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i.

KIM SCHOEN

RETURNING TO BERLIN: INTRODUCTION

August 11, 2013

The title of this symposium and publication comes from a venture in 'experimental psychology' that Kierkegaard undertakes in his book *Repetition*. He writes: “You can, after all, take a trip to Berlin; you have been there once before, and now you can prove to yourself whether a repetition is possible and what importance it has.” He embarks on this repeat trip to Berlin, somewhat absurdly, as a foil to start to question repetition as a concept.

Kierkegaard writes under the pseudonym Constantin Constantius, (or as one of our illustrious contributors, Jonathan Rée, jokes: " Standfast Steadfast") and he puts the question to us: *Is repetition possible?*

This almost farcical question—especially in our contemporary moment, papered and flashing in all forms of empty repetition—is still relevant. I speak here of *genuine* repetition—which Kierkegaard describes as "heard only at intervals and drowned by the noise of life." I hope for today's symposium to be a form of bracketing in which we take the time to try and listen to what fuller possibilities repetition has to offer.

Returning to Berlin—this performed ‘return’ is the subject of the day, the return in relation to photography. What does it mean to have ‘seen it before?’ The nostalgic qualities of photography always seem to

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position the photograph as an *aide de memoir*, the ultimate 'recollection.' And of course, photography as a medium itself embodies repetition. But Kierkegaard asserts that genuine repetition is recollected forward, the opposite in movement to recollection, which is remembering backwards. What might photography's function be if not for recollection? Can there be a different, as Gertrude Stein might say, *insistence* for a photograph?

The participants today will bring forth the dislocations, problems, and pleasures that repetition can perform. Various subjects repeat and return—our relationship to time, issues regarding original and copy, identity and its mutability, image and touch—referencing one another in surprising parabolic paths. All of these voices together—today, and in this book—I hope will unite and refract this subject into a series of challenging provocations.

Leopold Ahrendts, Gendarmenmarkt, Berlin 1850s

ii.

ii. BECKY BEASLEY
iii. ZOE CROSHER
iv. LESLIE DICK

ii. *Becky Beasley (b. 1975) is an artist who lives and works in St Leonards on Sea, UK. Recent exhibitions include, Spring Rain (Spike Island, Bristol, January 2013; touring to Leeds City Art Gallery July-October 2013) (solo) and Think Twice (Whitechapel Gallery, London, December 2012).She is represented by Laura Bartlett Gallery, London and Francesca Minini, Milan.*

iii. *Zoe Crosher was born in 1975 and currently lives and works in Los Angeles. Crosher uses photography to explore the imaginary in / fiction of documentary, pursuing an image practice that is conceptual in orientation yet rooted in vernacular representation. Crosher has served as a Visiting Professor at UCLA and Art Center College of Design, and was Associate Editor of the journal Afterall, after receiving her MFA from CalArts. In 2011 she was awarded the prestigious Art Here and Now Award by the Los Angeles County Museum of Art and is a recent recipient of the Rauschenberg award. Her work has been included in MoMA's 2012 New Photography exhibition and the 2010 California Biennial, as well as extensive exhibitions throughout the United States. She is represented by Perry Rubenstein Gallery, Los Angeles.*

iv. *Leslie Dick is the author of two novels - Without Falling (1987) and Kicking (1992) and a collection of short stories, The Skull of Charlotte Corday and Other Stories (1995). She has taught as a member of regular faculty in the Art Program at CalArts since 1992. She wrote on photography in Real Allegories: Olivier Richon (Steidl, 2006) and she writes regularly for X-TRA, a quarterly journal of contemporary art, whose editorial board she joined in 2011. She is currently Visiting Critic in Sculpture at Yale University.*

v. CHRISTIAN HAGEMANN
vi. MARC KATZ
vii. ULRICH GEBERT

v. *Christian Hagemann was born in 1976 in Germany and studied photography in Essen/Germany where he received his diploma in 2004 and a masters degree from the Royal College of Art in London in 2007. His photographic work centres on the still life genre and its ideas of the trompe l´oeil. Christian Hagemann lives and works in Berlin.*

vi. *Marc Katz received his PhD in German from Northwestern University. He's currently on the faculty of Scripps College (Claremont), where he teaches literature and the humanities. He's published on modern European fiction, philosophy and urban design. He returns to Berlin whenever he can.*

vii. *Ulrich Gebert, born in 1976 in Munich, Germany, studied at the Academy of Visual Arts in Leipzig from 1998-2005 and received his MA in photography from the Royal College of Art London in 2006. He currently lives and works in Munich, is represented by Klemm's in Berlin and Winkleman Gallery in New York. His work, usually focused on nature and ideology, is shown internationally.*

viii. OLGA FERNÁNDEZ LÓPEZ
ix. ROSALIND NASHASHIBI

ii.

viii. *Olga Fernández López is an academic researcher and teacher. Since 2009 she has lectured at the Department of History and Theory of Art (Universidad Autónoma de Madrid) and she is coordinator of the MA History of Contemporary Art and Visual Culture (UAM/UCM/MNCARS). She has lectured at the Curatorial Strategies, Past and Present Course at the Curating Contemporary Art Department (RCA). Between 2001 and 2006 she worked as a curator at the Museo Patio Herreriano (Valladolid, Spain). She holds a PhD in History of Art (2001, Universidad Complutense de Madrid) and a PhD in Curating Contemporary Art (2012, Royal College of Art). She has published, among others articles: Symmetries and Slight Anachronisms: Speculating on Modern Art in Latin America (Museo Reina Sofía, 2013), Travesia site-specific: Institutionalidad e imaginacion (Matadero, Madrid, 2011), Just What is it that Makes 'Curating' so Different, so Appealing (oncurating.org, 2001). She has co-convened the course Coloniality, Curating and Contemporary art (Universidad Internacional de Andalucía, 2012). Her research focuses on the specificities of the exhibition medium and its critical possibilities for curatorial practice.*

ix. *Rosalind Nashashibi is an artist working in film, sculpture, print and photography. Her best known films combine close observation of everyday life with constructed scenes, inhabiting the same place or time to capture the friction that occurs at the border between the real and everyday and the fantastical or mythological. These works often explore issues of control, internalized into citizens or exerted by the state. Nashashibi has exhibited internationally over the last decade and she has recently had solo exhibitions in Rome, Milan, Brussels, London, and Vancouver. She represented Scotland at the 52nd Venice Biennale, and has shown in the 5th Berlin Biennial, Manifesta 7 and Sharjah 10. She won Beck's Futures in 2003 and has been nominated for the Northern Art Prize in 2013.*

x. VANESSA PLACE
xi. JONATHAN RÉE
xii. OLIVIER RICHON

x. *Vanessa Place is CEO of Vanessa Place Inc., a trans-national corporation whose sole mission is to design and manufacture objects to meet the poetic needs of the human heart, face, and form.*

xi. *Jonathan Rée is a freelance philosopher and historian based in Oxford, England. He taught philosophy in London for many years, but gave up when he realised how bored he was. He has published books on a range of subjects from Heidegger to the history of deafness, and is now working on a big book (ten years overdue) which he hopes will transform the way people think about the history of philosophy. He had made several radio programmes for the BBC, and his journalism has appeared in The Guardian, London Review of Books, New Humanist, Times Literary Supplement, etc. He also has a long-standing interest in Kierkegaard as a philosophical humorist.*

xii. *Olivier Richon was born in Lausanne, Switzerland, in 1956. He studied at the Polytechnic of Central London, where he was taught by Victor Burgin. He received a BA (Hons) in Film and Photographic Arts in 1980 and an MPhil in 1988 for a research project on Exoticism and Representation. He taught Photographic Studies on BA and MA courses at the Derby School of Art from 1985 to 1993 and at the University of Westminster from 1993 to 1997. He has been head of Photography at the Royal College of Art since 1997.*

xiii. KIM SCHOEN
xiv. DUNCAN WOOLDRIDGE
ii. xv. SARAH LEHRER-GRAIWER

xiii. *Kim Schoen is an artist working with photography, video installation and text. She received her M.F.A. in photography from CalArts in 2005 and her Masters in Philosophy from the photography department at The Royal College of Art in London in 2008. Recent exhibitions of her work include A Voyage Around My Room (Norma Mangione Gallery, Turin), A Man Asleep (LM Projects, Los Angeles), Trust Fall (The Whitechapel Gallery, London). Her work has been written about in the Los Angeles Times, Art in America, featured in Hotshoe International, and her essay "The Serial Attitude Redux" was published in X-TRA, Quarterly for Contemporary Art, with a forthcoming essay "The Anxiety of Infinity" due out in Spring of 2014. Schoen is the co-founder and editor of MATERIAL, a journal of texts by visual artists.*

xiv. *Duncan Wooldridge is an artist, writer, curator and lecturer. His work is included in the publication 'Artist's Postcards', published by Reaktion Books; he was the curator of the exhibition 'Anti-Photography', at Focal Point Gallery, Southend, UK in 2011; his writing has appeared in Art Monthly, Source, Photoworks, Eikon, and in a forthcoming article for Elephant, on the photobook and the ABC Artists Book Cooperative; Duncan is Course Director of the BA (Hons) Photography programme, at Camberwell College of the Art, University of the Arts, London.*

xv. *Sarah Lehrer-Graiwer is an arts writer based in Los Angeles, where she edits the publication series "Pep Talk," runs the experimental arts venue the Finley Gallery, and teaches at USC and Otis College of Art and Design. She contributes to Artforum, Mousse, Art in America, and Artslant. Her book on Lee Lozano's Dropout Piece is forthcoming next year.*

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xvii. RETURNING TO BERLIN

iii.

BECKY BEASLEY

ON HAPPINESS

2013

I lived quite unhappily in Berlin for two years from December 2006 to January 2008. As a response to the invitation to reflect on returning here now, I will begin with a short text which I wrote and was published in 2007 in a small literary journal, alongside a series of both taken and found photographs of the same subject, Berlin Zoo.

Correspondences (1957/2007)

Being alone in a new city makes one do things one might not ordinarily do. The isolation throws into stark relief the other city in which one had developed rich connections with people and places over the years. Certain times, a couple of hours, now seem surplus to the day. They seem flat or, at best, too spacious, vertiginous. Gradually one realises that these were the hours previously filled by friends and conversations. Now alone and, despite having three languages, and as yet unable to speak German, the silence is initially disconcerting. So it is that one morning one finds oneself deciding to visit the Zoo, something one had always planned to do as an adult in the other city, but never did.

It makes sense only in hindsight. At the time it was just an instinct, activated by the renewed energy one has for exploring a new city. Later one realises it was because one was adrift, silenced and, somewhat

iii.

unexpectedly, innocent. One seldom experiences innocence as an adult. This is the gift of the new place. Decisions become naturalised. One goes to the Zoo. There, there are other innocents, animals and children. The animals are silent in their fashion and something occurs between you, an imaginary correspondence, history as the longer effort, rather than the small event of my current solitude. I took some photographs of the animals and buildings and emailed scans of them back home. Six months later, in a Berlin flea market, trawling though a box full of old passport and family photographs, I found a handful of small amateur prints, dated 1957, of the same animals and architecture of Berlin Zoo.

The history of my life is one of return and renewal. Quite despite myself, I slowly came to realize that I had, after all, always been a hopeful person, often buoyed on for years by crumbs. This relation, now no longer so melancholic, remains deathbound; in relation to life, it is played out as a future, as the potential between then and now, which is my life. So too photography. Over the last ten years, I have experienced a definite shift from a melancholic attitude towards- and thus experience of- photography and life, to a more or less joyful relation. Both are clearly possible and as such, at the best of times, now offer me a choice. At 35, I noticed some changes in my work and, after some reflection, I followed its lead and made a choice to have a happy relation. In doing so the work and the life changed. The work was happy ahead of me. I caught up.

