with him as ironic spectator of the historical scene or tableau. The ultimate unifying center of eighteenth-century historical writing, it has been said, is the narrator himself rather than the narrative of events: the latter exists largely as a pretext for “philosophical” commentary, and for the sake of the community of philosophes that this commentary was expected to establish between narrator and reader, and among readers.⁶¹

For Edward Gibbon, therefore, as much as for Lawrence Sterne, an enlightened historical prose demanded the very same ironic distancing that we find operative in the Capitoline Hill vision, a displaced narrator whose observations can themselves be observed. As Gossman indicates, it is precisely this seemingly casual literary ornament—that of Gibbon musing amid the ruins—that holds together the disparate fragments of the past for the critical Enlightenment observer. Indeed, in this formulation, without the ironic distance that is here spatially conceived as the watcher being watched, there can be no adequate representation of the past.⁶²

On the other hand, as Gossman goes on to describe, the situation in the following century would be altered dramatically. “It would not be too difficult,” he argues in a passage worth quoting in full:

⁶¹Lionel Gossman, *Between History and Literature* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1990), 243.

⁶²Of course, this dovetails with the link that Foucault draws, regarding the same moment, between modern forms of watching and the modes of constructed subjectivity that are produced by such surveillance (first external and subsequently self-surveillance). And it links as well to the very extensive literature on relation between forms of narrativity and forms of subjectivity.

to show that nineteenth-century historical narrative also shares important structural features with nineteenth-century fictional narrative, notably the explicit rejection of the clear Enlightenment separation of object and subject, past and present, narrative and commentary or discourse, and the attempt to make them continuous with each other. The dominant feature of both fictional and historical narrative in the nineteenth century is the replacement of the overt eighteenth-century persona of the narrator by a covert narrator, and the corresponding presentation of the narrative as unproblematic, absolutely binding. The historical text is not a model to be discussed, criticized, accepted or repudiated by the free and inquiring intellect, but as the inmost form of the real, binding and inescapable.”⁶³

From this perspective, in other words, the planes of *discours* and *histoire* that had been held so carefully apart within Enlightenment find themselves converging into a single dimension, a dimension in which a discursive historiography is adequate to, and co-extensive with the narrated objects and events of *histoire*. And since discursive representation of history is rendered here as an unproblematic enterprise, authorial intrusion and intra-narrative critique could only serve to diminish the clarity (and objectivity?) already guaranteed by an adequate regime of representation. With the advent of the nineteenth century, eighteenth-century critical space between narrator and narrated, the spaces once occupied by Gibbon and Sterne, are stitched up and papered over with a new conception of narrative representation. And from the new nineteenth-century vantage point, it is precisely this retreat of authorial presence and faith in the transparency of representation—whether practiced by novelists or historians—that underwrites the authenticity of the narrative.

The nineteenth-century rejection and reformulation of Enlightenment literary categories is too vast a topic to survey here, the stations of its wanderings—from Romanticism to Modernism—describing a dense knot of historical threads that the

⁶³Gossman, 251.

present work cannot hope to untangle. At the same time, it is within the context of these processes, in milieus defined by the early nineteenth-century rejection of Enlightenment categories, that the young Jacob Burckhardt began his own education in, exploration of, and experiments with the forms of historical understanding and representation. Indeed, the scholarly environment that Burckhardt first encountered as a young student was still largely dominated by problems inherited from the first generation of post-Revolutionary, post-Kantian and post-Enlightenment German intellectuals. Initially studying theology under de Wette and Hagenbach, and subsequently learning history at the feet of figures like Ranke, Böckh, and the younger Droysen, Burckhardt's intellectual landscape as a student was one still defined by the legacies of German Idealism and the various strands of a *Frühromantik* (early Romanticism) associated with the Jena circle. Thus, whereas de Wette had been a follower of Schleiermacher, and Böckh, Ranke and Hagenbach had been students of the same, the young Droysen and the nascent Prussian School had drunk deep of the Hegelian currents then gathering strength in Germany.

Yet while the intellectual landscape of German speaking Europe in the eras of reform and restoration was amazingly fertile in a variety of dimensions, it was a landscape whose intellectual features shared a common ancestor in the attempts of German Idealism and the Jena *Frühromantik* to come to terms with the critical coda by which Kant had signaled the intellectual end of the eighteenth century. This work cannot trace out the precise trajectory of these intellectual pedigrees, the ways in which an array of diverse figures—from Fichte and Schelling to Friedrich Schlegel and Novalis—sought ways to accommodate and extend the imposing edifice of Kantian *Kritik* at the turn of the nineteenth-century. What is significant for our purposes, and for the legacy it would

leave for Burckhardt's generation, is the way in which that generation understood the constellation of problems left by Kant's work, and the solutions they deployed to meet these challenges. For in many ways, the characteristic features of nineteenth-century narrative and representational regimes were, at least in part, conditioned in the early century by the intellectual materials that the traditions of German Idealism and the *Frühromantik* brought to bear on the Kantian legacy.

In more specific terms, the issue here is the way in which Kant's intervention had both superseded and, at the same time, sharpened the Enlightenment distinctions between reality and representation, between subject and object, between signifier and signified. On the one hand, Kant's transcendental *Kritik* had transposed the space of cognition from an external to an internal set of relations, grounding and securing the possibility of knowledge in the cognitive faculties of the knowing subject. But in subjectively securing the *a priori* forms of sensible intuition, Kant also opened up a necessarily opaque noumenal domain—the realm of the *Ding an sich*—that was antecedent to the categories conditioning concrete intuition. “Here, of course,” as Manfred Frank writes in relation to early German Romanticism,

we have the origin of Kant's dualism: there is a reality existing in itself, of which we know nothing; opposed to this reality there is a consciousness, which must be characterized as "completely without content" or "empty." Kant takes into consideration that there could be a root that is common both to the reality existing in itself and to consciousness, but which is itself unknown. The Kantian system breaks into two parts; this common root would bind these two parts together into a unity. This systematic unity can only be thought of as an idea. Here we have, by the way, a crude, imprecise, and ad hoc definition of the second of Kant's core theses: the unity in which reality and consciousness exist together cannot itself be the object of our knowledge. This unity can only be spoken of in terms of hypothetical concepts. They serve our reason, playing a necessarily regulative role

in unifying our knowledge. But the "real pursuit" of them would, as Novalis says, "lead into the realm of nonsense."⁶⁴

Thus, while we can imagine an *ontological* totality, a unifying ground of reality *in itself* and reality *for itself*, concrete experience and cognition is necessarily embedded in an irreducible *epistemological* dualism, a situation in which being and knowledge can never completely coincide. From Kant's perspective, in other words, an *absolute* ground can take the form of an *idea* within consciousness, but as this idea cannot correspond to a concrete, sensible experience, it necessarily remains a theoretical, heuristic, and infinitely extendable construct. An epistemological bridge between subject and object is thus theoretically possible, but it is a bridge whose completion is never quite complete, and the realms it seeks to join must remain perpetually separate. Being and knowledge may reflect and condition one another, in other words, but they do so as fragments which thought can never completely restore to wholeness.

However, Frank's invocation of Novalis in the above quote also announces the opening of a theoretical rift that constitutes an important line of contest among the intellectuals described above. For while the generation of the *Frühromantik* and the currents of German Idealism are too often either lumped together or rigidly separated into movements of literary or philosophical significance, the actual relation between the traditions is rather more complex than subsumption or opposition.⁶⁵ The intellectual biographical trajectories of the main figures of both movements—Fichte, Schelling, Hegel, the Schlegel brothers, Novalis, and Schleiermacher—describe a tangled web of

⁶⁴Manfred Frank, *The Philosophical Foundations of Early German Romanticism*, Trans. Elizabeth Millan-Zaibert (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2004), 29-30.

⁶⁵*Ibid.*, 24.

overlapping interests, influences, and affinities, a web that extended from Jena to Berlin and whose most intimate connections can be located in the last decade of the eighteenth century. At the same time, however, it is along the theoretical fault lines generated by their respective responses to Kant—and the notion of the *Absolute*—that a decisive distinction can be made between the two currents. Indeed, as the Novalis quote signals, it is precisely in their relation to (and the possibility of grasping) the idea of the *Absolute*—the ostensible grounding totality that unifies the *für sich* and the *an sich*—that the differences between Jena Romanticism and German Idealism spring most starkly into relief. While the figures of the Jena circle could speak of a *Sehnsucht nach dem Unendlichen*, and would celebrate the idea of a union between the subject and object in the *Absolute*, this was a yearning for totality whose (living?) consummation was impossible according to the philosophical principles of the *Frühromantik*. As Friedrich Schlegel, for example, attempted to concretely demonstrate in the aphorisms of the *Athenäum*, the human condition is one of essential fragmentation, a condition in which wholeness can be progressively approximated aesthetically but which can never be rendered whole through the offices of mere philosophy or reason.⁶⁶ For early Romantics such as Schlegel and Novalis, the unity of consciousness and being can be imaginatively and aesthetically conceived in images like that of Heinrich von Ofterdingen's *blaue Blume*, but such symbols also paradoxically represent the very impossibility of the symbolic union of the sensible and the ideal. Indeed, in the hands of the early Schlegel,

⁶⁶Here we are very close to the subject of Walter Benjamin's dissertation: *The Concept of Criticism in German Romanticism*. Benjamin follows Schlegel in suggesting that it is through the process of criticism that original fragments are completed. The critic completes that upon which he or she deploys their critical operations. See Peter Uwe Hohendahl and Klaus L. Berghahn ed., *A History of German Literary Criticism, 1730-1980* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1988); Michael Löwy, "Revolution Against 'Progress': Walter Benjamin's Romantic Anarchism," *New Left Review*, I/152, July-August 1985; Andrew E. Benjamin and Beatrice Hanssen eds., *Walter Benjamin and Romanticism* (London: Continuum, 2002).

the relation with the absolute is best conveyed not in the “presence” of the unifying symbol, but in the ramifying approximations and detours of fragmentary allegory.⁶⁷ For the Romantics, in other words, the strivings of representation (in both philosophical and literary senses) to adequately reproduce the domain of being in the face of epistemological fragmentation are perpetually incomplete. And if the symbol, as Goethe, Schelling, and Coleridge would have it, conveys the representational coincidence of concrete particular and universal ideal, then it is rather allegory, as understood by Friedrich Schlegel, that best describes the early Romantic relation between subjectivity and the absolute.

The situation, however, as it was regarded by the prominent contemporary exponents of Idealism was somewhat different, and it would be in Berlin that Burckhardt would encounter these latter most fully. Within these circles—from Fichte to Schelling and Hegel—the appropriation and extension of the insights of Kantian *Kritik* was premised on the elimination of the *Ding an sich* as means of circumventing the same dualism confronted by the Romantics.⁶⁸ It was this imperative, therefore, to deduce a common ideal unity that underlay the apparent duality of naive experience, that would form the headwaters of modern philosophical dialectics, tentatively at first in the absolute subject of Fichte, and with ever greater momentum in the great Hegelian epic of historical dialectic. From the standpoint of this tradition, the epistemological dualism described by Kant is merely the transitory artifact of a dialectical process that admits of

⁶⁷Likewise, it is here, among Schlegel's aphoristic fragments, that one first sees Benjamin's dawning interest in allegory as an undervalued mode of representation.

⁶⁸Frank, 28-29. “Early German Romanticism never subscribed to the projects of liquidating the thing in itself (*Ding an sich*), which are characteristic of the beginnings of idealism from Salomon Maimon to Fichte, Schelling, and Hegel.”

both differentiation and reintegration, a process grounded in a primitive unity and yet also promising a restoration of such unity at a higher level. Accordingly, the epistemological fragmentation depicted by Schlegel need not be an essential and inevitable human condition, but could represent a moment of necessary displacement in a larger historical process whose terminus is defined by the reconciliation between the subject of knowledge and the being of the world. Where history had become significant for the *Frühromantik* in its ever closer (but never completed) approximation of subjective and objective dimensions, German Idealism depicts history as a vast drama whose sequence of acts concludes in the convergence of ideality and reality in the unity of the *Absolute*. Put differently, German Idealism imagined a history that promised an historical consummation of the relation between Self and Other, between knowledge and being, while the Jena *Frühromantiker* conceive history as a graphic space in which vectors of spirit and vectors of nature draw nearer to one another, but never quite converge. In this sense, one could suggest that comedy (perhaps conceived in its darker forms) is the historical genre of Idealism, while tragedy is the historical genre of the *Frühromantik*.

For both of these traditions, then, for the *Frühromantiker* as well as the representatives of Idealism, the completion or correction of the Kantian critical project would be realized through its extension into the dimension of time and with reference to the motions of history. In consonance with a nascent century taking shape amidst rapid historical transformation, intellectual currents would likewise invoke the concepts of temporality and historicity as a means of addressing the most pressing theoretical concerns. What is important, however, from the perspective of the present discussion is the way in which history became a decisive constitutive concept in the emerging social

and human sciences, and how Romantic and Idealist notions of temporality conditioned the intellectual landscapes of Burckhardt's student and early professional years. For if the immediate impact of German Idealism and Jena Romanticism had long since passed, by the 1830's when Burckhardt began his secondary studies, the fields of scholarship and the generation of scholars that Burckhardt encountered in these formative years had been decisively shaped by the generation of Hegel, Schelling, Schleiermacher and the Schlegel brothers. It was within these landscapes, still defined by critical outlooks, theoretical commitments, and practical methodologies espoused by Idealism and Romanticism, that Burckhardt began to take shape as a scholar.

Indeed, if we are to trace the ways in which the mature Burckhardt would eventually grow dissatisfied with some of these intellectual territories and find inspiration in others, it is necessary to explore the ways in which these influences informed the early shape of Burckhardt's historiographical perspective. In other words, if Burckhardt would ultimately explore a specific set of visually oriented and synchronic approaches to history, approaches whose orbit lay outside the representational and theoretical territories defined by the historicist *Zunft*, such a move was made within an intellectual context still conditioned by Idealism and Romanticism. While the main currents of German historicism cannot be subsumed under the rubric of Idealism, the historiographical commitments of its most influential practitioners, particularly among the generation of historians after Ranke, clearly took shape under the influence of Hegel and his followers.⁶⁹ And as Burckhardt's early uncertainty regarding the political, theoretical, and

⁶⁹Indeed, Ranke is really the clear and glaring exception here, already intellectually formed before the full force of Hegel enthusiasm came to dominate German scholarship in the early nineteenth century. It was only with the next generation, most visibly in early Droysen, that the impact of Idealism—conjoined with

methodological commitments of his historical mentors—an anxiety that later crystallized into a deepening dissatisfaction—these relations can be understood as a tension between the representational legacies of Idealism and the Romanticism, legacies whose respective epistemological and ontological commitments could produce very different methodological commitments when applied to the nascent social and human sciences.⁷⁰

Burckhardt's trajectory involves, in other words, the gradual rejection of a historiography inclined towards historical teleologies and representational totalities of Idealism, and the progressive embrace of a synchronic, fragmentary, perspectival, ironic and visually-oriented historical practice.

How, then, did the intellectual currents described above come to define the theoretical and methodological materials available to a young historian? In a pattern that seems to replicate itself throughout Burckhardt's professional career, intellectual and theoretical tensions find themselves easily inscribed or marked out in geographical terms. For if, as we will discuss further below, Berlin came to represent the locus of Burckhardt's reception of idealism and historicism, his home city of Basel was the scene of his introduction to the still vital currents of Romantic methods and critique. For the young Swiss, in other words, the distance separating Basel and Berlin was one of more

the currents of a liberal nationalism—becomes associated with historical theory and practice. And even here, it is important not to understate the tensions between German historicism and German idealism, especially with regard to the latter's insistence on the essential rationality of necessary historical processes. Thus, while historicism could often speak in terms of historical necessity, the notion that these necessities were evidence of a larger historical/philosophical enterprise—involving the cognitive unification of being and knowledge—was an issue far beyond the ken of the German historical *Zunft*. Ranke, on the other hand, is an interesting transitional character, who in many ways still has much in common with the Romantic tradition. Indeed, his commitment to a theological ground to the movements of history, a ground impenetrable to the representational, methodological, theoretical tools of the historian, comes close to the Romantic notion of an Absolute which can never be fully approximated by the faculties of knowledge.

⁷⁰One might object at this point that the source of Burckhardt's historiographical idiosyncrasies lay more in his veneration of Enlightenment historiography than in Romantic criticism, and this is true as far as it goes. But we should remember that, despite the many differences, we have distinguished the *Frühromantik* here precisely in the way it preserves the Enlightenment posture of uncertainty regarding representation.

than physical miles. It was also marked by distances between the desires of family and personal calling, between the study of theology and the study of history, between two important stations of his intellectual development. And whereas the academic faculty of Burckhardt's Berlin years could count many luminaries, from Ranke and Droysen to August Böckh and Franz Kugler, it was in Basel that the young Swiss spent his first semesters as a student, and in Basel where he first came into contact with the intellectual legacies of Romantic thought in the form of critical theology.

Burckhardt's theological studies at Basel, however, had been more a family decision than one of true personal conviction. His younger brother, early identified as the most promising of the sons, had been tapped for a commercial career, while a religious vocation similar to that of the father was envisioned for the elder sibling. Despite a conspicuous early interest in philology and history at *Gymnasium*, and despite a precocious relation with Heinrich Schreiber, a friend of his father and historian at Freiburg, Burckhardt seems to have been reconciled to a course of theological studies after finishing at the Basler *Paedagogium* in the summer of 1836. Indeed, after completing a nine month stay in French speaking Neuenburg polishing his language skills, Burckhardt matriculated at the University of Basel in the theological *Fakultät*. During this period, however, Burckhardt's letters and writings also betray both a fascination with, and a growing uneasiness regarding, the theological implications of his Basel professors' lectures, an ambivalence that swiftly burgeoned into a crisis of religious conviction that eventually propelled him out of both the city of Basel and the field of theology.⁷¹

⁷¹ On Burckhardt's crisis of faith see Kaegi, *Burckhardt: Eine Biographie*. Vol. I.

For the moment, however, the two decisive influences on the development of Burckhardt's views during this Basel period were Karl Ludwig Hagenbach and Wilhelm Martin Leberecht de Wette. As the leading theological scholars at the university in Basel, it was under the influence of these two men that Burckhardt's own views would crystallize during his two years as a student. For his part, Hagenbach's work as a scholar bore the imprint of an early engagement with the legacy of Herder, as well as an education under Neander and Schleiermacher in Berlin. And while he would steer a more conservative course in later decades and defend the rights of the church in the face of encroachments of political institutions, Hagenbach's views in the 1830's were still linked to an Enlightenment confrontation with entrenched orthodoxy and a Romantic insistence on revitalization of religious traditions.⁷² Above all, the strong currents of a textually and historically sensitive theology were assembled by Hagenbach in a church history that sought to hold itself above the fray of confessional controversy and strove for an objective vision of Christianity in all its historical manifestations. The disputes and conflicts generated by dogma and orthodoxy would be resolved in the image of the church as an historical entity, a church whose truths were vouchsafed not in first principles, but in all its various historical experiences and expressions. "The Church is a religious community, Burckhardt wrote in a note from the Hagenbach winter *Vorlesung* of 1837/38, "that has its roots in the historical figure of Jesus of Nazareth; it is a phenomenon that is historically given, not simply an abstraction deduced from

⁷²On the roles of Hagenbach and De Wette see: Gossmann, *Basel in the Age of Burckhardt*, 211-213; and Thomas Albert Howard, *Religion and the Rise of Historicism: W.M.L. de Wette, Jacob Burckhardt, and the Theological Origins of Nineteenth-Century Historical Consciousness* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000).

concepts.⁷³ For the future historian and the young student struggling to define his own religious outlook, it was precisely the historical dimension of his teacher's theological views that made the greatest impression. To the extent that the truths of creation could be known, such things would be revealed not immediately in transcendent ideas, but in the movements and patterns of human history. The intellectual waters that Burckhardt was thus entering under the guidance of Hagenbach were being driven by the currents of a theology in which history emerged as a progressive revelation.

Like Hagenbach, Wilhelm De Wette also drew intellectual inspiration from that tradition of critical and historicized theology extending back through Schleiermacher to Herder. Unlike Hagenbach, however, de Wette had joined the University of Basel as an already well known theologian in his own right. Long before his arrival in the Swiss city, de Wette had been a *Dozent* in Heidelberg where he had worked closely with Friedrich Creuzer and had been enormously influenced by the latter's approach to the study of myth. Later, as a rising star in theological studies, de Wette had eventually been called to Berlin to take a chair in the company of such figures as Schleiermacher and Neander. However, after a controversy during the period of the Karlsbad decrees, a controversy involving a letter of condolence that de Wette had written to the mother of Kotzebue's assassin, calls went out for his resignation, and he left his post in Berlin for less political charged environs at the University of Basel.

As for his system of theology, de Wette, like Hagenbach, was clearly a creature of an historically oriented era, his theological positions replacing the revelatory dimension

⁷³Kaegi, *Burckhardt: Eine Biographie*, Vol I, 443. "Die Kirche ist eine religioese Gemeinschaft die ihre Wurzel im historischen Jesu von Nazareth hat; sie ist eine historisch gegebene Erscheinung... Die Kirche ist kein blosses aus dem Begriff abzuleitendes Abstractum."

of scripture and creation with processes of history and mythopoesis. On the one hand, and as a student of Creuzer, de Wette's positions consisted in the reconfiguration of revelation in terms of myth, and the presentation of religious truth as a phenomenon more visible in the course of history than the transcendent claims of traditional Christian dogma. On the other hand, however, the task was not merely one of demystifying the history of religious doctrine, but also one of re-situating theological truth on a firmer and more rigorous foundation, a foundation buttressed by historical and philological insights. For Burckhardt's teacher, it was in the realm of representation and historical interpretation that the particular and the universal, the eternal and the temporal could come closest to a point of mutual approximation. The revelations of history, in other words, emerged in an ongoing process of signification, with the particulars of history pointing towards the transcendent truths of religious faith. As a result, the question of authorship, or of the provenance of specific doctrines or texts, would be replaced by a method for which historical critique represented an ongoing process of revelation. To survey the history of the church, its theologies, its dogmas and its communities, was to survey the progressive attempts of mankind to express and interpret the transcendent in terms of the temporal. Theology here converged with history under the auspices of hermeneutics.

From such perspectives, history becomes a kind of concrete text or representation that mediates the relation between theological subject and theological absolute. But what is the precise nature of this mediation, and what conclusions does it come to regarding the epistemological status of historical representation? Surprisingly, despite the way in which the symbolic mode has been associated with Romantic thought, de Wette's

representational mode falls closer to the allegorical approach of Friedrich Schlegel than it does to the classically defined Romantic symbol. As it had developed in the hands of Goethe, Schelling and Coleridge, the idea of the Romantic symbol usually refers to a rhetorical figure that concretely unifies a particular representation and a universal idea. Opposed within this framework to mere allegory, the symbol was a concrete particular that did not simply represent a corresponding universal idea, but contained the idea within itself as the concrete presence (or co-presence) of the universal. Allegory, on the other hand, became associated with a certain distance between representation and represented, a figure whose ideal meaning is not contained within itself, but requires the interpretive intervention of the literary, historical, or theological critic. For de Wette, neither Romantic theology nor speculative Idealism could ever fully bridge the gulf that separated brute historical facts from the various cultural and universal meanings to which they were related. Instead, if such meanings could be wrested from historical events, then this could only be approximated, and only through a close, rigorous, critical and sympathetic engagement with actual experience in its *a posteriori* forms. The past would reveal its meaning, in other words, first in a direct confrontation with brute historical facts insofar as these could be rigorously determined, and then, through the application of a sympathetic and intuitive interpretive methodology. For figures like de Wette (and to some degree like Ranke) there was no doubt that history moved in accord with trans-historical and spiritual forces, and in this conviction they were in agreement with the powerful influences of Hegelian philosophy. Where they differed, however, was in the manner such forces were understood to be active in human history, and the ways in which such activity revealed itself. For de Wette, the meaning of history, and creation in

general, would be recognized not through a speculative and purely rational philosophical idealism, not through the deductions of an *a priori* reason, but through a sympathetic and critical reflection on history as a concrete field of signification.

De Wette and Hagenbach—but above all, the critical and historical thrust of their theological commitments—would thus exercise a profound impact on both Burckhardt’s short term religious crisis, and on his ultimate decision to leave his home city for Berlin and the field of history. In a letter written to friend and fellow student Johannes Riegenbach in August of 1838, one finds Burckhardt’s developing views on de Wette and contemporary theology closely linked to his own inner spiritual conflicts. “De Wette’s system,” Burckhardt declares in no uncertain terms, “becomes ever more colossal before my eyes; one must follow it, and nothing else is possible. Yet if the system of the teacher seemed ever more “colossal” and its influence ever more ineluctable, the student quickly recognized its similarly colossal implications. “But,” he continues immediately, “every day there disappears another piece of conventional Church doctrine in his hands. Today, I finally recognized that he holds the birth of Christ to be a myth—and I with him. A shudder overcame me today as many reasons occurred to me why it must necessarily be so.⁷⁴ Indeed, so revolutionary were such implications, so potent was de Wette’s system in transforming tradition into mere signs, that Burckhardt suspected the professor himself had been careful to guard against their full manifestation. “De Wette guards himself well,” he tells us in a critical moment, “from pursuing the consequences too far, but I also

⁷⁴Ibid.

can report that he doesn't merely undermine conventional belief, yet also attempts to rebuild, even while the rebuilt is less consoling than the original"⁷⁵

Therefore, in a process whose character should be now recognizable, Burckhardt quietly, and with not a little suffering and self-doubt, set about marking a path of his own.⁷⁶ What was clearest to him, at least initially, was that the course envisioned for him by his father and family was not one that he could steer with a clear conscience. While his feelings for, and sensitivity to, religion remained largely intact, his faith was no longer one that would allow him to serve in the capacity as a pastor, much less a position such as that occupied by his father. "With my present present convictions (if I may even name it that)," he continues to Riggerbach, "I could never accept a post as Pastor with a clear conscience, at least in relation to the present state of opinion regarding revelation—and that won't change soon."⁷⁷

All that was left, then, was the final step. By the spring of 1839, despite interventions on the part of concerned friends such as Riggerbach and Alois Biedermann, Burckhardt had spoken with his father and informed his family of his decision to leave Basel and theology for Berlin and the field of history⁷⁸. The conversation between father and son took place presumably sometime during spring holidays in 1839, though we possess no record of its precise character. Instead, in a letter to Friedrich von Tschudi, one of a number a friends who stood outside the circle of theology students, Burckhardt writes laconically on the 29th of May 1839, "My family knows, and suspects in part, what

⁷⁵Burckhardt, *Briefe*, Vol I, 85.

⁷⁶Ibid.

⁷⁷Ibid.

⁷⁸Biedermann was a theology student, and Riggerbach would subsequently switch to the same field from medicine shortly thereafter.

my religious convictions are.”⁷⁹ In early September of the same year, 1839, having drained the cup (“bis auf die Hefe”) of his own personal crisis of faith, Jacob Burckhardt finally took leave of his home city and set out on the road that would take him to Berlin, to Ranke and to history.

In purely physical terms the road from Swiss Basel to the frontier of Germany is not a long one. From the Münsterberg, across the Rhine, and through Kleinbasel, the border with what would become a unified Germany was in as easy walking distance in 1839 as it is today. But in other ways, especially in Burckhardt’s time, the road that led north out of the city and towards the southernmost spurs of the Black Forest range described a course that promised enormous cultural, political and intellectual distances. For if modernity, with all its social, political and cultural implications, had been trickling into the small world of Basel tucked away on the upper Rhine, its currents were already much stronger and more violent in the German lands to the north. To be sure, forces of liberalism, nationalism, industrialization had made themselves felt in Burckhardt’s home city. The wounds of the Basler *Wirren* (Troubles) and its civil unrest were still alive in the memory of the city, and issues of confederation and confession were being felt with increasing urgency throughout the landscape of Swiss cantonal politics.⁸⁰ However, if such currents and forces were doubtless transforming the landscape of pre-1848 Switzerland, the same forces were moving with even greater urgency and momentum in the German domains to the north. The distance, then, between and Basel and Berlin in 1839 must be measured not only terms of miles, but also in terms of their relative

⁷⁹Burckhardt, *Briefe*, Vol I, 112.

⁸⁰Kaegi, *Burckhardt: Eine Biographie*, Vol I.

positions in the increasingly rough social and political seas on the eve of the upheavals of 1848.

In any event, Burckhardt's journey from Basel that autumn snaked its way through Bavaria and Bohemia before eventually landing him in Hohenzollern Berlin and a modest student room off *Unter den Linden*. At the same time, the journey also led the young scholar far from the relatively provincial world of Basel and plunged him deep into the political, social and intellectual controversies simmering at the time in Prussia, Germany and Europe in general. The result for Burckhardt, in the three years of study in both Berlin and Bonn, was an intimate education in, and confrontation with, the various political and intellectual currents that were then churning the troubled waters of *Vormärz* Germany. The milieu that he encountered in Berlin was that of a city emerging as a center of political and cultural modernity in Central Europe. In slightly less than three decades the provincial capital of the Frederician *Staat* had become, first, a beacon for reform and national/liberal hopes throughout Germany, and subsequently, a central bulwark for the tasks and policies of Restoration. And although Burckhardt took up residence some twenty years after the Karlsbad decrees, twenty years after Prussia had chosen restoration over reform, the forces unleashed in the patriotic struggles against the French continued to simmer everywhere below the surface of official political culture in Berlin. In the streets of the city, in its institutions, its salons, and in its press, Hohenzollern dynastic conservatism was confronted—sometimes openly, sometimes not—by the powerful impulses of liberalism and German nationalism that would eventually erupt in open revolt in 1848.⁸¹

⁸¹Burckhardt himself found entrée into Bettina von Arnim's Berlin salon in his student years in the city.

Perhaps nowhere was this pattern of change and tension more obvious than in the city's university. Established as an institutional model and icon of Prussian reform, the University of Berlin had been envisioned as a central pillar of a modern Prussian *Kulturstaat* whose legitimacy and powers were to be bound up with the *Geistliche* development of its individual citizens. However, following the retreat from reform, what had been envisioned as state patronage of enlightened institutions gradually assumed the character of intervention and bureaucratic control. For as the university was increasingly becoming the focus of progressive politics, student radicalism, and undesirable elements of various sorts, Prussian authorities took a keen interest in establishing a degree of influence over its faculty and administration. The generation of reformers who had first occupied the most prestigious chairs either retired or passed away during the 1820's and 1830's, found themselves replaced with figures no less eminent, but rather more in tune with the political interests of the state. The Hegel, for instance, that joined the University in 1818 was one who had long since, like many others of his generation, cast away the republican sympathies of his youth and traded them for a historical philosophy that celebrated and privileged the functions of state. Likewise, the onetime schoolmaster from Frankfurt an der Oder, Leopold von Ranke, was offered a post in 1836 as much for his political reliability as for promise he may have evidenced as a scholar of history. With such imperatives driving appointments and politics at the university, a second generation of scholars—politically more reliable than their predecessors, though no less accomplished intellectually—had become established by the time Burckhardt arrived in Berlin.

Even so, the politics of the faculty and students at the university remained an issue of concern for the Prussian state. While the divide between the faculty politics and that of the state had diminished somewhat, the culture of the university, especially the student body, was steeped in the nationalist and liberal currents that restorative policies could neither dam up nor control. The proscription of liberal and nationalist minded student *Burschenschaften* had been enshrined in official policy since the Karlsbad decrees, and one of Burckhardt's first duties upon matriculation was that of swearing an oath attesting that he would avoid political activities and association with outlawed student groups. Yet even while Burckhardt did not go untouched by nationalist sentiments that suffused the atmosphere of the university, he appears never to have been seriously tempted to actively take part in the radical political activities forbidden by his oath. The correspondence of this period does indeed show a growing fascination with the notion of a pan-German national identity, a German identity in comparison to which the tepid quality of Helvetic self-consciousness seemed provincial and unsatisfying. But to the extent that such pan-German sentiment was more than just a minor dalliance, however, Burckhardt's German patriotism was of a distinctly *Grossdeutsch* flavor.

Yet it was at this institution, with its complex and churning political currents, that Burckhardt first came into close contact with the nascent institutions of German historicism and the broader currents of an historically oriented scholarship that had drunk deep from the works of Hegel and his followers. While Hegel had died nearly a decade before Burckhardt's arrival, Berlin had continued as the center of historical scholarship—in both theoretical and practical modes. With the already well-known Ranke at its forefront, a figure who came to symbolize the innovative methodological tenor of the

era's scholarship, the historical *Fakultät* at Berlin in 1839 also boasted promising young scholars such as Gustav Droysen, as well as stalwarts from the previous generation such as August Böckh. The historical community into which Burckhardt was now being introduced was thus one in the process of redefining its role as an interpreter of the past and an educator of the present. At the heart of this role, in both theory and method, was the idea that history formed the disciplinary keystone of the emerging edifice of the human and social sciences. Indeed, if the previous century had sought out a critical posture from which to survey how the geography of human experience had been deformed by religious and political orthodoxy, the German historicism of the nineteenth century seemed to have rediscovered a faith in the unifying absolute in the movement of historical time. History could here be envisioned as the 'Rosetta Stone' of the *Wissenschaften*, filling the void left by the Enlightenment's liquidation of theological meanings and temporalities.

Here, in some ways, Burckhardt's journey from Berlin to Basel, from theology to history, also has the character of a religious conversion. Having been powerfully influenced by the theological deconstructions of de Wette, and having been less enthused about his attempts at reconstruction of the same, Burckhardt had reconciled himself to a loss of the faith which his family and father still possessed. The turn to history was a matter not only of personal inclination, but an issue of spiritual necessity, and the move to Berlin, even then emerging as the *urbis mirabilis* of nineteenth-century historiography, had all the qualities of a leap into a new faith. With the recent crisis of belief still raw in his memory, he wrote Tschudi in December of 1839:

Were I only able to emerge from my doubts, even though that is an enormous thing, I would be able to speak in a more heartfelt manner.... At the same time,

there are other demons to overcome, especially, if one may put it this way, a complete secularization of my views, as well as in all of my approach to all things. A solace against this has emerged for me in the subject of my studies, History, and it was the first impetus that lifted me from the discontents of my fatalism and the perspectives based upon it.⁸²

For the young Burckhardt, in other words, the flight to Berlin signified not only an escape from the provincial confines of the home city and the constricting expectations of family, but also the opportunity to soothe the injury of religious crisis in a rediscovered enthusiasm for ‘revelations’ vouchsafed by history.

However, if Berlin had become something of a station of historiographical pilgrimage—for Burckhardt as well as for many others—the new faith, and its capital, was not without its controversies, its schisms, and its heresies. Put differently, the historical *Fakultät*, like the university itself, was by no means hegemonic in its methodological and theoretical commitments. Its scholars and professors spanned a number of generations, extending from the era of reform, through the conservative restoration, and into the era of pre-1848 nationalism. Indeed, Burckhardt's four primary academic influences and mentors in Berlin, Franz Kugler, August Böckh, Gustav Droysen and Leopold von Ranke, easily spanned this enormous (yet paradoxically compact) intellectual landscape that from extended from the *Goethezeit* to *Vormärz* Romantic nationalism. The era of Goethe and Humboldt, for example, was still strongly evident in the figure of August Böckh. Born in 1785, Böckh had long been a fixture at the Berlin university, representing an older generation who had joined the institution in the heady days of reform, but who were gradually giving way to younger colleagues.⁸³ By the time of Burckhardt's matriculation in 1839, Böckh's eminence in the fields of

⁸²Burckhardt, *Briefe*, Vol I, 130-131.

⁸³It was Böckh, for instance that, delivered the eulogy at the funeral of Wilhelm von Humboldt in 1835.

classical studies and philology only underscored the fact that he represented a waning generation of reformists and a declining mode of antiquarian history. On the other side of the spectrum, a figure like Kugler was of a generation born in the nineteenth century, and who had come of age only in the period of conservative reaction. And where Böckh stood as the seeming apogee of a more traditional form of historical scholarship, a form whose roots extended to the traditions of the *Érudits* of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, Kugler emerged, not only as a close friend of Burckhardt's, but also as professional guide to the historiographical territories of art and culture.

At least initially, however, it was not the eminence of Böckh or the approachability of Kugler that made the deepest initial impression on Burckhardt, but the somewhat larger than life figures of Droysen and Ranke. "Nun trat sie," he writes of these first encounters with Germany's emerging historical greats, "plötzlich in gigantischer grosse vor mich und ich mußte die Augen niederschlagen."⁸⁴ Once having collected himself, however, Burckhardt developed close scholarly relations with both professors, attending seminars of both men in the early semesters of his Berlin years. Yet although Ranke was seen as the more established of the two, the young Basler was drawn initially and most powerfully towards the latter. Aged a scant thirty-one years in 1839, and scarcely older than Burckhardt himself, Droysen was already an accomplished and recognized scholar of classical antiquity. Besides precocious translations of Aeschylus and a libretto for his friend Felix Mendelssohn, Droysen was best known for his *Geschichte Alexanders des Grossen* (1833) and the several volumes of *Geschichte des Hellenismus* (1836-43). Indeed, in the autumn of 1839 and winter of 1840, Burckhardt's

⁸⁴Burckhardt, *Briefe*, Vol I, 131.

first year in Berlin, Droysen figured prominently as a primary influence on the student. As Kaegi reconstructs it, Burckhardt's short lived choice of the Near East as his primary field of study is likely due to the effects of study under Droysen at the time.⁸⁵ And had it not been for the intrusion of outside events, one could imagine a very different Burckhardt who not only continued as a student of Droysen, but also went on to become a leading scholar of near eastern antiquity.

As it turns out, however, having been called to a more secure position at the University of Kiel, Droysen left Berlin in the spring of 1840, and would not return until 1859, when he was called back to a full chair in the historical *Fakultät*. In Droysen, however, despite the short time of his acquaintance with his Swiss student, Burckhardt first encountered a current of German historiography that was profoundly influenced and conditioned by Hegelian Idealism. Indeed, while it would be misleading to understand Droysen's work as the mere application, or uncritical intrusion, of Hegelian concepts within the field of history, the impact of Idealism in its convergence with a historiographic nationalism is not difficult to discern. Kaegi puts it well when he describes Droysen's work:

One clearly glimpses here the total conception of history as it is sketched by Droysen: it is a mechanical totality, articulated less in epochs than in the fates of peoples, and it moves – internally and externally – towards a single ethical goal or terminus. It represents one of the secularized forms of Christian historical salvation with roots in the Middle Ages. It is impossible to imagine Droysen's concept of history, and especially his understanding of Hellenism, without these Christian currents and forms. But with the transposition of the center of gravity from God to mankind, and its striving for freedom, an entirely new historical motive force emerges, one that is configured exclusively in terms of the relations between Near Eastern-European peoples.⁸⁶

⁸⁵Kaegi, *Burckhardt: Eine Biographie*, Vol II, 36-48.

⁸⁶*Ibid.*, 41.

Replacing the spiritual syntheses of religion with the posited syntheses of a universal history, Droysen's Hegelian historiography can be read as a secularized historical theology. Yet in this theological drama, it is not God that directs and judges the events on stage, but instead the hand of historical necessity. And this drama does not describe the travails of individual souls, but instead depicts the collective fortunes of peoples and nations as the true subjects of history. The meaning of history for Droysen, the meaning of that process Hegel would call a *Schlachtbank* (shambles, slaughterhouse) is here completely contained in—and indeed justified by—that which it signifies, and this significance is encompassed by both its genesis and its *telos*.⁸⁷

What Droysen shared with the Idealist tradition was precisely this gesture or interest in an ultimate synthetic closure or totalized fusion of epistemological and ontological categories. And as with the Idealist currents, Droysen envisioned history as the arena in which a lost authenticity is mourned or a promised utopia is heralded. In either instance, however, what lies between is the bitter and ineluctable law of necessity and the often grim historical pageant that it generates. Furthermore, this powerful vision of necessity, as developed by Droysen and others, converged with political currents of the day to become a powerful ideological instrument of Prussian-centered *Kleindeutsch* nationalist sentiment. In the Macedonian state of Droysen's *Alexander*, or in the Republic of Mommsen's *Römische Geschichte*, it is difficult not to recognize echoes of a nineteenth-century Prussia confronted with a similar set of world historical challenges and missions. As Demosthenes and the Greeks were to be overwhelmed by the ascendant

⁸⁷ “Aber auch indem wir die Geschichte als diese Schlachtbank betrachten, auf welcher das Glück der Völker, die Weisheit der Staaten und die Tugend der Individuen zu Opfer gebracht wurde, so entsteht dem Gedanken notwendig auch die Frage: wem, welchem Endzwecke diese ungeheuersten Opfer gebracht worden sind.“ Hegel, *Die Vernunft in der Geschichte* (Hamburg: Meiner Verlag, 1955).

Macedonian power of Philip, then this was merely the work of the same necessity that would bind the fate of Germany to the fortunes of Hohenzollern Prussia. Where the city-state of Athens had once to bow before the imperial ascendance of Macedon, thereby securing the extension of Hellenism throughout the eastern Mediterranean, so too would the provinces of a fragmented Germany give way before the unifying, world-historical mission of the nineteenth-century Prussian state.

From the perspective of the first year student Burckhardt, the departure of the dynamic Droysen, and the still novel historiographical approaches he represented, was a significant loss for both his own studies and for the university in general. “It is even more fatal for me,” he would write at the time, “since I was received quite well by him, and could visit as often as I wished. The man is truly important, and in ten years will be named among the greatest.”⁸⁸ Yet Burckhardt's flirtation with what became this current of Hegelian-inspired and Prussian-dominated historiography would be rather short lived. Indeed, surveying Burckhardt's later commitments, it is difficult to see how it could have been otherwise. For while Burckhardt's student years in the emerging Prussian metropole had been a means of expanding the limited horizons offered by provincial Basel, the next decades saw him coming terms with the virtues and advantages of precisely such provincialism. Where Droysen's *Kleindeutsch* historiography celebrated the historical necessity of nineteenth-century Prussian hegemony—in the territories of both scholarship and politics—Burckhardt would become the natural representative of an expansive, *Grossdeutsch* conception of German history. From this perspective, one which led him far afield from the political sentiments of his Prussian colleagues, it was precisely the

⁸⁸Burckhardt, *Briefe*, Vol I, 145.

recognition of provincial prerogatives that made possible a German—and perhaps European—cultural unity. So while Droysen envisioned the political unification of German-speaking Central Europe as a project in consonance with the German nation's nineteenth-century world-historical mission, Burckhardt's work soon emerged as a powerful if isolated counterpoint. If Europe had a future in the nineteenth century and beyond, Burckhardt saw this not in grand unions or utopian syntheses of political and cultural life. Instead, as we have already seen, Burckhardt was forever drawn to the fragment—whether understood in political, theoretical or methodological terms—as an element that should not so quickly be subsumed by the interests of general and universal, an element that always exists in uneasy tension with political, cultural and scholarly hegemonies.⁸⁹

Burckhardt's dalliance with the historical outlook and methods of Droysen, though thus initially quite potent, proved rather short lived and superficial. On the other hand however, his Berlin relations with Leopold von Ranke would prove at once more ambivalent, more pervasive, and more complex. Indeed while later commentators like Friedrich Meinecke and Felix Gilbert were to make much of a supposed opposition between the culturally interested student and the politically minded mentor, the relation between Burckhardt and Ranke is not one that lends itself well to such easy dichotomization.⁹⁰ While Ranke is rightly associated with an historiographical approach centered on politics and statecraft, and Burckhardt's embrace of *Kulturgeschichte* can be

⁸⁹We can express this interest in terms of either Enlightenment critical historiography (Voltaire, Gibbon, Diderot), or in terms of Romantically influenced critical aesthetics and theology (Schlegel, Schleiermacher, de Wette). But either way, this represents a position of clear opposition to the sort of Hegelianism implicit in Droysen's work.

⁹⁰Friedrich Meinecke, "Ranke und Burckhardt", *Werke*, vol. 7 (München: Oldenburg Verlag, 1968); Felix Gilbert, *Politics or Culture?: Reflections on Ranke and Burckhardt* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990).

seen as a partial rejection of his professor's methods, the rather crude categorical divisions of “politics” and “culture” perhaps more obscure here than they reveal. For if Ranke shared an emphasis on politics and diplomacy with a younger generation of historians like Droysen, Sybel and Treitschke, and if his approach to scholarship went far in defining the methodological commitments of subsequent German historiography, it is all too easy to overlook the particularities that made him a unique member of the historicist tradition he is said to have founded.

Ranke's peculiar position within the intellectual constellation of German historicism emerges most clearly when he is examined through the distinction, described above, between Romantic and Idealist representational philosophies. Born in 1795, and already 44 years old by the time Burckhardt arrived in Berlin, Ranke's historiographical commitments had not been shaped by the Hegelian enthusiasms of his younger colleagues, and indeed, the residues of Idealism that were implicit in the subsequent formulations of the Prussian School would remain alien to the older man throughout his career. Instead, aside from his very real gifts with regard to historical research and narrative, Ranke's outlook was constructed from an old-fashioned social conservatism, a healthy sensitivity to the interests of his political patrons, and an epistemological sensibility influenced by an early engagement with the Romantic theology of Wilhelm Leberecht de Wette. As with the younger Burckhardt, therefore, Ranke himself had studied with de Wette while both were at the University of Leipzig. Yet where Burckhardt's engagement with the theologian resulted in an apparent exchange of religion for history—in terms of both faith and avocation—Ranke seems to have incorporated de Wette's critical theology rather more directly into his historical theories and

methodologies. So if contemporary criticism has associated German historicism—especially in its Prussian School forms—with Hegelian influences, its initial Rankean influences have roots far deeper in the soil of German thought, extending from the surface strata of Idealism and reaching all the way to the Romantics, Herder, and even into Pietism.⁹¹

From de Wette, therefore, Ranke absorbed an understanding of history as a spiritual narrative, and conversely, religion as an ongoing process of historical revelation. Indeed, it is this Romantic theological vision of history that distinguishes Ranke so clearly from the Idealist gestures of Droysen described above. In this de Wettian understanding of history as a progressive revelation, this faith that each historical moment has a meaning that is not only divine but also ultimately inscrutable, we are extremely far from Idealist universe in which history is a movement of legible ideas. While Ranke would agree with his Idealist colleagues that the movements of history essentially reflect the motions of *Geist* in the world (whether one understands this in religious or intellectual terms), he would nevertheless embrace the Romantic notion that such meanings can be approximated but never fully grasped or apprehended. For Ranke, in other words, there is no privileged origin or *telos*, no special vantage point from which to unlock the meanings inscribed in the fabric of time; there simply was no ultimate (or eventual) unity of being and understanding from which to justify the course of history. On the contrary, it was precisely from this perspective, rather than a theoretical

⁹¹For the *ur*-history of the German historical school, see: Friedrich Meinecke, *Die Entstehung des Historismus* (München: Leibniz, 1946); Peter Hanns Reill, *The German Enlightenment and the Rise of Historicism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1975); Horst Walter Blanke and Jörn Rüsen, ed., *Von der Aufklärung zum Historismus. zum Strukturwandel des historischen Denkens* (Paderborn: Ferdinand Schöningh, 1984).

commitment to the justice of historical relativism, that Ranke could famously declare that “Every epoch is immediate before God, and its worth rests not on what proceeds from it, but on its existence, in its own self.”⁹² In this way, Ranke's historiography is no less committed to a meaningful historical process than German Idealism, but such meanings are revealed to human beings only, as it were, through the glass darkly, and only through the rigorous and critical study of events as they emerge in their *immediate* unfolding.

At the same time, however, Ranke combines these artifacts of Romantic theology with a post-revolutionary commitment to a species of conservative corporatism that likewise conditioned the nature of his historiographical work. Every epoch may indeed stand in immediate relation to God—rather than mediated through a teleological process—but the historical subjects that stand in such a relation are not the enlightened, atomized individuals of eighteenth-century social contract theory. Instead, and here clearly revealing his debt to the traditions of Herder and the Romantics, Ranke conceives of history as a drama played by nations and peoples rather than individual agents and actors. “Peoples,” according to Ranke's well known dictum, “are the thoughts of God.” And if it is the task of a rigorous history to most closely approximate and document the movement of such divine thoughts, then the natural object for such study would be those expressions and institutions of the *Volk* that are not merely transitory, but persist and develop over time. The result for Ranke, therefore, is a methodological and a theoretical emphasis on the history of states (and their interrelations) as the truest subjects of the historical process, an emphasis that would in turn become a distinguishing feature of

⁹² “Jede Epoche ist unmittelbar zu Gott, und ihr Wert beruht gar nicht auf dem, was aus ihr hervorgeht, sondern in ihrer Existenz selbst, in ihrem Eigenen selbst” Leopold von Ranke, *Über die Epochen der neueren Geschichte*, ed. Hans Herzfeld (Schloss Laupheim: Ulrich Steiner Verlag, 1955), 30.

German historiography throughout the nineteenth and into the twentieth centuries. While Ranke may have differed from a later, more teleologically-oriented historicism in his rejection of historical meaning as more than a regulative idea, he nevertheless converges once again with those later traditions in their valorization of diplomatic and political history.

For the purposes of the present discussion, however, it is Ranke's methodological understanding of historical research and representation, his conception of the ideal relation between the rigorous historian and the objects of research, that must be drawn still further into relief. While Ranke clearly shows the influence of de Wette's critical theology, one that necessarily foregrounds the interpretive operations of the critic in the production of meaning, the historian was nevertheless also a product of the nineteenth century, and shared its realist faith in the adequacy of representation to the being of the objects narrated. In reaction to the approach of critical—and ostensibly partisan—histories of figures like Gibbon and Voltaire, histories in which the presence of the author saturates the narrative, Ranke was unconvinced that historical representation required the explicit critical presence of an authorial interpreter. Instead, armed with a faith that such representation could in itself achieve a close discursive approximation of the movements of *histoire*, Ranke favored a narrative posture wherein the presence of the historian was diminished. If every epoch was indeed equidistant from the divine, and the representational media of scholarship could transparently document such historical events, then the task of the rigorous historian was not to stand in judgment of the past, but to reveal it as it was in itself. "This book," he wrote of his 1824 *Geschichte der romanischen und germanischen Völker von 1494 bis 1514*, "attempts to see all these and

other related histories of the Latin and Teuton Nations in their common unity. History has been given the task of passing judgment on the past for the benefit of the present and the future. The present attempt does not aim at such great responsibility. It merely wishes to show the actual past".⁹³ And this *actual past*, in other words, emerges most pristinely in that mode of historical representation where the narrative presence of the author is reduced. The object of historical representation rather than the critical subject should henceforth take center stage, and many of the ideological and disciplinary claims of historicist "objectivity" would find their sources in this Rankean vision of the implicit rather than explicit function of the historical narrator.

Confronted, then, with this exceptional figure, the young Burckhardt was initially more than a little awestruck. In the course of time, however, even as the Swiss became a recognized and valued student of the older professor, Burckhardt found his high estimation of Ranke increasingly mixed with a growing uncertainty about the man and his views. Throughout his later years, Burckhardt freely admitted and recognized the intellectual debts he owed to the older historian, but the Basler's early work and views show a desire to secure a degree of distance from those of his former mentor. Initially, Burckhardt's concerns emerged more in relation to the perceived character—or lack of it—in Ranke's overly flexible and inauthentic posture in professional, social and political terms. As Burckhardt became more familiar with the Berliner milieu in which he found himself, it quickly became apparent to him—through reputation and observation—that Ranke was considered too much the creature of his conservative patrons, and too willing to bend to whatever political winds seemed most powerful. Indeed, having been

⁹³ Leopold von Ranke, *History of the Latin and Teutonic Nations from 1494 to 1514*, trans. Philip Arthur Ashworth (London: Bell and Sons, 1887) vii.

welcomed into the left-leaning circle of Bettina von Arnim's Berlin salon, Burckhardt related a story to his sister Louise involving the estimable professor:

Ranke was once at Bettina's; the conversation turned to the subjection of Poland, Bettina was naturally deeply aroused against Russia and Ranke responded to her ideas with complete agreement. Some time later he was again at Bettina's in a large gathering; a big Russian diplomat engaged in conversation with him, during which Ranke described the actions of the Poles as revolutionary. At this moment, Bettina looked at him and, with a roll of her eyes, said only: Ugh! Ranke slinked from the house as quickly as possible and has never again visited.⁹⁴

The younger student seems to have quickly absorbed the general opinion in Berlin that, despite all his very real gifts as a historian, a lecturer and writer, Ranke could all too often prove an unreliable and superficial colleague.⁹⁵ And while the younger man maintained a respect for the work of the older scholar, the awestruck character of his historical enthusiasm—once considered a replacement for a lost religious faith—was tempered by a confrontation with its all too human high priests.

The reality of history in Berlin, from the perspective of Burckhardt, had therefore been an experience partly of fulfillment and partly of disappointment. On the one hand, Berlin had made possible the leap from theology into history, and it had solidified his faith in the essential necessity of this choice. On the other hand, however valuable and worthwhile intellectually, Burckhardt found the historical “faiths” of Berlin a poor substitute for his own lost belief, and an unsatisfying enterprise for a young Swiss student seeking his own particular relation to the past. While de Wette's vision of an historically grounded process of revelation—in its critical moments—had had such a profound impact on his outlook, he would nevertheless remain underwhelmed by the way in which

⁹⁴Burckhardt, *Briefe*, Vol I, 160.

⁹⁵Ibid. Burckhardt writes scathingly “Es ist schade um den Mann, daß er bei den allerungeheuersten Kenntnissen, dem durchdringendsten Geist, der größten Kunst im Umgang (er war auch mit mir sehr artig) so spottwenig Charakter besitzt.”

both his Basel and Berlin mentors sought to restore a meaningful ground to the human sciences by invoking these same historical processes. History, in other words, was surely the key, but not in the form reflected in the works of de Wette, Ranke and Droysen. Where the former had produced a powerful critique, one which Ranke himself seems to have absorbed productively, the younger Burckhardt could not accept on faith the comforting presence of the absolute or divine (as did his Berlin professor) in the concrete historical process. Still less could he embrace the Idealism of Hegel, and his younger historical followers, and accept that the presence of such a meaningful historical ground need not be taken on faith, but that it was available and comprehensible to the faculties of reason and rationality.

For the somewhat more agnostic and pessimistic Burckhardt—the same that we later find drinking deep from the work of the arch anti-Hegelian Arthur Schopenhauer—history was emerging as a field not defined by the synthesizing movements of individuals, nations and ideas, but marked by a perpetual and irreducible tension between the concrete actuality of historical fragmentation and the fragile domain of cultural ideals. For Burckhardt, once the faiths of Basel theology and Berlin historicism had been abandoned, the task was one of finding a mode of historical representation where the tensions between concrete and ideal, fragment and whole, past and present, would not be resolved or fused, but would be arranged in a constellation of productive and critical tension. It is towards this end that Burckhardt began to steer a more idiosyncratic historiographical course in the 1840's, a course that converged in the embrace of a distinct visual and cultural of appropriation and representation of the past. As with Gibbon, still comfortably musing on the Capitoline Hill, Burckhardt's methodological

and theoretical innovations would be inextricably linked to the histories and temporalities bound up in Italian landscapes.

Chapter Two

The Subject as a Work of Art: *Anschauung* as Remembrance in the *Cicerone*

“On the morning of the 29th of July 1837, five young travelers sat at an Inn in Andermatt, Switzerland, five young men that not even an unpracticed eye would have mistaken for English. They clearly lacked the two prerequisites of the travelling Briton: a fat purse and spleen.” On the contrary, notable less for spleen than for an unconcealed youthful *Übermut*, the five young men were a small group of Basel *Studenten* who had set off on a summertime holiday in the Alps and would collectively relate their adventures in an 1838 travel essay, “Fünf Tage Jenseits der Alpen.”⁹⁶ Pausing in Andermatt, at the confluence of several roads and passes that could carry them to the Berner Oberland of the West, Graubünden to the East, or the Göscheneralp pass to the North, the young travelers turned their eyes instead southward, to the pass of St. Gotthard and an Italy that lay beyond. With a literary enthusiasm apparently well versed in sources ranging from the classics to Goethe’s *Italienische Reise* and Eichendorff’s *Aus dem Leben eines Taugenichts*, the youths describe the moment of decision:

We sat there, with no more ideas, as Karl rose up with a meaningful expression: I’d like to make a suggestion to you, but you musn’t interupt me — we stood in tense anticipation — see, he began with a finger on the map, see what a short way it is from here to Italy, to Italy, where the lemon trees blossom, to Italy, for which you all long. Leave behind the Oberland and make an impetuous resolution!

⁹⁶ Jacob Burckhardt, “Wanderer in der Schweiz” 4. Jahrgang, 1838. Nr.29-41.

Then he showed a way on the map, that passed a short way through Switzerland, but then there was Italy. Silence reigned for a brief moment, a few considerations of Heinrich were set aside, and then we broke into noisy jubilation: off, off, let us, dear Friends, get going.⁹⁷

With the decision made, and with a youthful *Sehnsucht nach Süden* carrying them over the St. Gotthard and across the Italian frontier, the rest of the essay describes the adventures of the five friends over several days in the Tessin and along Lago Maggiore. Complete with midnight coach rides, highway brigands, beautiful chamber maids and an arrest by authorities for lack of valid passports, the “Fünf Tage” presents an Italian journey in the hues of a late Romantic novella, with all the simultaneous irony and enthusiasm of a Hoffmann or an Eichendorff. The Italian south that emerges here hovers somewhere between a lived experience and a region already determined by a complex knot of literary tropes, clichés and expectations, already configured as a region in which actuality and ideality readily blur into one another. But if this initial and extremely brief brush with the “storied” landscape to the south was nothing more than an adventurous summer’s lark for four of the young travelers, it marked the beginning of a lifelong personal and professional passion for one of them. For amongst these young traveling Basler—alongside Alois Biedermann, Theodor Meyer, Jacob Oeri, and Johannes Riggenschach—was the not yet nineteen year old “Karl”, the youth who initially suggested the journey and whom Werner Kaegi identifies as Jacob Burckhardt.⁹⁸

⁹⁷ Ibid. “Wir saßen da, ohne an etwas weiteres zu denken, da hub Karl mit bedeutungsvoller Miene an: Ich hätte euch was vorzubringen, ihr dürft mich aber nicht unterbrechen — wir standen in gespannter Erwartung — seht, fuhr er fort den Finger auf der Karte, seht welch kleine Strecke es noch bis Italien ist, nach Italien, wo die Zitronen blühen, nach Italien, nach dem ihr euch alle so seht. Laßt das Oberland fahren und fasset einen raschen Entschluß! Dann zeigte er auf der Karte einen Plan, der wenig über die Schweiz hinausging, aber es war doch Italien. Einen Augenblick herrschte Schweigen, einige Bedenklichkeiten Heinrichs aber wurden beseitigt, dann brachen wir in lauten Jubel aus: dahin, dahin, laßt uns, ihr Freunde, ziehn.”

⁹⁸ Kaegi, *Burckhardt: Eine Biographie*, Vol. 1, 516.

Still two years away from his autumn 1839 departure for studies in Berlin, Jacob Burckhardt's first encounters with Italy were as decisive for his intellectual development as they were artifacts of an historical moment and an individual sensibility still clearly defined in Romantic terms. But if these initial encounters and tours—taking place in the summers of 1837, 1838 and 1839 respectively—were cast in the Romantic sensibilities of an adolescent of the 1830's, they also mark the first encounters of an engagement and fascination with Italy that would remain long after the political and aesthetic Romanticism of Burckhardt's youth had metamorphosed into something more complex, more ambivalent and perhaps more intimate. From a summer's afternoon in 1837 to a final farewell to Rome in 1883, Italian travel emerged from this moment as an essential feature and recurring motif in Burckhardt's intellectual biography. But indeed, while this fascination with Italy remained for Burckhardt a remarkably consistent theme, the character of this Italian experience, reception and representation would undergo an equally remarkable process of transformation in the course of the historian's productive life. In the course of university studies in Berlin during the next decade, and in the course of a professional career that extended into the 1890's, the Italy (as ideality and/or reality) that captured the imagination of Burckhardt in 1837 would give way to a more subtle and ongoing intellectual relationship whose power never truly waned, yet which became more sober, more measured and more complex with the passing years.

The Italian journeys of the late 1830's are thus, in many ways, the youthful preludes to a career that became closely associated with Italian history in general and its cultural and artistic dimensions in particular. Of course, this road from early Italian sojourns to the mature historical research of the 1840's and the scholarly production of

the 1850's—the *Age of Constantine*, the *Cicerone* and *Civilization of the Renaissance*—was by no means inevitable, but the impact of those early experiences seems to have remained a powerful memory for Burckhardt during his student years. Writing to Johannes Riggenschach shortly after his second and more extended journey in the summer of 1838, this time only in the company of Jacob Oeri, Burckhardt described experiences that still possessed a rich Romantic aura:

Italy to me (listen and marvel) is a land of painful memories; I dared not let myself enjoy even a tithe of the whole corpus of nature and art; for the moment my heart and feelings—still profoundly emotional—rather than my mind were opened to the touch of the divine south, everything was transmuted into longing for vanished friendship, such as I never wish to feel again on earth. [...] What I suffered one heavenly evening in Pisa will remain forever in my memory. I stood sketching on the beautiful green meadow where Duomo, Campanile, Baptistery and Camposanto rise, leaning against the wall of the Seminary. Looking at the Byzantine arches of the Duomo, I inevitably thought of you and by a natural association of ideas had to think of you all, so that I was in no fit condition to go on drawing. (Camuph [Oeri] was asleep at the time in a near-by café. I walked quickly along, following the old walls of the town and passing across the Arno, where I was able to delight in a sunset that every artist in the world would have envied me. The whole sky was deep blue; the Apennines were violet in the evening light; the Arno flowed at my feet, and I could have cried like a child.⁹⁹

At the same time, however, in the course of the student years of the 1840's, these same Romantic inclinations found themselves focused on objects of a more German and political nature. During an 1841 semester in the Rhineland at the University of Bonn, and on leave from his studies in Berlin, Burckhardt became a member of a close circle of friends gathered around the figure of Gottfried Kinkel, then a young radical scholar at the Rhenish university. It was amongst these new friends that Burckhardt found the same kind of belonging of which he speaks to Riggenschach above and which seemed to elude

⁹⁹ Burckhardt, *Briefe*, Vol. 1, 91. "Ich spreche hier wenig mehr von Italien; der Rhein würde meine Sehnsucht ausfüllen."

him in Berlin. For a time, indeed, the Rhineland itself became an ersatz Italy in the symbolic landscape of Burckhardt's intellectual biography, a culturally and aesthetically rich "elsewhere" that promised intellectual engagement and personal intimacies that neither Berlin nor Basel had ever fully yielded. "I don't speak much here of Italy," he wrote to one of these *Maikaefer* friends, Willibald Beyschlag, in 1842 "the Rhine would satisfy my yearnings."¹⁰⁰ In the years before the deluge of 1848, in other words, Burckhardt found himself swept up in a milieu where political intellectual and cultural romanticisms were becoming fused in highly volatile combinations, romanticisms whose focus was less on distant aesthetic utopias beyond the Alps and more on political and national utopias of the here and now.

For the young Swiss Burckhardt, however, the sense of belonging he found among Kinkel and his German friends, and the sense of enthusiasm he sensed enveloping those Rhineland experiences were always more aesthetic and cultural in nature than they were political. Too much the natural outsider, and with too strong a streak of latent conservatism, Burckhardt increasingly found the radical political drift of his Rhenish friends inconsonant with his own interests and proclivities. To the extent that these ties had been defined in romantically conceived terms of a cultural revival of a German speaking nation, as long as poetry and *Schwärmerisch* visits to the Cologne Cathedral represented the political project of the *Maikäferbund*, the Basler could still feel very much at home among his friends in Bonn. Yet in the five years that preceded the revolutions of 1848, revolutions that would land Kinkel in a Prussian prison and lead to a dramatic escape to Britain, it was precisely these political issues and questions that came

¹⁰⁰ Burckhardt, *Briefe*, Vol. 1, 242.

to dominate the attentions of the Bonner group. Thus, in the second half of the 1840's, and coinciding not accidentally with the completion of Burckhardt's studies and his first professional research trips, the relationship between the Basler and the Kinkel circle cooled perceptibly, if by no means completely. Indeed, while Burckhardt would always express a fondness for this *Maikäfer* era, and he would maintain a somewhat less intimate correspondence with Kinkel and others, Burckhardt's brief dalliance with both Romanticism, German nationalism, and the Rhineland would clearly come to an end by 1848. And it is perhaps no accident that, in two extended professional research visits from 1846 to 1848, Burckhardt's attentions would be drawn away from the Rhineland and return once again to Italy.

Upon returning to Basel in 1843, after completing studies in Berlin, Burckhardt's personal and professional situation had given as little cause for comfort as did his increasingly gloomy political outlook. Engaged initially as a somewhat unenthusiastic editor for a conservative leaning Basel periodical, and somewhat later in the underappreciated post of *Dozent* at the University of the same city, Burckhardt's scholarly fortunes and aesthetic appetites seemed to have arrived at a state of perpetual undernourishment. With relations to politically engaged friends like Gottfried Kinkel and Hermann Schauenburg having cooled, and with prospects for advancement in the *Krähwinkel* of Basel seeming ever more tenuous, Burckhardt began making concrete arrangements for an Italian journey that had been on his mind since his final semesters in Berlin. By the February of 1846, his duties as *Redakteur* and *Dozent* safely behind him, Burckhardt could write a letter to a *Maikäfer* compatriot, Hermann Schauenberg, that is worth quoting at length:

In four and a half weeks I leave for Rome, and have not answered you for as many months; but I would like a word from you for my journey, so it's now high time I wrote to you. You weather-wise fellows vie with each other in getting deeper and deeper into this wretched age—I on the other hand have secretly fallen out with it entirely, and for that reason am escaping from it: to the beautiful, lazy south, where history is dead, and I, who am so tired of the present, will be refreshed by the thrill of antiquity as by some wonderful and peaceful tomb. Yes, I want to get away from them all, from the radicals, the communists, the industrialists, the intellectuals, the pretentious, the reasoners, the abstract, the absolute, the philosophers, the sophists, the State fanatics, the idealists, the 'ists' and 'isms' of every kind—I shall only meet the Jesuits on the other side, and among 'isms' only absolutism; and foreigners can usually avoid both. Beyond the mountains I must strike up new relations with life and poetry, if I am to become anything in the future; for I have quarreled inwardly with the present state of things—quite quietly, without any special vexation; quite gradually, the drops have hollowed out the stone, until I finally realized: it can't go on. I shall probably remain a year in the south; you will get news from me, and what news! Perhaps the Lord will send me a merciful little fever, to put an end to a restless mind—all right, I have nothing against it; *vogue la galere!* even if it's Charon's barque. Mysterious fate often means well towards us.¹⁰¹

For Burckhardt, the journey south is here still redolent of a mytho-Romantic timelessness, and represents an escape from an array of encroaching historical currents that collectively announced an approaching European modernity. And yet, where Burckhardt's Italian adventures ten years earlier had been construed in terms of youthful excitement and Romantic enthusiasm, the *Sehnsucht* of 1846 is already colored with other notes and sensibilities that will become familiar aspects Burckhardt's outlook. If we cannot say that Burckhardt displays the kind of spleen once reserved for English travelers alone, there are already those other, and distinctly Burckhardtian, tones of irony, elegy, and resignation that are so characteristic of his corpus. In ways that would not be foreign once again to Eichendorff—in both the evocation of an extra-temporal South and its simultaneous ironization—Italy comes here to represent a suspension of historical

¹⁰¹ Burckhardt, *Briefe*, Vol. 1, 208.

time, and in turn becomes linked with death itself, that other domain in which the actions of time are mastered and subdued.

In some ways, however, the Italian trip of 1846 could very well mark the beginning of a gradual retreat from the kind of Romanticism that characterized Burckhardt's outlook during the first three decades of his life. It was in the period of these journeys—travels that coincided with personal, professional and political upheaval—that Burckhardt found former Romantic inclinations gradually giving way to what could be characterized as the more detached, resigned and measured classical sensibility that can be recognized in the works of the coming decades. The Italy that therefore emerges from—and yet also conditioned—this change in sensibility was thus very different from the one given youthful expression on the banks of the Arno or the slopes along Lago Maggiore. From its first moments, indeed, the journey seemed to belie the Romantic aura that had accompanied it in Burckhardt's imagination. "The journey," as Kaegi writes, "turned out less romantic than Burckhardt had dreamt of it in Basel. Nothing of the 'übermenschlich schönen' landscape visions between Sestri and Spezia are to be found in the sketchbook, none of the painterly little places clinging to cliffs are recorded there as was once planned."¹⁰² On the contrary, in this instance, Burckhardt's direction seemed rather more well-defined, with very little time left over for the kind of aesthetic *Schwelgerei* that could perhaps have been expected from his previous correspondence. Indeed, as his letter to Schauenburg hinted, Burckhardt's destination was quite clear, and it was towards this destination that the young historian turned his compass in the spring of 1846. "In Burckhardt's heart, everything was drawn now to

¹⁰² Kaegi, *Burckhardt: Eine Biographie*, Vol. 3, 5.

Rome continues Kaegi in the same passage in relation to the diaries, “After the last architectural sketch of the cathedral in Genoa, there follows without transition or ellipsis the solemn entry: ‘Arrival in Rom 1. April 1846, Evening 8:30, entered through the Porta Cavallegieri.’ It was the first time in his life that he set foot on Roman soil.”¹⁰³ With this laconic diary entry, in other words, and in language far more reticent than previous communications, Burckhardt announced his entry into Rome, a city that would remain a central source of historical and personal inspiration for the rest of his life.

However, if Burckhardt’s entry into Rome signals a retreat from a Romanticism conceived in terms of a quasi-mystical region of self-completion and ecstatic presence, the historian nevertheless maintains and displays that species of Romantic irony that understands the ultimate impossibility of such complete identity of self and world. One could say that Burckhardt’s reception of Italy undergoes a transformation in form and sensibility from one like that of a Wordsworth, where there still exists possibility of coincidence and mutual recognition between self and nature (or world), to that of an E.T.A. Hoffmann, where two dimensions exist side by side yet can never be fully reconciled. From this perspective, we see Burckhardt beginning to pursue the precarious point of balance that he would attempt to maintain for the rest of his career, a personal and historiographical balance between a Romantic over-identification with abstract idealities and *a priori* first principles and an antiquarian impulse that mechanically assembles mountains of unrelated and indigestible factual fragments. The Italy to which

¹⁰³ Kaegi, *Burckhardt: Eine Biographie*, Vol. 3, 5. “Im Herzen Burckhardt’s draengte nun alles nach Rom,“ continues Kaegi in the same passage in relation to the diaries, “Auf die letzte Architekturzeichnung vom Dom zu Genua folgt ohne Übergang und ohne Lücke der feierliche Eintrag: «Ankunft in Rom 1. April 1846, Abends ½9 Uhr, durch Porta Cavallegieri eingefahren.» Es war das Erste Mal in seinem Leben, daß er diesen Boden betrat.”

he now escaped would be one not conditioned by a naïve Romanticism of which he had become increasingly suspicious, a Romanticism so easily translated into the dangerous political commitments of his Rhenish friends. But nor would it assume the same antiquarian mustiness that seemed to cling to the work of many Berlin acquaintances.¹⁰⁴ The Italy that here emerged, in other words, would be neither a piece of Eichendorffian fantasy like *Das Marmorbild* nor a project like Theodor Mommsen's vast, and perpetually accumulating, collection of Roman inscriptions, *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum*.

In turn, as the above distinctions became manifest in the contours of Burckhardt's historiographic practices and outlook, Italian and European pasts could be vouchsafed to the present neither in the form of pristine ideal entities nor in lifeless collections of atomized historical data. An authentic encounter with the past could be experienced neither as a material given nor a truth deduced from first principles. Indeed, to the degree one can ever speak of a Burckhardtian epistemology of history, the mature work that begins appearing in the late 1840's and 1850's bears the marks of an increasing engagement with Enlightenment and eighteenth-century historiographical literatures. And as with the models of Gibbon and Voltaire, models that remained primary influences in his methodological approach to cultural history, Burckhardt adopted a critical posture in relation to the objects of research, a posture in which historian understands himself or herself more as interlocutor with—rather than narrator of—historical events and entities.

¹⁰⁴ For instance, notice Burckhardt's scorn for the mere piling up of facts which he linked to the traditions of German antiquarian historiography, and against which he warns the younger Bernhard Kugler: "Ich rathe ferner zum einfachen Weglassen des bloßen Tatsachenschuttes - nicht aus dem Studium - wohl aber aus der Darstellung. Von äußeren Tatsachen braucht man schlechterdings nur diejenigen zu melden, welche der kenntliche und cha-racteristische Ausdruck einer Idee, eines Allgemeinen, eines lebendigen Zuges der betreffenden Zeit sind." Burckhardt, *Briefe*, Vol. 5, 76.

It is, as we have described above, a historiographical relation that tends to emphasize the ultimate incommensurability of *narrative time* on the one hand and *the time that is narrated* on the other, an understanding that both recognizes and explicitly underlines the critical space that opens up between *histoire* and *discours*. Where Burckhardt's early Italian reveries had emphasized a sense of presence, authenticity, and self-identification with the landscapes of a largely still unexplored Italian south, an identification in which Italy becomes the symbol of union (even unto death) between subjective and objective totalities, the era around 1848 shows Burckhardt assuming a more nuanced, more critically distanced, but no less intimate interest in the cultural importance of Italian pasts in relation to a European present.

This period of Burckhardt's early professional journeys to Italy thus coincided with an increasing set of suspicions regarding the state of historical consciousness in a modernizing nineteenth century. On the one hand, the methodological pathologies of historical professionalization threatened to deliver a past where little could be glimpsed but an ever increasing set of ever more detailed individual "trees". On the other hand, the naïve enthusiasms of romantically inclined historical consciousness presented sweeping vistas of "forests" which threatened to become utterly dissociated from the particularities of their constituent elements. Given these considerations, it is unsurprising that his three major works produced during the subsequent decade not only deal explicitly with chapters of Italian history, but pursued these chapters in a way that sought to address the above methodological and epistemological concerns. The work most closely associated with the methodological alternatives developed by Burckhardt is *Die Cultur der Renaissance in Italien*, first published in 1860 and whose methodological innovations are

well known to every subsequent student of European historiography. And yet, in many ways, *Die Cultur der Renaissance* might be viewed as only the third panel of a larger triptych of works that appeared during the course of the 1850's and collectively established the contours of Burckhardt's historical methodology. Indeed, while Burckhardt had, by the late 1840's, conceived of an extended series of cultural historical handbooks that treated the eras from the late antique to the Renaissance, the resulting research instead eventually produced two monographs and a hugely successful guidebook to Italian cultural artifacts. The two monographs, *Die Cultur der Renaissance auf Die Zeit Constantin der Grossen* (1853), neatly bookend the span of the original handbook project, while the (now) less celebrated *Cicerone* (1855) represented an impressive synthesis of the Italian culture during these periods, and is here framed in the form of a somewhat idiosyncratic guidebook for the educated nineteenth-century European visitor to Italy. Indeed, to the degree that Burckhardt's methodological commitments and evolutions have since become especially linked to the 1860 *Cultur der Renaissance*, it has become too easy to ignore the methodological links of that work with both the *Constantin* and the *Cicerone*, and the organic totality of which all three represent individual fragments.

In comparison with the other two works of the period, however, the *Cicerone* in particular has always occupied a somewhat problematic position within Burckhardt's oeuvre, as this has since been defined by professional historians and students of art history. While it displays an astonishing depth and range of art historical erudition, and while it attempts an astonishingly broad synthesis of Italian cultural history, the *Cicerone* presents subsequent readers with yet another example of Burckhardt's insistent

intellectual idiosyncrasy. For while it is constructed by an obviously skilled historian, and informed by what was then the most contemporary research, it would be impossible to situate it within a recognized genre of professional historiography or art historical scholarship. Indeed, writing from a rather more established and professionalized moment of the art historical discipline, Aby Warburg would later claim—in seemingly less than sympathetic terms—that the *Cicerone* was rather more “a chapter from the literary history of the Italian journey.”¹⁰⁵ It is uncertain, of course, as Christine Tauber notes in one of the few published monographs devoted to the work, in precisely what sense Warburg intended this pronouncement, but he clearly seemed interested in presenting the *Cicerone* less as a work of foundational disciplinary import, and more as a species of writing more at home in the literary genres of travel memoir and travel essay. Yet regardless of such subsequent policing of disciplinary boundaries, it is clear that the *Cicerone*’s place within the genres of travel writing, historical literature, or art historical scholarship has remained uncertain from the moment of its appearance in 1855.

