

# Benjamin's Dialectical Image and the Textuality of the Built Landscape

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## Introduction

In *The Arcades Project*, Walter Benjamin describes the architectural expression of nineteenth century Paris as a dialectical manifestation of backwards-looking historicism and the dawn of modern industrial production (in the form of cast iron and mass produced plate glass).<sup>1</sup> Yet in the same text, Benjamin refers to the dialectical image as occurring within the medium of written language. In this paper, I will first discuss the textuality of the dialectical image as it emerges from Benjamin's discussion of allegorical and symbolic images in his *Trauerspiel* study and the 'wish symbol' in *The Arcades Project*.<sup>2</sup> I will then discuss the 'textual reductionism' implicit in Benjamin's theory of the dialectical image, in which the dense pluralities of urban space are reduced to a finite script to be pieced together through Benjamin's constructivist method of historical observation. The textuality of the dialectical image will be elaborated on by discussing it in relation to the practice of translation. This discussion will be further contextualised by discussing a cadre of German/Austrian planners and architects who attempted to translate architectural idioms between cultural identities in Kemalist Era Turkey. The article concludes with a short recapitulation on the dialectical image as both an object of scrutiny and a method of observation, one which also takes into consideration the specific historicity of the observer.

## The built landscape and the image

The modernist movement in architecture and urban planning has left us with a bevy of discourses that shape the built landscape into a monolithic symbol, a narrative in which structures and the voids between form a unity of purpose. Ebenezer Howard's Garden City of To-Morrow, Frank Lloyd Wright's Broadacre City, Daniel Burnham's Colombia Exposition and City Beautiful, and Le Corbusier's *La Ville Radieuse* are all overarching systems of civic, structural and aesthetic organisation that regiment space through their various ideological presuppositions.<sup>3</sup> These schemes represent a utopian yearning for stasis, equilibrium and most importantly 'imageability'. Implicit in these discourses on the city and the structures within it is the attempt to bind the variegated strands of perception and interpretation through the emergence of a new symbolic and visual language. Each utopian salvation narrative enunciates its own symbolic vision of the peaceable kingdom.

Much of the discussion around image in architecture and urban planning is firmly entrenched within the realm of the symbolic. For example, the landscape of Le Corbusier's unbuilt *Ville Radieuse*, as defined by the clean geometric surfaces of the 'Cartesian skyscrapers' separated by vast swathes of green space, symbolises the human subject's return to a golden age of optical simplicity.<sup>4</sup> In urban planner Kevin Lynch's *The Image of the City*, urban space is described as capable of being suspended

into a series of interconnected images that the city-goer creates in his or her mind. The 'legibility' of a cityscape, thus, becomes a particular place's ability to be 'recognised and organised' into 'a coherent pattern'.<sup>5</sup> This ability of urban space to be replicated through the pneumatic scaffolding of its inhabitants is what Lynch refers to as its 'imageability'.<sup>6</sup> A 'workable image' must be reified into a legible symbol to be visually comprehended by those wayfinding through the convulsive terrains of urban space. Thus, in this context, urban space requires an equilibrium, a stability in which the flux of becoming is arrested so that it may be observed carefully within the tranquil fullness of time.<sup>7</sup> For example, the 'image' of Le Corbusier's cruciform 'high-rises in a park' with its programmatic attempt to abolish 'randomness' through an annulment of human interaction is inherently 'undialectical', partly due to its imposition of an ideological agenda onto the contingencies of the built environment.

Walter Benjamin's concept of the dialectical image rests on a dialogical model in which the essence of 'imageability' is not contained in the image itself but in the relationship between the viewer and the object. In this way, the dialectical image is a method of seeing rather than an inert sign. Moses Maimonides discusses the Hebrew word *zelem* as image: 'let us make men in our *zelem*'.<sup>8</sup> In contradistinction to the word *to'ar* that denotes external appearance, *zelem* implies a being's intrinsic sense of unity and purposiveness in the Aristotelian sense: 'the essence of a thing whereby the thing is what it is; the reality of a thing in so far as it is that particular being.'<sup>9</sup> The Jewish taboo against graven images derives from the immateriality of the divine soul, which would thus be degraded by attempts to depict specific features. Yet, as Maimonides claims, idols are categorised as graven images because they are worshipped for the 'ideas they represent' instead of due to their physical appearance.<sup>10</sup> In this way, the image is a dialogically interpreted sign that requires the observer to classify an object as representative

of something extrinsic to itself. The golden calf is a sacrilegious image not because of what it depicts (an animal) but what it is meant to signify (a deity).

W. J. T. Mitchell, in 'What is an Image', discusses this fraught relationship between the image as a symbol and a grammatical sign; Mitchell sees this tension as an illusion obscuring the difference between reality and its mimetic representation: 'the image is the sign that pretends not to be a sign, masquerading as (or, for the believer, actually achieving) natural immediacy and presence.'<sup>11</sup> The image inhabits the conceptual space between that of an indexical idea and a living organism that constantly alters in meaning and significance. The ambiguous nature of the image haunts Benjamin's writings from his early study on the Baroque allegorical emblem (as discussed below) to his discussion of the dialectical image in *The Arcades Project*, and complicates any attempt to characterise Benjamin's approach to the concept of image as either an object of knowledge or an optical method of perceiving reality. The paradoxical nature of the image also affects the way in which the built landscape is discussed as both a contingent space that only exists as a field of diverse, sporadic human interactions, and as an indexical unity of information that can be read as a script with a fixed meaning, coordinated through grammatical and syntactical structure. In terms of the latter, there is a threat of reductionism that informs any attempt to forge a systematic and transcendent framework that could universally apply to the fluctuating and culturally specific habits of human habitation (as discussed below). This attempt to abstract the complexity of an inhabited place into the conceptual space of an urban planner, and then to 'translate' its formal and aesthetic parameters across geographic/cultural boundaries, relies on a belief that there is a universal spatial/architectural language that could equally apply to every corner of the globe. This global modernising project of Western architectural and urban planning grounds itself on the notion

that the built landscape can be envisioned as a text that can be scrambled, translated and rephrased in order to fit the interests of the planner or architect as author. As we will discuss, the 'translatable' nature of space and its condensation into images is both formulated and contested within Benjamin's own writing.

Benjamin problematises the normative concept of the image as a discreet unit of signification by discussing the tensions between varying kinds of images. We will first trace this discussion by analysing Benjamin's binary pair of the allegory and the symbol as two contrasting forms of images before we discuss the implications within the dialectical image.