The history of sculpture is one of return and renewal. Rodin is a well known example. Each re-casting providing a new return, an alternative. So too my own sculptural relation to photography. Rodin drew over photographs of his sculpture. Until Albert Elsen's book, *In Rodin's studio*, published in 1980, such photographs had been generally regarded as 'damaged goods'[1]. It has since been argued that Rodin's many drawings on photographs which were never translated into sculptural works accumulate into a creative practice in themselves. Medardo Rosso's work is the radical example. Rosso (1858-1928) was one of the earliest known sculptors to use photography not to document his sculptures, but as photographic works in their own right, his practice conceptual 100 years ahead of its time. Within my own practice, I employ similar lines of thought as I have discovered over the years in Rosso: radically cropping negatives; at times treating the negative itself as very raw material; at other times I already know when shooting that it is only a small strip or section of the negative which I will work with later; other times designing and preparing physical objects in order to fit the space of the image as I imagine it at a full scale once printed. In many ways, with certain works, I am at no point psychically entering the miniaturized space of the

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BECKY BEASLEY
Literary Green

218x154cm and 80x165x40cm,
Gelatin silver print, acrylic glass, steel
2009

BECKY BEASLEY
Threshold

8 x 10 in, Gelatin silver print
2004/2009

BECKY BEASLEY
Night Work

218x154cm & 80x165x40cm
Gelatin silver print, acrylic glass, steel
2009

negative at the time of shooting, but experiencing something of the object as a full-scale dark room projection. Both the shooting and printing take place in different areas of the same studio room and so physically and mentally something spatial about the processes merge. I am aware of the clouds and lorries passing and parking outside the window where I shoot and how their shadows will manifest opaquely in the end and become part of the time of the work. At times a photograph of an object will lead to thinking about making another object which I would only have discovered through the making of the photograph of the first object. I always return to some point of departure, however obscure in the results, in order to move on. My basic motto for the ongoing progress of my practice has, since 1997, remained Roland Barthes instruction, *To get out, go in deeper*. The outside is what I am after, via a burrowing method. I wrote a short manifesto for myself some years ago in response to the thought, *What then of an object which appears inhospitable, but which nevertheless engenders in one a feeling of being potentially inhabitable?* I outlined it's possible features for myself as follows:

i) **an orifice or hole** of some kind for entry, the most minimal being the **pinhole** (re. photo/dark room) or the **chink** (question of the split or crack, as in the design or in the wear), the most visible being the **window** (re. images/architecture) or **door** (open or closed; potentially openable or ajar; also *the barely open door* which is, of course, a closed door) or the **threshold** (which ranges from those so grand they are hardly recognisable as still being thresholds, to those so infrathin as to be barely perceptible as being a threshold at all – the differences between being inside and outside in both the small and the vast are, despite appearances, quite indistinct)

ii) **an interior** (not necessarily inflated, or rigid) (qualities of the **vessel**)

iii) **an exterior** (not necessarily beyond the physical space of the object, but perhaps somewhere about the surface; see **threshold** or skin)

iv) ***sides*** (which replace the concept of the wall but retain the **thing**; graspable as **thing** if only by appearing to be held together by air or by being on the verge of falling apart) (neither necessarily rigid nor visible)

v) ***resistance which is open*** (an **exterior** which is resistant to penetration but nevertheless in some way porous; a simultaneity of open-ness and closed-ness) (see also **sides** and **an exterior**)

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vi) ***materialness*** (rather than *materiality* which is inherent) A fabric*ness*, something which, even when built, retains a quality of being potentially *buildable-with*. (eg. the over-size cardboard box which one imagines flattening and reconstructing smaller or differently, or the same) (Material*ness* as this specific *buildable-with-when-already-built* quality).

vii) ***potential for re-use*** (see **material*ness***)

Holes in forcefields are key to the possibility of the inhabitable inhospitable object. Through the chinks in the aggressive forces of the hospitable and the inhospitable, the passive nature of habiting and inhabiting spaces finds its agency. However, in conclusion, it would appear than it is the potential for re-construction or development that is the main attraction. The hospitable is founded on a future. *He who dies is your arms is, alas, your brother forever.*

Carlo Mollino's history of photography, the first in Italy, titled, *Message from the Darkroom*, originally published in 1949, goes to lengths to clarify, for me, at least, the profoundly sculptural pre-history of photography. My own body of work relating to researching Mollino, titled, *The Outside*, also began in 3-dimensions, at the Egyptian Museum in Turin, in the room containing all of the tomb artifacts of a royal architect and his wife which had been perfectly preserved. It was very domestic, and it was the domesticity of the contents which interested me and which I understood for myself the first time in that room. By chance I discovered the connection to Mollino's own *afterlife* apartment, decorated in secrecy towards the end of his life, also in Turin, and inspired by the same tomb room at the museum. I embarked on my own exploration of Mollino's apartment as a way of thinking through questions of my own relating to photography, the interior and colour. The resultant body of work was a paper-house of sorts, a puzzle in the form of a fairly long, hinged and essentially repetitive series of photographic panels printed from narrow strips taken from, finally, only three negatives. The works are wall hung and floor standing diptychs and triptychs. The repetition of the panels plays out in space, the hinges giving a feeling that the pieces could be re-configured differently. Some of the panels are glazed with coloured acrylic. The colours—a yellow and a pinkish orange—are taken from one of Mollino's astrological colour charts—and symbolize friendship and happiness. I chose these colours in order to change my life. During the time I was working on these things, I fell in love.

1 Henry Moore Institute Essays on Sculpture, No. 55, Jon Wood: **Drawing on Sculpture: Graphic Interventions on the Photographic Surface**

xvi.

SARAH LEHRER-GRAIWER

THRESHOLD TOWN

Poems For Repeating and Photography
2013

Hold still.
See your life-lines are parallel,
Even when, even when they converge.
Must be twisted through another dimension, hidden
—A blinking hole in your wall.
But my vanishing
Point is that
I was sleeping.
I was sleeping
So hard and deep that I dreamt a storm into being.
Bed sheets dropped away one after another
Completely blown and billowing anew now
Like the body bag I keep walking past
In my mind a million times.
Even when, even when
Stopped in my tracks.

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iv. ZOE CROSHER

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Book I: Reconsidered Archive of Michelle duBois, p.112-113, 2012

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Book II: Unraveling of Michelle duBois, p.82-83, 2012

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No.42-43 from The Additive Dust Series (GUAM 1979) from The Disappearance of Michelle duBois, 2012

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ZOE CROSHER
Silhouetted no.2

Digital C-Print, 31 x 20 inches
2010

ZOE CROSHER
Silhouetted no.3

Digital C-Print, 31 x 20 inches
2010

ZOE CROSHER
Silhouetted no.1

Digital C-Print, 31 x 20 inches
2010

ZOE CROSHER
Silhouetted no.12

Digital C-Print, 31 x 20 inches
2010

ZOE CROSHER
Silhouetted no.6

Digital C-Print, 31 x 20 inches
2010

ZOE CROSHER
Silhouetted no.7

Digital C-Print, 31 x 20 inches
2010

ZOE CROSHER
Returned to Berlin

from the Disbanding of Michelle duBois
Digital C-Print, 6 x 9 inches
2013

All images courtesy the artist
& Perry Rubenstein Gallery

SARAH LEHRER-GRAIWER
DUBOIS TOWN

Poems For Repeating and Photography
2013

Sometimes people want to come again forever. Returning eternally. Entrance.
It's just a flash and then the intensity of the feeling passes. The return idea is solid
but one is incapable of grasping the part about eternity for any more than
one heartbeat-stopping second if you could only stop your heartbeat for…
But we get the return idea so we focus on that.
Repetition will be freedom
As much as obsession neurosis infatuation fixation massacre.
It will serve stalker and psycho and lover and scientist.
It will be contestation and resignation together in transcendence.
Repetition will be a form of freedom
But it will prescribe a purely relational existence
—banning oneness, irreducibility to institute a
Being-multiple that is the same as being-in-the-world.
Repetition will be social through its musicality,
its rhyme and rhythm and beat
and pattern and difference,
Its foot-tapping habitus of self-affirmation and break-down.
Like a Suicide song that could go on driving forever, frictionless.

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v. LESLIE DICK

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xvii. RETURNING TO BERLIN

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LESLIE DICK

ON REPETITION: NOBODY PASSES

June 2013

Conversations expand and contract, circling; like detritus cast up on a stony beach—a bright piece of plastic rope, a broken board, a small shoe. The waves repeat, sliding over the stones, leaving 'orts and fragments' behind. This repetition exceeds our description, like the conversations circling, and leaves me with a heap of remnants, disparate yet connected, some thoughts on repetition. I place them on the table, for our consideration.

The first conversation was a written exchange with Francette Pacteau, who said something like: photography is no longer a discrete category, it suffuses us; it's everywhere, inside and outside us, consciously and unconsciously... Or that's what I thought she said.

Actually she wrote this: 'It is in our every bone, as it were, "it" has dissolved into a multitude of practices—conscious and unconscious—it has shaped our sensibilities, the ways we see the world and ourselves in it, etc.' In which case, we can't say: here I am, and there is the thing, and there, on the other side, is the image, the photograph of the thing. We can't draw such distinctions.

Later that day I spent some time with an artist from Iceland, Pàlli Haukur. In response to this notion that photography is not a category, he

said something like, yes, this is what I have been saying: *there is no medium*. He said he thought a new philosophy would emerge, in response to our contemporary being in the world, and at one point he said, memorably, *there is no representation*. As if the idealist, Platonic infrastructure has finally collapsed, under the pressure of our multifarious interconnected and apparently immaterial screens.

V.

Pàlli and I went together to see what can only be described as an exploitation documentary, *Let Me Die a Woman*, which was made across a number of years in the 1970s by Doris Wishman, one of the most prolific women film makers of the 20th century, admired in certain circles for her films *Bad Girls Go to Hell, A Night to Dismember*, and *Dildo Heaven*, a film she was working on at the time of her death in 2002 at the age of ninety. *Let Me Die a Woman* purports to be a documentary on what it calls transsexualism; it is truly unsettling, hilarious, and shocking, and includes close up footage of an actual sex change operation, as well as what can only be described as ethnographic displays of the naked bodies of male to female trans people. These stood calmly before the camera in what appeared to be an elaborately staged medical examination room, their hands gently clenched by their sides, as the doctor used a collapsible metal pointer to emphasize specific physical characteristics. It was striking to hear how emphatically these pioneers in the field of sex change surgery insisted on their need to become 'a complete woman'—a category that was itself undergoing deconstruction in the discourses around feminism and psychoanalysis at the very same time. The completeness they invoked was defined by certain socially agreed upon attributes and activities, certain practices that could apparently guarantee and validate a specific gender identity. The task was to match reality to the image, in an aspirational push towards an impossible ideal. These aspirations are, needless to say, built into the very structure of femininity, with the result that most women feel like this.

Zackary Drucker presented the film, in the context of Queer/Art/Film—LA. Zackary is an artist whose work is imbued with her interest in queer and trans history—a history that is hard to trace and therefore precious, whatever form it takes. *Let Me Die a Woman* presents its trans characters as specimens, to be scrutinized within a medical frame, but it also implicitly allows us to wonder at the motivations of the individuals who were willing to undergo the objectification of that frame, in order to achieve a presence, as representation, for unknown others—for us, in the future.

At the end of the film there was a Q&A and someone spoke of a recent conversation about a trans acquaintance, in which someone else had said that it was unfortunate that this person wouldn't or couldn't *pass*—and how that seemed all wrong, and from the stage, Zackary smiled and said, 'Yes, I think *nobody passes*.' In other words, whatever our struggle, we all fall short and at the same time exceed the limits of the image, that ideal image that promises a control and a completeness that will always elude me.

Pàlli's point was that photography (or gender identity) was not 'post-descriptive' so much as it is constitutive, as we strive to imitate an ideal, to repeat it and copy it, in a performance of identity and belonging. I've been fascinated by Lacan's essay on the Mirror Stage for a long time now, and it seems to me to be the fundamental text on this question of our relation to the (ideal) image. Ideal is in parenthesis there, because in a sense all images are idealizations. Lacan is clear that the relation to the mirror image produces an idealized version of the child, who sees something he mis-recognizes as himself: himself with a complete outline, exteriorized, framed, and perspectivally situated within a virtual, that is, a fictional space. The child points to the two-dimensional image, symmetrically reversed, incomplete in so many ways, and says, that's me! Ever after, our task will be to try to line that image up with our own lived real, and that impossible project, and the contradictions that ensue, is what we all live out, every day.