On the other hand, however, it would be unfair to dismiss Warburg’s judgment too swiftly as an instance of *ex post facto* disciplinary hygiene. For without a doubt, the *Cicerone* is deeply indebted to—if not completely defined by—the literary genres that Warburg invokes. Writing in February of 1870 to Otto Mündler, and with characteristic self-abnegation, Burckhardt himself would describe the work in part as a response to the then paucity of effective guidebooks. “All things considered,” he declares, “I wish a better man than me had written a *Cicerone* (according to the plan I had before me)—but

¹⁰⁵ Christine Tauber, *Jacob Burckhardts Cicerone. Eine Aufgabe zum Genießen* (Tubingen: 2000), 97. A superb overview with which any exploration of the *Cicerone* in Burckhardt’s corpus should begin.

what was there excepting Murray, in 1853, in the way of a guide to art which made any attempt to take in the whole of Italy and all the forms of art?"¹⁰⁶ The "Murray" to which Burckhardt refers are the guidebooks of the British based Charles Murray firm that were then among the only well established guides available for travelers in Europe. Indeed, in this sense, part of the uniqueness of the *Cicerone* stems from the particular moment in which it appeared, a moment of dramatic transition in the nature of travel and travel writing during the mid-nineteenth century. With possibilities for leisure travel still quite rare and limited to extremely narrow social strata, the first half of the nineteenth century had been overwhelmingly dominated by a travel literature that understood itself as precisely that, literature. Drawing on models from Goethe's *Italienische Reise*, to Madame de Stael's *Corinne* and Stendhal's *Promenades dans Rome*, such literature took the form of a travel memoir (real or fictional) related as a journey of moral, aesthetic, and perhaps sensual education, a kind of *Grand Tour* redrawn in accordance with the needs, interests, desires and anxieties of the educated bourgeois subject. Italy here became character, backdrop, and landscape in a *Bildungsroman*, or a cultural *Pilgrim's Progress*, that described the process of cultural edification undergone for, by and through the individual subject and author.

By the middle of the century, however, this sort of travel literature was quickly giving way in prominence to one of two alternatives. On the one hand, with increasing opportunity for travel (though of course still remarkably limited in class terms), demand was swiftly growing a literature in the form of the now familiar guidebook. The 1830's and 1840's saw the rapid growth of firms like Murray or the German-based firm,

¹⁰⁶ Burckhardt, *Briefe*, Vol 5, 70.

Baedeker and Sons, a growth that reveals burgeoning interest not only in vicarious experiences, but a desire to reproduce and experience an *Italienische Reise* of one's own. Such guides tended to offer the reader more prosaic—though more practical—advice and tips, involving anything from where to find a particular fresco by Raphael to how much one should tip the hotel staff. On the other hand, the objects of interest to the growing traveling public, whether those were Roman antiquities, Renaissance architecture or Baroque sculpture, were undergoing a shift in legitimate stewardship from the wealthy travelling connoisseur or dilettante to an increasingly professionalized body of academic experts who claimed a monopoly on legitimate discourse regarding such objects. In other words, Burckhardt's *Cicerone* appears at a moment in which the early nineteenth-century bourgeois traveler/subject was increasingly being replaced—or disaggregated into—one of two possible subject positions: tourist or expert. Indeed, the strange position that the *Cicerone* occupies, as both travel guide and work of scholarship, reveals it as a work of this threshold moment of transition in which traditional and emerging modes of traveling subjectivity are still present in one and the same work.

To a Burckhardt traveling in the late 1840's and 1850's, however, the manner in which the traveler reconstructs a visited domain—or the way in which the art historian interprets the elements of a work or style, and the historian assembles the fragments of Italian or Roman history—was far more than an idle issue of epistemological curiosity. Unnerved by a modernity whose signature qualities seemed to include a willful historical forgetfulness and a creeping disengagement with traditional cultural legacies, Burckhardt presents the *Cicerone* as an invitation to re-engage with—and re-member—a past that was quickly becoming fragmented and forgotten. Furthermore, and this is perhaps the

decisive point, the terms and conditions under which this re-engagement takes place are important not only in the antiquarian interest of preserving a relation to the past, but also important for the effect they have upon the subject of such experiences. The process of cultural, aesthetic or historical *Anschauung*, in other words, is a process of exchange in which both subject of historical knowledge and object of such knowledge come into being and assume definition. In Burckhardt's normative configuration of "healthy" subjectivity, to whose character we'll return below, the capacity for and exercise of such *Anschauung* is a threshold requirement, a requirement that involves a construction of the self through the critical re-membering and re-construction of cultural and historical objects. Indeed, from this epistemological perspective, Burckhardt can be seen veering into epistemological and psychological territories more akin to those of the Enlightenment and the *Goethezeit*, and to the degree that it insists on a kind of early nineteenth-century aesthetic subjectivity, the *Cicerone* is indeed somewhat regressive in the way it mediates and understands the relation between observer and observed. For Burckhardt, the task is one of reasserting a kind of aristocratic bourgeois aesthetic subjectivity that appeared to be dissolving under the influence of modernity, a subjectivity that becomes visible to itself only in a process of mutual and complementary revelation with the objects of its experience. Put differently, one could say that the *Cicerone* is an invitation not to a "Room of One's Own", but to a *Bildungsroman* of one's own, an educational experience in which self and world take shape, and become visible to one another, in a process of mutual revelation and reflection. It is a plea, in other words, for a mode of subjectivity that Burckhardt felt was disappearing from a modernizing world hovering between the alternatives of the solipsistic hedonism of a

Romantic self, and the objectification and atomization of tourism and expertise. If, for Burckhardt, the fortunes of culture depended on a specific relationship of remembrance, the latter in turn rested on a specific orientation of subject and object, a careful—rather Goethean—balance of mutual definition.

The notion of *Genuss*, or pleasure, to which Burckhardt invites readers of the *Cicerone*, must therefore be understood not simply as a somewhat esoteric aesthetic category or experience, but also as an essential moment in the complex mutual imbrications of culture, subjectivity and remembrance. Indeed, given the way in which we've outlined Burckhardt's epistemological and historiographical commitments, the prominent role ascribed to the experience of aesthetic *Genuss* should come as little surprise. For central to Burckhardt's normative notion of subjectivity is a free and unfettered play of *Phantasie* whose operations—provided they are both refined and measured—produce the enjoyment that correlates with a subjectivity both capable of cultural remembrance and constructed *in* cultural remembrance.¹⁰⁷ Thus, where reconstruction of history is conceived in the terms described above, in terms of an ongoing and never ending critical reconstruction of fragments, then it is these faculties of *pleasure* and *imagination* that drive the critical “afterlife” of fragmentary historical remembrance, that propel a “Baroque curve” of knowledge that never quite comes to rest in the perfect circle of complete understanding and presence.¹⁰⁸ It should also be obvious that this epistemological scheme is precisely analogous to the social/cultural

¹⁰⁷ We are in territory here coming very near that of Schiller's understanding of the political/historical function of the aesthetic—to the degree that Burckhardt recognizes the social import of aesthetic experience. And yet, given Burckhardt's own nature, and the intervening half century, the more optimistic dimensions Schiller's aesthetics seem less tenable in 1850 than they might have a few decades earlier.

¹⁰⁸ Used here in the Benjaminian sense.

framework—deployed by Burckhardt in *Die Cultur der Renaissance* and formalized in *Weltgeschichtliche Betrachtungen*—that describes a tripartite historical topography defined by the phenomena of Religion, State and Culture. Representing, in effect, the three primary “colors” of historical experience, the dimensions of religion, state and culture combine in varying proportions (and degrees of hegemony) to define the historical contours of any particular time. And if Burckhardt came to associate the religious and political dimensions with degrees of compulsion and coercion, the realm of culture was seen to emerge most profoundly and most forcefully in moments of relative freedom from such compulsions and coercions.¹⁰⁹ In the most famous example, Burckhardt situates the cultural efflorescence of the Italian Renaissance in a moment of deadlock between Papal and Imperial power, a moment that extended from the decline of the Hohenstaufens to Charles V’s sack of Rome in 1527. And similar to the historical fortunes of *Cultur*, the fortunes of modern subjectivity are dependent upon the degree of freedom it may assert in relation to the coercive forces—ideological or material—that beset it on various sides. From the perspective of Burckhardt, in other words, the fate of aesthetically attuned subjectivity and the fate of *Cultur* are inextricably intertwined, the free development and expression of the one dependent on the free development and expression of the other. Thus, while the *Cicerone* is a guide to aesthetic taste and enjoyment, Burckhardt’s *Anleitung* is part of a much larger task, namely that of encouraging forms of aesthetic subjectivity whose character bears the faculties of imagination and criticism required for the *re-membering* of European culture. For

¹⁰⁹ This is, of course, the nub of Burckhardt’s un-historicist denigration of politics and statecraft. As a set of phenomena whose essence, in Burckhardt’s view, rested ultimately on coercion and force, the state could be recognized only as an amoral entity, that is, not a carrier of culture but its antagonist.

Burckhardt, in other words, the subjective enjoyment and consumption of the Italian cultural landscapes is a faculty bound up with an active, yet restrained, *Phantasietätigkeit*, and this faculty of imagination is in turn required for the adequate preservation and reconstruction of the past. One knows the past, in this sense, not just when one “sees” it, but only when one sees it with the pleasure linked to an active subjective agency.

What this suggests, of course, is that Burckhardt’s *Cicerone* is more than a somewhat curious guidebook to the artistic heritage of the Italian peninsula, but also a kind of prescription for an ailing European culture and its associated forms of subjectivity, a prescription for exercises in a kind of aesthetic regeneration and reeducation. This function only further explains the curious formal nature of the work. As we’ve seen, and as embodied in its name, the *Cicerone* was always conceived by Burckhardt less as a rigid framework or itinerary, and more as a kind of literary companion with which the mobile traveler may wish to converse from time to time. While certainly written for an educated, and perhaps expert, audience, the *Cicerone* presents itself eponymously as an interlocutor and not as an authority whose pronouncements must be obeyed, and it is in this sense that the guide assumes the form of an invitation rather than a set of directives. In other words, the *Cicerone* engages the reader in a kind of ongoing conversation where the primary goal is one of education in aesthetic perception, and the ultimate task is oriented towards memory, all the while leaving the traveling subject the maximum degree of interpretive freedom. To this end, Burckhardt avoided, as he saw it, the authoritative antiquarianism of contemporary philology, history and archaeology, but also steered clear of the kind of prescriptive

itineraries and rigid schema found in increasingly prevalent guides like Baedeker and Murray's. At this formal level, organized according to genre of cultural object rather than location or historical chronology, Burckhardt seems intent on constructing a work that undermines and disrupts any overly schematic spatial or temporal reading. No simple linear organization is provided; the reader or consumer is required to construct historical, cultural and travel narratives of their own rather than simply insert themselves into the subject positions encouraged by professional historiography or the popular guidebook. Like the well known methodological "cross sections" by which Burckhardt disrupted the diachrony of traditional historicist narrative, and replaced this with a series of synchronic cultural slices, the choice of genre as the primary organizational category tends to dislocate and de-territorialize pathways of traveling and aesthetic experience that were already becoming well worn and clichéd.

Under the auspices of this formal framework, the *Cicerone* both addresses and constructs an ideal subject and partner, in an exercise of aesthetic conversation and perception, a subject suited to very particular modes of aesthetic sensibility, critical perception and cultural memory. At the same time, and in substantive terms, Burckhardt's treatment of representative works, artists and styles models a set of historical subject orientations that are defined and compared in terms of aesthetic posture and sensibility. As indicated above, Burckhardt tends to draw a strong relation between the contours of culture at any particular historical moment and a corresponding sort of subjectivity that may emerge under (or propel) such cultural circumstances. The result—linked with Burckhardt's overall comparative interests—is something close to a doctrine of ideal types or allegorical figures, where specific stylistic forms or artistic

individualities come to “represent” or stand in for larger cultural phenomena within any given cross-sectional slice of history. Burckhardt tends to associate specific cultural moments with certain kinds of artistic subjectivity and style. Terms such Classical, Byzantine, Gothic, Renaissance, Mannerist, and Baroque thus not only represent and embody distinct formal styles of artistic/cultural expression, but are also linked not accidentally to a horizon of possibilities for the expression and construction of subjectivity. For example, as Burckhardt’s posthumously published *Griechische Kulturgeschichte* attempted to demonstrate, classical Greek culture was presented as the result of an historically specific relation between individual subject and the immense demands of the traditional city-state. The form of culture in golden-age Greece, in other words, was precisely linked to a subjectivity understood in a context that was determined by the almost crushing centripetal forces of the Polis and tensions conditioned by the *agon*.¹¹⁰ In similar fashion, and throughout the *Cicerone*, Raphael is not only the representative and apogee of what Burckhardt understood as Italian Renaissance culture, but also a specific mode of modern aesthetic subjectivity that had achieved “classical” balance between interior and exterior, between objective necessity and a freely active *Phantasie*. Indeed, where Raphael emerges as a type and model of a Renaissance subjectivity still in ascendance, Burckhardt’s Michelangelo haunts the *Cicerone* as a titanic figure whose nature is both a stylistic high water mark and harbinger of decline. In all of these cases, however, it is not so much the lives of the particular figures that

¹¹⁰ See Ingo Gildenhard and Martin Ruehl eds., *Out of Arcadia: Classics and Politics in Germany in the Age of Burckhardt, Nietzsche and Wilamowitz* (London: Institute of Classical Studies, School of Advanced Study, University of London, 2003); Suzanne L. Marchand, *Down from Olympus: Archaeology and Philhellenism in Germany, 1750-1970* (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 2003); Jacob Burckhardt: *The Greeks and Greek Civilization*, Trans. Sheila Stern (New York: Macmillan, 1999); Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy and Other Writings*, trans. Ronald Speirs (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999).

interest Burckhardt—and by no means a cultural or art history conceived in terms of biography, à la Vasari—but more in the ways that each of the figures represented an horizon of subjective aesthetic orientations at any given historical moment.¹¹¹ As the *Cicerone* traces out the fortunes of the schools and styles of Italian art history, Burckhardt's *Anleitung* also carefully constructs a taxonomy of aesthetic experience, a gallery of possible, and mutually conditioning, relations between subjects and their cultural contexts.

The birth of a specifically modern culture—as well as its eventual fate—is thus closely linked by Burckhardt with the emergence and nature of a specifically modern subject. The reflections, for instance, in the *Culture of Renaissance in Italy* are intimately bound up with the development of certain forms or types of artist, politician and soldier, social types whose sense of self Burckhardt took to be one of the hallmarks of the era. And yet, in defining the Renaissance in this way, Burckhardt was not so much drawing a line between Renaissance and Middle Ages, loosely defined, but between the Renaissance and a more specific cultural phenomenon. Far from denigrating the cultural traditions and expressions of the Middle Ages and the Germanic Gothic, the true backdrop against which Burckhardt situates the Italian Renaissance is specifically the residue of Byzantine influence and cultural practice that had persisted through the Italian Middle Ages. As we've seen, Burckhardt's fascination with the larger cultural formation of the Renaissance, as it was for the likewise vital forms of the Gothic, was bound up with a corresponding and essential subjective correlate, one that offered at least some

¹¹¹ Giorgio Vasari, *The Lives of the Artists*, trans. Julia Conway Bondanella and Peter Bondanella (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998).

space for individual self-expression and *Phantasie*. But at the same time, Byzantinism becomes a by-word in Burckhardt's corpus for moribund traditionalism and empty formalism, an environment which tended to discourage both the aesthetic and subjective orientations Burckhardt came to associate with the Renaissance culture. Thus, if the Renaissance was a form of cultural re-awakening, the sleep from which it awoke was one Burckhardt associated with Byzantine traditions, not necessarily with Medieval culture as a whole.¹¹²

As Burckhardt presents it in the *Cicerone*, stylistic Byzantinism emerged around the 7th century A.D., and swept away the last vestiges of an *Altchristliches* (early Christian) style that had hitherto contented itself with pouring the new wine of Christian sensibility into the older wineskins of classical Latin forms. Indeed, Byzantine cultural influence—and at times hegemony—would remain the dominant stylistic force in Italian arts until the advent of Romanistic and Gothic alternatives in the next millennium. But where a truly classical spirit had still flickered within the *Altchristliches* form, even as only the dying embers of a once powerful tradition, Burckhardt regarded the cultural record of the Byzantine style in Italy as one clearly marking the end of Mediterranean classicism as a living tradition. Indeed, the high water mark of Byzantine influence in Italy is situated, for Burckhardt, precisely at the moment of most extreme cultural nadir between the high points of authentic and organic classical (Greek, and to a lesser extent Latin) culture and the rediscovery and modern fusion of this tradition in the Italian Renaissance. It is Byzantium, in other words, that Burckhardt presents in

¹¹² This is one area where Burckhardt's views veer clearly away from his Enlightenment influences. Already too steeped in Romantic historiography to so casually dismiss the Middle Ages, Burckhardt finds his cultural counterexample in the ossified forms of Byzantine art.

contradistinction with the cultural efflorescence of classical antiquity, the northern Gothic, or the Italian *Quattrocento*. But what exactly, in Burckhardt's estimation, are the qualities that define the cultural forms of Byzantinism, and in what ways does it come to represent the cultural antagonist of antiquity and renaissance? And furthermore, for the purposes of the present discussion, how does Burckhardt present Byzantinism to the reader of the *Cicerone*? How does Burckhardt's description and modeling of the Byzantine aesthetic relate to the ideal sensibilities of a culturally educated modern subject, citizen and traveler?

In terms of the *Cicerone*, Burckhardt's reflections on the nature of Byzantinism, and its place in his cultural-historical schema, come alive most fully and are most extensive in the third and final section which treats the history of Italian painting and wall decoration. Perhaps unsurprisingly, the focus of these reflections turns once again on the issue of fragments and their assembly in works of art. For it is with respect to remnants of Byzantine mosaic, dating primarily from the 7th through the 9th centuries, that Burckhardt undertakes a more explicit (and unsympathetic) thematization of the era and its cultural expression. In this instance, we must take care not to suggest that Burckhardt's target is mosaic as a genre in itself, a genre whose classical practice the historian presents with great sympathy. It is with a general and evident favor, for example, that Burckhardt treats the mosaics of the immediately preceding *Altchristliches* period, recognizing in them a still living residue of a formerly powerful tradition. On the other hand, however, Burckhardt distinguishes the character of Byzantine mosaic in such a way that it becomes emblematic of a period of cultural decadence and relative decline. In the same way, in other words, that the Byzantine era saw the increasing disintegration

of classical architectural remains, where such uncomprehending fragmentation saw elements being pillaged for more pedestrian uses, so too did the tradition of mosaic display a seeming embrace of outward material forms at the expense of any organic or creative cultural expression. What here differentiates the Byzantine legacy in Italy from that of the *Altchristliches* era, or even Renaissance redeployment of the classical forms, is by no means its interest in aging and ancient traditions, but the precise manner in which it orients itself (and understands its relation) to those forms and fragments. For what Burckhardt sees in Byzantine style is a moment in which once living and vital currents of pagan antiquity are reduced to nothing more than forms and fragments, mere raw materials to be mechanically assembled and reassembled in accordance with long held cultural formulae. As Burckhardt puts it, the essence of Byzantinism did not so much constitute a style in itself as it did represent the ‘ossification’ and ‘fossilization’ (*Erstarrung*) of the traditions which it had inherited.¹¹³

As a term describing a particular circumstance of cultural decline, *Erstarrung* is one which Burckhardt regularly used in *Die Zeit Constantins des Grossen* that had appeared two years before the *Cicerone*, and it captures a particular relation between objective traditions (defined by prescriptions of form and material) and the subjective dimension of cultural expression (defined by the relative presence of *Phantasie*). Though, as in most instances, Burckhardt was little interested in explicit theoretical ruminations on the precise meaning of the term, its significance is perhaps best captured by the naturalistic/biological metaphor of fossilization. The term, in other words,

¹¹³ Jacob Burckhardt, *Der Cicerone: Eine Anleitung zum Genuss der Kunstwerke Italiens* (Stuttgart: Kroener, 1986), 695. “Der Übergang in das Byzantinische war begreiflicherweise ein allmaehlicher [relative to the *Altchristlich*]; das Erstarren in den bisherigen Typen war eben der Byzantinismus.”

captures the sense of a cultural “organism” that persists no longer with the suppleness of an internally vital entity, but is present only as an external formal skeleton. And in turn, the expression of such an “erstarrte” organism can only be the product of mechanical repetition and rote adherence to formal tradition. Describing this process in the 3rd century, the same progressive *Erstarrung* of classical tradition that would reach its nadir in Byzantinism, Burckhardt writes in *Die Zeit Constantins des Grossen*:

The new Christian subjects spread a sunset glow over ancient art, but new content did not bring fresh quality. Mosaic was quickly claimed for the mighty programs of the victorious faith. It spread sacred figures and stories over all available space in the church, disregarding alike the laws of architecture as of painting. We can only wonder that so many relatively excellent works make their appearance as late as the sixth century. Ecclesiastical merit and completeness of the subject, along with magnificence of execution, were the only relevant considerations. For the artist's own joy in his work there is no room. Art had become serviceable to a symbol which lay outside itself, which had not grown up with it and through it; and the artist, even where his talent was considerable, was the nameless executor of something universally applicable, as had once been the case in Egypt.¹¹⁴

In the service, to varying degrees in Burckhardt estimation, of ecclesiastical orthodoxy and prescriptive classical models, aesthetic and cultural expression threatened to become an exercise involving the mere manipulation of pre-established and prescribed formal elements. Indeed, as the passage makes clear, it was precisely the sense of a living and subjective “joy” that this process gradually banished from the relations of aesthetic expression. The artist, like the onlooker, here became a mere technician of cultural expression, mechanically assembling and re-assembling meaningful fragments in accord with externally sanctioned forms. The corollary of an “erstarrte” culture, furthermore, is an undernourished sphere of subjectivity, a subjectivity serviceable—as with its aesthetic

¹¹⁴ Jacob Burckhardt, *The Age of Constantine the Great*, Trans. Moses Hadas (New York: Pantheon, 1949), 231-233.

expressions—to a “symbol” or principle of organization beyond the sphere of its own agency. And to the extent that Burckhardt understood subjectivity as a domain that permits the free and pleasurable activity of *Phantasie* and *Kritik*, Byzantinism represents a cultural circumstance that discourages emergence of individualities that he came to associate most closely with the Renaissance in particular and the modern era in general.

As he describes it in entries of the *Cicerone* regarding wall painting genres, the cultural hegemony of Byzantinism persisted until at least the first century of the second millennium, and could not be considered a spent force until at least the 13th century. In discussing and comparing these emerging challenges and cultural currents, first in the form of an indigenous *Romanisch* aesthetic and later in the first bloom of what would become the Tuscan Renaissance, Burckhardt draws in an even clearer manner his estimation of Byzantinism and its cultural/subjective imperatives. Describing the rise of the *Romanische* style, Burckhardt draws a stark comparison with the then contemporary forms of Byzantine tradition:

The defining feature of the new style, the lively movement and the efforts towards expressive gesture are here clearly at hand. In spite of all the meagerness of execution, the participation of the viewer is engaged; art improvises again after the long centuries of repetition and combination. Naturally, there mixes here also a studied Byzantinism in this harmless narrative wall painting, and a pair of later works (the frescoes of the fore hall in St. Lorenzo fuori,—and those of the chapel of St. Sylvestro in the fore-court of SS. Quattro Coronati, both from the beginning of the thirteenth century) are covered by later works of a more Byzantine manner. The new impulse was even strong enough to penetrate into the realm of monumental mosaic. In Santa Maria in Trastevere the semi-dome of the Tribuna, and the surrounding wall, holds the first masterpiece of the Romanistic style in Italy (1139-1153); even with all the crudeness of the forms, one greets here the

new currents, indeed the emergence of individual life; Christ and Maria, seated together, his arm on her shoulder—this is also unbyzantine in conception.¹¹⁵

Burckhardt here begins to outline the momentous shift that he understood as the transition from an “erstarrte” cultural life embodied by Byzantine influence to the reinvigorated forms of the High Middle Ages and the Early Renaissance. Where Byzantine forms are characterized by mere *Wiederholung* and *Kombinieren*, by mechanical and scripted expressions legitimated by traditional practices, the newer forms are distinguished by what Burckhardt describes as the first glimmers of improvisational gestures and expressions, even where these are still largely tentative and unrefined. If the representation of the holy family had become, to use a term Burckhardt himself deploys, “Egyptisch” in their precise adherence to well-established and nearly sacred aesthetic formulae, the new millennium saw the gradual disintegration of these prescriptions and a reemphasis on both the individuality of represented figures, and in the subjective activity of the artist.

However, Burckhardt also takes care to add one more decisive actor onto this increasingly active and improvisational stage of aesthetic expression, namely the onlooker or viewer. For Burckhardt perceives that the relations here are not simply limited to those between aesthetic objects and artist subjects, but also takes care to

¹¹⁵ Jacob Burckhardt, *Der Cicerone: Eine Anleitung zum Genuss der Kunstwerke Italiens*, 701. “Trotz aller Ärmlichkeit der Ausführung erwacht doch die Teilnahme des Beschauers; die Kunst improvisiert wieder einmal nach den langen Jahrhunderten des Wiederholens und Kombinierens. Natürlich mischt sich angelerntes Byzantinisches auch in diese harmlos erzählende Wandmalerei, und ein paar spätere Arbeiten (die Fresken der Vorhalle von S. Lorenzo fuori,—und diejenigen der Kapelle S. Silvestro am Vorhof von SS. Quattro coronati, beide vom Anfang des 13. Jahrhunderts) unterliegen sogar wieder einer mehr byzantinsierenden Manier. Allein der neue Antrieb war inzwischen schon genug erstarkt, um auch in die monumentale Mosaikmalerei einzudringen. In S. Maria in Trastevere enthält die Halbkuppel der Tribuna und die umgebende Wand das erste Hauptwerk des romanischen Stiles in Italien (1139—1153); bei aller Roheit der Formen begrüßt man doch gern die neuen Motive, ja das beginnende individuelle Leben; Christus und Maria zusammen thronend, sein Arm auf ihrer Schulter—dies ist auch im Gedanken unbyzantinisch.”

introduce the *Phantasietätigkeit* of the “Beschauer” as such to the equation. And for the author of the *Cicerone*, of course, this is a decisive step. For in an important sense, it is precisely on this interest in the “Teilnahme des Beschauers” that the task of Burckhardt’s *Anleitung* is premised. It is not merely in the act of artistic creation or in the material *objets d’art* that they produce that the phenomenon of a modern aesthetically capable subjectivity emerges. On the contrary, what Burckhardt appears to envision is a cultural ecology, or set of relations, in which activity and agency of the onlooker is of no less significance than that of the artist, where the objects of art are not merely objects but participate in a conversation between producers and consumers. The enjoyment of, and active conversation with, aesthetic expressions is thus a defining and necessary characteristic of the individualized modern subject. Where both artistic forms, and hence their interpretation, were rigidly regulated in traditional Byzantine forms, Burckhardt sees the first hints of modern sensibility in improvisations of both artist and onlooker. And in this sense, the *Cicerone* reveals itself as an attempt to invite readers and travelers into these sorts of conversations, and reinforce the kinds of interpretive action from which, in Burckhardt’s view, a healthy modern subjectivity is woven.

In the cultural landscape of fifteenth- and sixteenth-century Italy, however, the tentative individualism of the later Middle Ages blossomed into the fully realized subjectivity that Burckhardt associates with the High Renaissance. Not surprisingly, where he begins discussing the phenomena of the Renaissance, Burckhardt’s focus tends to shift from interest in the broad contours of a style—say, the Byzantine, or *Altchristlich*—and begins to settle on individuals and individualities as expressions of the new cultural sensibility. In other words, the nature of Renaissance innovation, coinciding

with, and plotted along, the development of an expansive and expanding subjective sphere, requires at its culmination a new set of *dramatis personae*—no longer styles or movements, but individual artists, sculptors and architects. But even with Burckhardt’s seemingly encyclopedic mastery of the cultural landscape of the *Quattrocento* and *Cinquecento*, an exhaustive mastery that would not disappoint antiquarian-minded contemporary colleagues, two primary figures clearly come to dominate in the course of the *Cicerone*: Raphael and Michelangelo. Where *Byzantinism* defined a benighted backdrop of limited subjectivity and aesthetic agency, a backdrop against which the Renaissance could be brought into relief, Raphael and Michelangelo come stand in for two poles of aesthetic orientation opened up by the emergence of Burckhardt’s Renaissance artist/subject. Indeed, as we saw above, the significance of this polarity does not simply represent a heuristic dichotomy between two individual artists with two distinct styles. Instead, Burckhardt’s fascination with the dyad, Raphael and Michelangelo, also rests on the way in which the two represent specific modern “types”, and define significant modes and postures of modern aesthetic subjectivity. The modern subject in the mode of Raphael, in other words, represents for Burckhardt one manifestation of the individualizing trends of the Renaissance, while the modern subject in the mode of Michelangelo reveals another set of possibilities. And while Burckhardt reconstructs them as titanic figures within a landscape of burgeoning individualities, the modern subject is rendered by Raphael in a bright major key, while that of Michelangelo is manifest, with more than a little dissonance, in a powerful minor.

From Burckhardt’s perspective, the aesthetic and subjective posture of the Renaissance discovers one of its most powerful examples—and reveals its extreme

distance from the Byzantine style—in the figure of Michelangelo Buonarroti. Indeed, in Michelangelo, Burckhardt discovers the artistic prototype for a kind of hyper-individualized subjectivity that seems to appear and reappear throughout European modernity since the Renaissance. Where strict Byzantine formalism had suppressed every expression of aesthetic individualism, Michelangelo introduces what Burckhardt sees as a new phenomenon—at least in the modern era—namely the artist as Prometheus unbound, the artist as subject bound only to laws of its own self legislation. “It was utterly alien for him,” writes Burckhardt in the third section of the *Cicerone*:

to put himself in the service of a previous form of devotion, of previous church types, or of the sensibility of any other man—or to see himself as bound in any way by such considerations. The great capital of church conventions and tradition of the Middle Ages was nothing to him. He constructed man anew, with a greater physical power that already seems almost daemonic, and he creates out of these forms a new earthly and Olympian world.¹¹⁶

In this sense, Michelangelo represents for Burckhardt the equivalent, in the aesthetic sphere, of what a figure like Francesco Sforza signified in the political. Like the *Condottiere* and statesman of the era, as is well described in the first chapter of *Die Cultur der Renaissance*, the artist here rejects the models and strictures of convention, and weaves reputation and power from the cloth of his own individual vision. If politics had indeed become a work of art in the Renaissance—that is, a matter of self-generated struggle and artifice—then so too did art itself become an “art”, and found its despots in men like Michelangelo.

¹¹⁶ Jacob Burckhardt, *Der Cicerone: Eine Anleitung zum Genuss der Kunstwerke Italiens*, 824. “Es lag ihm ganz ferne auf irgendeine bisherige Andacht, einen bisherigen kirchlichen Typus, auf die Empfindungsweise irgendeines andern Menschen einzugehen oder sich dadurch für gebunden zu erachten. Das große Kapital der kirchlichen Kunstbräuche des Mittelalters existiert für ihn nicht. Er bildet den Menschen neu, mit hoher physischer Gewaltigkeit, die an sich schon dämonisch wirkt, und schafft aus diesen Gestalten eine neue irdische und olympische Welt.”

Along with this new Renaissance type or personality, embodied for Burckhardt in Buonarrotti, there also emerges a distinct new governing principle or characteristic. Where the author of the *Cicerone* understands Byzantine culture as a phenomenon defined by a certain *Erstarrung*, by paralysis, ossification, or fossilization, it is the principle of *Bewegung* or movement that determines the sensibility of Michelangelo. Indeed, Burckhardt's Michelangelo reveals a modernity defined by a kind of restlessness and striving daemonism—not an unfamiliar leitmotif in German letters—an emphasis no longer on the representation of Being, but on the processes of Becoming. Surveying the story of Genesis as depicted in the Sistine Chapel, Burckhardt writes:

In four great and five small fields that stretch along the middle of the vault, the stories of Genesis are depicted. First among all artists, Michelangelo grasped the creation not as a mere word with a gesture of blessing, but as movement. By this alone there emerge the new motives for the individual acts of creation. With sublime motions the powerful figures hover there, accompanied by spirits [...] — so swift, that one and the same picture combines two acts of creation (for sun and moon and for plants). But the highest moment of the creation (and the highest of Michelangelo) is the vivification of Adam. Accompanied and surrounded by a host of angels, supported and supporting, the Almighty nears the earth and allows the spark of life to spring from his index finger and flow into that of the newly awoken first man.¹¹⁷

Burckhardt's prose here powerfully underscores the theme of movement that pulses through his reading of Michelangelo, with verbs like *bewegen*, *schweben*, *wallen* and *strömen* conjuring the motions and actions depicted in the fresco. Indeed, in this restless

¹¹⁷ Jacob Burckhardt, *Der Cicerone: Eine Anleitung zum Genuss der Kunstwerke Italiens*, 826. "In vier größern und fünf kleinern viereckigen Feldern, der Mitte des Gewölbes entlang, sind die Geschichten der Genesis dargestellt. Zuerst unter allen Künstlern faßte Michelangelo die Schöpfung nicht als ein bloßes Wort mit der Gebärde des Segens, sondern als Bewegung. So allein ergaben sich für die einzelnen Schöpfungsakte lauter neue Motive. In erhabenem Fluge schwebt die gewaltige Gestalt dahin, begleitet von Genien, welche derselbe Mantel mit umwallt; — so rasch, daß ein und dasselbe Bild zwei Schöpfungsakte (für Sonne und Mond und für die Pflanzen) vereinigen darf. Aber der höchste Augenblick der Schöpfung (und der höchste Michelangelos) ist die Belebung Adams. Von einer Heerschar jener göttlichen Einzelkräfte, tragenden und getragenen, umschwebt, nähert sich der Allmächtige der Erde und läßt aus seinem Zeigefinger den Funken seines Lebens in den Zeigefinger des schon halb belebten ersten Menschen hinüberströmen."

subjectivity described by Burckhardt, this figure of perpetual motion searching for individual expression, it is easy to detect the echoes of the Basler's judgment on his own era. "He is," writes Burckhardt of Buonarrotti, "the complete opposite of the Ancients, whose motives ripened slowly, and then developed over the course of a half millenium; he seeks to create ever new possibilities, and he can therefore be called the primary modern artist."¹¹⁸ Michelangelo, in other words, becomes the prototypical revolutionary—here in the aesthetic sense—of the modern era, breaking the tablets of tradition at every step in the name of personal ambition and a titanic need for self-expression. Mirrored as we already saw by Francesco Sforza and Sir John Hawkwood, Michelangelo also sees echoes in the great individualities periodically thrown up by a modernity all too readily intoxicated by the cult of genius, the allure of the new, and scorn for the conventional. In 1855, only seven years after the tumult of 1848, Burckhardt could look north from his Roman haven, or look across the Rhine from his perch in Basel, and find the spirit of Michelangelo alive and well in Paris, the Rhineland and Berlin.

Burckhardt's portrait of Michelangelo is thus one that is characteristically ambivalent. On the one hand, Burckhardt was fascinated by this subjective phenomenon he detected emerging in the Renaissance. "The signature of the last three hundred years, *subjectivity*," writes the historian of the artist:

Emerges here in the form of an absolutely limitless creativity. And to be sure, not involuntarily and unconsciously as was the case in so many of the spiritual impulses of the fifteenth century, but with a powerful deliberateness. It seems as

¹¹⁸ Ibid., 824. "Er ist in dieser Beziehung das gerade Gegenteil der Alten, welche ihre Motive langsam reiften und ein halbes Jahrtausend hindurch nachbildeten; er sucht stets neue Möglichkeiten zu erschöpfen und kann deshalb der moderne Künstler in vorzugsweisem Sinne heißen."

if Michelangelo conceived of a world-postulating and creating art in the same way that some philosophers have conceived of the world-creating Self.¹¹⁹

Michelangelo presents himself here as the distant ancestor of Fichte's self-postulated "I", the powerful modern dream of an individuality that creates and sustains itself from the force of its own consciousness of self. And while Burckhardt spares nothing in the admiration of the artist's powers, an artist who is nothing less than "a magnificent *fate* for art," Michelangelo nevertheless represents modernity in the moment of excess.¹²⁰ In this one figure is embodied the salutary expansion of the freely creative subjectivity of the Renaissance and modernity, and also the darker side of such powers, the ruthlessness and single-mindedness of purpose, the willful destruction of every boundary and convention, the glorification of self-expression over significance of content or ideality.¹²¹ Where the Byzantine style yields a model of an undernourished subjective sphere for the reader of the *Cicerone*, Burckhardt's Michelangelo reveals a mode of modern individuality that is at once enormously powerful and yet also dangerously swollen. "The viewer," writes Burckhardt in this same vein of astonished ambivalence, "will be curiously inclined to an artist whose greatness impresses him utterly and whose mode of sensibility so totally diverges from his own."¹²²

The principle that governs Burckhardt's reception of Michelangelo is thus one thoroughly steeped in an eighteenth-century enlightened Classicism that the *Cicerone*

¹¹⁹ Ibid., 639. "Die Signatur der drei letzten Jahrhunderten, die *Subjektivität*, tritt hier in Gestalt eines absolut schrankenlosen Schaffens auf. Und zwar nicht unfreiwillig und unbewußt wie sonst in so vielen großen Geistesregungen des 16. Jahrhunderts, sondern mit gewaltiger Absicht. Es scheint, als ob Michelangelo von der die Welt postulierenden und schaffenden Kunst beinahe so systematisch gedacht habe wie einzelne Philosophien von dem welterschaffenden Ich."

¹²⁰ Ibid.

¹²¹ Ibid.

¹²² Ibid. "Der Beschauer wird merkwürdig gestimmt gegen einen Künstler, dessen Größe ihm durchgängig imponiert und dessen Empfindungsweise doch so gänzlich von der seinigen abweicht."

deploys as an antidote to the daemonism of modern politics and culture. It clearly echoes the Goethean diagnosis of Romanticism as a “sickness” in relation to the “health” of classicism, and embraces Winckelmann’s notion of a *Stille Grosse* that inhabits all great and classical art. Conversely, Burckhardt depicts Michelangelo as the *Schicksal*, or fate, of modern art, a fate that represents both the apogee of the Renaissance, and the herald of subsequent cultural developments. Underscored is the notion of Michelangelo as the decisive influence in the eventual decline of the aesthetic sensibility of the High Renaissance, and the emergence of a modern culture understood in terms of Mannerism and the Baroque. The artist was, in other words, the most powerful early prototype and model for subsequent schools of the European Baroque culture of the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. For Burckhardt, as for most mid-nineteenth-century criticism, the Baroque was still primarily understood as the decadent expression of declining Renaissance traditions, a critical posture that began to change only in the late century. From this critical perspective, the hard-won and fragile balance achieved in the High Renaissance between naturalism and ideality, had been overwhelmed and intoxicated by the powers of an unleashed modern subjectivity, personified in the form of Michelangelo’s Promethean achievements. “He left behind,” writes Burckhardt, “an unsettled and transformed Sculpture. None of his contemporaries were so strong that they were not disoriented by the work of Michelangelo.”¹²³ And if Burckhardt saw the highest achievement of the Renaissance conditioned by a careful sense of balance, perspective and proportion—both in subject matter and in execution—the Baroque represented a period fascinated with power, governed by a cultural interest in display and

¹²³ Ibid. “Er hinterließ die Skulptur erschüttert und umgestaltet. Keiner seiner Kunstgenossen hatte so fest gestanden, daß er nicht durch Michelangelo desorientiert worden wäre.”

spectacle, and drawn to explorations of a willfully de-centered and disproportionate aesthetic sensibility. So powerful, in other words, was influence of Michelangelo in this respect that the artist eclipsed, among his Renaissance contemporaries, the memory of the figure Burckhardt held as the highest and most fully realized representative of *Cinquecento* Italian culture: Raphael. “The age of the artist,” he writes of Michelangelo, “was deeply moved, in equal measure, by the good and the evil that lay in him; he impressed them in daemonic fashion. Through him they completely forgot Raphael within 20 years.”¹²⁴

Burckhardt’s comparative taxonomy of culture, and its subjective corollaries, is thus bounded, on the one hand by the *Erstarrung* of Byzantinism, and on other, the striving subjective daemonism of Michelangelo. In the normative framework constructed within the *Cicerone*, a framework that envisions a relatively free sphere of cultural and subjective *Phantasietätigkeit*, both the example of Byzantine art and that of Michelangelo veer dangerously near regions of cultural compulsion. Where the former demands adherence to an external principle of ossified tradition, the latter emerges as a kind of aesthetic despot governing by the force of his own titanic creative powers. In either instance, the proposed conversation between artist, viewer, and tradition, degenerates into a soliloquy, with either one pole or the other defining the terms of the aesthetic relation. The critical role of the onlooker, a role essential to both subjective self-emancipation and cultural remembrance, becomes dangerously occluded by the claims of traditional forms and the modern cult of artistic genius. Between these poles, Burckhardt’s image of

¹²⁴ Ibid., 632. “Die Zeit des Künstlers freilich wurde von dem Guten und von dem Bösen, das in ihm lag, ohne Unterschied ergriffen; er imponierte ihr auf dämonische Weise. Über ihm vergaß sie binnen 20 Jahren Raffael vollständig.”

Raphael rests in a posture of classical balance, rivaled only by Michelangelo in his creative output, and unrivalled as a representative of a “healthy” aesthetic subjectivity. If, therefore, the *Cicerone* is an invitation to a conversation, Raphael represents the ideal interlocutor.

“To speak of Raphael,” reflects Burckhardt in third section of the *Cicerone*, “may here seem almost superfluous. He gives everywhere so much, so much that is unforgettable, so much unquestioned and immediate, that everyone who sees his paintings may encounter him without a guide and may take with him a lasting impression.”¹²⁵ Paradoxically, in the figure of Raphael, the *Cicerone* comes close to proclaiming its own superfluity. The power and presentation of Raphael’s works are such that the mediating speech of the *Cicerone*, or indeed any guide at all, becomes almost unnecessary. The works of Raphael open up a relation between themselves and the viewer with directness and immediacy that requires no guide other than that supplied by the subjective agency of the participants. Put another way, for Burckhardt, the artistic posture and expression of Raphael both models and fosters in the viewer the very kind of aesthetic agency to which the *Cicerone* invites its readers. To embrace and enjoy Raphael is to recognize and embrace a specific configuration of modern subjectivity, and the external directives and principles of aesthetic tradition, art historical expertise, or the *Cicerone* itself, become superfluous.

¹²⁵ Ibid., 876. “Über Raffael zu sprechen könnte hier beinahe überflüssig scheinen. Er gibt überall so viel, so Unvergeßliches, so ungefragt und unmittelbar, daß jeder, der seine Gemälde sieht, ohne Führer zurechtkommen und einen dauernden Eindruck mitnehmen kann.” And: “Die Vortrefflichkeit der einzelnen Motive entzieht sich durchaus der Beschreibung; es scheint sich alles von selbst zu verstehen.”

In the figure of Raphael, as described in the *Cicerone*, the powerful tensions at work in Renaissance modernity were *Aufgehoben*, and brought into a hard-won balance and harmony. Where Michelangelo's titanic efforts expended themselves in an almost violent assertion of individual self-expression and dominance, Burckhardt's Raphael is an equally powerful creative power, yet one directed towards an harmonious *Aufhebung* of the often conflicting imperatives of tradition, individuality, technique and subject matter. The model here is of a subject in sovereign mastery over the elements that constitute and condition its expression. The aesthetic demands of composition, color and content, the desire for both naturalism and the painterly, the temptations of formal virtuosity and the requirements of convention—all are here subordinated to the command of the self-mastered subject and expressed in unified, internally coherent works of art. Indeed, it is precisely this well-balanced, coherent singularity or individuality of the work of art with which Burckhardt associates the work of Raphael, and by extension, Renaissance aesthetic sensibility at its highest level of achievement. If the art works of Byzantinism that preceded the Renaissance, and the Mannerist works that followed it, were governed by external principles—in both their creation and in their reception—the signature of both the Renaissance subject and its art is a certain self-sufficiency or quality of self-containment. The Renaissance art work, in its formal execution and its philosophical outlook, most fully realizes itself when it is neither compelled as a reiteration of traditional convention, nor indulges in the ironic displacements and referential excess (self- and otherwise) of the later Baroque. The guiding imperative was towards a synthesis and harmonization of immensely powerful social, technical and individual forces, and to combine all these elements in subjectivities and works that exist *in*

themselves rather than *for* themselves. Thus, if the always incomplete mathematical algorithm of the curve may represent the nature of the Baroque (with Michelangelo as the prime mover)—always approaching but never quite achieving resolution—the symmetry and self-containment of the circle (the dome, etc.) may be the symbolic equivalent for the Renaissance.

It is thus Raphael, from Burckhardt's perspective, who most fully realizes this Renaissance harmony of potentially destructive forces, Raphael whose self-mastery yields an art that exercises control over the vectors of its individual expressive elements. "No detail announces itself, or pushes itself forward;" writes Burckhardt of the frescoes of the *Camera della Segnatura* in the Vatican:

The artist knows exactly the tender life of his great symbolic realms, and knows how easily the interesting individual element may overwhelm the whole. At the same time, however, his individual figures have become the most important studies of all previous painting. No better advice can be given than that one view these works as often and as completely as possible, and depending on ability, get to know them by heart. The treatment of the garments, and the expression of movement in the same, the sequence offered by color and light—again an inexhaustible fount of pleasure.¹²⁶

It is not, therefore, that Raphael executes individualized movement, or any other particular motive or technique, any more or less powerfully than Michelangelo. On the contrary, for Burckhardt, Raphael's signature is the ability to subsume these powers to

¹²⁶ Ibid., 863. "Kein Detail präsentiert sich, drängt sich vor; der Künstler kennt genau das zarte Leben seiner großen symbolischen Gegenstände und weiß, wie leicht das Einzel-Interessante das Ganze übertönt. Und dennoch sind seine einzelnen Figuren das wichtigste Studium aller seitherigen Malerei geworden. Es läßt sich kein besserer Rat erteilen, als daß man sie (wo nötig, auch mit bewaffnetem Auge) so oft und so vollständig als möglich betrachte und nach Kräften auswendig lerne. Die Behandlung der Gewänder, der Ausdruck der Bewegung in denselben, die Aufeinanderfolge der Farben und Lichter bieten - wiederum eine unerschöpfliche Quelle des Genusses." Or also p.853: "Er ist immer so wenig symbolisch als möglich; seine Kunst lebt nicht von Beziehungen, die außerhalb der Form liegen, - so sehr ihm auch das Symbolische da zu Gebote stand, wo es hingehört, wie die Fresken im Vatikan zeigen."

the requirements and harmony of the artwork as a whole, to fashion a coherent expressive unity without the crowding and jostling (Gedränge) that the historian sometimes associates with the legacy of Buonarroti.¹²⁷ Raphael balanced the (sometimes too schematic) quietude and tenderness of the Perugian school of his youth, with a sense of movement and individual expression perhaps absorbed from Fra Bartolommeo and others in Florence, and harnessed these in the service of the great works of his final years in Rome and the Vatican. Throughout, however, one finds a subject that holds both external necessity and internal artistic vision in a difficult yet powerful creative tension. From Burckhardt's perspective, to paraphrase once again the phrase from the *Cultur der Renaissance*, Raphael is the artistic subject as work of art.¹²⁸

The art of the Renaissance, like its politics, here assumed its signature forms in response to the appearance of new and characteristically modern modes of subjectivity. Such modes, having bloomed in the space left by the decline of restrictive traditional forms, emerged in a spectrum defined, on the one hand, by the explosive self-expression of a Michelangelo, and on the other, the synthetic and self-contained power of a Raphael. It is the appearance of this new genus of subjectivity—signifying the collection of species defined by the poles above—that Burckhardt defines as the single most important feature of a European modernity that extends from the early Renaissance to the nineteenth century. It is in this sense that the *Cicerone* reveals itself not only as a guidebook to the art treasures of Italy, but also as a kind of preparatory chapter in a train of thought that

¹²⁷ Ibid., 865. Of the *School of Athens* in the Vatican: “Trefflichste Verteilung der Lehrenden und der Zuhörenden und Zuschauenden, leichte Bewegung im Raum, Reichtum ohne Gedränge, völliges Zusammenfallen der malerischen und dramatischen Motive.”

¹²⁸

would culminate in the *Cultur der Renaissance* of 1860. Thus, while Burckhardt was never able to finish the planned sequel to *Cultur*, a sequel that had been envisioned as a work devoted exclusively to the art of the Renaissance, the *Cicerone* stands in for this absence as an aesthetically oriented prequel.

But as we've seen, the *Cicerone* was also much more than an aesthetic adjunct to the project of the Renaissance book. Aby Warburg's situation of the *Cicerone* in the larger tradition of German travel writing holds true to a significant degree. As a self-declared *Anleitung zum Genuss der Kunstwerke Italiens*, the *Cicerone* was for Burckhardt clearly something more than an appendix to his art historical and cultural historical scholarship. It is addressed, in other words, to a much larger reading and travelling public, addressed to the practical concern of orienting and introducing that emerging public to the cultural archive of Italy. But more than the purely practical hints of the Baedeker or Murray model, and more than the texts of self-development embodied in the travel memoirs of a Goethe, Stendhal, and de Stael, the *Cicerone* is even more clearly a work of public pedagogy. From the standpoint of Burckhardt's increasingly pessimistic reception of modernity, in both cultural and political terms, the *Cicerone's* invitation to experience the *Genuss* of Italian cultural heritage was much more than an invitation to a Romantic escape into a timeless aesthetic Arcadia. For *Genuss*, and the subjective faculty of *Phantasie* with which Burckhardt associates it, requires and involves the exercise of a kind of subjective agency whose disintegration marked a dangerous trend in modern European culture. Inheritor of Renaissance legacies, the modernity of the nineteenth century had become dangerously intoxicated by the dual modern despotisms of mechanistic materialism and the cult of personality, despotisms secured only at the

expense of cultural tradition and social memory. The *Cicerone*, is thus in some ways a prescription for an ailing modern subject, a subject unmoored and held in thrall by a Promethean modernity. In this sense, the guide to aesthetic *Genuss* is an invitation to remember not only the traditions of European culture, but also for the modern subject to remember its own constitutive function in the perpetual reconstruction and revitalization of those traditions. The *Cicerone* was an exercise regimen for a sphere of cultural memory and free *Subjektivität* threatened by peculiarly modern forms of atrophy.

And if the all roads had led to Rome in the time of Raphael and Michelangelo, if those Renaissance models made their culminating achievement in the city of Popes Alexander and Julius, so too was it towards the ancient city of Rome that Burckhardt was increasingly drawn as he reflected on the character and the discontents of European modernity. Indeed, for Burckhardt, Italy had been the birthplace of a modern world that persisted into the nineteenth century, and by the High Renaissance Rome had become the gravitational center of this cultural efflorescence. The urban physiognomy of Rome as Burckhardt encountered it in the mid-nineteenth century had been decisively defined by those early modern forms of aesthetic subjectivity, beginning in the Renaissance and extending through the seventeenth century Baroque. The architecture and urban geography of Rome, in other words, represented both an extreme antiquity and a unique modernity, a certain timelessness and at the same time an obsessive preoccupation with historicity, and it is to the urban physiognomy of Rome that we will turn in the concluding chapter on the Swiss historian from Basel.

Chapter Three

Rome, Capital of the Seventeenth Century: Burckhardt, Urban Space and Baroque Modernity

The reception history of Baroque aesthetics over the last century, a history that emerged most conspicuously at the beginning of the twentieth century and once again at its end, is not one usually linked with the work of Jacob Burckhardt. The Swiss historian is of course remembered for the central place his thought occupies in the historiographical landscape of Renaissance studies, and not primarily for his reflections on the culture of the seventeenth century. Indeed, where Burckhardt is still perhaps best known for his contributions in the field of Renaissance historiography, perpetually rounded up when the issue and its disciplinary development are revisited, the obverse appears to hold as well. On first glance, Burckhardt's reputation as a relatively unsympathetic observer of those historical styles subsequent to the Renaissance—Mannerism, Baroque and Rococo—seems not undeserved. “One might ask” he writes in the *Cicerone* on Baroque architecture, “How it is that one can expect something by focussing on these degenerate forms that the modern world has already long condemned?”¹²⁹ For Burckhardt, as we saw above, it was in the cultural expressions of Mannerism and the Baroque that the more extravagant legacies of Michelangelo found both an echo and a powerful amplification. And where Michelangelo had opened the

¹²⁹ Jacob Burckhardt, *Der Cicerone: Eine Anleitung zum Genuss der Kunstwerke Italiens* (Stuttgart: Kroener, 1986), 346.

door to a kind of willful aesthetic subjectivity and cult of artistic genius, the artists of the next generations were inspired to follow his dramatic lead. “They well recognized“ he writes of these subsequent figures, “that Michelangelo was celebrated less for his greatness than for his fantastic will and a distinct outwardness of expression. And they imitated him accordingly, where it fit and where it didn’t. Their painting became the depiction of effects without cause, of movements and muscular striving without necessity.”¹³⁰ In other words, Burckhardt’s early estimation of late-sixteenth- and seventeenth-century culture was conditioned primarily by the view that the Baroque was not a self-sufficient and vitally organic style in itself, but represented merely grotesque effects occasioned by the degeneration of Renaissance aesthetic sensibilities.

At the same time, however, even in Burckhardt’s corpus of the 1850’s, there is a degree of tension between, on the one hand, nostalgia for the “presence” embodied in Renaissance classicism and, on the other hand, an Enlightenment aesthetic epistemology that placed an emphasis on recognizing “distance” in critical reception. If the latter demanded a degree of displacement or irony in relation to objects of knowledge—be it cognitive, ethical or aesthetic—the former manifested itself in the posture of self-identity and organic authenticity. Indeed, the Raphael that emerges in the *Cicerone* often seems to function as a spiritual antidote for a Swiss historian and a nineteenth century whose

¹³⁰ Ibid., “Sie sahen auch recht wohl, daß man an Michelangelo weniger das Große, als die phantastische Willkür und ganz bestimmte Äußerlichkeiten bewunderte, und machten ihm nun dieselben nach, wo es paßte und wo nicht. Ihre Malerei wird eine Darstellung von Effekten ohne Ursachen, von Bewegungen und Muskelanstrengung ohne Notwendigkeit.”

powers of irony and ambivalence were well developed. But if this were the case, then the effectiveness of this antidote proved largely transitory. For while Burckhardt's esteem for the Renaissance and figures such as Raphael never waned—the ever-present Burckhardtian ambivalences notwithstanding—Burckhardt's later works and reflections show him rather more prepared to upset the applecart of an aesthetic classicism inherited ultimately from Goethe and Winckelmann. The scholarship and correspondence of the last three decades of his life, reflections quite deliberately withheld from publication during his lifetime, show Burckhardt increasingly interested in configurations of aesthetic subjectivity far removed from those simply defined by “*stille Größe*” or a quiet and harmonious classical “health”. The most well known example, and one whose controversial reception Burckhardt correctly predicted, is the posthumously published *Griechische Kulturgeschichte*. Famously derided by, amongst others, Nietzsche's one-time philological opponent and Theodor Mommsen's son-in-law, Wilamowitz-Moellendorf, Burckhardt's treatment of classical Greece re-envisioned the culture of the Attic golden age not as the product of an almost superhuman power, freedom and serenity, but as an era erected on an all too human foundation of extreme pathos and violent social forces. As a longtime reader of Schopenhauer, and perhaps in communication with Nietzsche, Burckhardt's nostalgic classicism thus found itself in the second half of the nineteenth century increasingly tempered by an aesthetic colored more starkly in hues of power, will, and the irrational. It would be going too far to suggest that Burckhardt came to reject what he once saw as the hard-won and healthy aesthetic subjectivity of a Raphael, but there is no doubt that he became more interested in the dissonances that underlay that subjectivity.

It is in this same period, therefore, that Burckhardt also reveals an increasing fascination with the Baroque as a cultural phenomenon.¹³¹ Letters and writings from the 1860's to the 1890's show the emergence of an almost grudging interest in the era, an interest that developed from a distinctly unenthusiastic sense of professional responsibility to one borne of a deep and genuine personal fascination. Foremost among these writings is his also posthumously published *Erinnerungen aus Rubens*, an extended meditation on the expression of creative and aesthetic subjectivity at a very different moment, and with a very different cultural landscape, from that of the High Renaissance. The book can be understood in part as Burckhardt's impassioned response to the Rembrandt cult then burgeoning among his contemporaries—and being put into the service of cultural nationalism—but it is also a record of his reevaluation of the Baroque as an authentic and legitimate object of study and veneration.¹³² Burckhardt's late interventions by no means represent a thoroughgoing treatment of the Baroque as was later undertaken by the art historical discipline; his reflections were more occasional and less programmatic than the monographic studies that would follow. Credit for the embrace of the Baroque as a legitimate art historical topic rests more properly with Cornelius Gurlitt (1850-1938), in *Geschichte des Barockstiles, des Rococo und des Klassicismus* (1887-9) and with Burckhardt's own student, Heinrich Wölfflin (1864-1945), in *Renaissance und Barock* (1888). In any case, like many of his contemporaries, Burckhardt shared and embraced

¹³¹ The term Baroque refers in Burckhardt's era primarily to architectural phenomena, and would generally remain so until August Schmarsow's use of the term in relation to painting at the close of the nineteenth century. Indeed, the term itself remains a topic of controversy until today, with commentators still uncertain about either its precise origin or the extent of its conceptual adequacy. See Panofsky, Deleuze and others for interesting discussions about the origin and meaning of the term. Erwin Panofsky, *Three Essays on Style*, ed. Irving Lavin (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1995); Gilles Deleuze, *The Fold: Leibniz and the Baroque*, translated by Tom Conley (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993).

the growing interest in seventeenth-century culture that characterized the late nineteenth century, an interest that came to full fruition in the first half of the twentieth century.

As we saw in the introduction, the Baroque has been a seemingly perpetual source of both fascination and controversy in the century and a half since Burckhardt's own tentative reevaluations in the mid to late nineteenth century. It has been configured as the degeneration of classicism as well as its dialectical supplement. It has been seen as a tool of imperial and cultural hegemony, but also as a representational mode that undermines the deployment of such powers. It has been read in terms of gender where it emerges as the perpetual feminine other to masculinized forms of Cartesian epistemology or classicist aesthetics. Common to all these, however, is a vision of a Baroque that describes a set of representational styles born in an era of early crisis in European modernity, and that nevertheless resonates with later modern crises. In other words, the Baroque is often understood as a kind of perpetual otherness or the expression of a negative moment in the dialectic of modernity, a moment that speaks of, and plays with, fundamental qualities of de-centeredness and ironic non-identity that paradoxically lie at the heart of the project of modernity. To use metaphors seen already above in relation to the *Cicerone*, the Baroque can be captured in terms of a mathematical or aesthetic infinite curve, a form that aims at the nostalgic circular identity of the Renaissance, but can never quite bring the arc to completion.¹³³ The Baroque in other words often seems to speak of

¹³³ Only the latest among many, Deleuze uses this notion of curvature and folding as the ruling metaphor in his book on the Baroque, *The Fold*. "Inflection is the ideal genetic element of the variable curve or fold. Inflection is the authentic atom, the elastic point. That is what Klee extracts as the genetic element of the active, spontaneous line. It testifies to his affinity for the Baroque and for Leibniz, and opposes him to Kandinsky, a Cartesian, for whom angles are firm, for whom the point is firm, set in motion by an exterior force. For Klee, however, the point as a "nonconceptual concept of noncontradiction" moves along an inflection. It is the point of inflection itself, where the tangent crosses the curve. That is the point-fold. Klee begins with a succession of three figures.1 The first draws the inflection. The second shows that no exact

those elements within modernity that cannot quite be brought into harmonious relation with its various classical expressions—from the Renaissance to Classical Modernism. But care must be taken here, for the Baroque cannot simply be configured here as a Manichean alternative to the Renaissance, nor can its “curve” be understood simply as an “other” to the circle. Instead, and importantly, the Baroque does not represent one pole or the other of a dialectic, but must be recognized rather as the field of tension that exists between the two poles. As the post-modern, in its non-vulgar sense, is not the negation of the modern, so too is the Baroque not the negation of the tradition which it inherits. Thus, in relation to reflections on the legacy of Spanish Gongorism, Cuban-French writer Severo Sarduy uses the geometrical metaphor of the ellipse to describe the nature of the Baroque.¹³⁴ Where the circle possesses the radial symmetry of a single central point, a symmetry that Sarduy also links to Renaissance representation and Raphael, the ellipse is a polycentric figure that recurs in the Baroque in works ranging from the frescos of Pietro da Cortona to the planetary motions described by Kepler. From this perspective, in other words, the Baroque emerges not as the antithesis of the classical but as a field of tension that opens up in any tradition between its practical being and its moments of self-reflection. It is in these porous spaces pondered in diverse ways by such figures as Wölfflin, Benjamin, and Deleuze—spaces that open up between the points of the ellipse, between being and reflection, between the literal and the ironic and perhaps between

and unmixed figure can exist. As Leibniz stated, there can never be “a straight line without curves intermingled,” nor any “curve of a certain finite nature unmixed with some other, and in small parts as well as large,” such that one “will never be able to fix upon a certain precise surface in a body as one might if there were atoms.”² The third marks the convex side with shadow, and thus disengages concavity and the axis of its curve, that now and again changes sides from the point of inflection.” Gilles Deleuze, *The Fold: Leibniz and the Baroque*.

¹³⁴ See the excellent discussion of Sarduy in relation to figurations of a Neo-Baroque in Gregg Lambert, *The Return of the Baroque in Modern Culture* (New York: Continuum, 2004).

histoire and *discourse*—that the Baroque inheres and manifests itself. In other words, a primary source of fascination in the Baroque has always been the way in which it embraces, and attempts to represent, a tense simultaneity of traditional forms and discursive reflection.

It is precisely in this tantalizing simultaneity of tradition and reflection that the Baroque of the late Jacob Burckhardt resonates so well with that of twentieth century scholarship. For the Baroque that emerges in Burckhardt's reflections in the second half of the nineteenth century is one manifest, however problematically, as a supplement to, rather than negation of the Renaissance. In one sense, after all, the Baroque presented an interesting problem for a history of artistic styles, a mode of art historical analysis towards which Burckhardt was increasingly drawn, but whose realization had to wait until Wölfflin's mature work in the early twentieth century. In another sense, however, the extravagant de-centeredness of the Baroque, its self-conscious representational ironies, its field of tension between traditional "text" and innovative "commentary", its play of materiality and spirituality, all clearly resonated for an historian with immense reservoirs of ambivalence and irony, an historian whose diagnosis of modernity could also be captured in the de-centered figure of a baroque ellipse. The Baroque could here fascinate precisely because it represented a model of modernity in which past and present were manifest simultaneously, a moment defined by the radical intrusion and hyper-consciousness of the past on the one hand, and the no less radical desire to surpass and transcend that past on the other hand. As it hovered—like Burckhardt himself—between the literal and the ironic, the material and the ideal, between text and context, the Baroque

opened up regions of very modern historicity in the porous spaces between its representations of past and present.

The representational corollary of these baroque disorientations and deconstructions, as Walter Benjamin and Paul de Man would later explore, can be found in the figure of allegory. For where, as we have already seen, the Romantic symbol claimed the status of a material particular that represented the unmediated presence of a larger whole, Baroque allegory self-consciously presented itself as a mediating abstraction, a pure sign that pointed to, rather than embodied, its referent. While symbolic representation, of the sort proposed by Coleridge, tends to collapse the distance between sign and referent, the point of allegory, in other words, was precisely the way in which it captures, underscores and plays with the spaces that open up between meaning and expression, between convention and improvisation. The almost obsessive embrace of allegory in the Baroque can thus be read, as Benjamin suggests, as a representational strategy born from an era of deep spiritual and intellectual crisis, a tropological intervention aimed at capturing a universe in which fissures had opened up between truth and its discursive expression.

As we have already noted, Burckhardt can be seen exploring those means by which the tensions described above could be captured by an alternative and nomadic mode of historical representation. With this in mind, a largely unremarked aspect of Burckhardt's late journeys to Rome springs significantly into relief. For in the *Reisen* of these later years, the Basel historian reveals an increasing engagement and fascination with the emerging technology and representational possibilities of photography. Indeed, far from viewing Burckhardt's late interest in the purchase and organization of his

photographic collection as the idiosyncratic hobby of an aging scholar, the rest of this chapter traces Burckhardt's photographic interests as an essential corollary to what we have described as a baroquely inflected mode of historical representation. The photograph, after all, as later observers such as Siegfried Kracauer and Walter Benjamin would note, not only represented a novel form of modern representation, but also an amplification of precisely those representational tensions that emerged in the Baroque. The photograph, in other words, was a means of historical recording in which the tensions that fascinated Burckhardt could be captured and preserved.

In order to understand this, however, it may be helpful to pursue a brief detour to the work of Siegfried Kracauer—German *Feuilletonist*, contemporary of Walter Benjamin, and astute critic of the modern media forms of film and photography. In his essays and work of the Weimar era, Kracauer explored the phenomena of photography and illustrated magazines as further extensions of what he held to be a generalized modern phenomenon that was seeing the progressive embrace of allegorical over symbolic representation. Where the symbol represents the unity of medium and mediated, Kracauer suggests that the photograph approaches a terminal limit in the distances opened up between mediating representation and mediated object. Indeed, as with allegory, photography represents a powerful abstraction away from the original object of its gaze. But with the photograph, this process reaches a new and heightened form, a form which not only involves a powerful degree of abstraction, but a dangerous (though potentially useful) evacuation of the memory of the original object.

However, even as lived historical remembrance increasingly becomes replaced by the abstractions of image memory, Kracauer points to film as a medium that carries the

potential for the transcendence of the antinomies of photographic representation. “The capacity to stir up the elements of nature,” writes Kracauer,

is one of the possibilities of film. This possibility is realized whenever film combines parts and segments to create strange constructs. If the disarray of the illustrated newspapers is simply confusion, the game that film plays with the pieces of disjointed nature is reminiscent of dreams in which the fragments of daily life become jumbled. This game indicates that the valid organization of things is not known, an organization that would designate how the remains of the grandmother and the diva stored in the general inventory will some day have to appear.¹³⁵

Where photography “assembles in effigy the last elements of a nature alienated from meaning,” Kracauer envisions film a kind of dream work in which at least a provisional meaning is imposed upon the denatured particles of a universe viewed through the photographic eye. Film is thus a medium in which the extreme allegorical impulses of photography rediscover a principle of organization, and potential for emancipation, in the agency of the artist and the interpreter.

From this perspective, Kracauer’s illustrated magazines can be understood as radicalized descendents of the great emblem books of the seventeenth century. In both instances, the natural world is rendered in the form of collections of abstract image-texts, signs whose relation to their original referents appear ever more tenuous. Yet like the Baroque emblem book, the images of photography present a world that remains atomized and mute without the interpretive intervention of the artist, the reader, or the collector. Indeed, it was due in part to this quality, that critics of allegory would describe it as a ruination of representation, a fallen state where representation becomes an historical

¹³⁵ Siegfried Kracauer, *The Mass Ornament: Weimar Essays*, trans. Thomas Levin (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press), 62-63.

rather than natural phenomenon. Into the once pristine dyad of signifier and referent was introduced an historically conditioned third term, an agent of interpretation required to distill meaning from the materials of allegorical abstraction. In the Baroque such intervention was likely understood as the province of a classically and humanistically educated readership, while Kracauer appears to have something similar in mind in relation to the work of cinematography, pastiche and collage, work which assembles and reassembles meanings from a landscape of abstracted imagery. Likewise, Walter Benjamin understood the work of the collector in similar fashion as he or she removes cultural particles from their “natural” milieus and reassembles them according to meanings and interests of their own design.¹³⁶ Without such intervention, as Benjamin suggests, without an interpretive agency not so different from that seen in Burckhardt’s *Anthology*, modernity must increasingly present itself as a kind of petrified landscape of opaque allegories, abstract signs and worn out commodities.

To the scholar, the cinematographer and the collector, however, we may wish to add another figure of such interpretive agency. Though not one thematized directly by Kracauer or Benjamin, this other interpretive type is nevertheless quite present in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. For in the figure of the traveler or the voyager, so central, for instance, to the modern imaginary of Baudelaire, there likewise emerges that same set of modern impulses and imperatives towards the mobile (both spatial and intellectual) collection, assembly and reconstruction of impressions.¹³⁷ As with

¹³⁶ See Benjamin’s classic reflection on collections, their arrangements and re-arrangements: Walter Benjamin, “Unpacking my Library,” in *Illuminations*, Hannah Arendt ed., Harry Zohn trans. (New York: Schocken Books, 1969).

¹³⁷ “Le Voyage” and others in Charles Baudelaire, *The Flowers of Evil*, Marthiel Mathews and Jackson Mathews eds. (New York: New Directions Publishing, 1989).

Baudelaire as he moved through the nineteenth-century urban spaces of Paris—a collector of incidental glances, emotions, signs and representations—travel as such demands a constant effort of interpretation and reinterpretation of novel sensory impressions, a perpetual reconfiguration of unfamiliar and shifting semiotic landscapes. And as with any other interpretive task, the traveler may display varying degrees of improvisatorial agency and willingness to accept dissonances in produced meanings. In rare cases, and on one end of the spectrum, we might encounter a traveler with the interpretive panache of a Charles Baudelaire, soaking up the city and reconfiguring its spaces as a text of his own making. On the other end of the spectrum, the traveler may embrace the comforting assistance of conventional interpretations, relying more readily on the prescriptions of popular guidebooks and other authoritative texts. In either instance, however, the traveler emerges as a figure confronting the more generalized problems of modern interpretation in peculiarly intense ways.

However, while Baudelaire is well known for embellishing stories of his own travels beyond his native France, the distances he explored and navigated were largely ones to be found in the *Arrondissements* of Paris.¹³⁸ For Baudelaire's contemporary, Jacob Burckhardt, duties as a scholar of cultural and art history required regular, and not unwelcome, journeys well beyond the confines of his native Basel. Such duties demanded periodic visits to a variety of European locales, but as we have seen, it was to Italy in general and Rome in particular that the historian was repeatedly drawn. Yet the Rome of the 1850's was a very different city than the Paris of Baudelaire in the same era. If Paris became the occasion for Baudelaire to ponder a new horizon of representational

¹³⁸ See Baudelaire's storytelling in regards to his brief travel to Mauritius and the degree to which it became central to his exotic imaginaries. Claude Pichois, *Baudelaire* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1989).

possibilities in one of the centers of European capitalist modernity, if Benjamin could declare Paris the “capital of the nineteenth century”, the Rome that welcomed Burckhardt in the second half of the same century was a very different creature. Thus, where Benjamin had detected in Parisian modernity a set of representational correspondences with the Baroque of the seventeenth century, Burckhardt’s Rome was home and capital to its original expression. Indeed, while many urban spaces in Europe and Latin America bear the strong imprint of seventeenth-century aesthetic legacies, Rome perhaps more than any other was (and is) defined by a Baroque sensibility. Even as its many other pasts, from classical antiquity to the Renaissance, remain uniquely visible and accessible in its urban landscapes, modern Rome nevertheless reveals itself first and foremost as a city of the Baroque. As the center of Catholic Christendom and as an urban space largely reborn and reconceived in the era of Reformation and Counter-Reformation, Rome persists until the present in its broader architectural outlines—despite some unfortunate efforts in the eras of the Savoyard monarchy and Fascism—in the form bestowed upon it in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Rome, in other words, is the capital of the European and Catholic Baroque, and it is in Rome—in its streets, its galleries, and in all its complex historical geographies—that we find Burckhardt collecting, assembling and reassembling impressions not only on the city itself, but also on its place in relation to both its Baroque and its modern histories.

As we’ve already seen, scholarship of the last century has explored the concept of the Baroque not only as a discrete moment of stylistic expression, or just as a distinct period of cultural history, but also as a trans-historical phenomenon signifying a particular orientation between truth and representation, convention and improvisation,

past and present. Therefore, while Rome's architectonic seems to announce itself as a representative of the former sense of the Baroque, a particular and historicized cultural moment, it also seems to permit and invite receptions of its unique urban spaces that partake of the latter trans-historical interpretation of the term. To put it differently, the spaces of Rome are largely conditioned by an objectively Baroque urban architectonic, but it is also a city whose form embodies signature Baroque tensions (and play) between past and present. As Walter Benjamin later demonstrated in response to the spaces of nineteenth-century Paris, the landscapes of urban modernity are rich with archaeological dimensions and strata into which the alert cultural historian may delve. These urban spaces, however, exemplified by Paris and London, had tended to rapidly overlay previous historical strata in the perpetual reconstructions of capitalist modernity; recent pasts were here concealed beneath a veneer of novelty and repressed pasts could be consigned to forgotten and moribund spaces like Benjamin's Parisian arcades. On the other hand, the modern urban refashioning of Rome was a process that did not commence until the second half of the nineteenth century, and was not pursued with true vigor until in the era of Fascism. In other words, where the modernity of Paris and London has often seemed premised on a pervasive and selective repression of previous historical strata, Rome wears its archaeological dimensions with peculiar visibility, its spaces not concealing but amplifying the interplay between its various presents and its innumerable pasts. In this sense, the physiognomy of Rome far more resembles that of Benjamin's *Neapel* than it does the Paris of the *Passagen-Werk*. It is a space likewise defined in terms of a certain incomplete modernity, a porousness in the architectonic memory and historical self presentation of the city where past and present are jumbled together in a

uniquely visible, fragmented and variegated manner. If the modern texts of Paris and London present themselves no less as historical palimpsests, their earlier iterations emerge only indistinctly on pages that have been powerfully repressed, rebuilt, erased or torn out. Rome, on the other hand, at least through the early twentieth century, presented itself as a text in which the earliest and latest revisions appeared with almost equal legibility, the present continually rewritten above, around and between the ever persistent signs and marks of the past.

Rome of the later nineteenth century was thus still a city of ruins, not only as an urban space literally built upon and around material artifacts of past ages, but also in the sense defined by the Baroque aesthetic of the emblem book or in Siegfried Kracauer's illustrated magazines. As a region of a visibly over-determined historicity, a jumble of fragments and signs pointing to meanings both present and absent, the historical geography of Rome seems to demand and invite interpretive interventions that are different from those required by Paris or London. If these latter self-consciously presented themselves geographically and architecturally as *symbols* of modernity, as cities whose modern novelties garbed themselves in the costume of an eternal and privileged present, Rome emerges as a city of allegory, a landscape in which tensions between past and present are visibly and self-consciously held in tension. Configured in the symbolic mode, the cultural meanings inherent in the shape of urban spaces emerge with an enforced pretense of self-identity and inevitability, all signs pointing to the necessity of the present moment and marking out a textual/architectural mastery of the present over the past. Where the interpretation of Paris and London thus appeared to require the hermeneutic of a cultural archaeologist, one prepared to pry apart the strata of

surface meanings from those repressed histories, the porous historical geographies of Naples and Rome conversely seem to require interpretive interventions more similar to those of the Baroque allegorist, the cinematographer or the collector.

In Burckhardt's fascination for Rome, then, in clear preference to Paris and London, we might find once again echoes of that youthful fascination with the project of the *Anthology*. Rome manifests itself here for Burckhardt as an enormous emblem book, a great semiotic field requiring (and permitting) the same interpretive cutting, pasting, assembly and reassembly that the Basel youth once practiced with his collection of the *Antiquities*. From this perspective, Burckhardt's late interest in seventeenth-century culture speaks not only to his interest in the historical phenomena of the Baroque, but also a preparedness to engage the historical landscape of Rome with what we might call a Baroque sensibility. From his journeys of the 1850's to those of 1875 and 1883, from travels focused on the Renaissance to those increasingly aware of the legacy of the Baroque, Burckhardt thus displays a willingness to embrace a mode of historical interpretation that bears the marks of a closer engagement with the seventeenth-century sensibilities. In other words, while it is possible to discern echoes of Renaissance symbolic self-identity in Burckhardt's earlier works, the late travels reveal a Burckhardt more prepared to leave open interpretive spaces of self-reflection and irony that can only be called Baroque. Upon reading and re-reading the emblem book of Rome, Burckhardt's historical epistemology more clearly recognizes the distances that separate *histoire* and *discours*, and in Baroque fashion it embraces the tensions between artifacts and their interpretation. If such spaces were discouraged by the forgetful contemporary

physiognomies of Paris or London, the spaces of Rome nevertheless offered unique opportunities to a cultural historian of the nineteenth century.