### The allegorical image

In the *Trauerspiel* study, written in the form of a *Habilitationschrift* in 1925 for the University of Frankfurt, Benjamin describes a particular Baroque view of nature in which all nature is embedded with the dynamic fluidity of history as manifested through the ubiquity of ruination and decay within material reality. Influenced by Warburg's work on the *Nachleben* of images, Benjamin describes this baroque optic straddling various temporalities (between the contemporaneous moment of the Reformation and antiquity).<sup>12</sup> This baroque view emerged out of Calvinist Reformation theology. Calvinism changed the emphasis of salvation from that of good works to a narrative of predestination. Thus, the individual exists within a melancholic relationship to external reality, bereft of personal agency regarding redemption. This kind of dejected mode of reflection manifests itself through the baroque emblem.

As Benjamin defines it, *Melencolia*, visually depicted in the famous Dürer print of the same name, is a numbed emotional state, outwardly focused on 'the utensils of active life' with which one cannot enter into a creative or natural relationship,

since they solely exist as sterile, unused 'objects of contemplation.'<sup>13</sup> In this moment, defined by the secularisation of human history, wrought by the doctrine of Calvinist predestination, the melancholic individual feels a lack of agency in their own fate, which can no longer be altered by their own volition. This sentiment induces an estranged relationship to the living world, which can then only be mediated through an 'enigmatic satisfaction' in contemplating the fragments of history. Benjamin writes:

Mourning is the state of mind in which feeling revives the empty world in the form of a mask, and derives an enigmatic satisfaction in contemplating it. Every feeling is bound to an a priori object, and the representation of this object is its phenomenology.<sup>14</sup>

In Benjamin's characterisation, melancholia is described as an emotional numbness that can increase 'the distance between the self and the surrounding world to the point of alienation from the body.'<sup>15</sup> This chasm thereby creates a melancholic optic in which an object is viewed not in its normative state of use but only as a fragmentary image of enigmatic wisdom.

In Baroque poetics, the 'false totality' of the classical symbol crumbles into allegory. The symbolic image of nature as statically benevolent is altered into a world of ever-present ruination and catastrophe, 'by its very essence [...] not permitted to behold the lack of freedom, the imperfection, the collapse of the physical, beautiful, nature'.<sup>16</sup> However, this ruin is not meant to signify a gradual descent but an integral part of the transformation between what Benjamin refers to as the relationship between 'material content and truth content'.<sup>17</sup> It is this ability to read the imprint of history's progression into the material world (in terms of both nature and language) that defines the baroque allegorical image which does not adorn through ornament but through a process of stripping away.<sup>18</sup> Unlike a symbol in which the truth content is revealed in

an instantaneous moment, the allegory, like a fossil that bears the marks of history, takes the form of a text in which the meaning constantly fluctuates depending on the historical situation of the reader. Thus, the allegorist's gaze transforms the natural world into a text; yet this text is not held in place through a fixed chain of meaning, but exists as a 'constellation of images' that are constantly altering their relationship to each other.<sup>19</sup>

### **From wish symbol to dialectical image**

Benjamin's dialectical image, as derived from his early work on allegory, has as its foundation a 'breaking point of an image out of the continuum of history'.<sup>20</sup> For Benjamin, the spectacle of the Paris arcades engendered its own means of imageability. Benjamin ascribes the creation of the Paris arcades in the 1820s to both the boom of the textile trade, which resulted in large expansive stores devoted to goods, and the advent of iron construction.<sup>21</sup> Rather than the old model of commerce in which individual producers sold their goods in small family-run stores along a dense street, a new form of public space was developed that was able to house a vast array of commodity goods within a unified superstructure. However radical a departure this new mode of production may have seemed compared with an older consumptive model, its structural manifestation in the form of arcades (*Passagen*) was adorned with similar fantastical 'wish-symbols' in that they evoked a sense of utopian longing for a lost world in which the built landscape folded gracefully into the natural world. For example, the fantastical arboreal qualities of the Paris arcades, with their signature use of iron buttresses reinforcing the vaulted glass ceilings that give vantage to the celestial heavens above, signify the growing distance between the modern consumer and the basic elements of nature: the trees and the starry cosmos. The aesthetic details of industrialised Europe mimicked the organic forms of the natural world while concurrently paving over it.

For Benjamin, the 'wish symbol' is intrinsically related to the phantasmagoria of commodification that was beginning to cast its dreamy spell during the construction of the Paris arcades. Thereby, the praxis of product commodification, as it alienated labour from the mode of production, created a framework through which the intrinsic 'use-value' of a product becomes eclipsed by its extrinsic market value. Yet, in order for this 'eclipse' to occur, aura, which Benjamin saw as lost to the age of mechanical reproducibility, must re-emerge under the 'phantasmagoric' guise of spectacle and commodity.

The phantasmagoric element of capitalism was first discussed by Marx in *Das Kapital* as 'commodity fetishism'.<sup>22</sup> Lukàcs conceptualised the fetishising of commodity as *reification*: 'The finished article ceases to be the object of the work-process. The latter turns into the objective synthesis of rationalised special systems whose unity is determined by pure calculation and which must therefore seem to be arbitrarily connected with each other.'<sup>23</sup> Lukàcs would further explore the relationship between fetish, experience and perception in his 1922 essay 'Reification and the Consciousness of the Proletariat', which Benjamin read in 1924.<sup>24</sup> He would later reinterpret the concept of 'reification', with its scientific connotations, as the concept of the 'phantasmagoric', which is the seemingly mystical force that transforms the individual into a consumer by imbuing objects with a 'use-value' that supersedes its functionality. This value is 'supernatural' because it is not intrinsic to the item, but rather it is extrinsically bestowed upon the item through commercial valuation. The material artefacts of Second Empire Paris are viewed by Benjamin as the living remains of modernity's primordial history (*Ur-Geschichte*).<sup>25</sup>

For Benjamin, the critical scholar of history must always be vigilant of modernity's proclivity to mythologise its past. Like Odysseus being tied to the helm of his ship, the historian must not fall prey to the

siren song of historicism's narratives, evident in the 'vague philosophemes' of Aragon's articulation of a modern mythos. As he exclaims in the prologue to *Les Paysans de Paris*:

Admirable gardens of absurd beliefs, premonitions, obsessions, and deliria, in which unknown and changing gods loom up [...]. How beautiful you are in your sand castles, columns of smoke! New myths are born beneath each of our steps [...] I want to reflect on nothing but these spurned transformations. A mythology takes shape and comes undone.<sup>26</sup>

Instead of celebrating the intoxicating effects of 're-enchantment' as aesthetically stamped upon the built landscape, Benjamin attempts to separate the mythological attributes of the 'wish symbol' from the material remains of history. This delineation can only occur through the 'awakening of a not-yet consciousness of what has been', a consciousness that is not intoxicated with the aroma of historicist fantasy.<sup>27</sup> In this way, the 'wish symbol' re-emerges as a dialectical image, bereft of its enchanting powers of manipulation. However, for this transformation to take place, the symbolic qualities of such an image must be destabilised from its overarching historicist narrative.