We want to be like the mirror, but we're all over the shop; we're more like sculpture than we are like pictures, we've got backsides and insides, and we see everything from an interior that mixes up whatever we see with memories and fantasies and other images and wishful thinking of all descriptions. Lacan says the mirror image provides the child with a model, a prototype for objects in the world. In a sense, we aspire to become like an object, complete, seen from the outside, and failure is built into that project from the beginning.

Lacan's description of the child in front of the mirror raises the question of what happens when the mirror is itself de-stabilized, and mobilized, becoming a disparate collection of different size screens, multiple windows framing the world in a series of temporary, arbitrary articulations. In a doctor's waiting room in Los Angeles recently, I saw a child of perhaps three scrolling through the videos on her mother's phone, adroitly using the touch screen to select which one to watch. They were videos of the child herself, on her tricycle, at the beach, etc. She staved off the boredom of immobility by the fascination of watching herself

repeated, perpetuated, watching a repetition of movement, exteriorized. Did she remember the internal sensations of the experiences depicted? Or was the detour through the image complete, the girl watching herself as another might?

Lacan proposes a connection between the structure of the mirror and our fascination with statues, ghosts, and the automaton, in which the world of our own making (our human world) tends to find (as he puts it) *completion*. When I think of the automaton, I remember the Terminator, with his ambiguous promise of eternal return: I'll be back! I think of the vampires: Miriam Blaylock, Angel, Spike; I think of Seven of Nine, the cyborg on *Voyager*, and the last timelord, aka Dr Who. We are fascinated by these things, because they live both inside and outside time, they cannot die, and as such they are more like that mirror image, the *mirage— miroir/image* —than we will ever feel ourselves to be.

V.

More recently I've been watching a brilliant TV show called *Orphan Black*, in which a young woman accidentally discovers that she's a clone, a scientific experiment, and one of a group of identical yet very different young women: the pill-popping uptight suburban housewife, the brilliant lesbian genetic researcher, the extremely violent punk psychopath, the New York City cop, etc. (One actor, Tatiana Maslany, plays all of them, needless to say.) Cloning is about repetition. We like thinking about human clones because we enjoy the play of similarity and difference, the question of how to become individual, the question of duplication. And we like to consider those who are almost human, the hypnotized, the pre-programmed—Trilby, River in *Serenity*, the different characters in *Doll House*—because they present for us the conundrum of the unconscious. To some extent we are all pre-programmed, according to Freud, driven as we are by the secret contents of our own inner cabinets of curiosity, the unconscious system.

The vampire, the automaton, the clone, and the woman subject to hypnotism: all of them are both human and non-human. There is something mechanical about them, as by definition machines are repetitive. Ideally they repeat perfectly, you can count on them not to fail. Charcot's Augustine could be counted on to perform hysterical seizures on cue, before the public at his *leçons du mardi*, before the camera in the photographic studio at La Salpêtrière.

These things, the automaton and her friends, are more like a photograph than they are like me. They are exteriorized; we don't see the connection between an inner motivation and outer behavior,

because the programming is alien to them. Most importantly, machine like, they appear both dead and alive, a paradoxical state to which I too unconsciously aspire. For I am locked in repetition, in a death sentence that requires me to be myself, to go on being Leslie Dick, day in day out, until death, or another unlooked for catastrophe, interrupts the repetition.

I have a limited repertoire, of gestures, vocabulary, ideas, lipstick, and it is through repeating them with a kind of dogged persistence that I become recognizable, to myself, to you. I repeat myself, endlessly. The symptom by definition must be repeated, in order to be recognized as a symptom—otherwise it would be merely an untoward event. In this sense being myself is symptomatic, or something...

It is through repetition that we perform the work of mourning; we go over and over the ground, re-living in memory scenes that are forever lost to us, yet indelibly present in our minds. Freud proposes melancholia as a refusal to do this work: we set up the lost object inside ourselves like a monument, a memorial, in perpetuity. Recently I met someone who told me that she and her dear friend had realized that they were carrying the dead corpses of their ex-husbands around with them, so that the stench, the stench of the rotting corpse, would keep other men away. She told me they realized they had to do what she called *burning rituals* — and then she told me the stench lifted, dispersed in the smoke rising into the night sky over Los Angeles. Keeping someone dead and alive allows a kind of stasis, where neither he nor I have to move, shift, change. To let go is to open up that space, to let something other in.

There is no time in the unconscious. I guess that means there's no repetition, and there's only repetition, because nothing erodes or fades, everything remains, as bright and hard as the first time. Time is both lost and found in the photograph, as it presents a moment definitively past, yet perpetuated, stilled and captured. Repeated.

When the child watches herself running around in miniature on her mother's iPhone, she is watching a former self, even if the video was shot that very day. It's a repetition, not only in re-viewing the footage, over and over, as she might ask for the same story to be read to her over and over again, but also in her imagination she can perhaps relive the scene in the garden. At the same time this tiny child knows she can use the device to make a new film of herself, here and now, or merely to fix her gaze on her own live reflection, as people do to check their hair, or their lipstick.

Is the child with the phone carrying the dead corpse of her own repetitions around with her, so that the stench prevents something else, something other, coming in? Roland Barthes wrote that the photograph was attached to the real like a criminal chained to a corpse, he said the photographic image literally drags a rotting corpse around with it—the pre-text, the real thing, the event. Maybe now the connection to the real is broken, and the corpse can rot away... and turn to dust.

v.

The idealized image produced endless repetition, a copy of myself, an illusion of mental stability and coherence. When the photographic paradigm is undone—by digital technology, among other things—the corpse can fall to pieces, come apart, as the event dissolves into uncertainty, and all the framing devices melt into air. *Nobody passes*, despite the apparently infinite repetitions of the digital, as the image becomes inconsistent and cannot be measured against a pre-existing reality. *Nobody passes*, and with that we can perhaps move beyond ideals of control, completion, and totality, to a space of uncertainty that is both impossible and beautiful.

v.

v.

i.

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v.

vi. CHRISTIAN HAGEMANN

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viii.

ix.

x.

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xii.

xiii.

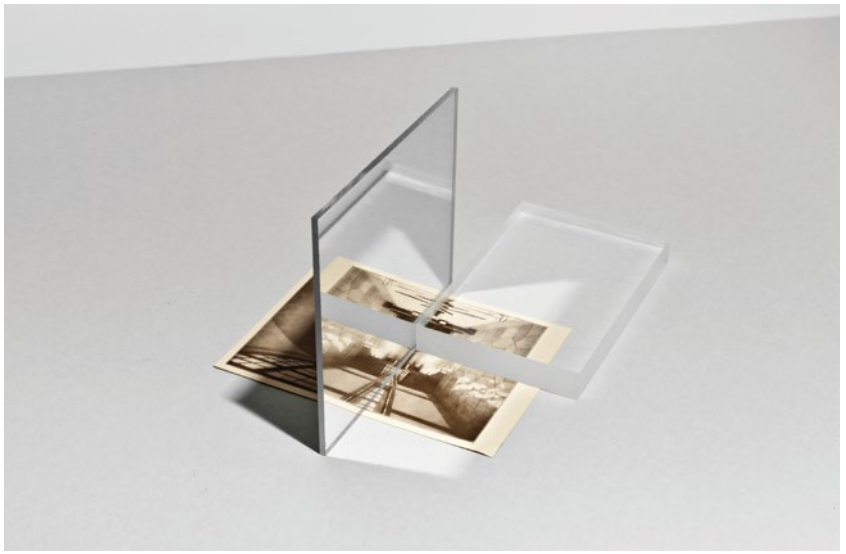
xiv.

xv.

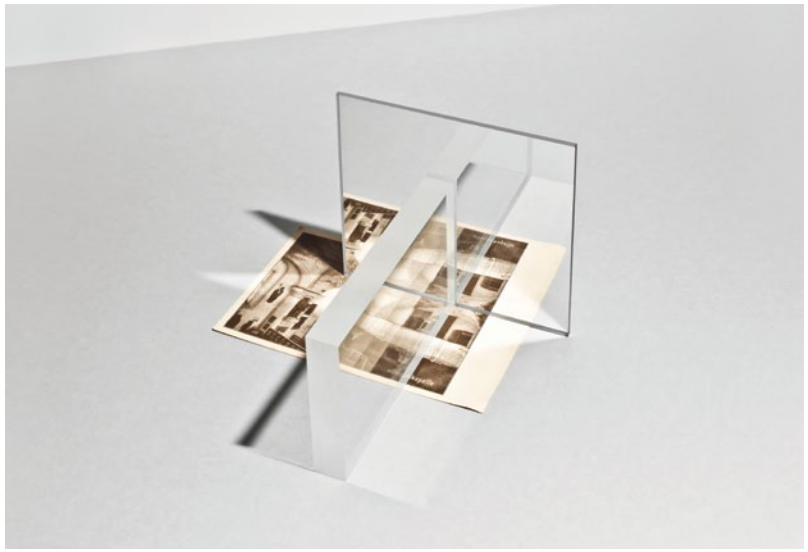
xvi.

xvii. RETURNING TO BERLIN

vi.



vi.



CHRISTIAN HAGEMANN
Extension #1

8.3 x 11.7, fine art inkjet print
2012

vi.

CHRISTIAN HAGEMANN
Extension #2

8.3 x 11.7, fine art inkjet print
2012

CHRISTIAN HAGEMANN
Extension #3

8.3 x 11.7, fine art inkjet print
2012

xvi.

SARAH LEHRER-GRAIWER
EXTENSION TOWN (AFTER B. CALLAHAN)

Poems For Repeating and Photography
2013

If
If you
If you could
If you could only
If you could only stop
If you could only stop your
If you could only stop your heartbeat
If you could only stop your heartbeat for
If you could only stop your heartbeat for one
If you could only stop your heartbeat for one heartbeat

P.S. Send a postcard. As mirrors will to symmetry, I will try to too.
P.P.S. I still will to stammer if only so I can telescope out one turn at a time in your general lunar direction.

i.

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vii. ULRICH GEBERT

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xii.

xiii.

xiv.

xv.

xvi.

xvii. RETURNING TO BERLIN

ULRICH GEBERT

GONE IS GONE IS NOT GONE - PHOTOGRAPHY AS A SOURCE FOR RECONSTRUCTION

2013

When the *Berliner Stadtschloss* will finally be rebuilt, the architect will not be Andreas Schlüter, who built the original building, nor Franco Stella, who won the architecture competition in 2009, but an architect called Albrecht Meydenbauer[1]. The reconstruction of the facade will be based on 45 different photographs that Meydenbauer took between 1916-21. From the late 19th century onwards, he invented methods and cameras to document the architectural heritage using state-of-the-art photography. The formats of his images often reached 40 x 40 cm (15 x 15 inches). He was able to secure funding from the state and in 1885 the *Preußische Meßbildanstalt* was established, an institution that documented 2600 buildings in over 20,000 images in the following 35 years. His technique is based on an exactly defined geometry that let two dimensional photographs be converted into three dimensional data. It was called Photogrammetrie (photogrammetry). Some 150 years after its invention, with the advent and progress of digital processing and imaging, photogrammetry could develop into a field of ever increasing importance. It is not surprising, given the cultural background concerning the artistry of copying, that large parts of the worlds photogrammetry businesses operate from China nowadays. Maybe the most audacious example for the technique was the exact copy of the Austrian UNESCO world-heritage listed village of Hallstatt in the province of Guangdong, which opened to the public in 2012.