As we have seen, Burckhardt's first encounter with Rome in 1846 was announced in somewhat more laconic fashion than we would expect, given his youthful enthusiasms. "Ankunft in Rom," he writes, "1. April 1846, Abends ½9 Uhr, durch Porta Cavallegieri eingefahren." This was a Burckhardt for whom the more extravagant residues of a youthful romanticism had gradually been worn away by an increasingly jaundiced view of the political and cultural romanticism practiced in Germany by his comrades of the mid-1840's *Maikäfer* period. At the same time, it would be a mistake to read this initial entry as representative of Burckhardt's earliest experiences of Rome. As the late 1840's were a watershed for the European political landscape, so too were they for Burckhardt's intellectual biography, and it is in these initial encounters with Rome that we find a variety of currents—residues of youth and premonitions of more mature reflections—present in his reception of the city. Writing to Karl Fresenius only several weeks after his arrival, April 21, 1846, Burckhardt reflects in a more enthusiastic and loquacious manner:

The enjoyment of Rome is a continual process of supposition and combination; the ruins of many times lay in puzzle-like strata beside one another. To be sure, I miss here the beautiful and completed edifice to whose towers and niches the anxious soul may flee: "Course and too colorful is Rome" says Platen without injustice; but taking everything into account, it is even still the Queen of the World and it leaves an impression, wonderfully combined of memory and pleasure, like no other city. I can only compare it to Cologne; in Paris, the old monuments are too few, and the modern horrors absorb the old too much.¹³⁹

¹³⁹ Burckhardt, *Briefe*, Vol.3, 16. "Der Genuß Roms ist ein beständiges Errathen und Combiniren; die Trümmer der Zeiten liegen in gar räthselhaften Schichten übereinander. Zwar fehlt mir hier ein vollendet schöner Bau, zu dessen Thürmen und Nischen die aufgeregte Seele flüchten könnte: «Plump und zu bunt ist Rom» sagt Platen mit Recht; aber Alles zusammengenommen ist es eben doch noch die Königin der Welt und giebt einen aus Erinnerung und Genuß so wundersam zusammengesetzten Eindruck wie keine andere Stadt. Ich wüßte nur Köln damit zu vergleichen; in Paris sind der alten Monumente zu wenige und die modernen Gräuelerinnerungen absorbieren die älteren zu sehr."

In a passage that already prefigures the conceptual task of a *Cicerone* still several years away, Burckhardt renders Rome precisely as a kind of unfinished city, a ruinous domain that requires the active participation and agency of the observer—here in the form of “*errathen*” and “*combiniren*”—to reconstruct. Indeed, it is precisely this unfinished state, and in the aesthetic faculties required to restore it to the mind, that constitutes the particular form of *Genuss* associated with the city. And as with the concept of *Genuss* in the *Cicerone*, Burckhardt clearly links such enjoyment to an active faculty of memory and remembrance. On the one hand, we still find here the poetic sensibility of Burckhardt’s youth, the presentation Rome as a place of “*aufgeregte Seelen*”, a landscape to be compared in resonance only to Köln’s own Gothic architectonic. On the other hand, however, the city likewise begins to reveal its character not as a domain of Romantic *Schwelgerei* and reverie, but as one inviting the pleasures of an active and critical interpretive agency (as well as one of fundamental uncertainty).

That Burckhardt’s earliest Roman visits, however, should have highlighted an aesthetic of such uncertainty is not entirely surprising. Tapped by friend and mentor Franz Kugler to assist in editing a new edition of the latter’s *Geschichte der Malerei* and *Handbuch der Kunstgeschichte*, Burckhardt’s stays in Rome (April-July 1846/October 1847-April 1848) coincided with mounting tensions between the city’s ecclesiastical government and a citizenry calling for political liberalization. These tensions, in retrospect, clearly mark the waning power of the Papal States as an effective temporal governing institution, and are linked with the larger Italian and European phenomenon of political ferment driven by ascendant nationalism and liberalism. Ironically, however,

Burckhardt had made his 1847 journey to Rome, in part, to steer clear of political storm clouds that seemed of more immediate threat to Basel and Switzerland in the *Sonderbund* crisis.¹⁴⁰ In the event, with the quick defeat of the Catholic *Sonderbund* faction in November of 1847, Burckhardt found that civil strife had reached a speedy conclusion in his homeland only to follow him to the Italian peninsula. In subsequent months therefore, and throughout the peninsula, Burckhardt found himself in an Italy where calls for constitutional reforms and civil disturbances were swiftly increasing in frequency and urgency.

Following the ultra-reactionary Gregory XVI, Pope Pius IX had initially been celebrated as a reformer when he declared an amnesty for political prisoners upon his 1846 accession to the throne of St. Peter. Yet Papal resistance to further reforms soon stiffened even as more calls for political modernization of ecclesiastical government continued to mount unabated. Eventually, however, with street demonstrations becoming a common occurrence in Rome, Pius relented, appointed a liberal ministry, and proposed a constitution in March of 1848. Yet after an April 1848 decision that refused direct assistance to a Piedmont at war with Austria, a decision overriding the will of the newly appointed administration, the Roman situation deteriorated still further. On the night of November 15, 1848, the Prime Minister of the Papal States, Pellegrino Rossi, was assassinated and the Pope was forced to flee Rome. The six months that followed saw the emergence of a short lived Roman Republic, complete with interventions from

¹⁴⁰ For more on the Sonderbund War see: Joachim Remak: *Bruderzwist nicht Brudermord. Der Schweizer Sonderbundskrieg von 1847* (Zürich: Verlag Orell Füssli, 1997). The *Sonderbundskrieg* refers to what turned out to be a relatively short conflict which resulted in the transformation of the loosely confederated cantons of Switzerland into a more closely bound federal state. The war lasted a mere 27 days in November of 1847 and pitted more conservative oriented Catholic cantons against more liberal leaning and Reformed cantons, with latter emerging with the upper hand.

Mazzini and Garibaldi, but in the summer of 1849 French troops dispatched by Emperor Louis Napoleon recaptured the city in the name of papal restoration and invited Pius IX to return from exile.

From Burckhardt's perspective, in the early months of 1848, most of these events still lay in an obscure and uncertain future. But what had become evident, even in the winter of 1847-1848, was that the "eternal city" was being introduced to nineteenth-century history in dramatic fashion. In other words, if the architectural spaces of the city were conditioned by a jumbled mix of old and new, so too had its social and civic spheres emerged as tense fields of traditional, liberal and radical currents. Indeed, a series of short reports submitted by the young historian to the *Basler Zeitung*—and later collected by Max Burckhardt—reveals Burckhardt's reflections on the contemporary political situation in the city that had so captivated his historical imagination. On the New Year's Day 1848, Burckhardt observed:

The new year began under not particularly fortunate auspices; in the political atmosphere there swept a sultry Scirocco, one that could possibly break in the form of a lesser or greater affray. The ground beneath the Pope is gradually being eroded and dug away; no week passes without agitations; it occurs to no one that one is obligated to wait at least for the results of *Consulta di Stato* and of the *Municipio* before new steps might have authority. The leaders, above all, have an interest in keeping Rome in a state of breathlessness and unrest, and it is towards this that all resources are directed.¹⁴¹

¹⁴¹ Max Burckhardt, "Rom 1848 : Berichte Von Jacob Burckhardt," *Corona*, Private Archive 208, no. 86 (1939). "Das neue Jahr eröffnet sich unter nicht ganz günstigen Auspizien; in der politischen Luft herrscht ein schwüler Scirocco, welcher vielleicht in einem größern oder geringern Krawall sich entladen wird. Dem Papst wird mehr und mehr der Boden untergraben; keine Woche vergeht ohne Häkeleien; keinem Menschen fällt es ein, daß man mindestens verpflichtet wäre, die Resultate der Consulta di Stato und des Municipio abzuwarten, ehe man zu neuen Schritten eine Art von Berechtigung hätte. Das leitende Comite hat vor allem ein Interesse, Rom beständig in Atem und Aufregung zu erhalten, und clazu werden nun alle Mittel in Bewegung gesetzt."

The Rome here described, accelerated by the winds of a modern political *Sirocco* is one increasingly removed from either the Romantic fantasies of Burckhardt's youth, or indeed from the poised harmony of Burckhardt's Renaissance aesthetic. Instead, the occupation of the city by the masses, the constant political confusion and unrest, juxtaposes the spaces of the ancient city with the accelerations and movement of modernity. Far from the idyll of *Roma Aeterna*, a classical and romantic retreat rendered in the painterly hues of Claude Lorrain, Burckhardt instead discovers in Rome a peculiarly dense and polarized form of urban modernity. Rome was not an Elysian field, but instead a field where past and present collide in a seemingly inexhaustible variety of fragments, a field that permits a singular aesthetic *Genuss* and one that generates powerfully unstable political winds.

The tensions, in other words, that Burckhardt discovered with ambivalence in Rome were thus in part tensions inherent in his own evolving reception of the city and the peculiar mode of its entry into nineteenth-century modernity. In its earliest manifestations, this reception was propelled by what might be called a Renaissance aesthetic. That is to say, to look at his descriptions from the earliest 1846 letters is to find a city configured with all the auratic and perspectival characteristics of a Renaissance masterwork. The city emerges under the auspices of the picturesque, its subject matter well balanced, and its lines of perspective converging on an ideal spectator who observes at a distance. In one of his earliest missives, from Rome in May of 1846, Burckhardt paints a picture of Rome for Wilhelm Wackernagel, as viewed from the frame of his apartment window:

If I hadn't set aside completion of the sketch, you would find here a beautiful depiction of the prospect that opens up above my table and stretches out beyond

my window. It is literally here a child's dream come true, it is palaces in moonlight, and then to the left a sublime panorama from the Pantheon to Monte Pincio, just now dipped in the most beautiful silver light, and finally to the right, past a peaceful cloister and fallen walls, the dark pine groves of Villa Ludovisi; beneath however, on the Piazza Barberini that lies just beneath my feet, "my friend the Triton" spouts his shimmering streams in the moonlight. Rising from the streets below, I hear singing, also the "laity" and the food-cart vendors, the passage of the coaches returning from the Corso, and many other indistinguishable noises.¹⁴²

In this word landscape, all the enormous descriptive and ekphrastic skill of Burckhardt as art historian is clearly visible. But it is precisely in this presentation of Rome as a panoramic artwork, that Burckhardt's early reception of Rome becomes evident, not just as an aesthetic object, but as an object with a very particular aesthetic relation between observer and representation. Put differently, Rome is here still well framed and kept viewed from a properly auratic (in the Benjaminian sense) distance, a dreamlike vision that is at once immediately present, but where the line between privileged observer and observed subject is clearly drawn.

As we've seen elsewhere, the aesthetic described above carries with it an epistemological premise that configures the artwork as a self-sufficient representation, directed towards but ultimately indifferent to the presence of an observer. In this sense, Burckhardt's urban aesthetic appears to partake of the same sensibility that would characterize his reception of Renaissance art, a reception that defined its object in terms

¹⁴² Burckhardt, *Briefe*, Vol. 3, 18. "Wenn mir nicht das Zeichnen komplett verleidet wäre, so sollten Sie hier zunächst eine schöne Federskizze von der Aussicht finden, die über meinen Tisch weg durch das Fenster hereinsieht. Es ist hier buchstäblich ein Jugendtraum wahr geworden, es sind die Palläste im Mondschein, dann links ein ungeheures Panorama vom Pantheon bis Monte Pincio, jetzt in das schönste Silberlicht getaucht, endlich rechts über einige friedliche Klöster und zerfallene Mauern weg der schwarze Pinienhain von Villa Ludovisi; unten aber auf dem barberinischen Platz, tief zu meinen Füßen, spritzt «mein Freund der Triton» seinen schimmernden Strahl in die Mondnacht. [...] Von den Gassen herauf höre ich Gesang, auch «Laien» und den Ausruf der Eßwaarenverkäufer, das Fahren der Karossen die vom Corso zurückkommen und anderes un-unterscheidbares Geräusch."

of strict geometrical perspective, an overall harmony of elements, and an affective tone of repose. However, even in this relatively early Roman journey, the intrusion of contemporary history into these same streets of Rome appears to render such an aesthetic increasingly untenable. In other words, where Burckhardt could once depict Rome in much the same manner as the framed landscapes of the Renaissance, the urban and civic form of the city now seemed to elude the order of such harmonious and structured framing. Instead, Burckhardt's Rome begins to emerge in the more mobile and porous fashion of a Baroque sensibility. Thus, while the Renaissance had observed a set of strict geometries, in the convergence of perspectival lines towards a single ideal observer and the separation of representational and observational planes, Baroque sensibility understood such relations in very different ways. On the one hand, the Baroque envisions both a mobile and a multiple spectatorship, the extravagant movement of its forms inviting and encouraging a variety of perspectival vantage points. On the other hand, the conceit of the frame, so essential to Renaissance sensibility, tends to lose its integrity in the Baroque. From the illusions of *trompe-l'œil* ceiling painting to the seamless integration of statuary with architecture, and architecture with urban context, the Baroque erases the strict framed separation of artistic text/object with its context/environment. As with the allegory, its most favored trope, the Baroque demands the participation of the observer in the work of art, draws the viewer out of passive spectatorship and envelops him or her in world where lines between reality and representation are called into question.

By the end, then, of Burckhardt's first professional stays in Rome, the once romantically picturesque city of the early correspondence gives way to one configured in

a more complicated mode of reportage. In other words, Burckhardt's vision of Rome begins to lose the distanced perspective of Renaissance *aura*, and emerges in the shifting perspectives and collapsed framing of a Baroque sensibility. The aesthetic distance that once characterized Burckhardt's privileged window perch begin to collapse and the tumult of the city is brought into more intimate relation with the observer. For example, in some of his last news notices sent off to Basel before his departure in April of 1848, Burckhardt describes the conjunction of the Roman Carnival with the political turmoil likewise erupting throughout the city:

March 7. —In the midst of the crazy hubub of Carnival there came the news of the revolution in France, and the people thus lost what little sense that they still had left.—The constitutional issue was moving ahead in the best way; in every number of the *Gazetta di Roma* the government spoke of the most diligent efforts of the relevant commission, and no one doubted that the next meeting would be the one—but one can't ascribe the tension of spirits to the Carnival, since the tri-color could scarcely have been said to dominate among the city's costumes. Since the news arrived, everything is now quite different; on Friday and Saturday evenings crowds with torches marched towards the French academy. [...], in order to shout Vivats of every sort, especially Evvivà la republica!¹⁴³

The landscape that Burckhardt describes here—in both form and content—is far more reminiscent of Rabelais' Baroque than that of Raphael's Renaissance. The spaces of the city have become crowded and confused by a mix of traditional carnival celebration and modern political agitation. Indeed, the entire city in the neighborhood of the Corso becomes a theater of masks, reversals and representations, a theater in which all are

¹⁴³ Burckhardt, "Rom 1848 : Berichte Von Jacob Burckhardt." "7. März. - Mitten in das tolle Treiben des Karnevals hinein fielen die Nachrichten der französischen Revolution, und die Leute verloren dabei die wenige Besinnung, die sie noch übrigbehalten hatten. - Die Konstitutionssache war eben im besten Gange; in jeder Nummer der «Gazzetta di Roma» sprach die Regierung von den emsigen Anstrengungen der betreffenden Kommission, und niemand zweifelte daran, daß der nächste Donnerstag der wahre Termin sei - doch ließ man den Karneval die Spannung der Gemüter nicht entgelten, kaum daß in den Maskenkleidungen die drei italienischen Farben einigermaßen vorherrschten. Seit jenen Nachrichten ist dies nun anders; Freitag und Samstag abends zogen Scharen mit Fackeln nach der französischen Akademie, [...], um Vivats aller Art, besonders Evvivà la republica!, auszurufen."

audience and all are participants; the privileged observational space of the private box, apartment window or café haunt is completely enveloped by the jumbled and jostling performance it once sought to frame.¹⁴⁴ Important here, however, is not only that the politics of Rome is rhetorically linked to the excesses of Carnival, but that politics, and the urban spaces in which it takes place, are represented in accord with a more Baroque sensibility, an aesthetic of extravagant movements and powerful energies, of illusion and display, of roles and reversals.

For Burckhardt, therefore, the political turmoil is framed as an amplification of the carnival atmosphere, here spilling out of the frame defined in the calendar of festivals. With the jostling masses in the streets, with the masks, the protests and the confusion of the urban spaces, Rome shows an aspect that can no longer be represented adequately by the perspectives of the Renaissance, but requires instead a representational mode more consonant with the tensions and uncertainties of its present condition. Rome seems to demand, in other words, a Baroque aesthetic.

With Rome still in the midst of such unrest, overwhelmed by the political carnival that would eventually force the exile of Pope Pius IX, Burckhardt took leave of the city in mid-April 1848. The decision, however, was linked less to fears of turmoil than to issues involving career prospects. As we noted, during the stays of 1846-1848 Burckhardt had

¹⁴⁴ In his own reflections on the 1788 Roman Carnival, Goethe likewise detected and explored the curious baroque sensibility that it engendered, an exploration that Bakhtin later reviewed in his work on early modern carnival: As Goethe writes: “The long, narrow Corso, packed with people, recalls to us no less the road of our earthly life. There, too, a man is both actor and spectator; there, too, in disguise or out of it, he has very little room to himself and, whether in a carriage or on foot, can only advance by inches, moved forward or halted by external forces rather than by his own free will; there, too, he struggles to reach a better and more pleasant place from which, caught again in the crowd, he is again squeezed out.” Johann von Goethe, *Italienische Reise* (München: Beck, 1981); Mikhail Mikhailovich Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, Helene Iswolsky trans. (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1984), 244.

been working on editorial updates of Kugler's *Geschichte der Malerei* and *Handbuch der Kunstgeschichte*, and the older scholar had simultaneously set about securing a position in Berlin for his younger colleague. Indeed, it was with the prospective Berlin appointment in mind that Burckhardt had conceived of the larger series of handbooks that would eventually appear in truncated form as the Constantine and Renaissance books. Simultaneously, however, friends in Basel had secured for Burckhardt an offer to act as *Kurator* of the soon to be dedicated Augustinerstrasse Museum, and when it became clear that the hoped for Berlin position would not be immediately available, Burckhardt steered a course once again for his provincial outpost on the *Rheinknie*.

Burckhardt would remain in Basel for the next several years, and it was during this period that he labored upon and finished the manuscript for *Die Zeit Constantins der Grossen*. By 1853, however, with prospects for advancement in Basel still unsatisfying and with the lure of the South still undiminished, Burckhardt undertook yet another journey to Italy and Rome, a research journey aimed at collecting materials for the project that would eventually become the *Cicerone*. In the previous chapter, and in the pages of the *Cicerone*, we saw how this journey influenced Burckhardt's aesthetic thinking at the time. And in many ways, Burckhardt's *Anleitung zum Genuss* remains perhaps the best record of the effects of his travel in that period. For in the period from the completion of *Constantin* through the *Cicerone* stay in Italy, there exists a distinct silence in the source materials indicating Burckhardt's impressions. "The *Cicerone* journey," as Werner Kaegi notes in his exhaustive biography, "the most famous and at the same time the least documented of Burckhardt's Italian journeys. There exists no letter and no diary that records its stations. No sketchbook depicts its impressions. Only

his passport with its stamps shows its laconic itinerary.”¹⁴⁵ The *Cicerone*, as we have already examined it, and perhaps the *Civilization of the Renaissance*, must be accepted as the best record of the fruits of Burckhardt’s Roman travel in the early 1850’s.

The record, however, of Burckhardt’s two subsequent journeys is documented more fully, and it is in these travels—in 1875 and again in 1883—that Burckhardt’s reception of the Baroque and his reflections on Rome’s unique urban modernity are brought more completely into the foreground. Upon returning from the *Cicerone-Reise*, and after securing a position for several years at Zürich Polytechnic, Burckhardt returned home again upon the offer of a professorial post at the University of Basel in 1858. Finishing the *Civilization of the Renaissance* in the security of this post, he went on to serve out the rest of his professional career at the university in Basel, formally retiring over three decades later in 1893. Yet the appointment in Basel also signaled another shift for Burckhardt, a shift from the activities of research and publication that had characterized the 1850’s to a focus primarily on pedagogical duties as an *Ordinarius*. As we have seen, Burckhardt by no means ceased research oriented writing, but the most significant products of this later period would have to wait for posthumous publication. Above all, then, Burckhardt’s professional travel during this period became increasingly oriented towards supplementing his activities as lecturer and teacher. Yet if Burckhardt’s scholarly focus was undergoing a transformation, so too were the political, cultural and aesthetic landscapes of Italy and Rome not remaining unchanged, and it is in the journeys

¹⁴⁵ Werner Kaegi, *Jacob Burckhardt; Eine Biographie* (Basel: Schwabe, 1947-1982) vol. III, 452. “Die Cicerone-Reise ist die berühmteste und zugleich die unbekannteste von Burckhardts Italienfahrten. Kein Brief und kein Tagebuch hält die Folge ihrer Stationen fest. Kein Skizzenbuch gibt ihre Eindrücke wieder. Nur der Paß zeigt mit seinen Stempeln das trockene Itinerar.”

of 1875 and 1883 that we find Burckhardt reflecting the histories of both his own career and that of Roman modernity.

Of course, Burckhardt's scholarly travels were by no means limited to Italy during this period. The first two decades of Burckhardt's professorship in Basel saw a number of excursions throughout Europe, with extended visits to France, the Low Countries, Austria and destinations in Germany. But Burckhardt's impressions during his two journeys to London—in 1860 and 1879—are particularly relevant for present purposes in comparison with the professor's Roman stays of 1875 and 1883. For the aspect of urban metropolitan modernity that presented itself in London was of a far different sort than that presented by a Rome whose fitful and halting path into nineteenth-century modernity had only recently been ratified in its establishment as capital of a new Italian *Grossstaat*. London, by contrast, was for Burckhardt the very essence of the modern metropolitan capital city, and the architectonic of the city represented very different aspect from the exposed archaeological layers and ruination of Rome. The text of London, in other words, was one dominated by the monumental passages of the present, its shapes, its sounds and its smells all impressing upon the spectator the privileged historical position of nineteenth-century imperial and industrial modernity. For Burckhardt, contra Benjamin, even Paris paled in comparison to the impressions left by London. "Paris is a nice little town," he writes in 1860, "next to this London."¹⁴⁶

The correspondence of the second London trip of 1879 is by far the more voluminous of the two, and as Kaegi writes, these latter documents show that, "the

¹⁴⁶ Burckhardt, *Briefe*, Vol. 3, 63.

second journey to England was among the most important journeys of his life.”¹⁴⁷ Above all, London merged with, and came to represent, a particular mode of modernity whose monumentality and dynamism were gradually radiating throughout Europe and beyond. Indeed, it was this almost sublime monumentality and the sheer oceanic scale of the city that made the most powerful initial impact on Burckhardt’s sensibility. Describing his initial railway entry into the city in July of 1879, Burckhardt writes to Carl Lendorff-Berri:

Where London actually begins, no one can really say; travelling through the last stations, one is already long in the city, and to be sure at great height, so that one can observe into courtyards and down to the people in them (where a pair of old pants hang drying from the wash). In between, of course, one saw St. Paul’s and many other impressive buildings that rise as much as possible out of the sooty atmosphere. At Charing Cross Station I was overwhelmed for a moment by the colossal character of the buildings and the goings on (the sea of omnibusses and carts, etc. etc.), but now I’m pretty blasé about the whole thing and don’t make much of it.¹⁴⁸

But even if quickly rendered blasé once again by the enormity and energies of London, Burckhardt returns repeatedly to leitmotifs of London’s superlative character, its *Colossalität* and *Monumentalität* as perhaps *the* great city of European modernity.¹⁴⁹ “You should really see London as an architect,” he writes to his nephew, “the modern

¹⁴⁷ Kaegi, *Burckhardt: Eine Biographie*, Vol. 4, 249.

¹⁴⁸ Burckhardt, *Briefe*, Vol. VII, 36-37. “Wo London eigentlich beginnt, kann kein Mensch mehr sagen; die letzten Stationen hindurch fährt man schon lange in der Stadt, und zwar in der Höhe, so daß man vielen Leuten in die Höflein hinein sieht, wo irgendwo ein Paar gewaschene alte Hosen trockneten. Dazwischen freilich sah man S. Paul und eine Menge anderer feierlicher Gebäude aus dem Steinkohlendunst so gut als möglich hervorrage. Im Bahnhof bei Charing-cross setzte mich noch einen Augenblick die Colossalität des Baues und aller Veranstaltungen, das Meer von Omnibus und Droschken etc etc in Erstaunen, aber jetzt bin ich schon blasirt und mache mir aus all dem Wesen nicht mehr viel.”

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 46-48. “Heut Vormittag entdeckte ich beim Bummeln in der Nähe von FleetStreet das ganz riesige neue Justizgebäude, New Law Court, und in der Nähe davon Record Office, ein Archiv, Beides gothische Burgen der opulentesten Art.”

one, I mean. The motto is: enormous, splendid and functional.”¹⁵⁰ Indeed, even the great collections in the museums and galleries were nearly overwhelming in the vastness and expanse of their purview. In institutions such as the National Gallery and the British Museum, Burckhardt found a stupefying wealth of art and artifacts from throughout Europe and the world, a wealth made possible by the same unprecedented prosperity and imperial power of which the city as a whole had become a symbol. Of the South Kensington Museum, rechristened as the Albert and Victoria Museum in 1899, Burckhardt writes, “I feel there postively humbled by the powerful sensibility that, from a immensely elevated perspective, established this singular collection, maintains it, and hourly increases its holdings.”¹⁵¹

Mixed, however, with the appreciation of London’s grandeur and energy are clear notes of the critical pessimism with which Burckhardt greeted a modernity that was making its presence felt throughout Europe. For the same power that had made possible London’s great museums and aesthetic monuments nevertheless had its source in forces of utility and acquisitiveness that were ultimately antithetical to the cultural functions of art as Burckhardt conceived them. Prompted by reflections on the new iron bridges spanning not only the Thames, but also the Rhine in his own home city, Burckhardt writes:

And what is all this great aesthetic stimulation to the Londoners when a colossal uglification of the city’s aspect can take place merely for the purpose of utility (in comparison with which our new iron bridge is nothing at all). This is to say that they have placed a high, infamous, and straight-lined iron bridge in the middle of

¹⁵⁰ Ibid., 36-37. “Du solltest aber London, das moderne meine ich, als Architect sehen! Das Motto ist: riesig, prächtig und zweckmäßig.”

¹⁵¹ Ibid., 81. “Dort fühle ich mich förmlich im Schirm und Schatten des mächtigen Sinnes, welcher von einem gewaltig hohen Gesichtspunct aus diese in der Welt einzige Sammlung gegründet hat, aufrecht hält und stündlich vermehrt.”

the most beautiful views of the city, layed a railway line across it, and built an abominably colossal ladies suitcase nearby (the main station of Charing Cross). As I strolled in the moonlight the other night, along the nearby Waterloo Bridge that once boasted wonderful painterly views of the Houses of Parliament, Westminster Abbey and Lambeth Palace, I now found these views cut in half and I truly could have wept. The deepening of twilight and the appearance of the full moon made the scene really painful. Also, further down, around London Bridge, there lay a similar iron-bridge horror that likewise leads to another colossal ladies suitcase. Good God, what next will be sacrificed to the practical sense of the nineteenth century! And how will things look in London in 100, or even 10, years when the growing crowds of humanity make necessary still more decisions of this sort?¹⁵²

In these juxtaposed visions of moonlight softly bathing a landscape being deconstructed in the name of modern utility, the residues of Burckhardt as Romantic, and the traces of his historical nostalgia, are still very clearly in evidence. If London's architectonic and cultural treasures were indeed made possible by a particular orientation to art and history, namely "von einem Gewaltig gesichtspunct," it was a monumental orientation or vantage point that tended more towards the absorption and effacement of the past rather than its visible preservation. Unlike Rome, the monumentality of London was configured under the sign of modernity; its collections, its architecture, its thoroughfares were all geared to underscore the privileged vantage point of an ahistorical modern present. Where Rome's monuments opened a space of historicity in the visible ruination of its monuments, where its previous iterations were more plainly visible to the casual observer, the reconfigured

¹⁵² Ibid., 43. "Und was hilft den Londonern alle die hohe ästhetische Anregung, wenn dann doch um der bloßen Utilität willen eine colossale Verscheußlichung des Stadtanblickes eintritt, wogegen unsere neue Brücke eine wahre Unschuld ist! Man hat nämlich eine hohe, infame, gradlinige Gitterbrücke mitten durch den schönsten Hauptaspekt gezogen und eine Haupteisenbahn drauf gelegt und einen gräßlichen colossalen Damenkoffer (den Kopfbahnhof von Charing-cross) dran gebaut. Als ich gestern Abend im Vollmond auf der (unten dran liegenden) Waterloobridge wandelte und den frühern wunderbar malerischen Anblick der Parlamentshäuser, der Westminster Abtei und des Lambeth Palace entzwei geschnitten fand, hätte ich wahrlich heulen mögen. Die Dämmerung und der aufsteigende Vollmond machten die Sache erst recht schmerzlich. Auch weiter unten, gegen London bridge hin, liegt ein ähnliches Scheusal von Gitterbrücke, welches ebenfalls zu einer colossalen Kopfstation führt. Ach Gott, was werden dem practical sense des XIX. Jahrhunderts noch für Opfer fallen! Und wie wird es in 100, ja schon in 10 Jahren in diesem London aussehen, wenn wegen Menschenzudranges immer schrecklichere Entschlüsse nöthig werden?"

modern spaces of London increasingly allowed the past a voice only to the extent that it had been pacified and absorbed as a style or mode—and not as a moment of critical historical reflection. Instead of the visible historical tensions of Rome’s legible pasts, the past in London was being either replaced entirely or rebuilt in the simulacral forms of architectural historicism, forms whose purpose was not so much the preservation of the past, but one of making visible modernity’s mastery over it.

In similar fashion, Burckhardt’s suspicions extended likewise to the museums and collections of the city. On the one hand, as we’ve seen, Burckhardt surveyed these with an enthused astonishment, nearly overwhelmed by their richness, but at the same time he nevertheless harbored uncertainties about the nature and eventual result of such titanic cultural accumulations. “Then my astonishment increased considerably,” he remarks once again to Alioth regarding the South Kensington Museum, “What will become of our art history if collecting takes place in this manner, and no one pursues any longer a more comprehensive perspective?”¹⁵³ Similar to his frustration with what he considered the methodologically unreflective *Sammeln* of many in the German historical community, Burckhardt here again announces his suspicions of the particularly modern fascination with the mere collection and warehousing of historical artifacts. Here was an encounter with the past that had been wholly conditioned by modern imperatives and logic of accumulation, an encounter in which the relation with history dangerously resembled that of the commodities piled on the wharves of the Thames. Here indeed was an astonishing collection of fragments of the past, but one whose focus was on the extension of such

¹⁵³ Ibid. “Da wuchs denn mein Staunen noch um ein Beträchtliches! Wo soll das hinaus mit unserer Kunstgeschichte, wenn auf *diese* Manier gesammelt wird und Niemand die eigentliche Gesamtübersicht mehr macht?”

collections rather than on their understanding. “How much insight I’m gathering, I don’t know yet;” he relates, apparently sensing his own state of interpretive exhaustion, “ in the meantime, I’m still in that state where the more one sees and notes, the dumber one becomes. If things begin to clear up for me, I’ll let you know.”¹⁵⁴

It might be tempting at this point, to link these impressions of Rome to the larger discussions of a “Baroque modernity” that has occupied more contemporary scholarship, and to a certain extent this would be fair. A central and defining feature of the Baroque, after all, announced first and most explicitly in Wölfflin’s *Renaissance and Barok*, is the impulse towards architectural monumentality. From this perspective, one could suggest that nineteenth-century London resonates with the aesthetic of the seventeenth century precisely in the way it deploys architectural monumentality as a visible display of its regimes of power and imperial pretensions. Likewise, the archive as a central metaphor and space of culture, as well as a generalized mania for accumulation and display of knowledge, is a phenomenon to which Benjamin, for instance, gestures as an important point correspondence between the spiritual crises of the nineteenth and seventeenth centuries. But if London can indeed be read in terms of a Baroque modernity, à la Buci-Glucksmann’s Parisian modernity defined by Baudelaire and Benjamin, then it is a Baroque with a very different outline from that of Burckhardt’s Rome.¹⁵⁵ Where London captures the modern Baroque through the metaphors of the monument and the archive, Rome supplements these with its own literal Baroque features and with a stronger sense

¹⁵⁴ Ibid., 63. “Wie viel Weisheit ich hier sammle, weiß ich noch nicht; einstweilen bin ich noch in demjenigen ersten Stadium da man vor lauter massenhaftem Sehen und Notiren nur immer dümmer wird. Wenn es anfangt sich abzuklären, will ich's Ihnen melden.”

¹⁵⁵ Elsewhere, Buci-Glucksmann reads Baudelaire and Benjamin to find a baroque modernity in the reception of nineteenth-century Paris. Christine Buci-Glucksmann, *Baroque Reason: The Aesthetics of Modernity*, trans. Patrick Camiller (London: Sage, 1994).

of that other favored Baroque symbol: the ruin. In its nascent adoption of urban modernity, and in the visual traces of its half-buried and half-ruined pasts, the monumentality of Burckhardt's Rome seemed to present its history as the interpenetration of past and present, rather than the absorption of the former by the latter. For Burckhardt, in other words, Rome was not only a city defined by the Baroque, but one whose contours made possible a radically different encounter with the past from those offered by London.

Even if the imperatives of an industrial, political and cultural modernity had yet to make a truly indelible mark on the Rome of Burckhardt's late visits, this is not to say that the city persisted in a state of timeless stasis. Since the period of his stays in the 1840's and 1850's, in other words, the nineteenth-century had left neither *Romae Aeternae* nor its rich cultural geographies completely untouched. In a history that we need not recount here fully, the intervening years—between 1854 and 1875—had seen the arrival and eventual culmination of the *Risorgimento*, consolidating the once fragmented peninsula as a unified European power under the House of Savoy and the constitutional monarchy of Victor Emmanuel II. Rome itself, while it had been designated the capital of the new Italian monarchy in 1860, had remained under Papal control and French protection until 1870, and was occupied by Italian troops only after Louis Napoleon's defeat at Sedan in the Franco-Prussian war. Indeed, only officially becoming the seat of the Italian national government in 1871, Rome's choice and emergence as the capital city of the new state was always more complicated than it sometimes appears in retrospect. In the first instance, while Rome provided the historical stage for a new Italy to cast itself as the unified and legitimate power over the whole

peninsula, the city was also home to another set of historical resonances which were linked to the temporal power and home of Catholic Christianity. Indeed, despite the *de facto* resolution of the question of Papal power in 1870, these tensions persisted as a *de jure* problem throughout not only the era of unification, but well into the twentieth century. In many ways, Rome's ascension to capital status was as much a product of compromise as it was a submission to the necessities of historical and cultural stagecraft. After all, viewed in comparison with the rest of Italy (especially the North), the Rome of 1870 was still a relatively backward and underdeveloped municipality. While today rivaled only by Milan in terms of size, Rome at the moment of unification was only the fifth largest city in Italy, trailing Naples, Milan, Genoa and Palermo.¹⁵⁶ Furthermore, even with unification and the increase of its business and administrative functions, Rome possessed only 0.8% percent of the Italian population, whereas Berlin boasted 1.7% of the total national population, Paris 8.5%, and London a staggering 10.4%. But in many ways, it was this very peripherality of Rome as a regional center that helped secure its role as eventual capital. For not only did it possess the necessary historical resonances, it was also considered, once the Papal issue was effectively settled, a kind of unthreatening neutral territory among the various regional forces working to achieve unification.

By the time of Burckhardt's 1875 visit, and even more so in 1883, Rome had assumed its new role, and its urban geography was gradually changing accordingly. While real estate speculation, projects of feverish new building and the accompanying crises—of the sort seen in the *Gründerzeit* of the German Empire—were likewise to be seen in Rome and throughout the Peninsula, its urban transformation took place at a far

¹⁵⁶ John Agnew, *Rome* (New York: J. Wiley, 1995), 10-11.

more moderate pace than that of Italy's neighbors to the north. In spite of this, Rome nevertheless saw its share of changes in the era immediately following unification. Along with the administrative infrastructure necessary to a new European capital, as well as accompanying housing and services, Rome saw the introduction of significant changes to the characteristic shape of its streets and squares. Indeed, almost immediately after the successful capture of Rome by Italian forces in 1870, a new government commission was established that was tasked with formulating and administering a plan to remake the city in accordance with its new role. "There is instituted a commission of architects-engineers," read the charter of the commission, "which should occupy itself with projects that expand and beautify the city and which are then submitted for the approval of the city council."¹⁵⁷ But as John Agnew goes on to note in surveying the trajectory of Rome's post-1870 urban modernization, "What beautifying Rome entailed became clear over the next 80 years. Above all it involved isolating as many as possible of the monuments of Rome as 'works of art.' In Baroque Rome streets and piazzas had been seen as integral to the urban fabric, as elements in a spatial system that organized the entire city. Now this integrated picture of the city was lost." Thus, as we have already seen, a central signature of the Baroque is the impulse towards an integration of the arts, an expansive aesthetic where 'frames' are broken and flow into ever larger and totalizing works of art. And in this sense, the Baroque aspect of Rome had configured and envisioned the city as an integrated whole—not a city that contained a set of discrete monuments and *objects d'art*, but an artwork itself that happened to contain a city.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid., 32.

If the seventeenth-century aspect and integration of the city was being thus gradually deconstructed, the city nevertheless remained thoroughly Baroque in another sense that we have already described. For also central to the Baroque, as later theorists have proposed, is the tense and visible dialectic between past and present, renewal and ruination, that seems to recur when Baroque sensibility manifests itself. Thus, while the modern features of cities like London and Berlin appeared to overwhelm their pasts, the political contexts and urban geography of Rome made a total and modern remaking of the city a near impossibility. Even with all its growth and with all its municipal planning, the face of Rome would remain defined by a unique mix of various historical strata. As one more contemporary commentator has put it, “the city has largely maintained its historic skyline dominated by monuments from its ancient, Renaissance and Baroque building epochs. Rome is not simply a montage of ruins within a modern city as is the case, for example, with Athens. ‘It is a crumbling mixture of all its pasts, jumbled together and still living, never dead but never freshly alive.’”¹⁵⁸ Therefore, even as Rome partially shed its pretension as a totalized Baroque urban space in its confrontations with modernity, its Baroque character was only further amplified to the degree that these processes only highlighted the ruinous historicity of its landscapes.

It was thus into this context, albeit during the very first and more modest transformations of Rome, that Burckhardt made his late visits in 1875 and 1883, visits in which we see the aging professor increasingly conscious of the Baroque, the historicity of Rome and an ever greater sense of his own historical mortality. Initially, however, Burckhardt seems to have been most impressed by the changes in the city since his last

¹⁵⁸ Ibid., 9.

visits over two decades before. Writing to Max Alioth shortly after his arrival in early April 1875, and alert to the city's new national and international status, Burckhardt declares that "Rome has changed enormously, evenings and nights the Corso is a little piece of Paris; the invasion of other Italians and all their dialects is gradually more apparent; I hear Milanese and Neapolitan, etc."¹⁵⁹ Indeed, the years had not only brought an influx of Italians from other regions, but also an immense increase in the number of foreign tourists visiting the eternal city, travelers coming to make the modern pilgrimage associated with the new devotions of sightseeing. Given its functions in relation to Catholicism, and as a destination for academicians throughout Europe, Rome had of course never been without its share of foreign voices. But from Burckhardt's perspective, the throngs of these new Italian and European visitors marked a serious change from the impressions of his earlier visits. "What characterizes Rome at the moment," Burckhardt comments with more than a touch of grumpy condescension, "is the huge number of Germans; today in the imperial palaces they represented a sizable majority. On this one day, I was strolling somewhat behind a party of Germans in the Vatican, a party for whom an old Austrian was acting as Cicerone; you should have heard what he was telling them!"¹⁶⁰ Indeed, perhaps since the English had already long been visible fixtures as visitors in Rome, well before Burckhardt's own first visits, the Basler surveys the massive increase in German visitors with especially intense suspicion and irritation. Aside from regular gallery tours with Wilhelm Bode (1845-1929), who

¹⁵⁹ Burckhardt, *Briefe*, Vol. 6, 21. "Rom ist enorm verändert, der Corso Abends und Nachts ein Stück Paris; die Invasion der Italiener und aller ihrer Dialecte fällt bei Schritt und Tritt auf; ich höre Milanese und Napolitanisch etc."

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 22. "Was Rom für mich momentan besonders kennzeichnet das ist die große Menge von Deutschen; heute in den Kaiserpalästen waren sie die beträchtliche Mehrzahl. Dieser Tage im Vatican ging ich einer Partie Deutschen nach, welche einen alten ausrangirten Östreicher zum Cicerone hatten; Sie hätten hören sollen, was Der ihnen erzählte!"

would later become Director General of Prussian Museums in the early twentieth century, Burckhardt attempted to avoid fraternization with the new German visitors whom he viewed with an extremely critical eye. “Otherwise, I don’t know any Germans,” writes Burckhardt,

but I see them in large numbers in all the galleries, etc.. Most of them belong to that type of modern penitent pilgrim, the ones no longer drawn to Rome’s churches of indulgence with stones in their shoes and weals on their backs. Instead, these must do their penitence in murderous boredom before art works in which they have no interest. The Italians don’t seem to me to suffer from the same effect; they either simply walk on or they stay and look at things properly.¹⁶¹

Indulging here in a by no means original disparagement of tourist newcomers, Burckhardt nevertheless detects something perfunctory and obligatory in the *Sehweise* of these modern German penitents making their obeisance before the cultural relics of Rome. Thus, where he sees the Italians still relating to works of art in a more authentic and subjective fashion, the German visitors approach the same objects as if in the stations of a dutiful passion, stations of an *auratic*—and horribly bored—reception that is demanded in the scriptures of the little red Baedeker.

Of changes in the city’s urban spaces and architectural features, on the other hand, Burckhardt is even more explicit in the 1883 journey, Rome by this point having had thirteen years of expansion and reconstruction as a capital city. Writing to Robert Grüninger from Rome in August of 1883, Burckhardt declares with some melancholy:

After 37 years, Rome has changed enormously, and all the old streets are now too small for this crowded melee. This evening I “strolled” through Trastevere, but

¹⁶¹ Ibid., 22. “Sonst kenne ich keine Deutschen, sehe sie aber massenhaft in allen Galerien etc.. Die meisten davon gehören zu jenen modernen Bußpilgern, die nicht mehr mit Steinen in den Schuhen und Geißelstriemen auf dem Rücken den römischen Ablaßkirchen nachziehen, sondern ihre Buße durch mörderliche Langeweile vor Kunstwerken, an denen sie nichts haben, abmachen müssen. Die Italiener machen mir in den Galerien nie diesen Effect; entweder sie laufen fort oder sie sehen die Sachen recht an.”

the stroll soon lost its interest because of the crush of carts and down and out people. They have buses circulating at will through through this city with no sidewalks, and if the Italians didn't understand driving in traffic completely, then there would be one accident after another. But they are fools to want to hold an Esposizione mondiale, or World's Fair, in such city. [...] One hears a lot of talk here about a great traffic artery to be built by breaking through the city, but about its precise orientation one hears many different things. The most insistent of these rumors relates to the route from Piazza Venezia to St. Peter's. Oddly enough, the views of the Tiber from Ponte Sisto, both upstream and downstream, are not yet completely spoiled. As for living in this city, or settling down in it, I no longer have any interest.¹⁶²

As with London, though, here in the narrow streets of the ancient city, the spearhead of modernity takes the form of fleets of city busses, oceans of traffic and masses that demand new arteries and a rationalized city plan. And while Burckhardt had long toyed with the romantic idea of resettling in Rome, an idea that was never entertained in a truly serious fashion, it is interesting to note that such a vision no longer seems appealing to the aging critic of modernity and resigned Basler. The Rome of his youth, at this moment at least, both as a material reality and as an emanation of his imagination, was very clearly no longer the Rome of 1883.

On the other hand, neither in 1883 nor since has Rome's visible historical aspect been fully or completely effaced by the changes brought about after unification. It remains perhaps unique in the degree to which the archaeological strata of its histories—ancient and modern—persist in visible and legible evidence for even the most casual

¹⁶² Burckhardt, *Briefe*, Vol. 8, 141. "Rom hat sich seit 37 Jahren ganz enorm verändert, und *alle* altern Gassen sind jetzt zu enge für dieß Gewühl. Heut Abend «schlenderte» ich im Trastevere, das Schlendern wird Einem aber verleidet durch diese Menge von Karren und abgerissenen Menschen. Man läßt in der ganzen trottoirlosen alten Stadt Omnibusse nach Belieben circuliren, und wenn die Römer das Fahren nicht vorzüglich verständen, so gäbe es Ein Unglück über das andere. Narren sind sie aber, in einer solchen Stadt eine Esposizione mondiale, Weltausstellung haben zu wollen. [...] Man redet wohl viel von einer großen Arterie die durch die Stadt gebrochen werden soll, aber über die Richtung verlautet sehr Verschiedenes. Das Nachdrücklichste heißt: direct von Piazza Venezia auf S. Peter los. Merkwürdiger Weise sind die hoch malerischen Tiberanblicke von Ponte Sisto aufwärts und abwärts noch nicht stark verdorben. Aber leben oder gar ausleben möchte ich hier nicht mehr."

observer. Thus, even amid explicit uncertainties about the transformations in Rome, and with a seemingly limitless tolerance for ambivalence, Burckhardt still finds traces of the Rome he remembers, an eternal city that all the construction and deconstruction of the late nineteenth century could not efface. “For the rest, Rome is passably intact in all its essential parts,” relates Burckhardt in mid-April 1875 with a somewhat more sanguine opinion of Roman transformations,

Aside from the area around Santa Maria Maggiore, and it is still filled with excellent architectural views and aspects like no other city on Earth; it is no longer the classical beauty of individual building that is decisive. Instead, whole groups have been thrown up together in many different periods as if in accord with a uniform model.¹⁶³

Taken as a whole, in other words, taken as a visible totality, Rome here remains passably intact from Burckhardt’s perspective. The ‘isolation’ or atomization of the city’s aesthetic monuments described by Agnew had clearly not advanced enough to change Rome in its more panoramic perspectives. It is, however, interesting that Burckhardt’s appreciation of this perspective recognizes the character of the city in its Baroque aspect as an aesthetic totality, as an integrated urban landscape where individual monuments are subsumed and enveloped by the effect of the whole. Thus, far from the individualizing aesthetic of the Renaissance, a sensibility in which both artwork and subject matter strive towards a discrete self-sufficiency, Rome persists for Burckhardt to the extent that it becomes itself an immense Baroque *Gesamtkunstwerk*, or total work of art.

¹⁶³ Burckhardt, *Briefe*, Vol. 6, 32. “Im Übrigen ist Rom noch in all seinen wesentlichen Theilen ausgenommen die Gegend um S. M. maggiore, leidlich intact, und hat noch jene ganze Fülle *vornehmer* architectonischer Anblicke wie keine andere Stadt auf Erden; es ist gar nicht immer die classische Schönheit des einzelnen Gebäudes welche entscheidet, sondern ganze Gruppen sind wie selbstverständlich in verschiedenen Zeiten nach einem gleichartigen großen Model zusammengestellt worden.”

It is not surprising, then, to find Burckhardt's reception in these later visits assuming and appreciating the contours of a more Baroque sensibility. Indeed, along with Burckhardt's already noted late fascination with Rubens, the late correspondence reveals a significant shift in Burckhardt's once unsympathetic estimation of seventeenth-century art and culture. As early as the 1875 journey, Burckhardt could write to Alioth that his "respect for the baroque increases by the hour, and he would be soon inclined to see it as the true end and culmination of living architecture. It not only has the resources for everything that serves a practical purpose, but also those of beautiful appearance."¹⁶⁴ Still over a decade before the appearance of Cornelius Gurlitt's path-breaking treatments, works that marked Baroque's reemergence as a legitimate topic, Burckhardt himself was already showing early signs not only of a scholarly reevaluation of the era, but indications of a true enthusiasm for its cultural production. Only a year after the 1875 Rome visit, Burckhardt would again take up the topic in a letter written during a trip to Milan. "On the issue of the Baroque I am becoming ever more heretical," he writes, "Already at the beginning of our trip, I found myself enlivened in the church in Feldkirch by the most ingenious Baroque confessional, and thought at once: If only Max could see that!—Here in Milan one can wallow in the Baroque."¹⁶⁵ Indeed, it was the persistence of this interest that no doubt led Burckhardt's encouragement of Wölfflin in his own efforts of the late 1880's, efforts that resulted in the latter's *Renaissance and Barok* (1888).

¹⁶⁴ Ibid., 21. "Mein Respect vor dem Barocco nimmt stündlich zu und ich bin bald geneigt, ihn für das eigentliche Ende und Hauptresultat der lebendigen Architectur zu halten. Er hat nicht nur Mittel für Alles, was zum Zweck dient, sondern auch für den schönen Schein."

¹⁶⁵ Ibid., 96. "In Sachen des Barocco werde ich immer ketzerischer. Schon ganz am Anfang unserer Reise erquickte mich in der Kirche zu Feldkirch der genialste Barocco-Beichtstuhl den ich je gesehen, und es hieß sogleich: Wenn doch der Max das sähe! — Hier in Mailand kann man in Barocco schwelgen."

Therefore, while a thoroughgoing art historical literature was still only on the horizon during Burckhardt's late trips to Rome, the journeys themselves reveal that Burckhardt shared the new enthusiasm for the era, an enthusiasm that would become a more generalized disciplinary phenomenon in the coming decades. This nascent "heretical" interest in seventeenth-century culture, however, coupled with Burckhardt's reflections on the paradoxically changed and unchanged urban landscape of Rome, finds the Basel professor not only "seeing" the Baroque freshly—and perhaps for the first time—but also seeing *with* it. As we have already noted, Burckhardt describes Rome in accordance with a mode of seeing and an aesthetic sensibility increasingly removed from those that had been announced sympathetically in works devoted to the Renaissance. But in these visions of Rome, visions defined by a reception of the city as itself a total work of art, Burckhardt's engagement with Baroque aesthetics weaves its way even more clearly into his curiously ambivalent reception of the histories made legible within Roman urban space. Indeed, in reflecting on the tensions between past and present, in the almost effortless shuttling between Rome as ancient ruin and Rome as modern ruination, Burckhardt's correspondence likewise reveals an attempt to come to grips with the inevitabilities of historicity, and an almost Baroque uncertainty (in both the modern and early modern senses) as to whether and how these inevitable processes could be captured, preserved, or above all, represented.

Simultaneously with reflections on the nature of Roman history and a more urgent sense of personal mortality, Burckhardt conspicuously reveals a new interest that would become perhaps *the* passionate obsession of his later years—the collection of photographs. This obsession, increasingly central to the correspondence of his later

years, focused almost exclusively on reproductions of artworks and appears to have begun in earnest during the decade after his 1858 assumption of academic duties at the University of Basel. Always emphasizing the value of direct *Anschaung* for cultural historical methodology, Burckhardt quickly came to view the assembly and organization of his collection as an absolute necessity in relation to his pedagogical duties. Writing to the university in 1874 regarding impending research travel to Paris, Burckhardt explains, “For the purpose of the lectures, on the other hand, I’ll have to expand my own collection by purchases primarily in Paris. This is the only place where individual folios and consignments of publications, together with photographs, can be had in large selections and for reasonable prices.”¹⁶⁶ But apparently Paris— “as the only place”—had not completely satisfied the pedagogically urgent need for reproductions, as Burckhardt writes only a year later of Rome, “where I must refresh my memories and purchase photographs, both for the purpose of my art historical lectures.”¹⁶⁷ In any event, regardless of intended *Behuf*, Burckhardt would continue to collect photographs of significant artworks on every one of his major travels of later life, and on an ever increasing scale.

At the same time, Burckhardt’s interest in such collecting was not merely pedagogical in nature. Linked perhaps to his increasingly pessimistic outlook for the artistic legacies of Europe, the historian saw in photography a means of preservation in

¹⁶⁶ Marc Siebert, “‘Wo ich nicht von der Anschauung ausgehen kann, da leiste ich nichts.’ Jacob Burckhardt und die Photographie” in Jacob Burckhardt, *Die Kunst der Malerei in Italien*, Christine Tauber ed. (Basel: Schwabe, 2003). “Zum Behuf der Vorlesungen dagegen werde ich meine eigene Sammlung durch Ankäufe hauptsächlich in Paris vermehren müssen, welches der einzige Ort ist, wo vereinzelt Blätter und Lieferungen von Kunstpublikationen sammt Photographien in größerer Auswahl und zu leidlichen Preisen zu haben sind.”

¹⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 12-13. “Wo ich meine Erinnerungen auffrischen und Photographien kaufen muß, beides zum Behuf meiner kunstgeschichtlichen Vorlesungen.”

an era that seemed increasingly unconcerned with cultural remembrance. “One day, he laid his head in his arms as he stood at the lectern.” remembered Nicholas Bolt, a former student of Burckhardt’s, “All of the students, even the most lively, became still. What has happened? He lifts his head: ,Gentlemen. A bomb has exploded in the Hermitage in Petersburg. Heinous hands have planted it. We must have all art works photographed.”¹⁶⁸ For Burckhardt, who would be nearly overwhelmed by anxiety in 1870 upon hearing rumors of the destruction of the Louvre, photography thus also represented a powerful instrument with which to protect the memory of cultural artifacts. Therefore, despite its limitations as a still relatively new form of reproduction, Burckhardt nevertheless greeted the technology as a benefit not only to his own memory, but to that of the nineteenth century as well.

For all of these reasons, therefore, issues of finding, buying, organizing and transporting photographic reproductions becomes a central feature of the documents from his late Roman journeys. While almost every missive contains at least a passing reference to the state of his finds and purchases, others find Burckhardt relating seemingly every detail of prices, quality, shops and purveyors. “It was of the frescos in Siena that I saw the most,” Burckhardt writes immediately upon his arrival in Rome, “and diligently purchased photographs, on which I’ve already spent over 120 fr. (without Rome).”¹⁶⁹ Once in Rome, however, Burckhardt’s purchases achieved an even greater pace, his experiences seemingly dominated by a perpetual and urgent search for rich

¹⁶⁸ Ibid., 14. “Einmal legt er vor der Vorlesung am Pult den Kopf auf die Arme. Die Studenten, auch die lebensvollsten, werden still. Was ist geschehen? Er hebt das Haupt: ‘Meine Herrn. In der Eremitage zu Petersburg ist eine Bombe explodiert. Ruchlose Hände haben sie gelegt. Wir müssen alle Kunstwerke photographieren lassen.’”

¹⁶⁹ *Briefe*, Vol. 6, 17-18. “Von der Freskenwelt von Siena habe ich das Meiste wiedergesehen und tüchtig Photographien gekauft, an welchen ich bis jetzt schon über 120 fr. (ohne Rom) ausgegeben habe.”

veins of photographic reproduction, dominated almost to the exclusion of the cultural artifacts themselves:

If I only had 3 more months! But instead of being able to really contemplate things, I have to go from one bottega di fotografo to another (something that is completely against my grain), and while I get something from this, it's not much. [...] I have to carry with me numberless reference samples, and have to rummage through many reproductions that are underexposed or overexposed, all so I don't miss the one print I'm pursuing.¹⁷⁰

Whether such collecting and shopping was truly an activity “against the grain” for Burckhardt seems belied by the record left in his correspondence, a record in which such purchases and bemused self-reflection are by no means rare. In any event, by the end of his 1875 Roman trip, Burckhardt had to turn his attention to the problem of delivering the fruits of his labors back to his Basel home. Again writing to Max Alioth, Burckhardt archly describes his preparations:

On photographs and other rubbish, I have now spent over 600 francs, and today I had the shipping agent's help in my room; just like one has the carpenter come by to measure a corpse for a coffin, this one had to have the measurements taken for a crate that will hold the results of the 16 days of purchases that will be picked up early tomorrow. For the last days (until Tuesday evening) I want to enjoy Rome and buy nothing more.¹⁷¹

In an intriguing reversal, therefore, it is only with his photographic relics safely packed away in the cargo “casket” that would carry them safely on the journey to the north, does

¹⁷⁰ Burckhardt, *Briefe*, Vol. 6, 26. “Wenn ich nur auch 3 Monate Zeit hätte! aber statt den Dingen nachsinnen zu können, muß ich von einer bottega di fotografo zur andern ziehen und märten, was mir vollkommen gegen den Strich ist, auch erreiche ich damit wohl etwas, aber nicht viel. [...] ich muß endlos viele kunsthistorische Belegstücke mitbringen und oft ganz lahme und versengte Abdrücke zusammenraffen nur damit ich dem betreffenden Blatt nicht noch einmal extra nachlaufen muß.”

¹⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 30-31. “Ich habe nun an Photographien und anderm Schund über 600 francs verklopft und heute den Spediteursgehülfen auf dem Zimmer gehabt; wie man den Schreiner kommen läßt um für einen Todten den Sarg anzumessen, so hat dieser für das Ergebniß eines 16tägigen Kaufens das Maß für die Kiste nehmen müssen, mit der er morgen früh aufrücken wird. Denn die letzten Tage (bis nächsten Dienstag Abend!) will ich Rom genießen und nichts mehr kaufen.”

Burckhardt resolve to enjoy Rome. Only then, in other words, does he resolve to enjoy the actuality of the city rather than the virtuality of its photographic representations.

Amid the furious collection of photographs, however, amid the stockpiling and organizing of representations of a changing Rome, another leitmotif likewise works its way into the late correspondence, and reflections on, the eternal city. Complementing the urgency of his project of photographic preservation are increasingly frequent notes and intimations of his own mortality. “Oh Grien,” he declares to Robert Gruninger in August of 1883, “I’m back again in the old place, with pleasantly mild temperatures owing to a deliciously delicate Tramontana. I could not have died peacefully without having seen Rome once more.”¹⁷² A few days later, writing to Gustav Stehelin, Burckhardt continued in a similar vein:

For my life, since this morning, there is not a lot more to be said; I have seen Raphael once more in the halls of the Vatican, and can now peacefully die. Actually, I wanted only to go to St. Peter’s early this morning, but quickly realized that everything was open! In the end, I bribed the garden doorman with 1 Lira and walked about the wonderful papal garden whose grounds I hadn’t trodden since those early times of Pio nono! I was completely alone in the little Villa Pia where only the fountains speak, and the intoxicating smell from all the southern flora presses in.¹⁷³

A visit once again to the Vatican, a communion with Raphael and a stroll through the gardens are related thus in the tones and hues of an elegiac summation, an experience that resonates not only with memories of the early era of Pius IX—the 1840’s and 1850’s

¹⁷² *Briefe*, Vol.8, 134. „O Grien, ich bin wieder in dem alten Nest angelangt, bei köstlich milder Temperatur vermöge deliciöser kleiner Tramontana. Ich hätte eben doch nicht ruhig sterben können ohne Rom noch einmal gesehen zu haben.

¹⁷³ *Briefe*, Vol.8, 136. “An *meinem* Leben liegt seit heute Morgen nicht mehr viel; ich habe Rafael in den vaticanischen Sälen noch einmal gesehen und kann nun ruhig sterben. Ich wollte heut früh eigentlich nur nach S. Peter, merkte dann aber und erfuhr auch, daß Alles offen sei! Zum Schluß bestach ich noch den Gartenportier mit 1 Lira und lief in dem wunderbaren päpstlichen Garten herum, den ich seit den ersten Zeiten des Pio nono nicht mehr betreten hatte! ich war ganz einsam in der kleinen Villa Pia wo nur die Fontaine redete und von all den südlichen Pflanzen ein betäubender Wohlgeruch eindrang.”

when Burckhardt first came to Rome—but also with a sense of impending mortality. The city, in other words, speaks to Burckhardt of both its own historicity but also of his own. Put differently, the tensions between eternity and history that Baroque Rome embodies also become a geographical echo and occasion for Burckhardt’s insistent memories of younger days and urgent premonitions of the far fewer days that remained.¹⁷⁴ In effect, the city of Baroque allegory itself becomes an allegorical mirror for Burckhardt’s own sense of personal historicity. His own pasts, his own all too historical future, find themselves woven into the experience of an urban landscape that likewise wears these characteristics with a unique clarity and distinctness. Where Paris, and particularly London, had presented geographies that tended to conceal historicity beneath the eternal present of privileged modernity, Burckhardt’s Rome paraded all of its tattered historical costumes at once, and reminded the visitor that all such costumes were once representations of a powerful present. Rome possesses a geography and landscape that simply resists the suppression of its pasts—much to the frustrations, for example, of later Fascist efforts—and cannot conceal its perpetual ruination and reconfiguration.

Thus, as with Freud’s much later reflections in *Civilization and its Discontents*, Rome emerges for Burckhardt as the occasion for an extended and immense allegory, one which captures the tension between a self-conscious present and a vast and ruinous

¹⁷⁴ Another example: “Ferner machte ich heut Nachmittag in reichlicher Gluthhitze einen eiteln Versuch — nur par acquit de conscience — in Villa Ludovisi einzudringen, um die Statuen wieder zu sehen - Alles war hermetisch verschlossen, da schlenderte ich vor Porta Salara und vor Porta Pia hinaus, legte meinen Rock übenden Arm, ging bis nach S. Costanza und S. Agnese und ließ mir wieder einmal seit 30 Jahren die beiden alten Kirchen durch einen guten alten Pater aufmachen. - Dann lag, im Kampf zwischen Tramontana und Scirocco, die erhabene Campagna so eigenthümlich da und ich lief bis über Ponte Nomentano und sah den Teverone wieder wie in den Zeiten meiner Jugend. Auf dem Heimweg erquickte mich ein herrliches Fiaschetto Velletri in einer ländlichen Osterie. Wie altgewohnt sieht da Alles aus im Vergleich mit der fluchwürdig gewordenen Straße, ehemals Via Flaminia, von Porta del Popolo aus! wo das herrliche Rococo-Casino rechts bis auf kleine Trümmer verschwunden und *ein* vierstöckiges Scheusal neben dem andern entstanden ist! —.” Burckhardt, to Max Alioth August 23, 1883.

past.¹⁷⁵ But where Freud may have highlighted the degree to which such pasts could be submerged and repressed by the surface experiences of the present—though he chooses the “eternal city” precisely because its pasts are visible and cannot be completely subsumed—Burckhardt’s strolls through Rome suggest an urban experience that actively undermines such repressions and radically relativizes the claims of any privileged present—modern or otherwise, personal or otherwise. Indeed, following Freud, if the city could be analogized with a “psychical entity”, then Burckhardt’s Rome is one where repressed pasts bubble up and announce themselves with an extreme clarity and frequency. From this perspective, the urban geography of Rome is one uniquely characterized by, and suffused with, the uncanny intrusions of the past into the present. It is no accident after all that Freud, in his essay on the topic, illustrates the sense of

^{175c} . . . in mental life nothing which has been once formed can perish . . . everything is somehow preserved and . . . in suitable circumstances (when, for instance, regression goes back far enough) it can once more be brought to light. Let us try to grasp what this assumption involves by taking an analogy from another field. We will choose as an example the history of the Eternal City . . .
. . . Let us, by a flight of imagination, suppose that Rome is not a human habitation but a psychical entity with a similarly long and copious past—an entity, that is to say, in which nothing that has once come into existence will have passed away and all the earlier phases of development continue to exist alongside the latest one. This would mean that in Rome the palaces of the Caesars and the Septizonium of Septimius Severus would still be rising to their old height on the Palatine and that the castle of S. Angelo would still be carrying on its battlements the beautiful statues which graced it until the siege by the Goths, and so on. But more than this. In the place occupied by the Palazzo Caffarelli would once more stand—without the palazzo having to be removed—the Temple of Jupiter Capitolinus; and this not only in its latest shape, as the Romans of the Empire saw it, but also in its earliest one, when it still showed Etruscan forms and was ornamented with terra-cotta antefixes. Where the Coliseum now stands we could at the same time admire Nero’s vanished Golden House. On the Piazza of the Pantheon we should find not only the Pantheon of today, as it was bequeathed to us by Hadrian, but, on the same site, the original edifice erected by Agrippa; indeed, the same piece of ground would be supporting the church of Santa Maria sopra Minerva and the ancient temple over which it was built. And the observer would perhaps only have to change the direction of his glance or his position in order to call up the one view or the other . . .
Perhaps we are going too far in this. Perhaps we ought to content ourselves with asserting that what is past in mental life may be preserved and is not necessarily destroyed. It is always possible that even in the mind some of what is old is effaced or absorbed—whether in the normal course of things or as an exception—to such an extent that it cannot be restored or revived by any means; or that preservation in general is dependent on certain favorable conditions. It is possible, but we know nothing about it. We can only hold fast to the fact that it is rather the rule than the exception for the past to be preserved in mental life. Thus we are perfectly willing to acknowledge that the ‘oceanic’ feeling exists in many people, and we are inclined to trace it back to an early phase of ego-feeling.” Sigmund Freud, *Civilization and Its Discontents*, New York: Norton, 2005), 16-20.

repetition and uncertainty that he linked to the uncanny with an anecdote in which he becomes hopelessly lost in the labyrinthine streets of an Italian city. To be sure, it would be a mistake to shoehorn these later Freudian reflections into the much earlier Roman ruminations of Burckhardt, ruminations that were neither thematized nor theorized as explicitly as they would be in the subsequent psychoanalytic literature. Nevertheless, Freud's Roman metaphor captures well the uncanny experience of historical crisis, as both an urban and subjective phenomenon, in which the present becomes conscious of its own fragile mastery of its pasts, in which the most recent scribblings on the palimpsests of city and ego find themselves nearly overwhelmed by the graffiti of a vast and only partially concealed historical text. And for Burckhardt, as for Freud, Rome becomes an urban emblem of this very predicament, an allegory that captures a space of tension that opens up between the never fully adequate representations of the present and the never fully visible contours of the past.

From this vantage point, Burckhardt's mania for photography emerges in a somewhat different light. Following Kracauer's reflections on the nature of photographic representation, reflections that configured the medium as an extension and amplification of the tensions in allegorical representation, Burckhardt's fascination with mechanical reproduction and his mania for collecting assume the intriguing form of characteristically Baroque representational strategies. For if the seventeenth century saw the pervasive embrace of allegorical representation as a means of capturing the metaphysical and epistemological antinomies of its own era—historicity and eternity, soul and flesh—the abstracted representations of nineteenth-century photography likewise announced a strategy to confront its own antinomies of present modernity and persistent pasts. Thus,

if the collected images in Kracauer's illustrated magazines occupied a similar functional position as did the emblem books of the seventeenth century, then one could say that the photograph carries out the same task as the allegory in the Baroque. In this sense, photography reveals itself as the expression of an era that is both hyper-conscious and dreamily self-deluded about the distances increasingly opened up between representation of the past and the experience of history. In the latter instance, the photograph speaks of a state of misrecognition to the degree that it purports and claims to capture a transparent and objective reality, a past moment *wie es eigentlich gewesen*. In photography's claim to secure the authentic presence of the represented subject matter, a pacification of the past that delivers a once recalcitrant history in an image of pure visibility, the medium announces a dreamed of solution to the uncertainties of historical reflection, and the tensions between past and present. In the former case, the photograph announces a hyper-consciousness of the past to the degree that it reveals its character as a representational strategy, as a sign that points to, but cannot truly make present its designated and depicted referent. It is of course this dual nature of the photograph, claiming unmediated presence of the subject even while operating as a thoroughly mediated sign, that has prompted subsequent theorists to describe its curiously uncanny nature; the images in photographs appear to us as ghostlike apparitions, present in some significant sense to the viewer, but also a reminder of what is irretrievably absent, distant and other.

Like the Baroque allegory, in other words, the photograph can be understood as signifying representation stretched to an extreme limit, its abstracted images tensely holding together past and present, sign and referent, in a context where the distances

between these appear to be ever widening. Where the abstract seventeenth-century allegory permitted the representation of a metaphysical relation, however tenuous, between the ideality of spirit and the materiality of the flesh, the photograph likewise presents an abstraction that purports to restore an historical relation between past and present. But in this fashion, the photograph may also share with allegory the same status as a ruination of representation (and representation of ruin), both in the supposedly inadequate or incomplete delivery of its referent, and in the corollary that it requires the intervention of historically situated interpretation. Similar to the ruin or the allegory (or the Baroque allegorical representation of the ruin), the photograph hovers ambivalently between claims of both preservation and transience, the eternal and the ephemeral, its own material state of ruination or incompleteness paradoxically becoming the sign for a lost totality or ideality. Indeed, like the allegory in its relation to seventeenth century metaphysics, the photograph becomes the strategy of choice for an era confronted with similar antinomies of meaning making and representation—not ones, in this instance, of heaven and earth, but instead of past and present.

Seen in this light, Burckhardt's late mania for collecting photographs can be explained not only in terms of pedagogy and preservation, though these were no doubt foremost, but may also speak to a curious representational correspondence between the medium of photography, the ruins of Rome, and a European modernity unsure of its links with the past. For a Burckhardt that had placed such novel emphasis on the importance of the image and of *Anschauung* in relation to the interpretation and representation of the past, photography had to have fascinated as a medium of such reflection. For an historian who once said that, "Wo ich nicht von der Anschauung ausgehen kann, da leiste ich

nichts,” the photograph clearly presented a mode of *Anschauung* whose nature corresponded with his own presentiments about the nature of Rome in particular and European modernity in general. Thus, even while Burckhardt was himself in little doubt about the representational limitations of photography, it nevertheless provided a form of presence even in the midst of historical ruin. “I’m living already in a morass of photographs,” he reflects in a letter from Rome,

and I’m only at the beginning. By and by, however, certain thoughts have occurred to me, not really in relation to me, but in relation to those that come after us: that everything will fade, even while the least lithographic representation lasts; and one will say: if one fades, then just make 1000 more—only the objects themselves are not eternal! And I have seen much in the Camposanto in Pisa that is further destroyed than before, and also in the Palazzo Publico in Siena.¹⁷⁶

Thus, in a world in which everything is doomed eventually to fade, the photograph may come to stand as the only representational signum of a past that is perpetually bleached and faded by the intense light of subsequent presents. But in doing so, in becoming the present sign of a lost history, the photograph also captures the tensions inherent in Burckhardt’s Rome, tensions born of the intimate links between its historical geographies and an historically overdetermined semiotic landscape. In other words, while the photograph may preserve the past, it does so by injecting it into the mediations of the technology and subsequent arrangement and interpretation. Put differently, and somewhat paradoxically, the past is made available, but only on the condition that it is subject to the ravages of abstraction, time and historical reevaluation. Again, like the

¹⁷⁶ Burckhardt, *Briefe*, Vol. 6, 23. “Ich lebe bereits in einem Morast von Photographien und bin doch erst am Anfang. Allgemach kommen mir aber, nicht für mich sondern für die welche nach uns kommen, gewisse Bedenken: das Alles wird verbleichen, während die geringste lithographische Ansicht dauerte; [...] und man wird sagen: wenn eine verbleicht, so macht man 1000 neue — allein die Objecte selbst sind nicht ewig! und ich habe im Camposanto zu Pisa Manches viel zerstörter angetroffen als früher, auch im Palazzo pubblico zu Siena.”

ruin, Burckhardt's photographs preserve the past only to the extent that they also reveal their ever increasing distance from that past. The photograph may capture the historical object or event, but does so only at the price of rendering this object as a sign, a representation or cipher.

Conversely, it can be argued that, for Burckhardt, it was precisely this ruined and mediated character of the photograph that made it such an attractive mode of representation for a Rome that was similarly defined by ruination and unstable historicity. For Rome itself, in the 1870's and 1880's, was not only an ancient city filled with signs and wonders from a multitude of epochs, it was also a place clearly embarking on its own confrontation with European urban modernity. What made Rome's pasts so accessible and insistent, the dense and visible juxtaposition of its various histories, were precisely the same features that made photography an attractive representational medium. For in its own uncanniness, the photograph also captured the curious uncanniness of Roman landscapes, the simultaneous presence and absence of history and its ghosts. And while for a Leopold von Ranke, this representational mode would perhaps not have reached the threshold necessary to see the past as it really was, an aging Burckhardt may have found in this inadequacy the perfect visual emblem for an historical moment that resolutely resisted capture from a single historical vantage point, and a landscape where history perpetually dissolved from objects into signs.

Thus, very much like those sweeping curves and folds of the seventeenth century, Burckhardt's fascination with photography and the baroque finds him veering ever closer to closing the circle that began with his youthful experiments with the emblems of the *Antiquities*. But even more immediate is the way in which his nomadic collection of

photographs comes near to establishing a new harmony that re-territorializes national history onto the level of European cultural history. And to a degree, as his pedagogical and preservational pronouncements indicate, this is true to a significant extent. From his *Grossdeutsch* beginnings, Burckhardt remained a cosmopolitan concerned with the unity and persistence of pan-European cultural legacies, and to the extent that his unique forms of visual and cultural history disrupted textual and national historical narrative, this was accomplished by foregrounding the contours of civilization in its Western forms.

At the same time, however, the deployment of the concept of the Baroque towards these ends carries with it some strangely paradoxical consequences. For in capturing modernity through the lens of the Baroque, one captures it by means of a concept associated with movement, instability, irony and de-centeredness, a concept by its very nature intent on breaking the frames of every territorializing effort it encounters. Thus, where Spanish colonial power sought to reterritorialize the New World culturally by means of the Baroque, it was in the Latin American Neo-Baroque of the twentieth century that the form was appropriated and redeployed as a form of counter-hegemony. In its insistent protean character, in its unsettled and extravagant motions, the Baroque can thus represent both empire and the nomad. Therefore, even as Burckhardt's Europe comes to an unsettled rest in the tensions and allegorical imagery of the Baroque and the Baroque modern, its nomadic energies and imperatives would reassert in themselves in the coming century.

Part II

The Library and the Archive: Aby Warburg, Sigmund Freud and the Labyrinth of Fin-de-Siècle Italy

Chapter Four

Per Monstrum ad Astra: The Library of Aby Warburg and the Labyrinth of Italy

In 1892, the aging and now celebrated author of the *Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy* received a package from a still young and utterly unknown art historian. The package contained a recently completed dissertation on the topic of stylized ornamentation in the *Primavera* and *Birth of Venus* of Sandro Botticelli, and its author, the eldest son of a major Hamburg banking family, was Aby Warburg. “The fine work,” wrote Jacob Burckhardt in a characteristically generous but reserved response, “that I here return to you demonstrates the tremendous depth and multi-dimensionality that research on the Renaissance has reached.”¹⁷⁷ This brief moment of personal contact between Burckhardt and Warburg, only a few years before the 1897 death of the former, nevertheless marks the beginning of the long career of the latter, a career whose contours would be decisively informed by the work of the Basel historian and a similar fascination with the significance of Italy in the cultural history of European modernity. If Italy had been a territory of decisive personal and professional orientation for Jacob Burckhardt, it was likewise for Warburg charged with symbolic overtones of breaks with disciplinary tradition, religious faith, familial expectations, and national historiographies. For it was in pursuit of an education in the field of art history, a career path that steered the eldest

¹⁷⁷ Jacob Burckhardt, *Briefe*, Vol. 10, 65. “Die schöne Arbeit welche ich mit bestem Dank zurücksende, zeugt von der ungemainen Vertiefung und Vielseitigkeit welche die Erforschung der Höhezeiten der Renaissance erreicht hat.”

Warburg son away from a Rabbinical calling or a leading role in the banking business, that Warburg first journeyed to Italy to participate in August Schmarsow's 1888 Florence seminar.¹⁷⁸ But the impact of the Italian experience would extend far beyond uncertain early attempts at liberation from family obligations and the establishment of an independent professional identity. Warburg met his future wife, Mary Hertz, an artist and daughter of a Hamburg senator, during this early sojourn, and once married in 1895, the couple set up residence once again in Florence until 1903. Indeed, it was likewise in Florence that Warburg began his first researches in the issue of the relation between the Renaissance and its reception of pagan antiquity—a dissertation on the theme of movement and fluttering garments in Botticelli's *Primavera* and *Birth of Venus*.¹⁷⁹ This theme, in turn, of the complex interpenetrations of tradition, mythology, past history and present experience would become the lodestar guiding and prompting him through his subsequent geographical and intellectual journeys. As he would later describe himself, in a phrase of simultaneous self-description and self-dispersal, and in a formulation that captures a sense of what we might call his characteristically nomadic identity, Warburg was, “Ebreo di Sangue, Amburghese di Cuore, d'Anima Fiorentino.”¹⁸⁰

It seems fitting, therefore, that that we introduce the intellectual wanderings and cartographies of Warburg by way of an anecdote from Burckhardt's later life, a Roman encounter of the Basel historian who inaugurated a new era of Renaissance research and similarly sojourned across boundaries of geographical, disciplinary and methodological

¹⁷⁸ Hans W. Hubert, *Das Kunsthistorische Institut in Florenz. Von der Gründung bis zum hundertjährigen Jubiläum (1897-1997)* (Florence: Ventilabro, 1997).

¹⁷⁹ Aby Warburg, *Gesammelte Schriften* (Nendeln, Liechtenstein: Kraus Reprint, 1969).