Much like in Freudian psychoanalysis, history is never entirely relegated to the 'no longer' of the past, but rather re-emerges through a series of repetitions. As Benjamin writes in *Convolute N*:

In the dialectical image, what has been within a particular epoch is always simultaneously, what has been from time immemorial. As such, however, it is manifest, on each occasion, only to a quite specific epoch [...]. It is at this moment that the historian takes up, with regard to the image, the task of dream interpretation.<sup>28</sup>

These moments of resurfacing are reflected in the particular physiologies of nineteenth century Paris's

spectacle architecture which modelled its decorative forms on archaic wish-symbols of a Utopian '*Ur-Geschichte*'. These structures were made to resemble a primeval forest resplendent with mass manufactured plate glass and cast iron modern building materials that only came into being in the early nineteenth century.

The new industrial modes of production ushered in radically new spaces for consumption. This innate process comes to surface in the form of the arcades, adorned with fantastical symbols, depicting a primordial paradise, bereft of class-based disparity. Thereby, the functional nature of pre-fabricated building materials (plate glass and cast iron) was actively 'repressed' within the architectural design of these modern structures in order for the mythological enchantments to take hold of consumers.

Benjamin reads the historicist character of the nineteenth century streetscape as 'internally divided and differential', both rooted in 'the expressive fecundity of nineteenth-century society and the ideological function of proliferating cultural forms in a single ontological feature of historical time.'<sup>29</sup> Buildings within the 'profane' network of commodity production and distribution (movie theatres, train stations, apartment blocks, and department stores) attempted to conceal their functional use through the aesthetic grammar of sacred 'hierophantic' space. Benjamin interprets the aesthetic language of nineteenth century metropolitan spectacle as a form of mental scaffolding necessary to cover over the chasm between modern industry's quickened pace of innovation and humanity's ability to absorb each shock of the new. In addition, Benjamin examined the way in which this particular form of architectural expression affected humanity's ability to acclimate itself to these convulsive transformations.

This form of architectural masquerade was a response to the new functionality of mass produced

building materials, such as iron and plate glass. Design solutions were needed to mask the origins of these new scientific inventions from plain sight. In an annotation of a passage from Falke's *History of Modern Taste*, Benjamin attempted to further define the cause of the peculiar nineteenth century aesthetic language by reiterating the relationship between this epistemic rupture and its concrete manifestation in the *Biedermeier* aestheticism of the nineteenth century's built landscape:

This perplexity derived in part from the superabundance of technical processes and new materials that had suddenly become available. The effort to assimilate them more thoroughly led to mistakes and failures. On the other hand, these vain attempts are the most authentic proof that technological production, at the beginning, was in the grip of dreams.<sup>30</sup>

According to Benjamin, the spectacular architecture of the nineteenth century, through its dependence on both technological production and the veiling of such innovations, is steeped in 'the collective dream' in which one epoch dreams its own future through a distorted or 'cunning' recollection of its recent past.

Iron, as one of the first prefabricated architectural materials, was, thus, repressed as a building material, merely used as a skeleton supporting the large body consisting of marble walls and plate-glass ceilings. As Benjamin writes: 'These builders model their pillars on Pompeian columns, their factories on houses, as later the first railway stations are to resemble chalets.'<sup>31</sup> This quote is abutted by an uncited passage from Sigfried Giedion's *Bauen in Frankreich*, which reads, 'Construction fills the role of the unconscious.'<sup>32</sup> This quote is taken out of context from Giedion's disparaging critique of the 'artistic drapery' of nineteenth century bourgeois architecture, in which the onslaught of technological progress is hidden under a veneer of backward-looking historicism. He writes, 'Outwardly, construction still boasts the old pathos; underneath,

concealed behind façades, the basis of our present existence is taking shape.'<sup>33</sup> Giedion saw the architectural frippery of Second Empire, *Jugendstil*, *Beaux Arts* and *Art Nouveau* design, as the mere product of 'individual dilettantism and pseudo-handicraft', which masked the importance of a building's function.<sup>34</sup> Giedion's discussion of modernist spatial unification is echoed in Benjamin's own description of the Paris arcades in *The Arcades Project*, as an 'optical illusion' in which street and residence forge an ambiguous liminal space between public space of leisure and commodified space, moulded by personal interest.<sup>35</sup>

By inserting Giedion's quote into his text, Benjamin draws a relationship between the anti-quarian aesthetic tendencies of nineteenth century Europe and societal anxiety regarding the new technical domination of engineering over architecture. Due to this trepidation over the role of science within aesthetic production, the collective fantasies of a classless society relegated to prehistory 'mingled with the new to produce the utopia that has left its traces in thousands of configurations of life, from permanent buildings to fleeting fashions', which thus manifested and exhibited the dialectical image. As Benjamin writes,

It's not that what is past casts its light on what is present, or what is present its light on what is past; rather [dialectical] image is that wherein what has been comes together in a flash with the now to form a constellation [...] image is dialectics at a standstill. For while the relation to the present to the past is a purely temporal, continuous one, the relation of what-has-been to the now is dialectical: is not progression but image, suddenly emergent.<sup>36</sup>

As evidenced in this quote, a dialectical image is a nexus of relations that emerges not in a single instant, as in the case of the 'wish symbol'. Rather, it becomes understood only in the fullness of time. The dialectical image is both an object of historical

circumspection and an optic through which normative historical narratives are critiqued.<sup>37</sup> This optic / object does not function as another link in the chain of cause and effect within historical consciousness, but as a means of beholding the instantaneous moment in which a historicist model of the past is brought into contestation by the critical observer. This awareness inspires an awakening from the long sleep of historicism. Thereby, the dreaming collective is capable of producing a particular set of images that allows for the 'historical epoch to elucidate its own contradictions and to redeem its own desires'.<sup>38</sup>

### The dialectical image as text

For Benjamin, the crucial moment of historical reflection is hermeneutically based in the 'reading' of the dialectical image, in which the innate contradictions and injustices of culture are imprinted like fossils. In this way, history is not teleologically determined, but a living possibility that must be constantly re-imagined. Therefore, the reading of the dialectical image exists within a duality of object and optic. The dialectical image, thus, is not just an abstract idea but a way of seeing both past and present simultaneously.