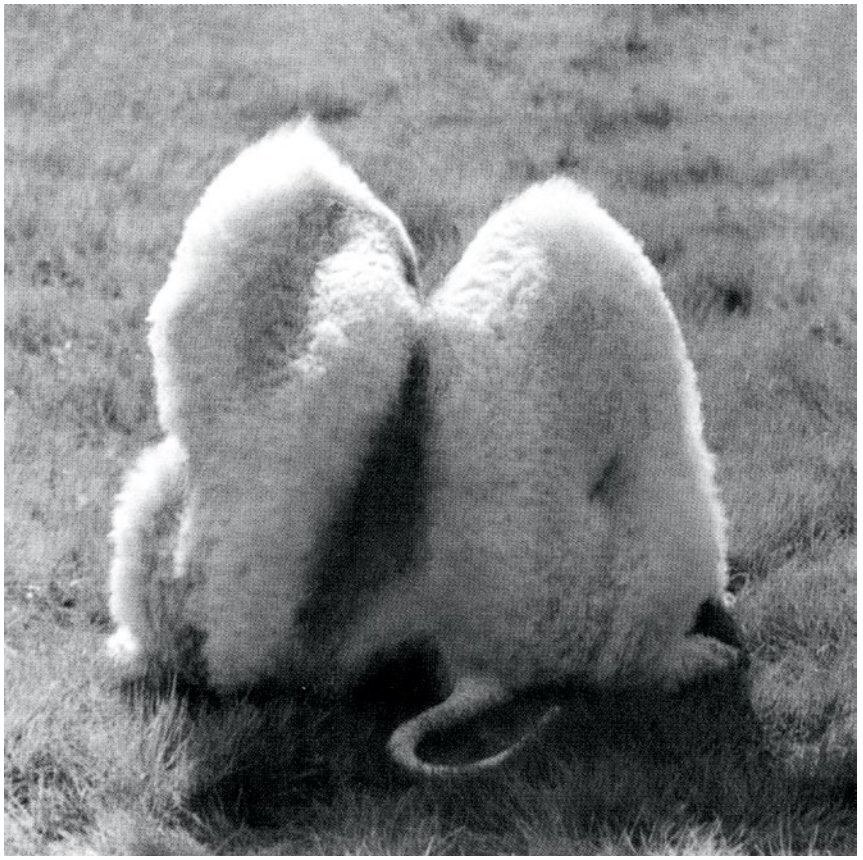
We must not forget that reconstruction is no modern phenomenon, and does not stop at architecture either. There has always been the urge to rebuild something that was thought to be lost for all times. In biology, the fictional Jurassic Park comes into mind. And in fact there are dozens of historical attempts to re-breed extinct animals. One of the most famous in Germany are the breeding projects by the brothers Heck, Heinz and Lutz, directors of the zoological gardens in Berlin and Munich during the 1930s and 40s. Back in those days the technological advancement in genetics was on a rather shaky ground, but the political climate was in favour of racial ideology and related projects being put into practice. The test object selected was the long extinct *Aurochs*, the wild cattle that inhabited German soil (and not only that) in the middle ages. The last specimen reported was killed in 1627, but the myth surrounding it made it a perfect subject to exemplify Germany's scientific prowess. It was an endeavour that could not rely on properly scientific methods though. Advancements in genetics were very premature and all the Heck brothers had in their hands to start their projects was a single image, the so called *Augsburger Bild*, found and reproduced by C.H. Smith in the 19th century, apparently a reconstruction in itself, based on an image made by a historical unknown painter.

Are we dealing with a new form of conservatism or are we experiencing a postmodern form of canonization that other sections of culture already have witnessed? Future Fatigue? The death of avant-garde? Retro-culture as a crisis of contemporary identity?

As a positive side effect, photogrammetry could be seen as an expansion of possibilities concerning the photographic print, where a reference to visual reality, at least at some point in time, stays intact. It is therefore dependent on existing visual data. But in the end there is a loss that can be mourned: that of context. In this process, the signifier and the signified are torn apart. The time and location shift of something that "once was"—that will be resurrected by a photogrammetrical endeavour—is indeed severe and requires a contemporary iconographic approach. At the moment, and not for the first time, it looks like visual studies lag behind interpreting what is technically possible. Photogrammetry as an academic subject stays in the realm of technology, mastered by engineers.

ULRICH GEBERT
Evil Twin

60 x 60 cm, Inkjet Print
2012



The phenotype of photogrammetrical reconstruction is the physical rendering of a photograph put into a whole different context, be it in time or place, that creates a new criteria for cultural classification. Along with the outer geometry, we have to find ways to represent the inner geometry of this very cultural act. The *Aurochs* and the *Berliner Stadtschloss*, as diverse as those examples are, share an undercurrent of ideological interests. The decision of where to resurrect what, and at what time, reflects the political will of an era. In the case of the *Stadtschloss*, the reconstruction followed the deconstruction of another iconic building of historical significance, the *Palast der Republik* of the deceased German Democratic Republic.

The reconstruction of vanished buildings must not be seen as being conservative. It is rather a manifestation of visual references encroaching upon history, and therefore a truly postmodern process. History repeats itself, but not in photogrammetrical exactitude.

Notes

1 Oswalt, Philipp: **Die Geburt der Architektur aus der Fotografie**, Rotary Magazin 2011, http://www.rotarymagazin.de/titelthema/thema-des-monats/die-geburt-der-architektur-aus-der-fotografie-a-672.html (20.07.2013)

SARAH LEHRER-GRAIWER

TWIN TOWN

Poems For Repeating and Photography
2013

Mitosis
Splitting
Symmetry
Mirror
Synonym
Second

Mimesis
Symmetry
Splitting
Mitosis
Self
Synonym

for twin
is doppelganger, double, duplicate, second self, clone, copy, replica, replicant, carbon copy, photocopy, Xerox, reproduction, reprint, shadow, match, identical, look alike, dead ringer, two peas in a pod, two balls in a sack, two brain cells in one head, two birds in one stone, two tits in one ass.

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viii. MARC KATZ

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xvii. RETURNING TO BERLIN

viii.

MARC KATZ

RENDEZVOUS IN BERLIN: BENJAMIN AND KIERKEGAARD ON THE ARCHITECTURE OF REPETITION

1998

It is frequently pointed out that contemporary theory has taken a spatial turn, and that the pathos of temporality which informed the modern has given way to synchronicity and the juxtaposition of geographical and historical referents. Indeed, Walter Benjamin has achieved such preeminent status at least in part because of his effort to re-map modernity in terms of built space. From the rubble of memory he lays out a "history" of the 19th century in architectonic terms, offering readers a tour through its paradigmatic locales, his "dreamhouses of the collective": winter-gardens, arcades, market-halls, panoramas, the ornamental façades of train stations and factories (to be sure, some of these phantasmagorical structures have become so naturalized and ingrained in the idiom of cultural theory that they have by now acquired something of a second mythic life). Regardless of where Benjamin traveled, the Berlin of the outgoing 19th century remained his autobiographical orientation point, "the décor," as he put it, of all his "walks and concerns" (5: 123). In his memoirs and essays he is quick to mention those who served him as guides in figuring the city's locales, chief among them Franz Hessel, Ludwig Rellstab and Julius Rodenberg; and he includes Baudelaire and Proust as well, since what he learned in Paris he applies to his reading of Berlin. One figure, however, given short shrift by Benjamin (and scarcely mentioned by his commentators) is Kierkegaard.[1] Benjamin does make

reference to him on several occasions, most frequently in the notes for Das Passagen-Werk; but although Kierkegaard provides him with the basic unit of an urban physiognomy-the 19th-century bourgeois interior-Benjamin dismisses him as a historical "latecomer" and in effect lets him fall through the cracks of his project (3: 381).

Yet it could be said that Kierkegaard haunts the spaces of Benjamin's Berlin writings to a degree the latter is largely unaware of. Kierkegaard himself was fixated on Berlin. It was, apart from Hamburg, not merely the only foreign city he ever visited, but if we can trust his journals, the only one he ever planned to visit.[2] He made the trip four times between the years 1841-1846, during the period Benjamin characterizes as the moment of "great firsts," as the city was experiencing a wave of radical perceptual change that was set in motion by the material and symbolic forces of industrialization, including train travel, photography, steam power, gas lighting and, eventually, iron-frame architecture. It could be said that Kierkegaard, coming from the provincial Danish capital and experiencing in Berlin the shock of the new at first hand, lapsed into an idiosyncratic kind of tourist-compulsion in which he felt compelled to re-stage an encounter with the city at the same sites and at regular intervals.

viii.

Curiously, the only sustained account of his visits to Berlin that he composed is found in the pseudonymously authored "Repetition" (1843) in the form of a fictional travelogue which serves as the text's narrative hinge. My argument is that in this work, Kierkegaard and Benjamin cross paths not only topographically but conceptually, most significantly in that they each take practices of everyday life—theater-going, interior decoration, strolling—and render them disjunctive by using their locales as forms of theoretically "inhabited" space. Adorno briefly alludes to an affinity of technique: "It is no accident," he writes, "that Benjamin's dialectic is one of images rather than continuity. He hit upon it without knowing that Kierkegaard's melancholy had long since conjured it up.'"[3] Given the tremendous resonance of their work, the web of connections between Benjamin and Kierkegaard demands to be identified and elucidated, particularly in the local context of Berlin flânerie. In doing so, however, it is not the intention of this essay to rearrange points of origin or to find in Kierkegaard one more precursor for Benjamin's project, but rather, to bring the two into a conjuncture with one another in order to highlight habits of historicist thought which linger on to inform Benjamin's work, as well as our own. Although contemporary theory may be tireless in its ability to locate and debunk remnants of historical master-narratives, pursuing instead more multivalent, open sources, it tends not to apply this approach to its own practice.

While Benjamin's spatializing method has been seen as a challenge to linear historicism, it has itself emerged as a postmodern point of origin, with his reading of metropolitan modernity serving as a kind of "master itinerary" retraced again and again as we orient ourselves in our shifting cultural landscape. I would like to suggest that Kierkegaard's Berlin travelogue works against this tendency to re-auraticize space by exposing the principle of perpetual recirculation—what Benjamin's Das Passagen-Werk refers to as the "ever-returning new"—which lies not only behind the formation of the modern, but behind efforts like Benjamin's to see through its paradigmatic structures.

The Berlin Kierkegaard knew was developing into what Weimar-era theorists would later decipher as the classic Urlandschaft of modernity. As its dependence on small trade and lingering guild mentality were giving way to the demands of an industrializing economy with an increased circulation of goods and individuals, Berlin's traditional legibility was being undermined. As architect Peter Eisenman notes: "the 18th-century development of the city fabric as a collection of extruded perimeter blocks caused the streets to be seen as figuratively negative, but the 19th-century extension of the main avenues ... [the Friedrichstrasse and Unter den Linden] privileged the space of the street."[4] As central axes emerged to displace the courtyard and square as key spatial reference points, the city was being semantically renegotiated according to sense bombardment and speed—categories productive of new forms of social relations and subjectivity. From Kierkegaard's scattered notes and journal entries it is clear that his habitus in the city was that of a cultural tourist. In fact, he carefully models this by creating a pseudonymous narrator for the account of his second stay in 1843. In the travelogue contained in the first part of "Repetition," Constantin Constantius, whom Kierkegaard characterizes as a Danish rentier, stages a reencounter with Berlin in a psychological dare with himself, and in the process he follows Kierkegaard's tracks through the city, including walks through the Tiergarten, attendance at a performance of Nestroy's "The Talisman," and a passage by steamer to Stralsund. Neither autobiography, nor fiction, Constantin's report plays itself out in an irresolvable tension between the two, with Kierkegaard as a missing point of confessional origin in a long chain of displacements. We should not miss the significance of Kierkegaard's method, for what Constantin's travelogue details is the breakup of the emerging bourgeois-urban subject into a sequence of serial identities both within the text's frame (Constantin retraces his own steps) and outside of it (while Constantin follows Kierkegaard's Berlin itinerary, he himself is framed

when he later turns up in the pseudonymously authored *Stages on Life's Way,* 1845). In a pattern that, at least at first glance, is familiar to us through standard models of the "dispersed self' this repeated bracketing is highlighted as a part of subject formation. Since every attempt at self-recuperation is an act of self-mediation, unitary identity is made unstable simply by being an object of retrospection. When Constantin returns to those sites in Berlin where memory traces have been left, he stages an uncanny encounter with himself as *flâneur* by establishing a chain of dislocating selves whose successive acts of self-estrangement provide the piece with a narrative, and whose compulsion to reduplicate and reiterate suggests less the passive anxiety of Baudelaire or Poe than the more deliberate play of identity and non-identity that Benjamin admired in surrealist nightwalkers like Aragon.