¹⁸⁰ Gertrud Bing, “Aby Warburg,” in *Aby Warburg. Ausgewählte Schriften Und Würdigungen*, Dieter Wuttke and Carl Georg Heise eds. (Baden-Baden: V. Koerner, 1979). “Jewish by blood, Hamburger at heart, Florentine in spirit.”

territories. In a letter written during his 1875 journey to Rome, and between passages describing the successes and frustrations of his growing photographic collection, Jacob Burckhardt related the following anecdote to the Basel painter and architect, Max Alioth:

It was touching today in the great hall of the Capitoline Museum, where the Centaurs stand; it was a public day and Romans of lesser means were also strolling about; a good older woman accompanied by a child asked me with some shock: where is it that such creatures could be found? And I had to reassure her that these *immaginazioni de' scultori seien, perchè*, I added, *sarebbe di troppo l'intelligenza dell' uomo insieme colla forza del cavallo*. But isn't it a wonderful thing to sculpt for a people that takes even the most venturesome things for real? A people that perhaps holds even feminine allegorical figures to be saintly personages. While in the North, every child knows a priori that art is only a lark.¹⁸¹

For a brief moment, in the nineteenth-century precincts of the Capitoline museum, the Basel Ordinarius thus presents himself in the midst of a modern battle of centaurs, a contemporary Theseus rescuing the Lapith women from the terrifying threat of the centaur beast-men. In this instance, however, the instruments of victory are not sword and shield, but a demystifying and rational *Besonnenheit* (detachment, deliberateness) or *Denkraum* (space of thought or contemplation) that unmask the strange figures as nothing more than the fevered products of artistic and mythological imagination. But while vanquishing one set of mythologies, Burckhardt nevertheless inscribes another in its place. For in the space of only a few lines, Burckhardt reproduces a complex mythic geography of European enlightened modernity, a topography richly inflected by discourses of gender, class and nation. This modern Theseus, as always a figure of

¹⁸¹ Burckhardt, *Briefe*, Vol. 6, 22-23. "Ganz rührend war's heute im großen Saal des Museo capitolino, wo die Centauren stehen; es war Öffnungstag und auch armes Volk von Rom lief herum; eine gute alte Frau mit einem Kind fragte mich ganz erschrocken, wo solche Creaturen vorkämen? und ich mußte sie beruhigen daß dieß nur *immaginazioni de' scultori seien, perchè*, fügte ich weise hinzu, *sarebbe di troppo l'intelligenza dell' uomo insieme colla forza del cavallo*. Aber ist es nicht eine herrliche Sache, für ein Volk zu weißeln, das auch das Kühnste für wirklich hält? das vielleicht noch die allegorischen weiblichen Figuren für sante persone hält? während ja im Norden jedes Kind a priori weiß, daß die Kunst nur Spaß sei."

civilizing energy, here emerges from an enlightened north to penetrate the labyrinth of myth and release the Italian woman and child of little means into the light of a demystified history. The spell is once again broken, civilization is once again rescued from fearsome superstition, and the slain monsters resolve themselves once more into stone.

Thus, even in the hands of a scholar singularly alert to the various siren songs of modernity and carefully distanced from the more voluptuous lures of religion, myth and history, the most modern narrative of enlightenment cannot outpace its uncanny shadow companion: myth. The self-cultivated gaze of allegorically inclined distance, towards which we saw Burckhardt groping in the preceding chapter, seems haunted by presence of an uncanny mythic supplement, a repressed mysticism that returns in the very narrative of demystification. Of course, as a scholar constitutionally unable to share the triumphalist currents of nineteenth-century historicism and positivism, Burckhardt was well aware of the dark margins that necessarily hover around even the most brilliant of lights and most enlightened ages. If the age of Constantine had its barbarian hoards in the shadowed regions beyond the *Limes*, and if the creative efflorescence of the Italian Renaissance had its counterpart in the egoism of unleashed individuality, the era of European late modernity likewise had its own dark recesses, its own demons and monsters which no enlightenment could ever truly and completely exorcise. Thus, though drawn together by a common apprehension of these shadowed regions of the modern, Burckhardt eventually cultivated a careful distance between himself and, for example, the younger Nietzsche whose exploration and embrace of chthonic domains took on dimensions that came to alarm his older Basel colleague. In the concluding remarks of a

1928 Hamburg seminar on Jacob Burckhardt, the Hamburg art historian Aby Warburg would indulge in a bit of myth-making of his own:

Burckhardt was a necromancer, with his eyes open. Thus he conjured up spectres which quite seriously threatened him. He evaded them by erecting his observation tower. He is a seer such as Lynkeus (in Goethe's *Faust*); he sits in his tower and speaks ... he was and remained a champion of enlightenment but one who never desired to be anything but a simple teacher.¹⁸²

As with *Faust's* Lynkeus, Burckhardt's visions are penetrating and far-reaching, but his gaze is one that insists on a well maintained distance between the observer and the world he surveys. And indeed, from his well protected tower post in Basel, the historian preserved a critical and aesthetic distance from the world below, only too well aware that the sculpture viewed from the tower comes to life once again as the fearsome centaur when observed with too much intimacy.

It is more than a little ironic, therefore, that the work of this Lynkeus of Basel, undertaken from a posture of well-guarded critical distance and ironic ambivalence, should have helped inaugurate the late nineteenth-century enthusiasms that swirled around the reception of the Italian Renaissance and its European counterparts. "As a result," notes one observer, it was at precisely this moment that, "the old qualifying phrase, *renaissance des beaux arts* gradually gave way to the more definitely periodic term *la Renaissance*, which was also used adjectively to denote a type or style of art."¹⁸³

With the appearance of Burckhardt's *Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy* in 1860, the concept of the Renaissance underwent an important transformation, one

¹⁸² Warburg Institute Archive (WIA), III, 110. 4. Burckhardt und Nietzsche. See also E. H. Gombrich, *Aby Warburg: an Intellectual Biography* (London: The Warburg Institute, 1970), 255; Joseph Mali, *Mythistory: The Making of a Modern Historiography* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003), 181.

¹⁸³ Wallace Ferguson, *The Renaissance in Historical Thought* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1948), 144.

characterized curiously by both consolidation and dispersal. On the one hand, despite his well documented allergy to the mixture of history with Hegelianism or speculative philosophy of any sort, the life that Burckhardt breathed into the Renaissance was animated not a little by the spiritual powers of *Zeitgeist*. As a consequence, the Italian Renaissance was instantly transformed from an historical syndrome, a loose collection of coincident phenomena, and consolidated into to an expressive cultural totality, a well defined age whose various elements were unified internally and organically. On the other hand, Burckhardt's exclusive focus on the Italian Renaissance and its relation to Western antiquity had the paradoxical effect of making the era a phenomenon of truly cosmopolitan interest. Thus, whereas Michelet had presented *la Renaissance* as a chapter of a national narrative, a revolutionary break from the benighted epoch of the French Middle Ages, Burckhardt resituated the Renaissance as a moment in the history of Western modernity, a transition whose aftershocks were still being felt throughout European civilization. If historians are sometimes said to "make history come alive", then it is doubtless to Burckhardt that we can charge with the nineteenth-century "rebirth" of the Renaissance.¹⁸⁴

¹⁸⁴ Of course, an appreciation of the relatively distinct set of aesthetic and historical phenomena that would eventually become associated with the term "Renaissance" had been remarked upon well before Burckhardt, observers from the era of Vasari until the eighteenth-century had long been intrigued by the Italian Quattrocento and Cinquecento. But it was not until the first half of the nineteenth century that the concept of the Renaissance, as a relatively well-defined and coherent historical period, became firmly established. Thus, the seventh volume of Jules Michelet's *History of France* (1833-1862), entitled *La Renaissance*, treated sixteenth-century France, and was one of the earliest works to examine the age as a distinct era historical period rather than simply an assemblage of aesthetic categories and observations. Indeed, whereas still other progenitors of the modern conception of the Renaissance can be found in a variety of areas, including Sismondi, Stendhal and even in early Ruskin, its delimitation as an historical moment distinct from the middle ages and terminating at some point in the mid-sixteenth century appears to have gathered impetus from Romantic, but particularly Hegelian, currents that were penetrating historical thought in the first half of the nineteenth century. See the still very useful and informative Wallace Ferguson, *The Renaissance in Historical Thought*.

As with any good gothic tale, where the necromancer or inventor is doomed to see his creations take on a life of their own, even one carefully secured behind the walls of his observation tower. In this instance, the Renaissance, which Burckhardt had constructed in his compact 1860 volume, quickly took on a life of its own in the second half of the nineteenth century, and became a key generative element in the various Renaissance revivals that extended to the turn of the century and beyond. On the one hand, and coinciding with the increasing professionalization of humanities scholarship during the era, Burckhardt's work became a spur to research in an ever expanding realm of academic Renaissance studies. Burckhardt's Renaissance emerged as an undiscovered continent of historical interest, its revelation soon followed by the colonization of specialists from a variety of disciplines and fields. More remarkable, and partly in response to the popular reception of Burckhardt's work, was the way in which late nineteenth-century interest in the Renaissance extended beyond both "legitimate" disciplinary and scholarly boundaries. Indeed, while Burckhardt had maintained in his later years a friendly though distanced relation and curiosity about Nietzsche, the former's Renaissance had found a mutual resonance with the work of the latter in the cultural phenomena of *Renaissancismus* or *Renaissancekult*, by the last decade of the century. Drawn into this constellation of cultural fascination with the Renaissance were not only *fin-de-siècle* discourses of aestheticism and decadence, but also currents of nineteenth-century racialism and nationalism. Where the former were most visible in British aestheticism, represented by figures such as Walter Pater and John Addington Symonds, the threads of the latter extend from Gobineau's reactionary *La Renaissance* of

1877 to the Renaissance dramas of Gabrielle d'Annunzio.¹⁸⁵ In all these instances, however, it the lure of the Renaissance was one in which Burckhardt's vision was strongly inflected by the work of Nietzsche, an epoch of extravagant amorality and a landscape of *Übermenschen* who acted "beyond good and evil." From within the well-determined confining spaces of bourgeois social life and ethical propriety, so well described by the later work of Walter Benjamin, the Renaissance became a magic mirror in which was reflected the repressed double identity of the *fin-de-siècle*, a looking glass beckoning with the image and promise of a world defined by passion and power rather than Victorian convention.¹⁸⁶

A strange creation indeed for a Burckhardt who had always sought a resigned and critical distance from the images he brought to life in the *Civilization of the Renaissance*. By the time of his death in 1897, the enthusiasms of his younger colleague had become a generalized cultural phenomenon, and the uncanny visitor in the form of *Renaissancismus* had taken on a spectral life of its own. Not only had the Renaissance become an object of historical, sociological, and aesthetic interest, but the voluptuous image of its reception had come to suffuse cultural production of every sort, from

¹⁸⁵ See in this relation: Gerd Uekermann, *Renaissancismus und Fin-de-Siècle: Die italienische Renaissance in der deutschen Dramatik der letzten Jahrhundertwende* (New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1985); Reinhardt, *Jacob Burckhardt und die Erfindung der Renaissance. Ein Mythos und seine Geschichte*. For German and nationally inflected versions of the Renaissance see: Karl Brandi, *Das Werden der Renaissance* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1910); Konrad Burdach, *Reformation. Renaissance. Humanismus* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1963). For a more international contextualization see Hilary Fraser, *The Victorians and Renaissance Italy* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1992); Walter Pater, *The Renaissance* (New York: Modern Library, 1873); John Addington Symonds, *Renaissance in Italy; the Fine Arts* (Gloucester, MA: P. Smith, 1967); Arthur Gobineau, *The Renaissance* (London: W. Heinemann, 1913).

¹⁸⁶ Walter Benjamin, *Arcades Project*, ed. Rolf Tiedemann, trans. Howard Eiland and Kevin McLaughlin (Cambridge: Belknap Press, 2002), 212. "The nineteenth century, like no other century, was addicted to dwelling. It conceived the residence as a receptacle for the person, and it encased him with all his appurtenances so deeply in the dwelling's interior that one might be reminded of the inside of a compass case, where the instrument with all its accessories lies embedded in deep, usually violet folds of velvet."

architecture and design to the arts and popular literature. Indeed, if Burckhardt had himself long gazed into the mirror of the Renaissance for portents of a troubled modernity, the turn of the century saw the Renaissance cult lose sense of the boundary between self and reflected image; viewed from the careful distance of a tower retreat, the seductive images of Borgias, Sforzas, Medicis remained a heuristically useful allegory, but when gazed on too long, and with too much intimacy, the boundary between real world and looking glass world began to disappear. As with the Centaurs in the Capitoline Museum, an unreflective gaze could easily find the stone of sculpture transformed once again into the fleshly terror of strange monsters.

What is particularly striking, however, in this phenomenon of Renaissance enthusiasm, is the way in which the emergence of European modernisms was accompanied contemporaneously by persistent spectral apparitions of European pasts. Indeed, in works from Marx's *Eighteenth Brumaire*, to those of Aby Warburg, Sigmund Freud and Walter Benjamin, the new spaces of modernity seem inevitably and invariably haunted by spirits of their various histories. Whether as tragedy or as farce, the past appeared to erupt precisely at the points where modernity insisted on its essential rupture with the tissues that marked its historicity. In this larger sense, European modernity is itself haunted by an uncanny *Doppelgänger*, a repressed past forever reemerging in the cultures of nineteenth-century Parisian neo-classicism, in the political theater of the Second Empire, or in the *ur*-drives of psychoanalytic subjectivity. Indeed, the very concept of modernity, its vision of a utopian release from the mill-stone of its accumulated pasts, invariably provokes and invokes the very spirits it seeks to exorcise, the past perpetually reemerging as a returning supplement in the discourses of newness

and novelty. Thus, as definitions of post-modernity are forever tangled up with modernity as its repressed other, so too did modernity and its modernisms rest uncertainly on the founding absence of its own historicity. But it is from within this shadowy space of absence that the distorted echoes of an uncanny past return. Even in the most brilliant spaces of enlightened modernity, from the Capitoline Museum to the Paris Arcades, one can find a centaur stirring, a mirror surface dissolving and a past that refuses to sleep.

Therefore, even as he described with admiration the careful gestures of distance with which Burckhardt pursued his historical necromancy, Aby Warburg invokes the counter example of Nietzsche in the same seminar summation above. Where Burckhardt here seems to recognize the seduction of the historical powers and currents which he was summoning, a recognition resulting in his carefully constructed ramparts of irony and Basel provincialism, Warburg presents Nietzsche as one who refused the protection of a similar Lynkean tower. Ironically, from Warburg's perspective, the philosopher who had called for a critical rather than antiquarian or monumental history had listened too intently and too long to the signals of the past. As Warburg puts it:

We have to recognize Burckhardt and Nietzsche as receivers of mnemonic waves, and that the awareness they had of the world was arrived at in very different ways. [...] Both are very sensitive seismographs that resonate down to their foundations when they receive and transmit these waves. But an important difference: Burckhardt received these waves from the world of the past, and he felt the dangerous tremors they made. In response, he took care to strengthen the foundations of his seismograph. [...] What type of seer is Nietzsche? His type is that of the Nabi of the ancient prophets, who runs through the streets, rends his garments, shouts "woe!" and perhaps leads the people behind him. His originary gesture is that of the leader with the Thyros staff who demands that all follow him. From this, his observations on dance. In Jacob Burckhardt and Nietzsche, two ancient types of seer collide in the border region between Romanic and Germanic worlds. The question is: whether each type of seer can survive the shock and agitations of his vocation. [...] Two pastor's sons stand in very different relation to the sense of the divine in the world: one of these feels the

diabolical breath of a demon of nihilism and secures himself in a tower. And the other, wishes to make common cause with these spirits.¹⁸⁷

In a language thus also suffused with metaphors of myth and biblical mystery, Warburg describes a vision of the past whose reception and recording carries with it both the possibility for critical enlightenment and the threat of a history that veers dangerously into the orbit of myth. Far from being stranded in the present, Warburg's Renaissance and Warburg's modernity were awash in the traces, echoes, 'mnemic waves' and images transmitted by an ever-present past. And for a Warburg that fought his own battles against mental illness, battles waged with enormous suffering only several years before the seminar noted above, the problem of integrating the spectral powers of historical memory into the realm of the present was a task of utmost personal and professional significance.

But the phenomenon of the Renaissance cult is intriguing not merely as a particularly colorful moment in the larger pattern of modernity's ambivalent, and sometimes schizophrenic, manner of self-representation and self-definition. In the cultural landscape of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the uncanny mirror of the Renaissance itself presented a double aspect to those who would look within it. As we've seen, the reflected image of the Renaissance was occasion for reflections and

¹⁸⁷ WIA, III, 110. 4. Burckhardt und Nietzsche. "Wir müssen Burckhardt und Nietzsche als auffänger der mnemischen Wellen erkennen und sehen, dass das, was sie als Weltbewusstsein haben, sie beide in ganz anderer Weise ergreift. [...] Beide sind sehr empfindliche Seismographen, die in ihren Grundfesten beben, wenn sie die Wellen empfangen und weitergeben müssen. Aber ein großer Unterschied: Burckhardt hat die Wellen aus der Region der Vergangenheit empfangen, hat die gefährlichen Erschütterung gefühlt und dafür gesorgt, dass das Fundament seines Seismographen gestärkt wurde. [...] Welcher Sehertypus ist Nietzsche? Er ist der Typus eines Nabi, des alten Propheten, der auf der Straße läuft, sich die Kleider zerreißt, Wehe schreit, und das Volk vielleicht hinter her leitet. Seine ursprüngliche Geste ist die des Führers mit dem Thyrosstab, der sich Gefolgschaft Alle zwingt. Daher seine Bemerkungen zum Tanz. Es prallen in Jacob Burckhardt und Nietzsche in diesem Grenzgebiet zwischen Romanismus und Germanismus die uralten Sehertypen zusammen. Die Frage ist, ob der Sehertypus die Erschütterung des Berufes aushalten kann. [...] Zwei Pastorsöhne, die zum Gefühl Gottes in der Welt ganz anders stehen: der eine, der den dämonischen Hauch des Vernichtungsdämons fühlt und sich in einen Turm setzt, und der andere, der mit ihm gemeinsame Sache machen will."

meditations on the nature and possibilities that lay concealed or repressed beneath the veneers of bourgeois modernity. On the other hand, the vision of the Renaissance could also be configured as a drama of historical reception. For while the age of the *Condottiere*, of titanic artistic talent, and of brutal political genius could be construed by some as an inspiring tableau of a lost authenticity, a liberated space of aristocratic egoism, the Renaissance could also reflect the present as a moment likewise troubled by desires for historical rupture and yet haunted by the figure of historical tradition. In this sense, interest in Renaissance was not only a delirium brought on by the return of modernity's repressed pasts, but could also become a model for understanding the interpenetration of past and present at moments of apparent historical rupture. For beside the aesthetic construction of the self and state, with which Burckhardt had so closely linked the Italian Renaissance, the Basel historian (and many others) had presented the age also as a confrontation with, and reception of, the legacies of classical antiquity.

Viewed from this perspective, however, our looking-glass Renaissance quickly slips from the simply curious to the realm of the truly curiouser. Indeed, in this shift of vision, from a Renaissance reflected in the gaze of modernity to a Renaissance itself reflecting on antiquity, the seductive historical double that haunted the consciousness of modernity reveals itself as phenomenon similarly haunted by its pasts. The drama of the Renaissance in turn emerges as the stage of its own reflections on the drama of antiquity, and modernity observes while the Italian *Quattrocento* and *Cinquecento* observe antiquity. In the strange moment of double *endoublement*—where the ghost of the past is pursued by its own persistent uncanny shadow—a degree of reflective distance opens

once again in the reception of the Renaissance in particular, and historicity in general. The Renaissance genius is presented here not as a moment of possible authenticity, not as an object of either desire or dread for the modern onlooker, but as an actor himself, an actor who plays a role on a stage not of his own design and driven by an historical plot written by an alien hand. Indeed, from the manner in which we have previously discussed the terms, the Renaissance might be said to undergo a transformation from a field of symbolic desire to a more distanced (or abstracted) allegorical representation of the modern historical consciousness. Here again, the centaur may stir and the frame is broken, but in this case the beast's movements betray its own representational character. Like pieces of alienated Brechtian stagecraft, the images of the past here demand not the emotional investment of the audience, but enforce instead a space of detached reflection. Authenticity and utopia resolve into artifice and theater.

While the aging Hamburg art historian Aby Warburg could reflect with circumspection on the figure of Burckhardt in his 1927 seminar, long after the enthusiasms of *fin-de-siècle* Renaissance reception had run their course, it was nevertheless at the height of these historical fever dreams that he began his career as a scholar and collector. Indeed, if there can be said to be a red thread that runs through Warburg's career—an intellectual biography that often seems intent on atomizing itself into a dizzy profusion of details, fragments, stops and starts—then it is one that winds itself around the issue of Europe's pasts and the way they continue to haunt and revisit its various presents. Thus if Warburg's primary interest was in the "renewal of pagan antiquity," the question was one bound up with questions about modernity's historicity, the manner in which any historical present could never quite exorcise the ghosts of its

various pasts. Through his explorations of the Renaissance, and in the observations of his present, Warburg sought to trace the ways in which modernity still resonated with tremors and traces of pasts from which it could not disentangle itself. But as his reflections on Burckhardt and Nietzsche indicate, Warburg was likewise convinced that such historical tremors, traces and resonances carried ambivalent and uncertain signals in the modulations of their frequencies and amplitudes. For the messages of the past, received in the present and recorded by the seismographic work of the historian, could speak in the tongues of either angel or demon, and could assume either Apollonian or Dionysian form. For Warburg, therefore, a sensitivity to the manner in which the past pervades the present could yield a gesture of enlightenment or signal the uncanny return of long repressed cultural atavisms.¹⁸⁸

¹⁸⁸ It is interesting to note that the subsequent reception of Warburg has similarly followed a pattern of tensions between interpretations that attempt to recapture either an Apollonian or a Dionysian Warburg. The former is best represented in Ernst Gombrich geography. E. H. Gombrich, *Aby Warburg: An Intellectual Biography* (London: The Warburg Institute, 1970). In a well known riposte to Gombrich's more positivistic and scientifically disciplined Warburg, Edgar Wind responded in an essay that is now contained in Aby Warburg, *Ausgewählte Schriften und Würdigungen*, ed. Dieter Wuttke and Carl Georg Heise (Baden-Baden: V. Koerner, 1979). On the other hand, Philippe-Alain Michaud reconstructs a more mobile, dispersive and Dionysian Warburg, and connects these to contemporary developments in modernist cinema. See Philippe-Alain Michaud, *Aby Warburg and the Image in Motion*, trans. Sophie Hawkes (New York: Zone Books, 2004). Otherwise, the contemporary reception of Warburg began around the same time as the reemergence of Benjamin in the 1960's. In more recent developments, interest in Warburg has been amplified by contemporary currents of culturally-oriented history, questions of cultural memory, and literatures surrounding the field of visual studies. For instance see: Dorothee Bauerle, *Gespensstergeschichten für ganz Erwachsene. Ein Kommentar zu Aby Warburgs Bilderatlas Mnemosyne*, vol. 15, Kunstgeschichte (Munster: Lit, 1988); Horst Bredekamp, ed., *Aby Warburg: Akten Des Internationalen Symposions, Hamburg 1990* Schriften des Warburg-Archivs im Kunstgeschichtlichen Seminar der Universität Hamburg; Vol. 1 (Weinheim: VCH, 1991); Michael Diers, Thomas Girst, and Dorothea von Moltke, "Warburg and the Warburgian Tradition of Cultural History," *New German Critique*, no. 65, Cultural History/Cultural Studies (1995); Silvia Ferretti, *Cassirer, Panofsky, and Warburg: Symbol, Art, and History*, trans. Richard Pierce (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989); Kurt W. Forster, "Aby Warburg's History of Art: Collective Memory and the Social Mediation of Images," *Daedalus* 105 (1976); Beatrice Hanssen, "Portrait of Melancholy (Benjamin, Warburg, Panofsky)," *MLN* 114, no. 5, Comparative Literature Issue (1999); Werner Hofmann, Georg Syamken, and Martin Warnke, *Die Menschenrechte des Auges: Über Aby Warburg* (Frankfurt a.M.: Europäische Verlagsanstalt, 1980); Dieter Wuttke, *Dazwischen : Kulturwissenschaft Auf Warburgs Spuren*, 2 vols. (Baden-Baden: V. Koerner, 1996); Dieter Wuttke, *Aby M. Warburg-Bibliographie 1866 bis 1995: Werk und Wirkung* (Baden-Baden: V. Koerner, 1998); Roland Kany, *Mnemosyne als Programm: Geschichte, Erinnerung und die Andacht zum*

For Warburg, in other words, the fascination with the past—its images, texts, traces and relics—possessed the double resonance of familiar (and familial) territorial safety and nomadic transgression. On the one hand, the texts, images and territories through which he travelled can be understood as a seductive refuge in moments of personal anguish. On the other hand such experiences could carry him into strange and disconcerting regions, from terrifying images in an illustrated Balzac volume to a life beyond the comfortable certainties of the familial sphere. Throughout Warburg's life, therefore, the visions and representations he explored seemed to vibrate with a sense of both seductive wonder and a nagging sense of dread and pathos. Describing one such image laden experience, in a childhood memory during an illness of his mother, Warburg relates:

A single visit to the bedside of my poor and distracted-looking mother, the company of an inferior Jewish-Austrian student who had to function as my tutor, made for an atmosphere of inner despair which came to a climax when my grandfather arrived and said: 'Pray for your mother', whereupon we sat down on suitcases with Hebrew prayer-books and rattled out something. Two things served as counterpoise to these deeply disturbing events: a grocery shop downstairs, where, for the first time, we could contravene the dietary laws and eat sausages, and a lending library which was full of stories about Red Indians. I devoured these books in masses, for they obviously offered a means of withdrawing from a depressing reality in which I was quite helpless ... the emotion of pain found an outlet in fantasies of romantic cruelty. This was my inoculation against active cruelty.¹⁸⁹

Warburg's memories of these experiences thus echo many of the same themes that emerged in his reflections on Burckhardt above. The image of an "elsewhere"—in this

Unbedeutenden im Werk von Usener, Warburg und Benjamin (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 1987); Matthew Rampley, "From Symbol to Allegory: Aby Warburg's Theory of Art," *The Art Bulletin* 79, no. 1, Mar. (1997); Robert Galitz and Brita Reimers, ed., "Aby Warburg: 'Ekstatische Nympe... trauernder Flussgott,'" in *Portrait eines Gelehrten*, ed. Robert Galitz and Brita Reimers, ed. (Hamburg: Doelling und Galitz, 1995).

¹⁸⁹ Gombrich, *Aby Warburg: An Intellectual Biography*. 20.

instance configured in the spatial realms of the American West rather than the temporal terms of an undiscovered past—arises here as a line of flight, a retreat from pain. At the same time, it also emerges as a crossing of boundaries in the form of dietary restrictions and imaginary travels. However, while these “elsewheres” had their lures—as Warburg’s Burckhardt well understood—they also had their costs; while it was true that such images and visions could liberate, they could also overwhelm even the canniest of adventurers. The Nietzschean danger of yielding to such lures was something which Warburg—perhaps recognizing his own tendencies towards melancholy and the fragility of his mental states—seems to have felt with particular acuity throughout his life. Even so, Warburg was perpetually intrigued by the territories that lay just beyond the familiar and the conventional. In secret passages of undiscovered historical currents, in rare and abstruse texts found in unexpected places, in a journey to America that would take him to the most distant spaces of the continent, or in the exotic landscapes of the Italian Renaissance, Warburg was fascinated by these accelerations and deviations into new and indistinct territories. And yet he was also acutely aware of the ways in which this fascination with deterritorialization presented risks and challenges to the integrity of his own psychic and professional life.

As with the catalog of his own passions, the library and institute that would eventually bear his name was at once an attempt to bring order to the fragmented Western cultural memory, and an extra-territorial (and ultimately nomadic in both metaphorical and literal senses) outpost peering into esoteric and exotic regions of the past. The contours of Warburg’s work, in other words, are defined to a great extent by such tensions, the desire to discover the living centaur, and the fear that it may escape its

confinement in the museum, the archive or the library. Indeed, this vision of a library that contains both desires and dangers—a volatile storehouse of the past which can emerge either as a space of enlightenment or as a relentlessly self-ramifying labyrinth—seems to have haunted Warburg throughout his life. As is now part of an accumulating Warburg lore, some of his earliest memories reveal an acute sense of the power of the visual image in his psychic life.¹⁹⁰ In 1873, for example, the six year old Aby had been struck with typhoid fever, and as his brother Max would later recall it, the young Warburg's fever dreams were accompanied by fantastic images come to life from the illustrated pages of Balzac's *Petites miseres de la vie conjugate*, whose pages had so intrigued the youth. But far from discouraging Warburg from further explorations in the books he encountered in the family library—the delicate state of health in which the illness had left the boy required careful monitoring—such textual adventures became the natural outlet for a child protected from more strenuous activities. While such events seem mark out *in nuce* the twin territories of book and image that would come to define the contours of his personal and professional interests, another youthful anecdote—one with similar mythic or biblical overtones—finds Aby Warburg pursuing the passions of reading and looking that would later propel him beyond the confining expectations held for the eldest son of the Warburg family. As his brother Max would again relate, in this instance in the course of a memorial address upon his elder brother's death in 1929:

When he was thirteen, Aby made me an offer of his birthright. He, as the eldest, was destined to enter the firm. I was then only twelve, rather too immature to reflect, and so I agreed to purchase his birthright from him. It was not a pottage of lentils, however, which he demanded, but a promise that I would always buy him all the books he wanted. After a very brief pause for reflection, I consented. I told myself that when I was in the business I could, after all, always find the

¹⁹⁰ Ibid., 18-19.

money to pay for the works of Schiller, Goethe, Lessing and perhaps also Klopstock, and so, unsuspecting, I gave him what I must now admit was a very large blank cheque. The love of reading, of books ... was his early passion¹⁹¹

Lentils or no, when it became clear to the family that Aby was interested neither in a career in the family firm nor in a rabbinical education, but was intent instead on a scholarly career, it was indeed to Max Warburg that fell the duty of leading the family concerns. True to his word, however, the younger brother generously funded the establishment and maintenance of the institution that would eventually become the most lasting legacy of his brother's unconventional scholarly pursuits, the *Kulturwissenschaftlichen Bibliothek* (and later *Institut*) Warburg.

The Warburg family thus remained, for its eldest son, both a foundational territory and a point of departure. The territory of this family can trace its provenance back to at least 1559, when a certain Simon von Cassel, migrated from Hesse to the city of Warburg in Westphalia.¹⁹² By the time of Aby Warburg's birth in 1866, the family had been living in Hamburg, after an extended sojourn in Paderborn, since the late eighteenth century. After the disruptions of the Napoleonic era, and building upon connections with the Rothschild family, the hitherto modestly successful banking fortune of the Warburg's expanded dramatically in the course of the early nineteenth century. Further expanding these emerging possibilities in business and finance, the remnants of Hamburg's legal restrictions on its Jewish inhabitants were lifted in 1868, only two years after the arrival of the first son of Charlotte and Moritz Warburg. A succession of siblings soon followed, with Max Warburg born in 1867, Paul in 1868, and Felix, Olga,

¹⁹¹ Ibid.

¹⁹² Ron Chernow, *The Warburgs: The Twentieth-Century Odyssey of a Remarkable Jewish Family* (New York: Random House, 1993). 3.

Fritz and Louise following in the 1870's. With the beginning of this latter decade, punctuated by the Franco-Prussian War, the family saw its further ascendance in the ranks of the national banking community during the conflict, and proved able to weather the subsequent financial crises with rather more success than many others in similar circumstances. By the beginning of the twentieth century, the family had come to enjoy the fruits of its remarkably astute business acumen. Where Moritz Warburg had helped found the Commerz-Diskonto bank in 1871, his son Max would become a board member of Albert Ballin's Hamburg-American shipping line (HAPAG) and emerge as an advisor to Germany's political and business elites.

During the course of the long nineteenth century, then, the family of Aby Warburg saw its fortunes dramatically rise from a provincial banking concern to a major player in the financial and political landscapes of Imperial Germany. In the face of these expansions of opportunity, the family thus showed an eagerness to explore the more cosmopolitan realms to which it now had access. In relation to this, the Warburgs saw the purview of their activities extending well beyond Germany and Hamburg. While the well travelled Max nearly died during a trip to South Africa, Paul Warburg married into the New York Loeb family, settled in America, and was sworn in as a member of the Federal Reserve Board on the eve of World War I. But the most unconventional traveler—in relation to the spaces of the Warburg family—was Aby Warburg. For if the other siblings found themselves scattered in pursuits on either side of the Atlantic, Aby's journeys were different in the sense that they pierced the boundaries drawn by familial expectations of calling and career. Max Warburg's tale of relinquished birth rights aside, the initial and most conspicuous gesture, by which Aby announced the path he intended

to tread, was his decision to attend university and pursue a career as a scholar and an academic.

Warburg's education and early career, however, resonates not so much as a gesture of Nietzschean flight and Dionysian nomadism, but as one in consonance with the more Apollonian tasks of scientific research and rigorous scholarship. It was thus not to the distant lands of the American "Red Indian" that Warburg initially set off as a student in 1886—a trip that he would eventually make on the occasion of his brother's marriage to Nina Loeb—but to the philosophical and historical *Fakultäten* at the University of Bonn. As his thoughts on Burckhardt indicate, Warburg's scholarly convictions and outlook, both as a student and throughout his career, were profoundly marked by the impact of the currents that were then defining the intellectual landscape of the late nineteenth century. Above all, and like his contemporary Sigmund Freud, Warburg was early convinced of the enlightened missions of science and scholarship. Indeed, still uncertain about prospects in the field of art history, Warburg entertained the notion of pursuing a career in medicine, and even attended several semesters of courses in psychology as a post-graduate in Berlin. In any event, though this latter psychological interlude eventually came to naught, a positivistic faith in progress and in the unity of scientific and cultural advancement remained a central motif in his early work, and was also an important point of orientation throughout his career—even when that point found itself in tension with other forces and commitments.

Though attending seminars in a variety of fields, including history and philosophy, Warburg's semesters in Bonn found him gravitating towards the field of art history. At the time, the two primary figures of the *Fakultät*, and the scholars into whose

orbit Warburg soon found himself drawn, were Carl Justi and Henry Thode. Of an older generation, and already a well established figure in the art historical community, Carl Justi (1832-1912) had secured a name for himself with a three volume 1866 work on Winckelmann and, at the time of Warburg's studies, was completing a likewise magisterial treatment of Velázquez. Somewhat laconic and less approachable than the younger Thode, Justi nevertheless came to be associated by Warburg with the kind of careful and deliberate scholarship that Warburg also prized in Burckhardt. Henry Thode (1857-1920), the younger and more academically flamboyant colleague of Justi, had habilitated as a *Privatdozent* at Bonn in 1886 largely on the basis of his controversial book, *Franz von Assisi und die Anfänge der Kunst der Renaissance in Italien*. In this work, Thode countered the Burckhardtian thesis of the Italian Renaissance as a reencounter with, and rediscovery of, classical pagan antiquity. According to Thode's counter-narrative, the primary and most proximate source of the transformations of the Italian Renaissance were announced in the Christian and worldly humanism that had been inaugurated by St. Francis and his followers. However, while Warburg initially found in him an engaging scholar who was a scarce ten years older than himself, Thode's enthusiasms—which would later include everything from zealous Wagnerism to proto-racialist tendencies—made his 1889 appointment as director of the Städelschen Kunstinstitut in Frankfurt a.M. not an overwhelming loss for Warburg.¹⁹³

Ironically, given Warburg's chosen discipline of art history, the Bonn figures that exercised the greatest impact on the young student, and whose influence continued to be felt throughout his career, were the historian Karl Lamprecht (1856-1915) and the

¹⁹³ Thode's first wife was Wagner's daughter, Daniela von Bülow (1860-1940)

philosopher and philologist Hermann Usener (1834-1905). If Justi came to represent for Warburg a staid but meticulous model of scholarship, Karl Lamprecht appealed to the more expansive and discursive impulses in the young Hamburger. The Lamprecht of the late 1880's, though this was still several years before the *Methodenstreit* that would accompany his multi-volume *German History* of the 1890's, was already in the process of revealing himself as both an extremely gifted and volatile scholar.¹⁹⁴ Habilitated in 1880 under Bonner historian Wilhelm Maurenbrecher, Lamprecht stayed on at Bonn for nearly a decade, first as a *Privatdozent* and then as *außerordentlichen* Professor. In 1890, he accepted a call to a chair at Marburg, but only a year later he moved on once again to Leipzig, a post secured by Maurenbrecher which he held for the remainder of his career. It is exceedingly difficult, from perspective of the current historiographical moment, to adequately gauge the enormous response that Lamprecht's personality and work aroused in the German historical community of the time. On the one hand, the term *Kulturgeschichte*, under whose banner he called for a radical reorientation of the practices of contemporary German historicism, Lamprecht had in mind a very different concept than the one used and contested in current historiographical parlance. On the other hand, while the German historical *Zunft* still persists in a variety of contemporary forms and outlooks, its modern disciplinary power is only a pale shadow of the forces that were arrayed against Lamprecht under the self-policing auspices of academic historicism. But in the figure of Karl Lamprecht, the still nearly hegemonic

¹⁹⁴ Karl Lamprecht, *Deutsche Geschichte* (Berlin: Weidmann, 1909-1920). See also: Chickering, *Karl Lamprecht: A German Academic Life (1856-1915)*; Schorn-Schuetten, *Karl Lamprecht: Kulturgeschichtsschreibung zwischen Wissenschaft und Politik*. Viikari, *Die Krise der "Historistischen" Geschichtsschreibung und die Geschichtsmethodologie Karl Lamprechts*. Iggers, *The German Conception of History. Karl Lamprecht, What Is History? Five Lectures on the Modern Science of History*, by Karl Lamprecht, trans. E.A. Andrews (New York: Macmillan Co., 1905).

methodological and conceptual framework of the German historical school, experienced the first shock of what would become a generalized crisis by the end of the nineteenth century.

When Lamprecht called for a new approach to history, a *Kulturgeschichte* that would cast out the treasured idols of German historicism, it was largely a call to reconsider the individualizing dimensions of the tradition, the Rankean legacy that understood history to be the study of discrete historical actors and agencies—whether these were in the form of “Great Men” or in states that acted on the stage of world diplomatic and military history. Having drunk deep of the positivist currents of the day, and quite familiar with the methodological successes of the natural sciences, Lamprecht sought to revisit the old distinction that had served to shield the historical sciences from encroachments by their neighbors in the natural sciences. In this view, where the natural sciences were distinguished by methods of generalization and abstraction—methods that brought the variegated phenomena of nature under progressively more abstract natural laws—the study of history was presented as a science of individualities, its focus on the singular and unrepeatable event, situation or person. What Lamprecht was calling for, at the risk of oversimplification, was a refocusing of the methodological lens of history from the actions of states and individuals to the movements of impersonal forces and social phenomena. Imbued with a certain positivist optimism, Lamprecht was in no doubt that the laws and forces that governed history were at least as legible as those of nature, and the benign harmonies discovered in the latter would be discovered likewise in the realm of history. Indeed, from this perspective, Lamprecht’s *Kulturgeschichte* seems to emerge as the optimistic and preceding counterpart to the *Kulturpessimismus* of the

late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries; where the former was confident in the ineluctable laws of historical progress, the latter glimpsed a history that was caught in the clutches of decline and degeneration.

For a German historical community still governed by the mandarins of Neo-Rankean historicism, Lamprecht's suggestions were nothing less than an abomination. At best, Lamprecht's intervention was an unwelcome blurring of the bright line between the natural and historical sciences, a line whose careful definition was a bedrock principle of the discipline's self-representation. In this, the sensitivities of an aging historical school were apparent in the degree to which they rejected absorption into the domain of positivist sciences, and recoiled from the unique status the historical discipline in Germany had long enjoyed. At worst, however, the call for the methodological revolution of *Kulturgeschichte* was greeted as the dangerous salient of an advancing historical materialism, a history focused not on Frederick the Great, the state, or the German *Volk*, but on ostensibly abstract entities like economic class, social milieu and cultural environments. To be sure, Lamprecht was a scholar who seems to have been uniquely unconcerned and insensitive to the toes of fellow historians, but the controversies that came to surround his work reveal that the *Zunft* was already highly aware of the increasingly fragile state of historicism's disciplinary hegemony.

In Hermann Usener, on the other hand, Warburg's encounter with the broad historical horizons of Lamprecht's *Kulturgeschichte* was complemented by a scholar whose interests centered on the philological and quasi-anthropological study of human mythologies and their historical development. "In these lectures by the great Hermann Usener," writes Ernst Gombrich of the Hamburg scholar's student days, "Warburg first

came into touch with that powerful trend in nineteenth-century thought which tried to apply the findings of modern science to the subject matter of the humanities. Psychology and anthropology seemed to offer the key to the classics which a student of Greek civilization could only disregard at his peril.”¹⁹⁵ What impressed Warburg, in other words, was the way in which Usener was reconfiguring and resituating the phenomenon of myth in the disciplinary territories of the emerging psychological and anthropological sciences—territories outside the charmed regions of historicist hegemony. In this, Usener represented an important figure in a larger constellation of work then applying psychological explanation to phenomena traditionally located within the purview of religious studies, aesthetics, philology and hermeneutics. Thus, besides the influence of Usener in relation to such fields, Warburg also became familiar with the wider literature emerging around conceptions of myth and symbolic expression that were grounded in the psychologies of perception and emotional response.

The general thrust of this nineteenth-century literature on such psychologies of sensuous perception and expression—a literature that had accumulated around the work of Friedrich Theodor Vischer (1807-1887), Karl Köstlin (1819-1894), Hermann Lotze (1817-1881) and Robert Vischer (1847-1933)—proposed the revising of both eighteenth-century conceptions of aesthetic objectivity and the Hegelian variants of aesthetics which express the movements of the historical dialectic.¹⁹⁶ This literature

¹⁹⁵ Gombrich, *Aby Warburg: An Intellectual Biography*, 28. On Usener see Antje Wessels, *Ursprungszauber: Zur Rezeption von Hermann Useners Lehre von der religiösen Begriffsbildung* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2003); Robert Vischer, et al, *Empathy Form Space: Problems in German Aesthetics, 1873-1893*, trans. Harry Francis Mallgrave and Eleftherios Ikonomou (Santa Monica, CA: Getty Center for the History of Art and the Humanities, 1994).

¹⁹⁶ See Friedrich Theodor Vischer, *Asthetik, oder Wissenschaft des Schönen* (Leipzig: C. Macken, 1846-57); Friedrich Theodor Vischer, *Mode und Cynismus. Beiträge zur Kenntniss unserer Culturformen und Sittenbegriffe* (Stuttgart: K. Wittwer, 1888). Robert Vischer, *Drei Schriften zum ästhetischen Formproblem*

hoped to explore the question of symbolic meaning and aesthetic experience as a set of phenomena to be situated in the sphere of subjective psychology. From this perspective, the subject of experience takes precedence as the author of the meanings it invests in the objects of natural and symbolic phenomena. What governs such the products of such experience is not the movement of Hegelian spirit through history, or the contours of an object with intrinsic aesthetic properties, but the ahistorical and natural laws that inform the human psyche.¹⁹⁷

For Usener, the all too human impulse towards representation and signification had its source in mythopoetic gestures that are themselves grounded in the basic psychological expressions of anxiety and desires for control. At certain historical moments, the forms of organized religion emerge to collect and stabilize the volatile and expressive responses of mythology, and this may be further amplified through a “vernunftgemässen logischen Denken” (reasonable logical thought) that yields a still greater distance from the realm of immediate psychic reflex, but the primitive psychological roots of mythological thinking remain active in every age. Describing the relation between the psychological processes of symbolic representation and subsequent modes of textual and iconic representation, Usener thus writes:

The two main operations of all mythical representation are personification and metaphorical visualization. Tito Vignoli was mistaken when he held that myth was already given in personification. A concrete image must also rise from the depths of consciousness and unite itself with the personified representation. It is

(Halle/Saale: M. Niemeyer, 1927). Karl Reinhold von Köstlin, *Prolegomena zur Ästhetik* (Tübingen: L. F. Fues'sche Buchdruckerei); Hermann Lotze, *Geschichte der Aesthetik in Deutschland* (München: Cotta, 1868).

¹⁹⁷See Hermann Usener “Mythologie“, *Vorträge und Aufsätze* (Leipzig: Teubner, 1907). “Die Naturwissenschaften haben in gerechter Auflehnung gegen die mit den Tatsachen selbst in Widerspruch geratene Spekulation Hegels und Okens Protest erhoben und die Unzulässigkeit einer "Naturphilosophie" siegreich behauptet. Unvergleichlich schwerer ist es der Geschichtswissenschaft geworden, sich aus den Banden Hegelseher Philosophie zu lösen.”

in this way that the mythic image or motif emerges, and likewise with a symbol and concrete visual representations of the divine. It is these two elements that form the origin of all religious representation, and as we saw earlier, of all representations of early man. But language and poesis are also rooted in this mysterious ground. It involves nothing less than the awareness of the spiritual constitution and modes of movement that find their opposite in rational thought and the sciences [...].¹⁹⁸

In this formulation, then, we catch a glimpse of the predicament with which the later Warburg thought Burckhardt and Nietzsche had been confronted, a predicament whose presence he also felt in his own work. In a circumstance where all symbolic representation emerges from mythopoesis, the representational operations of discursive reason may ultimately confront and describe the nature of myth, but they can never truly escape from their own rootedness in magical thinking. Every enlightenment, in other words, carries with it its own mythical inheritance, and must perpetually wrest itself from the encroachments and anxieties of symbolic reflex. “Athens,” remarked Aby Warburg in a 1917 essay on the significance of astrology during the reformation, “always wishes to be newly re-conquered from Alexandria.”¹⁹⁹

Though he remained true to his first interest in the field of art history, Aby Warburg was thus profoundly influenced by the history of Lamprecht and the philology/psychology of myth as envisioned by Usener. The former opened up for Warburg an expansive new territory of historical reflection, a territory no longer limited

¹⁹⁸ Ibid., 58. “Die beiden Hauptvorgänge alles mythischen Vorstellens sind Beseelung (Personifikation) und Verbildlichung (Metapher). Tito Vignoli war im Irrtum, wenn er durch die Personifikation den Mythos schon für gegeben ansah. Es muß gleichzeitig aus der Tiefe des Bewußtseins ein Bild aufsteigen und sich mit der beseelten Vorstellung zu einer bildlichen vereinigen. So entsteht das mythische Bild oder Motiv, so ein Symbol, so eine konkrete bildliche Gottesvorstellung. In diesen beiden meist vereinigten Vorgängen liegt der Ursprung aller religiösen Vorstellungen, also wie wir früher sahen, überhaupt aller Vorstellungen der älteren vorgeschichtlichen Menschheit. Aber auch Sprache und Dichtung strecken ihre Wurzeln in diesen geheimnisvollen Grund.”

¹⁹⁹ Aby Warburg, “Heidnisch-antike Weissagung in Wort und Bild zu Luther’s Zeiten”, in *Gesammelte Schriften*, 534. “Athen will eben immer wieder neu aus Alexandrien zurückerobert sein.”

to states and individuals, but extending into every region of social, economic, cultural, political and religious study. Lamprecht revealed a past whose various moments and dimensions—from the smallest and most modest episodes to events and movements of the most monumental proportions—could be brought into communication with one another under the auspices of his broadly conceived *Kulturgeschichte*. Thus, if traditional currents of German School historicism had sought to domesticate and enclose historical phenomena within boundaries set by markers of discipline, period, methodology and field, Lamprecht envisioned an historical practice in which such borders became infinitely more porous and traversable. Under the influence of Usener, on the other hand, Warburg developed a life-long interest in the history and development of symbolic expression, an interest that carried with it a conviction in the inextricable significance of mythopoesis in the historical representations and self-representations of human culture. From both men, however, and in consonance with the intellectual currents of the time, Warburg acquired an image of human history that was profoundly and decisively inflected by the psychology of human representation. For Warburg, the vast multitude of instances where human beings employ symbols, signs and images—whether in fear or in reflection—emerge as a field to be charted and traced in an historical study of representation, a study that links and indexes the transformation of symbolic forms to the movements and renewals of human history.

Though Warburg went on to continue his education with semesters of advanced study in Munich and Strasbourg, the true punctuation of his early academic years was his participation in a seminar conducted by art historian August Schmarsow in Florence. Where the journey from Hamburg to Bonn had been a tentative first step in his

intellectual explorations, the journey to Florence both confirmed and amplified his conviction in his choice of calling. In the course of this visit, after all, Warburg discovered an exotic territory that would remain a source of life-long intrigue, and the landscapes of Florence and Italy soon came to represent points of orientation to challenge and complement the significance of the Hamburg *Heimat*. As the eventual home of Warburg's library and collections, Hamburg seems a space associated with, or imagined as, a sphere of familial assimilation and intellectual *Denkraum*, a space of reassembly, restoration and stock-taking. In Warburg's personal and professional geography, the spaces of Italy often seem regions of seductive intellectual distance, a place that could signify a sense of exotic and independent exploration, or at other times, produce a nagging sense of self-dispersal and intellectual disintegration. The allure held by the kaleidoscopic fragments of Italy's history of visual culture, had its reverse side in the Hamburg home to which Warburg perpetually returns to resolve his Italian *Bruchstücke* into a legible mosaic. Like Nietzsche, Warburg felt his own strong *Drang nach Süden*, and like Burckhardt he felt the need to construct his own tower of Lynkeus in the Hanseatic north.

From 1888 to 1905, therefore, Aby Warburg's career was decisively shaped by his experiences in Italy, but above all by the city of Florence and the cosmopolitan intellectual milieu that had settled there in the second half of the nineteenth century. Indeed, it was during the months of his participation the 1888-1889 Schmarsow seminar, that Warburg first encountered the two female figures who went on to become his close companions for rest of his life. In the first instance, while conducting research on what would eventually become his Botticelli dissertation, Warburg made the acquaintance of

Mary Hertz, a young artist and daughter of a Hamburg Senator, likewise abroad on a family *Kunstreise* of her own. “Miss Hertz,” wrote Warburg in a letter to his Hamburg family, “who is an excellent painter, has such a surprising interest, simple and yet profound, in all artistic things that I really take pleasure in being a cicerone, an occupation which, as you know, is not otherwise my hobby.”²⁰⁰ The two immediately struck up a close friendship, one whose intimacy remained undiminished in subsequent years marked by frequent separation. Ultimately, however, after nearly a decade of friendship, and over the initial hesitations of Warburg’s family, the Jewish Warburg and the Protestant Hertz were wed in 1897 and set up an expatriate household in Florence the following year.

On the same first Florentine journey on which he met Mary Hertz, Warburg also first came into contact with another figure who became the ever-present other woman in his life. While conducting research assigned by Schmarsow on the development of fifteenth-century Florentine relief sculpture, Warburg became aware of an anomaly of historical periodization, the sort of anomaly towards which his professional work seemed to gravitate. As it had been reconstructed in conventional art historical understanding of the time, the Italian *Quattrocento* was signified by a gradual transition to ever greater degrees of representational naturalism. From this perspective, the Renaissance, as the heroic liberation from medieval symbolism and stale allegorical convention, manifested itself most conspicuously in a new attention to the perceived contours of a living human

²⁰⁰ Gombrich, *Aby Warburg: An Intellectual Biography*. 44. Nevertheless, Warburg undertook a job on the side during his first Florentine stay, updating information on the city’s museums for the Baedeker firm. In his correspondence with the firm, Warburg wrote, for instance, in 1888: “Sehr geehrter Herr Baedeker, heute Morgen schickte ich Ihnen eingeschrieben die Correcturbogen und die Beschreibung der vier Saele der Selbstbilnisse...” Interestingly, over half the letter is devoted to the plumbing and quality of the water supply in the museums, a detail that reveals what German tourists were probably concerned about as they planned their own journeys to the South. WIA, GC, Warburg Letter to Baedeker, 1898.

and natural world, and the index of its advance was the degree to which its forms embraced an increasingly prevalent verisimilitude. But in the relief sculpture of the era, Warburg discovered that such Renaissance naturalism was often accompanied by equally powerful gestures of ornamental stylization. Contrary to the naturalistic naiveté that Ruskin, and his many followers, found in the era before Raphael, Warburg's observations seemed to indicate an era no less interested in ornamental ideality and the free play of artistic imagination. Above all, Warburg located these observations in phenomena that he came to call "*bewegte Beiwerke*," in the fluttering hair, richly folded drapery and wind-blown garments that formed the "accessories in motion" of the Quattrocento. In turn, the threads of these accessories led Warburg to the motif of the female nymph, the same figure who emerged with such insistent movement and extravagant ornamentality in Botticelli and the other masters of the ostensibly naturalistic Italian Renaissance.

Like Mary Hertz, these figures of the striding, mobile and flowing nymph—figures such as those depicted in Botticelli's *Primavera* and *The Birth of Venus*—accompanied the Hamburg historian for the rest of his life, and the insights contained in the 1891 Botticelli dissertation continued to inform Warburg's thought far longer than is usually the case with such works. In what would become a signature of his method, Warburg pursued the elusive figure of the nymph even as the trail she left extended beyond the formal domains of Renaissance art history, following her provenance to both the contemporary literature of the Renaissance and into the classical field of Roman sarcophagal relief art. For Warburg, the significance of the nymph was bound up with its status as an image of antiquity that had been taken up and translated by a moment of Renaissance modernity. What intrigued Warburg, in other words, was the manner in

which such images persisted through time, and yet resonated in different ways in various historical contexts. As the student of Usener, Warburg was alert to the multi-valent character of such symbolism, and understood that its manifestation could signal either a return of primitive totemism, or announce an enlightened gesture of power over symbolic representation and its originary anxieties. As with the symbols and icons he continued to explore in the following decades, the resonant figure of the nymph announced itself as an ambiguous cultural memory, one that could represent retreat into reflexive mythical thinking or advance into the reflection of enlightenment and *Besonnenheit*. In other words, the identity of the classical figures of feminine mobility—figures reborn in the Renaissance work of Botticelli and others—seems to hover between that of the Nymph and that of the Maenad. Where the former indicated a cultural memory of antiquity that had been mastered by, and accommodated within, modernity, the latter recalled the atavistic roots of the symbol in the ecstatic feminine violence of the Dionysian Maenads.

It is this vision of the symbolic legacy of the past—the perpetually recurring and highly charged mnemonic images who gaze into the present with a Janus face both threatening and benign—that pervades nearly all the reflection of Warburg's subsequent work. Like the library of his parent's home, complete with the "satanically" illustrated editions of Balzac, the archive of Western cultural memory harbored countless fragments of such volatile symbolic experience.²⁰¹ While the Botticelli dissertation stopped short of pursuing these reflections fully, Warburg continued to explore the curious pattern of

²⁰¹ In this instance, Warburg's charged symbols closely resemble the Benjaminian concept of the dialectical image. In both cases, an historically resonant fragment of the past is unearthed and brought into volatile relation with the present. The shock of this encounter can be explosive and undermine the conventional contours of historical consciousness. For more on these connections see: Matthew Rampley, "From Symbol to Allegory: Aby Warburg's Theory of Art."

dualities that seemed, from his perspective, to have inhabited and pervaded the culture of the Italian Renaissance. In subsequent years, these explorations were given more definite theoretical contours in Warburg's concept of symbolic *Polarität*, a concept describing the multivalent or polyvocal character of the images that perpetually emerge and recur in cultural history. While such polarities were not always configured in terms of classical versus modern, or mythos versus logos, the general framework of mutually present and overlapping opposites is a motif that runs throughout Warburg's work. Indeed, as Gombrich presents the issue, Warburg's notorious difficulty in achieving a satisfactory conceptualization of his problems—not to mention the often fragmentary character of his admittedly tortured writing process—may owe much to theoretical and constitutional commitments that tended to multiply meanings and amplify conceptual tensions. As Warburg was fond of remarking himself, “Der Liebe Gott steckt im detail,” and the task of subsuming such details into a holistic vision was something he seems to have both desired and resisted. Warburg often appears as a scholar fascinated by harmony, dreaming of an idiosyncratic library in which the pieces of his work could be situated in mutual consistency, but one also with peculiarly attentive eye for the anomaly, the supplement, and the ill fitting remainder.

The work of Warburg around the turn of the century therefore returns again and again to issues of opposites in apparent tension. In his reflections, for instance, on Ghirlandaio's frescos in Florence's Santa Maria Novella, Warburg pursues the trail of the elusive Renaissance nymph. One of these frescos, commissioned by the Tornabuoni family in the era of Lorenzo de Medici, depicts on first glance a suitably sober recitation of the birth of St. John the Baptist. But a second look, beyond the immobile matrons in

the heavy fabric and costume of Renaissance Florence, reveals a strange apparition in the form of a striding nymph, complete with billowing gown and captured in a moment of mobility. According to Gombrich's sketch of these reflections, Warburg's attention was drawn to this work in the course of conversations with the Dutch author A. Jolles. For a short period, the two had agreed to explore the question of the nymph in the form of an imaginary exchange of letters in which Jolles played the (now familiar) role of one whose aesthetic enjoyments have led to an uncanny erotic desire—in the form of the Tornabuoni nymph. In a passage that could have been lifted directly from Wilhelm Jensen's 1903 novella, *Gradiva: A Pompeian Fantasy*, Jolles writes of the striding nymph that follows the grave figures into the holy scene:

Behind them, close to the open door, there runs—no, that is not the word, there flies, or rather there hovers—the object of my dreams, which slowly assumes the proportions of a charming nightmare. A fantastic figure—should I call her a servant girl, or rather a classical nymph?—enters the room ... with a billowing veil. [...] is this the way to visit a sickroom, even with congratulations? This lively, light-footed and rapid gait, this irresistible energy, this striding step, which contrasts with the aloof distance of all the other figures, what is the meaning of it all? ... It sometimes looks to me as if the servant girl rushed with winged feet through the clear ether instead of running on the real ground... Enough, I lost my heart to her and in the days of preoccupation which followed I saw her everywhere ... In many of the works of art I had always liked, I discovered something of my Nymph. My condition varied between a bad dream and a fairy tale. [...]

... I lost my reason. It was always she who brought life and movement into an otherwise calm scene. Indeed, she appeared to be the embodiment of movement ... but it is very unpleasant to be her lover ... Who is she? Where does she come from? Have I encountered her before? I mean one and a half millennia earlier? Does she come from a noble Greek lineage, and did her great-grandmother have an affair with people from Asia Minor, Egypt, or Mesopotamia?²⁰²

But if Jolles is intent here on replaying the *fin-de-siècle* motif of the aesthetic vision come to life, a Pygmalion or Norbert Hanold overwhelmed by erotic reverie in the

²⁰² Gombrich, *Aby Warburg: An Intellectual Biography*, 107-108.

Tornabuoni chapel, Warburg resists what he considers a false, fashionable, and ultimately dangerous intimacy with the symbolic apparitions of the past. As always, he too is intrigued by the multiple juxtapositions of a religious fresco that is, on the one hand, rendered in the style of Renaissance realism, and on the other hand, grants admittance to a curiously displaced figure of classical ideality and fancy. Such juxtapositions he wishes to pursue, but not in the fevered fashion of *Renaissancekult* aestheticism or in the pious bromides of Ruskin's followers. Warburg's well documented distaste for interpretive approaches is revealed in a passage in which he archly characterizes the European pilgrims on aesthetic pilgrimage in the cities and museums of Italy:

The modern languid art-lover who has gone to Italy to refresh himself feels greatly superior to so much trivial realism and turns away with a discreet smile. Ruskin's word of command sends him to the cloisters, to a mediocre Giottoesque fresco, where he must discover his own primitive mentality in the charming, unspoiled and uncomplicated Trecento work. Ghirlandaio is not that kind of rural, bubbling brook for the refreshment of Pre-Raphaelites, nor is he a romantic waterfall which inspires that other type of tourist, the superman on Easter holiday with *Zarathustra* in the pocket of his tweed cape, seeking fresh courage from its mad cascading for his struggle for life, even against political authority ... Life weighs heavily on the Tornabuoni, but they are too proud to tell this immediately to every hurried tourist. Only when he lingers in silence and does not tire of silently enquiring after their fate will they allow him to share the sufferings of their lives which stiff brocades and the heavy folds of Lucca cloth hide so splendidly.²⁰³

The secret of the nymph, in the opinion of the art historian defending his territory, will not yield itself to the overheated and under-informed speculations of the "Übermenschen in Osterferien," those sentimental travelers who regularly descended on Italy with Baedeker in one hand and Nietzsche in the other. But if these latter came to Italy to see reflections of their own imagined Renaissances—in the guise of naïve spiritualism or in

²⁰³ Ibid., 111.

the costume of earthy and egoistic hedonism—the Tornabuoni frescos could only frustrate their desires.

Warburg proposes, in other words, something entirely different from the simple registration of the frescos in the competing and conventional options of spiritual primitivism or revolutionary realism. Instead, he searches the work and his sources for the outlook of Ghirlandaio and the patron, Giovanni Tornabuoni, from whose perspective the apparently disparate and idiosyncratic elements of the frescos may have rested comfortably together. In this light, the Renaissance of the Tornabuoni takes shape in typical Warburgian fashion as a volatile, though not always dissonant, combination of themes, tones and leitmotifs. This polyvocal Renaissance was not without its violent tensions, but those tensions were not those mirrored in the gaze of the Ruskin innocents or the hedonisms of Nietzsche and Pater. In the apparition of the nymph, or in the depiction of Tornabuoni family likenesses in the fresco depicting Zacharias' sacrifice, Warburg finds aesthetic realism, religious devotion, and pagan motifs joined together in ways that aroused no sense of disharmony for the Renaissance mind of the Tornabuoni. With respect to the Zacharias fresco, Warburg goes to great length to identify and catalogue the images of the specific Renaissance individuals depicted. Indeed, far from finding a gesture of irreligiosity in the intrusion of the Tornabuoni into the scriptural scenes, Warburg observes that this practice was only an extension of the long-held tradition of fashioning wax images of patrons, which were in turn mounted in their associated church or chapel. A vigorous and worldly Renaissance realism, in other words, was not necessarily inconsonant with a still devoted and vibrant religious faith.

An Etruscan merchant of knightly lineage has staked his honour on being buried in a building in which the Virgin Mother of the Saviour born in the land of

Canaan is worshipped, and on telling her story in the images on its walls. (Originally an act of individual magic, a personal thank-offering, an *ex-voto*, sympathetic magic, social self-satisfaction.) The members of his family appear, according to a carefully thought-out ceremony, in solemn groups. Exuberant vitality, the awareness of a germinating, creative will-to-life, and an unspoken, maybe an unconscious opposition to the strict discipline of the Church ... demand an outlet for their accumulated pent-up energy in the form of expressive movement. And thus a diligent search begins in the permitted sacred story for a pretext; after which the classical past must lend its protective, indisputable authority as a precedent to allow the search for freedom of expression, if not in words then at least in pictorial form. [...]

One must understand the extent of the energy that went into the arrangement of the external ceremonial and that made for a clear articulation of the social element ... and also the extent of the energy that went into the expression of religious associations ... understand, that is, the extent of the psychological oscillation between a cool political attention to physiognomies and (hot) demonic, superstitious, subjective literal magic, devout religious or pagan gestures reflecting the ideal. Only then can one grasp the true liberating significance of the enhanced expressive movement of the body.²⁰⁴

Thus, while Warburg still sees in the Tornabuoni cycle, a set of powerful impulses towards liberation from antiquated forms of spiritual expression, there are also gestures pointing towards accommodation and a reconceived harmony (and persistent tensions) between the worldly affairs of Medicean Florence and the spiritual demands of ecclesiastical propriety. Interestingly, and even with these clear suggestions of a more ambivalent and complicated reception on the part of Warburg, also visible in Gombrich's reconstruction is an impulse to rescue and recover a Warburg of enlightenment and clear progressive historical trajectories. These latter were, without a doubt, a major set of elements in Warburg's thinking, but Gombrich seems over-willing to tidy up and reassemble, here and elsewhere, the Hamburger's thought into a coherent system and world view.²⁰⁵ Thus, despite the somewhat more ambivalent conclusion of a Renaissance

²⁰⁴ Ibid., 123.

²⁰⁵ See for instance Michael Steinberg's interpretive essay in Aby Warburg, *Images from the Region of the Pueblo Indians of North America*, trans. Michael Steinberg (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1995).

in tension to which Warburg seems to arrive, Gombrich seems intent on reasserting a more univocal set of interpretations. “That these frescoes are fundamentally irreligious,” Gombrich writes, “Warburg has no doubt. He finds it understandable that they should be a scandal to a devout Catholic. This display of earthly splendor seems to him incompatible with true Christian devotion.”²⁰⁶ Nevertheless, if Warburg had configured his work on the Renaissance in terms of a certain *Polarität*, so too was his methodology and outlook governed by a seeming oscillation between a pole of conceptual consolidation, that Gombrich wishes to restore, and a pole of conceptual dispersal and disaggregation. And while Gombrich no doubt captures well the former moment in Warburg’s thought, the Hamburger was also quite sure that God is less likely to be found in an abstract theory or coherent system than in the detail, the granule and the fragment.

Throughout his most sustained period of Florentine expatriation (1897-1904), in a circulating milieu of acquaintances that included Adolf Hildebrand, Arnold Böcklin, Conrad Fiedler, Isolde Kurz, and Jesse Hillebrand, Warburg pursued his vision of a Renaissance born of the expressive cultural tensions of *Polarität* and *Kompatibilität*. Such researches eventually culminated in works such as the essay “Franco Sassetti’s Last Injunction to His Sons”, which expanded on the themes of the Tornabuoni work, and a series of pieces on the cultural exchanges between Renaissance Italy and its Flemish, Burgundian and German counterparts to the North. The 1902 “Flemish Art and the Florentine Early Renaissance”, the 1905 “Artistic Exchanges between North and South in the Fifteenth Century”, and the 1907 “Peasants at Work in Burgundian Tapestries”, find Warburg still exploring the persistence of antique imagery in the era of the Renaissance,

²⁰⁶ Gombrich, E. H., *Aby Warburg: An Intellectual Biography* (London: The Warburg Institute, 1970), 114.

but he complicates that set of temporal interpenetrations with questions of spatial and geographic circulation. Where the Tornabuoni and Sassetti works had revealed a rich field of appropriation and resistance between early modern Italy and the cultures of classical antiquity, Warburg sought a similar field of porousness and exchange between the seemingly disparate realms of Northern and Southern Europe in the fifteenth century. Significantly, in relation to these migrations of Gothic, Renaissance and Classical imagery, Warburg again comes to focus on the figure of an image in motion. In this instance, however, the phenomenon of interest is not the nymph, but the production and exchange of tapestries and wall-hangings in the early modern era.

What made these particularly intriguing was not only the pervasive nature of the form, for which masters of both North and South submitted designs and cartoons, but also the reproducible and mobile character of tapestry weavings in an era before the general implementation of oil on canvas. As Warburg relates it in “Peasants at Work in Burgundian Tapestries”:

The tapestry, which we now admire as a mere aristocratic fossil in a show collection, brings with it from its origins some rather more democratic features: for by its very nature the woven tapestry *arazzo* (arras) was never the product of unique, original creativity. The weaver, as the anonymous purveyor of the image, could repeat the same subject as often as the client demanded. Nor was the tapestry, like the fresco, permanently attached to the wall: it was a mobile support for the image. In the history of methods of reproduction and dissemination it figures, in a sense, as an ancestor of printing—the same craft whose cheaper product, wallpaper, has appropriately enough usurped the position of the tapestry in the bourgeois home.²⁰⁷

Long before the age of “mechanical reproduction” of visual artifacts, Warburg glimpsed a Renaissance that was not without its own robust culture of reproducible and

²⁰⁷ Aby Warburg, *The Renewal of Pagan Antiquity: Contributions to the Cultural History of the European Renaissance* (Los Angeles: Getty Research Institute for the History of Art and the Humanities, 1999), 315.

transportable art, a culture that he would later pursue in the spatial and temporal peregrinations of wood block prints, astrological manuscripts and tarot card art. The point, however, was that the nineteenth century had no monopoly on the reproduction, transmission and circulation of visual imagery. Visual images, with all their symbolic and mnemonic resonances, had long been migrating throughout the European and Mediterranean worlds, and the territories with which academic historians and aesthetic dilettantes sought to enclose the past were far more porous and traversable than their border guards were prepared to allow.²⁰⁸

By 1904, however, Warburg had begun to feel an increasing sense of professional anomie and a lack of inspired direction, a sense that only magnified his mercurial tendencies and the melancholic moodiness. Warburg was always keenly aware of what seemed a fragile and volatile mental constitution, and while he could be outwardly charming and wry, his family and closer associates were also quite familiar with the abrupt changes in mood that could almost instantly overwhelm him. On one such occasion, during a visit to Florence by family friends, Warburg revealed the kind of depressive agitation that was not an uncommon phenomenon in the household. “Finally,” as biographer Ron Chernow relates the scene,

like some wandering, restless apparition, he approached his startled visitors and said that if he were institutionalized, he hoped they would care for Mary. Aby was then thirty-three. Already, his mind alternated between delirium and lucidity. [...] After he snapped out of the depression, the visitors were amazed that he could

²⁰⁸ Ibid., 319. Warburg seems to have been fond of the images of border guards in relation to his transgressive territorial investigations: “If we refuse to be distracted by the current tendency to regulate art-historical inquiry by posting border guards, then it becomes evident that monumental pictorial forces are at work within this ‘inferior’ region of Northern European applied art; and there is no historical difficulty in assigning all of this Burgundian genre art to its true place within a general stylistic evolution. In the few surviving tapestry inventories, scenes from the life of the common man appear frequently enough to make them a typical iconographical feature of court tapestry art from the beginning of the fifteenth century onward.”

step back and analyze his behavior so clinically. He told the couple he planned to check into a Swiss clinic that spring—perhaps Kreuzlingen, to which he was later confined.⁵ Among other things, he worried inconsolably about the damage he was doing to his young family.²⁰⁹

Though such intimations of instability were not uncommon, the self-imposed pressures of writing, the distractions of his adopted Florence, and a career forever hovering on the margins of secure professional recognition had begun to take their toll on Warburg. In 1904, therefore, the Warburgs decided to return to Hamburg, with the hopes that a degree of distance from the Italian milieu would yield the necessary perspective to continue the work he was then doing on Flemish and Italian art.

The return to Hamburg, however, was likewise bound up with another venture that had increasingly come to fascinate Warburg. Since his youthful and nearly obsessive interest in reading, Warburg had been an inveterate purchaser and collector of books. Letters to his family, for instance, from his first student forays to Florence, are filled with requests for funds to buy the necessary volume for this project or the complete edition of that. By the turn of the century, however, he had begun to toy with the idea of establishing an art historical library in his home city of Hamburg, to be funded by the civic-minded generosity of the Warburg clan. Already in the summer of 1900, Warburg had written to his brother Max—no doubt reminding him of their youthful contract—in the hopes of securing financial backing from the family concern. “In the last analysis,” he writes,

we are all *rentiers*, and terribly interest-minded. Something like a library can only be founded by means of sacrifices. We must have the courage to do this. After all, what do we do for art? Two paintings by Consul Weber meet the total of our annual requirements. I would not hesitate for a moment to enter my library as a financial asset in the accounts of the firm. If I don't conk out

²⁰⁹ Chernow, *The Warburgs: The Twentieth-Century Odyssey of a Remarkable Jewish Family*, 114.

before, my book will not be the worst the firm will have achieved. Don't laugh; I am by no means blinded by pride; on the contrary, I am really a fool for not insisting even more that we should demonstrate by our example that capitalism is also capable of intellectual achievements of a scope which would not be possible otherwise. If one day my book is mentioned in connection with and as a complement to Jacob Burckhardt's *Civilisation of the Renaissance*, this will be the compensation for what I and you have done.²¹⁰

By November of the same year, with Max Warburg positively inclined to the project, a more systematic collection of volumes began even before Aby's return from Florence.²¹¹

After the 1904 homecoming, and with the increased pace of his library purchases, it quickly became apparent that the size of the collection would soon become unmanageable without a dedicated space in which to house it and a formal staff to maintain it. In 1909, therefore, Warburg acquired a property at Heilwigstrasse 114 to become the library's home, and hired a specialist in Renaissance collection, Dr. P. Huebner, to formalize its organization. "When I entered the library for the first time in 1911," long time Warburg assistant and colleague Fritz Saxl would later relate, "it was clear that Warburg had lived many years in Italy. Although broadly conceived, its holdings were primarily German and Italian works. The library held at that time around 15,000 volumes, and every younger student like me must have felt a bit of befuddlement at the sight of it."²¹² Indeed, despite the disruptions of war and defeat in the following

²¹⁰ Gombrich, *Aby Warburg: An Intellectual Biography*, 129-130.

²¹¹ *Ibid.*, 131-132. The seriousness of the funds at issue is revealed in a November letter from Aby to the family: "... I am looking forward to receiving the Statutes of the Library. I have had the same idea as you, i.e. to contribute my own present library as the basis. I still have all the major bills since my university days, from which it appears that since 1889 I have invested about 10,000 M. in my library. During the last few years, I spent about 2,500-3,000 M. With 3,000 M. I can make do, with 4,000 I am free, and with 5,000 I can achieve something really good and unusual. In this latter case the taking of photographs on a larger scale would also be possible.

My scholarly work progresses and gains shape and wants to be communicated; the discovery as such no longer stands in the centre of my own inner concern. Unfortunately, the first signs of fatigue are also present (unmotivated states of worry), but I hope to overcome them ..."

²¹² Fritz Saxl, "Die Geschichte der Bibliothek Aby Warburgs (1886-1944)," in Warburg, *Ausgewählte Schriften und Würdigungen*. "Als ich 1911 die Bibliothek zum ersten Mal betrat, war deutlich, daß

decade, disruptions largely relieved by contributions and assistance from the American branch of the family, Warburg's library continued to expand, reaching a total of around 20,000 volumes by 1920.

For the first two decades of the twentieth century, the library retained the character of an open, but privately held collection. But if the library was ultimately envisioned as a center for research—and as an organized territory of intellectual re-collection and supplemental archive of Warburg himself—the arrangement and content of the collection likewise reflected the capacious and idiosyncratic interests of its namesake. Describing the project of reorganization undertaken in 1920, as the library was being reconfigured as an art historical institute with links to the University of Hamburg, Fritz Saxl writes of the unique organizational character of the institution:

Everywhere in the library there were small groupings of books that denoted specific avenues of thought—even while precisely this extraordinary richness appealed to the scholar, it simulataneously made it much more difficult for him to find what he sought. When the philosopher Ernst Cassierer used the library for the first time, he decided henceforth to either stay away completely—at which he succeeded for some time—or to imprison himself there for years—which he often later did with some pleasure. Warburg's new aquisitions naturally always had an inner coherence. But there were also many “trial balloons” and idiosyncratic “arabesques” that, for an institute serving a larger public, were somewhat less attractive or wanted.

The first and most urgent work of stabilization [*Stabilisierungsarbeit*] undertaken in the library consisted in the normalization of Warburg's system of organization, such as it had developed by 1920 (i.e. to here extend it and to there prune it back). There was simply no on-hand classification system that could really be used as the library was devoted to the study of cultural history—and indeed a unique perpective on it. It should hold the essential materials, and make them available in subdivisions that led students to books and ideas with which they

Warburg mehrere Jahre in Italien gelebt hatte. Obwohl umfassend angelegt, enthielt sie vor allem Deutsches und Italienisches. Sie besaß damals etwa 15000 Bände, und jeder jüngere Student, wie ich, muß sich bei dem Anblick verwirrt gefühlt haben.”

might not yet be familiar. It seemed risky to do this in too rigid or mechanical fashion.²¹³

Warburg's own Tower of Lynkeus, a library and research station here situated in Hamburg rather than in Basel, thus still encompassed the intellectual tangents and curves of thought that characterized Warburg's thought. The fragments, details, trial balloons and arabesques with which Warburg was fascinated, the strange passages and marginal territories that he pursued through his research, found concrete expression in a library that took shape as the idiosyncratic personal album of Warburg's journeys, the expeditions he undertook through the European memory of its antiquities, its renaissances and its modernities. It is tempting, furthermore, to compare Warburg's library to Sigmund Freud's magic writing pad, that vision of a memory record configured as a supplemental substrate or archive. However, where Freud's metaphor might have wound its way into the formal disciplinary organization of psychoanalytic knowledge—a process we will explore in the following chapter—Warburg's supplement emerged in the concrete form of the house on Heilwigstrasse 114. And if Freud's practices of "archivization" always returned the experiences of Italy, archaeology and classical literature into the well ordered spheres of psychoanalytic writing, Warburg's library seems to resist easy categorization and translation into a rationalized archive. The

²¹³ Ibid. "Überall in der Bibliothek gab es kleine Büchergruppen, die eine bestimmte Denkrichtung anzeigten—so sehr gerade dieser außerordentliche Ideenreichtum den Gelehrten erfreute, er erschwerte es ihm gleichzeitig, sich in der Bibliothek zurechtzufinden. Als der Philosoph Ernst Cassierer die Bibliothek zum ersten Mal benützte, beschloß er, ihr entweder gänzlich fern zu bleiben—was er eine Zeitlang durchgehalten hat—oder sich dort für Jahre in Gefangenschaft zu begeben—das hat er später öfter mit Freuden getan. Warburgs Neuanschaffungen hatten natürlich immer eine innere Kohärenz, es gab aber auch viele "Versuchsballons" und persönliche Arabesken, die in einer für ein größeres Publikum bestimmten Institution weniger erwünscht erschienen.