Benjamin's writings are replete with images that straddle the threshold between various temporalities. For example, in *Berlin Childhood around 1900*, specific images from the built landscape of his childhood become, in his recollection, imbued with significant meaning. For example, the caryatids that supported the loggia above his family's balcony are described as slipping away from their post in order 'to sing a lullaby [...] a song containing little of what later awaited [...] sounding the theme through which the air of the courtyards has forever remained intoxicating'.<sup>39</sup> This recollected song returns to Benjamin's inner ear years later after he has left Berlin and is vacationing in the south of Italy with his lover, Asja. He recounts: 'It is precisely this air that sustains the images and allegories which preside

over my thinking, just as the caryatids, from the heights of their loggia, preside over the courtyards of Berlin's West End.'<sup>40</sup> In this passage, Benjamin draws a relationship between one's comprehensive experience (*Erfahrung*) and the built environment. It is in this way that topographical forms shape mental forms. One's perception is moulded by the structures that spatially orient one's life-world. Thus, these adornments from the vernacular neoclassical design of Berlin architecture, as re-imagined by Benjamin, unconsciously direct, in a Proustian manner, one's eyes to other 'images and allegories' that also stand on a liminal threshold between the mythic past, culled from one's own subjective experiences, and the convulsive present as crystallised in an instance of visual legibility.<sup>41</sup> In the same way, the uneven paving stones in *Time Regained* are imbued with an atavistic charge due to Marcel's own past experiences upon the same pathway.<sup>42</sup>

Benjamin's specific interest in the Paris arcades, with their aesthetic replication of organic forms, is part of a personal constellation of historic images. The *mémoire involontaire* within *À la Recherche* was primarily an 'elegiac' attempt to return to an early happiness as a form of philosophical 'ensnarement'.<sup>43</sup> For Benjamin, Proust's novel is not truly a work of the *mémoire involontaire*, as the memories were actively conjured up by the author himself; Benjamin asks, 'Is not the involuntary recollection, Proust's *mémoire involontaire* much closer to forgetting than what is usually called memory?'<sup>44</sup> Benjamin was distrustful of Proust's tendency for 'self-absorption' which projects his own loneliness into society's 'overlound and inconceivably hollow chatter', which emanates from 'the sound of society plunging down into the abyss of this loneliness'.<sup>45</sup> As Benjamin writes in 'The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction', architecture is a form of art that best undergoes aesthetic 'reception in a state of distraction' through 'tactile appropriation' as opposed to optical visualisation.<sup>46</sup> The built landscape is only truly experienced as a work of art

through 'habit', as a durational experience, rather than attentive observation.<sup>47</sup> Thus, the built landscape is a text not read by the eyes alone, but also by the body, as stored within a personalised archive of somatic sensations.

In contradistinction to Proust's elegiac eye, the dialectical image, in its relation to the built landscape, is both an optic and an object. However, this perception of the present is related to one's subjective habits of reception. Thus, Benjamin's early memories of the caryatid-bearing loggias in Berlin pre-focused his own perceptive capabilities to be aware of similar referential architectural symbols, such as the Paris arcades. These images are 'read' in the awareness of the 'now of legibility'; they subsequently become part of one's pool of unconscious images. The present must be examined in both an inward sense (as is the case with Benjamin's writing on the loggia) and an external sense (by placing the image of the loggia within a constellation of interpretations). Therefore, a form of personal unconsciousness precedes an act of consciousness.

However, this reflective faculty comes to awareness through one's perceptive capabilities, as informed by a historic consciousness, a consciousness that is both the effect of a particular cultural perspective as well as the gradual evaporation of national or linguistic borders. Hence it is important to reiterate that Benjamin's theory of the dialectical image is not a closed system of historical perception, but an encounter in which the totality of the text is never foreclosed by an authoritative reading.

### **The dialectical image and the threat of textual reductionism**

Benjamin describes Paris as a 'linguistic cosmos', an alphabet, categorised through a linguistic system of '*lieux-dits*'.<sup>48</sup> These localities, for Benjamin, take the form of textual images read 'in the perilous critical moment on which all reading is founded'.<sup>49</sup> As this

quote exemplifies, throughout *The Arcades Project* Benjamin makes frequent reference to the relationship between the dialectical image and the symbolic realm of language. However, there is a danger hovering over the ubiquitous nature of Benjamin's concept of legibility. To read a topography as a text can only occur as a result of a primary reduction of all the varieties of human habitation into a common totalising language, which is precisely what Benjamin was critical of in the symbolic monumentality of nineteenth century Paris. Similarly, to be able to read someone is to dismember their being into an aggregation of details, factors, dispositions, physiologies and pathologies. In other words, as much as reading a place is an act of re-membering, it is concurrently an act of *dis-membering*: a process of fragmentation by which the integral fabric of a *place* is transformed into the abstract dimensionality of *space*.

If we are to read Benjamin's later work on space and architecture with his earlier writings on language then we are confronted with a reductive language of acculturation, in which diverse localities (*lieux-dits* – *Ortschaften*) become texts to be arranged and rearranged under the shadow of ideological 'judgment' (*Urteil*).<sup>50</sup> In his early essay 'On Language', Benjamin accords the fallen nature of language as wrought by the reduction of primordial name-language into a closed system of signification, in which words are ascribed a specific use-value. Ultimately, the process of acculturation is the force that fragments the primordial unity, as harmonised by an ineffable 'magical community with things'. Thus the 'Adamite language-mind' becomes segmented into the 'fallen language' of fragmentary communiques.<sup>51</sup> In the Garden of Eden, Eve's transgression introduces the concept of the binary into human history; that which is good only exists externally in relation to that which is evil. In this way, words lose their immanence. They become mere opposites in a chain of differentiating signifiers. Thus, when an examination of the built landscape



ventures into logocentric metaphors (when a place becomes 'legible'), the spectre of totalising ideologies emerges.