"Repetition" problematizes the category of authenticity on two fronts: on the one hand, it does so in individual terms, by means of the pseudonyms; on the other, it operates in a more broadly discursive context through Constantin's encounter with an emerging tourist industry. In the Berlin of the *Vormärz*, travel was in the process of being regularized and subsumed within a pan-European network of transport and consumption. Binary train routes (e.g., Berlin-Stettin) were expanding into a full-fledged transportation system with dependable schedules, connections to steamers, surface vehicles and station hubs around which a services industry had begun to develop. Although travel firms were still a rarity, and organized group travel a novelty, there was a proliferating market for tourist guides, either in book or brochure form. One contemporary example, Schmidt's *Wegweiser* (1822), indexes the choice and sequence of sights and administers the tourist's impressions through model itineraries, or spatial narratives (it spectacularizes, and therefore defuses, even seemingly non-touristic industrial sites by listing factory and steamworks along with hotels, eateries, bathing establishments and "best views").[5] In a practice that would soon become standard with the Baedecker and Grieben guides of the 1850s, Berlin was delineated through a series of consumable sights into which travelers were initiated as a variant of the reading public. As Rumpf writes in *How to Experience Berlin in the Shortest Possible Time* (1835): "In general, strangers want to take in all notable locales at a particular place with a single glance."[6] The efficiency of the panoramic view and the demands of a developing commodity culture met in the new touristic dream of having "done"a city.

viii.

Constantin derides the fact that tourism functions this way as a play of signs. "If one is ... a courier," he writes, "who travels to smell what everybody else has smelled or to write in the names of notable sights in his journals and in return gets his in the great autograph book of travelers, then he engages a day servant and buys *das ganze Berlin* for four Groschen" (153). He defines his project of recuperating the self precisely in opposition to industrialized travel. His account begins with a recollection of "The Talisman," the Nestroy comedy he saw performed the year before at the Königstädter Theater. Recalling his visit, Constantin compares his theater box to an apartment living room, the private space of bourgeois memory and archive of souvenirs: "one sits here at the theater," he writes, "as comfortably as one does at home" (the comparison was not unique to Kierkegaard, since the decorum governing the mid-century theater loge was that of the private salon: unaccompanied women, for example, could only avoid the taint of the "fille publique" if they sat in a private box).[7] As Constantin recollects being seated, he, in effect, takes his place within a fully naturalized bourgeois code of private and public, so that by acquainting the reader with the theater's sightlines, he simultaneously asserts his *bona fides* as tour-guide, memoirist, and viewing subject: "In the first balcony one can be assured of getting a box all to oneself. If not, however, may I recommend to the reader boxes five and six at the left, so that he can still have some useful information from what I write. In a corner at the back there is a single seat where one has his own unsurpassed position" (165).

In predictable fashion, his travelogue that follows opposes the authentic and local to the standardized, reiterated and commercial. But, as Jonathan Culler has pointed out, the common binary authentic traveler/mere tourist is illusory, since the tourist is nothing but a projection of the traveler's bad faith.[8] While managed travel uses the rhetoric of Romantic subjectivity to promote direct, unmediated experience and a recuperation of selfhood far from the work-relations of the market economy, what is forgotten is that the very terms "authentic" and "originary" are always after the fact. As Rosalind Krauss observes: "Although the singular and the formulaic or repetitive may be semantically opposed, they are nonetheless conditions of each other ... the priorness and repetition of pictures is necessary to the singularity of the picturesque ... for the beholder it depends on being recognized as such, a re-cognition made possible only by prior example."[9] This masking of the interdependence of "origin" and "copy" was capitalized upon and made to play an institutional role across all lines of 19th-century cultural production, from connoisseurship to the

extension of copyright. What the tourist industry did was to employ the Romantic travel-ethos by offering its customers spontaneity and recuperation of self in serial form, through souvenirs, group travel and pre-set itineraries.

Benjamin, in his typology of urban strollers, recognizes the family resemblances between *flâneur* and tourist—the *flâneur* is the native tourist, the tourist a foreign *flâneur*—and he lays out a rationale for privileging the former over the latter. The tourist measures space in its own terms, i.e., exotic distance, while for the native *flâneur*, the city opens up as a temporal domain and a repository of past associations, so that its streets hold the promise of mnemonic aid. What Kierkegaard's project does is lend the foreign traveler those prerogatives Benjamin assigns the native. In Berlin, Kierkegaard's Constantin acts the part of local "archaeologist" excavating the city for lost memory traces, only here the time differential is radically foreshortened. Where Baudelaire takes two decades to return to the Place de Carrousel of his childhood in "Le Cygne," Kierkegaard's experiment is undertaken just a little more than a year after his initial visit. Benjamin himself judged the importance of such time differentials in relative terms; as he writes in his notes to *Das Passagen-Werk* (5: 576), the quickened pace of technological change opens wider distances between shorter segments of time, so that the recent past may assume a dense nostalgic or mythic "visual spell." The compression and isolation of variables like time and distance lend Kierkegaard's "experiment" a kind of laboratory purity. If Constantin enacts his trip in theatrical time—time as a series of repeat performances—then he does so with the gestural compactness of farce. On returning to Berlin, he notices a new wedding ring on the finger of his former landlord, while the beggar he used to pass at the Brandenburg gate is now wearing a different colored coat. Back at the theater to see the Nestroy play for a second time, he is forced to sit in a box on the right rather than the left. Temporal disjunction is thus played out in spatial terms. Although the arrangement of furniture in the bourgeois interior usually serves to stabilize identity by establishing a domain of habit (in fact, a Danish expatriate living in Berlin was startled to notice the care with which Kierkegaard had furnished his rooms abroad),[10] when Constantin re-enters his Berlin apartment and sees that a desk and velvet chair have been rearranged, he finds that something has, quite literally, "taken" place.[11]

viii.

Yet more than such minuscule alterations, it is the experience of sameness that is most destabilizing to Constantin. Entering his *Stammlokal* as if on automatic pilot, he finds everything—patrons,

witticisms, greetings at the door—untouched by time. "I could count the hair on every head," he writes; and yet he concludes that repetition is beyond him (170). Difference carried by the context of the familiar brings the uncanny home to him in a way nothing else does. This acute perception of non-identity "de-originates," that is, it works retroactively, by calling into question the solidity of the memories which Kierkegaard uses as departure points for Constantin's return trip. The first and second visits unfold not as echo to original, but as echo to echo, so that his Berlin is defined by serial experiences in which the model instance is bracketed out as such. Something significant is being detailed here, for Kierkegaard is making Constantin trace the iterable logic of an emerging culture of mass replication: repetition is seen as foundational, with authenticity as its self-defeating, peripheral effect. From the proliferation of photographs and the mobilization of tourism to the introduction of the rotary press, new 19th-century technologies destabilized the concept-pairing of original and copy. In "Repetition," this instability is experienced, with hypochondriacal acuity, as a flattening out of surface/depth models like that of bourgeois domestic space, which, coded as a storehouse of memory, ostensibly promises a recuperation of selfhood and authenticity. In this sense, Constantin's return trip acts out a collapse of that bourgeois interiority, or self-encapsulation, which constitutes itself through perceived threats and shocks. As a result, the subject is stranded in the ambiguity between inside and outside, between copy and original, like the trauma victim, except that in Constantin's heightened state of anxiety, self-representation itself is perceived as traumatic occurrence. Kierkegaard and his chain of multiple pseudonyms are consumed by copies because they cannot find a workable distance from them. We might consider this state to be marginally traumatic, since it exacerbates the liminality of deferred experience which informs traditional accounts of trauma. Anxiety turns here on the loss of traumatic origin, a situation similar to that described by Mark Seltzer in his analysis of the crisis of a "wound culture" whose symbolic order is dependent on, but not securely in possession of, interiority: "The traumatic here is something like a return to the scene of the crime, not merely in that the trauma is the product of its representation, but also in that it is the product not of an event itself, but of how the subject repeats or represents it to himself. In order for this return to tak e place, time must be converted to place, act into scene.'"[12] Constantin's version of this self-staging registers this cultural shift through the serializing logic of tourism, whereby authenticity comes after the fact, like picturesque sights which, strangely, always resemble themselves.

This is precisely the territory in which Benjamin makes his rendezvous with Kierkegaard. In a series of autobiographical writings Benjamin works his way back towards the Berlin of the *Vormärz*. His ambition to "set out [his] *bios* as if on a map," leads him to reconsider those architectural remnants from the mid-nineteenth century which had left their impress on him as a child (6: 466). The result is that across the distance of a century he and Kierkegaard meet at particular autobiographical sites—on the Pfaueninsel, at the Royal Opera House on the Gendarmenmarkt, before the Schinkelfassaden around the Kupfergraben, at the Tiergarten monument to Friedrich Wilhelm which was built shortly before Kierkegaard's first trip, and which serves Benjamin as his point of entrance to the "labyrinthine weave" of the city (6: 465). Benjamin's Berlin memoirs, written over a span of years, are in effect co-extensive with his career as a critic. He incorporated early autobiographical pieces from *Die literarische Welt* into the first version of his memoirs, *Berliner Chronik*, which he revised after his stay on Ibiza in 1932. The unpublished text served as the basis for *Berliner Kindheit um Neunzehnhundert*, selections of which were first sent to the *Frankfurter Zeitung* before being extensively rewritten in exile. Together the memoirs constitute a series of compulsive reworkings (a long "good-bye" to the city is how Adorno characterized them). Although Benjamin's stated project was to lay out his sphere of life topographically, he was doing so on shifting ground. He resists the notion that *Berliner Chronik* or *Berliner Kindheit* offer anything like autobiography in the traditional sense of the term, since they revolve not around continuity and a seamless recuperation of the past, but rather around "space and the disjunctive" (6: 488). Like Constantin, he stands in an uncanny relation to the self he conjures up. In Benjamin's memoirs, the play of identity and non-identity, the search for an elusive moment of originary self-presence, is spatialized through a series of receding interiors extending from the "masked rooms" of his parents' west-side apartment, to his aunt's bay window, to the *Gründerzeit* interior of his grandmother's house in the Steglizterstrasse, and back into architectural structures from what he delineates as his mid-century "horizon of family memory." The autobiographical after-images of these environments are spectral. Benjamin compares them to snapshots, because he sees the process of ghosting the self as integral to the medium of photography with its capacity to serialize and reduplicate. Confronted with photos of himself as a child, he experiences a proximity that estranges. "Moments of sudden exposure are at the same time moments when we are beside ourselves" (6: 516).[13] In one passage, photo and furnished dwelling—the two great apparatuses of bourgeois memory—are fully conflated as he considers a picture of himself as a boy

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posed in a photographic studio mock-up of a domestic interior, in which he is positioned as a thing among things in a reified landscape of memory:

> Wherever I looked, I saw myself surrounded by screens, cushions, pedestals which lusted for my image like the shades of Hades for the blood of the sacrificial animal. ... The gaze [that] sinks into me from the child's face in the shadow of the household palm ... it belongs to one of the studios that ... partake of the boudoir and the torture chamber....I am disfigured by my similarity to everything surrounding me here. I dwelt in the nineteenth century as a mollusk dwells in its shell; and the century now lies hollow before me like an empty shell. I hold it to my ear.(4:261)

There is no separating the autobiographical from the collective-historical in Benjamin. His memoirs have to be read as part of that broader matrix of texts through which he patterns his history of the nineteenth century. The seriality he confronts in autobiographical passages like the one above haunts his contemporaries in the form of phantasmagoria, collective dream-images whose compulsion to repeat is masked by the appearance of novelty and its agent, fashion. "The eternal return," he writes, "is a projection onto the cosmos of the punishment of staying after school: humanity is forced to copy out its text in endless repetition" (1: 1234). The naive belief that Weimar culture in its most progressive guises is no longer subject to such anxious compulsions has only consolidated their mythic density (the equivalent of "dreaming that one is awake"). Throughout his work, Benjamin seeks out early industrial-era phantasmagorical forms and styles—panoramas, the embossing of facades—at the moment of their impending obsolescence, reanimating them as images in order to upset perceptual habit. His constellatory pre-history of modernity turns not on the mutual illumination of particular historical moments, but on their re-inscription, so that the past emerges as a recollection of the present. In this sense, Benjamin "excavates" traces of 19th-century Berlin which, although dismissed by official memory as obsolete, still lie on the surface of city.