Kein verfügbares Klassifikationssystem ließ sich anwenden, da diese Bibliothek dem Studium der Kulturgeschichte —und zwar aus einem ganz bestimmten Blickwinkel—gewidmet war. Sie sollte das wesentliche Material enthalten und es in Unterteilungen darbieten, die den Studenten zu Büchern und Ideen hinleiteten, mit denen er noch nicht vertraut war. Es schien bedenklich, dies in zu starrer Form zu tun."

dispersed territories of Italian experience—the arabesques of historical nomadism, disciplinary transgression, and professional marginality—find themselves mortared into the very stones of the Warburg’s tower retreat, and they haunt the territory of the library like spirits of restless and insistent deterritorialization.

Following Warburg to the Hamburg library were those persistently recurring images in Western visual culture, those images that are charged with the psychological energies of their initial symbolic presentation, and emerge in Warburg’s concept of the *Pathosformel*. The term describes those symbolic expressions that continue to carry and transmit a memory of their own psychic *ur*-formation, and that perpetually reappear and resonate in the history of Western visual expression in a recurring process of re-working and re-mastery. For Warburg, Western civilization has been subject to its own centuries-long project of *Vergangenheitsbewältigung*. In this case, however, the original trauma lies in the pre-historical *ur*-anxieties and fears whose terrors prompted the compensating reflex of sympathetic magic and symbolic expression. To name and to represent was to assert mastery over a universe inhabited by inscrutable forces of personal animus. But the affective and emotional energies that went into these symbolic formulae continued to resonate long beyond their first appearance, and depending on nature of the mind or seismograph that picks up their signal, they may reemerge as images of demonic malevolence or in the sublimated and mastered forms of benign spirituality. However, if Warburg first came to recognize these recurring forms, or *Pathosformeln*, in his Italian researches and in his Renaissance studies, his return migration to Hamburg soon revealed the degree to which such formulae were themselves insistently migratory, wandering and reappearing not only various historical eras and periods, but also capable of traversing

the porous cultural boundaries between Northern and Southern Europe. In the spaces of the newly established library, Warburg soon found that his *Pathosformeln* had come to Germany as well, and had arrived a very long time ago.

From 1904 until the outbreak of the First World War, Warburg's scholarly attention was thus increasingly drawn to the ways in which the *Pathosformeln* of antiquity had traveled nomadically out of their original Mediterranean sphere, and come to circulate in regions beyond the Alps. Building upon the work that he had already done on the cultural exchanges between north and south during the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, Warburg produced a series of works and fragments focused on the penetration of antique imagery into the representational ecology of the German north: "Dürer and Italian Antiquity" (1905); "The Gods of Antiquity and the Early Renaissance in Southern and Northern Europe" (1908); "On Images of Planetary Deities in the Low German Almanac of 1519" (1908). All these reflections, however, culminated in Warburg's essay, "Pagan-Antique Imagery in Words and Images in the Age of Luther." Published first in 1920, but first delivered as a paper in 1917, the essay is not only a formidable piece of scholarship—tracing the prevalence and metamorphoses of antique astrological currents during Luther's Reformation—but is also a intensely personal and timely statement about a culture in crisis that finds itself hovering between representational polarities of enlightenment and atavism. For Warburg, in other words, the Renaissance returns once more as a mirror within which to gaze on an image of the present, a contemporary moment whose fantastic advances in science and knowledge were matched only by an astonishing propensity for violent cultural atavism.

Of the many idiosyncratic interests that Warburg had cultivated and that subsequently came to inform the contours of his library, the phenomenon of astrology—its historical persistence and representational development from antiquity into the modern era—came to have special significance during this period. Gombrich, as always, is quick to remind the reader that such interests were conducted purely in the most enlightened scholarly spirit, even relating Warburg’s efforts to unmask contemporary practitioners as the charlatans he thought they were. But while this is true enough as far as it goes, Gombrich’s solicitude for Warburg’s credentials as a champion of enlightened *ratio*—as we have seen before—sometimes overshoots its mark and conceals the more nomadic and discursive dimensions of Warburg. This latter was the scholar who navigated border regions and found history in second-hand shops, the nomadic intellectual that allowed himself to be carried away by the labyrinthine lures of fragments and anecdotes. This aspect of his practice carried with it certain costs for Warburg, and it may even have been less prized than his other qualities by the historian himself, but it nevertheless played an important role in his development and his work. And thus we find—in “Pagan-Antique Prophecy in Words and Images in the Age of Luther”—Warburg making yet another unique turn into the tangled passages and cultural side streets of astrological thought in the era of the Reformation.

The published edition of the paper is preceded by a preface that is also dated 1920. As such, this latter must have been written during a moment of relative lucidity in the period of mental instability that followed Warburg’s psychological breakdown of 1918. Despite these circumstances, and with the resignation of one suffering confinement in multiple dimensions, Warburg writes that he has, “nevertheless allowed

this fragment to appear, partly in the expectation that this initial attempt will be of use to a later researcher, and partly because, however good or bad the present weaver, the opportunity of threading in new strands from abroad will long be denied to German scholarship.”²¹⁴ Even before his breakdown, which occurred as the war reached its own ultimate climax in 1918, Warburg felt with special intimacy the closing and the swift assertion of territorial boundedness that accompanied the commencement of hostilities, and that interrupted the cosmopolitan flows in which he had lived and studied. Though greeting the war with a grim foreboding, and too old to find himself in arms, Warburg hoped at first to play a part through activities of wartime charity work. Eventually, however, as Saxl relates it, Warburg’s own health and background forced him to withdraw from such activities. In the end, he found himself with little more to do than follow the news, collect newspaper clippings and look on as colleagues such as the young Fritz Saxl were called up for duty. “He telephoned around,” writes Saxl, “talked to people in the street and to his friends who were in touch with Berlin, he read foreign newspapers, but the contradictions could not be cleared up.”²¹⁵ By October of 1918, with pressures and anxieties weighing down an already fragile constitution, Warburg’s psychological situation worsened and he suffered the breakdown that led to his commitment at the Kreuzlingen clinic of Ludwig Binswanger, a confinement that would last until 1923. By the time the Luther paper was published, Warburg’s formerly mobile world had closed in around him in dramatic fashion, and it is perhaps not surprising that

²¹⁴ Warburg, *The Renewal of Pagan Antiquity: Contributions to the Cultural History of the European Renaissance*, 597.

²¹⁵ Gombrich, *Aby Warburg: An Intellectual Biography*, 208.

his 1920 preface ends with a dedication to his wife and the, “memory of the winter of 1888 in Florence.”

Warburg opens the Luther paper with a suitably classicist gesture towards the spiritual kinship of classical antiquity and Germany. “Es ist ein altes Buch zu blättern:” he writes quoting Goethe’s *Faust II*, “vom Harz bis Hellas immer Vettern.” But almost immediately thereafter, he declares his distance from this tradition by announcing that the works he examines fall within the ambit of art history only, “in the widest sense...insofar as that term covers image-making in all its forms.” Thus, despite the now somewhat ironic Goethe quote with which he began, Warburg announces an investigation into territories very different from those of conventional German classicism, a tradition born with Winckelmann and persisting well into the twentieth century. As objects of art, Warburg freely admits that his visual documents are of little worth. “They stem from prints or printed books;” explains Warburg,

they lack aesthetic appeal; and without the texts that relate to them (whether printed with them or not), they are unpromising material for the purely formal concerns of present-day art history, in that their strange illustrative quality stems from their content. The idea of examining a mere "curiosity" for its relevance to the history of human thought is one that comes more naturally to historians of religion than to historians of art. And yet it is one of the prime duties of art history to bring such forms out of the twilight of ideological polemic and to subject them to close historical scrutiny. For there is one crucial issue in the history of style and civilization—the influence of antiquity on the culture of Renaissance Europe as a whole—that cannot otherwise be fully understood and resolved.²¹⁶

Put differently, to trace the criss-crossing and tangled threads of antiquity’s passage through Renaissance Europe, and Germany in particular, Warburg proposes a shift in focus. For such purposes, the standard and conventional canon of art historical discipline

²¹⁶ Warburg, *The Renewal of Pagan Antiquity: Contributions to the Cultural History of the European Renaissance*. 598.

was far too insensitive and restrictive, and the cultural historian (or historian of religion, as the case may be) must look to those regions of representation and expression that lie beyond the purview of limiting disciplinary boundaries. What interests Warburg, in other words, what he seeks to trace and follow, are not the well worn art historical issues of style, school, genre or provenance, but a content and a subject matter for which canonical legitimacy is meaningless. And, more specifically, the content at issue is the various ways and varied forms by which traces of antique symbolism found their way into the visual lexicon of Germany in the era of the Reformation.

It is astrology, therefore, and the visual images by which it found representation in Reformation, that Warburg chooses as his vehicle for this particular expedition. Indeed, as he unfolds his findings in the paper, complete with his signature erudition and careful mapping of extremely esoteric literatures, Warburg reveals a Reformation that teems with astrological sciences, premonitions, controversies, and anxieties. He follows it even into the conversations and correspondence of Philipp Melanchthon and Martin Luther, revealing the degree to which even these leaders of Protestant reform gave ear to the counsels of astrological auguries. Not only had astrological “science” persisted since antiquity, in parallel with the spiritual institutions of Christianity, but its practice continued to flourish, transmitting as it did its original pagan imagery throughout Europe. But if this pagan imagery of astrology was pervasive in the era of the Renaissance and Reformation, it was of a very different character from that envisioned in the serene classicisms of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. “A classically rarefied version of the ancient gods,” as Warburg puts it,

has been so successfully imposed on us, ever since Winckelmann, as the central symbol of antiquity, that we are apt to forget that it was entirely the creation of

humanist scholars: this "Olympian" aspect of antiquity had first to be wrested from its entrenched, traditional, "daemonic" aspect. Ever since the passing of antiquity, the ancient gods had lived on in Christian Europe as cosmic spirits, religious forces with a strong influence in practical affairs: indeed, the cosmology of the ancient world—notably in the form of astrology—undeniably survived as a parallel system, tacitly tolerated by the Christian Church.²¹⁷

In shifting the focus to the visuality of astrology, briefly bracketing for a moment any admiration for the idealized pagan imagery of a Raphael or a Botticelli, we immediately encounter a sphere in which the reception of pagan antiquity in the Renaissance emerges in a more contested and ambivalent aspect. For in the variety and multiplicity of fifteenth- and sixteenth-century astrological representation, Warburg finds a corresponding variety in the ways by which such visual survivals were received and accommodated in those eras.

It was not, therefore, the already well-documented persistence and pervasiveness of astrology in Reformation Germany that interested Warburg, but the rich and varied textures of antique reception manifest in that historical moment. Indeed, the most concrete task of Warburg's paper is that of outlining the opposing conceptions of astrology held by Martin Luther and Philip Melancthon, and the opposition that thus wove its way into even the highest levels, and the most intimate partnerships, of the Protestant community. In the views of the two reformers, neither of whom completely rejected the value of astral portents and readings, Warburg marks out the poles of possible response to the hints and imagery of astrology. Reading, for example, Melancthon's correspondence with Johann Carion, in which the former requests astrological advice on issues ranging from politics to his recently born daughter, Warburg identifies Melancthon as a more "faithful" believer in the value and significance of

²¹⁷ Ibid.

astrology. But again, the distinction Warburg wants to draw here is not between one of belief and non-belief, but one between differing intellectual orientations and postures in the reception of astrological signs. Thus, if Luther emerges as somewhat less credulous than his colleague in these matters, this signals for Warburg a different orientation towards, rather than a complete rejection of, astral augury.

In this particular instance, as described by Warburg, the astral sign and figure of Saturn emerges with particular urgency, and was bound up with the contemporary controversies and bitter polemics surrounding the astrological significance of Luther's contested date of birth. Of special interest was the literature generated in relation to the "Great Conjunction" of 1484, and the rich landscape of prophecy and divination that emerged around it. Among the more colorful of these latter were portents claiming the impending arrival of the appearance of a prophet monk born at the time of the conjunction and under the often sinister and malevolent sign of Saturn. By the 1520's, the literature of the "Great Conjunction" was resurrected into renewed topicality by events in the early years of the Reformation, with partisans on both sides clashing over Luther's precise date of birth and the specific meaning of this to the "Great Conjunction." In a passage that was perhaps directed also at his own moment of world war and rampant propaganda, Warburg writes of the Reformation:

The fear of natural signs and wonders, in the heavens and on the earth, was shared by all Europe; and the press of the day exploited it for ends of its own. The invention of printing from movable type had lent wings to learned thought; and now the art of pictorial printing enabled images—their language an international one—to fly far and wide. These stormy petrels darted from North to South and back again, and every party sought to enlist in its own cause the "pictorial slogans" (as they might now be called) of cosmic sensationalism.²¹⁸

²¹⁸ Ibid., 622.

For Warburg, in other words, the figure of Saturn—under whose influence Luther’s birth took place in all accounts—assumed an immediate theological, political and astrological significance, all inflected by a burgeoning and swiftly circulating visual culture. Indeed, from Warburg’s perspective the transformation of contemporary visual representations of Saturn became a useful way of mapping the various receptions and resonances of pagan imagery. “We shall take Saturn as our guiding star through this astral labyrinth,” writes Warburg, “because in the age of the Reformation the fear and awe of Saturn stood at the very center of astrological belief.”²¹⁹

The political and theological moment of Reformation was thus one acutely aware of, and inflected by, a parallel and much older configuration of astral space and human time. In the course of the essay, Warburg ultimately traces out two primary poles or variants of this awareness as it was manifest among Luther’s contemporaries, and situates each by tracing their respective responses to the sinister and melancholy sign of Saturn. The first of these emerges most prominently in the astrological compendium and prophecies of Johannes Lichtenberger (1440-1503), published in both Latin and German in 1488 and 1490 respectively. Lichtenberger’s *Practica* was largely a collection and recitation of work already done by others such as the Paduan professor Paulus von Middleburg, but its publication in the vernacular and its liberal use of woodcut illustrations contributed to the enormous popularity it came to enjoy in the following decades. The astrological controversies surrounding the emergence of Martin Luther and the reform movement only further amplified the interest in Lichtenberger’s interpretation of the 1484 great conjunction, and the degree to which Luther’s appearance had been

²¹⁹ Ibid.

presaged by the astral alignments of the late fifteenth century. In the political and theological polemics that raged in the following century, battles waged increasingly in the emerging cultures of printed word and image, Lichtenberger became a standard work of interest and available to a wide variety of readerships. Indeed, even after the lines of conflict had been drawn between Luther's supporters and his Catholic opponents, Lichtenberger's text and images found themselves deployed and redeployed by partisans of both sides. So profound and persistent was its influence, that Warburg—always sensitive to the migratory patterns of his documents—notes that historical records of its consultation extend to as late as 1806, following the Battle of Jena.²²⁰

But what interested Warburg was the way in which Lichtenberger's images presented the figure of Saturn, as the ruling figure in the house of Scorpio under whose sign Luther had been born. "The history of the influence of antiquity, as observed through the transmission, disappearance, and rediscovery of its gods, has some unexplored insights to contribute to a history of the meaning of anthropomorphic thought," writes Warburg as he traces the various manifestations of Saturn:

In the transitional age of the early Renaissance, pagan-cosmological causality was defined in classicizing terms through the symbols of the gods; and these were approached in due proportion to their degree of saturation with human quality: from a religious daemon-worship at one extreme to a purely artistic and intellectual reinterpretation at the other.²²¹

In relation to Lichtenberger's imagery, Warburg's primary focus is on Saturn's relation to the supposedly moderating and more congenial influence of Jupiter. Indeed, the visual representation of this confrontation between the sinister, melancholy, and sometimes revolutionary aspect of Saturn and the stabilizing function of Jupiter had particular

²²⁰ Ibid., 623.

²²¹ Ibid., 645.

salience for an era in deep political and religious turmoil. But for Warburg, Lichtenberger's images speak with the visual tones of a distinctly atavistic spirituality, that "religious daemon-worship" which formed one of the poles of possible representation. "Lichtenberger," Warburg writes of the *Practica*, "shows us a pair of debased, repellent planetary spirits contending for the control of human destiny; the object of their struggle, man himself, is absent." The pattern by which Lichtenberger here receives and interprets the symbolic remnants of antique culture is steeped in what Warburg understands as an anthropologically primitive posture of spirituality and representation. The nomadic orientation of the classical pantheon here emerges as personified forces of fate and demonic presences whose struggles determine the fortunes of an impotent mankind. The images capture a representational posture in which humanity confronts historical and natural worlds that are governed by entities of absolute otherness and range far beyond the limited sphere of human control.

In looking to the other terminus of the spectrum, the opposite representational pole in the reception of antique themes and astral imagery, Warburg turns to the contemporary Renaissance figure of Albrecht Dürer (1471-1528). By the 1520's, Dürer had long enjoyed a distinguished reputation throughout Europe as an accomplished artist and engraver with contacts both north and south of the Alps. Indeed, Dürer's travels in Italy, first in 1494 and 1495 and then from 1505 to 1507, form a seminal chapter in the history of artistic exchange between the Renaissances of Germany and Italy. Though he remained in Nuremberg during the balance of his career, he carried on correspondence and maintained contact with a variety of well-known artists to the south, including Raphael, Leonardo and Giovanni Bellini. It is not Dürer's works from his Italian

journeys that interest Warburg, however, but Dürer's 1514 engraving, *Melancholia I*. In this instance, the example could not be a more legitimate representative of the art historical canon, with an enormous art historical literature devoted to both Dürer and the engraving. In the iconological field alone, for instance, and within Warburg's immediate orbit, Erwin Panofsky opened his career with a 1914 dissertation on the Nuremberg artist, *Dürer's Kunsttheorie: vornehmlich in ihrem Verhältnis zur Kunsttheorie der Italiener*, and jointly authored a 1923 study with Fritz Saxl entitled, "*Melancholia I*": *Eine quellen- und typengeschichtliche Untersuchungen*.²²²

Dürer's *Melancholia*, however, provided a rich document for iconological investigation not only for Saxl and Panofsky, but also for Warburg, both in his Luther essay and elsewhere.²²³ In his 1905 fragment on Dürer's *Death of Orpheus*, for instance, Warburg had already been intrigued by the way in which the artist had responded to the works of his Italian contemporaries, but had nevertheless brought a different temperament to bear on the antique themes and formulae that he found there. "Antiquity came to Dürer by way of Italian art," suggests Warburg,

not merely as a Dionysian stimulant but as a source of Apollonian clarity. The Apollo Belvedere was in his mind's eye when he sought for the ideal measure of the male body, and he related the truth of nature to the proportions of Vitruvius. This Faustian tendency to brood on questions of measure and proportion never left him, and indeed intensified; but he soon lost interest in the antique as a source of agitated mobility in any Baroque or Manneristic sense.²²⁴

²²² Erwin Panofsky and Fritz Saxl. *Dürer's "Melancholia I": Eine quellen- und typengeschichtliche Untersuchungen* (Leipzig and Berlin: Teubner, 1923). See also, Erwin Panofsky, *Albrecht Dürer*. 2 vols. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1943).

²²³ See the fragment on Dürer's *Death of Orpheus* in Aby Warburg, "Dürer and Italian Antiquity," in *The Renewal of Pagan Antiquity*, 553-558.

²²⁴ *Ibid.*, 556.

There is thus in Warburg's Dürer an impulse to rework the forms of classical tradition in ways that set him apart both from the Olympian vitality of the Italian milieu and from the sinister demonism exemplified by the images in Lichtenberger's *Practica*. In the case of *Melancholia I*, a work overflowing with allegories of astrological and pagan import, Warburg finds Dürer subtly transforming these visual rhetorics from a narrative of a battle between personified (super)natural forces to a story signifying an internal spiritual conflict. "Here," writes Warburg,

the cosmic conflict is echoed in a process that takes place within man himself. The daemonic grotesques have disappeared; and saturnine gloom has been spiritualized into human, humanistic contemplation. Deep in thought, the winged figure of Melancholy props her head on her left hand and holds a pair of compasses in her right; she is surrounded by technical and mathematical instruments and symbols, and before her lies a sphere.[...] Dürer shows the spirit of Saturn neutralized by the individual mental efforts of the thinking creature against whom its rays are directed. Menaced by the "most ignoble complex," the Child of Saturn seeks to elude the baneful planetary influence through contemplative activity. Melancholy holds in her hand, not a base shovel, but the compasses of genius. Magically invoked, Jupiter comes to her aid through his benign and moderating influence on Saturn. In a sense, the salvation of the human being through the countervailing influence of Jupiter has already taken place; the duel between the planets, as visualized by Lichtenberger, is over; and the magic square hangs on the wall like a votive offering of thanks to the benign and victorious planetary spirit.²²⁵

And somewhat earlier:

The truly creative act—that which gives Dürer's *Melancholia I* its consoling, humanistic message of liberation from the fear of Saturn—can be understood only if we recognize that the artist has taken a magical and mythical logic and made it spiritual and intellectual. The malignant, child-devouring planetary god, whose cosmic contest with another planetary ruler seals the subject's fate, is humanized and metamorphosed by Dürer into the image of the thinking, working human being.²²⁶

²²⁵ Ibid., 645.

²²⁶ Ibid.

In Dürer's engraving, the visual themes and spirits of antiquity make yet another appearance, but here the tale is one in which these are received and transmuted in a process of rational reflection or contemplation, a gesture of meditative distancing with which Warburg associated the term *Besonnenheit*. In this instance of the "renewal of pagan antiquity," the primitive anxieties of symbolic expression were re-synthesized and re-expressed through the creative agency of the artist, who in both form and content announces a reasserted human power in the face of the highly charged memories contained in the *Pathosformeln*. Dürer finds a symbol of man's subjugation and powerlessness before malevolent cosmic forces, and sublimates it into an allegory of self-emancipation through reflection and rational contemplation.

By sketching this spectrum of Renaissance representational forms, a spectrum described by the distance between the images of Lichtenberger and Dürer, Warburg hopes to illuminate the distance between Melanchthon and Luther in terms of their respective receptions of astrology. Where Melanchthon still finds himself agitated by an astrological literature such as Lichtenberger's, in which the theologian continues to detect truly supernatural forces, Warburg's Luther confronts the signs of astral portents in a way more similar to that of Dürer. "Luther and Dürer thus coincided to some extent in their resistance to the myth of the great conjunction," Warburg concludes,

With them, we find ourselves embarked on the struggle for the mental and religious liberation of modern humanity—though as yet only at an early stage. Just as Luther still went in fear of cosmic portents and omens (not to speak of the antique *lamiae*), Dürer's *Melancholia* has yet to break quite free of the superstitious terrors of antiquity.²²⁷

²²⁷ Ibid.

Though both figures are still firmly embedded in a landscape populated by mysterious forces and uncanny correspondences, Luther and Dürer here emerge as representatives of an early gestural current of representational liberation from the imagery of totemism and sympathetic magic. In each case, the external and fateful conflict between Lichtenberger's Saturn and Jupiter undergoes an *Aufhebung* into the sphere of an interior and humanized spiritual struggle. And in this latter case, the struggle is carried out by means of a carefully cultivated and hard won space of detachment (*Besonnenheit*) from the immediate and primitive reflexive responses aroused by the culturally charged symbolic memories of the *Pathosformeln*. For Luther, in other words, the astrological imagery of a book like the *Practica* could be taken seriously, but only in relation to more marginal or external phenomenon, and never in relation to internal spiritual conditions. To underscore this point, Warburg includes an extended anecdote, humorously related by a seventeenth century commentator. As Luther was one day reading Lichtenberger's *Practica* and making preparations for a new translation, he was approached by a Dr. Justus Jonas who was stunned that the reformer should be so interested in a work so closely associated with his vilification:

"Why translate him? He is against you." Luther asked him why. Jonas said: "Lichtenberger says you have the devil; and you have no devil." Then Master Luther smiled and said: "Now, Doctor, look more closely at the picture. Where does the devil sit? Not in the monk's heart but on his back. That is quite right! In my heart dwells my Lord Jesus, and there the devil shall never enter, now or hereafter. And yet I think he does sit on my back, through the agency of the pope, the emperor, and the great potentates, and all those in the world who claim to be wise. If he can do no more, he makes a fearful roaring in my ears."²²⁸

²²⁸ Ibid., 629.

"Now, Doctor, look more closely at the picture." In a dictum that could easily have been penned by Aby Warburg himself, Luther thus invites his interlocutor to participate in a deeper and more sustained moment of reflection on the image. In this posture of contemplation, he transforms the image from one that depicts his diabolical nature, to one that merely asserts his more earthly and material concerns. The devil may indeed plague him as a burden on his back, but such forces can never truly penetrate into the spiritual recesses of his heart.

The Luther essay displays Warburg's characteristic ability to follow the most minute and mobile of historical traces to produce a novel work of scholarship, but it is also a powerful reflection on the historical moment of its writing. For while Warburg presents Luther in the costume of a celebrated and heroic figure, an historical personality resonant with themes of national liberation, the moment of the Reformation emerges as a deeply ambivalent era. Indeed, if the German sixteenth century had seen the simultaneous presence of a primitive symbolism and a more emancipatory representational rhetoric, so too was the early twentieth century the scene of such tensions and crisis. Writing in the midst of a world war, and undermined by an increasingly uncertain mental state, Warburg was well aware of the fine line that both individual and civilization walked between the threats of primitive fear and the hopes of rationality and clarity. However, even as the convulsions of European war began to draw to a close, Warburg's suffered a setback in his more personal and psychological struggle, a setback that ultimately reached a climax in a 1918 breakdown and his several-year commitment to the clinical care of Ludwig Binswanger.

The circumstances of Warburg's breakdown and the years of his recovery even today retain the character of an ellipsis in the biography of the art historian. Documents from this era are protected by the Warburg Institute and have not been made available to researchers, and the latter have—to varying degrees—studiously respected the wishes of the Institute. For the present discussion, suffice it to say that the years from 1918 to his gradual recovery in 1923 seem to represent a disorienting amplification of the tensions we have traced in Warburg's personal life and professional methods. For during the period in question, Warburg suffered in a realm defined both by radical retreat and terrifying self-dispersal. On the one hand, the depressing confinements of war were profoundly deepened by the necessity of clinical commitment, all the territories he had once mapped and explored resolved themselves into the four walls of a Kreuzlingen clinic. On the other hand, the nomadic character of his thought, with all its accelerations and its arabesques, had traced such a tangled map that even the familiar landmarks and topographies of the self had become lost or indistinct. The schizophrenia he detected in the history of European symbolic representation had thus come to haunt the historian himself. Regardless of how one chooses to interpret Warburg's illness, the path by which Warburg eventually recovered both himself and his health is, on the contrary, very well known in the literature relating to the art historian. After showing signs in 1923 of a generalized and sustained improvement in his condition, Warburg made a bargain with Binswanger that if he could write and deliver a lecture before the staff and other patients of the Kreuzlingen clinic, then he would be deemed ready to return to his former life. What emerged was the remarkable *Schlangenritual* (Snake Ritual) text on totemistic practices of the Pueblo Indians—whose rites he observed nearly 20 years earlier during

his 1895 journey to America—that marks the end of the biographical ellipsis formed by his painful years of psychological instability.

The essay itself lies outside the scope of the present work, but it picks up and continues the same themes that intrigued Warburg before his breakdown: the emancipation of self and civilization through a conscious process of mastery over the volatile psychological energies bound up in symbolic representation. Here again, the subject matter seems to mirror and recapitulate his own personal struggles as Warburg attempts to exorcise his own demons in a difficult process of synthesis and representation.²²⁹ The story, however, of Warburg's self-willed recovery through an act of writing has naturally been a tantalizing one for the literature around the *Schlangenritual* text. In the excellent interpretive essay accompanying his translation of the work, for instance, Michael Steinberg declares that Warburg's:

psychological resolution culminates in the writing of the Kreuzlingen lecture of April 1923. The *act* of writing is by no means a secondary element in this process; it is the lifelong conjunction of Warburg's psychological and scholarly energies. There are two points to be made here. First, his biography proceeds through his writings: letters, diaries, and scholarly texts. Thus his intellectual and personal biography needs to be traced in terms of the genealogy of texts. Second, the recovery (in a clinical sense) of the person is achieved through the writing of a text (the Kreuzlingen lecture), and that recovery is also the recovery of writing itself.²³⁰

There is, doubtless, a great deal of truth in such interpretations, in which the act of writing emerges as a self-restorative process. In this vision, however, of a written act of self-constitution, this inscribed social contract with oneself (or one's selves), the emphasis on Warburg's discursive writing may subordinate and overshadow the importance of Warburg's images. But as we have seen, the relationship between words

²²⁹ See Warburg, *Images from the Region of the Pueblo Indians of North America*, 1.

²³⁰ *Ibid.*, 71.

and images in Warburg's work is a complex one, and not one in which images are merely the incidental supplement to written texts. "If I am to show you images," writes Warburg in the first sentence of Steinberg's translation, "most of which I photographed myself, from a journey undertaken some twenty-seven years in the past, and to accompany them with words, then it behooves me to preface my attempt with an explanation." Thus, as Warburg frames it, it is the words that accompany the images, rather than the reverse, and indeed it is precisely the words that disappear from Warburg's last major project.

The final period of Warburg's life, which ended a scarce five years after his Kreuzlingen recovery, was dominated by his interest in a work which he came to call *Mnemosyne*. As he described it in 1927, the work was to take shape not as a discursive text, paper or monograph, but in the form of an elaborately conceived "atlas" or album of images tracing the evolution and manifestation of the expressive formulae to which his work had long been devoted. As Gombrich notes, the writing process was always one accompanied by certain degree of pain and anxiety for Warburg, and the insistently fragmentary character of his corpus seems to bear this out. And subsequently, in the years after his recovery, such difficulties of composition were apparently only further amplified. Fritz Saxl, having served as an educational officer in the Austrian armed forces, returned once again to Hamburg with a method of display that he had used during his wartime presentations, a method that immediately intrigued and appealed to Warburg. Fairly simple in essence, Saxl's presentational tool consisted of large flat panel covered with black cloth on which images and visual fragments of various sorts could be easily arranged and rearranged. If the migratory nature of Warburg's thought

had always been hard to press into the linear confines of discursive writing—and had barely been encompassed by the organization of his library—here was a method which allowed Warburg to more nimbly arrange his thoughts in the two dimensional space of the black panels. As Gombrich writes:

He was always so deeply convinced of the complexity of the historical processes that interested him that he found it increasingly vexing to have to string up his presentation in one single narrative. Every individual work of the period he had made his own was to him not only connected forward and backward in a 'unilinear' development—it could only be understood by what it derived from and by what it contradicted, by its *ambiente*, by its remote ancestry and by its potential effect in the future. Even in his early notes Warburg had been fond of mapping out these complex relationships in diagrammatic form in which the work he was studying was represented as an outcome of various forces.²³¹

Thus, while the difficult task of writing out his ideas in standard form certainly had its value for Warburg, the mode of visual presentation that culminated in his *Bilderatlas* captured a dimension of his thought that could be rendered only poorly in textual form. The complicated avenues and channels through which his thinking often traveled—passages that seemed to tunnel through the territorial boundaries of discipline, geography and historical epoch—could find expression only in the more porous mode of representation that characterized the panels of the *Atlas*.

God, according to Warburg's most favored motto, was hidden in the detail, and if one follows the French origins of the word "detail", then the pastiche like process of "cutting out" and reassembling visual fragments in *Mnemosyne* was truly a spiritual exercise. As with the protean textures of Warburg's thought the panel series of the *Bilderatlas*, and the objects arranged within them, underwent nearly constant reconception and revision. The last series, as it was envisioned shortly before Warburg's

²³¹ Gombrich, *Aby Warburg: An Intellectual Biography*, 284.

death, was to consist of a total of 79 panels, with each black frame containing a series of images tracing a particular theme in a representational history that extended from antiquity to modernity. Thus typical of Warburg's passion for the marginal, the unexpected and the fragmentary, the *Bilderatlas* included photos from contemporary illustrated magazines depicting images with links to antique formulae. In a panel devoted, for instance, to the characteristic theme of the striding figure of the classical nymph, Warburg not only attaches an image from Ghirlandaio's Tornabuoni cycle, but he also includes a contemporary photograph of a female golfer in mid-swing—likewise capturing the flowing and mobile gesture of the accessories in motion. The thematic motifs of the “Judgment of Paris”—traveling from antiquity to the Renaissance—are drawn together in a panel which culminates in Manet's arch-modern *Dejeuner sur l'herbe*. Alongside a reproduction of Delacroix's *Medea*, on a panel devoted to the motif of *Kindermord*, Warburg situates an advertisement graphic for “Malt-Crème”, the cover art of a fish cookbook, and an image from a HAPAG poster.²³²

Aside from the very occasional caption or panel title, the tangled fibers of cultural memory that link these images for Warburg are nowhere explained or elucidated in textual form. But for Warburg, this was precisely the point. As with Walter Benjamin's *Arcades Project*, a work which has also been linked with the currents of modernist pastiche, the object of the *Bilderatlas* was precisely that of breaking such fragments out of the congealed territories of conventional historical narrative, of putting those fragments into motion and revealing the interrelations that resist simple linear exposition. Far from being a merely useful outlet for a thinker still recovering from

²³² Aby Warburg, *Der Bilderatlas: Mnemosyne*, ed. Michael Diers, Horst Bredekamp, Kurt Forster (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 2003).

mental illness, and a scholar still deeply pained by the writing process, Warburg's late interest in the *Bilderatlas* should be interpreted as the culmination of a life's work that was devoted to capturing the living mobility of Western cultural forms. And if this was indeed a scene of a somewhat idiosyncratic form of writing, then the emphasis is surely on the scene rather than the writing

In the panels of *Mnemosyne*, therefore, in the photos and reproductions that accumulated as the gnomic map of antiquity's persistent renewal, the *Bilderatlas* brought Aby Warburg's career to a final coda, the resolution of a lifelong thematic development in which the visual image had emerged as a powerful, durable and self-sufficient carrier of social and civilizational memory. Indeed, composed exclusively of images with little or no commentary, the *Bilderatlas* seems a fitting final statement from a scholar who had striven to understand the nature of art and the visual image as an object and document of historical interest. Where the legacies of Hegel and his followers had found only the reflection or expressions of more fundamental historical forces, and where others such as Wölfflin had retreated behind the ramparts of stylistic formalism, Aby Warburg always resisted such gestures of conceptual absorption and closure. Like the black background that surrounds Warburg's *Mnemosyne* images, the dark borders that snake around the pictures like hidden passages and labyrinthine detours, Warburg's work was always aimed at recovering a sense of the porousness of history. Whether he was discovering hitherto unknown connections between the visual lexicon of classical antiquity and moderns such as Manet, or tracing the subtle web of mutual influence between Medicean Florence and a still Gothic northern Europe, or deciphering the complex interrelations between historical texts and visual representations, Warburg's approach was perpetually

expansive and ramifying. The disciplinary and scholarly maps that he produced in these navigations, maps with both false starts and marvelously novel passages, seem primarily concerned with generating and pursuing new connections that ceaselessly radiate outward and grow lushly from his work. To the frustration of both his contemporary colleagues and later observers, such rhizomatic movements always made following the trail left by Warburg a difficult task. The Hamburg historian seems to have had far less interest in maintaining territorial integrities of discipline, periodization or methodology, than in searching out the porous spaces and liminal phenomena that resist such territorialization. Indeed, as he traversed the steppes and deserts of these nomadic spaces—whether in a Florentine archive, a Danish second-hand shop, or amongst the Pueblo Indians—the war machine that propelled these various peregrinations was that of the visual image.

However, if this war-machine of visibility was to gain momentum, to accelerate and traverse the various territorial boundaries that sought its encirclement and capture, then Warburg's images eventually and ultimately had to be freed from the commandments of speech, writing and the text. For as Warburg sought to map out the strange passages and resonant memories, the visual/iconic document or representation had always seemed drawn into the orbit of textual representation, always configured as a supplement to illustrate, and be embedded within, frameworks and territories of written or indexical narrative. In this sense, therefore, the *Bilderatlas* emerges as something more than a map of antiquity's *mnemic* after-effects in Western civilization. Rather than a narrative tracing in which the images might become congealed in the territorial matrices of discipline, period and method, it is instead a map that prompts its elements and representations into perpetual motion. For Warburg, in other words, the task was not one

of merely recovering the image and translating it into the archive of the written text or commentary. The task, on the contrary, was one of showing how images, and their cultural resonances, could complicate, undermine and even dissolve the narrative territories that they encounter.

Chapter Five

Auch ich im Archiv: Sigmund Freud and the Italian Scene of Writing

The conceptual wanderings and methodological journeys that accompanied Aby Warburg's oscillations between Florence and Hamburg, and between the rationality of Athens and the mysticism of Alexandria, were always an idiosyncratic and intensely personal journey. His peregrinations through libraries and second-hand shops, through the ancient Mediterranean and the American West, were traced as an exploratory landscape that no guidebook or Baedeker could ever truly encompass—even his own art historical library struggled to draw a coherent circle around its patron's intellectual migrations. For his contemporary and fellow Italophile, Sigmund Freud, the lure and landscapes of Italy were manifest under the guidance of another star, and configured in a set of coordinates very different from those laid out in Warburg's nomadic explorations. For if we have linked Warburg to the Deleuzian figure of the nomad, we could perhaps associate Freud's travels with those of Kafka's K in *Das Schloss*. Like the protagonist in Kafka's novel, Freud seems to encounter the unknown territory—on in his case, Italy—from the perspective of a surveyor; the nature of his calling is to chart, record, map and make legible the spaces and experiences he explores. But as with K, Freud's impulses toward survey, orientation and registration seem haunted and frustrated by a landscape that refuses to cooperate. Thus, in a passage from his essay on the uncanny, Freud relates an experience with which Kafka's K would have been highly sympathetic:

As I was walking, one hot summer afternoon, through the deserted streets of a provincial town in Italy which was unknown to me, I found myself in a quarter of whose character I could not long remain in doubt. Nothing but painted women were to be seen at the windows of the small houses, and I hastened to leave the narrow street at the next turning. But after having wandered about for a time without enquiring my way, I suddenly found myself back in the same street, where my presence was now beginning to excite attention. I hurried away once more, only to arrive by another *detour* at the same place yet a third time. Now, however, a feeling overcame me which I can only describe as uncanny, and I was glad enough to find myself back at the piazza I had left a short while before, without any further voyages of discovery.²³³

But if Freud often finds himself thus lost in the labyrinthine spaces of Italy, it is not a map such as that of Warburg that he seems to desire. Rather, what Freud persistently seems to seek—in terms borrowed again from Deleuze—is a tracing, a model or a topographical representation of Italy. Where Warburg seems to wish to multiply and amplify the portals and passages that he finds in Italy, Freud also finds such multiplications and amplifications intriguing, but is nevertheless overcome by the disturbing feeling of the uncanny which they seem to generate. The end result for the psychoanalyst is an uneasy hovering between, on the one hand, a nearly obsessive interest in Italy and Italian travel, and on the other hand, a recurring effort to render or reproduce the experience of Italy in a legible, textual and rational tracing. To put it in the terms that we will explore in the chapter below, the Italian journeys of Freud almost

²³³ Sigmund Freud, "Das Unheimliche", in *Gesammelte Werke* (Frankfurt am Main: 1999 (1919)). The literature on Freud's essay and related issues of the uncanny as a phenomenon of modernity is vast. Especially interesting is the work of the past decades looking at the architectural/spatial dimensions of the uncanny, and how those spaces may in turn be gendered and otherwise marked semiotically. See for instance: Terry Castle, *The Female Thermometer: Eighteenth-Century Culture and the Invention of the Uncanny* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995); Jo Collins and John Jervis, ed., *Uncanny Modernity: Cultural Theories, Modern Anxieties* (London: Palgrave, 2008). Robin Lydenberg, "Freud's Uncanny Narratives," *PMLA* 112, no. 5, Oct. (1997); Anthony Vidler, *The Architectural Uncanny: Essays in the Modern Unhomely* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1992); Nicholas Royle, *The Uncanny* (New York: Routledge, 2003); Maria M. Tater, "The Houses of Fiction: Toward a Definition of the Uncanny," *Comparative Literature* 33, no. 2 (1981); Mladen Dolar, "'I Shall Be with You on Your Wedding Night': Lacan and the Uncanny," *October* 58, Rendering the Real, Autumn (1991).

inevitably end up in the spaces where they began—in a Viennese study, in the circle of psychoanalysis and in the archival recordings of his texts.

Of course, the texts of Freud have long been recognized as defining landmarks in the landscape of *fin-de-siècle* modernity. And as they took shape in an intellectual topography defined by the nascent decline of a once hegemonic historicism and the emerging discourses of European modernism, they both opened and occupied a set of novel spaces within which problems of cultural and subjective historicity could be explored. In this relation, Freud has naturally attracted enormous attention from scholars, and has become an inescapable figure in the historiographies of remembrance and modern subjectivity. Furthermore, like Warburg, Freud's career spanned the era from the late nineteenth century to the early decades of the twentieth century, and the trajectory of the latter reflects the same early interest in medicine and positivist natural science that would continue to influence the contours of their thinking throughout their careers—even where these were pursued to conclusions far removed from their starting point. Above all, however, the troubled and much fraught relation between past and present, the mutual entanglement of *what now is* and *what once was*, forms a red thread running through both men's work, and also a sphere of common concern with modernity and its troubled memories.

As with Aby Warburg, the experience of travel in Italy and reflection upon its various pasts—its Renaissances and Antiquities—became inextricably linked to explorations and meditations on the nature of historical and psychological memory. The interpenetration of Italian history with its contemporary *fin-de-siècle* landscapes came to represent a nearly inexhaustible source of fascination as each man wrestled with

questions regarding the uncanny relations between the European present and its half-remembered pasts. Thus, the curious charge and resonance that images of Italy enjoy within Freud's corpus has not gone unremarked. From his first forays to the South—marked most conspicuously by anxiety dreams about a Rome that both beckoned and threatened—to his later years of Roman conquest and yearly vacation/pilgrimages to the Italian peninsula, Freud's reflections and sentiments about Italy suffuse a great deal his work. Indeed, whether as psychoanalyst, holiday-maker or amateur collector of antiquities, Freud's career was accompanied by an insistent Italian leitmotif.²³⁴ The lure of the South was such that, already in his seminal 1900 *Interpretation of Dreams*, Freud includes a self-analysis of a series of his dreams related to Rome:

Like so many boys of that age, I had sympathized in the Punic Wars not with the Romans but with the Carthaginians. And when in the higher classes I began to understand for the first time what it meant to belong to an alien race, and anti-Semitic feelings among the other boys warned me that I must take up a definite position, the figure of the Semitic general rose still higher in my esteem. To my youthful mind Hannibal and Rome symbolized the conflict between the tenacity of Jewry and the organization of the Catholic Church. And the increasing importance of the effects of the anti-Semitic movement upon our emotional life helped to fix the thoughts and feelings of those early days. Thus the wish to go to Rome had become in my dream-life a cloak and symbol for a number of other passionate wishes. Their realization was to be pursued with all the perseverance and single-mindedness of the Carthaginian, though their fulfillment seemed at the moment just as little favored by destiny as was Hannibal's lifelong wish to enter Rome.

²³⁴ On Freud's Collections/Collecting, his fascination with Italy and its archeological metaphors: Kurt Ebeling, and Stefan Altekamp, eds., *Die Aktualität des Archäologischen* (Frankfurt a.M.: Fischer, 2004); Jeffrey Prager, *Presenting the Past: Psychoanalysis and the Sociology of Misremembering* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2000); Donald Spence, *Narrative Truth and Historical Truth. Meaning and Interpretation in Psychoanalysis* (New York: Norton, 1982); Rolf Haubl, *Der Psychoanalytiker als Archäologe. Eine Einführung in die Methodologie der Rekonstruktion* (Stuttgart: 1996); Donald Kuspit, "A Mighty Metaphor. The Analogy of Archaeology and Psychoanalysis," in *Sigmund Freud and Art. His Personal Collection of Antiquities*, ed. Lynn Gamwell/Richard Wells (New York: 1989); Richard H. Armstrong, *A Compulsion for Antiquity: Freud and the Ancient World* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2005).

After these initial hesitations, and perhaps through the assistance of his own interpretive ministrations, Freud nevertheless broke through these Roman anxieties in 1901 and would go on to visit the city at least six more times during the course of his life. “Why then are we leaving this ideally beautiful and swimmingly peaceful place?” he writes to his wife of his decision to push still further south while on a 1900 Tyrolian holiday, “Only because we have a short week left, and our hearts are directed to the South, to fig trees, chestnut, laurel, cypress, houses with balconies, antique relics and the like.”²³⁵

For Freud, therefore, the intrigue and fascination of Italy was bound up with its function as a kind of magic mirror in which the image of modern memory was distilled and illuminated. Indeed, Italy came to represent a uniquely uncanny space in modernity, a space in which the shadow spaces of half-remembered (and half-buried) histories still seemed to hover at the edge of vision. On the one hand, such a conception made Italy a singularly useful occasion for reflection on the nature of individual and cultural memory, a domain from which to launch enlightened forays into undiscovered zones of desire, myth and history. And indeed, the self-representation of Freud—as individual subject and as a man of science—is pervaded by Enlightenment discourses of pacification of the unknown through rational illumination. Even the dark spaces and absences of Italy’s uncanny historical landscapes, as Freud perceived them, had to be brought into the light of modern scholarship. But if Freud often configured his projects in terms of such modernist triumphalism—the shadowy architectures of Italy/past/memory transformed into transparent spaces à la Le Corbusier—they also display another aspect of modernist

²³⁵Sigmund Freud, *Unser Herz zeigt nach dem Süden: Reisebriefe 1895-1923*, Christfried Tögel ed. (Berlin: Aufbau, 2002), 128. “Warum wir also diesen ideal schönen u ruhigen, schwammreichen Ort verlassen? Nur weil wir nur noch eine kurze Woche haben u unser Herz, wie sich gezeigt hat nach dem Süden zeigt, nach Feigen, Kastanien, Lorbeer, Zypressen, Häuser [n] mit Balkonen, Antiquaren udgl.”

discourse, an aspect highlighted by perpetual and persistent anxiety that such projects of Enlightenment can never quite be realized and are never fully complete. In other words, Italy became a region of fixation—Freud himself was explicit in describing his own obsessive interest in psychoanalytical terms—a region which demanded further inquiry into the field of memory, but one that always seemed to resist complete elucidation. To put it differently, Italy became closely associated with both the desires of science and the anxieties aroused by its persistent incompleteness. Indeed, at the root of Freud’s continual and uncanny return to Italy as a thematic obsession there seems to be a fascination with those aporia and shadow spaces that they cannot quite bring to light. The uncanny landscape of Italy, in other words, carried with it a strange admixture of desire for, and revulsion of, the unknown that still seems to inhabit its crevices and hidden compartments. Thus, even as Freud sought to illuminate these crevices and compartments, he was nevertheless plagued by a sense that such spaces resonate with threatening energies and uncanny powers.

In his 1919 essay, “Das Unheimliche,” Freud draws a quote from Friedrich Schelling as he surveys possible definitions for the strangely recalcitrant concept. In *Philosophie der Mythologie* of 1835, Schelling had pithily defined the uncanny—in a passage relating to Homer and mythology—as “the name for everything that ought to have remained secret or hidden but has come to light.”²³⁶ It is this definition that seems to have intrigued Freud most, and from which the theory of the uncanny as the return of

²³⁶ Freud, “Das Unheimliche”. See also Ernst Jentsch, “On the Psychology of the Uncanny,” in *Uncanny Modernity: Cultural Theories, Modern Anxieties*, ed. Jo Collins and John Jervis (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008.); Vidler, *The Architectural Uncanny: Essays in the Modern Unhomely*. 26-27; Friedrich Schelling, *Historical-Critical Introduction to the Philosophy of Mythology*, trans. Markus Zisselsberger Mason Richey (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 2007).

the repressed drew its first energy. But in many ways it also captures the mixture of transgression and desire with which Freud pursued his explorations of Italy and memory. In Freud's work, therefore, a significant theme emerges that encompasses two conflicting desires. On the one hand, there is the desire to bring something to light, to share a secret, to breathe life into something long thought forgotten and dead. On the other hand, one finds the anxiety of lost mastery, the fear of uncontrollable forces, and the secret that should have remained hidden. The cultural geographies and historical legacies of Italy became a field that Freud sought to map out and trace, a region that he perpetually surveyed for a means to reveal that which was hidden, and yet also a space in which to master the uncanny otherness brought to light. In the following pages, therefore, we will examine the ways in which Sigmund Freud set about charting these strange territories of memory, and the strategies with which he sought to tame the fearsome creatures and uncanny apparitions aroused by the light of remembrance.

In both the myths and histories of the genesis of psychoanalysis, as handed down from Freud's earliest formulations, a curious preoccupation with themes of travel, mobility and exploration seems to recur with significant regularity. The correspondence between Freud and Wilhelm Fliess, an intimate communication that extended from the late 1880's into the first decade of the twentieth century, is an invaluable record not only of the emergence of psychoanalytical thought, but also the simultaneous appearance of what would become Freud's lifelong love of—or obsession with—travel. Freud's enthusiasm for both interests becomes a leitmotif of this correspondence to such an extent that the urgings of *Reiselust* and meditations on nascent psychoanalysis often seem to blend imperceptibly into one another.

Writing to Fliess in December of 1897, Freud's reflects on the frustrations accompanying his psychoanalytic work, reflections which then quickly turn to the desire for travel and the neurotic nature of his Roman *Fernweh*:

On such quiet days as yesterday and today, however, everything in me is very quiet, terribly lonely. I cannot talk about it to anyone, nor can I force myself to work, deliberately and voluntarily as other workers can. I must wait until something stirs in me and I become aware of it. And so I often dream whole days away.—All of this is only introductory to our meeting—in Breslau, as Ida proposed, if the train connections suit you. You do know that what happened in Prague proved I was right. When we decided on Prague last time, dreams played a big part. You did not want to come to Prague, and you still know why, and at the same time I dreamed that I was in Rome, walking about the streets, and feeling surprised at the large number of German street and shop signs. I awoke and immediately thought: so this was Prague (where such German signs, as is well known, are called for). Thus the dream had fulfilled my wish to meet you in Rome rather than in Prague. My longing for Rome is, by the way, deeply neurotic. It is connected with my high school hero worship of the Semitic Hannibal, and this year in fact I did not reach Rome any more than he did from Lake Trasimeno. Since I have been studying the unconscious, I have become so interesting to myself.²³⁷

In this fabulously nomadic passage—or rather, in this dramatic narrative of nomadism and its territorializing other—Freud casts himself in the lead role of an almost Joycian odyssey. The scene begins with Freud well-ensconced in the scene of writing, though here beset by frustrations and blockages of loneliness and anomie. Into these spaces there immediately emerge traces and images of travel and movement, supplemental memories that carry Freud's thoughts far abroad to dreamscapes of Breslau, Prague and Rome. From the constrictions of frustrated writing, there thus leak fantasies of travel and escape to the presence of friends and desired destinations. But even as these nomadic travels reach their greatest distance from the conscious/discursive spaces of his Viennese

²³⁷ Sigmund Freud, *The Complete Letters of Sigmund Freud to Wilhelm Fliess*, ed. Jeffrey Moussaieff Masson, trans. Jeffrey Moussaieff Masson (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1985), 285.

study, Freud returns these traces of waywardness (and wayward traces) back to the scene of writing, a scene in which these various nomadic wanderings are returned once again to the *Heimat* of psychoanalysis and to the pages of a letter to a colleague. To the extent, in other words, that travel became a significant constitutive metaphor in his psychoanalytical work of the era, all roads did in fact seem to lead to Rome, but these same roads seem to lead back to the spaces of writing and psychoanalysis.

Such preoccupation with images and metaphors of travel, however, were by no means a thematic idiosyncrasy of either Freud or the early stages of the psychoanalytic movement. At a 1912 meeting of the Vienna Psychoanalytic Association, for instance, Alfred Freiherr von Winterstein delivered a paper entitled, “On the Psychoanalysis of Travel,” that resulted in a lively discussion among the participants. In an article based on the conference paper, and subsequently published in the journal *Imago*, Winterstein suggested:

In the majority of cases of reported analysis we can ascribe the spontaneous and seemingly inexplicable appearance of an urge to travel [...] to sexual roots, whether it has to do with the satisfaction of the Libido (Homosexuality!) the realization of infantile fantasies and arousals, [...] or directly as graspable as sexually symbolic death wishes (travel together—death together—coitus). The rest of the cases could be ascribed to criminality or death wish in terms of their motivating factors.²³⁸

Indeed, if Freud’s own interest in both the theory and practice of travel continued unabated throughout his life, so too did it continue to recur as a theme in the literature of

²³⁸ Quoted from Christfried Tögel, “Gestern Träumte ich wieder vom Reisen.” in *Unser Herz zeigt nach dem Süden: Reisebriefe 1895-1923* (Berlin: Aufbau, 2002), 16. “In der Mehrheit der von uns zur Analyse herangezogenen Fälle konnten wir den spontan und in scheinbar unerklärlicher Weise auftretenden Trieb zum Reisen [...] auf seine psychosexuelle Wurzel zurückführen, mochte es sich nun um den Wunsch nach wie immer gearteter Befriedigung der Libido (Homosexualität!), um die Verwirklichung infantiler Phantasien und Regungen, [...] oder um direkt als sexualsymbolisch aufzufassende Todeswünsche (gemeinsame Reise - gemeinsames Sterben - coitus) handeln. In den restlichen Fällen wurde Kriminalität und Todeswunsch als treibender Faktor nachgewiesen.”

psychoanalysis that burgeoned in the first half of the twentieth century. As late as 1936, in a letter to Romain Rolland, Freud remarked on a paper by Viktor Tausk that presents the urge to travel as either a response generated by escapist anxiety or as a desire for self-liberation from the parental sphere. Thus, within the body psychoanalytic thought, the theme of *Reiselust* remained a theoretical well from which its practitioners would draw repeatedly in the first half century of the movement's history.²³⁹

But if psychoanalysis had not been slow to identify travel as an object of theoretical elucidation and thematization, the role of such mobility represented for Freud far more than an object of reflection. Especially with regard to Freud's many Italian sojourns, travel was not merely a phenomenon upon which to reflect, but itself became a significant occasion for such meditation and rumination. In this sense, and during his many summertime pilgrimages to Italy, travel was perhaps more significant as a space of practice and experience than it was as a phenomenon to be theorized. For not only were Freud's journeys inflected by already well-developed turn of the century bourgeois discourses regarding the physical and mental benefits of holiday travel—whether these manifest in the physical rejuvenation of the spa or as spiritual edification in the encounter with Italian culture—but the landscapes of Italy presented a peculiarly rich field of images that would continue to shape and define Freud's understanding of his own psychoanalytic concepts. It was, for instance, under the spell of Italy that Freud's interests in archaeology and collecting emerged in earnest, interests that would go on to penetrate and inform the deepest strata of his psychoanalytic conceptual framework. Though the passage from the *Interpretation of Dreams*—a passage that we noted in our

²³⁹ Ibid.

reflections on Burckhardt—is well known, it is by no means isolated in its evocation of a metaphoric correspondence of half-buried ruin and the human unconscious, an evocation that was informed by Freud’s travelling experiences in, and reflections on, the historical landscapes of Italy. The archeological topography of Pompeii, for instance, was a theme to which Freud returned not infrequently in his writings. For instance, besides his extended interpretation of Wilhelm Jensen’s *Gradiva*, a novella set in Pompeii and which we examine in greater detail below, Freud relates the following exchange in his case study of the ‘Ratman’:

To illustrate my brief statements on the psychological distinctions between what is conscious and what is unconscious, and on the wear and tear to which all consciousness is subject, while the unconscious remains relatively unchanged, I refer to the antiquities displayed in my consulting room, remarking that they were in fact merely grave goods and that for them burial meant preservation. Pompeii had only started to decay once it had been unearthed.—He goes on to ask whether there was any guarantee as to how one would react towards what one found out. One person might behave in such a way as to overcome the reproach, but another might not, he thought.—No. I reply, it is in the nature of things that the emotion is always overcome, usually while the work is still in progress. After all, people are making every effort to preserve Pompeii, but anyone would wish to be rid of such tormenting ideas²⁴⁰

Indeed, in this case study example, we find an archaeological and Italian theme not only emerging as a constitutive metaphor for Freud’s own conceptual heuristic purposes, but also a Pompeian image that penetrates the deliberately arranged and protected sphere of the psychoanalytic session, an image that is deployed in the setting of actual clinical practice. To put it differently, therefore, the scene of Italy seems never far removed from Freud’s writing or clinical practice, and it is a scene that persists not merely as an

²⁴⁰ Sigmund Freud, *The "Wolfman" and Other Cases*, ed. and trans. by Louise Adey Huish (New York: Penguin Classics, 2003), 142.

accidental rhetorical ornament, but one whose metaphors significantly shape the conceptual apparatus of psychoanalysis.

However, even if he seems to deploy the archaeological Pompeian metaphor with such sovereign assurance in the clinical encounter with the ‘Ratman,’ the experience of Italy and its topographies of memory nevertheless possessed for Freud a persistently troublesome—even uncanny—aspect. Freud’s own admission to Fliess of the neurotic character of his Roman obsessions, and the ferociously self-conscious effort with which he returns the nomadic peregrinations of his letter above back into the spaces of psychoanalytic observation, reveals an understanding of his Italian dreams as vehicles of dispersion as well as psychoanalytic crystallization. He seems well aware that his particular *Drang nach Süden* contains both constructive and destructive moments, on the one hand a rich source of reflective inspiration and imagination, on the other hand a set of experiences that perpetually threaten to carry him away, an urge and landscape that eludes the conceptual containment of his of his well-lit—and ever so *Heimlich*—psychoanalytic framework. Without doubt, this reverse side of the Italian medal was part of the charm that Italian travel and holidays held for Freud, but it was also one that would yield tensions that continued to haunt his thought well into the twentieth century.

It is perhaps these very tensions—this sense that Italy had acquired in his own thinking/desiring a resonance of both psychoanalytic enlightenment and a stubborn inscrutability or ineffability—that explains another dimension of Freud’s preoccupation with travel. Besides the frequent journeys, to both Italy and elsewhere, a significant part of Freud’s travelling practice involved extensive reading and research on the nature of prospective destinations, often well before any firm plans for departure had yet been

made. On the one hand, this practice no doubt represented a kind of *ersatz* travel for Freud, the kind of pleasant anticipatory exploration long familiar to readers of travel literature and guidebooks. On the other hand, and perhaps not surprisingly, Freud pursued these explorations with much the same scientifically-informed curiosity and discipline with which he pursued his cartographic charting of the unconscious. The Italy of Freud, like the unconscious of psychoanalysis, was a region of strangely resonant and seductive power, but it was also a region enveloped in darkness, partially hidden beneath the contoured strata of present consciousness.

That Italy, as both metaphor and intimate subjective experience, should be configured as a space of alluring inscrutability, a space both demanding and resisting the colonization of psychoanalytic enlightenment, is not surprising given the geographical and colonial configurations that Freud deploys throughout his work. Writing, for instance, of the strange and exotic land of female sexuality, Freud declares that, “We know less about the sexual life of little girls than of boys. But we need not feel ashamed of this distinction, after all, the sexual life of adult women is a ‘dark continent’ for psychology.”²⁴¹ In the same way, then, that female sexuality becomes linked to discourses of colonial desire (and vice versa), so too does the space of Italy become a similarly charged object of colonial fascination for Freud. The dark continent of Italy, and the neurotic intrigue it held for Freud, had to yield to the enlightened psychoanalyst in the same way that Africa was yielding to the cartographic consciousness of European science and empire.

²⁴¹ Ibid.

As with any careful explorer, therefore, Freud approached his prospective travels in Italy with the same study and interest that would befit any colonial voyage of discovery or campaign of conquest. Even several years before his first journeys to Rome (1901) and Pompeii (1902), Freud appears to have developed more than a passing interest in the careful study of the geography of these regions, an interest that became a means of pleasurable escape from the difficult work then leading up to the publication of *The Interpretation of Dreams*. “I notice with sorrow,” he wrote to Fliess in April of 1897,

how far down the overwork and tension of the last years have brought me. Do not imagine that therewith I want to contradict my own etiological theory. I long for a few beautiful days; for several weeks when I happened to have a free hour I did no more than cut open books, play solitaire, study the streets of Pompeii, and the like.²⁴²

A year and a half later, Freud’s anxieties about his work on the *Traumdeutung*, were still accompanied by the pleasurable haunting of desire for an Italian elsewhere:

I am not sufficiently collected, to be sure, to do anything in addition, other than possibly studying the topography of Rome, the yearning for which becomes ever more tormenting. The dream [book] is lying still, immutably; I lack the incentive to finish it for publication, and the gap in the psychology as well as the gap left by the [removal of the] thoroughly analyzed sample [dream] are obstacles to bringing it to a conclusion which so far I have not been able to overcome.²⁴³

As in the simultaneous gestures of escape and reassertion of control that we witnessed in Freud’s letter to Fliess regarding his work and imagined Roman travel, we see here a similar doubling of Italy as object of both desire and mastery; it is a daydream space of escape from frustrating work, but one that must submit to an almost clinical survey and examination of its anatomy. If we were to present these scenes of Italophilia in allegorical form, we might imagine the seductive figure of *Italia*, the traditional female

²⁴² *The Complete Letters of Sigmund Freud to Wilhelm Fliess*, 236

²⁴³ *The Complete Letters of Sigmund Freud to Wilhelm Fliess*, 332.

allegorical personification of Italy, reclining on Freud's office couch as the good psychoanalyst gazes on with fascination. But while he permits himself this intrigue, it is an indulgence that he can allow himself only when it is configured in terms of the gaze of the clinician, only when he may play the good doctor and intrepid explorer who maps and charts her undiscovered territories under the auspices of enlightened discourse and psychoanalytic science.

The fair *Italia*, in other words, is permitted to speak and share her secrets, but only on condition that she may be mapped out and rendered according to the coordinates of psychoanalysis. In a significant sense, then, Freud is not only examining and studying maps, but also producing them. He constructs, as it were, a cartographic double of a recalcitrant Italian experience with all the Cartesian geometries of visibility that his science of psychoanalysis can deploy. Indeed, the interesting question arises, as to whether the production of a psychoanalytically charted map/double—a production aimed at illuminating and explicating an uncanny experience of otherness—is not itself implicated in the generation of *Unheimlich* effects. For in the deceptively simple words of Alfred Korzybski, a dictum illustrated in the work of Jorge Luis Borges and Jean Baudrillard, “the map is not the territory.”²⁴⁴ Or, to put it rather more in the context of the present discussion, the case study is not the patient, the words of the ‘talking cure’ are not the experience of health, and Italy is more than its topography. In his *On Exactitude in Science*, for instance, and regarding the necessarily frustrated desire for complete

²⁴⁴ Alfred Korzybski, “A Non-Aristotelian System and its Necessity for Rigour in Mathematics and Physics,” a paper presented before the American Mathematical Society at the New Orleans, Louisiana, meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, December 28, 1931.

cartographic representation, Borges relates the framed narrative of an imaginary explorer in the age of the baroque:

In that Empire, the Art of Cartography attained such Perfection that the map of a single Province occupied the entirety of a City, and the map of the Empire, the entirety of a Province. In time, those Unconscionable Maps no longer satisfied, and the Cartographers Guilds struck a Map of the Empire whose size was that of the Empire, and which coincided point for point with it. The following Generations, who were not so fond of the Study of Cartography as their Forebears had been, saw that that vast Map was Useless, and not without some Pitilessness was it, that they delivered it up to the Inclemencies of Sun and Winters. In the Deserts of the West, still today, there are Tattered Ruins of that Map, inhabited by Animals and Beggars; in all the Land there is no other Relic of the Disciplines of Geography.

Suarez Miranda, *Viajes de varones prudentes*, Libro IV, Cap. XLV, Lerida, 1658²⁴⁵

The power granted by abstraction, in other words, the power to conceptualize and understand, thus ultimately founders on the absurdity of its own representational hubris. The dilemma of the cartographer—whether he charts the Antarctic, Italy or the unconscious—presents the following difficult options: either one re-presents reality on a one-to-one scale, in which case the representation becomes unusable or indistinguishable from the original, or one decreases the level of specificity, in which case the model may only approximate that which it seeks to reproduce. In the instances of both Borges' Empire (which is complete but has become tattered) and Freud's psychoanalytic geography (which may only approximate the domains it seeks to survey), an uncanny

²⁴⁵ J. L. Borges, "A Universal History of Infamy," trans. by Norman Thomas de Giovanni (London: Penguin, 1975). Or see this passage Lewis Carroll's 1893 *Sylvie and Bruno Concluded*: "That's another thing we've learned from your Nation," said Mein Herr: "map-making. But we've carried it much further than you. What do you consider the largest map that would be really useful?" "About six inches to the mile." "Only six inches!" exclaimed Mein Herr. "We very soon got to six yards to the mile. Then we tried a hundred yards to the mile. And then came the grandest idea of all! We actually made a map of the country, on the scale of a mile to the mile!" "Have you used it much?" I enquired. "It has never been spread out, yet." said Mein Herr: "the farmers objected: they said it would cover the whole country, and shut out the sunlight! So we now use the country itself, as its own map, and I assure you it does nearly as well." (L. Carroll, *Sylvie and Bruno Concluded*, 1893).

doubling occurs in which illuminations of the map seem haunted by the supplemental presence of the corresponding actuality. There is always something or somewhere left over—a region, according to Borges, “inhabited by Animals and Beggars”, but perhaps also by nomads—which refuses to be brought into the clean well-lit spaces of discursive representation and scientific abstraction. Indeed, from these perspectives, it seems that it is precisely on the tattered margins of such forms of enlightened representation that the ineffable shadows of the uncanny are generated.

Freud, however, was by no means unaware of the difficulties that confront the explorer of the unconscious. Indeed, it is perhaps this very consciousness of the problem that led him, in his rhetoric and reflections, to identify his own project so frequently with those of the explorers of the physical world. But even so, his geographical metaphors alone seem to suggest his faith in the eventual and adequate representation of the psychological spaces; as the ‘dark continent of Africa’ had been resolved into an ever clearer space of visibility, so too could the topography of psychic phenomena gradually emerge into greater focus. Indeed, it is partially against this recurring need within Freud’s work to capture, pin down and crystallize the seemingly mobile and resistant forms of psychic life that the ‘schizoanalytic’ interventions of Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari were directed. And not surprisingly, in works such as *Anti-Oedipus* and *A Thousand Plateaus*, the images and metaphors of cartography and mapping come under critical scrutiny as they relate to the understanding of social and psychological phenomena. For these latter, as we have already seen, the vision of a ‘reality’ or ‘actuality’ of deep structure and ontological priority is the effect—rather than the object—of such cartographic impulses and ‘tracings’. The very concept of a

representational model of the world—of the unconscious, of Italian spaces, of anything that caught up in processes of becoming—is haunted by the ghost of referentiality; the greater its expansiveness and the more precise its representations, the more it invokes and arouses the presence of an otherness which it is said to reflect.

But as we've seen, if the post-structuralist interventions of Baudrillard, Deleuze and Guattari had taken the step of eliminating this doubling by undermining the metaphysical assumptions that undergird distinctions between actuality and virtuality, Freud's response seems to have been one of doubling down on the representational powers of psychoanalysis.²⁴⁶ If there still persisted uncharted territories of stubborn otherness, in human consciousness and its representations, then it was not the understanding of charting (or tracing) itself that required modification, but a further extension their reach and power.

For Freud, the result is a constant struggle to outpace the uncanny phenomena that seem to perpetually hover at the margins of the psychoanalytic project. As in the letter to Fliess, where Freud encounters a kind of ambulant uncanny in his Roman dreams, there emerges a forceful and almost automatic reflex which strives to contain these phenomena once again within the enlightened conceptual territories of psychoanalysis. To put it another way, and in a manner that likewise captures the intimate relation between memory and the spaces that supplement it, we find Freud struggling to erect and maintain an archive or home within which he may assign a law of organization and hierarchy to

²⁴⁶ See for example, Jean Baudrillard, *Simulacra and Simulation* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1994), 1. "Today abstraction is no longer that of the map, the double, the mirror, or the concept. Simulation is no longer that of a territory, a referential being or substance. It is the generation by models of a real without origin or reality: A hyperreal. The territory no longer precedes the map, nor does it survive it. It is nevertheless the map that precedes the territory—precession of simulacra—that engenders the territory."

the objects of memory, objects that otherwise seem destined to escape into the realm of the unrepresentable. Indeed, it is this archival impulse in Freud, this *mal d'archive*, upon which Derrida focuses in his 1995 meditation on 'Freudian Impressions.' Extending his previous reflections on the supplemental memory function of Freud's 'magic pad', Derrida explores the notion of the archive as a similar supplement. Tracing the etymology of the term, Derrida underscores its links not only to an *arkhe* understood as an origin or founding principle, but also to the concept of an *arkheion*, the house or domicile of the Greek magistrates or *archons*. The archive, in other words, reveals part of its nature etymologically as a space of familiarity—a home, a territory or a domicile—from which, and within which, a certain domain of law is enacted and operative. As Derrida puts it:

It is thus, in this *domiciliation*, in this house arrest, that archives take place. The dwelling, this place where they dwell permanently, marks this institutional passage from the private to the public, which does not always mean from the secret to the nonsecret. (It is what is happening, right here, when a house, the Freud's last house, becomes a museum: the passage from one institution to another.) With such a status, the documents, which are not always discursive writings, are only kept and classified under the title of the archive by virtue of a privileged *topology*. They inhabit this uncommon place, this place of election where law and singularity intersect in *privilege*. At the intersection of the topological and the nomological, of the place and the law, of the substrate and the authority, a scene of domiciliation becomes at once visible and invisible. I stress this point for reasons which will, I hope, appear more clearly later. They all have to do with this *topo-nomology*, with this archontic dimension of domiciliation, with this *arche*, in truth patriarchic, function, without which no archive would ever come into play or appear as such.²⁴⁷

The archive, in its Freudian sense and beyond, is for Derrida a territory or home within which traces of memory are brought together under the auspices of an organizing *arkhe*

²⁴⁷ Jacques Derrida, *Archive Fever: A Freudian Impression*, trans. Eric Prenowitz (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), 2-3.

or principle. It involves a ‘topo-nomological’ practice, one in which a space (topos) is designated whose contours are both the embodiment and exercise of an organizational law (nomos). Indeed, as Derrida shows in his reflections on the Freud house in Hampstead, London that has become the Freud museum, the archive is originally a space of patriarchal law, a secure and *Heimlich* domain that is carefully governed and monitored by the presence of a father/archon.

But as E.T.A. Hoffmann revealed in *The Sandmann*, and as Freud would come to note in his explorations of the concept of the uncanny, the home of the father like the home of the archival law is very often the space where the *Heimlich* gives way to the *Unheimlich*. Indeed, as we saw with our Deleuzian territories, the spaces upon which one traces the law or the archive are precisely the spaces whose disjunctions and articulations seem to nourish the experience of the uncanny, that strange visitor that makes its presence felt in the most familiar of spaces. It is no accident, therefore, that Derrida links his Freudian impression with the psychoanalytic literature of the death drive and the compulsions of repetition. For if the archive is a space of law, then it is also a site of originary oedipal violence, a space in which the reinstatement (or repetition) of the *arkhe* is bound up with a gesture of forgetting and effacement. The law of the father is overthrown, so that the law of the father can be reasserted ad infinitum. And as with the “fort-da” game described by Freud in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, the doublings of the archive preserve the “impressions” of the past even as they overpower and efface the memory of what produced them.²⁴⁸ But in this sense, the archive (like the consciousness) emerges as a haunted house, a space of patriarchal law that nevertheless

²⁴⁸ Sigmund Freud, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, Standard Edition, Vol. 18, 14-15.

resonates with the murder of the father, a collection of traces and footprints that is nevertheless haunted by the absence of the feet which left them. The desired memory is thus brought back to life—or back into light—but only at a price. For while the memory returns, it may only return in the figure of an uncanny supplement—a mechanical doll, a prosthetic limb—whose movements and gyrations obey laws of the archive and not their original model.

The tension between this desire for presence as reproduction, and the simultaneous revulsion at the nagging lack of presence in the reproduced object, is one that Derrida locates in the different resonances that the concepts of *archive* and *archeology* take on within Freud's work. Thus, even as Freud busily constructs the archival edifice of psychoanalysis, he nevertheless dreams and fantasizes about the ostensible presences of archeology.

As we have noted all along, there is an incessant tension here between the archive and archaeology. They will always be close the one to the other, resembling each other, hardly discernible in their co-implication, and yet radically incompatible, *heterogeneous*, that is to say, *different with regard to the origin, in divorce with regard to the arche*. Now Freud was incessantly tempted to redirect the original interest he had for the psychic archive toward archaeology (the word "*archiv*," by the way, appears already in the *Studies on Hysteria* (1895) [SE 2]).²⁰ [...] Each time he wants to teach the topology of archives, that is to say, of what ought to exclude or forbid the return to the origin, this lover of stone figurines proposes archaeological parables. The most remarkable and the most precocious of them is well known, in the study of hysteria of 1896. [...] It is the nearly ecstatic instant Freud dreams of, when the very success of the dig must sign the effacement of the archivist: *the origin then speaks by itself*.²⁴⁹

Archaeology, in other words, here stands in for an experience of pure presence, where the trace is encountered in the substrate and matrix of its own making. For Freud, the trace here speaks with its own voice, and not with the mechanical echoes and ventriloquism of

²⁴⁹ *Archive Fever*, 92.

the archivist. In this sense, we may understand why Freud indelibly marks and configures Italy as an ever recurring space of archaeology, as a region of desired yet always elusive presence. Italy, in other words, is cast as an extra-archival *topos*, a space of otherness outside the *Heimlich* confines of bourgeois Vienna study and the enlightened sphere of psychoanalytic discourse. Yet at the same time, if this presence of otherness beckons as the *non plus ultra* of Freud's enlightened project, we nevertheless find him returning again and again to the archive, always translating his archeological dreams back into the matrix of his archival edifice. Even thus as he is lured by the desired figure of Hoffmann's Olympia—or perhaps in this case *Italia*—Freud reasserts his archive and finds himself in the uncanny embrace of a mechanical doll. His efforts to save and preserve that which is no longer present, seem thus to have the side-effect of generating the most curious and strange of uncanny artifacts.

The image of Italy, for Freud, resolves itself into a space of nomadic desire, a space of pristine archeological memory that emerges in forms not yet touched by the interventions of the law-giving archivist. It is not surprising, then, to find that Derrida focuses special attention on Freud's 1907 essay, "Delusions and Dreams in Jensen's *Gradiva*." This latter piece represents Freud's first exploration of the ways in which psychoanalysis might engage with a work of art or literature, an exploration that Freud later continued with the more well-known (and rather problematic) essays on Michelangelo and Leonardo da Vinci. The occasion for this early attempt was the novella by Wilhelm Jensen entitled, *Gradiva, Ein pompejanisches Phantasiestück*, which was published in 1903 and seems to have been called to Freud's attention by Jung.²⁵⁰

²⁵⁰ Wilhelm Jensen, *Gradiva, Ein pompejanisches Phantasiestück* (Dresden: Reißner, 1903).

Likely unfamiliar to most contemporary readers, and yet also curiously familiar in its themes, the story itself may require a brief retelling in order to better situate it within the contexts we have thus far marked out. Jensen's *Pompejanisches Phantasiestück* focuses on the adventures of one Dr. Norbert Hanold, a particularly well disciplined and precociously successful docent of archeology. On a wall in Hanold's study there hangs a one-third size plaster cast of a bas relief that had once caught his eye on a research trip to Rome. The relief depicts the figure of a young woman in mid stride, with soft wavy hair and garments falling in "voluminous folds", a young woman certainly not of divine origin, but with a quiet grace and nonchalance intriguing to Hanold in any event. As the story unfolds, Hanold increasingly finds his scholarly discipline disrupted by recurring and insistent meditations on the figure he comes to name Gradiva, or "the girl splendid in walking."²⁵¹ His mind is continually drawn to reflections on the woman represented in the figure. To what family sort of family circumstance did she belong? In what ancient landscapes or cityscapes did she tread? On what errand might she have been as she was captured by the relief in her curiously resonant stride? Had she hailed from Pompeii, and what doom had it been that awaited her there? Such questions return with ever greater frequency and urgency until Hanold is soon completely diverted from his work. Indeed, where his scholarship and research had once formed nearly the entirety of his life, to exclusion of the more mundane interests of sociability other human interests, Hanold soon finds himself grown cold to, and uninterested in, his former researches and work. Hanold settles on the notion that he has been confined too long in his little study and a

²⁵¹ Wilhelm Jensen, *Gradiva: A Pompeian Fancy*, trans. Helen M. Downey (New York: Moffat, Yard & Company, 1918), 4-5.

journey might do some good in clearing his mind. Indeed, a spring excursion to the South might even serve to restore to life his own failing scholarly interests.