In *The Production of Space*, Henri Lefebvre warns about the danger of determining space as a system of linguistic patterns / codes in which 'representational space' becomes reduced to an abstract blueprint.<sup>52</sup> Lefebvre argues that spatial practice cannot be read as a static discourse in which spatial dynamics are fixed into an indexical pattern of communication, but rather as an ongoing activity. Like a score in which the music cannot be said to truly exist until it transcends the two-dimensional abstract plane of notation paper and vibrates the acoustical space around the bodies of the listeners, 'The actions of social practice are expressible but not explicable through discourse; they are precariously acted, and not read.'<sup>53</sup> The metamorphosis of place into space allows for concrete, indexical identifiability in exchange for the precariousness and contingencies that imbue a place with its texture and atmosphere. Space is always socially mediated, which is to say that the social aspect of space imbues it with an irreducible contingency. An effort to regulate space by envisioning the city as, in Benjamin's words, a 'linguistic cosmos', reduces the vital activities within lived space into a fixed and legible code to be deciphered. In this sense, knowledge is masked through its own techniques of systematisation.

We are now left with an essential question regarding translatability: if Benjamin's dialectical image implies a decodable act of reading as if it were a text, what is the risk of textualising space and spatialising the textual? We shall now turn to this question.

### **Translation and the built landscape in Kemalist Era Turkey**

If the supposed legibility of Benjamin's dialectical image is related to the act of reading a text, we

must now discuss this concept in relation to translation, since a translation is always at risk of being manipulated by the ideological dispositions of the translator. Similarly, by perceiving the built landscape as a script, this threat of textual reductionism could have a similar impact in the fields of architecture and urban planning. This interrogation will help us further examine the limitations of Benjamin's logocentric concept of the dialectical image as an architectural image that is 'read': if even a conservative translation often negates aspects of the original text, then what does a translation convey? What presumptions, conscious or unconscious, inform this conveyance?

In *Origin of Geometry*, Husserl claims that 'objective idealities' require the existence of universal language in order for an abstract concept to be passed down through history:

The Pythagorean Theorem, indeed all geometry, exists only in space [...]. It is identically the same in the original language of Euclid and in all translations, within each language it is the same [...]. For language itself, in all of its grammatical particularities, is made up of ideal objects.<sup>54</sup>

A universal mathematics is thus predicated upon a universal language of the human community. The linguistically possible is cordoned off by the dictates of what can be rendered into an objective ideality. Such a transcendental notion of universal translation exists on the presupposition that everything expressible in language has its correlative in objective reality. Thus Husserl's understanding of translation is more of an epistemological theory on what can be known and, in turn, how this knowledge can be expressed in language, which leads to the conclusion that language is only capable of expressing knowledge.

While not concerned with translating mathematical truths, Benjamin, in his oft-quoted essay on

translation, focuses on the question of translating linguistic truth in terms of literary language, as he asks this question: 'What does a literary work say?' What does it communicate? Benjamin both answers and further complicates his question in the very same paragraph:

the translation tells very little to those who understand it, for its essential quality is not statement or the imparting of information. Yet any translation which intends to perform a transmitting function cannot transmit anything but information – hence, something inessential. This is the hallmark of a bad translation.<sup>55</sup>

Benjamin concludes that a text's translatability is an intrinsic characteristic of the work itself.<sup>56</sup> Thus, according to this theory, certain works even demand the dispersal of their after-lives, such as myths, legends and sacred texts. By virtue of its 'translatability', the original text shares a 'vital connection' with its translation.

In contradistinction to Benjamin and Husserl, Derrida maintains that the act of translation requires the presumption of a false totality within any given language. For example, one must first come to a decisive conclusion on the parameters of the language itself before translation into another language if there is indeed a difference between a translation and a subjective re-telling of a text. Thus, even before an interlingual translation occurs between two distinct languages, an intralingual translation binds the text itself to the reader. Thus, in order to translate a word, one must first reduce the vast constellation of polyvalent meanings into an indexical unit as an epistemological object capable of replication and reiteration. Derrida discusses in his essay on the Tower of Babel how there is an innate impossibility in translating the word Babel as a proper name, as it both refers to the name of God and the name for the confusion that comes as an effect of humanity trying to construct a tower to the heavens. In this context, the emergence of a

single word in one language requires an essential act of totalisation. In order to come to a conclusive interpretation of a statement or utterance, one must both select and exclude a unified meaning to the word that one is translating as the process of linguistic transference cannot accommodate two disparate meanings. Much in the same way that 'business English' has proliferated into the common denominator of global communication, the reiteration of western architectural paradigms has reduced a 'multiplicity of idioms' into a 'structural order'. Through this process, the earth's surface is colonised by a specific chain of signifiers, an archive of what is 'sayable' while also demarcating the boundaries of what can be said. The translator becomes the technocrat of language, the one who striates the landscape, drawing the binary line between sense and non-sense.<sup>57</sup>

This essential paradoxical tension within the task of translation, as both a reduction and proliferation of linguistic meaning, is elucidated in Esra Akcan's recent book *Architecture in Translation*, which analyzes the relationship between city planning and translation theory within the context of the birth of the Kemalist Republic in 1930s Turkey.<sup>58</sup> During this period, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk and his team of technocrats consciously attempted to forge a collective identity of ethos for the new republic through the construction of both architectural landmarks and collective urban housing that would align the new state with the history of western modernity, while also exhibiting the singularity of Turkey's place in the history and geopolitics of technological modernisation. Such a process requires both an inward 'intralingual' conveyance within the Turkish State itself (in which a multitude of ethnicities, aesthetic traditions and religious symbolism are translated into a unified, totalised and totalising language of depiction) and an extrinsic 'interlingual' translation (in which the Turkish state translates the functional and aesthetic values of Eurocentric technological modernity). This process was not meant to imbue

the Turkish nation with the aesthetic accoutrements of Eurocentric culture, but rather evokes the Anatolian foundations already implicit in the West's aesthetic depiction of the modern city as a hygienic space that favours open spaces, flat surfaces and efficient movement.