The Berlin of the *Vormärz*, Kierkegaard's Berlin, is most extensively evoked in Benjamin's 1929-1932 series of radio broadcasts for young people. Radio provided Benjamin with the opportunity to pursue his rarefied dialectic of ruin and repetition through the popular discourse of tourism ("As one leaves the city on the way to Oranienburg and Velten, one cuts through Tegel, where there is a lot to be seen ..."). Through a series of 28 half-hour talks, he leads his listeners on auditory forays into *Alt-Berlin*, its streets, schools, public works, puppet theaters, workers' housing and early sites of industrial production.

Benjamin operates through a public performance (rather than explication) of his constellatory history. He does this by using the new mass medium to reach back to early forms of metropolitan journalism in an attempt to reanimate the panoramic perspective developed in guides like the *Buntes Berlin* and the *Berliner Stadtklatsch* and in E.T.A. Hoffmann's story "Des Vetters Eckfenster" (in which the Romantic picturesque is first translated into the idiom of sensationalism and "local color").

In evoking the practices of the classic mid-century feuilletonist, Benjamin found a contemporary model in the work of Franz Hessel, his close friend and co-translator of Proust. According to Benjamin, Hessel represents a second-coming, or *Wiederkehr*, of the 19th-century *flâneur* who reinvigorates the tradition of urban idling from a perspective at once retrospective and emancipatory. Benjamin's architectural interest is caught by Hessel's depiction of communicating spaces (i.e., bridges, doorways, crossings etc.), because Hessel provides him with what he calls "threshold knowledge" (3: 196). Hessel wrote *Spazieren in Berlin* as a tourbook for natives who were oblivious to the phantasmagorical forces held by the city's streets through entertainment venues, signage, architectural detail and so forth. Hessel treats phantasmagoria as double-edged, in that they embody collective wishes and strivings which although half-expressed or neutralized, are present as a potentially transforming force (as Lefebvre would say, they comprise their own contradictions and are therefore sites of alternative impulses). A structure like the arcade, for example, with its encapsulation of the street, upholds bourgeois interiority at an illusory remove from the exigencies of public life, while at the same time it collapses the terms of this otherwise strict dichotomy. As an instance of "dream-space," the arcade evinces the key to its own dissolution in the form of the transparency embodied in its glass and iron frame, but obscured by *Gründerzeit* pilasters, embossing, pediments and friezes. According to Benjamin, it is only when the structure is read with an eye to this principle of transparency that it shows itself as an *awakening* dream. The post-Baudelairean, post-surrealist *flâneur* creates oppositional space within the dream world of the streets through reiteration, by reconstructing its representative structures as a series of legible images.

In Benjamin's project, Kierkegaard plays a crucial (albeit inconspicuous) part, in that his work furnishes a virtual template for the bourgeois interior, the basic architectonic unit in Benjamin's theoretical construction. For Benjamin, the interior is a concrete expression of 19th-century domestication mania, an illusory sanctum set up to shut out the very conflicts that make up its conditions:

"The living space constituted itself as interior. The office was its compliment. The private citizen ... required of the interior that it should support him in his illusions" (5: 52). As a locus of phantasmagoria, the interior is charged with mythic compulsion, so that it is endlessly replicated and inflected. Arcades, museums, department stores are versions of interior display space in monumental form, while antimacassars and inlaid boxes are interiors within interiors. "It is scarcely possible, Benjamin notes, "to discover anything for which the 19th century did not invent casings-pocket watches, slippers, egg cups, thermometers, playing cards, and in lieu of casings, then coverlets, carpet runners, linings and slipcovers" (5: 292). According to Benjamin, we can find the architectonic code for these features of interior construction in a citation from Kierkegaard's *Stages on Life's Way*: "homesickness at home."[14] "This," says Benjamin, "is the formula for the interior" (5: 289). The private sphere was compulsively heaped with bric-a-brac, mementos, heirlooms, photographic portraits and various objects of display, and thus was meant to furnish visible, reassuring proof of an integrated and autonomous self. As such, it is an extreme example of "striated" space obsessively parceled and held as territory. Borrowed memories turned up in the form of "fake antiques" which created a boom market in the '40s. In this elaborately outfitted theater of subjectivity, identity was constituted by an assumption of style suggesting less stability than schizophrenic delirium—delirium being, as Deleuze and Guattari remind us, the unseen outer wall or constitutive limit of consumer economies whose inner wall, or relative limit, is a de-socialized "commodity flow."[15] "The Gothic, the Persian, the Renaissance," Benjamin writes, "that meant: that there was a festival hall from Cesare Borgia, that out of the boudoir of the housewife there arose a gothic chapel, and that over the study of the master of the house there was the apartment of a Persian sheik" (5: 282). The succession of styles and accumulation of world-souvenirs allowed the occupants to play tourists at home, traversing distances of time and place as domestic nomads (to this effect, Benjamin cites Kierkegaard's boyhood habit of taking "roomwalks" with his father, apartment length strolls in which imaginary storefronts and pedestrians would unfold panorama-like in front of them.)

In his notes to *Das Passgen-Werk*, Benjamin maintains that Kierkegaard's image-space (*Bilderwelt*) is co-extensive with the bourgeois interior and therefore within the bounds of a phantasmagoric "magic circle" marked out by contemporaries like Poe, Baudelaire, and E.T.A. Hoffman.[16] Yet Kierkegaard resists such facile typologizing. A brief look at Hoffmann, Benjamin's prototypical Berlin *flâneur*, points

up a radical difference in the way street and interior are negotiated. Although Benjamin was unaware of it, Kierkegaard's Berlin apartment off the Gendarmenmarkt was located around the corner from the Charlottenstrasse where Hoffmann had lived fifteen years earlier. A view of the square, in fact, turns up as a central locale both in "Repetition" and in Hoffmann's "Des Vetters Eckfenster," the text Benjamin cites in radio talks and essays as a crucial moment in the genealogy of the Berlin flâneur: "this last story which [Hoffmann] dictated on his deathbed is nothing short of a primer on physiognomical vision" (7: 91). The story revolves around a provincial visitor to the city, who is tutored by his cousin, a Berliner, in the "art of seeing" from the vantage point of a bay window overlooking the square. In a version of the urban picturesque, the Berlin cousin construes a number of Biedermeier *tableaux vivants* out of the crowd of people on the streets. He appropriates them as types, or touristic landmarks in a panoramic display of universalized humanity. The window establishes the visual perspective into which the provincial visitor is initiated, as its picturesque view renders him a bourgeois-urban subject through the act of seeing. The cousin, for his part, is the archetypal journalistic guide who navigates a changeable urban milieu and helps readers (native or foreign) shop for authentic experience by introducing them to local "scenes." He serves to naturalize a perspective at once detached and acquisitive: through the window's frame, the unwieldiness of street life and its potential threats are drawn into the room and domesticated as decor.

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Kierkegaard shares a similar apartment view of the Gendarmenmarkt's twin churches, opera house and market-place with the cousin in "Des Vetters Eckfenster." But where the cousin's illustrative gaze extends into the square, Kierkegaard's Constantin, making his way back through Berlin, dissolves the habitus of the *flâneur*. Constantin enters his old flat, a paradigmatic dream-space which is here permeated by the ambiguity-producing glow of gas lighting and which has been filtered through the uncertainty of memory:

> Sitting in a chair by the window, one looks out on the great square, sees the shadows of passersby hurrying along the walls; everything is transformed into a stage setting. A dream world glimmers in the background of the soul. One feels the desire to toss on a cape, to steal softly along the wall with a searching gaze, aware of every sound. One does not do this, but merely sees a rejuvenated self doing it (151-52).

If narrative is the unfolding of temporality in space, then disjunctive time—Constanin's "repetition"—plays itself out in a built version of liminal trauma. This memory theater, formed by a series of interlocking rooms, is the architectural equivalent of repetition mania. Constantin recalls subtle, dreamlike displacements which are the more uncanny for being so slight. He steps outside himself, consumed as a stable subject while in agoraphobic retreat. "One climbs the stairs to the first floor," he writes,

> and in the gas illuminated building, opens a little door and stands in the entry. To the left is a glass door leading to a room. Straight ahead is an anteroom. Beyond are two identical rooms, identically furnished, so that one sees the room double in the mirror (151).

The crisis-ridden and therefore (paradoxically) still functioning spatiotemporal unity of classic metropolitan perspective is dissolved; and instead, Constantin's scene of reenactment is folded back on itself in a mise-enabyme, in which street life, windows and the registering interior itself are reduced, through mirroring, to a flat plane of representation suggesting the doubling with a difference which informs Kierkegaard's text as a whole.

To draw the crucial point: the principle on which Constantin's travelogue turns is one of disjunctive similitude. At first glance, his report from Berlin would seem an assertion of bourgeois subjectivity in the manner of Hoffmann or Baudelaire, that is, a subjectivity that, no matter how destabilized, is reconstituted as a refuge in ever deeper interior space. What makes "Repetition" so deceptive is the fact that it revolves not around identity with the figure of *flâneur*, but around uncanny proximity to him. According to Benjamin, Baudelaire suffers the anxiety of "duplicating selves and treading in place which is at the heart of *flânerie*." He registers the discomfort of such duplication, writes Benjamin, but because of Baudelaire's "armature" of the picturesque, he himself cannot read it as such (5: 405). Benjamin's categorization of Kierkegaard as a *flâneur* in the Baudelairean mode overlooks the fact that Kierkegaard deliberately mobilizes this fear of doubles as the very form-giving principle of his travelogue. Far from being the "sanctum" or "refuge" it is assumed to be, this interior is an infernal apparatus set by the author for himself in which the attempt to recuperate the self is mocked, or shadowed, by "catastrophic" failure. Kierkegaard registers his own impress on returning to Berlin. His interior is already a form of dialecticized image, which is read

against itself in Constantin's problematic re-staging of his Berlin *flâneries* where progress is measured by a series of perceptual shocks delivered by the juxtaposition of two discreet moments.

Kierkegaard's spatial incognito finds something of an analogy in Benjamin's notion of "tactile nearness," a technique worked up in his later writings which he hoped would allow him to revisit outmoded structures so as to subvert their mythic-compulsive power to repeat. It is precisely this technique that alarmed Adorno when he read the first draft of the Baudelaire piece. Benjamin, he believed, ran the risk of collusion by offering a "wide-eyed presentation of facts at the cross-roads of positivism and magic."[17] Benjamin was himself well aware of the danger of being held captive by what Adorno calls the "Medusan glance" of these images, but as Benjamin saw it, there was no choice, since the idea of safe distance which Adorno advocated shares the illusory structure of bourgeois autonomy Benjamin was examining. He needed a means of breaking the spell of the auratic which would no longer be dependent on the perspective of critical or instrumental mastery, since this perspective supports the visual distance (*Fernsicht*) which constitutes the aura in the first place. He found a potential model in film's ability to open up the human sensorium to new, intimate spatial formations through the idiom of cross-cuts and close-ups. For Benjamin, film reconstitutes the optic field both by bringing things "nearer to home," while at the same time investing them with the kind of perceptual jolt, or "interval" between shots first theorized by Vertov as cinema's formal principle. Film opens up the spaces of everyday life in which phantasmagoria lodge. "In and of themselves," Benjamin observes,

> these offices, furnished rooms, bars, city streets, railway stations, and factories are ugly, incomprehensible, hopelessly sad. Or rather, they were so and seemed so, until film came along. Film came along and exploded this entire dungeon world with the dynamite of the tenth of a second (1: 499).