Thus, several days later, and without having any explicit intent to do so, Hanold arrives in Pompeii and settles at the *Hotel Diomed* in hopes of some respite from the pall of dissatisfaction that seems to dog his every step. The next day, again after a night troubled by dreams of Gradiva, Hanold sets out for a tour of the ruins. But here too he is still deserted by his scientific muse, and haunted by a sense that “he lacked something without being able to explain what.”²⁵² Wandering the streets of the once-buried city, he looks in vain for sparks of his old scientific interest or for hints of whatever it was that propelled him here out of the north. Even with the approach of twilight, the ruins and their natural surrounding seem to arouse only a further sense of that anxious indifference, now following him like a shadow. “With a calmness bordering closely on indifference,” writes Jensen of Hanold, “he let his eyes pass over the all-pervading beauty, and did not regret in the least that it was growing pale and fading away in the sunset, but returned to the *Diomed*, as he had come, dissatisfied.”

After yet another troubled night of dreams, Hanold finds himself again wandering the streets of Pompeii, looking for something that he himself cannot name. But under the mid-day sun, a time when other tourists have retreated to the shelter of hotel and *Albergo*, Hanold glimpses a figure moving through the ruins, a figure that appears to be the very image of Gradiva come to life in the lonely heat of the Italian afternoon. And while she appears in all the hues and vitality of a living being, it is at once apparent to Hanold that this is indeed Gradiva, and it is precisely this that has brought him so far from home. In a

²⁵² Ibid., 35.

feverish dream state, one in which the very stones of Pompeii seem to have come to life once again, the young archeologist follows the figure and confronts her once again in the House of Meleager. He addresses her first in Latin and then in Greek, but she soon returns his queries in Hanold's native German tongue. Convinced this is his Gradiva, revived by the noon-tide magic of Pompeii, he declares that he recognizes her and knew that her voice would sound as it did. When she asks how this could be the case, since they have never spoken before, Hanold replies: "No—not talked—but I called to you when you lay down to sleep and stood near you then—your face was as calmly beautiful as if it were of marble. May I beg you—rest it again on the step in that way." With this, the apparition abruptly gathers herself and, with a look of something between pity and contempt, disappears once again into the streets of the ruined city.

Hanold returns to the Hotel, even more overwhelmed by the dream-like experience he has had in which the past seems to have been brought to life before him in the figure of the striding Gradiva. Intent on catching a glimpse once again of the apparition, he returns the next afternoon to the silent streets amid the ruins. On both this day and the next, Hanold again encounters the ghostly young woman who passes like spirit through the ruins in the silence and heat of the bright afternoon sun. On the first day, she meets his strange questions with a solicitude and patience as one might with a child or someone suffering from a fever brought on by the heat of the day. On the following afternoon, their meeting is interrupted by another pair, a young couple on tour from Hanold's German homeland who delightedly and familiarly greet the Gradiva beside him. Surprised by this sudden intrusion, and shocked by the familiarity with which the couple had addressed the apparition which he thought his own, Hanold swiftly

withdraws. "In order to get a little more light on the matter," writes Jensen, "by an attempt at meditation, a remote place in solitary silence was absolutely required; at first, however, he was impelled to withdraw as quickly as possible from the sphere of eyes, ears and other senses, which use their natural functions as suits their own purpose."

But as Hanold wanders once again confusedly through ruins, it begins to dawn on him the extent to which his mind had been clouded by strange delusions over the last several days, the manner in which boundaries between dream and reality had become blurred and indistinct. Slowly, and still indistinctly, he begins to piece together the puzzle within which he has found himself as he rambles half-consciously through the crumbling cityscape. By chance, or perhaps by way of something more, he once gain encounters his Gradiva as the two simultaneously seek shelter from an afternoon thundershower in the ancient city's Casa di Diomed. And it is here then, that Hanold's Gradiva gradually reveals the secret towards which the young man was still groping confusedly. For Gradiva's true name was Zöe Bertgang, the daughter of an eminent German zoologist who had accompanied her father to Pompeii while the latter conducted field research. Indeed, not only was this apparition in truth a fellow traveler from his own country and from Hanold's living present, but she also reminds the young scholar that she and he had been the closest of childhood friends. Indeed, it was only when Hanold had been led away by his researches, and been attracted by the powerful muse of his scientific calling, that the two had grown distant and estranged. Hanold, it seems, under the influence of his archeological work, had retreated from all connections that had linked him to the mundane world of the present and retreated into a world inhabited only by traces and relics of a distant past. She had loved him in their former life, but when she

first encountered him again in Pompeii, she found herself vexed by what she took as yet another example of his willful self-isolation and indifference. On subsequent meetings, however, she realized that Hanold had been indeed suffering under a strange delusion out of which she undertook to gradually draw him. “Yes, now I recognize,” Hanold says in dawning realization, “—no, you have not changed at all—it is you, Zöe—my good, happy, clever comrade—it is most strange.” And as the rain begins to ease outside the shelter of the Casa di Diomed, Hanold likewise realizes that while Zöe means ‘life’ in Greek, the name Bertgang is a German transliteration of the Latin term *Gradiva*—the one ‘splendid in walking’. With these realizations, and finally recognizing that his distractions and despairs had led him circuitously and unconsciously to this point, it dawns on Hanold that he has been seeking Zöe all along. The search, however, had been translated in his fantasy life by the work to which he had devoted himself to the exclusion of all else, transposed from a desired recovery of his own memories into a recovery understood in archeological terms. Thus, as the sun once again emerges from behind the retreating thunderheads, young Hanold and Zöe Bertgang are united once again, share a kiss in the living present of Pompeii and envision a future marriage.

It is this story, then, to which Freud turns his psychoanalytic gaze in the 1907 “Delusion and Dream in Jensen’s *Gradiva*.” But the re-presentation of the general contours of Jensen’s novella that we have just given not only functions as a means of situating the work in the context of the present discussion, it also enacts precisely those forms of tracing and archivization that we described above in the present chapter. For in the retelling of the story—in its condensation and abstraction—we have in essence produced a cartographic image of the original, reproduced the novella in a form where all

that is left is the impression it has left on the substrate or our current discussion of Freud. And the nature of this impression, this trace left by the novella, is determined as much by this work, as it is by the original. Jensen's novella, in other words, is remembered and reproduced by means of a textual supplement, a mechanical doll whose task is not to play chess but to record and recreate the presence of a story that is nevertheless quite absent. We have summoned the work back to life, but it can appear only as an echo, an abstract tracing or perhaps merely as a ghost of something which cannot be truly present.

Furthermore, as Derrida observes in the case of Freud's reading of *Gradiva*, the practices of archivization (here in its psychoanalytic dimension) are bound up with similar gestures of recapitulation, reproduction and repetition. Literary exegesis, in the case of Freud, thus often makes its first appearance in the form of a supplemental reproductive appendage, an extensive gloss or summary in which he registers the impression that a text or document has made in the substrate of his psychoanalytic archive. And as Jensen makes an impression on Freud, and Freud in turn makes an impression on Derrida, so too do our present concerns become complicit in the archivization of archives. But for Freud, this gesture of restoration through repetition is particularly conspicuous in those works which hover around those issues of the uncanny which come to haunt psychoanalysis. When it comes to the *Unheimlich*, in other words, Freud can be found repeatedly repeating things, circling and returning to the same strange phenomena that forever seem to elude stable expression in the archive of psychoanalysis. In what sometimes seems like an elaborate game of psychoanalytic "fort-da," the uncanny is summoned by a Freud determined to exorcise it, but is then brought back later by a Freud who is aware of its persistent presence. Freud desires to bring the uncanny

into the well lit spaces of his psychoanalytic archive, but the brilliant illumination of these spaces seems only to further darken the shadows which hover on its margins. “And let us note in passing a decisive paradox to which we will not have time to return,” writes Derrida in *Archive Fever*,

but which undoubtedly conditions the whole of these remarks: if there is no archive without consignation in an *external place* which assures the possibility of memorization, of repetition, of reproduction, or of reimpression, then we must also remember that repetition itself, the logic of repetition, indeed the repetition compulsion, remains, according to Freud, indissociable from the death drive. And thus from destruction. Consequence: right on that which permits and conditions archivization, we will never find anything other than that which exposes to destruction, and in truth menaces with destruction, introducing, *a priori*, forgetfulness and the archiviolithic into the heart of the monument. Into the "by heart" itself. The archive always works, and *a priori*, against itself.²⁵³

On the “decisive” issue of the link between the memory supplement and the repetitions of the death drive, Derrida slyly announces that it is one to which he will not return or repeat. But if the French critic resists the tempting obsession of such repetition, the Viennese doctor seems bound to further ramify and expand his archival reproductions at every opportunity.

In her seminal reading of Freud’s essay, *Das Unheimliche*, Hélène Cixous explores terrain similar to the one we’ve described above, a terrain that reveals in Freud a persistent return to the issue of the uncanny, a return that seems to breed only more instances and experience of uncanniness. The further Freud pursues the threads of the strange and fantastic, in other words, the less he appears in the guise of the psychoanalytic cartographer and the more he emerges as a prisoner in his own archive or a wanderer ensnared within his own labyrinth. After describing the theater of starts and stops, of hesitation and uncertainty, that Cixous finds in Freud’s various supplemental

²⁵³ Derrida, *Archive Fever*, 11-12.

preliminary remarks—supplements that Cixous compares to a puppet theater of mechanical dolls—she next focuses on the distorted repetitions that characterize Freud’s gloss and description of E.T.A. Hoffmann’s *Sandmann*. This latter piece, yet another work of literary fiction, forms the interpretive ground and pretext for Freud’s exploration of the uncanny, and its scenes and contours are extensively reproduced by the author of “Das Unheimliche.” “Next comes Freud’s narration of the *Sandmann*,” writes Cixous,

and the account is faithful (or so it would seem); it is not a paraphrase. Freud delights in having to rewrite the tale structurally, beginning with the center designated as such a priori. The whole story is recounted then by the Sand-Man who tears out children’s eyes. Given the fact that Freud’s approach is that of inverted repetition, one sees how he rewrites the tale for demonstrative purpose: a reading that is reclosed as that in the *Unheimliche* is now closed on the *Heimliche*. The reader gets the impression that Freud’s narrative is not as *Unheimlich* as he claims: is that new element which should have remained hidden doubtless too exposed here? Or did Freud render uncanniness something too familiar? Was the letter stolen? The two versions of the Sand-Man have to be read in order to notice what has been slipped into one version from the other. As a condensed narrative, Freud’s story is singularly altered in the direction of a linear, logical account of Nathaniel and strongly articulated as a kind of “case history,” going from childhood remembrances to the delirium and the ultimate tragic end.²⁵⁴

As Cixous’ reading reveals, Freud seems particularly conscious in this essay of the Sisyphean character of his attempts to trace the uncanny into his psychoanalytic, etymological, or exegetical maps. He starts, but then pauses again. He proceeds in a new direction, only to shift the orientation along other routes. He returns again and again to his reproduction of Hoffmann’s story, each time finding the *Unheimlich* transformed once again into the *Heimlich* when its traces are captured in the matrix of his archive. And as we saw in Derrida’s description of the archive, Freud’s desire to capture the

²⁵⁴ Hélène Cixous, “Fiction and Its Phantoms: A Reading of Freud’s ‘Das Unheimliche,’” *New Literary History*, Vol. 7, No. 3, Thinking in the Arts, Sciences, and Literature (Spring, 1976), pp. 525-548 and 619-645.

uncanny seems perpetually frustrated by the erasure of the same uncanny at the moment of capture.

In similar fashion, though Freud does not explicitly thematize the *Unheimlich* in the earlier work, *Delusion and Dream in Jensen's Gradiva* treats related issues of the strange and the fantastic, and is likewise pursued with persistent gestures of repetition. As with his nomadic dream desires of Italy that are always rerouted back into the territorial spaces of the *Traumdeutung*, and like the spoken words of his patients that are always adumbrated by careful inscription in the case study, the fantastic encounters of *Gradiva* find themselves reiterated in the supplementary archive of psychoanalytic exegesis. And yet even as he writes, even as he presses his pen into the substrate of his writing block, he is, like Norbert Hanold, plagued by the sense of something missing, a nagging and uncanny dream of presence that hovers at the boundaries of his archival visions.

In the very opening lines of his treatment of Jensen's novella, we find Freud creating that magic circle into which he hopes to draw and reproduce both the uncanny events of the story and the uncanny manner in which a work of literature mirrors the work of psychoanalysis. "In a circle of men," writes Freud,

who take it for granted that the basic riddle of the dream has been solved by the efforts of the present writer, curiosity was aroused one day concerning those dreams which have never been dreamed, those created by authors, and attributed to fictitious characters in their productions. The proposal to submit this kind of dream to investigation might appear idle and strange; but from one view-point it could be considered justifiable.²⁵⁵

²⁵⁵Sigmund Freud, *Delusion and Dream in Wilhelm Jensen's Gradiva* (Los Angeles: Green Integer, 2003). 111.

Freud's first gesture, in a seemingly paradoxical gesture of magical invocation, is thus to create a circle of enlightenment, a gendered space of men who have come to recognize the new spheres of knowledge illuminated by psychoanalysis. But once situated within this circle of men, Freud's discourse immediately pauses with the same signature moment of hesitation and doubt described so well by Cixous. Freud announces—in a kind of textual stutter or conceit of uncertainty—that such investigation may seem “idle or strange”, only to patch over the matter by appealing to a dizzy proliferation of points of view. To put it differently, the territorial interiority and integrity of the space of illumination, the circle that Freud marks out before all else, is disrupted in its first encounter with—or impression of—the object of his reflections.

But the problem here is more complex than it at first appears, and it is one that propels Freud into the border regions between the archival interiority of the circle and the benighted regions beyond. For as we've already intimated, what interests Freud about Jensen's *Gradiva* is less Norbert Hanold than it is Wilhelm Jensen. If, as Freud suggests, Jensen's work seems to reproduce the very phenomena that psychoanalysis had taken such care to elucidate and explore, with what posture does the nascent science meet the literary double that returns its gaze in the pages of *Gradiva*? The psychoanalytic project, in other words, here draws perilously close to a vision of itself as a supplement, a ghostly reproduction of a set of truths already enunciated and represented in literature. On the one hand, of course, the story may be understood as gratifying testimony to the universality of psychoanalytic theory and practice, an illustration of the way its concepts emerge independently in a variety of spheres, and indeed it is in this tone that Freud pursues his reading. On the other hand, however, *Gradiva* emerges as an uncanny visitor,

a *Doppelgänger* that seems to pantomime the movements of psychoanalysis from beyond the canny confines of Freud's circle of men. The question that emerges for Freud, and with an urgency that explains the vigor of his reflections, relates to the status of psychoanalysis as an independent and legitimate field of knowledge. For while the thematic convergences of *Gradiva* and psychoanalysis are tantalizing and suggestive, they also underscore the risks attendant to the mutual imbrications of science and fiction. What does psychoanalysis find, in other words, when it returns the gaze of the literary simulacrum? What occurs in this strange chance encounter between fiction and psychoanalysis, an encounter similar to that between Hanold and Zöe that Freud describes as "the destiny which has decreed that through flight one is delivered over to the very thing that one is fleeing from?"²⁵⁶ Like the unhappy heroes of ancient myth, psychoanalysis seems to return the gaze stare of an uncanny other only to find itself transformed into stone, no longer the subject of illumination but fossilized itself as a supplementary object in the archive of literary history.

The eerie similarity between the dreamscapes of Jensen's *Gradiva* and the magic circle marked out by Freud is not merely the occasion for his intervention, but also the thorny subtext over which Freud broods in the *Delusions and Dreams* essay. How may psychoanalysis learn from a literary *Phantasiestück* and not itself become absorbed into the territory of mere fiction? "Story-tellers are valuable allies," Freud opens generously,

and their testimony is to be rated high, for they usually know many things between heaven and earth that our academic wisdom does not even dream of. In psychic knowledge, indeed, they are far ahead of us ordinary people, because they draw from sources that we have not yet made accessible for science. Would that

²⁵⁶ Ibid., 151.

this partisanship of literary workers for the senseful nature of dreams were only more unequivocal!²⁵⁷

What thus begins with declaration of common cause between the psychoanalytic circle and the realm of the arts, ends with as much equivocation as Freud himself detects in the pronouncements of fiction. But even if we accept the premise that the lessons of literature are indeed far too equivocal in their representations of psychic phenomena, Freud assures us that the present investigation may nevertheless bear fruit. “It may perhaps afford us,” he writes,

from this angle, a little insight into the nature of creative literary production. Actual dreams are considered to be unrestrained and irregular formations, and now come the free copies of such dreams; but there is much less freedom and arbitrariness in psychic life than we are inclined to believe, perhaps none at all. What we, laity, call chance resolves itself, to an acknowledged degree, into laws; also, what we call arbitrariness in psychic life rests on laws only now dimly surmised. Let us see!²⁵⁸

According thus to Freud, what had once been the realm of fantasy, and what had once been the irrational domain of the dream, may find their various phenomena—once only “dimly perceived”—ushered into the circle of the law and what Derrida might have called the patriarchal archive. Fiction may be a valuable ally to psychoanalysis, but to enjoy such status it must submit itself to the archival recording apparatus of Freud. Where there had once been only darkness, Freud nevertheless steels himself for the simple command, “Let us see!”—a command that also resonates in the form of a question.

In the wake of this query/command, Freud proceeds again in the now recognizable gestures of advance and hesitation, movement and pause. But once such

²⁵⁷ Ibid.

²⁵⁸ Ibid., 113-114.

preliminaries are dispensed with, once the nature of his inquiry is several times set forth and amended, Freud arrives once again at the story which appears to have prompted these methodological peregrinations. “It so happened,” relates Freud as author of a psychoanalytic story that will now come to frame that of Jensen’s *Gradiva*,

in the group of men who started the idea, that someone remembered that the bit of fiction which he had most recently enjoyed contained several dreams which looked at him with familiar expression and invited him to try on them the method of *Traumdeutung*. He admitted that the material and setting of the little tale had been partly responsible for the origin of his pleasure, for the story was unfolded in Pompeii, and concerned a young archaeologist who had given up interest in life, for that in the remains of the classic past, and now, by a remarkable but absolutely correct detour, was brought back to life. During the perusal of this really poetic material, the reader experienced all sorts of feelings of familiarity and concurrence. The tale was Wilhelm Jensen's *Gradiva*, a little romance designated by its author himself “A Pompeian Fancy.”²⁵⁹

It is interesting to note here how the appearance of the story—again in the circle of men—has its source likewise in the equivocal promptings of memory, and a certain pleasure accompanied by “all sorts of feelings of familiarity and concurrence.” In this sense, Freud’s enframing tale is also not without its uncanny aspects, as Jensen’s work surfaces in the memory of his own milieu, confronting Freud as a peculiarly familiar and resonant double of psychoanalytic observation—even down to the specificity of “remarkable but absolutely correct” detours. But how then to proceed in the face of this literary *Doppelgänger* and simulacrum of psychoanalysis?

Freud’s reply to this is immediate, but is not necessarily surprising when presented in the context of the discussion above. For even as he prepares to shed the light of his psychoanalytic exegesis on the phenomenon of Jensen’s novella, he bids the reader

²⁵⁹ Ibid., 114.

pause once more and set aside the text which he is producing. “In order that my further references may be too familiar material,” explains Freud,

I must now ask my readers to lay aside this pamphlet, and replace it for some time with *Gradiva*, which first appeared in the book world in 1903. To those who have already read *Gradiva*, I will recall the content of the story in a short epitome, and hope that their memory will of itself restore all the charm of which the story is thereby stripped.²⁶⁰

In one sense, this is just another pause, and another repetition, in a text ostensibly devoted to the explication of such detours and repetitions. On the other hand, however, this gesture of repetition and recapitulation is perhaps more important to Freud than his more extensive textual elucidations that follow. It is this move, in which Freud claims to restore the text of *Gradiva* to memory that is the necessary moment of capture by which the fantastic story is pressed into the matrices of the psychoanalytic archive. Indeed, while Freud signals that this detour will only be in the form of a short “epitome”—a term likewise used in relation to the preserved abstracts of lost works of antiquity—his reproduction of the novella occupies more than half of the entire *Delusion and Dreams* essay. Like Derrida’s *Archive Fever*, each of whose chapters announce themselves as preliminary supplements in titles like “Exergue,” “Preamble” and “Forward,” the first half of Freud’s essay on Jensen’s *Gradiva* consists of just such an extended prologue, abstract or supplement. But as with Derrida’s supplemental archive, this moment of impression, capture and preservation is also one of destruction and erasure. By reproducing the story within the confines of his own analytic archive, Freud indeed invokes the presence of Jensen’s novella, but only in the form of the traces it leaves in the magic pad of Freud’s essay, only in a form that also confirms its pacification and

²⁶⁰ Ibid.

absence. In the moment of archival repetition, in other words, the object of uncanny desire and wonder, the double represented by this “Pompeian Fancy”, is transmuted into the mechanical doll or phantom limb that obeys a new set of laws and commandments. Like Spalanzani’s Olympia in Hoffmann’s *Sandmann*, the status of Jensen’s story here seems to oscillate between uncanny desire at a distance and lifeless mechanism in proximity. Archival repetition, in other words, may capture the uncanny, but can reproduce it only as something lifeless and soulless—something not very uncanny after all.

The more Freud desires to capture the image of the uncanny, the greater his efforts to sculpt or represent its living aspect, the more it emerges in the form of a stone monument and relic in his archive. For a later Freud, however, the one probed in Cixous’ reading of the 1919 essay on the uncanny, this problematic disappearance of the desired object at the moment of archivization haunts his reflections with greater urgency than it does in the earlier text of *Delusion and Dream*. It is in relation to this curious ineffability of the uncanny, after all, that Cixous explains the hesitations and detours that characterize Freud’s later essay, the recurring dilation and closure of interpretive possibilities by which he approaches and retreats from his object. Such gestures, as we’ve seen, are likewise present in the essay on Jensen’s *Gradiva*, but here the general trajectory is towards the pole of capture and pacification. For the task in this work is not one of exploring and elucidating the phenomenon of the uncanny, but one of configuring the observations of fiction in such a way that they can safely be brought within the magic circle of psychoanalysis. And as Derrida points out—but refuses to repeat—it is the

action of repetition that lies at the very heart of the archival impulse, the obsession that generates the fevers of the *mal d'archive*.

But here again, the old problem still reasserts itself, even if less distinctly and explicitly than it does in *Das Unheimliche*. For in the oscillations between marking the territorial boundaries of psychoanalysis and fiction, and registering the archival impressions of the literary uncanny, the principle of distinction that emerges to define the spheres of science and literature is one defined by the clarity and distinctness with which each describe the objects of their interest. The principle, in other words, that shields psychoanalytic methodology from identifying with its literary double is its ability (or perhaps frustrated desire) to make present the objects of its discourse. As a patient may be only dimly aware of the psychic phenomena of which the analyst had long and explicitly suspected, thus also does the literary work only dimly perceive its own psychologically oriented contours before the intervention of a Freudian reading, case study, or reproduction. And yet, as we've seen, it is precisely such presence that haunts the archive since the latter only reproduces it in the form of ruins, traces and impressions. In a predicament that becomes even more apparent in his later studies, Freud seems caught between two desires that cannot be reconciled. On the one hand he wants the closure and distinctness of his scientific archive, and on the other hand he imagines an archive without archivist or medium of recording, an archive in which the trace announces itself in its own voice and in immediate presence.

The tangled logics of these seemingly incompatible desires find themselves knotted up in Freud's text, resulting of course in the same persistent profusion of qualifications, supplements, prologues and epicycles. Even where Freud concludes his

“epitome” of Jensen’s work—a preparation for commentary in which the good doctor cannot seem to resist comment—he opens his exegetical remarks with following elliptical introduction:

It was really our intention to investigate with the aid of definite analytic method only the two or three dreams which are found in the tale Gradiva; how did it happen then that we allowed ourselves to be carried away with the analysis of the whole story and the examination of the psychic processes of the two chief characters? Well, that was no superfluous work, but a necessary preparation. Even when we wish to understand the real dreams of an actual person, we must concern ourselves intensively with the character and the fortunes of this person, not only the experiences shortly before the dream, but also those of the remote past. I think, however, that we are not yet free to turn to our real task, but must still linger over the piece of fiction itself, and perform more preparatory work.²⁶¹

And a few lines later:

The imaginative representation of the story of illness and its treatment, which we can survey better after finishing the story and relieving our own suspense, is really correct. Now we wish to reproduce it with the technical expressions of our science, in doing which it will not be necessary to repeat what has already been related.²⁶²

Freud’s representational perambulations now seem to hover in a nearly vertiginous state of confusion. He has indulged in an extensive and circuitous survey of Gradiva, but also reassures his readers that such a detour was by no means superfluous. However, even as this preparatory abstract draws to completion, he discovers that he cannot yet come to grips with his “real task.” On the other hand, and only a few moments later, he arrives at the conclusion that he may now “reproduce” the “correct” story of Jensen in the language of psychoanalysis without, of course, repeating “what has already been related.” Freud thus appears again in the familiar modes of a hesitant interpretive advance and a nearly obsessive impulse towards representational recapitulation.

²⁶¹ Ibid., 159-160.

²⁶² Ibid.

But conspicuous here is the question of how the essentially “correct” story will now be made to speak with help of Freud’s exegetical and terminological corrections, how Jensen’s *Gradiva* will now play chess on the board, and according to the rules, of psychoanalysis. To put it another way, Freud himself seems to be aware that the point at which he embarks upon his “real task” of interpretation from a psychoanalytic viewpoint, is precisely the point at which the *Gradiva* emerges not as the double of psychoanalysis, but in the form of an illustrative (and already illustrated) archival supplement.

Anticipating concerns about such an overcoding of the novella, Freud replies in the following—and once again preliminary—set of remarks:

we wish to repeat, Wilhelm Jensen has given us an absolutely correct study in psychiatry, in which we may measure our understanding of psychic life, a story of illness and cure adapted to the inculcation of certain fundamental teachings of medical psychology. Strange enough that he should have done this! What if, in reply to questioning, he should deny this intention? It is so easy to draw comparisons and to put constructions on things. Are we not rather the ones who have woven secret meanings, which were foreign to him, into the beautiful poetic tale? Possibly; we shall come back to that later. As a preliminary, however, we have tried to refrain from interpretations with that tendency, by reproducing the story, in almost every case, from the very words of the writer; and we have had him furnish text as well as commentary, himself. Anyone who will compare our text with that of *Gradiva* will have to grant this.²⁶³

To those who might object that Freud is putting words in the mouth of Jensen and his *Gradiva*, performing a bit of psychoanalytic ventriloquism, Freud rejoins (and wishes to repeat) that he has in fact faithfully reproduced the contours of the original work. He has made present Jensen’s work in such a way that any observer would “have to grant” that Freud has taken no undue license with the original. Put differently, and as Derrida might phrase it, the gesture here seems to be one of “outbidding” those who might question whether Freud’s *Gradiva* has emerged as a mere simulacrum of the original model. The

²⁶³ Ibid., 153-54.

proliferation of copies and traces and reflections of the original is driven by Freud's need to reassert a degree of presence to the object of his investigation, even as he seeks to install its image and representation as a useful object in the library of psychoanalysis.

Perhaps, however, the time is right to pause briefly, and indulge ourselves also with moment of repetition and capture. As with Freud's essay on the uncanny, our reflections seem to have produced a similar dizzy proliferation of doublings and mirrorings. Setting aside for a moment the narrative impressions left by Freud, Derrida, Cixous or the present text, we might return again to Wilhelm Jensen's *Gradiva*. This latter, we will recall, is the story of a young archeologist who has seemingly himself become fossilized and embedded in the discourse of his science whose task is one of recovering a distant past. Driven by what appear to be strange dreams and uncanny presentiments, Norbert Hanold is carried away to Italy in search of something he has become conscious of only in dimly perceived feelings of lack. Upon encountering what he first understands to be a revived figure from the past of his discipline, he gradually emerges from this delusion under the care and careful ministrations of his Gradiva who gradually resolves into Zöe Bertgang. In this narrative of recovery, Jensen depicts a transformation from a state of extreme alienation—Hanold's almost pathological estrangement both from himself and others—to a state of quite literally recovered presence. Hanold, prompted by portents aroused by indistinct erotic impulses, recovers his present at the same time that he recovers his individual memory. In this sense, we see that it is not Gradiva/Zoe who has been revived and brought to life from tomblike encasement in the soil of Pompeii, but rather it is Hanold himself that had become a relic himself, a fossil caught within the stony matrix of his scientific pursuits. As it emerges in

Jensen's *Gradiva*, then, the narrative is one of recovered self-memory and recovered individual history, a tale in other words describing the perils of becoming lost in the archive.

Upon taking up his investigation of Jensen's *Gradiva*, then, Freud's response as we have seen is to construct a narrative of his own, one that frames, encapsulates and records the contours of the former. But like the original *Gradiva*, Freud's text begins with the appearance of a strange phenomenon that is prompted to consciousness by the complex machinery of memory: "someone remembered that the bit of fiction which he had most recently enjoyed contained several dreams which looked at him with familiar expression and invited him to try on them the method of *Traumdeutung*." Within Freud's *Heimlich* circle of men, "someone" has recollected a story that has "looked at him with familiar expression," someone has detected the presence of an uncanny visitor that doubles the observations of psychoanalysis. As it is the task for Jensen, thus also it is the task of Freud to resolve these uncanny phenomena through a process of demystification, a process in which such dreamlike apparitions are restored to presence and actuality. We have already seen how Freud's Italian experiences and his reception resonated for him as (not unproblematic) images and metaphors of presence, and such images no doubt played a role in his selection of Jensen's work as an object of exploration. But as Derrida points out in his own reflections on Freud, the father of psychoanalysis here seeks still deeper and more fundamental strata than those unearthed by either archeology or Jensen:

When he wants to explain the haunting of the archaeologist with a logic of repression, at the very moment in which he specifies that he wants to recognize in it a germ or a parcel of truth, Freud claims again to bring to light a more originary origin than that of the specter. In the outbidding, he wants to be an archivist who is more of an archaeologist than the archaeologist. And, of course, closer to the ultimate cause, a better etiologist than his novelist. He wants to exhume a more

archaic *impression*, he wants to exhibit a more archaic *imprint* than the one the other archaeologists of all kinds bustle around, those of literature and those of classical objective science, an imprint that is singular each time, an impression that is almost no longer an archive but almost confuses itself with the pressure of the footstep that leaves its still-living mark on a substrate, a surface, a place of origin. When the step is still one with the subjectile. In the instant when the printed archive is yet to be detached from the primary impression in its singular, irreproducible, and archaic origin. In the instant when the imprint is yet to be left, abandoned by the pressure of the impression. In the instant of the pure auto-affection, in the indistinction of the active and the passive, of a touching and the touched. An archive which would in sum confuse itself with the *arkhe*, with the origin of which it is only the type, the typos, the iterable letter or character. An archive without archive, where, suddenly indiscernible from the impression of its imprint, Gradiva's footstep speaks by itself! Now this is exactly what Hanold dreamed of in his disenchanted archaeologist's desire, in the moment when he awaited the coming of the "mid-day ghost."²⁶⁴

Like Norbert Hanold in other words, Freud seems caught here between two desires. On the one hand he wants to take hold of the uncanny apparition of the novella, and on the other hand he wants to register this presence in the recording apparatus of psychoanalysis. He searches for the point at which his archive collects not only traces and imprints, but also summons the presence of that which leaves those traces and imprints. In short, as when "Gradiva's footstep speaks for itself," Freud desires an archive that speaks for itself, a story in other words that does not need to be repeated, reproduced or recapitulated. Like Hanold's erotic desires that are initially translated to consciousness in the familiar imagery of his archeological practice, Freud's desire for presence likewise emerges paradoxically in his perpetual and obsessive gestures of repetition and re-presentation.

But if Hanold completes his recovery through recognition of his affection for Zoe, in a remembered presence that replaces the alienation of a premature archeological burial, Freud's desire for presence must remain frustrated. Rather, his choice is to dig deeper, to

²⁶⁴ Derrida, *Archive Fever*, 97.

excavate ever more remote locations and record these ever more meticulously in the archive of his science. Whether in the literary form of Jensen's *Gradiva*, in the nomadic daydreams of lonely hours, or in the many actual visits and tours of his own, Freud's Italian journeys always return once again to the scene of writing in his Viennese study. Every journey is punctuated by a return to the space of the archive, the study adorned with his own collection of antiquities, the recordings of his letters to Fliess and the circle of men that returns to enframe (and repeat) the *Gradiva* in the territory of psychoanalysis. Indeed, as Freud draws his reading of the novella to a close, and attempts to envelop it within a psychoanalytic framework, the image of the circle of men once again reasserts itself in a final gesture of capture:

One of the circle who, as was explained at the beginning, was interested in the dreams of *Gradiva* and their possible interpretation, put the direct question to Wilhelm Jensen, whether any such similar theories of science had been known to him. Our author answered, as was to be expected, in the negative, and rather testily. [...] Either we have presented a true caricature of interpretation, by transferring to a harmless work of art tendencies of which its creator had no idea, and have thereby shown again how easy it is to find what one seeks and what one is engrossed with, a possibility of which most strange examples are recorded in the history of literature. Every reader may now decide for himself whether he cares to accept such an explanation; we, of course, hold fast to the other, still remaining view. We think that our author needed to know nothing of such rules and intentions, so that he may disavow them in good faith, and that we have surely found nothing in his romance which was not contained in it.²⁶⁵

Thus overcoming this last possible disruption in the question of authorial intent, Freud recloses the circle and comfortably enfolds *Gradiva* in the archival arms of psychoanalysis. In all his repetitions and restorations and perorations, Freud can finally come to the conclusion that his own words have never strayed from those of Jensen, and his own text is really nothing more than the amplified and demystified presence of the

²⁶⁵ Freud, *Delusion and Dream in Wilhelm Jensen's Gradiva*, 210-211.

original *Gradiva*. Thus, as Freud sits writing in his study, his own cast of a striding nymph gazing down from above the desk, the circle of psychoanalysis is closed, the traces of *Gradiva* are registered and the archive is complete.

As we conclude our own exploration of Freud's archival re-territorialization of Italian experience and its uncanny haunting of his corpus—an exploration that has surveyed a burgeoning field of supplements, prologues, and epilogues—we might end with a postscript or afterword of our own. For the question remains, after all, how we should interpret those other archives, impressions and doubles invoked by Cixous, Derrida and the present text. In what ways do these represent either porous interpretive openings or archival fossilizations of their own? In this instance, Derrida might be of particular help. In the postscript of *Archive Fever*, a work originally delivered before conference at the Freud House in London, Derrida suddenly announces a change of scenery. “By chance,” he writes in a passage dated from Naples in May of 1994,

I wrote these last words on the rim of Vesuvius, right near Pompeii, less than eight days ago. For more than twenty years, each time I've returned to Naples, I've thought of her.

Who better than Gradiva, I said to myself this time, the *Gradiva* of Jensen and of Freud, could illustrate this outbidding in the *mal d'archive*? Illustrate it where it is no longer proper to Freud and to this concept of the archive, where it marks in its very structure (and this is a last *supplementary thesis*) the formation of every concept, the very history of conception?²⁶⁶

It requires no appeal to magical thinking, however, to suggest that there is more than simple fortune and serendipity at work in Derrida's change of setting. As the critic closes his own doubling of Freud and Jensen, how better to outbid his models and predecessors than through an Italian journey and gesture of presence himself? And if Derrida is right in linking the repetitions of the archive to transgressions of erasure, should we not always

²⁶⁶ Derrida, *Archive Fever*, 97.

expect our suspect to return to the scene of the crime? However, since Derrida has seen fit to raise the stakes, it seems fitting that the present reading of Derrida, Freud and Jensen should likewise raise the bid yet another notch. With this in mind, then, perhaps a Neapolitan journey of our own is in order, a journey which will embark in the following chapter in the company of Walter Benjamin, Asja Lacis and the Angel of History.

Part III

The Dialectics of Sightseeing: Walter Benjamin, German Historicism and a Little Red Book

Chapter Six

Let's Go!

On the Road with Walter Benjamin and Auratic Historicism

Instead of entering the space of a theater, wouldn't you be stepping down to the street?

Walter Benjamin, *Passagen-Werk*, (R1,3)

The experiences of the traveler and the tourist contain, in miniature, the fundamental experiences and challenges of modern subjectivity. The traveler, like the modern in general, is confronted with a constantly shifting field of novel phenomena, the disintegration of recognized social, cultural and perhaps historical certainties, and is nevertheless challenged to situate these new experiences in a meaningful new conceptual framework.²⁶⁷ The tourist or modern traveler, in other words, is not simply coincident with modernity, but must stand alongside Walter Benjamin's *Flâneur*, Prostitute and Collector as one of its ideal types. The nineteenth-century *Italienische Reise*, indeed contained both elements of a Benjaminian dialectic of modern technology and representation. On the one hand, it is an embrace of the newness of modern travel, of modern technology and modern material means, but on the other it provides the aura of

²⁶⁷See Rudy Koshar, *German Travel Cultures* (Oxford: Berg, 2000). Koshar provides an interesting short overview of some of the ways tourism has been configured in modern criticism. He especially argues against the view of tourism as merely an adjunct of a "Culture Industry" as defined by Horkheimer and Adorno. See also Christine Keitz, "Zwischen Kultur und Gegenkultur: Baedeker und die ersten Arbeitertouristen in der Weimarer Republik," *Reisen und Leben* 19 (1989).

antiquity, ur-history and nature within which to wrap this newness and confer meaning upon its dislocating dimensions. In an edifying visit to Arcadian landscapes, in the surveying of the vast cultural wealth from classical antiquity to the Renaissance, in a stroll through Pompeii and a climb up the slopes of Vesuvius, the modern traveler is pleasantly schooled in the project of making meaning in confrontation with novelty, and is assured that their own apparently dislocated era can be contained in still greater and more sweeping narratives of universal history and the natural world. Thus, the following chapters trace out and explore this Benjaminian dialectic that situates the reception of historical objects on a spectrum between an “auratic historicism” of distance and a reified world of collected and commodified historical objects. However, in order to begin this exploration, we must turn initially not to Benjamin’s Italian journey of 1924, but to the last days and months of Benjamin’s life in 1940, a period of final reflections on the nature of historical representation, and a final flight from the gathering storms of a Nazi occupied Europe.

Looking northwards, therefore, from the border between France and Spain on a June day in 1940, the prospect offered Walter Benjamin would have seemed all too familiar to the Angel of History. As imagined in Benjamin’s final fragmentary meditation, *Über den Begriff der Geschichte*, the allegorical figure of the angel watches helpless and wide-eyed as the wreckage of the past piles up before its gaze. And though it would pause—though it would make whole once again the broken fragments gathering at its feet—it cannot. A strong wind blows out of the past, pressing the angel forever backwards into the future, a wind that bears the name of progress. From that perspective in 1940, from the path on which Benjamin sought refuge from occupied France in transit

through neutral Spain, a rising tide of historical wreckage could likewise be perceived approaching from the north. But where the angel of history is ineluctably driven into the future, Benjamin himself was no less sure that the tide of destruction rising before him would soon overwhelm his momentary refuge. After his belated and reluctant flight from Paris, Benjamin and his fellow refugees had eventually been halted by border officials at the outpost town of Port Bou, and sensing the menace of the forces gathering behind him in France, Benjamin chose the only alternative that still seemed available. In a moment, all the complex geographies and trajectories of Benjamin's passage through European modernity had emptied into a seemingly shrunken and hopelessly narrowed future. The alleys, the arcades and the one-way streets that Benjamin had traveled had run ultimately into one final cul-de-sac: a last passage in the form of a vial of morphine and a solitary suicide.

Of course, the irony of this final episode—delayed flight, initial refusal of transit, and suicide on the eve of unforeseen reversal—has come to form an obligatory station of pilgrimage in Benjamin reception, a dramatic last act that has doubtless contributed much to the fascination his work has exercised on subsequent commentators.²⁶⁸ At the same

²⁶⁸See Vanessa Schwartz, "Walter Benjamin for Historians", *The American Historical Review*, Vol. 106, No. 5 (Dec., 2001), pp. 1721-1743. Also Momme Brodersen, *Walter Benjamin: A Biography* (London: Verso, 1996). In the vast literature and cottage industry that has grown up around Benjamin, his writings on history and historicism tend to get embedded in larger issues related to his broader understanding of cultural history. A recent and very valuable specific look at Benjamin's late "Theses on History" is Michael Löwy, *Fire Alarm: Reading Walter Benjamin's 'On the Concept of History'* (New York: Verso, 2005). See also in relation to issues of history memory and mythology: Norbert Bolz and Bernd Witte eds., *Passagen: Walter Benjamins Urgeschichte des neunzehnten Jahrhunderts* (München: W. Fink, 1984); Jasiel Cesar, *Walter Benjamin on Experience and History: Profane Illumination* (San Francisco: Mellon Research University Press, 1992); Christopher Fynsk, "The Claim of History," *Diacritics* 22, no. 3/4, Commemorating Walter Benjamin, Autumn-Winter (1992); H.D. Kittsteiner, Johathan Monroe and Irving Wohlfarth, "Walter Benjamin's Historicism," *New German Critique*, no. 39, Second Special Issue on Walter Benjamin, Autumn (1986); Heiner Weidmann, *Flânerie, Sammlung, Spiel: Die Erinnerung des 19. Jahrhunderts bei Walter Benjamin* (München: W. Fink Verlag, 1992); Buck-Morss, *The Dialectics of Seeing: Walter Benjamin and the Arcades Project*. Michael Steinberg, ed., *Walter Benjamin and the*

time, however, one can't help suspecting that Benjamin himself would have viewed the aura of tragic drama that has enveloped his intellectual biography with a touch of ironic amusement. For beyond the simple irony of a message delivered too late, or a possibility gone unrecognized, what remains is the irony of an intellectual life that was devoted to "waking" modernity from mythic dreams, but that nevertheless becomes itself the subject of dramatic mythologization in after-life. Indeed, the true irony is that Walter Benjamin has been so often cast in the role of tragic protagonist—battling mythic forces beyond his control, and doomed to an inevitable, if somehow cathartic, fate. For to consign his history to the realm of myth is to embed it firmly in the domain from which he sought, throughout his life, to retrieve history as such. On the contrary, as it is conceived in Benjamin's final works, the primary danger confronting European modernity was the manner in which consciousness of history, and the ruptures of modernity, found themselves perpetually cloaked in precisely these sorts of archaic and mythic costumes, the way in which a waking recognition of history was continually deferred by the dream sleep of mythic representation.

Like the Surrealists, whom he had read and from whom he had drawn inspiration in the 1920's, Benjamin had recognized a powerful mythic dimension in the experience of urban modernity. Yet where Aragon and Breton had reveled in the dream-like surrealism of modern life, exploring and celebrating such experiences for their own sake, Benjamin was concerned to take Surrealist insights a critical step further. "Whereas Aragon persists within the realm of dream," Benjamin writes in relation to the aims of the

Demands of History (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1996); Irving Wohlfarth, "Et Cetera? The Historian as Chiffonnier," *New German Critique*, no. 39, Second Special Issue on Walter Benjamin, Autumn (1986); Gerard Rault and Uwe Steiner, eds., *Walter Benjamin: Aesthetik und Geschichtsphilosophie* (Bern: Lang, 1998).

Passagen-Werk, “here the concern is to find the constellation of awakening. While in Aragon there remains an impressionistic element, namely the “mythology” . . . , here it is a question of the dissolution of “mythology” into the space of history.”²⁶⁹ It was not enough, in Benjamin’s estimation, merely to recognize the manner in which a mythologized phantasmagoria suffused an ostensibly de-mystified modernity. On the contrary, if an essential component of an unfolding European modernity emerged in the dream state of mythic representation, then the task of a truly critical history was one of both recognizing and waking from the mythic images that were thrown up like sparks from the clash and clamor of the modern era. Put another way, if modernity for Benjamin had come to conceive its history as a kind of spectacle—one that narrates and explains the forces that have come to shape the present—the most dangerous form such a spectacle can take is one informed by traditional dramatic forms of classical tragedy. The province of tragedy is, after all, the realm of myth, and its motions are guided by the struggles between finite mortals and the transcendent powers of nature and the gods, struggles whose ultimate terminus is never fully in doubt. The fate of the hero is always already written, the plot ineluctably leading to its inevitable conclusion, and the audience left with nothing more than the sorrow and pity of catharsis. Indeed, in both its traditional formal elements and in the economies of spectation that govern the relation between audience and spectacle, classical and bourgeois drama rendered a template that for Benjamin had been extremely inviting and extremely dangerous for the modern construction of its various pasts. The presentation of history in these traditionally dramatic terms carries with it not only the colorful costumes of mythic inevitability—the

²⁶⁹ Walter Benjamin, *The Arcades Project*, trans. Howard Eiland and Kevin McLaughlin (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999), N1, 9.

tragedy of decline or the comedy of progress—but it also seals the past from the present with the unities of time and space on the stage, and encourages a detached yet empathetic posture among the audience. “Overcoming the concept of ‘progress,’ writes Benjamin in the *Arcades Project*, “and overcoming the concept of ‘period of decline’ are two sides of one and the same thing.”²⁷⁰ There is, in other words, a degree of affinity between the concepts of epic theater developed by Brecht and Benjamin’s vision of historical representation as a form of spectacle. Despite all the well known personal tensions between the two—or rather, between the Benjamin who was fascinated by Brecht and the Benjamin in communication with Adorno—each shared the conviction that revolutionary energies had been locked up by the forms and methods of, respectively, dramatic and historical representation.²⁷¹ In both cases, the wall that had come to define the relation between spectator and spectacle, a wall that allowed only a passive union of empathetic reception, had to be broken down. The strict inevitabilities of mythic representation had to be replaced with the possibility for action and choice, and the spatial and temporal strait jackets that contain the action on stage had instead to be called into question by a different set of methodological and dramaturgical techniques.

At the same time, however, while modernity had been cloaked in a mythic and ur-historical phantasmagoria, Benjamin recognized that this regressive tendency was balanced by the advance of industrial technologies and cultural phenomena that were relentlessly eroding auratic pretensions such as “distance” and “tradition”. The classical locus of Benjamin's reflections on this is, of course, in the 1935/36 “Das Kunstwerk im

²⁷⁰ Walter Benjamin, *The Arcades Project*, N2,5.

²⁷¹ See Andrew E. Benjamin, *The Problems of Modernity: Adorno and Benjamin* (London: Routledge, 1989). Gerhard Kaiser, *Benjamin. Adorno; Zwei Studien* (Frankfurt a.M.: Anthenaum-Fischer-Taschenbuch Verlag, 1974).

Zeitalter seiner technischen Reproduzierbarkeit.” Here, in relation to the artwork, Benjamin describes the decline of aura in the face of modern technologies of reproduction. The “auratic” quality of the artwork—its perceived remove or distance from the observer, its embeddedness in a past or tradition—suffers a decline in the face of modern modes of reproduction, whether these be in film, photography, or other representational technologies that allow for mass production and reproduction. For the literary critic and aesthete in Benjamin, a sense of loss is clearly registered in this progressive collapse of aura. Yet for the materialist Benjamin, the progressive reification of aesthetic objects through the demands of technological modernity nevertheless represents an historical opportunity. If art and its social domains have been colonized and transformed by the technologies and economic imperatives of modernity, it may likewise suggest the possibility of a salutary synthesis of culture and technology that would permit the emergence of a truly socialist aesthetic. While the commodification of art in the modern context was perhaps unavoidable (e.g. the translation of an auratic singularity into a work of art to be produced and reproduced) it was of course only the extreme, if necessary, formulation of a reifying bourgeois culture that had opened the door to its own *Aufhebung*. The eye of the camera, for example, as the representative mode of modern reproductive technology, may enforce a regime of modern reified vision, but it may also provide a glimpse into the possibility of a more humane and socialist manner of representation.

For Benjamin, the optics of modern aesthetics were not coincidentally bound to those of contemporary historiography. If the object of art, and its associated forms of perception, construction, and social function, had been undergoing a radical

transformation through the modes of modern mechanical reproduction, so too did the object of history confront a moment of reckoning with emerging perceptual categories and representational regimes. In the same way that the art work, for Benjamin, presented itself in the nineteenth century in the dialectical tension between the “art for art's sake” of aestheticism and a mass-produced (and reproduced) art in the form of a commodity, the object of historical reflection was subject to similar forces, imperatives defined likewise by the tension between auratic tradition and the reifications of the commodity form. The object of historical reflection in the nineteenth century was thus bound to become visible in, and gravitate towards, representational polarities defined ever more strictly by auratic distance and commodified nearness. In the former case, the image of the past found itself constructed with an emphasis on its fundamental otherness, on its stubborn self-sufficiency, and on its perceived organic wholeness. From this perspective, the present gazes back at the past in the same way that the aesthetic subject confronts an artwork still enveloped in auratic tradition. In Benjaminian terms, it is a relation of two subjective singularities, a relation between the gaze of an observer and an entity that defiantly and mysteriously returns such a gaze. In the latter case, however, the past emerges in a nearness that arises only in the relation between self-sufficient subject and a pure object, an object whose “nearness” is characterized by its ready assimilation to the brute material relations of possession, manipulation, manufacture and reproduction. Here, the trace and image of the past is stripped of its auratic cloak and injected—as a reified object among other reified objects—into the material economy of present historical circumstance. The past, in other words, is here severed from the tissues that define its distance, and invited into the present on the condition that it relinquish its aura and circulate in the present as a

commodity to be bought and sold. In this latter instance, then, the value of the past and its traces thus migrates from the intrinsic value of use to the relational value of exchange. The image of the past, like the objet d'art at the same historical juncture, becomes an object, a product and a commodity. Therefore, if the nineteenth century saw the reception of artistic representation gradually transformed by dialectical pressures enforced both by material developments and the aestheticist reaction against such influences, then the representation and reception of the past could not remain immune to the same dialectical forces. Like that of the isomorphically similar aesthetic object, the status, nature and modes of visibility of the historical image or trace would be governed by the tensions that Benjamin describes.

Of central importance for Benjamin, in other words, is the problem of concept formation in the various domains of historical reflection, as it emerges in the context of the dialectical forces that condition cultural modernity. Indeed, given the era in which Benjamin had reached intellectual maturity—an era which saw historical epistemology debated by philosophers such as Wilhelm Windelband and Heinrich Rickert, historians such as Friedrich Meinecke and a theologian such as Ernst Troeltsch—it is not surprising that his own meditations on historical knowledge would bear the residue of controversies that formed a central feature in the intellectual landscape of the previous several decades.²⁷² However, if theoretical questions concerning the epistemological and social status of historical objects can be seen as a point of initial orientation for a younger

²⁷²See: Georg Iggers, *The German Conception of History* (Hannover, NH: Wesleyan University Press, 1968); Charles R. Bambach, *The Crisis of Historicism: Neo-Kantian Philosophy* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1987); Berthold P. Riesterer, *Karl Löwith's View of History: A Critical Appraisal of Historicism* (The Hague: Nijhoff, 1970); Friedrich Meinecke, *Die Entstehung der Historismus* (München: Oldenbourg, 1959). Erich Fülling, *Geschichte als Offenbarung. Studien zur Frage Historismus und Glaube von Herder bis Troeltsch* (Berlin, 1956).

Benjamin—weaned on the esoteric debates of neo-Idealism, neo-Kantianism and historicism—the approaches of such schools would seem to a later, and increasingly materialist, Benjamin to be hopelessly sterile and academic. To be sure, the problem of the relation between past and present—how the former is received, constructed and represented in the context of the latter—would remain at the very center of Benjamin's work until the end of his life, his own approach to its description and solution would take shape within the matrices of culture, modernity and materialism that increasingly came to dominate the contours of his intellectual outlook in the 1920's.

While the problem of historical knowledge thus remained decisive for Benjamin, its solution was unlikely to be found in the philosophical systems of the previous generation. In the general outlines of this diagnosis, Benjamin was not alone and certainly not the first. Indeed, Benjamin had studied for a short time under Georg Simmel whose work was already pointing the way to a more materialist and culturally oriented sociology, a sociology that decisively influenced a group of students that included not only Benjamin himself but Siegfried Kracauer as well.²⁷³ In similar fashion, the work of Karl Mannheim undertook a self described sociology of knowledge that sought to explain political epistemology in terms of social formations and dynamics. Thus, in an atmosphere increasingly oriented away from the abstract philosophical narratives of neo-Idealism and neo-Kantianism and towards a fuller reckoning with

²⁷³See especially: David Frisby, *Fragments of Modernity: Theories of Modernity in the Work of Simmel, Kracauer, and Benjamin* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1986); Carlo Antoni, *From History to Sociology: The Transition in German Historical Thinking*, trans. Hayden V. White (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1959); Karl Mannheim, *Ideology and Utopia: An Introduction to the Sociology of Knowledge* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1985); Helmut Lethen, "Kracauer's Pendulum: Thoughts on German Cultural History," *New German Critique* Spring-Summer (1995); Siegfried Kracauer, *The Mass Ornament: Weimar Essays*, trans. Thomas Levin (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1995); Georg Simmel, *Simmel on Culture: Selected Writings*, ed. Mike Featherstone David Frisby (London: Sage, 1997).

sociological and cultural phenomena, Benjamin's own turn achieved crystallization in the well known shift to dialectical materialism in the years 1924 and 1925. But here again, while the terms in which Benjamin sought to explain the mutual relations between art, literature and history had shifted, the central issues remained largely untouched. The status and character of representation—whether aesthetic, social or historical—was to be explained not through transcendental categories or the movements of world spirit, but through the dialectical tensions that organized a material present. In a move decisively introduced in *Einbahnstrasse* of 1925 and ultimately pursued through the various convolutes of the *Passagen-Werk*, Benjamin sought out a way of conceiving aesthetic and historical phenomena that was grounded in an accounting of cultural, technological and material processes.²⁷⁴

For Benjamin, then, the past as it is constructed, introduced, and rendered useful in the domain of the present is defined and made manifest in the dialectic polarities which describe the character of cultural modernity. As suggested above, such polarities are defined by the “distance” of aura and the “nearness” of the commodified object. But how exactly are we to conceive of the historical object in terms of nearness and distance, in terms of auratic entity and reified object? What, we might ask for the purposes of the present work, does it mean that an object defined by a certain kind of historicity, by its appearance in the present as a trace of the past, becomes entangled in a social, historical and technological dialectic that governs the character of contemporary representational processes? In short, what exactly is the nature of this Benjaminian historical object

²⁷⁴See Asja Lacis' autobiographical reflections in *Revolutionär im Beruf; Berichte über proletarisches Theater, über Meyerhold, Brecht, Benjamin und Piscator* (München: Rogner & Bernhard), 1971.

through whose mediation the present constructs an adequate and useful representation of the past?

The application of pressure to the deceptively simple notion of an historical “object” reveals not so much a neat set of conceptual categories, but an extremely unstable, highly contentious and historically contingent array of definitions. Indeed, in its most extreme formulations, the idea of an “object” of history tends to assume two important and opposed forms. On the one hand, the object may be identified with an actual entity or event towards which the formal research of the historian, or the informal work of social and personal memory, is directed. In this case, the object of history is the very figure of Julius Caesar, an individual whose existence is circumscribed and embedded within a set of historical circumstances whose status can be described in terms of an irreducible past-ness. The object here is a life and an individual that is no longer present, the definition of whose contours and influence is the aim and goal of historical reflection. On the other hand, however, the historical object can conversely be described as those traces of the past which persist into the present, and whose concrete and material “presence” resonates with historical significance. In this case, of course, the historical object can denote the various traces and relics that permit a figure such as Julius Caesar to persist as a figure of possible historical reflection in the present. For such objects, we would look to existent contemporary texts such as the *Commentaries*, or to fields such as numismatics or archeology. If we were to put this in terms of Saussurian linguistics, the notion of an historical object masks a theoretically significant equivocation, uncertainly situated between the description and identification of an historical object as referent and an understanding of the same object as sign.

From this perspective, the concept of an “object” of history does not so much describe a relation between past and present, but instead goes far in obscuring the rich variety of possible relations such a concept could designate. Furthermore, what should quickly become apparent is the way in which Benjamin's reflections on the dialectics that govern modern aesthetics can be mapped precisely onto the tensions that inhere in the construction of historical objects. On the one hand, if the object of history is understood as an entity removed from the experience of the present (or whose relation to the present is grounded in a strictly observed and rigid matrix of continuity), as an object defined by its distance from, and non-existence in, the present, we can quickly recognize the tissues of Benjaminian “aura” progressively gathering about the past. On the way such continuities enforce a stratified and “auratic” past, a terrain of stratification that requires a critical “blasting” to disaggregate, Benjamin writes:

The destructive or critical momentum of materialistic historiography is registered in that blasting of historical continuity with which the historical object first constitutes itself. In fact, an object of history cannot be targeted at all within the continuous elapse of history. And so, from time immemorial, historical narration has simply picked out an object from this continuous succession. But it has done so without foundation, as an expedient; and its first thought was then always to reinsert the object into the continuum, which it would create anew through empathy. Materialist historiography does not choose its objects arbitrarily. It does not fasten on them but rather springs them loose from the order of succession. Its provisions are more extensive, its occurrences more essential.²⁷⁵

In this vision, too, we begin to perceive in clearer outlines Benjamin's critique of historicism as a methodological approach to the (re)construction of historical objects. As with its contemporary aesthetic counterpart in the various currents of aestheticism, the governing impetus and defining principle of European historicism was its effort to erect a regime of representation that preserved the object—in this instance, historical—from the

²⁷⁵ Walter Benjamin, *Arcades Project*, N10a,1.

material interests and encroachments of the present. The call for a history *wie es eigentlich gewesen*—for a history that engages its object as self-sufficient entity, a history that relied on such concepts as *Einfühlung* and other vagaries of historical hermeneutics, a history for whom an understanding of the past relied precisely on the degree of its removal from the present—could result in nothing less than the auratic mythologization of a past. What Benjamin understood as historicism was a relation to the past whose concerns with “auratic” distance had produced a convoluted intellectual armature, a class of privileged historian interpreter/acolytes whose methods rendered the sole legitimate representation of the past, and—ultimately—a principle of historical representation that bound potentially revolutionary energies of the present in the congealed matrices of distance, tradition and “large contexts.” Under the determined ministrations of European historicism, the past could be secured (and pacified) in a well defended historical “garden” or “zoological park”, a domain of edification whose well defined historicist walls preserved past from present and present from past. Yet if Oskar Kokoschka, as Carl Schorske once argued in *Fin-de-Siècle Vienna*, had set off an explosion in the “garden” of Austrian aesthetic culture, or if Brecht had destroyed the “fourth wall” of traditional bourgeois drama, the task for Benjamin was that of blasting asunder the walls erected by European historicism, and exploding the congealed pasts that had accumulated in its rigidly maintained “garden”.²⁷⁶

However, even while nineteenth-century academic historicism was scoring its greatest victories in policing legitimate boundaries of past and present, the “object” of history was erupting into the present in a huge variety of more immediate and concrete

²⁷⁶Carl Schorske, *Fin-de-Siècle Vienna* (New York: Vintage Books, 1981).

forms, challenging at every step the claims of auratic historicism. Here, such historical “objects” entered—and proliferated in—cultural domains precisely as objects, as historical “signs” that had been wholly absorbed in, and rendered proximate to, the concerns of the present. The past here emerges as a “style”, as a form of ornament or object of collection from which all meaning is denied save those the present bestows upon it. In this sense, the fashionable “historicism” of nineteenth-century architecture and other cultural domains—as opposed to the historicism of German historiography—can be understood precisely as the introduction of the past into the present as a commodity, a past that can be produced, reproduced and instrumentalized.

As should be gradually more apparent, Benjamin's understanding of the tensions that governed historical perception not only allows us to map these two disparate forms of nineteenth-century historicism—historiographical and cultural—onto a common dialectical framework, but permits us to connect this dialectic to more generalized Benjaminian themes relating to the decline of aura and the rise of mechanical reproduction occurring simultaneously in a variety of social and cultural domains. On the one hand, Benjamin's critiques of nineteenth-century aestheticism find their corollary in his vehement rejection of the theories and methods of academic historicism, while on the other hand, the commodification of the aesthetic object in the face of mechanical reproduction mirrors the reduction of historicity to style, ornament and object of exchange. Indeed, in the *Arcades Project*, Benjamin remarks on the transformations in the aesthetic of history that accompany these transformations, replacing the narrative with the materiality and fragmentarity of the epic drama:

Universal history appears, to the Saint-Simonian Barrault, as the new work of art: “Shall we venture to compare the last of the tragic or comic authors of Rome with

the Christian orators intoning their eloquent sermons? No, Corneille, Racine, Voltaire, and Moliere will not come back to life; dramatic genius has accomplished its mission.... In the end, the novel will fail no less in respect of what it has in common with these two genres as in its relations to the history of which it is the counterfeit.... History, in fact, will again take on a powerful charm...; it will no longer be only a little tribe of the Orient that will make for sacred history; the history of the entire world will merit this title. Such history will become a veritable epic, in which the story of every nation will constitute a canto and the story of every great man an episode.” [E. Barrault,] *Aux artistes; Du Passe et de l’avenir des beaux-arts* (Paris, 1830), pp. 81-81. The epic belongs to the organic age; the novel and drama, to the critical.²⁷⁷

Even while a material dialectic was transforming the respective tectonic relations of base and superstructure in European modernity, Benjamin discerns a complementary set of dialectical tensions active within the sphere of culture itself. The dialectics of materialist history, in other words, is mirrored in a separate cultural dialectic of historical and aesthetic representation.²⁷⁸

As we have suggested above, even as this dialectical tension seemed to be reaching ever more extreme formulations, even as technology was undermining aura and remaking the past into a vast repository of second-hand and cut-rate collectibles, the decline of aura also presented a new set of possibilities. For if the commodification of the past and its traces threatened to produce a wholly reified and objectified orientation towards historicity, it nevertheless occasioned the opportunity for precisely that

²⁷⁷ Walter Benjamin, *Arcades Project*, U15a,1.

²⁷⁸ Benjamin argued that within the superstructure there was a separate (and relatively autonomous) dialectical process, “no less noticeable (...) than in the economy,” but proceeding “far more slowly.” It is this dialectic that makes possible the transition to a socialist society. It plays itself out between the collective imagination and the productive potential of the new nature that human beings have brought into being, but do not yet consciously comprehend. Moreover, this dialectic has developed *not* by “burying” the dead past, but by revitalizing it. For if future history is not determined and thus its forms are still unknown, if consciousness cannot transcend these horizons of its socio-historical context, then where else *but* to the dead past can imagination turn in order to conceptualize a world that is “not-yet”? Moreover, such a move itself satisfies a utopian wish: the desire (manifested in the religious myth of awakening the dead) “to make [past] suffering into something incomplete,” into something incomplete,” to make good an unfulfilled past that has been irretrievably lost. Susan Buck Morss, *Dialectics of Seeing* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1989), 124.

“constellation of awakening” that Benjamin sought in a new and revolutionary relation to the past. The decline of aura, the decline of an experience of the past in the form of a distant and irreducible otherness signifies at the same time an end to the mythologized slumber from which the present had confronted the past in the nineteenth century. In a European modernity awash in ever more intimate encounters with, and reproductions of, historical traces—whether enacted by the architect, the photographer, the tourist or the collector—the enforced historicist localization of the past in the past was becoming increasingly untenable. “While the relation of the present to the past,” writes Benjamin in the *Arcades Project*, “is a purely temporal, continuous one, the relation of what-has-been to the now is dialectical: is not progression but image, suddenly emergent.—Only dialectical images are genuine images (that is, not archaic): and the place where one encounters them is language. *Awakening*.”²⁷⁹ Thus, although the commodification and objectification of historical traces reduced the significance of historicity from an auratic value to exchange value, it nevertheless propelled history at high velocity into a potentially revolutionary collision with the present²⁸⁰.

An intriguing convergence thus emerges in Benjamin's thought between the dialectical fortunes of modern aesthetics and the field of historical epistemology. Of central importance is the way in which these processes become manifest, are rendered visible, and subsequently leave their traces. Beginning at least as early as the mid-

²⁷⁹ Walter Benjamin, *Arcades Project*, N2a,3.

²⁸⁰ See also in this context: “The true method of making things present is to represent them in our space (not to represent ourselves in their space). (The collector does just this, and so does the anecdote.) Thus represented, the things allow no mediating construction from out of “large contexts.” The same method applies, in essence, to the consideration of great things from the past—the cathedral of Chartres, the temple of Paestum—when, that is, a favorable prospect presents itself: the method of receiving the things into our space. We don’t displace our being into theirs; they step into our life.” Walter Benjamin, *Arcades Project*, H2,3.

1920's—emerging tentatively in the essay *Neapel* and then realized more fully in *Einbahnstrasse*—Benjamin's materialist turn is characterized by emphasis on the spatial fields in which the dramas of cultural and historical dialectics are produced and enacted. In other words, simultaneous with his materialist turn, Benjamin begins to turn his critical gaze to the way in which space functions as both a register and an organizational matrix for the perception of historical and aesthetic phenomena. But if this emphasis on spatiality was to have a critical or revolutionary moment, if it were to recognize rather than further mystify the dialectical tensions that define its concrete forms, new methods of experiencing, exploring and documenting such spatial domains would be required. To the extent that the energies of historical and aesthetic objects had been contained by conventional spatial imperatives, to the extent that such objects could only be made visible in the rigid “spectational” relations we saw in the metaphor of traditional dramatic form, a richer and more subversive encounter with the forms of spatial organization needed a far less rigid economy of speculation. From this perspective, in other words, the revolutionary potential bound up in modern constructions of historical time was dependent on revolutionary modes of understanding the spaces of modernity. History is congealed in spatiality—the task is one of finding a way to blast it out.

In true dialectical fashion, therefore, it is in that most modern of experiences, in the jostle and shock of the urban thoroughfare, that Benjamin discovers an economy of spatial experience that may dispel the vapors of mystification thrown up by modernity itself. In the modern street, after all, the rigid conventions of the theater and its attendant modes of legitimate speculation are utterly meaningless. As Baudelaire had documented in the previous century, a stroll on a city avenue takes form as a series of impressions and

shocks whose shape is governed solely by the movements of the traveler, the subjective arrangement of impressions, and the vagaries of chance. As Benjamin puts it in reflections on Baudelaire:

Of all the experiences which made his life what it was, Baudelaire singled out his having been jostled by the crowd as the decisive, unique experience. The luster of a crowd with a motion and a soul of its own, the glitter that had bedazzled the *Flâneur*, had dimmed for him. To impress the crowd's meanness upon himself, he envisaged the day on which even the lost women, the outcasts, would be ready to advocate a well-ordered life, condemn libertinism, and reject everything except money. Having been betrayed by these last allies of his, Baudelaire battled the crowd—with the impotent rage of someone fighting the rain or the wind. This is the nature of something lived through (*Erlebnis*) to which Baudelaire has given the weight of an experience (*Erfahrung*). He indicated the price for which the sensation of the modern age may be had: the disintegration of the aura in the experience of shock. He paid dearly for consenting to this disintegration—but it is the law of his poetry, which shines in the sky of the Second Empire as “a star without atmosphere.”²⁸¹

In the travels and travails of the *Flâneur*, then, Benjamin's allegorical representative of this mode of urban experience, it is precisely the experience of the onlooker that defines and grounds the meaning of modern spectacle. To make a Benjaminian analogy, the modern street produces meaning not in the manner of tragedy as defined in his *Habilschrift*, the *Ursprung des deutschen Trauerspiels*, not as a self-sufficient ritual to whom the presence of the onlooker is incidental, but in the same manner as the German Baroque *Trauerspiel*. “The spectator of tragedy,” writes Benjamin, “is summoned, and is justified, by the tragedy itself; the *Trauerspiel*, in contrast, has to be understood from the point of view of the onlooker.”²⁸² Indeed, as if to underline this connection between the

²⁸¹ Benjamin on Baudelaire: Walter Benjamin, “On Some Motifs from Baudelaire”, *Illuminations*, pp. 192-193.

²⁸² Walter Benjamin. *Ursprung des deutschen Trauerspiels* (London: Verso, 1985) 119. “The spectator of tragedy is summoned, and is justified, by the tragedy itself; the *Trauerspiel*, in contrast, has to be understood from the point of view of the onlooker. He learns how, on the stage, a space which belongs to

“dramaturgy” of the street and that of the *Trauerspiel*, Benjamin reminds us that while the tragedy was born as a rite bound to and connected with a specific ritual space, the *Trauerspiel* finds its antecedents in the street spectacles of the *Trionfi* as these had been practiced in Renaissance Italy. Their images [those of the *Trauerspiele*] are displayed in order to be seen,” writes Benjamin,

arranged in the way they want them to be seen. Thus the Italian Renaissance theatre, which is in many ways an influential factor in the German baroque, emerged from pure ostentation, from the *trionfi*, the processions with explanatory recitation that flourished in Florence under Lorenzo de Medici. And in the European *Trauerspiel* as a whole the stage is also not fixable, not an actual place, but it too is dialectically split. Bound to the court, it yet remains a traveling theatre; metaphorically its boards represent the earth as the setting created for the enactment of history.²⁸³

In both instances, in the German tragic drama and the splenetic reflections of Baudelaire, a peculiar perceptual regime is born from eras of profound spiritual dislocation, eras in which materiality enlarged its claims at the expense of transcendence and the presence of symbolic sensibility retreated before the ramified meanings of allegory. Allegory, for Benjamin, is a mode of signification that announces a condition of radical immanence, a condition in which objects and things become signs and in which signs point merely to other signs. Where the symbolic mode makes a claim for the “presence” of the transcendent, allegory defers its meaning in the play of signs, and significations remain inert without the interpretive intervention of the onlooker, the collector, or the *Flâneur*. But if the Baroque Tragic Drama, in Benjamin's estimation, had been able to arrest the slide into the abyss of allegory through a theological sleight of hand, and if Baudelaire

an inner world of feeling and bears no relationship to the cosmos, situations are compellingly presented to him.”

²⁸³ Ibid.

had been isolated in its embrace—at once behind and ahead of his era—European modernity of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries had produced social and technological conditions that increasingly enforced regimes of perception of an allegorical rather than symbolic cast.²⁸⁴ Indeed, in the commodity form of modern Capital, Benjamin discerned a force whose unyielding imperative of exchange was progressively banishing aura and transcendence from the domains of sense and meaning. In place of these, there emerged a melancholic landscape of “petrified” objects, objects with no intrinsic meaning—or use—save those announced in the relation of exchange.²⁸⁵ The meaning of objects, the meanings of history, the meanings of nature, are here justified and exhausted in the arrangements of the collector, the relation of ownership, and the satisfaction of the consumer. For Benjamin, the image of the chaotic urban street thus captures, *in nuce*, the dialectical tensions inherent in European modernity, tensions that enforce the progressive decline of auratic perception and announce an increasingly pervasive process of reification and objectification.

²⁸⁴ Bainard Cowan, “Walter Benjamin's Theory of Allegory,” *New German Critique*, No. 22, Special Issue on Modernism (Winter, 1981), pp. 109-122. For more on the representational nature of symbol and allegory in their modern trajectories and interpretations see: Gail Day, “Allegory: Between Deconstruction and Dialectics,” *Oxford Art Journal* 22, no. 1 (1999); Theresa M. Kelley, *Reinventing Allegory* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997); Rampley, “From Symbol to Allegory: Aby Warburg's Theory of Art.”; Matthew Wilkins, “Toward a Benjaminian Theory of Dialectical Allegory,” *New Literary History* 37 (2006); Samuel Weber, “Genealogy of Modernity: History, Myth and Allegory in Benjamin's Origin of the German Mourning Play,” *MLN* 106, no. 3, German Issue, Apr. (1991); Joseph A. Mazzeo, “Allegorical Interpretation and History,” *Comparative Literature* 30, no. 1, Winter (1978); Craig Owens, “The Allegorical Impulse: Toward a Theory of Postmodernism,” *October* 12, Spring (1980); Timothy Bahti, *Allegories of History: Literary Historiography after Hegel* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992); Vance Bell, “Falling into Time: The Historicity of the Symbol,” *Other Voices* 1, no. 1 (1997); Ferretti, *Cassirer, Panofsky, and Warburg: Symbol, Art, and History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989).

²⁸⁵ Benjamin, *Ursprung des deutschen Trauerspiels*, 166. “Whereas in the symbol destruction is idealized and the transfigured face of nature is fleetingly revealed in the light of redemption, in allegory the observer is confronted with the facies hippocratica of history as a petrified, primordial landscape.” Also see: Benjamin, *Arcades Project*, J55,13. “The allegories stand for that which the commodity makes of the experiences people have in this century.”

To step from the theater and into the street, is for Benjamin to make a leap from tragedy to *Trauerspiel*, from symbol to allegory, from auratic transcendence to reified immanence, from transcendent myth to material history. And while modernity casts its melancholic gaze on the world it has created to find only a ruinous landscape of fragments, objects and trinkets, it nevertheless may also glimpse the possibilities inherent in an historical domain whose rigid stratifications and congealed narratives have likewise been shattered and exploded. If the petrified landscape of allegory, in other words, spells the death of mythic transcendence and auratic consciousness, it may in turn prove fertile ground for that constellation of awakening for which Benjamin had sought. At the very moment of the most radical reification, the object of history like the object of art is released from the mythologies of transcendence, progress, tradition and continuity. Like the onlooker invited to participate in the performance of epic drama, like the collector free to savor the disorder in the unpacking of his books, like the child who constructs an historical narrative from the images of a family emblem book, modernity first discovers its historical agency when released from the imperatives of auratic meanings and awakes from the sleep of mythic transcendence. The very moment that history becomes a landscape of pure objects, reified in the commodity form and dissected by the photographic eye, is also the moment of most powerful revolutionary potential, the moment at which questions regarding the legitimate relation of past and present emerge in their starkest forms.

If this confrontation between the imperatives of aura and reification, between history as transcendence and history as kitsch, forms an essential characteristic of European modernity, it may seem fitting that Benjamin's mature reflections on this

process spring from encounters on Italian soil and find their first staging on Neapolitan streets. As we have already seen, Italy had long figured as a central region of interest for German historians. From Leopold von Ranke's search for the "hand of God" in the dusty folios of the Venetian archives to Jacob Burckhardt's experiments in Italian cultural history, German historical thought of the nineteenth century found a virtually inexhaustible source of professional fascination and personal inspiration in the tangled historical landscapes of Italy. In the palimpsest of possible temporalities that crowded the Italian context, in the histories of classical civilization, Christendom, Renaissance and an emerging European modernity, German scholars discovered a useful theater in which to investigate and reflect upon the jumbled temporalities of a German nineteenth century.²⁸⁶ In the very different works of a Ranke, a Mommsen or a Burckhardt, Italian pasts of classical antiquity, of Christendom and of Renaissance are staged as a spectacle for a modern audience. And as a new entity called "Germany" was gradually being erected on the ever uncertain ground of European modernity, many of its foundational stones—hewn from invented continuities and shoring up imagined missions—were supplied from the quarries of Italian history and the research of German historians.²⁸⁷

²⁸⁶On the historical import of Italian travel for German travelers and scholars alike, see: Arnold Esch and Jens Petersen eds., *Deutsches Ottocento* (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 2000). Especially in this volume: Bernd Roeck, "Johann Jakob Bachofen, Jacob Burckhardt und Italien"; Arnold Esch, "Auf Archivreise: Die deutschen Mediävisten in der ersten Hälfte des 19. Jahrhunderts: aus Italien-Briefen von Mitarbeitern der Monumenta Germaniae Historica vor der Gründung des historischen Instituts in Rom."; Volker Sellin, "Abdankung der Geist vor der Macht? Das Verhältnis von Kultur und Politik nach 1870." Karl Christ and Arnaldo Momigliano eds., *L'antichità Nell'Ottocento in Italia E Germania/Die Antike im 19. Jahrhundert in Italien Und Deutschland* (Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 1988); Arnold Esch and Jens Petersen, eds., *Ferdinand Gregorovius und Italien: Eine Kritische Würdigung* (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer, 1993); Klaus Heitman und Teodoro Scamardi eds., *Deutsches Italienbild und Italienische Deutschlandbild im 18. Jahrhundert* (Tübingen: 1993); Gunter Oesterle, Bernd Roeck, Christine Tauber, eds., *Italien in Aneignung und Widerspruch* (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer, 1996); Linda Marie Puetter, *Reisen durchs Museum: Bildungserlebnisse deutscher Schriftsteller in Italien (1770-1830)* (Hildesheim: Georg Olms, 1998).