However, this cross-cultural dialogue is already constructed over a composite of ossified notions of national identity. This condensation of identity into public space is exemplified in the translation of the idea of the Garden City from Ebenezer Howard's concept of the anglophone socialistic Garden City and the Anatolian reiteration as an exclusive neighbourhood for the elite. Howard's original plan consisted of low density housing inhabited by a socially diverse population, surrounded by green-belt agricultural land.<sup>59</sup> However, this image of the Garden City is based on a Germanic reiteration by Theodor Frisch in his translation of Howard's doctrine, translated as *die Stadt der Zukunft*.<sup>60</sup> These *Gartenstädte*, while not being entirely self-sufficient, resembled the post war new towns that formed along the edges of cities after the Second World War. Frisch used the green-belt agricultural spaces from Howard's doctrine not to reunite the modern worker with the natural environs of their supposed 'ancestors', but to further separate disparate sociocultural groups from each other and thereby reinvigorate the 'spiritual life' [*Gesundes Geistlebens*] of the community.<sup>61</sup> Herman Jansen, who designed the post-republic residential quarters of Ankara in the 1930s, was influenced by Frisch's version of the Garden City as exemplified by the Germanic categorisation of domiciles – '*Landhaus*' for the elite class, '*Einzelhaus*' for middle class families and '*Arbeitsviertel*' for factory workers. The Kemalist government specifically hired Jansen to translate the Garden City paradigm into a Turkish setting not entirely for functional reasons, since the green belt around the English and German Garden City was meant to be farmed by the inhabitants; this was impossible due to central Anatolia's arid

climate.<sup>62</sup> For Turkish authorities, the Garden City was symbolic of western progress in the rational spatial segregation between living space and work space. Such symbolic value was important for the Republic to present itself in contradistinction to Eastern religiosity, the crowded conditions of the Anatolian city and the recent memory of the Ottoman Empire's chaotic final years. Hence, it is difficult to attach architectural forms with fixed ideological presuppositions, since they are altered as they cross social/ political/ ethnic boundaries. For Howard, the single family house surrounded by green space symbolised modern man's 'return to the land'. For Frisch, it symbolised the need to create an ethnically 'pure space'. While for the Kemalist regime, the single family house represented an escape from the autocratic rule and crowded conditions of the Ottoman Empire.<sup>63</sup>

The complications implicit in the act of translating a built landscape from one cultural context to another is further evidenced in the use of serial construction (*Serienbau*) in Kemalist Turkey. Serial architecture developed during the housing policies and practices of Weimar era Germany by Ernst May in Frankfurt and Martin Wagner in Berlin. They designed a typology of *Siedlung* (housing estate) that would 'rationalise' building practices in the modern industrial city.<sup>64</sup> For these urban planners and designers, the individualistic Ruskinian aura of the house as a creation by a collective of craftsmen had to be negated to contend with twentieth century problems surrounding working class housing. These problems were confronted with the creation of a rational mode of construction that would be efficiently and cheaply designed as 'types' that could be endlessly reiterated, regardless of environmental and topographical conditions. The essential task of construction within this context is the ability to discern which type of already formulated domicile type fits best into any preconceived urban or rural context.

This type of 'architectural reproducibility' is exemplified in Austrian architect and designer Margarete Schütte-Lihotzky's report for the construction of village schools across Anatolia, as depicted in her report to a Kemalist government planning official from the late 1930s:

The projects and technical details need to be as simple as possible so that they can be constructed without qualified workers. The types of the village schools have to be completely different from each other, depending on the location, depending on the climate, local construction materials and the size of the town. The architecture of the village school must be in harmony with the whole landscape, environment and silhouette of the village, not only the form, roof and façade but also, above all, the building's color plays a role in this, naturally the color has to be different in each landscape. A school's color in the yellow-brown-green steppes of Anatolia will be different from another one in the middle of rich coastal vegetation. The interiors must also have friendly colors, for which one has to go back to the colors, paintings and crafts that were customary in the past.<sup>65</sup>

These intentions, expressed in the letter, are not of the Western missionaries of technological progress who attempted to transform specifically non-western (thereby 'pre-modern') cityscapes into transnational symbols of technological modernism, but of a sensitive planner who wants to give a voice to the peasant villagers of Anatolia, increasingly at odds with the rapidly modernising city centres of Istanbul and Ankara. Schütte-Lihotzky created a series of forty-nine permutations of structural types and then allowed the villagers to construct the ideal assemblage that would best represent their unique life-world. Hence, one could argue that Schütte-Lihotzky's consultative method of planning is a form of advocacy for the 'agency of the oppressed'.<sup>66</sup> However, this set of permutations is akin to a pre-set language of fixed signifiers that delineates the terrain of the enunciable or – in this

particular context – the buildable. Furthermore, these forty-nine types were designed around a western notion of a collectively ingrained totalised 'Turkish past', based on the assumption that the diverse ethnic populations of Turkish villages would be able to come to a consensus that there is an aesthetic type defining the particular identity of their polis. Therefore, Schütte-Lihotzky's method is based upon the presumption that ethnic identity, as well as its supposedly corresponding architectural ideations, is reducible or translatable to a series of common types. Thus, we arrive back at the essential question, how can such a mode of translating identity through material structure exist if that which is being translated is constantly in a state of flux, such as language itself? In this context, translation becomes a dubious exercise in the coercive consolidation of cultural identity into a fixed lexicon of architectural symbols.

This possible reductionist threat that stands in the shadow of modernity's logocentric perspective of the built landscape brings us back to Benjamin's own discussion around the nature of symbolism as discussed above. To reiterate, the modern discourse of architecture and urban planning tends to envision the diversity of human habitation as a chain of symbols that *denotes* a specific meaning, intent or unity of purpose. On the other hand, Benjamin's dialectical image, as preceded by his theorising of an allegorical gaze, *connotes* a constellation of relationships. These two different verbs are key in understanding the difference between Benjamin's understanding of the image and the common discourse on the symbol. Denotation implies a direct definition between symbol and its meaning (for example, a male stick figure denotes the 'men's room'). On the other hand, connotation evokes a relationship between an image and a myriad of images. While denotation relies on a strict chain of identity between sign and meaning, connotation allows for a chasm, however minute or expansive, between the sign and meaning. Instead of getting a message *out*

of a symbol, like a bumblebee suckling nourishment out of a flower's pistil, the observer must read these relationships *into* the image through an interpretive lens much like a translator actively rearticulating the voice of the original text by hearing its reverberations reflected in a new language.