Benjamin considers architecture's defining feature to be the fact that it ritualizes, or freezes the relationship of space and action. It is a weak medium because it is appropriated by use and perception ("sight and touch") working in tandem under the guidance of habit (1: 504). Ritual passivity is simply the flip-side of auratic distance: both are alibis for disengagement. "Architecture is appropriated by the collectivity in a state of distraction," he writes (1: 504). Yet as he goes on to suggest, the susceptibility of the architectural medium is also the source of its potential strength. If "tactile appropriation" can be mobilized for disjunctive effect,

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then proximity gains a redemptive component, if not for architecture *per se*, at least for an architecturally structured theory like his own. While it is certainly the case that some of his formulations on literary montage call to mind the interventionist tactics of the 1920s avant-garde and its pose of revolutionary intrepidity, their rhetorical register does not necessarily mesh with the kind of stealth technique he develops in his later work. Benjamin's notion of "tactile appropriation" is not reliant on extraneous materials, like the parodic references or pictorial commentary found in the montage of Heartfield or Höch. On the contrary, it requires that phantasmagorical structures are preserved intact so as to allow them to release their own inherent contradictions and thus make evident their transformative possibilities: "The method of my work: literary montage. I have nothing to say, only to show" (5: 574). His late work approaches a form of spontaneous critique, whereby the everyday is encountered, made visible, in its own unfamiliar terms. "We penetrate mystery," Benjamin writes, "only to the degree that we recognize it in the everyday realm, by virtue of a dialectical optic that perceives the everyday as impenetrable, the impenetrable as everyday" (5: 90).

In Kierkegaard and Benjamin, it is not simply that the domestic interior figures as a dominant image, but that they regard the images themselves as interiors, that is, as forms of inhabited and inhabiting space. One has to search out images where they "dwell," Benjamin writes ("wo die Bilder wohnen, wo sie hausen," 3: 196). Since the interior is the prime locus of everyday life, it is the very structural embodiment of the phantasmagorical (the site where social relations are reproduced on a daily basis). For both Kierkegaard and Benjamin, then, "inhabiting" the image of the interior means occupying a space which is governed by habit and repetition. The dream space of the interior is reiterated into "waking space" (*Wachwelt*) from within, which means that its image is predicated not on an anterior wakefulness but on the process, or event, of awakening. This is borne out by Constantin's return trip to Berlin, which turns on a reenactment of a set of mundane practices, rather then recollection. Indeed, when Constantin shows up again in Kierkegaard's *Stages on Life's Way*, he offers an explicit countervoice to William Afham, the pseudonym who furnishes Benjamin with the "formula" for the bourgeois interior ("homesickness at home"). As William speaks at a symposium hosted by Constantin, he outlines a theory of recollection similar to involuntary memory: "to conjure up the past for oneself," he declares, "is not as difficult as forgetting.".[18] Although Constantin supports this attempt to work against the encrustations of habitual memory, he is wary of William's "proficiency in illusion" and warns

that such memory-play will prove an "eleatic ruse"[19] (a reference to the doctrine of Parmenides and the protoidealists which holds that movement is an illusion obscuring the world's eternal stasis). Benjamin, for his part, engages in a similar internal debate in assessing his relationship to Proust. As Benjamin's acknowledged guide, Proust's doctrine of involuntary recollection provides a model to open up the Berlin of Benjamin's childhood by helping him mediate the states of waking and dreaming. Memory traces suspend the illusory duration of time through a process of spatialization in which they take on dimensional form as discreet images ("space-crossed time"). Yet this "experimental re-arrangement of furniture in slumber" is, Benjamin insists, a mere half measure, since space is left as a false eternity. Proust, lying on his back in the middle of his bedroom and conjuring the past through images of elaborately differentiated decor, creates a hermetically closed environment governed by compulsive, or mythic, reiteration from which present time is barred. Benjamin distances himself from Proust, and in doing so he inadvertently echoes Kierkegaard's Constantin: "Proust," Benjamin writes, "traps us in memory's eleatic magic realm" (2: 313).

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This echo is more than slightly ironic, given the ease with which Benjamin classifies Kierkegaard as a historical "late-comer." Yet one could say that it is precisely Kierkegaard's belatedness, his deliberate cultivation of epigonistic after-images, that in many ways makes his memoirs so contemporaneous with Benjamin's own. Kierkegaard does not employ his images in the development of a historiography, let alone one informed by a materialist pedagogy, as Benjamin's is. Nevertheless, Benjamin clearly repeats or "revisits" some of the key structural features of Kierkegaard's dialectic in developing the stealth tactic of the interior-image. It is difficult to say how comfortable Benjamin would have been with this convergence of perspectives. His assumptions about the kind of critical privilege history bestows shift and often overlap. He maintains that images become readable only when juxtaposed according to a specific historical "index" (something not found in "Repetition," with its truncated time-differential between visits), but there are also points in his work when this same index is then doubly privileged by being tied to a modernist teleology and its assumption of heroic innovation and an underlying universal-history. "Dwelling in the old sense is a thing of the past. With Giedion, Mendelsohn, Le Corbusier ... what is coming in the future stands under the sign of transparency," Benjamin writes in reviewing Hessel's *Spazieren in Berlin* (3: 196-97). Siegfried Giedion's historical account of the Bauhaus and its anticipatory moments in the 19th century institutionalized transparency as an architectonic

and theoretical principle unfolding itself through three historically inevitable "space conceptions."[20] According to this modernist narrative, the architectural past only becomes readable in light of a progressive aesthetic of flowing light and imperceptible spatial transitions between rooms. In mining avant-garde architectural theory for his Arcades project, Benjamin clearly draws from Giedion's survey; and yet, as becomes evident while he was finishing his memoirs and compiling notes for "The Theses on the Philosophy of History," Benjamin uses it chiefly as a point of departure for putting the modernist notion of legibility through a drastic transformation: "The concept of the historical progress of mankind cannot be sundered from the concept of its progress through homogeneous empty time. A critique of the concept of such progression must be the basis of any criticism of progress itself" (1: 701). In opposition to the historicism of the Bauhaus, with its premises in bourgeois epistemology, Benjamin came to view history under the sign of perpetual rupture and disjunction (what the angel of history sees before him is "wreckage piled upon wreckage"). This is not to suggest, as J. Hillis Miller and others do, that Benjamin eventually forgoes the eschatological, but rather that in his later writings he effects a radical reinvestment of the utopian moment *within* disjunction itself.[21] "The concept of progress," he writes, "is to be grounded in the catastrophe; that things just go on is the catastrophe. It is not that which is approaching, but that which is" (1: 683). Whereas Mies van der Rohe planned his 40-story glass and steel tower as a formalist rebuke to the architectural vernacular of the Friedrichstrasse, Benjamin's Berlin memoirs are, in effect, "built" out of outmoded structures and common haunts.

Here again Benjamin might be said to cross paths with Kierkegaard, because there is a similar form of secular messianism informing the everyday spaces of "Repetition." One hesitates to group the eschatologies of Benjamin and Kierkegaard together, given the explicit materialhistorical interests of the former, and the expressly theological concerns of the latter. But it may be that they meet here, in their Berlin writings, as they do at no other point. For Kierkegaard's account of his stay takes place entirely within the sphere of the secular, falling as it does under the category of his early, "aesthetic" production. His Berlin, like Benjamin's, is shot through with an explicitly quotidian form of illumination (as opposed to his "ethical" or "religious" stages). It occupies profane space, governed by immediacy and without recourse to the kind of ontology that could possibly guarantee notions of repetition as mimetic return. Rather, what we find in the *flâneries* of both Benjamin and Kierkegaard is history as a perpetual piling up of "debris,"

of ruined forms and unsuccessful reenactments that in their failure carry with them a utopian moment as potential. The dialectical images they develop "on site" in Berlin work against both the stasis of perpetual ruin, and the illusory neutrality of the historicist continuum. Instead, critical distance is renegotiated as inhabited space, indistinguishable from the uncanny shape of what is nearest at hand.

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Notes

Unless otherwise noted, references to Kierkegaard and Benjamin are from: Søren Kierkegaard, **Fear and Trembling and Repetition**, trans. Howard H. Hong and Edna V Hong (New York: Princeton UP 1983); and Walter Benjamin, **Gesammelte Schriften**, ed. Rolf Tiedemann and Hermann Schweppenhaiuser, 12 vols. (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1972-).

1 See Benjamin's review of Adorno's Kierkegaard: **Konstruktion des Asthetischen** in: Benjamin, Schriften (3: 234). Scattered references to Kierkegaard are found in Konvolut D, I, J and M in **Das Passagen-Werk** as part of planned chapters on the fláneur, Baudelaire, boredom and the bourgeois interior. When Kierkegaard is mentioned among Benjamin scholars, it is typically as a footnote in B.'s intellectual biography. See, for example, Susan Buck-Morss, **The Dialectics of Seeing** (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT P, 1989) 176.

2 Kierkegaard's first visit lasted from October 1841 to March 1842. He subsequently re-turned to the city for two-week stays in May of 1843, 1845, and 1846. He considered a fifth trip in May of 1848, but was not able to make it on account of his failing health. See Kierkegaard's **Journals and Papers**, ed. Howard H. Hong and Edna V Hong, 7 vols. (New York: Indiana UP, 1978) 5: 399.

3 From Adorno's introduction to Benjamin's Schriften. In: **On Walter Benjamin**, ed. Gary Smith (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT UP, 1988) 11-12.

4 Peter Eisenman, **"K Nowhere 2 Fold," Anywhere**, ed. Cynthia Davidson (New York: Anyone, 1992) 222.

5 Valentin Schmidt, **Wegweiser fair Fremde und Einheimische durch Berlin und Potsdam** (Berlin: B. Nicolai, 1822) xii.

6 Thomas Rumpf, **Berlin: wie man es in kiir-zester Zeit erleben kann** (Berlin: Arani, 1835) 4.

7 Kierkegaard, **Repetition**, 165. See: Michelle Perrot, **A History of Private Life**, 5 vols. (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard UP, 1990) 4: 278.

8 Jonathan Culler, **"The Semiotics of Tourism," American Journal of Semiotics I** (1/2, 1981): 127-29.

9 Rosalind Krauss, **The Originality of the Avant-Garde and Other Modernist Myths** (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT P, 1985) 166.

10 T. H. Croxall, **Glimpses and Impressions of Kierkegaard** (London: Nisbet, 1959) 23.

11 For an excellent discussion of place and serialism in the context of Benjamin's work, see Samuel Weber, **Mass Mediauras: Form, Media, Technics** (Stanford: Stanford UP, 1996) 76-90.

12 Mark Seltzer, **"Anatomy of a Wound Culture," October 80** (Spring, 1997): 11-12.

13 Although Eduardo Cadava does not draw on the bourgeois interior as a specific apparatus of memory, he does offer a very valuable treatment of the function of photography in Benjamin's dialectic, see Eduardo Cadava, **Words of Light** (Princeton:Princeton UP, 1997).

14 Søren Kierkegaard, **Stages on Life's Way**, trans. Howard H. Hong and Edna V Hong (New York: Princeton UP, 1978) 13.

15 Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, **A Thousand Plateaus**, trans. Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 1987) 345.

Notes Continued

16 This observation is made explicit in his review of Adorno's study, and it informs his comments on Kierkegaard in the notes to the Arcades Project. See Schriften, 3: 381.

17 Walter Benjamin, **Briefe**, ed. Theodor Adorno and Gershom Scholem, 2 vols. (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1966) 2: 620.

18 Kierkegaard, **Stages on Life's Way**, 9-10.

19 Kierkegaard, **Repetition**, 3 09.

20 Siegfried Giedion, **Architecture and the Phenomena of Transition** (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard UP 1971) 267-68.