But while German historians went far during the nineteenth century in securing a monopoly on the legitimate interpretation of the past—whether German, Italian, or otherwise—the “lure of Italy” and the historical fascination it exercised was a phenomenon by no means restricted to professional academics. For even as the connoisseur, collector or enthusiast were being banished from the sober precincts of the academy, generations of Germans from the educated classes were coming to see Italy not only as edifying domain of potential historical insight, but as an increasingly proximate realm that resonated with social and subjective significance. For educated Germans, having drunk deep of Goethe's *Italienische Reise* and later of Burckhardt's *Cicerone*, the concept of “Italy” would resolve itself into a rich tangle of signs, instantly evoking associations of material prosperity, spiritual education, aesthetic taste, historical knowledge, and every manner of corporeal satisfaction. Italy, in other words, emerged as commodified collection of cultural signs, a set of commodities whose consumption assumed an essential role in the construction of German middle-class subjectivity. In private souvenirs and *objets d'art*, in classical public architecture, and in the ever increasing opportunities for actual travel to the Italian peninsula, educated Germans adorned the formal edifices of state, the informal institutions of the public sphere, and the cozy domains of private life with the ornaments of Italian culture. As the century progressed, the expanding material resources of these classes, the increasing ease of convenient transportation, and explosive advances in technologies of mechanical representation, the signifying power of Italy was brought within the grasp of ever widening segments of the population. From reproductions of Italian masterworks, to illustrated magazines and books, and eventually to the possibility of an Italian journey of

one's own, the uncertain modern conflicts of German middle class subjectivity could find security in the collection, evocation and consumption of Italy's aesthetic and historical wealth. The *Italienische Reise*, glimpsed once only in the now auratic reflections of a Goethe, a Herder, or a Burckhardt, was now becoming an eminently reproducible experience. “Italy”, in other words, with all its signifying resonance in social, cultural and subjective spheres (and now as an industry, a product, and an object of consumption), thus increasingly became manifest in the form of the commodity fetish, a set of talismanic objects whose ostensible resonance with an idealized history secured their bearer from the vicissitudes, conflicts and banalities of a lived and quotidian history.

In the following chapters, we will take a closer look at the ways in which these dialectical poles—a construction of temporality grounded in an auratic historicism and one defined by a reception of the past into the reified field of commodified and reproducible modern culture—are implicated in concrete representational configurations of time and space in Italian contexts. In the pages of the German periodical, *Italien*, aimed at an educated and scholarly elite, we will trace out the residues of an auratic historicism that sought to preserve the experience of Italy and its histories in a matrix of mythic timelessness on the one hand, and a sweeping historical totality on the other. Conversely, a review of a contemporary Baedeker guide from 1926 will yield a glimpse of an alternate approach to the re-construction of Italian spaces and times. In the formal qualities of the Baedeker, and in its criteria for its selection of objects of interest, a more modern form of traveling consciousness is revealed where the appropriation of traveling spaces is predicated on the collapse of aura and a reconfiguration of tourism as a revealing mode of modern consumption. Finally, we will turn to the contribution of

Benjamin and Lacis in the form of the *Neapel* essay. What will emerge here is a prefiguration of Benjamin's later *Denkbilder* and the *Passagen-Werk*, in its forms as a mobile and fragmentary cityscape, but also an early attempt to navigate between the above regimes of temporal and geographical representation. To this end, therefore, perhaps we can enlist the services of Benjamin's Angel of History, and invite this allegorical figure to an Italian Journey of its own. If, in Benjamin's formulation, the Angel is fated to witness the past as an ever rising tide of historical wreckage, we might ask how its historical visions would be transformed if viewed, respectively, through the pages of a culturally oriented journal, through the lens supplied by a small red Baedeker, or through the experience of a Neapolitan stroll in the company of Walter Benjamin and Asja Lacis.

There are few concepts in the intellectual history of modernity that are more lushly overgrown with significance than that designated by the deceptively innocuous term of "historicism." Even a cursory *Begriffsgeschichte* of the term would extend at least as far back as the eighteenth century, where Peter Hans Reill, for instance, located its origins in multiple currents including Pietism and Leibnizian philosophy, and it would extend to the present day with current incarnations such as the New Historicism advanced by critics like Stephen Greenblatt in the 1980's and 1990's.²⁸⁸ Of course, any concept whose history spans such an enormous period of time is unlikely to remain unchanged or completely stable in its definitions and uses, and historicism boasts a perhaps a more

²⁸⁸Peter Hans Reill, *The German Enlightenment and the Rise of Historicism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1975); See Stephen Greenblatt especially in *Shakespearean Negotiations: the Circulation of Social Energy in Renaissance England* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988). Also Stephen Greenblatt and Catherine Gallagher, *Practicing New Historicism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000); Paul Hamilton, *Historicism* (London: Routledge, 1996).

protean and slippery character than most. Indeed, the longevity of historicism as a useful intellectual concept owes perhaps as much to its malleability and lability as it does to any stable set of agreed upon meanings. These definitional difficulties are amplified when we consider that the career of historicism is a phenomenon that cannot be framed completely within the domain of intellectual history or the “history of ideas.” From its earliest incarnations, historicism has always been linked with, and has resonated within, a variety of political, social and institutional histories. Whether we see it in its nascent forms as a rejection of the natural law historical theories of the French Enlightenment, or we see it in later manifestations as a theoretical bulwark for Prussian nationalism, or we see it merging later with socialist thought and Darwinist residues to produce an evolutionary—rather than revolutionary—progressivism, historicism has always been much more than a set of theoretical meditations on historical methodology.²⁸⁹ The career of “historicism” is thus characterized by a rich tangle of often contradictory intellectual layers, and operative in a wide variety of historical domains—the political, the social and, yes, the cultural.

In most comprehensive terms, therefore, it may be helpful to view historicism less as a singular and continuous concept and perhaps more as a persistent arena for reflection and debate on the legitimate place of history in the explanation of human phenomena. And while such a broadly conceived definition may appear to sacrifice specificity for comprehensiveness, it nevertheless allows us to link the various manifestations of historicism both with one another and with the larger contexts in which it was always embedded. What such a definition allows, to put it somewhat paradoxically, is the

²⁸⁹Besides Iggers see: Jörn Rüsen, *Konfigurationen des Historismus: Studien zur deutsche Wissenschaftskultur* (Frankfurt: 1993); Annette Wittkau, *Historismus: Zur Geschichte des Begriffs und des Problems* (Göttingen: 1992).

historicization of historicism. Here, the boundaries that marked historicism as a phenomenon of intellectual or institutional history reveal themselves to be extremely porous, and the tradition can be reframed within the larger framework of what John Toews, in the nineteenth-century German context, has called the process of “becoming historical.”²⁹⁰ While in many ways framed within a classical history of ideas, Toews’ notion of “becoming historical” underlines the fundamental relation between intellectual historicism and social “commitments to a cultural reformation that would create communal solidarity through subjective identification with public memory.”²⁹¹ If the early nineteenth century saw the revolutionary emergence of history as a fundamental set of discourses informing construction of modern subjectivities, academic historicism may be recognized as a relatively more formal piece of a larger puzzle that included not only professional historiography, but also artifacts of public memorialization and the tissues of social memory. Thus, if Toews reminds us that, “It is important to recognize that the historicism of 1840 was not synonymous with [...] Romantic historicism,” the term itself nevertheless persists and remains useful to the extent that its intellectual formulations are inseparable from the larger scale and ongoing insertion of historical thinking into the construction of national, social and subjective identities.²⁹² Indeed, it is precisely this relation to these central meaning-making processes that goes far in explaining both the curious persistence of historicism as a useful intellectual concept and the perennial debates and polemics that surround its legitimate application. The fortunes of

²⁹⁰John Toews, *Becoming Historical: Cultural Reformation and Public Memory in Early Nineteenth-Century Berlin* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004). Also in relation to historical consciousness is: Peter Fritzsche, *Stranded in the Present: Modern Time and the Melancholy of History* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2004). And in more intellectual historical dimensions: Peter Koslowski, ed., *The Discovery of Historicity in German Idealism and Historism* (Springer, 2005).

²⁹¹*Ibid.*, ii.

²⁹²*Ibid.*, xix.

“historicism”, in other words, closely track the attempts of moderns to think, understand and identify themselves through historical lenses, and while the term itself is most closely associated with its intellectual manifestations, these cannot be separated from the broader social, political and cultural energies that have conferred upon the term both perpetual life and perpetual controversy.

In terms of his own life as well as that of the concept itself, Walter Benjamin's explicit engagement with historicism must be understood as a relatively late arrival. Although, the issue of historical consciousness remains a consistent and central theme in Benjamin's oeuvre throughout his intellectual career, it is not until extremely late that the concept of “historicism” emerges as a decisive and discrete formulation. Indeed, while Benjamin's understanding of historicism certainly becomes manifest in the *Passagen-Werk*, only with the theses of “Über den Begriff der Geschichte” of 1940 does Benjamin turn his full attention to the problems of what he calls “historicism”. Of course, as Toews warns us that Romantic historicism was a very different animal than the historicism of the 1840's, we can be still more certain that the concept of historicism that occupied Benjamin's thoughts in 1940 is no less a distinct creature. This is all the more true when we recall that by the time of “Über den Begriff der Geschichte,” historicism in its more restrictive sense—an institutionally hegemonic and intellectually continuous array of methodological and theoretical approaches to the practice of formal historiography—had long been recognized as essentially moribund, an increasingly old-fashioned province of dusty antiquarians and conservative university chair holders. The energetic assaults of positivist history in the late nineteenth century, the injection of debased mutations of Darwinist thought, the emergence of Neo-Idealism at the turn of the twentieth century,

and the challenges mounted by new sociological and anthropological discourses—all of these contributed to a decline of historicism in its manifestation as a distinct school associated with German scholarship.²⁹³ By the 1920's, the last generation whose intellectual formation took place exclusively under the once hegemonic auspices of German historicism were writing elegiac retrospectives on the merits and failures of the historicist outlook. The already declining currency of Prussian School national-liberal optimism had been rendered almost completely bankrupt by the disasters of Wilhelmine power politics and the First World War. From this perspective, for instance, Friedrich Meinecke would write his reflections of the dangers of historicist relativism and its relation to political power in *Die Idee der Staatsräson* of 1924, and theologian Ernst Troeltsch would publish *Der Historismus und seine Probleme* a year before his death in 1923.²⁹⁴ These both critical and sympathetic accounts of traditions of scholarly German historicism represented perhaps the last attempt, within the tradition itself, to salvage what was possible from the wreckage of the previous years. Therefore, if Benjamin's emphasis on the term in 1940 is to have any meaning at all, we have to look further than the rarefied institutional histories of German historiography. For Benjamin, in other words, despite the decline of historicism's academic hegemony and the retreat of its self-identified intellectual representatives, a "historicism" of some sort was alive and all too well in the summer of 1940.

²⁹³One should distinguish here between "historicism" as the unquestioned guiding methodological commitment of German historical scholars, and the *Zunft* which represented this community. If historicism was in decline, the "guild" of German historians was still alive and quite well.

²⁹⁴Georg Iggers, *The German Conception of History* (Hannover, NH: Wesleyan University Press, 1968). Chapter 7.

Obviously, for a Benjamin writing in 1940, the problems of *Staatsräson* or historical relativism that had so preoccupied Meinecke and Troeltsch in the early 1920's had been eclipsed for some time by more pressing and immediate concerns. As with most socialist intellectuals of his generation, the Benjamin of the inter-war period was less concerned with salvaging the long hallowed traditions of German historicism than with determining the latter's relative complicity in the eruption of a barbarous World War and in the nourishment of emerging, and equally barbarous, political regressions such as Italian Fascism and the National Socialism. Such were the central issues for the politically and intellectually committed left of the 1920's and 1930's, Benjamin's own confrontation with these problems extends at least from his conversion to Marxism in 1924-25 until it reached an acute and eventually lethal significance in the summer of 1940. That historicism thus emerges into the foreground of his work in this last and most threatening moment, that it should become the target of his final meditations on the forces that had forced him into a precarious exile, should alert us to the importance of the issue in his thinking of the time, but also to the specific nature of the concept in the context of his work.

But in order to reconstruct Benjamin's somewhat idiosyncratic concept of historicism, it might help to briefly survey some of conceptual sediments that had gathered about the concept since its inception 150 years earlier. German historicist thought of the nineteenth century had no doubt produced “pearls” of modern historiography, but it was perhaps the ever-present grain of historical relativism buried within that had been the, both irritating and constructive, *Ursprung* of such works. On the one hand, it was of a piece with claims of sober detachment and legitimizing

objectivity.²⁹⁵ It formed the intellectual foundation for a rejection of French-centered Enlightenment narratives and indices of “progress” and “natural law”. Each epoch, according to Ranke, had to be recognized as equally close to God, an expressive organic totality that had to be judged not according to any trans-historical conception of value such as “Reason”, but on its own terms. Alternatively, and in the course of time, the dangers of such relativism could be seen in the way that political *Macht*, as a value in itself, tended to fill the space evacuated by the trans-historical values of *Geist*. The historical record itself was to be the ultimate arbiter of historical justification, and the success of significant historical individualities—in this case the state—had to be measured within the courtroom of historical fortune and power politics. For early critics like Jacob Burckhardt, and for later ones such as Meinecke and Troeltsch, the potential strengths of a certain historical relativism had spun out of control and resulted in the elevation of state power to the sole value according to which historical entities could be judged. It was partly due to such concerns, of course, that Burckhardt sought to balance the political effects of Prussian politically-oriented historicism with a reassertion of value and the ideal in the cultural realm. In each of these cases, doubts about historicism centered on an all too enthusiastic participation in Prussian and Imperial nationalist self-legitimation, with its motivating sources and resultant effects primarily in the domains of politics and diplomacy.

By the beginning of the twentieth-century, “historicism” was being re-conceived not merely as an intellectual armature of a set of political and national imperatives, but in

²⁹⁵This is precisely the current that would be embraced and valorized within American historiographical traditions. See Peter Novick's *That Noble Dream: The “Objectivity Question” and the American Historical Profession* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988).

terms of its social and class character. The process of re-imagining the social field in its more synchronic dimensions was already underway by the first two decades of the twentieth century, with figures such as Tönnies, Weber and Simmel attempting to expand the narrow political interests of “Prussian” historicism to explore a field of historically informed social phenomena. However, it is with Lukács that historicism and its conceptual frameworks would begin to be explicitly identified as phenomena and manifestations of social and class conflict. Central to this critique was Lukács' 1923 *Geschichte und Klassenbewußtsein*, a work that figures prominently in Benjamin's writings from his 1924 stay in Capri and Naples, and in his eventual conversion to Marxism during the same period.²⁹⁶ As Benjamin put it in a July 7, 1924 letter to Gershom Scholem:

While proceeding from political considerations, Lukács arrives at principles that are, at least in part, epistemological and perhaps not entirely as far-reaching as I first assumed. The book astonished me because these principles resonate for me or validate my own thinking. (...) Regarding communism, the problem with “theory and practice” seems to me in effect to be that, given the disparity that must be preserved between these two realms, any definitive insight into theory is precisely dependent on practice.

...But, since I have been here, this has not prevented me from seeing the political practice of communism (not as a theoretical problem but, first and foremost, as a binding attitude) in a different light than ever before. I believe I have written you that much of what I have arrived at thus far in thinking about his subject was greeted with very surprising interest by those with whom I discussed it—among these individuals was a wonderful Communist who has been working for the party since the Duma revolt...²⁹⁷

²⁹⁶ Also, Benjamin continues: “...In conclusion: Bloch reviewed Lukács' *History and Class Consciousness* [*Geschichte und Klassenbewusstsein*] in the March issue of the *Neue Merkur*. The review seems to be by far the best thing he has done in a long time and the book itself is very important, especially for me. Naturally I am unable to read it now.” To Gershom Scholem, Capri, June 13, 1924. In Gershom Scholem and Theodor W. Adorno eds., *The Correspondence of Walter Benjamin, 1910-1940*, trans. Manfred R. Jacobson and Evelyn M. Jacobson (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994).

²⁹⁷ *Ibid.*

In reinterpreting the Weberian concept of social rationalization from a Marxist perspective, Lukács presented contemporary social and scientific positivisms not as symptoms of Protestant worldly asceticism, but as a form of ideological false consciousness generated by bourgeois commodity forms. With this move, centered on the concept of *Verdinglichung*, Lukács had taken aim at the naive positivist optimism that lingered in both bourgeois and socialist thought, an optimistic faith in a salutary, inevitable and evolutionary process of social and scientific progress. At the same time, *Geschichte und Klassenbewußtsein* broadened and deepened the currents of Marxist ideology critique, opening the way to further materialist exploration of the relations between theories of knowledge and class consciousness. For Benjamin, Lukács' work was a revelation, and it was in the engagement with *Geschichte und Klassenbewußtsein*—along with his relationship with Asja Lacis—that the first indications of his transition to Marxism become apparent. Over the course of the next fifteen years, Benjamin's often idiosyncratic brand of materialism would bear the traces and residues of the Lukácsian work—and the Italian journey—that conditioned his initial turn to Marxism.²⁹⁸

Above all, the echo of Lukács can still be found in Benjamin's later thematization of historicism. To some extent, one can view the concept of historicism in Benjamin's "Über den Begriff der Geschichte" as the extension and translation of Lukács' critique of commodity from reification into the domain of class-based historical epistemology. As

²⁹⁸ On the relation between the work of Benjamin and Lukács see: Bernd Witte, "Benjamin and Lukács, Historical Notes on the Relationship between Their Political and Aesthetic Theories," *New German Critique*, no. 5, Spring (1975); Ferenc Feher, "Lukács and Benjamin: Parallels and Contrasts," *New German Critique*, no. 34, Winter (1985); Edzard Kruckeberg, *Der Begriff des Erzählens im 20. Jahrhundert: Zu den Theorien Benjamins, Adornos und Lukács* (Bonn: Bouvier, 1981).

with Lukács, the proximal target for Benjamin were those currents of Marxist thought—whether objectively lived or subjectively formulated—whose trust in evolutionary social progress, or the inevitability of revolution, betrayed dangerous traces of bourgeois historical ideologies. An essential dimension of such ideologies, for Benjamin, was precisely the residue of an optimistic and scientific positivism that conceived of dialectical materialism as kind of natural law that would inevitably result in the redemption of human history in the promise of a classless utopia. “It was in the context of a conversation in which I was describing how this works,” Benjamin tells us of his position on these currents, “—comparable, in method, to the process of splitting atoms—liberates the enormous energies of history that are bound up in the “once upon a time” of classical historiography. The history that showed things “as they really were” was the strongest narcotic of the century.”²⁹⁹ In this case, Benjamin's concerns focus on that element of historicism that stresses a vision of historical time as an organic continuum that unfolds and develops according to its own inner logic. History emerges here as a mere mechanism, a narrative whose final chapter is already implied in the necessary motions of the first.

It is to this problem, therefore, that he devotes the first of his theses in “Über den Begriff der Geschichte,” in the allegory of the chess-playing automaton.³⁰⁰ So long as socialism construes the game of revolution as a mechanical process, so long as it resigns itself to function as an automaton observing a natural and calculable course, then it is always fated to lose the match. But if, according to Benjamin, we conceal the dwarf of

²⁹⁹ Walter Benjamin, *Arcades Project*, N3,4.

³⁰⁰ Walter Benjamin, *Illuminations*, ed. Hannah Arendt., trans. by Harry Zohn (New York: Schocken Books 1969), 253.

“theology” beneath the apparatus, and allow it to pull the necessary levers, the historical chess game can be won. To be fair, of course, this injection of messianic theology into the works of dialectical materialism has been the source of endless controversy in the history of Benjamin reception.³⁰¹ But for our purposes, the point is clear: the machine of history is unlikely to produce—in and of itself—a winning game of chess or, still less, a revolutionary moment of historical redemption. Indeed, as the allegory of the Angel of History tells us in the same work, it is precisely this faith in the mechanical continuity of history, ever advancing and ever progressing, that resists the redemptive efforts of the angel.³⁰² In both cases, furthermore, we find Benjamin gesturing to a somewhat altered posture with regard to history. Instead of situating ourselves comfortably within the continuum of an automatic narrative, we are invited to lift ourselves above or lower ourselves beneath—on a vertical axis—an apparently sequential, determined and horizontal series of historical events.

In order to understand this vertical (or perpendicular) movement of Benjamin, we might imagine ourselves, for instance, in a very long queue where information is passed back and forth strictly along the line of those waiting with us. In this situation we are completely dependent upon the mediating communications of the individuals in front of us and behind us for information regarding, say, whether there are any concert tickets left, whether the band is any good, or what it is we are waiting for at all. Stories are passed back to us describing what awaits those ahead, or what has happened to those behind, but these are necessarily partial and subject to the interests of the intervening

³⁰¹For extensive discussion of these issues see Michael Löwy, *Fire Alarm: Reading Walter Benjamin's 'On the Concept of History,'* (New York: Verso, 2005); Kittsteiner, "Walter Benjamin's Historicism."

³⁰²Walter Benjamin, *Illuminations*, 257-258.

communicants. We are, as it were, locked in a closed series, and firmly embedded in a process whose only known object is that of waiting. And nevertheless, we wait.

Benjamin's proposal, in other words, is not one of looking back to a utopian golden age at the rear of the queue nor looking forward to the rewards supposedly received at the head of the queue, but one of imaging what it would mean to step out of this great moving queue of history, and situate ourselves at right angles to the line of its movement. What Benjamin suggests is that the redemption of history is not vouchsafed to those at the terminus of the historical queue, but is something that can emerge only from a new relation between the members of the line. In the gesture of stepping out of our queue, in moving vertically to the horizontal plane of history, we necessarily interrupt the narratives that pulse along its length and determine the self-understandings of its members. Indeed, to take this step, is to disentangle oneself from the narrative mediations of the line. From our new position, our relation to those individualities in the line is no longer mediated by the contours of the line itself; instead each individual, each story, each hope, each disaster within the queue can be engaged in its singularity and is available to us immediately. The energies of these experiences are no longer drained and forgotten in the conduit of the line. Indeed, it is their very immediacy that occasions that spark of recognition—that flash of lightning at a moment of danger—where past and present are drawn together, and the energies of the past collide directly with the present. The past, for Benjamin is thus redeemed in its recognition by the present, and the present is redeemed by the infusion of revolutionary potential from the past.

If the space of criticism, for Benjamin, is secured by thus stepping out of and demolishing the grand narratives of progress and the constrictive long-term continuities

of historicism, it should come as little surprise that Benjamin's critical gaze turns towards the isolated fragments, half-buried fossils and crumbling ruins that lie just below the surface of the larger edifices of long term historical narratives. While such broadly conceived historical narratives may be useful in policing the order and self-understandings of the historical queue described above, they nevertheless represent a static matrix where the position of each element within the line determines its own meaning and the meaning it may attach to other portions or individuals of the queue. The task, however, is one of undermining these perceived continuities and allowing history to express itself through its fragmentary elements rather than as a supposedly expressive totality. Where historicism invites us into the museum of the past through the grand front entrance decorated with allegories of progress, of national accomplishment, and of cultural achievement, Benjamin grabs our hand and takes us through an alleyway to the rear door used by janitors and cafe staff. Without a trace a philistine hesitation, he carefully avoids the displays in the main halls to find greater illumination in the jumbled disorder of the storerooms and in the commodified kitsch of the museum gift shop.

It is essential, furthermore, to emphasize the specific domains from which Benjamin seeks to secure his critical insights. Indeed, one of the idiosyncrasies of Benjamin's cultural criticism is the manner in which it cannot be simply mapped in a one to one way onto the material landscape of class interest and ideology. Where Adorno could distinguish an ideologically debased popular culture from the potentially critical spaces of high culture—the former drawing its energies from the mystifications of modern culture industries and the latter seeking a critical exterior to this ideological matrix—the critical moment for Benjamin resides precisely in embracing, and drilling

deeper into, the desiderata of the popular culture in which Adorno had found so little critical nourishment. This is to say, in other words, that the geography of culture is not co-terminous with the geography of ideology and class interest; indeed, from this perspective, popular culture cannot so easily be dismissed as a region of entertaining baubles whose object is the ideological mystification of the masses, and the rarefied spaces of high modernism do not necessarily represent a refuge from such mystifications. Put still differently, the object of granularizing history and attending to these fragments is not to then set about re-locating and re-situating these fragments as this or that representative of a particular social formation or class interest. For Benjamin, on the contrary, such fragments, and the stories they tell, embody in themselves the dialectical tensions of the cultural sphere as a whole. By attending closely, we find in the objects of modern commercial and industrial culture not merely the mute carriers of the messages of capital, but a landscape of objects alive with confused chatter about utopian hopes and regressive anxieties.

Cultural history, as practiced by Benjamin, engages the traces and detritus of the past as the overdetermined images and wishes of a dreaming collective. And as with psychoanalytical *Traumdeutung*, the meanings one finds in these objects are almost always multiple and rarely reducible to an unequivocal source, whether this be a single repressed sexual desire or a single hegemonic class formation. Thus, for Benjamin, the fragmentary artifacts of past culture, from whatever source or sphere they may be drawn, each contain a story of the dialectical tensions that conditioned the shape of modern culture. In a deserted boutique, say, of a long forgotten Paris arcade, we may stumble on a collection of sea shells. If we were to put one of these to our ears, we might fancy that

we hear an echo of the distant ocean, and if we look at it through the eyes of Adorno we may see a natural object transformed by a commodified culture into an inert bauble, a collector's item to be consumed as a mere object of ownership and entertaining distraction. But released from its context and blasted out of the historical strata that have buried it, the shell emerges from Benjamin's perspective as an object vibrating with the historical tensions that conditioned its appearance as a cultural object. It speaks now of a nostalgia for a natural past—a utopian dream of ur-history or a childhood memory—and now as a representative of the modern mania for collection, for the transformative power of the collector's will to order. Reading Strindberg, for instance, Benjamin describes the way in which the experience of Arcade becomes a repository for these kinds of objects and memories:

Extinct nature: the shell shop in the arcades. In "Pilot's Trials," Strindberg tells of "an arcade with brightly lit shops." Then he went on into the arcade.... There was every possible kind of shop, but not a soul to be seen, either behind or before the counters. After a while he stopped in front of a big window in which there was a whole display of shells. As the door was open, he went in. From floor to ceiling there were rows of shells of every kind, collected from all the seas of the world. No one was in, but there was a ring of tobacco smoke in the air.... So he began his walk again, following the blue and white carpet. The passage wasn't straight but winding, so that you could never see the end of it; and there were always fresh shops there, but no people; and the shopkeepers were not to be seen: the unfathomability of the moribund arcades is a characteristic motif.³⁰³

Only when lifted out of the context of its discovery, only when blasted out of the narratives that have congealed upon it, can we now see how the shell has left an impression on the historical casing within which it was embedded, an impression that reveals the hopes, fears, and utopian wish images that have defined its trajectory as an element of culture.

³⁰³ Walter Benjamin, *Arcades Project*, H1a,3.

It should be clear now that the historicism of which Benjamin speaks in the *Passagen-Werk* and in “Über den Begriff der Geschichte” can be understood not simply as the hegemonic intellectual expression of classical German historiography, nor comprehended as the mere reflection of a particular class formation. While it is both aware and informed by these conceptions, Benjamin's concept of historicism might rather be understood as a kind of centrifugal force within cultural receptions and representations of history. That is, historicism might be conceived here as any of those cultural gestures, narratives, or imperatives that seek to restore continuity and totality to an increasingly fragmentary historical consciousness. These may appear, of course, in a variety of narrative guises—in the certainties of “progress”, in the un-ruptured continuities of organic development, in the mechanisms of natural law. In every instance, however, the goal is always to re-envision history as a total process, to reassemble the fragments and singularities of the past into a stable and rigid matrix, to force the members of our now unruly metaphorical queue back into line.

In this context, Benjamin's reflections on the role and character of nineteenth-century representational strategies—from Neo-Classicism to Art Nouveau—are particularly illuminating. It is no accident, Benjamin suggests, that this era of unprecedented social, political and technological transformation also saw the massive injection of both “history” and “nature” into its representational repertoires. “There is an effort to master the new experiences of the city,” he writes for example in the Arcades Project, “within the framework of the old traditional experiences of nature. Hence the schemata of the virgin forest and the sea. (Meryon and Ponson du Terrail)”³⁰⁴ Or further:

³⁰⁴ Ibid., M16a,3.

When did the excavations begin? Foyers of casinos, and the like, belong to this elegant variant of the dream house. Why a fountain in a covered space is conducive to daydreaming has yet to be explained. But in order to gauge the shudder of dread and exaltation that might have come over the idle visitor who stepped across this threshold, it must be remembered that the discovery of Pompeii and Herculaneum had taken place a generation earlier, and that the memory of the lava-death of these two cities was covertly but all the more intimately conjoined with the memory of the great Revolution. For when the sudden upheaval had put an end to the style of the ancient regime, what was here being exhumed was hastily adopted as the style of a glorious republic; and palm fronds, acanthus leaves, and meanders came to replace the rococo paintings and chinoiseries of the previous century. *Antiquity*³⁰⁵

Benjamin's primary concern here, as seen above, is with a dialectic taking place within the cultural sphere itself, a dialectic between, on the one hand, technologies that undermine traditional auratic conceptions of art and history and, on the other, the resistances thrown up by aestheticism and historicism to combat this disintegration of aura. Within the field of these tensions, the eruptions of the "new" in European modernity, found themselves obsessively and perpetually cloaked in the costumes of historical and natural motifs. Train stations would become temples, iron-work would twist and bloom in fantastic botanical forms, and a journalist of this modernizing era could confidently declare that, "In the nineteenth century, ancient Greek architecture once again bloomed in its classical purity."³⁰⁶

From a Benjaminian perspective, as we will see later, such historicisms and aestheticisms must be configured merely as rearguard actions, resolutely defending their objects from the reifying and reproductive interventions of photography, recorded sound and reproducible culture in general. But as with the response to the above technologies,

³⁰⁵ Ibid., L1,1.

³⁰⁶ See also: "On the Gare du Nord: Here they have entirely avoided that abundance of space which is found in waiting rooms, entryways, and restaurants around 1880, and which led to the problem of the railroad station as exaggerated baroque palace." Benjamin, *Arcades Project*, F2a,2.

so too would the technologies of tourism and travel find resistance among those who would seek to restore and revivify an aesthetically and historically integrative traveling experience in the face of an increasingly fragmented, reproducible, and commodified tourist industry. And of course, in Benjaminian fashion, we can locate such resistance not merely in the manifestos of aestheticism or in the great tomes of scholarly historicism, but even in the pages of a *Zeitschrift* dedicated to the educated and edifying appreciation of all things Italian.

Three years after Benjamin's own transformative Italian Journey in 1924—three years after the fateful encounters with Lukács and Asja Lacis had nudged him fully into the broad current of inter-war Western Marxism—a German periodical appeared that exemplifies much of what Benjamin might have later identified as the hoarse last gasps of historicist and aestheticist recuperations of history and art. Edited by Dr. Werner von der Schulenburg and published in Heidelberg by the Niels Kempmann Verlag, the periodical appeared in December of 1927 under the title *Italien: Monatsschrift für Kultur, Kunst und Literatur*. Schulenburg himself was a long-time student and observer of Italy and its cultural relations with Germany. An author of a variety of historical novels with Italian setting, Schulenburg was also a scholar with interests in the Germany reception with Italy. Among the products of these latter interests, Schulenburg edited a volume devoted to Burckhardt's Italian experience. In later years, Schulenburg would go on to serve as cultural attaché in Rome under the Nazi regime. His sentiments, however, were clearly that of the conservative and national opposition, and Schulenburg eventually became implicated in political improprieties that centered around the staff of the German embassy in Rome. Nazi authorities eventually sought his arrest, but Schulenburg was able to sit

out the end of the war while in hiding in Bavaria. As for *Italien*, it seems to have been envisioned as a continuation of the work of Karl Hillebrand's *Italia*, a periodical likewise focused on the cultural encounters between Italy and the Germany. From the outset, Schulenburg's periodical addressed itself to an educated and culturally literate elite readership, and the magazine would cater to these tastes with edifying pieces such as Hugo von Hofmannsthal's reflections on Goethe's Sicilian travels, Robert Michels' thoughts on the psychology of Italian emigration, and the report of the German *Konsul* on the nature of Mussolini's regime.³⁰⁷ Indeed, before the end of its relatively short three year run in 1930, the Italy that the magazine constructed was most definitely not the debased realm of Baedeker tourist kitsch, but one that could still speak and inspire the "northern" spirit with its combination of "southern" aesthetic, and historical and intellectual treasures.

From the very introduction of the inaugural issue, penned by Schulenburg himself, the unmistakable scent of cultural pessimism in its national-conservative Weimar variants clearly announces itself. After lauding the long and mutually enriching cultural exchange between a German "North" and an Italian-Mediterranean "South", an exchange in which Germany emerges as the rightful inheritor and amplifier of Italian traditions, Schulenburg turns his attention to the dangers of the contemporary cultural moment, a moment in which the heritage of the past is threatened by the corruption and philistinism of an increasingly materialist present. Worth quoting at length, Schulenburg declares:

³⁰⁷Werner von der Schulenburg ed., *Italien: Monatsschrift für Kultur, Kunst und Literatur*, Jahrgang 1 (Heidelberg: Niels Kampmann Verlag, 1927).

In the recent years, however, new forces have been unleashed by invisible spectres [...] in order to lead the German people into a colorless and formless Materialism. To be sure, the methods of these spectres rest on organizational and formal concepts – since it could not be any other way – handed down out of Italy; whether these spirits make their home in the Near East, the Wild West or in the less refined social strata of our homeland. They work openly with a finely executed disposition of the masses; and they quietly keep their ledger with a great Milanese credit bank. But they have reasons to close their eyes, and the eyes of their adepts, to the light of the South. They wish to suppress this last and deep knowledge - a knowledge with which Italian culture can still supply the North - this clarity and distinctness of thought, this organically conditioned individuality. They pursue this all in order to introduce instead gray, anti-human and uncertain concepts that are anchored in their own egotistical aims, rooted in goals that lead back into chaos and will destroy the great work of two thousand years. They direct all their resources to this; they twist, lie and deceive. In the place of the southern sun, they wish to erect a great gold piece instead.³⁰⁸

The stage of a once bright “comedy” of progress—dramatically rendered as the diffusion of *Geist* and *Kultur* from Mediterranean forebears to modern Europe descendants—had darkened into a tragedy of threatening decline.

In searching for the source of this descent into crass materialism, Schulenburg marches out the usual suspects of national-conservative pessimism. Those responsible for the modern debasement of *Kultur* have made their home, we are told, “im nahen Osten, im wilden Westen,” and even in, “den ungeistigen Schichten unseres Heimatlandes.” And although thus framed in a rather oblique and *Salonfähig* fashion,

³⁰⁸Ibid., 2. “In den letzten Jahren, sind jedoch neue Kräfte in Bewegung gesetzt worden von unsichtbaren Geistern, welche sich aus guten Gründen den Tatsachen solcher kulturellen Bedingungen und Auswirkungen entgegenstemmen, um das deutsche Volk einem farb- und formlosen Materialismus entgegenzuführen. Zwar stützt sich die Technik dieser Geister – weil es eben nicht anders geht – auf die aus Italien überkommenen Organisations—und Formenbegriffe; ob diese Geister nun im nahen Osten, im wilden Westen oder in den ungeistigen Schichten unseres Heimatlandes zu hause sind. Sie arbeiten öffentlich mit einer auf das feinste durchgeführten Gliederung der Massen; und sie führen im stillen ihr Hauptbuch mit einer grossen Mailänder Kreditseite. Aber sie haben Gründe, ihre und ihrer Adepten Augen vor dem Licht des Südens zu verschliessen. Sie wollen diese letzten, tiefen Erkenntnisse, welche jene Kultur dem Norden zuzuführen imstande ist, diese limpidezza, diese Helligkeit des Denkens, diese organisch bedingte Freiheit des Individuums niederhalten, um graue, menschenfeindliche, zweifelhafte, in ihren egoistischen Zielen verankerte Begriffe dafür einzusetzen; Begriffe, welche in das Chaos zurueckführen und die Riesearbeit von zwei Jahrtausenden auslöschen müssen. Sie verwenden alle Mittel dafür; sie drehen, verfälschen und betrügen. Sie wollen an die Stelle der südlichen Sonne ein grosses Goldstück hängen.”

Schulenburg's suspects are clear and unoriginal enough in their general outlines—in a broad and perhaps half-concealed anti-Semitism, in fear of encroaching Americanism, and in anxiety regarding the coarse and uncultured masses at home who are dangerously susceptible to both American and Socialist brands of materialism. Under the influence of these dangerous forces, the continuity of tradition from antiquity to the culture of modern Germany and Europe was threatened with rupture, fragmentation and dissolution into the crass common denominators of modern materialism.

At the same time, the metaphorical frame in which Schulenburg situates his historical conception—the role of Italy in European culture and the danger of its loss for the present moment—is particularly revealing. While the rising and setting of the sun, as metaphor for the fortunes of cultural and individual enlightenment, is perhaps not original, in Schulenburg's curious universe, the sun of European culture unquestionably rises in the South. If Europe's morning was lit by the light of Hellenic and Italian antiquity, if its skies were brightened by the Italian Renaissance, then it is only in modernity that an ominous twilight appears imminent. Conversely, the modern opponents of such spiritual traditions are depicted as *Unsichtbar*, as unseen and unseeing spirits operating in darkness and in secret. They seek to replace the clearness and distinctness of the Southern sun with the merely reflected light of coins and precious metals. What emerges is a metaphorical framework wherein it is only tradition and the continuity of history that vouchsafe clarity of vision and cultural insight. If modernity is to be an enlightened age, then it must be illumined by the increasingly distant sun of Italian history and the universal values classical antiquity.

Even more broadly, it is worth noting the way in which Schulenburg constructs a cultural history of Europe while using language and images drawn from natural history. Again, this is by no means original to Schulenburg, but in his appeal to natural metaphors and organic concepts, we can clearly recognize the outlines of that general syndrome identified in Benjamin's conception as historicism. In this case, Schulenburg can be linked to that broader current of Weimar *Kulturpessimismus*, announced most influentially in Spengler's 1918 *Der Untergang des Abendlandes*, and whose reconstruction of history as an organic process yielded a gloomy prognosis of inevitable decline. In accord with this tradition, Schulenburg presents the "ascent" of European culture, and the stewardship of its German inheritors, in rhetorical terms as an eminently natural process. Here, the rise of this European tradition, in its classical forms, wears the natural costume of the dawning day. As surely as the sun rises in the morning, as surely as its brilliance daily warms a distant earth, so too does Mediterranean antiquity mark the "morning" of European culture and brilliantly illuminate the historical epochs that follow. Indeed, the metaphor of the sun precisely captures the concept of an (aesthetic-religious) auratic origin or singularity we have seen described by Benjamin. Like the antiquity that Schulenburg seeks to recover, the sun is precisely that kind of auratic object that is both always and immediately present (in the self-generated warmth of the latter or in cultural legacies of the former), yet whose presence is guaranteed only in the carefully preserved atmosphere of distance that surrounds it. History, like the sun, is available to us, but only on condition that it is mediated by the intervening and protective insulations of space or time. With its motions guided, like the sun, by inscrutable natural laws, with its cycles turning irresistibly and perpetually, history is here cloaked in a powerful and mythic aura,

and the province of the historian merges imperceptibly with that of the priest. Indeed, for conservatives like Schulenburg and Spengler, not only has history become a dramatic tragic drama, but the always foreseen defeat of the tragic hero seems to be drawing ever closer.

Curiously, however, Schulenburg injects an almost theological note—and one that might have amused Benjamin—in the supra-natural manner in which his natural drama draws to a close. Although the rise and nourishment of European cultural traditions are inscribed in the certainties of natural and mythic phenomena, the forces that threaten their dissolution arise under the auspices of inauthenticity, artificiality and the *Unheimlich*. What we don't find here, in other words, is the more thoroughgoing pessimism of a Spengler for whom the *Morgenrot* of culture presupposes an eventual and inevitable twilight *Abendrot*. Instead, for Schulenburg, decline is an interruption, an unnatural product of *Geister* or spirits, and a product of the artificialities of a modern, mass-produced and spiritually debased materialism. The darkness these latter bring results not from the natural cycle of fading day, but announces itself in the uncanny “eclipse” of the sun of historical tradition by means of that most symbolically artificial of all objects—a coin. Thus, redemption may be had, but only on condition that modernity turn its eyes from the Babylon of urban modernity to the “heavenly city” of classical and Italian culture.

But if Schulenburg sketches the rough contours of Italian space as they emerge in the territories of a pessimistic modern historicism, the manner in which this tradition saturates the construction of physical spaces only becomes fully evident when we, as it were, join it for a walk in the landscapes it describes. Such a walk, as a mobile reception

of physical space, has a long history as an element in the genre of *Reisebeschreibung*. Though it can perhaps trace its beginnings to the religious pilgrimage of the Middle Ages, the modern descriptive “stroll” has its roots as far back as Johann Gottfried Seume's 1801 *Spaziergang nach Syrakus* and extends at least as far as Benjamin's own *Denkbilder*, with the *Neapel* essay foremost among them.³⁰⁹ Yet whereas Benjamin's *Denkbilder* radically transformed the genre, the form itself was more congenial to the leisurely and subjectively oriented *Reisebeschreibungen* of the early nineteenth century.³¹⁰ Nevertheless—or perhaps because of this—the pages of *Italien* were a welcome home for travel description of this sort. Whether in the diaries of nineteenth-century German artist August Geist, in the “*Umbrische Spaziergänge*” of Alfred Steinitzer, or Adolf von Hatzfeld's “*Positano und Pompeji*”, the *Spaziergang* emerges as a favored means of constructing and reflecting upon Italian physical and temporal landscapes.

In both the proximity of their respective itineraries and in the distance of their conceptual frameworks, Adolf von Hatzfeld's “*Positano und Pompeji*” offers a unique contrast with Benjamin's own configuration of Naples that we will explore later.³¹¹

³⁰⁹For histories of the Pilgerfahrt see section one of Bausinger, Beyrer and Korff ed., *Reisekultur* (München: Beck, 1999).

³¹⁰For eighteenth and early-nineteenth century travel narratives see: Italo Michele Battafarano ed., *Italiensiche Reise – Reisen nach Italien* (Gardolo di Trento: Reverdito, 1988); Peter ed. Brenner, *Der Reisebericht: Die Entwicklung einer Gattung in der deutschen Literatur* (Bonn: Suhrkamp, 1988); Wolfgang Griep and Hans-Wolf Jäger eds., *Reisen im 18. Jahrhundert* (Heidelberg: Winter, 1986); Wolfgang Griep ed., *Sehen und Beschreiben: Europäische Reisen im 18. und frühen 19. Jahrhundert* (Heide in Holstein: Wolfgang Griep 1991); Jürgen C. Jacobs, *Wiedergeburt in Rom: Goethes "Italienische Reise" als Teil seiner Autobiographie* (Paderborn: Schöningh, 2004); Ludwig Schudt, *Italienreisen im 17. und 18. Jahrhundert* (Wien: Schroll, 1959); William Stewart, *Die Reisebeschreibung und ihre Theorie im Deutschland des 18. Jahrhunderts* (Bonn: Bouvier, 1978); Irmgard Scheitler, *Gattung und Geschlecht: Reisebeschreibungen deutscher Frauen 1780-1850* (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer, 1999); Linda Marie Puetter, *Reisen Durchs Museum: Bildungserlebnisse deutscher Schriftsteller in Italien (1770-1830)* (Hildesheim: Georg Olms, 1998).

³¹¹*Italien*, 183-189.

While Benjamin makes his own journey to Naples from Capri, just off the western tip of the same Sorrentine peninsula, the construction of his journey will yield far different temporal perspectives than those that emerge in Hatzfeld's journeys in the same Sorrentine environs. Where, as we shall see, Benjamin plunges into the urban Neapolitan landscape, closely attending to the fleeting, fragmentary, and porous character of its life and architectonics, Hatzfeld's journey is at once more landward and more vertical. It thrusts the reader up from the southern facing harbor of Positano and carries the narrative to the commanding heights of the surrounding massifs. The result, for both its historical and spatial organization, is one related more to the aesthetic category of the "picturesque" than to Benjamin's kaleidoscopic visions. The temporal frameworks assembled in the strolling reflections of Hatzfeld will assume the forms of natural and or aesthetic phenomena, forms in which time is framed and conceived in an image of history that speaks to the viewer only on condition of a requisite auratic distance.

As the narrative begins, Hatzfeld configures his spaces in natural, mythic and ur-historical temporalities. "The heart," he tells us of this region in the opening lines, "and living pulse of the Gulf of Salerno is Positano, and its crown is the three-peaked Mt. St. Angelo."³¹² This small town is the living heart of the Gulf of Salerno, and its small harbor and narrow streets are nestled on the steeply sloping flanks of the Sorrentine Peninsula's southern facing uplands. "Like a great beast," we are told, "these mountains lay along the sea, and in a paw that strikes the sea rests Postitano."³¹³ The town—both literally and metaphorically—is thus initially and powerfully situated in natural and a-

⁵² Ibid., 183. "Das Herz und lebendige Puls des Golfes von Salerno ist Positano, seine Krone der dreigekuppelte Monte St. Angelo."

³¹³ Ibid. "Ein ungeheures Tier liegt diese Gebirge am Meer, und an seiner Pranke, die es in das Meer schlägt, ruht Positano."

historical contexts. Yet even as Hatzfeld turns his gaze from the majestic surroundings to the town itself, the boundaries that might distinguish natural, historical, and aesthetic territories remain indistinct and ill-defined. Where the mountains boast “Terraces and columns,” the pink houses of the city bloom with gardens of “Palm and Ailanthus, and steel-blue Carob. The slopes are covered with Aloe and thousands of house-sized cacti.”³¹⁴ Indeed, once the proper Ausblick is arrived at, Hatzfeld changes register from Nature to Art, and the town recalls “to memory the painting of Toledo by El Greco, with a landscape dominated by gold-brown.”³¹⁵ Nature, art and mankind emerge here in classic Arcadian harmony, a harmony where each element mirrors and complements the other, and where the vicissitudes and ruinous fragments of historical time do not yet penetrate. For Hatzfeld, in other words, the experience it brings to mind is that of a “morning awakening, the first glimpse of the peak, with the early sun’s soul-stirring play of light. It is the radiance of noble, long past ages.”³¹⁶

If this small community on the Gulf of Salerno recalls, for Hatzfeld, the Spanish Baroque of El Greco, it shimmers likewise in the Arcadian light of Claude Lorrain’s French Baroque. An ur-historical harmony of art, nature and spirituality settles on and envelops the town, and its contours emerge in an auratic vision of the Golden-Age, a paradise unmarked by the “Fall” of historical time. In an explosion of Expressionist color that barely obscures the presence of an equally Expressionist nostalgic spirituality, Hatzfeld describes the landscape:

³¹⁴Ibid., 184. “Terassen und Säulen, Palmen und Eilantus, und die stahlblaue Karobe. Die Abhänge bedecken Aloe und tausendfach die Haushohen Kakteen.”

³¹⁵Ibid. “das Bild Grecos in die Erinnerung, das er von Toledo malte, mit dem die Landschaft beherrschenden Gelbbraun.”

³¹⁶Ibid., 184. “...morgenliche Erwachung, das erste Blick in die Kuppel, mit ihrem die Seele erhebenden Lichtspiel der frühen Sonne. Es ist die Ausstrahlung edler, längst vergangener Zeiten.”

Over the upward- thrusting movement of this landscape, there descends a paradise-like fecundity in places where flat surfaces emerge. Light green flickers next to steel-blue tropical shadows. Along with northern oak and silver-trunked nut trees there bloom fragrant and fruit-bearing Orange and Lemon. In between, there stand prickly and convoluted groups of turquoise Cacti and Agave. From the lush swells of meadows, streams crash down into the sea below. In the moist ground bamboo grows, and here poisonous snakes make their home.³¹⁷

In this aesthetic, natural, and almost theologically configured garden, Hatzfeld discovers a timeless realm of plenty, a realm where the divided territories of the present—both temporal and geographical—find union once again in the botanical presence of Mediterranean orange and lemon trees, northern oaks and oriental bamboo. Indeed, true to a conception rather more in common with El Greco than with Claude Lorrain, Hatzfeld even populates his garden with the ominous presence of poisonous snakes.

Conversely, almost as an inversion of Dante's stroll up the slopes of Paradise, historical time enters Hatzfeld's descriptions with a climb up the 1500 meter slopes of Monte St. Angelo. As the elevation increases, Hatzfeld is astonished at the degree to which the landscape changes. However, even as this landscape begins to change, so too do the geographical and temporal associations. "As we reached a high plateau," he tells us, "we were newly surprised by the change in the landscape. A grove of German beech, in colors of violet-brown, waited there for spring. And at their feet was gold-brown autumn foliage, *Lederblumen* and anemones, just like at home in the northern spring."³¹⁸

³¹⁷Ibid. "Über die nach oben gerichtete Bewegung dieser Landschaft sinkt paradiesische Fruchtbarkeit herab, dort, wo sich Tragende Fläche bildet. Helles Grün funkelt neben stahlblauen tropischen Schatten. Mit nordischen Eichen und silbersstämmigen Nussbäumen wächst die blüten duftende und fruchttragende Orange und Zitrone. Dazwischen stehen zackig und verworren türkisblaue, gehegebildende Kakteen und Agaven. [...] Über saftige, schwellende Wiesen stürzen die Bäche zum Meer. In den feuchten Gründen wächst Bambus, der Wohnort der giftigen Schlangen."

³¹⁸Ibid., 185. "Als wir ein hohes Plateaus erreicht hatten waren wir von neuem überrascht von dem Wechsel der Landschaft. Deutscher Buchenwald in violetter Braunheit wartete auf der Frühling, zu Füßen gelbraunes Herbstlaub, Lederblumen und Anemonen, wie bei uns im nordischen Frühling."

The ripe summer of an Italian paradise is thus exchanged for a more northern landscape still awaiting the moment of its blossoming.

From this new vantage point at the heights of Monte St. Angelo, furthermore, “almost like a Frankish landscape,” the entire region is laid out before Hatzfeld³¹⁹. From here Capri is distantly visible to the west, the Gulf of Salerno to the south and the slopes of Vesuvius to the north and east. Beyond the slopes of the volcano, one can see not only the more populated regions along the gulf—stretching from Vesuvius to Naples—but also a landscape populated with historical traces. As Hatzfeld describes it, at the feet of Vesuvius, “there lay the blue gulf, [...], clear and peaceful,”

And along its shores city after city, and the lush red, pulsing life of Naples nestled amidst a luxurious green. Here flared up and died the last of the German Hohenstaufens, who still had the courage throw their minds into their beliefs. To the right is the mountain spur that pushes into the sea and where Virgil once lived. And far in the distance, Ischia rounds off the horizon (but perhaps also opening it up), flying away like an enormous wasp.³²⁰

What is striking here, of course, is the way Hatzfeld maps a set of geographical and temporal associations onto his hike out of the paradise of Positano. As the elevation increases, the physiognomy of the landscape not only shifts from “South” to “North”—conveniently mapping the direction of cultural and historical diffusion—but the perspective shifts from one of myth and ur-history to one of history and transience. What comes to mind for Hatzfeld, from this new vantage point, are not the eternities of Art and Nature, but a grand sweep of history populated with Latin poets, German emperors, and

³¹⁹Ibid. “...fast wie eine fränkische Landschaft...”

³²⁰Ibid. “...liegt der blaue Golf, [...], klar und ruhig und an seinen Ufern Stadt um Stadt und in üppiges Grün gelagert Neapel mit seinem in satter roter Gegenwärtigkeit pulsierenden Leben. Hier verloderte der letzte deutsche Hohenstaufe, der noch den Mut hatte, seine Sinne in seinen Glauben zu werfen. Rechts schiebt sich die Halbinsel in das Meer mit dem Bergzug, wo Virgil wohnte, und ganz in der Ferne schleisst Ischia den Horizont ab, wie eine riesige Wespe, davonfliegend, man könnte auch sagen den Horizont öffnend.”

modernizing urban spaces. Historical time thus manifests itself here in its most panoramic and most auratic forms, its developments, its truths, and its motions all clearly comprehended in a dramatic and distant totality.

It is therefore no coincidence that Hatzfeld turns his gaze—at this precise narrative moment of heightened historical sensitivity—to his description of Pompeii. And where Positano had assumed the costume of an almost mythic Arcadian paradise, Pompeii occasions reflections on the *Unheimlich* transience of history and the uncertain fates of those that dwell within its currents:

It is a feeling of surprise, and enormous joy and a growing sense of anxiety about the uncanniness of this place and of the fate of man. One has the feeling, as one closes one's eyes, as if one's body has been frozen with awe and sinks back into the millenia, helplessly into the unknown. One can't hear it, this wonder in itself, this singularity, as present and past are brought into living contact.³²¹

What leaps from this passage, however, is not simply the configuration of Pompeii as a region of *Unheimlichkeit*, a configuration that has been common currency among modern travelers to the ruins at the feet of Vesuvius. Instead, for our purposes, what springs into relief is the way in which Hatzfeld links a certain “situated-ness” in history with the sensual regime of vision. To close one's eyes in such a place, he imagines, is to sink “zurück in die Jahrtausende, hilflos ins Ungewisse.” To suspend, in other words, one's visual relation with the traces of the past, is to suspend at the same time one's historical position with regard to that past. Authentic historical consciousness thus presents itself as intertwined with a visual regime that defines the auratic relation of historical subject

³²¹Ibid., 187. “Es ist ein Gefühl von Überraschung, einer ungeheuren Freude und einer aufsteigenden Angst vor der Unheimlichkeit dieses Ortes und des Schicksals seiner Menschen. Man hat ein Gefühl, das einem die Augen schliesst, als erstarre der Leib und sinke zurück in die Jahrtausende, hilflos ins Ungewisse. Man kann es nicht hören, dies Wunderbar in sich, dies Einzige, da Gegenwart und Vergangenheit sich lebendig berühren.”

and historical object; for the subject of historical perception, it is vision that guarantees one's own temporal position and that of the historical object. As with the visual conventions of theater, the drama of history (or historicism) demands a strict observation of such optical regimes. To close one's eyes is to forget the strict separation of subject and object, to collapse the carefully drawn boundaries of the fourth wall, and merge dangerously with the action and characters on the stage. The risk of not “seeing” in accord with these conventions is the transformation from subject of historical or aesthetic reception to object of such reflections. Thus, if Hatzfeld had discovered an authentic and powerful “vision” of history in the panoramic views from Monte St. Angelo, such an historical perception is immediately dissolved in the collapse of the visual relations upon which it is grounded and guaranteed.

But even as Hatzfeld and Schulenburg were reinforcing these traditional and auratic modes of historical perception, even as they sought to mobilize an educated and culturally literate readership to preserve such “visions” of temporality, Italian travel and historical reflection had long since ceased to be the monopoly of only the most elite segments of German society and academia. By the time *Italien* ceased publication in 1930, one could already speak of a travel and tourist industry whose enormous expansion found in Italy a destination uniquely fascinating for growing numbers among the German middle classes. And although these newcomers had themselves drunk deep of the German cultural traditions that had made Italian travel so attractive, they would also bring with them new imperatives and new desires. In this well-organized and less elite emergence of leisure oriented travel, Italy would be constructed not only as a potentially edifying encounter with historical and cultural treasures, but also as an occasion to

engage in modern forms of consumption and their associated forms of display. Though still resonant with history, Italy was quickly emerging as an industry, a market and an escape. But if anything truly united these new travelers—with all of their bourgeois concerns, anxieties and expectations—it was a ubiquitous little red book with the name “Baedeker” embossed in gold along its spine.

Chapter Seven

Benjamin, Baedeker and the Porous Theater of Naples

With a weary sigh and a shrug of resignation, Walter Benjamin's Angel of History steps off the train and onto the platform in the busy terminal of 1924 Naples. Amid the bustle of porters, the tangle of the baggage, the happy reunions and sad farewells, the other travelers take little notice as the small winged figure with sad wide eyes makes its way through the station to the portals that mark the threshold of the city beyond. Passing through and pausing for a moment before the still greater bustle of a Neapolitan evening, the angel reaches into a somewhat shabby overcoat, producing a small red book. And with Baedeker in hand, like so many of similarly arriving visitors, the angel of history sets out to explore the city.

Anyone noticing the strange appearance of Benjamin's allegorical figure would perhaps have thought it odd that such a being would require the services of Karl Baedeker and Sons. The ancient city of Naples, of course, must be more than a little familiar to one whose task has been to survey the unfolding of history itself. But for the Angel, as for so many others of mortal persuasion, there is something comfortingly recognizable in its presentation of the city before it. The books of Baedeker and Sons, after all, clutched like secret keys or talismans by generations of German travelers, presented their readers with a familiar collection and arrangement with which to navigate a potentially chaotic experience. Indeed, while the substance of their hints, suggestions

and starred entries may have varied—from one period to another, and with respect to one destination or another—their formal organization proved extraordinary in its continuity and popularity. Having long ago superseded earlier forms of the literary travel companion—the countless personal accounts of travel abroad that littered the first half of the nineteenth century—the power and success of the Baedeker model was rooted precisely in its elevated and extremely impersonal presentation. Indeed, it provided generations of middle-class German travelers precisely the satisfying forms of efficient organization and streamlined overview, in the face of a still exotic destination like Naples, with which the travelers had become increasingly familiar in their daily experiences in Berlin, Hamburg and Frankfurt. In its pages, the daunting labyrinth and bustle of a foreign destination—its histories, its cultures and its geography—would take shape in efficient and sensible itineraries. A reassuring diagram or tracing, in other words, was what Baedeker offered the tourist, a diagram that could comfortably enclose and organize the experience of the traveler, providing the framework for a relation with the exotic histories and geographies he or she encountered abroad.³²²

³²² Research into the nineteenth century emergence of the guidebook, and its related cultures of popular travel, has become more sustained in the past two decades, but the literature is still relatively sparse. For a more general set of reflections of the phenomenon of popular travel in the modern German context, see Rudy Koshar *German Travel Cultures* (Munich: Berg, 2000). Also, Esther Allen, “Money and the Little Red Books: Romanticism, Tourism, and the Rise of the Guidebook” *LIT* 7:213-26. 1996. For a closer look at popular travel in the era of Weimar, see the work of Christine Keitz in “Zwischen Kultur und Gegenkultur. Baedeker und die ersten Arbeitertouristen in der Weimarer Republik”, *Reisen und Leben* (19:3-17, 1989), and “Die Anfänge des modernen Massentourismus in der Weimarer Republik”, *Archiv für Sozialgeschichte* (33:179-209, 1993). In the context of National Socialism, and in relation to the cultural politics of leisure and travel, Sheila Baranowski’s recent *Strength Through Joy: Consumerism and Mass Tourism in the Third Reich* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007) is a useful addition to still developing literatures on the *KdF* (Strength through Joy) program and other Nazi cultural interventions. On the other hand, research specifically on the Baedeker publishing house has suffered due to the destruction of its headquarters and archives in Leipzig during the Second World War. Helmut Frühauf, *Das Verlagshaus Baedeker in Koblenz, 1827-1872* (Koblenz: Rheinische Landesbibliothek, 1992) is a good place to start, and indispensable is Alex Hinrichsen ed., *Baedeker-Katalog. Verzeichnis aller Baedeker-Reiseführer von 1832-1987 mit einem Abriss der Verlagsgeschichte* (Minden: Ursula Hinrichsen,

As some commentators have already noted, the peculiarities of the travel guide of the first half of the twentieth century are thus manifest less in their content than in their form.³²³ Yet if this quality poses problems for analysis, if the interpretation of form can speak less equivocally than that of content, it is nevertheless the formal characteristics of the travel guide that offer insight into the expectations and categories with which the German tourist of the era traveled. The mere fact of the enormous and consistent popularity of the Baedeker series—the name survives even today as a synonym for reliable and sober guidance—reveals the depth to which such books satisfied the needs and expectations of an increasingly well traveled public. To take a closer look at the Baedeker form, in other words, is to dig deeper into the ways in which educated and traveling Germans were invited to select, organize and navigate a potentially chaotic set of exotic experiences.

To invoke such terms as selection, collection and arrangement as we reflect on the formal character of the travel guide, may remind us once again of an Angel and its histories that we left on the steps of the Naples train station. For if that Angel cannot close its eyes to the disaster that perpetually mounts before it, it nevertheless continues to collect and catalog the forces and motion of the histories unfolding in its mournful gaze. Like the traveler, the Angel of History and its professional acolytes are tasked with organizing and arranging an often foreign and chaotic field of exploration where the

1988). Furthermore, while the monograph literature on this still somewhat thin, excellent collections continued to appear. An early and excellent volume on the broader German context is Hermann Bausinger, Klaus Beyrer, and Gottfried Korff, eds., *Reisekultur: Von der Pilgerfahrt zum modernen Tourismus* (Munich: C.H. Beck, 1991); Shelley Baranowski and Ellen Furlough eds., *Tourism, Commercial Leisure and National Identities in 19th and 20th Century Europe and North America* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2000) takes on a more expansive survey beyond exclusively German contexts.

³²³Christof Thoenes, “Die deutschsprachigen Reiseführer des 19. Jahrhunderts”, *Deutsches Ottocento* (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 2000).

confusing hubbub and bustle of Naples confronts the weary traveler on the threshold of the train station. Likewise, the historian confronts a similarly exotic dimension of signs, meanings, and experiences. Indeed, the historian is a traveler whose task is precisely that of navigating and organizing both the past itself and its relation to the present.

Furthermore, the diagrams, tracings and geographies of the past that German historicism produced throughout the nineteenth century, had been powerfully absorbed and assimilated in the larger social and cultural imaginaries of the era. Of the variety of movements, forces, desires and anxieties that sought to make, remake or restore a still inchoate sense of German identity, history was a common denominator. History, in other words, was a field of battle, a means of legitimization and the most potent of form of argument. From whatever perspective, the definition of a distinctly German experience was almost always performed in relation to the discourse of history and the institutions of German historical scholarship. In a German world where such difficult issues were being thought out and negotiated at all levels—local and national, cultural and political, material and spiritual—the imperatives and logics of German historical thought likewise penetrated into nearly every sphere of social concern. Far more than an exercise of rarefied scholarship, German historicism was woven into the very fabric of national self consciousness and the conflicts that surrounded it. Historicism offered the institutional and intellectual force behind a discursive framework whose latticework upheld the edifice of German identity.

Indeed, it was precisely this insight—the manner in which a particular mode of historical consciousness could be found to have penetrated broader spheres of cultural and social import, far removed from academic historical practice—that emerged as a

central theme in the later works of Walter Benjamin. Whether in his ruminations on such wide ranging topics as children's books, fashion, cinema or collecting, an underlying concern with the character of time and remembrance of history and personal memory remains consistent. Above all, however, it is in the autobiographical geographies of the *Denkbilder* and the convolutes of the *Passagen-Werk* where we find Benjamin experimenting with modes of remembrance that challenged the certainties of a dominant and all pervasive historical consciousness.

What the *Denkbilder* (literally translated as "thought images") present in their respective explorations of places such as Naples, Moscow, Berlin and Marseilles are a series of subversive readings of urban spaces as geographical texts, an attempt to map out the ideological and historically situated contours of particular urban geographies. For Benjamin, to move through such spaces was not merely a mundane matter of moving from point *a* to point *b*, but was instead to experience a set of concretized ideological structures and materialized historical conceits. Embedded in the bricks and mortar of the humblest edifice, laid into the stones of every street, were the unconscious residues of the arguments, hopes, propositions and anxieties that had formed a city's past and present.³²⁴

From this perspective, the Baedeker series/model presents a potentially illuminating, if challenging, object of analysis. From its beginnings in the mid-nineteenth century, the series had become the most popular and persuasive guide for travel among the emerging German traveling public. By the early twentieth century, the little red books had long been the companion of choice for travelers both within and beyond the

³²⁴ See Gerhard Richter, *Thought-Images: Frankfurt School Writers' Reflections from Damaged Life* (Palo Alto CA: Stanford University Press, 2007) for an examination of Benjamin's *Denkbilder* in the broader context of Frankfurt School deployment of the form. Also, Britta Leifeld, *Das Denkbild bei Walter Benjamin: Die unsagbare Moderne als denkbare Bild*. (Frankfurt: Lang, 2000).

borders of Germany. Therefore, while it may be extremely difficult to establish the ways in which the guides were put to use in concrete individual circumstance, there can be little doubt that Baedeker offered an “invitation” whose character travelers of several generations had found congenial to their expectations and requirements. We can be fairly certain, in other words, that the dialogue or invitation that Baedeker presented was one that was at least consistent with the meanings and uses of travel as it was then emerging and understood at the time.

What the Baedeker presented to its public was a conspicuously pervasive “invitation” to organize and navigate the experience of leisure travel in a particular fashion or form. At first glance, the precise form and character of this invitation seems peculiarly opaque. Part of the appeal of the guides was no doubt a straightforward and terse presentation, a presentation whose priorities were convenience and ease of use. Where travel books of the early nineteenth century had been fashioned more as literary companions—the subjective reflections of likeminded travelers—the Baedeker offered itself less as a loquacious Cicerone, and more as a quick and reliable resource on a variety of basic concerns. While in a number of editions an authority on the region would be enlisted to write an introduction or overview in some fashion, the pages of the red book limited themselves, by and large, to a highly abstract presentation of transportation schedules, museum hours and hotel possibilities. The invitation it offered was not that of a chatty authorial presence, but one of an easy-to-use index of information.

On the one hand, as some commentators have suggested, the relatively dry and open-ended presentation of the Baedeker may have yielded the occasion for greater

improvisation, and permitted experiences not guided at every moment by a strong authorial presence. The Baedeker tourist is simply provided a set of loose suggestions, a handy set of directions, and pointers with which to navigate between the choices he or she may choose to make.³²⁵ However, if the voice of the Baedeker was not manifest in a narrative framework, was not organized by the subjective pronouncements of an earlier traveler, the guides nevertheless make a distinct and defining presence felt. If the Baedeker can be said to have informed the experiences of its readers, then this is manifest in the selection of those features which may have interested the traveler, and the corresponding organization of selected elements into an inviting formal framework. The resonance of the Baedeker among its German audience must be sought in its criteria of selection and the character of its organization, and to understand its influence it is these dimensions that we must bring into greater focus.

What then is the precise form and character of the invitation that is found in the Baedeker that is clutched by our newly arrived Angel as it stands before the Naples train station? What we discover, in the first instance, is the well known preamble with which the Baedeker publishing house greets the reader, assuring the user that the greatest efforts have been made to keep its contents reliable, and declaring that the firm maintains the most scrupulous methods when it comes to recommendations and suggestions. “In relation to innkeepers and other establishments,” the Baedeker firm declares to their readers, “the editor emphasizes his complete independence from any concern other than

³²⁵Critical examinations of modern tourism have tended to frame it within the question of agency and the degree to which tourism is an element of a “Culture Industry” or whether it possesses critical or emancipatory dimensions as well. See Hans Magnus Enzensberger’s “Eine Theorie des Tourismus“ in *Einzelheiten I. Bewußtseins-Industrie* (Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp 1962) for the classic formulation of tourism as debased culture, and see Koshar’s *German Travel Cultures* (2000) for an attempt to move beyond this—interestingly using Benjamin’s notion of collection as theoretical ground.

that of the welfare of the travelling public. He regards the mention of an establishment in his books in this sense as a sign of trust and confidence. He will report oversights or mistakes as soon as is possible. His recommendations are in no way for sale.³²⁶ There should be no question, the traveler is assured, of any interest other than that its readership is served when it comes to the merits of the establishments it mentions.

With such obligatory formalities out of the way, the book proceeds with a short overview of the city's history and significance, authoritatively contributed by a scholar or researcher, ostensibly with extensive experience in the region. Given the interests and purposes of the educated classes that made up the majority of the German traveling public, such an overview would, in Italy, focus primarily on the historical and aesthetic contexts that the traveler may have occasion to visit. In comparison with the literary reminiscences and memoirs of the preceding era, what we immediately observe is the exchange of subjective—if knowledgeable—reflection, for the sober and reliable remarks of an ostensibly “authoritative” expert. In this, of course, the Baedeker follows the general trends that had come to prevail among the academic disciplines whose portfolios included objects of potential tourist interest. If the guidebook had undergone a radical transformation in the character and form of the information it imparted, this was likewise in line with the shifts in the way knowledge was being produced and legitimated. In history, archeology, art history or geography, the era of the connoisseur and educated amateur had been left behind in the first decades of the nineteenth century. Replacing

³²⁶Karl Baedeker, *Italien von den Alpen bis Neapel* (Leipzig: K. Baedeker, 1926). vi. “Den Gastwirten gegenüber betont der Herausgeber seine Unabhängigkeit von jeder andern Rücksicht als dem Wohle des reisenden Publikums. Er betrachtet die Nennung in seinen Büchern in gewissem Sinne an sich schon als ein Zeichen des Vertrauens. Versehen oder Irrtümer wird er baldmöglichst berichtigen. Seine Empfehlungen sind auf keine Weise zu erkaufen.

these more informal arrangements, as we have already discussed in reference to the field of historical scholarship, were the relatively more formalized modes of inquiry enshrined in the institutions of academic research. Legitimate knowledge could be produced first and foremost from within the disciplinary matrices of professional scholarship, and such expertise was a necessary component of any guide that would help direct the tourist through the array of sights and curiosities of the exotic destination. As with so much of life in domestic, political and cultural spheres, the discursive power of disciplinary expertise had penetrated into the experience of the traveler. And while the Baedeker of 1926 forgoes the intrusion of an identifiable professorial contributor—a departure from previous decades—the aesthetic and historical interests of the traveling Baedeker reader are announced in the only two sections that are situated between the preliminary remarks and the guide itself. The first of these is an extensive time-line style overview of Italian history, stretching from the classical era to the present. The second is an index of Italian artists and the locations of their works.³²⁷ Clearly, while leisure travel had changed the face of the Italian Journey, its ostensible cultural purposes had remained at the center tourist concerns.

But if the tourist could be comforted that the information was not only reliable, but also sanctioned by scholarly authority, we also find here the traces of an underlying framework guiding and informing the course of the challenging encounters of travel. Where the Goethean model of subjective reflection, bound to a narrative of personal transformation, had receded as the dominant form of travel narrative, what emerges in the pages of the Baedeker is a manner of leisure travel understood as a set of technical

³²⁷ Ibid., xxiii-xxxv.

problems to be overcome and a body of knowledge to be absorbed. However much, therefore, figures such as Goethe or Heine would remain powerful models for the practice of travel and its meanings for the individual, the activities of the tourist had assumed the cast of a technical challenge whose successful completion required authoritative expertise and objective observation. And it was precisely these that the Baedeker guides provided in abundance.

The traveler of the early twentieth century, like travelers from any era, harbored a number of anxieties as to the most efficient means of absorbing the most from his journey. The era of the aristocratic Grand Tour, already a relic when Goethe embarked on his own journey, had been left far in the past for the majority of German travelers, and as the circles for whom leisure travel to destinations like Italy had widened, so too was there a corresponding foreshortening of the time and resources available for the average holiday. From months or years to weeks or months, travel had become a far more condensed affair, with both time and financial resources exercising imperatives on the middle class that had been less pressing on their aristocratic forbears. A successful journey, in other words, was one necessarily extremely well organized and exhaustively planned.

Thus, if Baedeker provided such organization and facilitated such planning, we can also observe the ways in which the traveler could find him or herself necessarily dependent on the organization and planning the red guides offered. With too little time and resource to engage in a more leisurely self discovery of the city, and nevertheless highly aware of his or her lack of knowledge with regard to the sights and sounds around them, the traveler was bound to encounter the destination through the helpful passages of

the Baedeker. And if this is the case, then how might the Naples of 1924 emerge from the pages in the eyes of the Angel of History? How does such a text invite its reader to encounter the city? What pieces does it suggest as of special interest, what means of habitation and sustenance, what anxieties does it seek to allay? As a key, in other words, to the city of Naples, what doors does it unlock, what doors does it bar and what doors pass by unnoticed by guide and traveler alike?

What we discover in the pages of the Baedeker, beyond the introductory remarks, is a guide supremely attuned to the educated middle-class sensibilities of its readers. Conspicuously, the issues of money and remuneration arise early, often, and always in a neatly organized fashion. Remarks on begging, tipping, and negotiation of prices figure prominently at the very outset, and speak to a general concern of the traveler for the maintenance of his own finances, but also with what is considered customary and reasonable in the Neapolitan context. In similar fashion, the question of exchange is also handled carefully, though with obligatory warning that circumstances and figures in this area are subject to frequent change. Aside from these monetary concerns, incidentals such as portage, customs, municipal authority, holidays and the like are laid out concisely, and always in an extremely terse, uncommented fashion.³²⁸ What emerges from such concerns is a materially coordinated geography of the city that describes a topography dominated by the landmarks of train terminals, hotels, restaurants, banks, post offices and government bureaus.³²⁹ The stations of bourgeois organization and comfort are laid out like a constellation for navigating tourists, marking out a set of concrete pathways and priorities amid a potentially confusing foreign milieu. In this

³²⁸Ibid., ix-xx.

³²⁹Ibid., ix-xx

process, therefore, a first set of reductions is accomplished and a criterion for selection established, a distillation or abstraction of the landscape of the sort that is performed by any cartographic representation. However, despite the rather banal character of this constructed urban space, we would do well not to overlook the conspicuous geography that emerges from the motive force of the travelers' interests and anxieties. What has begun to unfold, therefore, from the Baedeker "gaze," is a specific vision of urban physiognomy—where the traveler had once only been confronted with formlessness—whose contours and geometries are determined by concerns of finance, habitation, communication, transportation and sustenance.

But to establish a geography of this sort, to mark out one's orientation in such a way, is already to establish a certain character of encounter with the urban space. In the maps and descriptions of the Baedeker, in other words, the traveler is invited to structure his or her experience according to many of the familiar categories of modern life in the northern city, categories and their imperatives to which he or she had become accustomed at home. A cartographic network of well defined directions, meticulously collected time schedules, and well established boundaries produce a relation to the city that would be easily recognizable and navigable for the German traveler.

We should not, of course, be overly surprised that such an initial reduction of the Neapolitan landscape should take place in the dialogue between the tourist and the Baedeker. Tourists of any era, be they pilgrims of the Middle Ages, aristocrats on tour or the bourgeois traveler of the early twentieth century, all possess certain fundamental needs and carry with them a degree of anxiety toward how these should be satisfied. Yet, precisely because of the basic material needs and concerns of travelers from various eras,

it is easier to trace the contours and relations that are, nevertheless, distinct to each. The “natural” concerns and forms of one era, in other words, will often seem inscrutable to another. In this sense, what is telling in regard to the Baedeker model are the degree and character of its abstractions and reductions. While it is true that any means of orientation, any diagrammatic or cartographic representation, involves a series of abstractions or reductive moments, it could be argued that the Baedeker and its “invitation” virtually insist on remaining at the level of such abstraction. To put it otherwise, if the spaces and temporalities of an urban space are often experienced through coordinates beyond those that can be graphed spatially and temporally, the Baedeker appears to insist on these alone. Thus, where an early pilgrim to Rome would organize the urban experience in terms of religious holidays, spaces of worship, religious orders where lodging could be sought, the Baedeker tourist confronts a far more rarefied space, a region in which navigation and orientation—and all the meanings that could be associated with these—are organized in the most abstract spatial and temporal terms.

What emerges from the Baedeker is a tracing, in the sense suggested by Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, where the spaces and the selected elements of possible tourist interest are not related internally or organically to one another, but whose distribution is governed by an overarching and abstract set of organizing principles.³³⁰ Indeed, in this

³³⁰ See Deleuze and Guattari’s distinction between “mapping” and “tracing” in Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987), 12. “It is our view that genetic axis and profound structure are above all infinitely reproducible principles of *tracing*. All of tree logic is a logic of tracing and reproduction. In linguistics as in psychoanalysis, its object is an unconscious that is itself representative, crystallized into codified complexes, laid out along a genetic axis and distributed within a syntagmatic structure. Its goal is to describe a de facto state, to maintain balance in intersubjective relations, or to explore an unconscious *that is already there from the start*, lurking in the dark recesses of memory and language. *It consists of tracing, on the basis of an overcoding structure or supporting axis, something that comes ready-made*. The tree articulates and hierarchizes tracings; tracings are like the leaves of a tree.” (my italics)

instance, it is the logic of the minute and the imperatives of the meter—the structures of time and space—which condition and inform all possible contents within the diagram. To be sure, this may have been both useful and comforting to the visiting German traveler, but it nevertheless represents only one among many possible alternatives for the organization of experience in an urban landscape. In other words, it is in its highly abstract formal qualities that the Baedeker most powerfully exercises its determinations on its readers. For it is the form that in turn governs the nature and shape of the elements that may appear within it and the relationship of the traveling observer with those elements.

From this perspective, travel in the Baedeker mode could be said to bear a familial resemblance to the great scientific and commercial expositions that had become so prevalent in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, or to the public museums that had sprung up at the same time. Indeed, Baedeker's presentation suggests striking similarities with that of a museum program, its own pages slipping almost imperceptibly at times from museum interiors to urban exteriors. Meticulously mapped out in space and always including carefully organized time tables and hours, the Baedeker efficiently propels its reader through a city become museum—a space organized for observation and visual consumption.

The relationship, however, between the museum-goer and the objects on display, between the visitor to an exhibition and the array of curiosities laid out before him or her, is historically contingent and carries with it an ideological component. As a great deal of recent research in the field of museum studies has shown, the museum emerges at a

particular moment in time and proceeds to organize the objects of the collection and the forms through which they are viewed by visitors.³³¹ In this process of organization, selection and reduction, items of interest are plucked out of original or previous contexts and placed within the abstract space of a museum, whose organization itself is largely driven by its function as region of display. In other words, the formal architectural contours of the museum derive their general features from their function as a space of visibility. The spaces thus produced tend necessarily to be abstract and easy to navigate containers of pure space. For what counts here is not the space itself, but its ability to efficiently reveal and display the items it houses.