### Interpretive horizons

To fully understand the textual implications of Benjamin's dialectical image, we need to read this concept in relationship to Benjamin's theory of language and its translatability. As we discussed above, language has the capability to both conceal and reveal the primordial spark of creation. In this context, the textual component of the dialectical image is not a sight of inscriptive totality but an encounter between the past, as a confluence of disparate narratives, and the contemporary moment (*Jetztzeit*). In this flash of recognition, history is perceived as an object to be actively 'constructed' instead of merely recalled.<sup>67</sup> Reminiscent of Gadamer's dialogical hermeneutics, place is continuously produced and reinterpreted through a 'horizon of interpretation' (*Horizontverschmelzung*), a 'horizon [which] is, rather, something into which we move and that moves with us'.<sup>68</sup> Rather than a closed text, as bounded by authorial intent and editorial authority, the dialectical image can only be 'read' through a constant alteration of the framing devices shaping critical perception, as informed by historical and subjective consciousness (discussed above as *Mémoire Involontaire*). By overextending the logocentric trappings of Benjamin's discussion of the dialectical image, we risk covering over the radical core of Benjamin's thoughts on historicity: a constellation of temporalities through which material remains are perceived as fragments blasted out of the continuum of ideologically-induced narratives. Hence, the dialectical image is not etched in stone; its significance constantly shifts like the shadows that emerge and dissolve along the sun's trajectory. Benjamin's dialectical image is, thus, not stuck within a fixed prism of three-dimensional pictorial

space. As opposed to the Renaissance pictorial tradition in which the image is petrified into a 'figure of knowledge', Benjamin's conception of the image exists within a hermeneutic flux constantly eluding the totality of ideological agendas. In Sigrid Weigel's words, Benjamin's image is best understood as an *Ähnlichkeitskonstellation*, a constellation of semblances which transcends the simple 'form-content' paradigm of visual representation.<sup>69</sup>

Benjamin's approach offers an alternative means of viewing architecture, by emphasising the task of observation as an embodied encounter rather than an objective analysis or a detached reading of a text. A place cannot be lifted out of the 'blank space' of time and studied in isolation but only as a crucial intersection between what it has signified, what it currently signifies, and what it will come to signify.

### Notes

1. Walter Benjamin, *The Arcades Project*, trans. Howard Eiland and Kevin McLaughlin (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press / Boston: Belknap Press, 1999).
2. Walter Benjamin, *The Origin of German Tragic Drama*, trans. John Osborne (New York: Verso Press, 2009), 140. Originally published as *Ursprung des deutschen Trauerspiels* (Berlin: Rowohlt, 1928).
3. For further information on the concept of the original Garden City, please see: Ebenezer Howard, *The Garden Cities of To-Morrow* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1965). In *The Disappearing City* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1932), 17–19, Frank Lloyd Wright discusses his plan for the Broadacre City in which every family is allotted an acre of land. Wright's plans for the vast sprawling suburban metropolis stem from the architect's belief in 'individuality' as the 'fine integrity of the human race.' Therefore, for Wright 'organic modern architecture' binds the 'common spirit of the people' into a cohesive image of a 'great unity'. For further information on Daniel Burnham's *Columbian Exposition* and its relationship to the civic discourse emphasised in the 'City Beautiful' movement, please

- see: William Wilson, *The City Beautiful Movement* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University, 1989). For a foundational text that expresses the essential relationship between urban aesthetics and civic morality as the touchstone of the City Beautiful movement, please see: Charles Mulford Robinson, *The Improvement of Towns and Cities or The Practical Basis of Civic Aesthetics* (New York: Knickerbocker Press, 1906), 253–271. For a discussion on Le Corbusier's concept of visual perception and its relation to the built landscape, please see: Le Corbusier, *Towards a New Architecture* (New York: Dover Press, 1985).
4. Le Corbusier emphasises the importance of 'primary forms' in the built landscape in that they are able to be 'clearly appreciated' within a single optical glance. Thus, Le Corbusier's optical view of architecture and the cityscape derives from the perceptive capabilities of an imaginary everyman, who 'looks at the creation of architecture with his eyes, which are five feet, six inches from the ground. One can only deal with aims which the eye can appreciate, and intentions which take into account architectural elements.' Le Corbusier, *New Architecture*, 62.
  5. Lynch, *The Image of the City* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1972), 3.
  6. *Ibid.*, 7.
  7. Kathleen Boyer discusses the way in which urban space has been modelled after three key phases of image traditions, which reflect differing 'states of capitalism' throughout the course of modernity: the city as a 'work of art' influenced by theatrical stagecraft of the eighteenth century, the nineteenth century city as 'panorama' and the 'city of spectacle' (twentieth-century Los Angeles and New York City). Kathleen Boyer, *The City Of Collective Memory* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1995), 64–65.
  8. *Genesis 1–26* as quoted in Moses Maimonides, *The Guide for the Perplexed*, trans. Michael Friedländer (London: Routledge Press, 1910), 12. W. J. T. Mitchell also discusses the difference between *zelem* and *töar*. W. J. T. Mitchell, 'What is an Image?' in *New Literary History* vol. 15, no. 3 (1984): 521.
  9. Maimonides, *Guide for the Perplexed*, 13.
  10. *Ibid.*
  11. W. J. T. Mitchell, 'What is an Image?' 529.
  12. Aby Warburg, *Ausgewählte Schriften und Würdigungen*, ed. Dieter Wuttke (Baden-Baden: Verlag Valentin Koerner, 1980), 202. A classic instance of Warburg's concept of '*Nachleben*' can be found in his discussion of the relationship between Pagan cosmology and the advent of astrology during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, as he writes in his essay 'Pagan-Antique Prophecy in Words and Images in the Age of Luther. According to Warburg, practitioners of this median art that stands between theology and science in the early Modern era, such as John Dee and Thomas Hood, were able to distance the possibilities of divine interventions by recasting the irrational pantheon of Pagan entities into a rational system of astral constellations that could be both numerically graded and empirically observed by means of charting their discreet movements. Thus, the birth of modern science contains an 'after-image' of pagan atavism.
  13. Walter Benjamin, *The Origin of German Tragic Drama*, trans. John Osborne (New York: Verso Press, 2009), 140. Originally published as *Ursprung des deutschen Trauerspiels* (Berlin: Rowohlt, 1928).
  14. Benjamin, *Trauerspiel*, 139.
  15. *Ibid.*, 140.
  16. *Ibid.*, 176.
  17. *Ibid.*
  18. *Ibid.*, 185.
  19. Sigrid Weigel, *Walter Benjamin: Images, The Creaturely, and The Holy*, trans. Chadwick Truscott Smith (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2013), 199. 'The concept of *Bild* (image) is defined as a constellation in which heterogenic elements meet to form a condense image in the sense of having a momentous meaning.'
  20. Sigrid Weigel, *Body and Image-Space: Re-reading Walter Benjamin*, trans. Georgina Paul (London: Routledge Press, 1996), 155.
  21. Benjamin, *Arcades Project*, 152.
  22. 'The form of wood, for instance, is altered by making a table out of it. Yet for all that, the table continues