Yet, as commentators such as Benjamin himself have been able to show, the abstract forms of organization in institutions like the museum, the exposition—or the present day department store—nevertheless were both symptomatic of, and helped to reinforce a set of concrete relations between objects and observers. As Benjamin suggests, it was the great exhibitions of the nineteenth century that represented the first school of the new forms of consumption that would have fully emerged by the turn of the

³³¹In the *Arcades Project*, Benjamin situates the museum in a familial relation with the other great spaces of nineteenth century visual consumption: the exposition and the department store. They are “collective dream houses” in which knowledge, power and consumption are brought into a kind of magical contact. “Museums unquestionably belong to the dream houses of the collective. In considering them, one would want to emphasize the dialectic by which they come into contact, on the one hand, with scientific research and, on the other hand, with “the dreamy tide of bad taste.” “Nearly every epoch would appear, by virtue of its inner disposition, to be chiefly engaged in unfolding a specific architectural problem: for the Gothic age, this is the cathedrals; for the Baroque, the palace: and for the early nineteenth century, with its regressive tendency to allow itself to be saturated with the past: the museum.” Sigfried Giedion, *Bauen in Frankreich*, p. 36. This thirst for the past forms something like the principal object of my analysis—in light of which the inside of the museum appears as an interior magnified on a giant scale. In the years 1850-1890, exhibitions take the place of museums. Comparison between the ideological bases of the two: Walter Benjamin, *Arcades Project*, Rolf Tiedemann ed., trans. Howard Eiland and Kevin McLaughlin (Cambridge: Belknap Press, 2002), 406-407.

twentieth century.³³² Within the halls of such institutions, observers confronted a series of reified objects whose mode of organization could both elicit a range of desires and channel these into systems of difference and ideological frameworks.

Above all, the museum and its related forms reinforced the conceit of a privileged, yet strangely disengaged standpoint. It was the privilege, in other words, of the ideal, educated middle-class museum-goer to be able to survey—at a single glance—the vast eons of natural history or the collected legacy of human artistic achievement. However, the price at which such omniscience is granted is destruction of the contexts from which both emerge. The observer is invited to situate his position and understand his subject orientation as a consumer of visual images and cues whose organization yields a narrative of privilege and power. The subject, in other words, enters a realm of disassociated objects³³² and is invited to participate in a purely specular mode of consumption.

From this perspective, the Baedeker's presentation of urban spaces such as Naples becomes rather more clear. What is created here is a spatially and temporally abstract landscape whose ultimate aim is that of producing a realm of maximum visibility. In order to accomplish this, the field of possible objects, in this case an entire living urban landscape is rendered as a series of distinct and visually consumable "sights", *Sehenswürdigkeiten*, or numbered "tours". But to transform Naples in such a way, to construct a geography of the tourist, necessarily produces a relation to, and vision of, the city that involves a distinct reduction of its multiplicity and variety. As the tourist moves through the city—in the same ways as would a visitor to a museum—the historical and

³³²Ibid., 201. "The world exhibitions were training schools in which the masses, barred from consuming, learned empathy with exchange value. 'Look at everything; touch nothing.'"

cultural geographies of that city must likewise take their shape from the forms implied by such a relation.

The city into which the Baedeker invites the visitor to Naples is a city understood and visually organized in the form of a museum. Both the selected content and the organizational form of the guide's presentation can be read with more clarity. What the Baedeker produces is a highly abstract space in which are located a series of interiors which house the items of historical and aesthetic interest that have drawn the tourist to the city. One could say, in other words, that the monuments and museums that form the vast majority of the Baedeker's content—a content consistent with the interests of an educated traveling public—extend their logic and forms into the city that surrounds them. The urban space emerges as a series of artifacts to be observed and consumed in a fashion similar to that of the museum experience or perhaps the environment of the nascent department store.

But the museum character of Baedeker's urban space is revealed perhaps more clearly in what it chooses not to represent than in what it selects for inclusion. We have already seen the ways in which any representation of any landscape—whether literary, cartographic or otherwise—involves a series of selections and reductions, each chosen in order to highlight the mode of orientation consistent with the purposes of the representation. With this in mind, what gets left out of such representation can reveal as much about the purposes and functions as what is included. In the case of the Baedeker, such exclusions are particularly illuminating and highly conspicuous.

The guides and literary companions of a century earlier had been organized in most cases in relation to the experience of an educated individual traveler, and its content

devoted to wide ranging meditations on the culture, food, weather, religion, and dangers of the region described. Such extended subjective accounts no doubt lent themselves to precisely the sort of concrete, embodied reflections that they related. Likewise, with the Goethean model of travel, still deeply resonant among the German *Bildungsbürgertum*, travel was represented first and foremost as an experience of personal development and education. Leisure travel in general, and travel to Italy in particular, was understood as a unified experience of sensual, spiritual and intellectual import. Obviously, the cityscapes that emerged from such memoirs and companions assume forms that correspond to such interests. A city such as Naples was constructed from the elements of a highly personalized experience—woven together from personal relations, letters of introduction; the ever present native cicerone, a boring evening at an indifferent restaurant and the bodily complaints and pleasures that accompanied the traveling experience. Above all, and in this the residues of the Grand Tour and Enlightenment sensibilities, the traveler of the early nineteenth century exhibited a zeal for reflection of an anthropological and cultural sort. Every encounter and every experience was the occasion for a meditation on the cultural specificity not only of Italy, but also of Italians. Comparisons of the respective national “characters” virtues and vices of “Italia” and “Germania” course throughout these works as a powerful and persistent current.³³³ What emerges is a thoroughly embodied and culturally sensitive map of the urban experience as a German traveler abroad. This of course, is not to valorize the traveling experience of the early nineteenth century or present its forms as a somehow more authentic mode of travel. But it is an unmistakable aspect of its historical contours that earlier modes of travel exhibited

³³³Christof Thoenes, “Die deutschsprachigen Reiseführer des 19. Jahrhunderts”, 2000.

and even celebrated a great degree of immersion in the living culture and social forms they discovered.

By the era of Baedeker's supremacy at the end of the nineteenth century, the experience of travel was rapidly becoming one of far greater appeal to ever larger spheres of German society. Middle class affluence made leisure travel a possibility where it had once been the province of aristocrats and scholars. At the same time, and in direct relation, the infrastructure of travel and tourism had become far more mature and sophisticated than had been the case only decades earlier. An industry dependent on the foreign traveler had grown enormously, centering with ever greater sophistication to the needs, desires and anxieties of visitors. On the one hand, such a well developed infrastructure—catering to an increasing number of moderately endowed travelers—made possible a vastly more secure and efficient journey or holiday. On the other hand, however, as the tourist experience became more streamlined, the possible forms and varieties of experience became more powerfully restricted. A canon of sights, hotels, restaurants emerged that would pattern almost unconsciously the character and experience of the destination. Likewise, it permitted a greater ability to avoid many of the difficulties and annoyances that had formed such a large portion of earlier traveling experience.

In this new streamlined experience, so beautifully presented in the maps and terse descriptions of the Baedeker, an extremely conspicuous absence makes itself felt. For if the little red guidebook had invited the traveler to experience a city like Naples as a kind of museum, as a space neatly organized for secure transit and maximum visibility, the cultural life and rhythms of the living city seem to disappear almost completely.

Nowhere in its pages, so meticulous in the presentation of hotels, museums and transit centers, does one find any extended discussion of the culture and material life of its citizens. What Baedeker presents in other words, is an Italy without Italians and a Naples without Neapolitans.

What the Baedeker produces, in other words, is an urban environment reconstructed for the traveler as a vast interior, organized in the familiar form of museum and in accord with nineteenth-century modes of scopic consumption. The museum, after all, is constructed as a middle-class institution, addressed to an educated bourgeoisie, and is organized as a means by which a specific class may understand and celebrate its own aesthetic tastes and historical accomplishments. By definition, the museum enforces the exclusion of lesser educated and culturally suspect classes. It is a region of edification, education and enlightenment and is designed for those classes capable of such improvement and leisure. In accord with the exclusions and inclusions implicit in the form, a landscape emerges that is populated by nothing more than monuments, relics and historical curiosities. The tourist is invited into the same relation with the urban landscape as that of the museum-goer to the objects on display. The result is a rather abstracted dialogue between a de-contextualized set of historically and aesthetically “significant” objects and a curiously disembodied posture of observation. A maximum of visibility and movement is achieved, but only within the diagrammatic contours as produced by the Baedeker.

As the museum’s technologies of visibility and the arrangement of its displays generated powerful narratives imbued with the interests of particular and historically determined classes, so too does the Baedeker reinforce a narrative that situates the visitor

as a privileged observer whose powers of vision are the culmination of the historical and aesthetic movements laid out before him or her. In the same way that regimes and structures of vision were implied in the forms of power exercised in contemporaneous colonial adventures, so too does the museum form of travel situate the educated observer as the inheritor and rightful steward of the historical and cultural legacies on display. In the artistic and historical treasures of Naples, in the ruins of Pompeii, the middle-class traveler surveys all with sovereignty born of the assurance in his or her own culminating position in the narratives on display.

Unfolding from the Baedeker—the cityscapes and museum-forms by which it constructs a destination like Naples—is a relation between past and present, a relation bearing a strong familial similarity to the contours of universal history as imagined by Walter Benjamin. With the Neapolitan present safely bracketed from the pages of the guide, barred from the halls of the museum and the secure domain of the hotel, the relation established to the city is one between educated, historically sophisticated travelers and a landscape of almost completely monumental and antiquarian interest. In the itineraries and geographies constructed from the Baedeker maps, a universal cultural history begins to emerge whose narrator and culminating figure is nothing less than the educated middle class at the turn of the twentieth century.

At this point, to visit once again our newly arrived angelic tourist, we can begin to discern the strange comfort with which this traveler clutched the little red guide in its immortal hands. The disembodied vision of ruins, relics, and monuments, stretching back through time and surveyed from the privileged position of a culminating subjectivity is one all too familiar to the Angel of History. As the Baedeker constructs the Neapolitan

milieu in a linear perspective where all vectors converge in the pupils of the privileged observer, where its histories and geographies follow clearly marked and nearly inevitable trajectories, so also do times and spaces find their form and presentation in the grim universal histories of the Angel's vision. A narrative uncoils from the eyes of the observer—whether angel, historian or tourist—and winds itself around a landscape and forcefully determines its shape. It is a gaze, a vision, and a narrative in the form of a diagram, powerfully determining and conditioning the elements that can be included and made visible in the field that it describes.

We should thus not be surprised to find the Angel of History close its guide, place it once again in its pocket and set off into the city with an air of resigned disappointment. The helpful Baedeker has reminded it once again that here is a city it knows very well, and a city it will always know well. Its ruins and monuments will always be there, provided one has the proper eye for them—or the proper guidebook. If the Angel recognizes the Naples it has found in the pages of its Baedeker, then it is because the contours and forms of historical consciousness are deeply implicated in the ways in which an urban landscape is constructed by both inhabitants and visitors. The interests and ideologies embedded in the temporal perspectives brought to bear on an urban landscape exert an enormous influence on the nature and distribution of the landmarks that can be found within it. Indeed, such construction and reconstruction of cities may take place in the brute material domain, in the violent and concrete redistributions of Haussmann's Paris, but also in the imaginative organization of city spaces that every subject undertakes in order to navigate a complex environment. The city, in other words, is always a construct of both masonry and ideology, erected not only from the material

skeleton of stone and steel, but also one woven together from more flexible and transitory tissues. These living tissues of cultural, spiritual and historical consciousness are no less decisive in the organization of the form of urban life than the ossified edifices and thoroughfares through which they move. The experience of urban space is always shaped by such forces as temporal and historical consciousness. In the gaze of the Angel of History, passing into the Neapolitan milieu, there is also revealed a city whose shape had been coordinated, at least in part, by the historical consciousness of German travelers and whose shape had been determined by the powerful cultural dialectics of auratic historicism and modern regimes of representational and commodity reproduction. The organization of time and space, the reflections between subjects and objects, the modes of inclusion and exclusion that had for decades determined the shape of German historical institutions and imaginaries can thus be found woven even into the experience of a holiday in Naples.

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Curiously enough, at the precise time the Angel of History stepped from its train at the Naples terminal, two other travelers could be found entering the city from the more ancient threshold of quays and docks on the city's great bay. To be more precise, we should say that we would find a man and a woman stepping gingerly off a ferry that had brought them on the short trip to Naples from Capri. Indeed, an even more perceptive eye might remark that the relation between the couple was perhaps somewhat uncertain. They are assuredly not married, but they may or may not be in the process of becoming lovers. At any rate, an air of expectant adventure, surely intellectual and perhaps erotic, accompanies them as the city's bustle welcomes them.

Yet perhaps it would be overly hasty to claim that this couple arrives at precisely the same time as the Angel. For while all three step into Naples at the same hour on the same day in 1924, the man and the woman are conducting an experiment in which the temporalities and geographies of the city will emerge in a manner vastly different from those of the Angel and its Baedeker. From the perspective of our newcomers, an urban landscape will emerge with alternate historical sensibilities and geographic sensitivities that will bear little resemblance to the neat coordinates and disembodied visions of the Baedeker's guidebook and Werner von der Schulenburg's *Italien*. To put it differently, we may understand our two visitors as cartographers of a sort, cartographers who set about generating not a diagram, but a map in the Deleuzian sense. For such a map, there can be no book, no pre-existing guiding framework that will already have organized the task of navigation.³³⁴ Instead, the shape of the city will here emerge from concrete experiences occasioned by the movement through it. And as we shall see, the pathways that it produces will be infinitely more tangled than the smooth thoroughfares blasted

³³⁴ See Deleuze and Guattari's distinction between "mapping" and "tracing" in Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987), 12. Important here is the distinction between the concepts of "tracing" and "mapping", where the former emerges from an already coded set of deductions and the latter from the concrete operations/movements of individual elements within a given system or frame. "The rhizome is altogether different, a *map and not a tracing*. Make a map, not a tracing. The orchid does not reproduce the tracing of the wasp; it forms a map with the wasp, in a rhizome. What distinguishes the map from the tracing is that it is entirely oriented toward an experimentation in contact with the real. The map does not reproduce an unconscious closed in upon itself; it constructs the unconscious. It fosters connections between fields, the removal of blockages on bodies without organs, the maximum opening of bodies without organs onto a plane of consistency. It is itself a part of the rhizome. The map is open and connectable in all of its dimensions; it is detachable, reversible, susceptible to constant modification. It can be torn, reversed, adapted to any kind of mounting, reworked by an individual, group, or social formation. It can be drawn on a wall, conceived of as a work of art, constructed as a political action or as a meditation. Perhaps one of the most important characteristics of the rhizome is that it always has multiple entryways; in this sense, the burrow is an animal rhizome, and sometimes maintains a clear distinction between the line of flight as passageway and storage or living strata (cf. the muskrat). A map has multiple entryways, as opposed to the tracing, which always comes back "to the same." The map has to do with performance, whereas the tracing always involves an alleged 'competence.'"

through the city by Baedeker or the vistas glimpsed from the heights of Monte St. Angelo by Adolf von Hatzfeld.

Though his letters speak only vaguely of both his journey and his partner, Walter Benjamin's excursion to Naples from Capri in 1924 nevertheless produced an enormously fertile textual record. In cooperation with Asja Lacis, a Lithuanian socialist actress close to the circle around Bertholt Brecht, Benjamin set out to describe the city in an essay entitled simply "Naples."³³⁵ Benjamin had been in Capri visiting Ernst Bloch and his wife, and was there ostensibly to finish a *Habilschrift* whose progress and outlook had long been a source of anxiety. Taking leave from a domestic life in Berlin that was gradually feeling more unhappy and restrictive, Benjamin journeyed to Capri where a thriving German expatriate colony had long since been established. While the precise contributions of Benjamin and Lacis in the formulation of the "Naples" essay remain uncertain, the influence of her person is well documented in Benjamin's own writings, and the presence of Lacis was to be felt in a number of subsequent works (e.g. *One Way Street*, "Moscow Diary," etc.) in which he would more clearly mark out new intellectual pathways. Indeed, in dedicating *One Way Street*, Benjamin would write, "This street is named / Asja Lacis Street / after her who / as an engineer / cut it through the author."³³⁶ However, what interests us here is not the task of determining the relative degrees of authorship of Benjamin and Lacis, but instead the character and mode of exploration they together produced in the Naples essay. For what emerges from this piece is not merely a

³³⁵See Asja Lacis' autobiographical reflections in *Revolutionär im Beruf; Berichte über proletarisches Theater, über Meyerhold, Brecht, Benjamin und Piscator* (München, Rogner & Bernhard, 1971).

³³⁶Walter Benjamin, "Naples," *Walter Benjamin: Selected Writings, Volume 1, 1913-1926*. Marcus Bullock and Michael W. Jennings eds. (Cambridge: Belknap Press, 1996), 444. "Diese Strasse heisst / Asja-Lacis Strasse / nach der / die sie als Ingenieur / im Autor durchgebrochen hat."

prefiguration of Benjaminian themes as they would become manifest in later cityscapes and the *Passagen-Werk*, but also an early indication of the way his work would seek to understand how traditional patterns of historical consciousness were both embedded in urban geographies and potentially undermined by subversive cartographies. As Benjamin puts it:

To construct the city topographically—tenfold and a hundredfold—from out of its arcades and its gateways, its cemeteries and bordellos, its railroad stations and its . . . , just as formerly it was defined by its churches and its markets. And the more secret, more deeply embedded figures of the city: murders and rebellions, the bloody knots in the network of the streets, lairs of love, and conflagrations.”
337

From the very outset, therefore, the city that emerges from the Naples essay is one very different from that one would find in the Baedeker or *Italien*, and it is with an earthy cultural anecdote of life in Naples that Benjamin plunges his reader into the streets of the city. The avenue into which Benjamin first invites his readers is virtually blocked by a procession dedicated to the solemn humiliation of a priest who has committed a transgression before the community.³³⁸ The procession moves slowly forward in a mood of condemnation, until its way is barred by yet another procession in celebration of a wedding. Both parties stop and look expectantly to the humiliated priest who immediately rises and offers his blessing to the newlyweds and the audience. For Benjamin, the anecdote speaks to the powerful vitality of Catholicism in Naples, a Catholicism whose fortunes are never far from both condemnation and subsequent renewal. Indeed, the streets of Naples here become the theater for a narrative more complex than can be envisioned by the historicist imagination. It is a narrative of

³³⁷ Walter Benjamin, *Arcades Project*, Rolf Tiedemann ed. (Cambridge: Belknap Press, 1996), 83.

³³⁸ Walter Benjamin, *Walter Benjamin: Selected Writings, Volume 1, 1913-1926*, 414.

intersecting movements, sudden reversals, and unexpected transitions. The story of Catholicism in Naples, in other words, cannot be understood in terms of a museum outline or from the linear organic developments of standard historical narratives, but must instead be glimpsed from amid the rituals and performances that constitute the theater of Neapolitan urban space. Thus, as Benjamin strives to make clear throughout the essay, Naples is a region that seems particularly resistant to either linear narrative or linear navigation. The shape of its historical development, the patterns of its institutions and trajectories of its streets appear to elude what we have called a Deleuzian diagrammatic consciousness. According to Benjamin, and in contrast with what he calls the Nordic city, the shape and experience of Naples is governed thoroughly by what he calls “porousness.” “As porous as this stone is the architecture,” writes Benjamin,

Building and action interpenetrate in the courtyards, arcades, and stairways. In everything, they preserve the scope to become a theater of new, unforeseen constellations. The stamp of the definitive is avoided. No situation appears intended forever, no figure asserts it “thus and not otherwise.”³³⁹

Like the limestone cliffs on which the city nestles, the city is shot through with channels, pockets, pathways and caves. In all aspects, in its spiritual life, its modes of commerce, its architecture, its familial structures and arrangements, Naples appears to resist the settled boundaries and distinct categories that Benjamin associates with the Northern city. There is, as Benjamin describes, a certain celebration of unfinishedness, a resistance to permanent form that is indistinguishable from the onset of decay. The opportunity for renegotiation, re-design is always preserved in an ad hoc and improvisatory organization

³³⁹Ibid., 417.

whose porous flexibility governs the social, cultural, and ideological morphology of the city.

Naples is, in short, a landscape whose features stubbornly resist translation into diagrammatic cartography and the geographic/historicist consciousness that governs its distributions. For Benjamin, the city emerges as a place in which the neat organizational dyads of life in a northern city are subject to either indistinct differentiations or sudden and curious reversal. Interiors and exteriors, observer and observed, work and leisure—all of the binary categories that Benjamin suggests have so thoroughly marked and coded the modern German city—are in Naples reproduced in far less distinct and far more transient forms. As opposed to this Neapolitan porousness, Benjamin would later describe the nineteenth-century interior in a very different fashion:

The difficulty in reflecting on dwelling: on the one hand, there is something age-old—perhaps eternal—to be recognized here, the image of that abode of the human being in the maternal womb; on the other hand, this motif of primal history notwithstanding, we must understand dwelling in its most extreme form as a condition of nineteenth-century existence. The original form of all dwelling is existence not in the house but in the shell. The shell bears the impression of its occupant. In the most extreme instance, the dwelling becomes the shell. The nineteenth-century, like no other century, was addicted to dwelling. It conceived the residence as a receptacle for the person, and it encased him with all his appurtenances so deeply in the dwelling's interior that one might be reminded of the inside of a compass case, where the instrument with all its accessories lies embedded in deep, usually violet folds of velvet. What didn't the nineteenth century invent some sort of casing for! Pocket watches, slippers, egg cups, thermometers, playing cards—and, in lieu of cases, there were jackets, carpets, wrappers, and covers. The twentieth century, with its porosity and transparency, its tendency toward the well-lit and airy, has put an end to dwelling in the old sense. Set off against the doll house in the residence of the master builder Solness are the "homes for human beings." Jugendstil unsettled the world of the shell in a radical way. Today this world has disappeared entirely, and dwelling has diminished: for the living, through hotel rooms; for the dead, through crematoriums.³⁴⁰

³⁴⁰ Walter Benjamin, *Arcades Project*, 221.

In opposition to this black and white division of space in the nineteenth-century modern, and despite the most fantastic accounts from other travelers, Benjamin's Naples is a city of gray, a city where boundary lines and spheres of life bleed into one another and transition from one to another takes place in such fine degrees as to be almost imperceptible.³⁴¹

Thus if the Northern city may have assumed, to borrow a Weberian formulation, the form of an iron cage—a series of rationally allocated cells whose neatly organized interlocking structure informs the patterns of life and consciousness of its inhabitants—Benjamin's Naples resembles a continually inhabited ruin in which passageways and avenues of thought are perpetually in a state of repair and disrepair. There exists here no ultimate or ideal form to be permanently established, no configuration not already in communication with its past or yielding simultaneously to an emerging future. Indeed, this is suggested in Benjamin's description of the fate of a philosophical conference that was held in Naples to celebrate the 500th anniversary of the city's university.³⁴² In the dusty heat of the Neapolitan summer and in competition with various municipal festivities, the designs of European philosophy collapsed into confusion of lost papers, lost money, and lost visitors. The great minds and designs of European philosophy proved no match for a Neapolitan landscape that escaped and seemingly denied the most

³⁴¹“Walter Benjamin, *Walter Benjamin: Selected Writings, Volume 1, 1913-1926*, 415. “Fantastic reports by travelers have touched up the city. In reality it is gray: a gray-red or ocher, a gray-white. And entirely gray against sky and sea.”

³⁴² *Ibid.*, 415. “No more grotesque demonstration of this could be provided than in the convocation of an international congress of philosophers. It disintegrated without trace in the fiery haze of this city, while the seventh-centennial celebration of the university—whose tinny halo was supposed to be, in part, formed of that congress—unfolded amid the uproar of a popular festival. Complaining guests, who had been summarily relieved of their money and identification papers, appeared at the secretariat.”

subtle categories and finely tuned rationality of the conference attendees. Amid the bustle of Naples streets, the conference died not with a bang, but with a whimper.

The characteristically porous and tangled architecture of the Neapolitan urban environment extends into—and perhaps has its source in—the most fundamental material aspects of life in the city. While Benjamin locates the fundamental organizational element of the Northern urban life in the well defined precincts of the individual household, the Naples essay traces a far different basic structure. Indeed, what strikes Benjamin most profoundly are the indistinct boundaries between public and private life, categories that he suggests strongly define the “Nordic” cityscape. “This is how architecture, the most binding part of the communal rhythm, comes into being here:” writes Benjamin,

civilized, private, and ordered only in the great hotel and warehouse buildings on the quays; anarchic, embroiled, village-like in the center, into which large networks of streets were hacked only forty years ago. And only in these streets is the house, in the Nordic sense, the cell of the city's architecture. In contrast, within the tenement blocks, it seems held together at the corners, as if by iron clamps, by the murals of the Madonna.³⁴³

On the contrary, activities, rituals and performances that the northerner might consider elements of a strictly intimate interior nature, Naples conducts out of doors and in the streets. Alternately, various spheres of life coded in the north as “public” are invited into the heart of the Neapolitan household. With doors and windows widely open to a busy street, for example, a family dinner may spill out onto the avenue or a short nap may take

³⁴³Ibid., 416. See other examples in “Naples” on this comparison between northern and Neapolitan spaces: “The stairs, never entirely exposed, but still less enclosed in the gloomy box of the Nordic house, erupt fragmentarily from the buildings, make an angular turn, and disappear, only to burst out again.”, 417. “Similarly dispersed, porous, and commingled is private life. What distinguishes Naples from other large cities is something it has in common with the African *kraal*: each private attitude or act is permeated by streams of communal life. To exist—for the northern European the most private of affairs—is here, as in the *kraal*, a collective matter.” 419.

place around the corner. The activities that are thus strictly organized in the North as private, familial, and strictly enclosed, merge in Naples indistinguishably with the life of the city beyond the walls of the household. The very kitchen that had served up the family dinner may likewise be available to the passerby, offering various house specialties to Neapolitans for whom even the times and places of refreshment are mobile and porous. As Benjamin relates it:

Not the least example of such virtuosity is the art of eating macaroni with the hands. This is demonstrated to foreigners for remuneration. Other things are paid for according to tariffs. Vendors give a fixed price for the cigarette butts that, after a cafe closes, are culled from the chinks in the floor. (Earlier, they were sought by candlelight.) Alongside the leavings from restaurants, boiled cat skulls, and mussels, they are sold at stalls in the harbor district. Music parades about—not mournful music for the courtyards, but brilliant sounds for the street. A broad cart, a kind of xylophone, is colorfully hung with song texts. Here they can be bought. One of the musicians turns the organ while the other, beside it, appears with his collection cup before anyone who stops dreamily to listen. So everything joyful is mobile: music, toys, ice cream circulate through the streets.³⁴⁴

In this latter gastronomical relation, Benjamin finds the coffee culture of Naples particularly illuminating. In the Neapolitan coffee bar, we are told, one has traveled far afield from the model and attendant cultural imperatives of, say, its Viennese counterpart. Where the latter encourages long and leisurely stays, and whose structures encourage the formation of the intellectual groups that assemble there, the espresso bar of Naples is an infinitely more mobile and variable space. As Benjamin notes, short stays are the rule, and a longer sit would be met with impatience by the staff.

The true laboratories of this great process of intermingling are the cafes. Life is unable to sit down and stagnate in them. They are sober, open rooms resembling the political People's Cafe—the opposite of everything Viennese, of the confined, bourgeois, literary world. Neapolitan cafes are bluntly to the point. A prolonged stay is scarcely possible. A cup of excessively hot *caffè espresso* (this city is as

³⁴⁴ Ibid., 417.

unrivaled in hot drinks as in sherbets, spumoni, and ice cream) ushers the visitor out. The tables have a coppery shine; they are small and round, and a companion who is less than stalwart turns hesitantly on his heel in the doorway. Only a few people sit down here, briefly. Three quick movements of the hand, and they have placed their order.³⁴⁵

The coffee house of Naples is but a brief station in the daily routine of its inhabitants, and does not invite the long and ongoing groupings and associations that may define the Northern establishment. Like the family home, the coffee house here resists enclosure into a stable interior space associated with a distinct and established set of activities. Instead, it represents an important node in a transitory urban network that extends through the city's spaces, a mobile network whose shape in turn defines the porous shape of daily life in Naples.

Likewise, in a similar set of boundary reversals, municipal order is guaranteed as much by organized crime syndicates, the *Camorra*, whose tentacles extend all along the Bay of Naples, as it is by the police or civil authorities.

So it does not occur to an injured party to call the police if he is eager to seek redress. Through civic or clerical mediators, if not personally, he approaches a *camorrista*. Through him, he agrees on a ransom. From Naples to Castellamare, the length of the proletarian suburbs, run the headquarters of the mainland *camorra*. For these criminals avoid neighborhoods in which they would be at the disposal of the police. They are dispersed over the city and the suburbs. That makes them dangerous. The traveling citizen who gropes his way as far as Rome from one work of art to the next, as if along a stockade, loses his nerve in Naples.³⁴⁶

Indeed, as Benjamin suggests, it is often these more formal municipal and spiritual authorities that may act as intermediaries between a citizen seeking the redress of some grievance and the criminal organization. These latter will determine the most reasonable form of potential penalty, and see in turn that the indicated terms are subsequently

³⁴⁵ Ibid., 421.

³⁴⁶ Ibid., 414.

satisfied. Like all else, the line between the law and criminality is drawn with a distinct lack of clarity, and the borders such lines mark seem to invite, rather than forbid, their transgression. The law of the city and the interests of crime thus not only coexist with one another, but inhabit similar spheres of activity in almost natural congeniality and cooperation.

Even the times and rhythms of the city, according to Benjamin, appear to obey the ad hoc laws of porousness. If the Northern city, by contrast, is organized in space with an increasingly strict rationality, so too had its temporal forms been structured and defined. Such organization, as we have already seen, bleeds even into the patterns of leisure travel presented by the popular Baedeker mode. The imperatives of train schedules, meal times, museum hours and the like formed a temporal latticework that governed the shape of the daily lives that took place within clockwork forms of both work and leisure. For Benjamin, the Neapolitan scene is one where, once again, such strict borderlines have the same faded, indistinct gray quality of the city itself. If the days of the week elsewhere strictly adhere in their character to the activities designated to them—Sundays for worship and leisure, weekdays for business and public life—each Neapolitan day at least partially participates in the qualities of the others. The tune played by street musicians, Benjamin writes, “is both the residue of the last and prelude to the next feast day. Irresistibly, the festival permeates each and every working day. Porosity is the inexhaustible law of life in this city, reappearing everywhere. A grain of Sunday is hidden in each weekday. And how much weekday there is in this Sunday.”³⁴⁷

³⁴⁷Ibid., 417. “Irresistibly, the festival penetrates each and every working day. Porosity is the inexhaustible law of life in this city, reappearing everywhere. A grain of Sunday is hidden in each weekday. And how much weekday there is in this Sunday!”

Of particular significance for Benjamin, however, is the visual organization and enactment of Neapolitan life. Throughout the essay, Naples is figured as a kind of theater in which life itself is performed as a piece of perpetual improvisation. “Porosity results not only from the indolence of the southern artisan,” Benjamin writes,

but also, above all, from the passion for improvisation, which demands that space and opportunity be preserved at any price. Buildings are used as a popular stage. They are all divided into innumerable, simultaneously animated theaters. Balcony, courtyard, window, gateway, staircase, roof are at the same time stage and boxes. Even the most wretched pauper is sovereign in the dim, dual awareness of participating, in all his destitution, in one of the pictures of Neapolitan street life that will never return, and of enjoying in all his poverty the leisure to follow the great panorama. What is enacted on the staircases is an advanced school of stage management.³⁴⁸

That Benjamin and Lacis should reach for this metaphor of theatricality is not surprising. The former was then attempting to finish a *Habilschrift* on the character of Baroque tragic drama, while Lacis was herself involved in the socialist theater and a member of the Brecht circle.³⁴⁹ And yet, the metaphor seems more than a figure of biographical convenience, for in fashioning their presentation, each of their commitments to drama decisively informs their reception of the theater of Naples. Indeed, as the form and ideological thrust of theater-going experience can be at least partially graphed in geometrics of spatial organization and lines of sight, so too does the Neapolitan theater reveal its nature in the formal organization of its spectacle.

Therefore, for example, if Brecht’s Epic Theater represented a critique of bourgeois sensibilities and its attendant theatrical expectation, the theater which emerges

³⁴⁸ Ibid., 416-417.

³⁴⁹ In her autobiography, Lacis describes her first encounters with Benjamin on Capri, and how she found his description of the *Habilschrift* fairly opaque. But she does remember remarking on the similarities between Benjamin's and Brecht's concepts of allegory as related to dramatic forms. Asja Lacis, *Revolutionär im Beruf; Berichte über proletarisches Theater, über Meyerhold, Brecht, Benjamin und Piscator*.

in the streets of Naples for Benjamin and Lacis is one with an exotic set of relations—between stage and audience, between observer and observed. And if Brecht had transformed the drama into a machine of porosity by deconstructing the conventions of the “fourth wall” and empathetic reception, Benjamin and Lacis likewise envisioned a landscape in which a rich variety of northern bourgeois walls had been reduced to ruins or rendered extremely porous. The result is an urban experience based not on the passive, narrative moralism of bourgeois theater, but on a more engaged material encounter, one in which the strict separations of players and watchers is called into question.³⁵⁰

While the “spectacle” of poverty, in a northern city for instance, might take on the moralistic colors and privileged viewpoints of a bourgeois drama, such theater in Naples appears to obey a less certain and established set of principles. “At the hospital San Gennaro dei Poveri,” writes Benjamin,

the entrance is through a white complex of buildings that one passes via two courtyards. On either side of the road stand benches for the invalids, who follow those going out with glances that do not reveal whether they are clinging to their garments with hopes of being liberated or with hopes of satisfying unimaginable desires. In the second courtyard, the doorways of the chambers have gratings;

³⁵⁰ See also Michael Steinberg, *Austria as Theater and Ideology: The Meaning of the Salzburg Festival* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1990). In the final section, Steinberg discusses the relationship between Benjamin and Hoffmannstahl and the reemergence of a “neobaroque” ideology in the first decades of the twentieth century. For Steinberg, the rehabilitation of the baroque in Hoffmannstahl is a move which seeks to overlay a fragmented modern socius with ideological visions of baroque “totality” that are presented in the form of baroque “theatricality”. Steinberg goes to some length to show Benjamin’s own view of Baroque theatricality took a course that carried it far from Hoffmannstahl’s conservative modernist dramaturgy. In this sense, Benjamin’s own sense of the essentially fragmented and polyvalent character would lead him towards a theater of smooth ideological surfaces and into the “alienated” landscape of Brechtian Epic Theater. But where Steinberg sees theatricality as a way in which the Baroque and “neobaroque” assert the sense of ideological totality, Benjamin’s view accepts this but would go one step further to suggest that it is this very notion of theatricality that eventually undermines the claims of a totalized ideology. Theatrical representation eventually becomes recognized and thematized precisely *as* representation with all the epistemological and ontological uncertainty that such a recognition may generate.

behind them cripples display their deformities, and the shock given to daydreaming passers-by is their joy.³⁵¹

To be sure, the theatrical dimensions of such an encounter would be hard to overlook; all the elements of performance, display, audience and stage are there. And yet, it is also clear from the presentation that the dramatic exchange between visitors and invalids is one more complex and more tangled than would be admitted by a traditional drama. Who, we might ask, is situated here as the audience, and who as the performer? Are not each the occasion for a mirroring of the other, does not each elicit a certain set of anxieties and desires in the other? The relations involved in this performance involve a multi-directionality that the structures of more traditional dramatic forms would allow. Put differently, one could say that the entire cityscape of Naples forms a stage in which every participant is both actor and observer, and no privileged wall or box seat defines its proper vantage point.

If Benjamin and Lacis present Naples as a kind of spectacle, then the forms of this spectacle are strikingly similar to the forms being developed by Brecht at the same time as Epic Theater. As Brecht sought to correct traditions of dramatic presentation stretching from Aristotle to nineteenth-century bourgeois drama, we likewise see Benjamin and Lacis attempting to create new relations within the theater and optics of an historically conscious mode of travel. And if Brecht could criticize the pretenses of bourgeois realism for its familiar postures of empathy, verisimilitude and supposed objectivity, Benjamin and Lacis perform a similar task in relation to spectacles of Neapolitan culture, geography and history. The claim of porousness thus emerges, not simply as a characteristic of a reified object called Naples, but a term describing the

³⁵¹Benjamin, *Walter Benjamin: Selected Writings, Volume 1, 1913-1926*, 415.

relation between viewer and viewed, a relation that yields entirely new constellations of historical thinking and unprecedented forms of mobile agency.

What emerges in the Naples essay, therefore, is an almost Brechtian mode of dramatic narrative. It is constructed from a series of anecdotes and reflections, each selectively self contained in much the same way that the Brechtian scene exists and points not towards the next scene, but to itself and its own interpretation. The stations and stages of the essay represent relatively independent occasions for the reflection, and consciously avoid a dramatic narrative whose pieces are granted meaning in the resolutions of an ultimate terminus or are guaranteed from the perspective of a privileged audience.

We must also remember that the methods of Epic Theater were to disrupt the unities of time, place and action that governed drama in Aristotelian poetics. For Brecht, such unities and the empathetic response they invite necessarily discourage a critical posture on the part of the viewer. Instead, traditional dramatic conventions had conspired to situate the spectacle as a mirror of fate, a representation of human life as a natural and necessary drama of suffering and pain. Dramatic narrative presents the world to its passive audience as a given, a story that was thus, and only thus. Epic drama, on the other hand, deploys methods such as the alienation effect so that the audience may critically participate in the discovery that ostensibly natural categories have their genesis in social and material conditions. In this critical space, opened by the Brechtian drama, the audience is encouraged to reflect on the possibilities of what has been and what is becoming—possibilities that are necessarily obscured by the linear perspective and empathetic posture of the naturalistic attitude.

Where Brecht seems to unlock a set of new social and historical perspectives through the radical refashioning of formal dramatic conventions, Benjamin and Lacis undertake a similar reconstruction of the spectacles in which the traveler participates. In contrast with the popular Baedeker model and the elite forms of *Italien*, the authors of the Naples essay set about a redistribution of the conventional relations and narratives that inform a more standard bourgeois holiday. While the former examples either encouraged their audiences to situate themselves as privileged observers of a vast historical spectacle or find themselves coordinated in a strict linear landscape of cultural objects of consumption, Benjamin and Lacis undertake a performance of their own, and invite the reader to understand the moment of foreign travel as a powerful moment of interpretive agency. The fourth wall, as it were, between tourist and destination is broken down, and the audience member likewise becomes conscious of his own performance. The ultimate aim of this transformation, however, is one of exposing alternate models of historical and social organization. The forms of the tourist spectacle are no less implicated in a set of historical ideologies and imperatives than the forms of conventional dramatic spectacle. Indeed, if certain philosophies of history could be reinforced by, and embedded in, bourgeois drama, so too was the experience of travel likewise conditioned by hegemonic historical discourse.

Such discourses, embodied and most fully realized in the institutions of historicism, not only informed the shape of academic research, but had become implicated through their extensive influence in nearly every aspect of German historical consciousness—whether this was located in the monograph, the theater piece, or the experience of travel. The conventions embraced by these historical discourses

encouraged a specific set of relations with the past, and a specific set of imperatives from which the past was to be reconstructed and represented. And as with the Angel of History, the past that emerges from such a perspective must emerge as either a linear collection of disasters or the ongoing development of human progress. In either case, the Angel, the historian, or the audience can only helplessly watch the spectacle; history is understood as either a series of natural organic developments or as a debased and commodified collection of fragmentary historical kitsch. From such a perspective, absorbed by educated Germans and encouraged by the forms of the Baedeker model, Naples could only emerge as a set of objects, artifacts and ruins; as allegories, in other words, of unavoidable and unalterable historical and social forces. Regardless of whether the elements of this drama were configured as tragedy or comedy, their meaning is always already situated in the diagrams of plot. Naples would become a resonating sign for what necessarily must be, and obscured are all the spaces and temporalities that could have been *à la Hatzfeld*.

The Naples essay is therefore an experiment in a different kind of performance, a spectacle in which relations between observer and observed and conventional unities are radically called into question. The traveler here is not rendered as a privileged yet passive audience, admiring the majestic sweep of Neapolitan fortunes and misfortunes—its art, its treasures, its ruins, its souvenirs. We find here a mode of travel whose forms resist and elude the imperatives that govern conventional Baedeker tourism and what we have called auratic historicism. Yet by detaching the spectacle from such strict forms, a new space for meditation on historical forces, both at home and abroad, becomes possible. The city that emerges from within this new perspective is not simply a record

and relic of a naturalized historical process, but shows itself as a living entity, perpetually in construction and perpetually in decay. Put differently, the Naples represented by Benjamin and Lacis emerges more as a region of lively and disturbing historical possibilities and less as a realm of traditional historical narrative or commodified tourist experience.

But it is nevertheless in the form of ruins, relics or wreckage that the Angel of History must render the spatial and historical landscapes of Naples. Indeed, it is in this that we may understand the feeling of *déjà vu* felt by the Angel as it perused the pages of its small red Baedeker. For the prospect offered by the Baedeker is one quite familiar to the Angel. In the pages of the guide, the Angel may observe the well cataloged spectacle of a history in fragments as it is played out in the theater of Baedeker's maps and suggestions. But the Angel cannot stop and hold these fragments together. The winds of historicism that drive it backwards into the future are never at rest. Indeed, before it knows it, our Angel finds itself receding once again into the future, first from the streets of 1924 Naples, and then past that lonely night of Benjamin's 1940 suicide. And as it looks down sadly at the now still figure of Walter Benjamin growing smaller in the ever widening distance, it ruefully and ironically mutters a single word—progress.

Conclusion

If the Angel of History is doomed to wing its way relentlessly into the future, the itineraries described in *Nomad Past* have revealed historical landscapes very different from those glimpsed through Benjamin's angelic historiography or in the traditions of the German Historical School. Where the these latter methodologies and concepts tread historical paths informed by imperatives of textuality, individuality and linearity, the present work has brought into relief historical trajectories of a very different sort. Instead of historical visions and rhetorics that embed the past in the certainties of narrative realism or in the ultimate rest of the *telos*, the *Nomad Past* has sought to present a set of historical constructions defined in terms of their porousness, their incompleteness and their interruptibility. From this perspective, the interventions of Burckhardt, Warburg and Benjamin reveal modes of historical construction that insist on travelling beyond—across, through, or beneath—the neat spaces and well-trodden narrative tracks laid down by the conventional histories of their disciplinary contemporaries. Their pasts were characterized, in other words, by a restless nomadism that refused to travel along the standard avenues and traditional arteries of historiographical practice.

To invoke once more a Baroque metaphor, the *Nomad Past* has sought to reconstruct a mode of historical representation that is analogous to the seventeenth-century mathematics of calculus and complex topologies. Like Baroque explorations of curvilinear spaces, our various nomad pasts likewise encountered historical topographies that seem to elude expression in the conventional historical formulae. If the Baroque, in other words, sought a mathematical language with which to describe a world whose

panoply of forms and processes extended far beyond that which could be described in classical methods, so too does a nomadic history proceed from the conviction that the linearities and articulations of historicism are—by themselves—inadequate to a world with far more complex historical spaces. As with the spatial mathematics of the Baroque, such historical topographies (could we call them non-Euclidean historiographies?) must come to grips with stubborn remainders and uncertain variables, with disrupted historical narratives and dissolving historical narrators. Indeed, as Baroque calculus exchanged the sureties of the point and the necessities of the circle for subversive approximations of curvilinear space, nomad pasts insist on escape from conceptions of historical spaces that are neatly defined in terms of concepts like progress, objectivity and narrative linearity.

In the end, however, this is all but an elaborate way of pursuing the meaning of Walter Benjamin's dictum that, "history decays into images, not into stories." For to understand history in the terms of images is to recognize that the rhetorics and methodological concepts of traditional historiography are inadequate to represent historical "topographies" conceived in spatial and visual terms, inadequate to describe spaces whose contours escape the logics of conventional narrative forms. To pursue a nomad past in these terms is thus to "map" an historical space whose boundaries are no longer determined by the arcs of grand narratives, the vectors of historical teleologies, or by the individualizing points of agency and authorship. What emerges instead is a past where the imperatives of beginning, middle and end are upended, where once clearly marked territories of national and cultural narratives begin to dissolve, and a more multi-dimensional and porous set of historical spaces opens up to the historian.

In this way, the experience of the past is opened up and explored much as one might navigate a city or a landscape, the past is approached in the same way that Jacob Burckhardt traveled through Rome and Walter Benjamin moved through Naples. Indeed, in this manner, Benjamin's mobile and visually-inflected *Denkbilder* emerge as an alternative model for the practice of historical reflection, a model that replaces the idea of the storyteller with that of the traveler or tourist. Rather than a nineteenth-century Rankean narrator who constructs his histories in terms of continuities of time and place, continuities grounded likewise in the conceit of authorial integrity, we approach the past as one might plunge into a unfamiliar city—in all the modes of traveling collection and epistemological pastiche that we linked to the mobile experience of modernity. For where, after all, does the city (any city) begin and where does it end? Which broad avenues are significant, and which hidden alleyways are even more significant? In which direction must we move as we pass through its precincts, and according to what sequence? What would it even mean to describe the space of such a place in terms of a single narrative perspective or teleological movement? For anyone short of perhaps James Joyce and his Dublin Odyssey, conventional narrative thus tends to collapse in the face of a modern urban experience characterized precisely by its discontinuities, its porous passages and its ephemeral encounters. And in the same way, to engage the past not as a narrator, but as a *Flâneur*, collector or traveler, is likewise to encounter a more unruly and nomadic space, a region described best in terms of image and montage rather than those of text and narrative.

It is from this vantage point, then, that we have sought to describe the nomadic histories of Burckhardt, Warburg (and the counter-example of Freud), and Benjamin as

each traced out visually inflected pasts at the margins of a historiographical moment that was dominated by the texts and narratives of German historicism. At the same time, however, it is not enough to simply situate these histories, explorations and *Denkbilder* as more refined and mature examples of the sort we saw in Burckhardt's early and idiosyncratic collection of *Antiquities*. A central task of the present work, in other words, is one of pressing beyond a simple, and all too appealing, understanding of these interventions as idiosyncratic supplements to "regular" or conventional historical practices and epistemologies. For to situate them in this manner is to dismiss them in the same fashion that we too easily dismiss any other liminal mode of historical representation or reconstruction. By configuring them as supplements or merely curious alterities, we come perilously close to pacifying the very nomadism that makes them so valuable; we come close to reterritorializing their deterritorializations in a form that no longer threatens conventional historiographical approaches. As in the case of Burckhardt's *Antiquities*, to pause for a moment and consider these historical approaches is to recognize not only a living encounter with history, but a past that opens up radical new ways of conceiving the relation between past and present. As brief glimpses into historical worlds constructed in radically different ways, the value of such approaches lies in the radical challenge they pose to the ways in which history is constructed and represented. And if the practice of history is something more than the rote application of well-worn methods, concepts, rhetorics and approaches, then we should be ever alert to those more nomadic movements of historiography—not only as they move beyond and across conventional territories, but as they call the very status of those territories into question. If freedom is always and everywhere the freedom to think differently, as Rosa

Luxemburg once claimed, then a living engagement with the past always and everywhere consists of the freedom to encounter that past differently.

It is with these concerns in mind that the *Nomad Past* set out to explore the specific ways in which cultures of visibility, travel and consumption worked together to shape (and reshape) the experience, production and consumption of historical knowledge within the modern German-speaking world. In what ways, in other words, does a visually inflected experience of the past produce an alternative landscape of temporal experience and historical belonging/identification? The preceding chapters have sought to determine how mobile forms of visibility (art tours, sightseeing, urban experience) conditioned the reception of historical traces and historically resonant spaces, and how ideologies of temporality were implied (and subverted) by regimes of visual consumption. Indeed, in examining the German visual encounter with Italy and the traces of its various histories, a primary focus has been that of discovering how the visual experiences of travel and mobility could either reinforce or subvert powerful, nationally-oriented historical narratives and imaginaries. The *Nomad Past*, in other words, has sought to reveal the ways in which the mobile and visual consumption of Italian spaces (and Italian histories) complicated the sense of historical “situated-ness” that had emerged so powerfully in the course of the German nineteenth century.

Our discussion of Burckhardt, for example, examined the ways in which his visual and synchronic reception of the Italian past opened a cosmopolitan and aesthetic alternative to nationalist historiographies of Prussian school historicism. From his early professional peregrinations to the pages of the *Cicerone*, and ultimately to his final visual (and photographic) encounters with Rome, Burckhardt produces an “invitation” to a

visual reception of Italy's historical pasts and aesthetic monuments, an invitation that encourages a reconstruction of subjectivity in relation to its experience of time. More specifically, Burckhardt pursues a reframing of the nineteenth-century subject's relation to historical narratives, and insists on its imaginative and pleasurable activity in the process of such historical reconstruction. Thus, in the example of the *Cicerone*, Burckhardt draws a close link between the experience of aesthetic pleasure (*Genuss*) and the cultural value of historical remembrance, a link that is established above all through the active agency and participation of the subject as viewer, traveler and human being. Likewise, in Burckhardt's late journeys to London and Rome, we found the historian ruminating on the changing forms of nineteenth-century urban experience even as he experimented with ways of representing those changes in visual forms. Furthermore, in the face of a century that seemed intent on eliding and obscuring its pre-modern pasts, the Basel historian found—in the technology of photography and in the architectonic of Rome—a mode of subjective experience that both permitted and encouraged a degree of agency in interpretive pleasures of *Errathen* and *Kombinieren*. What Burckhardt explored, in other words, was a nomadic space that still allowed movement for alternative and idiosyncratic modes of historical interpretation. Italy became for Burckhardt a temporal and visual space constructed not from the materials of great texts, grand narratives and national historiographies, but primarily from the interpretive agency of the travelling and collecting subject.

On the other hand, in the figures of Aby Warburg and Sigmund Freud, we encountered German receptions of Italian pasts as they emerged at the turn of the twentieth century. This moment of emerging modernisms was, somewhat paradoxically,

also one in which the status of the past—and its stubborn significance for modern culture and modern subjectivity—emerged as a theme of vital import. Announced most powerfully in the currents of *Renaissancismus* (or Renaissance-cult), and still present in the residual traditions of German classicism, the Italian past emerged as a landscape in which to explore and contest the individual and cultural significance of history for Germans at home and abroad. It was an historical region whose reception (and consumption) produced highly charged confrontations among elite national historiographies and the fashionable historicisms in architecture and the arts. In response to these currents—characterized by equal measures of horror and fascination—Aby Warburg embarked on a career of nomadic research whose geographical span extended from the Arizona desert in the American West to the Laurentian Library in Florence. At the same time, however, Warburg's nomadism was manifest not merely in geographical terms, but was propelled into novel methodological and epistemological territories by his commitment to a visually-inflected and spatially-mobile form of cultural history, a history that moved across categories and boundaries formed by established historical periods and categories. In these visually constructed historical spaces, furthermore, conventional borders between North and South, between antiquity and modernity, between text and image became ever more indistinct. Such explorations culminated, of course, in Warburg's final *Mnemosyne* project, an experiment that realized a truly mobile and nomadic cultural history by disentangling historical images from textual exposition. Thus, while Warburg gravitated towards an historical vision that was disaggregated into ever smaller imagistic elements, if his methods produced dissolution of conventional narratives of German history and academic historicism, they nevertheless went far in

demonstrating Benjamin's dictum that history indeed decays into images rather than stories.

By contrast, while no less engaged with issues of visibility and travel, Sigmund Freud's *fin-de-siècle* preoccupation with Italian history seems to emerge with a greater emphasis on moments and modes of construction and reconstruction. Where Warburg's methodologies tended to produce a disaggregated and porous field of mobile images—a past in which traces, elements and variables proliferated faster than the Hamburg historian could stitch them into coherent narratives—Freud scrupulously returns his visual and nomadic wanderings into the newly constructed and emerging framework of psychoanalysis. Indeed, if Warburg's library took shape in response to that scholar's idiosyncratic mode of collecting and arranging its elements, Freud's collections (and recollections) are always made to obey the law of his psychoanalytic archive. Whereas the Warburg library thus became a space of collection always threatened by the centrifugal force of its leader's nomadic interests, the Freudian archive seems to exercise a powerful centripetal force on its constituent elements. In this way, Freud's excursions to Italy—whether in fantasy, in fiction or in actuality—are almost always accompanied by a return journey, a moment of recapitulation in which observations and experiences are returned to (and impressed in) the archival matrix of psychoanalysis. Hence, we discover those curious and uncanny doublings and re-doublings that emerge in Freud's attempt to “record” Italian insights (and sights) in the scenes of psychoanalytic writing. Yet Freud's very attempts to manage and represent his travelling experiences—in what he considers to be the clarifying light of psychoanalysis—are precisely the gestures that generate those shadows of uncertainty and uncanniness that hover around his Italian

experiences. Thus, if Warburg's archival methodologies seem to produce a dispersive and schizophrenic (yet mobile) field of disaggregated images, Freud's well-lit circle of psychoanalysis seems haunted by presences that its archive can never quite fully capture.

The third section of the *Nomad Past* reflects on a moment in the mid-1920's, in which Italian travel and German tourism were becoming available as modes of consumption available to wider social and cultural spheres. At the same time, however, this moment saw the marked decline of the institutional power of German historicism, and in this convergence of trends, the historical resonances of travel became still more urgent. History and travel, in other words, found themselves engaged with, and confronted by, emerging spheres of consumer culture that applied their own epistemologies and ideologies to the objects of the past. A recognizable modern tourist culture, in other words, was in the process of emerging, and the modes of its consumption were in turn influencing the ways in which the past was likewise produced, exchanged and consumed. In this fashion, therefore, the auratic traditions of German historicism—a tradition in which the past assumes an almost aesthetic distance from the present—found themselves increasingly confronted by a past that could be bought and sold, a past inserted as a commodity in circulation with other commodities of modern capital. “Everything that the foreigner desires, admires, and pays for is "Pompeii." writes Benjamin in relation to this commodification of time, "Pompeii" makes the plaster imitation of the temple ruins, the lava necklace, and the louse-ridden person of the guide irresistible.”³⁵²

³⁵² Walter Benjamin and Asja Lacis, „Naples“, in *Walter Benjamin: Selected Writings Volume 1*. Howard Eiland, Michael W. Jennings, and Gary Smith eds. (Cambridge, MA: Belnap Press, 1996). 415.

By reading Benjamin's "Naples," therefore, in relation to a contemporary Baedeker travel guide and alongside essays from the German arts magazine *Italien*, we discovered a variety of modes and methods by which visitors may be invited to experience (or consume) similar landscapes—the city and region of Naples in that moment of the mid-1920's. Yet each of these texts presents its respective landscapes in accordance with very different sets of visual principles and ideological coordinates. In the texts of Benjamin, Baedeker and *Italien*, readers are encouraged to reconstruct the historicity of the Neapolitan environment in ways that situate the traveler in a specific and ideologically charged relation to the historical traces around him or her. In the end, however, what Benjamin provides is a model of sensitive spatial and historical experience that refuses to embrace either the auratic (and anesthetized) historicism of *Italien* or the brute materiality of history as tourist kitsch. Put differently, Benjamin resists the temptation of territorializing the past in terms of either a crude ideality or a crude materiality. Instead, the "Neapel" *Denkbild* pursues a more nomadic recovery and representation of Naples, a process of mapping (not tracing) in which the emphasis on visibility, mobility and agency (through *Flânerie*) produces an historical topography that is radically porous in both temporal and spatial terms. Thus instead of engaging the city as a sequence of narratives, or in the subjective role of storyteller or narrator, Benjamin constructs the spaces and times of Naples in the casual movements and fragmentary anecdotes of the tourist and collector. Indeed, as if referring back to his Neapolitan insights, Benjamin later remarked in the *Passagen-Werk* that, "The constructions of history are comparable to military orders that discipline the true life and confine it to

barracks. On the other hand: the street insurgence of the anecdote.”³⁵³ And thus the *anecdote* was for Benjamin the *antidote* to a history disciplined by the grand narratives of historicism of which he was critical; the anecdote was, in Deleuzian terms, precisely that nomadic “war machine” that permitted Benjamin to envision historical spaces that could not be represented from the perspective of traditional historicism. Like Burckhardt’s Rome and Warburg’s *Bilderatlas*, Benjamin’s “Naples” releases history from its bondage to narrative by recovering its fragmentary, anecdotal and ruinous dimensions.

In the end, therefore, what the *Nomad Past* seeks to show are those ways in which the construction of historical consciousness was not merely a contest conducted at home or in the multi-volume tomes of German historicism, but was something negotiated at various levels of discourse and practice, in various modes of embodied and visual experience, and in spaces that extended far beyond the familiar domains of region and nation. The various strands of the *Nomad Past*—its themes of travel, visuality and historiography--thus converge to reveal more complicated topographies of cultural, intellectual and social history. However, if these strands of travel, visuality and historiography are indeed to retain a mobile and transgressive character, we should take care that they don’t come to rest too quickly in those ready-made territories and conceptual frameworks that always threaten to capture and halt the movements of any kind of nomadism. Put differently, we must recognize that the meanings of the nomad take shape in the course of its concrete movements and not in the image or abstract territories across which it travels; and in turn, those territories and concepts that it crosses always run the risk of being themselves reified and transformed into rigid categories.

³⁵³ Walter Benjamin, *Arcades Project*, (S1a,3)

From this Deleuzian perspective, the nomad is forever confronted by the lure of settlement, its mobile concepts congealing into settled territories and neat sedentary concepts. The moving strands of the present work are, in similar fashion, by no means immune to this form of methodological deceleration and these moments of conceptual ossification. So as we reflect on the preceding chapters, we would be remiss if we did not examine the points at which our own explorations threaten to slip into those overly neat categories, those concepts and binaries that represent the capture and settlement of the nomad.

The preceding chapters have often invoked a distinction between those historical approaches based on textual and narrative models and those historiographies informed primarily by visual and optical imperatives. Where a narratively-oriented historiography might insist on formal requirements like strict sequential development, authorial integrity and an emphasis on primacy of textual interpretation, the more optically oriented historiographies could explore historical landscapes characterized by synchronicity, disruption of sequence and fragmentation. But at the same time, such distinctions can all too easily crystallize into rigid categories and crudely defined territories. For if this distinction between narrative history and visual history may hold in the abstract, it is precisely in this dimension that the movements of nomadism are arrested. The domain of the nomad is always and everywhere the sphere of practice, and in this domain, crude distinctions such as that between narrativity and visuality tend to become more or less exclusive. The distinctions we are making here, in other words, should be taken as purely analytic and provisional, a mode of categorization that recognizes no purely narrative and no purely visual historical approach. In practice, therefore, as Hayden White and others

long ago showed, even visually-oriented historians like Burckhardt may operate according to certain narrative tropes and rhetorics. And conversely, even the most textually and philologically oriented histories often pursue their arguments in visually sensitive ways. Theodor Mommsen's *History of Rome*, for example, a work that is firmly rooted in the author's philological skill and textual erudition, nevertheless opens with a rich visual tableau, a cartographic and geographic overview of the Mediterranean world as it might have been glimpsed at the dawn of the Roman Republic. To transform the "visual" and the "narrative" into new and mutually exclusive territories would be to bring the movements of a nomadic past to a standstill, and even if while such territories may briefly flare into existence, the ultimate goal is always that of showing the provisional and porous character of such boundaries.

In the same way, the chapters above often hover perilously close to a hard and fast distinction between the aesthetics of the Renaissance Classicism and the aesthetics of the Baroque. Indeed, the temptation offered by this simple binary distinction is only further amplified by the degree to which these aesthetics also suggest political, historical or cultural orientations. But here again, such a neat and abstract opposition is untenable in any but the most abstract dimensions. Leaving aside the degree to which these categories are used primarily as metaphors and analogies (and it is only in this sense that any Postmodern condition could possess characteristics of the Baroque), the present work uses the terms in ways that are by no means mutually exclusive. On the contrary, Renaissance and Baroque bleed into one another, presume one another, and communicate with one another in ways analogous to the relation between the concepts of Modernity and the Postmodernity. While a Baroque aesthetic may revel in incompleteness, in illusion

and in polyvocality—and in the tensions that thus result—the realism and seeming naiveté of the Renaissance is always already present to the Baroque as an interlocutor and a point of departure. Where the Renaissance, as we have seen, was characterized by its fascination the completion and repose of the circle, the Baroque merely represents the stretching and distortion of this circle into a de-centered (or multi-centered) ellipse. The relation, therefore, between the concepts of Renaissance and Baroque, at least as they are deployed in the present work is dialectical rather than absolute, a difference borne of intimate confrontations rather than complete *otherness*.

By the same token, however, the distinction between the aesthetics of the Renaissance and the Baroque is decisive for the argument of the *Nomad Past*. For if the approaches of narrative and visual-oriented history are not so easily disentangled from one another, the nomadisms we have described are defined primarily by the Baroque rhetorics and visual aesthetics that they appear to deploy. In short, the characteristic element of our various nomad pasts is located not in visuality as such, not merely in their emphasis on a scopically and optically-oriented history, but on a particular approach to the visual that is characterized here in terms of the Baroque. This Baroque visual idiom—with its antinomies of spirit and flesh, meaning and signification, ideality and materiality—permits in turn an approach to historical representation in which such tensions and antinomies are put to work rather than suppressed. The landscapes that emerge from such a baroquely nomadic historiography do not take shape in satisfyingly sequential narratives, nor do they rest upon the narrative integrity of a sovereign authorial presence, but they emerge instead as an assemblage of fragments, ruins and images. Their histories consist rather of lateral cross-sections, anecdotes and image-albums

(Bilderatlas) that represent history in terms of constellations rather than stories, as mosaics rather than paintings. From the Baroque aesthetic that permits these modes of historical collection and display, another vision of history emerges whose detours, ruptures and crooked timbers are no longer forced into the smooth regimentations of story and narrative.

In response to these reflections, it might be natural to wonder what becomes of our pasts when their narrative constellations thus decay into the images of their constituent stars. What happens to the landscape of history when its territories find themselves deterritorialized by the journeys of a nomad past? However, as Deleuze and Guattari make clear that deterritorialization is not an end in itself, and a schizophrenic multiplication of selves and meanings is but a station in a larger process, so too does the present work by no means wish to valorize a deconstructed or deterritorialized history for its own sake. In the past several decades, a good deal of literature has explored the rhetorical and formal imperatives that shape the writing of History, and many have claimed that the recognition of these imperatives ultimately entails the rejection of historical representation as a practice with claims to any truth value. Yet whether such a conclusion is celebrated or rejected, it rests on a vision in which History is cast out of the pristine sphere of logic, and plunged into the arena of rhetoric; where History had once been cloaked in the mantle of Truth, we are assured that it now speaks only in the rhetorical tongues of persuasion and power.

On the other hand, while the formal analysis of historical literature (either textual or visual) may represent an epistemological slippery slope for some—a slope whose end is greeted with either glee or resignation—the present work is committed to quite another

view. To be sure, such linguistic turns, literary deconstructions and conceptual deterritorialization may confront us with histories and representations whose contours are more fragmentary, disjoined and dispersed than those presented by traditional narrative realism. Indeed, under such pressures and through these critiques, the constellations that have inhabited our historical skies for so long may change their shapes or even disappear altogether. But at the same time, such pressures also permit and produce spaces for those movements of nomadism in our arrangement of historical landscapes. Where there once was only a Big Dipper—eternal and unchanging—we are once again freed to exercise a degree of agency in the creation of new constellations: a bear, a plow or even a coffin with a trail of mourners. Indeed, this is precisely the sort of metaphorical “blasting” to which Benjamin refers when he seeks to release individual fragments of the past from the congealed larger meanings of history and historicism. The deterritorialization of the past, the disaggregation of its traces out of the matrix of conventional history, is thus not an end in itself, but a decisive station in encountering it anew, a moment of disorientation that may reveal hitherto unexpected landscapes and geographies. From this perspective, to “blast” away the ossified forms of received history, to deterritorialize the constellations and meanings that have long comforted us, is not the “end” of historical representation but instead represents the very precondition of its living practice. It is the *otherness* of the nomad, and all its freely deterritorializing motions, that reveals a vision of the past that is as wondrously incomplete and protean as the present.

As we reach the end of the present work, however, we find that our final station resides not in the territories and nomadisms of the early nineteenth century, but in the historiographical terrain of the present moment. In some ways, of course, the present

moment is one very different from those we have described in the *Nomad Past*. The disciplinary territories marked out by the institutions and discourses of the German Historical School have long since dissolved, and have been replaced by a far more variegated historiographical landscape. The German historical *Zunft*, while still quite present and not without its share of influence, possesses now only traces of its former hegemonic powers and disciplinary solidarity. The special German paths that historicism helped to pave, were in the twentieth century first reversed and then abandoned altogether. Indeed, the issues that now confront the historiography of Germany have long been defined not by the frameworks and interests of nineteenth-century historicism, but by the powerful gravitational pull of Germany's catastrophic twentieth century. The territories of history, in other words, can no longer be so easily mapped onto the territories of nation and ideology. In a world of ever advancing globalism, and in the face of technologies of communication and "mechanical reproduction" that would have astounded Benjamin, the territories of historiography have become increasingly porous, and its institutional structures more varied. Thus, in many ways, history circulates today with unimaginable speed and often through previously unknown or unexpected passages.

At the same time, however, the past that we have described may nevertheless have much in common with the present moment. While the border guards that once manned the ramparts of discipline, field and ideology are no longer so watchful as they once were, while the territories that we inscribe and narrate into the contours of the past are perhaps less indelible than they once were, the historical discipline is nevertheless still disciplinary. Thus, both historian and history are—and perhaps necessarily—still conditioned by the practices of disciplinary tradition and the discourses of the

historiographical present. Furthermore, if advances in technology and communication have had a profound influence on contemporary historical practices, the nineteenth and twentieth century worlds of Burckhardt, Warburg, Freud and Benjamin also envisioned their pasts through the lens of a rapidly changing and accelerating modern world. Indeed, the nomadic explorations that we have traced owed much of their impetus to social and technological transformations within their respective moments of modernity. The increasing ubiquity and availability of convenient modes of transportation not only made possible the rapid expansion of nineteenth-century leisure travel, but also made possible new forms of mobility for the historian and researcher. The emergence of photography and other forms of “mechanical reproduction” likewise exerted a gradual but decisive influence on the ways in which historians “envisioned” the past, introducing a vast new horizon of documentary sources and traces. Thus, where the experience of the past in the twenty-first century is being reconfigured—literally before our eyes—by memories and histories delivered by television and the internet, the period from Burckhardt to Benjamin similarly represents an era readjusting its past through the rapidly changing lens of its present.

In *Archive Fever*, Derrida ponders similar questions when he looks at Freud’s archival interventions and wonders what forms such an archive might have assumed at another historical moment and within a different technological landscape. If the present work has examined the ways in which new forms of visibility and mobility conditioned the ways in which history could be conceived and written, Derrida in turn reflects on how technological transformations in the form of the archive—any archive—inform the content of what is there archived. “This means that,” writes Derrida,

in the past, psychoanalysis would not have been what it was (any more than so many other things) if E-mail, for example, had existed. And in the future it will no longer be what Freud and so many psychoanalysts have anticipated, from the moment, for example, became possible. [...] But the example of E-mail is privileged in my opinion for a more important and obvious reason: because electronic mail today, even more than the fax, is on the way to transforming the entire public and private space of humanity, and first of all the limit between the private, the secret (private or public), and the public or the phenomenal. It is not only a technique, in the ordinary and limited sense of the term: at an unprecedented rhythm, in quasi-instantaneous fashion, this instrumental possibility of production, of printing, of conservation, and of destruction of the archive must inevitably be accompanied by juridical and thus political transformations.³⁵⁴

Like the nineteenth-century, therefore, the present moment confronts a situation where the forms and objects of archivization, historicization and remembrance are undergoing an episode of radical transformation. And in the course of this transformation, the ways in which historians document and envision the past—or record and preserve it for the future—must likewise emerge in new and unexpected ways. As the mobilities and visibilities of historical traces and records accelerate in the coming century, as the political and institutional spaces of professional history encounter the spaces of an increasingly digitalized world, so too will the territories by which we remember and organize the past be reconfigured and reorganized.

And thus we return to the *Monumenta Germaniae Historica* (MGH) and Burckhardt's anthology. For beginning in the 1990's and continuing until present, the MGH has been gradually emerging as the dMGH. The *Monumenta Germaniae Historica*, in other words, has undertaken the project of the complete digitalization of its 357 volumes and 166,285 pages, a project available online as the *digitalisierte Monumenta Germaniae Historica* (dMGH). Originally begun over a decade ago as the

³⁵⁴ Derrida, *Archive Fever : A Freudian Impression*. 17.

elektronische MGH (eMGH), in which the volumes were translated into CD-ROM form, the current “digital” approach has pursued a web-based model. Indeed, while the eMGH was welcomed at the time as an important resource by the historical community, its digital revision is aimed at addressing concerns about the visual nature of the documents. As Bernhard Assmann and Patrick Sahle describe it in a report entitled, “Digital ist Besser”:

Die neuere texttheoretische Forschung fasst unter dem Begriff der „bibliografischen Codes“ zusammen, dass die Materialität und Visualität der Druckausgaben Informationen liefert, die zur angemessenen Rezeption der Texte benötigt werden. Für die MGH bedeutet dies z.B., dass es wichtig ist, die spezifische Historizität einer Ausgabe möglicherweise schon an ihrer visuellen Erscheinung erkennen zu können, um ihren editorischen Status einzuschätzen und die eigene Benutzung daran auszurichten. Diese und weitere Überlegungen haben die MGH schließlich im Jahr 2003 bewogen, das Paradigma der geglätteten Volltextdatenbank durch einen Ansatz der Retrodigitalisierung zu ersetzen, der zunächst auf die Verfügbarkeit der Druckausgaben als Bilddigitalisatesetzte³⁵⁵

Thus, not only has the MGH been rendered in a searchable text format, but its current digital approach will now reproduce the texts in the form of digitized images so that the “materiality” and “visuality” of the documents may be preserved to some degree. At the beginning of the twenty-first century, then, one of the great models of the textually oriented and hermeneutically inclined tradition of German historicism finds itself drifting ever closer to the alternative model presented by the youthful anthology of Jacob Burckhardt. No longer simply a visual supplement or appendage, the image—digital or

³⁵⁵ Bernhard Assmann, and Patrick Sahle, *Digital Ist Besser : Die Monumenta Germaniae Historica Mit Den Dmgh Auf Dem Weg in Die Zukunft - Eine Momentaufnahme*, vol. 1, Schriften Des Instituts Fur Dokumentologie Und Editorik (Köln: 2008). 8.

otherwise—takes its place beside the text as both archival object and mode of archivization.

Furthermore, if the reception of modern forms of visual culture represented an important element in the historical nomadism of our figures—from Burckhardt to Benjamin—then the visual and digital influence of the World Wide Web likewise presents similar opportunities. The visual dimensions of Burckhardt’s anthology, as we have seen, were an essential part of his fragmentary youthful project. It revealed a history that emerged in the form of pastiche or bricolage, a history whose visual “details” dissolved original contexts and reconstructed them as historical images. In this way, the visions of Burckhardt’s “Antiquities” not only shows another means of communicating and representing the past, but also demonstrates the way that an active and mobile visibility enforces both the deterritorialization and the reterritorialization of traditional texts and documents. We might ask, in other words, what happens to the historical text or document when it is lifted out of its well controlled narrative environment—the monograph, the collection, the archive—and it is transferred into a realm of “cutting and pasting”, a realm initially explored in nomadisms of Burckhardt’s *Anthology*, in Warburg’s *Bilderatlas* or in Benjamin’s *Passagen-Werk*? What new historical territories and deterritorializations of the past may emerge from such movements and reconfigurations?

Thus, where the nineteenth-century saw new forms of historical reflection emerging through, and conditioned by, rapidly changing cultures of mobility and visibility, the present moment confronts a similar set of possibilities, here amplified by the inflections and interventions of a digitized history. As Assmann and Sahle put it in

relation to the dMGH, the digitalization of historical documents creates more than just another supplemental repository or archive. Instead, by situating the texts into a contemporary web-based or virtual setting, the dMGH represents a fundamental re-contextualization of the dusty volumes of the Monumenta, instantly breaking them out of their textual territories and accelerating them into the unbounded spaces of the Web. And the results are not just technical in nature, but cut to the core of what a collection like the MGH can do:

Explizit gemachte Verweise gehen über den Rahmen der MGH nicht mehr nur virtuell, sondern auch real hinaus. Wenn alles nur noch einen Klick entfernt ist, dann verschwimmt die Grenze zwischen innen und außen. Die Ressourcen für die Mittelalterforschung wachsen zusammen. Bei der Verlinkung zu weiteren Ressourcen wie dem Marburger Lichtbildarchiv oder digitalisierter Sekundärliteratur geht es teilweise um automatische oder zumindest automatisierbare Prozesse, teilweise ist aber eine intellektuelle Nacharbeit nötig und sind fachliche Entscheidungen gefragt. Damit fließt aber neues Wissen in die alten Bände ein. Ihr wissenschaftlicher Wert wird erneut merklich gesteigert. Die Editionen gewinnen an Aktualität.³⁵⁶

A simple shift, therefore, in the method of archivization or in the technology of its representation may not only expand our understanding of how to use such archives, but it also represents the opportunity for novel and nomadic visions of the past itself, a past that is imagined through the visual and mobile interconnectedness of the World Wide Web. Indeed, as the photograph emerged as a point of fundamental reorientation in the way that modernity understood time, movement and memory, so too will the virtual and rhizomatic architectures of the internet likely condition the way in which the twenty-first century remembers and organizes its own pasts.

³⁵⁶ Ibid., 42

Several decades ago, to contextualize these issues in another way, critics and historians such as Hayden White began to document the manner in which the writing of history partook of the same tropes and structures of other literatures of the modern era. The past, in other words, was thus bound to emerge in consonance with the formal imperatives of nineteenth-century narrative, in its strict linearity, in its authorial integrity and in its complement of traditional tropes. And while such observations prompted more than a few historians and scholars to declare the end of history as a rigorous human science—declarations made with either resignation or glee—the literature nevertheless had the salutary effect of requiring historians to become more sensitive to their own textual practices, and the ways in which these too could carry and transmit unwanted ideological baggage. But such literature may also alert us to the impact that the Internet may likewise have on both the form and content of historical knowledge in the current century, alert us to things of more intimate disciplinary concern than internet plagiarism or sites like RateMyProfessor.com. In other words, if history is written—or archived, understood and experienced—in forms drawn in part from its cultural and disciplinary *habitus*, then what sort of history emerges from the age of the internet, and how might it be different from that which characterized the previous centuries?

The cultures, organizations and accessibilities of the internet, after all, are of a radically different nature than those of the printed text. Indeed, if the visual temporalities of Burckhardt, Warburg, Freud and Benjamin explored those spaces just beyond the territories of a textually oriented historical discipline, if their nomadisms were among the first to undertake a visual reorganization of historical reflection, then the contemporary moment emerges as one in which such impulses could be powerfully amplified and

generalized. For example, where the printed text, in any of its historiographical genres, has its expansive and avowedly inter-textual moments, it is also a space of enclosure and boundedness (or bindedness), a space that at least rhetorically insists on its internal coherence and on the integrity of authorship. While a textual collection like the MGH might have its moments of dispersion, moments that bring it into unforeseen contact with other texts and contexts, it is nevertheless precisely what it says it is—a collection. As Derrida might have put it, the *Monumenta* is an archive, a space of law under which its documents are submitted to a set of powerful organizing principles. In terms that Deleuze might prefer, the MGH manifests itself as an example of arborescent logic, a space that produces and reproduces historical knowledges and territories. On the other hand, as it is woven into the contemporary spaces of the Web, the digital MGH takes shape in a very different environment. In contrast to the traditional forms of the text—both material and discursive—the structure of the Web is rhizomatic rather than arborescent, its utility and power bound up in its unbounded and interconnected nature. Thus, one might ask where a book begins and where it ends, or one could enquire if a collection is complete, but such questions become meaningless when applied to the internet. Where, after all, does the internet begin and where does it end? And when can we say that it is complete? Indeed, even with respect to specific regions of the internet, such questions are meaningless. Once inserted into the Web, as the authors of “Digital ist Besser” describe, the dMGH immediately bleeds into adjacent virtual territories. With a simple click, the space of the dMGH arrives in that of the Marburger Lichtbildarchiv, and from there to a nearly infinite number of linked territories. And if the accelerations of Burckhardt and the others produced a set of nomadic histories, then the visualities and

mobilities of the present—as manifest in both virtual and material spheres—will doubtless yield novel encounters with, and organizations of, the past. What such dispersed and rhizomatic archives and histories will look like is impossible to tell. From this perspective, new forms of nomadism can be seen emerging, nomads that wander territories and gather speed in the virtual Steppe of the World Wide Web. In the emerging fields and landscape of digital history, in other words, the contemporary moment may represent a unique opportunity to glimpse a vision of pasts that are as mobile, visual and nomadic as the present.

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