- to be that common every-day thing, wood. But, as soon as it steps forth as a commodity, it is changed into something transcendent... The mystical [fetish] character of commodity does not originate, therefore, in their use-value.' Karl Marx, *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy*, ed. Friedrich Engels and Ernest Untermann, trans. Samuel Moore and Edward Aveling (New York: Modern Library, 1936), 82.
23. Georg Lukács, *History and Class Consciousness*, trans. Rodney Livingstone (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1971), 84.
  24. 'Reification and the Consciousness of the Proletariat' can be found in Lukács, *History and Class Consciousness*, 83–223. For further information on the influence of Lukács's theory of reification on Walter Benjamin, see: Margaret Cohen, 'Walter Benjamin's Phantasmagoria', *New German Critique* 48 (1989), 90.
  25. Lukács, 'Reification'.
  26. Louis Aragon, *Nightwalker*, trans. Frederick Brown (Upper Saddle River: Prentice Hall Press, 1970), 5. Originally published as *Le Paysan de Paris* (Paris: Editions Gallimard, 1926).
  27. Benjamin, *Arcades Project*, 458.
  28. *Ibid.*, 464.
  29. Tyrus Miller, 'Glass before Its Time, Premature Iron: Architecture, Temporality and Dream in Benjamin's *The Arcades Project*' in *Walter Benjamin and The Arcades Project*, ed. Beatrice Hanssen (London: Continuum Press, 2006), 243.
  30. Jacob Falke, *Geschichte des Modernen Geschmacks* (Leipzig: T. O. Weigel, 1866), 380. Quoted in Benjamin, *Arcades Project*, 152.
  31. *Ibid.*
  32. Quoted in Benjamin, *Arcades Project*, 152. Original quote from Sigfried Giedion *Building in France, Building in Iron, Building in Ferro-Concrete*, trans. J. Duncan Berry (Santa Monica: Getty Press, 1995), 87
  33. *Ibid.*
  34. *Ibid.*, 167.
  35. Benjamin, *Arcades Project*, 423.
  36. *Ibid.*, 462.
  37. Max Pensky, 'Geheimmittel: Advertising and Dialectical Images in Benjamin's *The Arcades Project*' from Hanssen, *Walter Benjamin and The Arcades Project*, 115.
  38. Margaret Cohen, 'Walter Benjamin's Phantasmagoria', *New German Critique* 48, (1989), 206.
  39. Walter Benjamin, *Selected Writings Vol. 3 1935–1938*, trans. Edmund Jephcott and Howard Eiland (New York: Schocken Press, 2002), 345.
  40. *Ibid.*
  41. 'Most memories that we search for come to us as visual images. Even the free-floating forms of the *mémoire involontaire* are still in large part isolated, though enigmatically present, visual images.' Walter Benjamin, *Illuminations*, trans. Harry Zohn (New York: Schocken Press, 1969), 214.
  42. Marcel Proust, *In Search of Lost Time*, vol. 6, trans. Andreas Mayor and Terrence Kilmartin (New York: Modern Library, 1999), 255.
  43. John McCole, *Walter Benjamin and the Antinomies of Tradition* (Ithaca: Cornell Press, 2002), 261.
  44. Benjamin, *Illuminations*, 202.
  45. *Ibid.*, 212.
  46. *Ibid.*, 240.
  47. *Ibid.*
  48. Benjamin, *Arcades Project*, 522.
  49. *Ibid.*, 461.
  50. McCole, *Antinomies of Tradition*, 283.
  51. Walter Benjamin, *Reflections*, trans. Edmund Jephcott (New York: Schocken Press, 1978), 327.
  52. Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, trans. Donald Nicholson Smith (Hoboken: Blackwell Press, 1974), 163.
  53. *Ibid.*, 212.
  54. Edmund Husserl, *Origin of Geometry*, with an introduction by Jacques Derrida, trans. John Leavey, (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1989), 160–161.
  55. Benjamin, *Illuminations*, 69.
  56. 'Just as the manifestations of life are intimately connected with the phenomenon of life [...] a translation issues from the original – not so much from its life as from its afterlife.' Benjamin's description of a text's afterlife bears a resemblance to Warburg's notion of an image's continual survival [*Nachleben*] (see note

- 10 above). Ibid., 71.
57. Jacques Derrida, 'Des Tours des Babel', in *Difference in Translation*, ed. and trans. Joseph Green (Ithaca, Cornell University Press: Cornell University Press, 1985), 217–221.
58. Esra Akcan, *Architecture in Translation: Germany, Turkey and the Modern House* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2012).
59. Howard, *Garden Cities*, 45.
60. Theodor Frisch, *Die Stadt der Zukunft* (Bremen: Bremen Outlook Verlag, 1985), 9–16.
61. Akcan, *Architecture in Translation*, 36.
62. Ibid., 38–40.
63. For an in-depth account of the cultural transference between German/Austrian architects and Kemalist urban planning, see Bernd Nicolai, *Moderne und Exil. Deutschsprachige Architekten in der Türkei 1925–1955* (Berlin: Verlag für Bauwesen, 1998).
64. Michael Hellgardt, 'Martin Wagner: The Work of Building in the Era of Its Technical Reproduction', *Construction History* vol. 3. (1987), 96–97.
65. Quoted in Akcan, *Architecture in Translation*, 212.
66. Ibid., 213.
67. 'Die Geschichte ist Gegenstand einer Konstruktion [structure], deren Ort nicht die homogene und leere Zeit sondern die von Jetztzeit [now-time] erfüllte bildet.' Walter Benjamin, *Gesammelte Schriften* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1980), ed. Rolf Tiedemann and Hermann Schweppenhäuser, 701.
68. Hans Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, trans. Joel Weinscheimer and Donald Marshall (New York: Continuum Press, 2006), 303–305.
69. Sigrid Weigel, *Body and Image-Space: Re-reading Walter Benjamin*, trans. Georgina Paul (London: Routledge Press, 1996), 46.

## Biography

In the spring of 2007, Ross Lipton received his Bachelor's degree in Literature from New School University. In 2010, he received a Master's of Liberal Arts from the University of Pennsylvania. From 2010 to 2015, Ross taught World Literature at SUNY Binghamton while working towards a doctorate in Comparative Literature. He currently teaches Philosophy at La Salle University in Philadelphia. He is presently working on a dissertation exploring the influence of musical harmony, as a metaphor for both aesthetic and social / political concordance, on the various articulations of urban space from the late eighteenth century to the late twentieth century. Ross Lipton was recently awarded a Fulbright Research Fellowship Grant to study at the IFK (Internationales Forschungszentrum Kulturwissenschaften) in Austria for the 2016/2017 academic year.