21 In his study of Hitchcock, Slavoj Žižek makes a similar point about Benjamin and Kierkegaard when he notes that they each use ruin and return for utopian effect: Slavoj Žižek, **Enjoy Your Symptom!** (London: Routledge, 1992) 80. See J. Hillis Miller, **"Narrative and History," ELH 41**(#3: Fall, 1974): 469-73.

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ix. OLGA FERNÁNDEZ LÓPEZ

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xvii. RETURNING TO BERLIN

OLGA FERNÁNDEZ LÓPEZ

OUT OF FUTURITY: TIME-TRAVELLING WITH ROSELL MESSEGUER AND SUSANA BARRIGA

2013

In H. G. Wells' *The Time Machine* (1895), the main character, a scientist called Alexander Hartdegen, travels to the year 802.701. In this distant future, where civilization has apparently reached a "happy" evolution, he progressively discovers a tenebrous underworld. During his wanderings about an imprecise London, he enters what seems to be a ruined museum, The Palace of Green Porcelain, where Wells draws a fictionalized description of South Kensington Museums. In this museum, the Time Traveller discovers that the past of his own present does not correspond faithfully to the past as displayed in the future, producing for him a paradoxical doubled past. Among the deteriorated and unrecognizable objects that Hartdegen needs to recognize and understand, he must look for the ones that have a utility for his present adventure. Is it not the same rationale that we apply when we write history, after all? In the novel Hartdegen is able to escape from the future and even tell a captivating story to his nineteenth-century minded contemporaries.

In the twentieth century, the future has been usually portrayed as a dystopian totalitarian nightmare, an unforeseen aftereffect of the dream of modernization. Dystopia is a common genre in science-fiction and usually serves a moralizing purpose that alerts us to the undesirable—and therefore avertable—consequences of a conflicted situation.

In these narratives, the present is confronted with its collective fears a possible solution is recommended via anticipation. Less common is the strangeness that takes place in the film *The Planet of the Apes* (1968), where the travel to the future (1972 to 3978) takes the astronauts to a planet that re-stages a diverted evolution. Contrary to Hartdegen, when Colonel George Taylor finds the Statue of Liberty, he realizes that there is no return, and no hope. For us, modern believers, this Uchronia where the past is a safer place than the future may be too scary and disheartening.

At this point I would like to address the leitmotiv of Documenta 12, *Is Modernity our Antiquity?*—which I consider to be a tricky question. If we think carefully about its enunciation, we may give two different possible answers. In the realm of artistic forms and techniques, on the one hand, we could consider that modernity (modernism) has already passed and that we are definitely postmodern or postmodernist. But we could also consider the modern imaginary as an "original" source to which we are bound to cyclically return, a Benjaminean deposit of dialectic images. Modernity as the new Classicism. In this framework it is worthy to note the popularity gained by the neologism "prequel" and the development of a whole range of narrative strategies by script-writers and fans. These *alter-logics* (reboot, origin-story, retcon, fanfictions, retronyms) are mainly used in popular culture (comics, TV-series, films, video games). All of them expand forms of retroactive continuity or derivative fictions.

ix.

Although as narrative procedures they are not different from old modes that revamp myths, they embody contemporary ways of reinventing the past as a product of the future (not the usual other way around), especially the past-as-story (as fiction), or rethinking history as memory (as in memory studies). These are forms that question the vision of a future engendered by progress and modernization. For me, the works of a generation of artists (born mainly in the 1970s) are very significant, in that they contaminate history and myth, using retro-modern forms—not to melancholically mourn over them, but to re-signify them. These artists look for and use archive images from the Cold War Era and recreate a repository in which retro-communist and retro-capitalist imaginaries and their *political fictions* still co-exist, interrogating each other. After the Fall of the Berlin Wall, when communism was declared dead, the 2008 crisis eroded the expansion of late capitalism. This specular collapse reaffirms the need to go beyond *capitalism*, towards a new social order that, in spite of the worldwide revolts, is still to be imagined.

In *Ovni Archive* [U.F.O. Archive], Rosell Messeguer assembles photographs, images, press clips, postcards, book covers, leaflets, maps, objects and all kind of documentation related to defense apparatus and espionage systems since the Cold War. The project was born after a trip to Rio de Janeiro in which she discovered and photographed military batteries that appeared, formally, as alien flying saucers. This formal similarity related to other objects, such as Isaac Peral's submarine, which she saw everyday in her hometown Cartagena when she was a child. The archive emphasizes the resemblance of objects (submarines, balloons, rockets, helmets, ufos, lamps, cameras, bombs) that were designed with the common visual alphabet of the modern era style. These shapes, caught between positive science and popular belief, attempt to figuratively provide an aesthetic unconscious of the Cold War fears (communists, imperialists, guerrillas… and aliens). Behind the faith in progress, modernity was inhabited by phantoms that also took modernized forms. Espionage and defense objects that needed to be invisible due to their function also needed to become materialized, providing an allegorical image for fears that didn't have one. U.F.O.s embody a symbolic displacement of the anxieties of those years (nuclear war, communism attack), and they are, at the same time, cause and effect of those fears. Rosell collects images of these types of objects that both activate our imagination, and are expressive of a specific socio-political moment.

Rosell's archive is complemented by textual information (official documents, press clips, books), making visible this war against the invisible, connecting imagination and historical facts. Rosell's work opens a field between science-fiction and political fiction that suggests what forms conceal, or what we *think* they conceal. In this imaginary realm, the present digs into the past and projects itself in retro-active continuity. The distinct speculative element in espionage facilitates a fictional "pre-quelisation" of the present-day. In its repetition (Wikileaks, PRISM), the past is produced from and by the future. Repetition is not an inevitable neurotic symptom, but re-produces the conditions of possibility of the new cover-up. The archive ambivalently reveals and contributes to this dark zone.

Contrary to Rosell, the work of Susana Barriga projects not the present into the past, but the past into the future. *Memory for a house. Project of a voyage to the East* is not a completed work, but a film to still to be produced. In this respect, any following comment can be considered science-fiction. This project was triggered by a trip that Susana made from Cuba to Berlin in the winter of 2009, in which she encountered

the ruins of the former eastern part of the city. She especially recalls her visit to Mauerpark flea market, where she experienced a folding up of temporalities: the realm of her childhood memories, the Cuban present-day embodied in obsolete objects still in use on the island, and the Berliner present-future of a past shaped by the communist utopia, that she inevitably projected back onto Cuba's prospects. In Mauerpark: an incomplete past met an unaccomplished present.

What needs to be remembered? What needs to be forgotten? How can we imagine the yet-to-come? Up until now Susana has gathered fragmentary elements, photographs, interviews, film excerpts—all adding to an on-going audiovisual research that wishfully will become a film. Susana does not want to position herself in a melancholic Östalgie. But neither does she want to celebrate the immersion in capitalism and the disappearance of hope for a better world. The yet-to-come is only to be prefigured here, in our present. For Susana, this pre-figuration can be intuited in repetitive acts. In one of the excerpts, we can see the tedious, learning exercises that a group of teenage skateboarders repeat, suspending time in an endless future offering. There, lies a promise.

ix.

Rosell Messeguer - OVNI BLANCO, 2007

ix.

Rosell Messeguer - Submarino Peral, 2009

Rosell Messeguer - OVNI, 2007

ROSELL MESSEGUER
FIND THE STORY THAT DOES NOT EXIST

> *Reinhart Koselleck once said that from a certain point in time every historical event inevitably becomes history. This assertion contains various layers of meaning, probably the most important of which is the insight that temporal distance from historical happenings, which are afterwards singled out as "events" bring about a metamorphosis in the status of what has happened because of changes in the way it is received and categorized. It is not just that in the course of time the emotional involvement in an event volatilizes, while our knowledge about the course it took expands, thus enriching its cognitive effect for us, but sooner or later that event codifies itself as a conglomerate of key concepts and iconic images, a process that leads to a reception of what has been that creates an ideology and gradually adopts the position of a former memory of historical details.*
>
> Moshe Zuckermann, *The Subconscious of History*

In this way we build the story based on events, selecting some of them, marginalizing others. General history, the one that remains for History, is just a story among many others that could be "the history". The creation of parallel stories that help and complete, as well as the importance of these in the current era of structural diversity of the media, is the starting point of the project: Find the story that does not exist; Visual ideas that deepen on socio-political relations of the past and its relationship to the changing present.

SUSANA BARRIGA
MEMORY FOR A HOUSE*. Project of a voyage to the East.

1

The sea had fallen back leaving the form of a U, but not like it does at low tide. I walked from the shore on a stone path. The walls were made of water (almost twice the height of the house). All the doors and windows were open. For an instant I was afraid that the water would return to its place, but there was a slight wind, it was unlikely that such a thing would happen at that moment.

2

My hostess lives in Strausberger Platz, crossing from the Metro in front of the statue of Marx, it's difficult to arrive on February nights when the cold and the symmetry conspire against the newcomer. The constant novelty seems to hide remnants of my own memory. I try to access them, or at least register their disappearance, or hold an instant of the present as proof that it has been occurring. Although many visible traces of the former GDR have succeeded in confusing me, this isn't about tangible references, but rather the stupor they generate in me. Perhaps that's why I end up believing that it's a mirage, a zone I thought possible to locate in the country of my childhood, yet it's here, still agonizing. It's as if it knew that one day a distant neighbor would arrive, only to realize that its memories were somewhere else, at the mercy of another time.

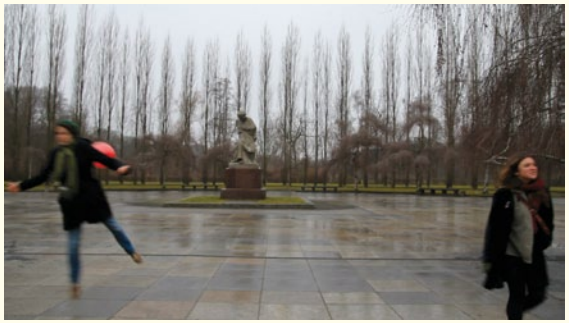
ix.

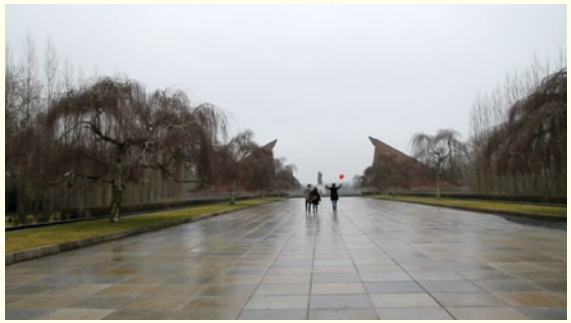
3

In the dark people keep searching. The long tables covered with objects form an open map. I recognize some of the items for sale as they are still in everyday use in Cuba. In front of the photo albums that are sold at one of the stands, the possibility of purchasing private memories unsettles me. They are real family archives with ornate frames and notes on the photos. At the time I think about how someone decorated them, I wonder how such a personal gesture could end up in this market? A boy flicks through one: the same family at various times. We delve into a box. Someone removes a glove to keep looking, scrupulously for the first few seconds (as if asking these strangers for permission to look at them), then doing it like us. I open an album of flight attempts.

4

George dedicates himself to stamping passports for tourists at the border crossing at Potsdamer Platz Berlin, like in the time of the Wall, but now the permit costs 2.50 Euros. To those who go he often asks: "Did you see the line on the ground?". He says it just like that, and to begin with he's just another merchant who sells the image of reconciliation. But his question is a provocation to peer into the abyss of what is no longer or that which we can't recover, that stubbornly we wanted to forget and we ended up selling (also to forget?). It will continue being a border and a possibility of transgression, and perhaps even a childish reminiscence of





Susana Barriga, Memory for a house. Project of a voyage to the East. Film stills, 2009

* "Memory for a house" parts from a self-referential motivation, linked to my Cuban origin, my sociopolitical experience in the last communist bastion, and the confrontation of my childhood memories and youth with the remnants of the communist utopia in the East, twenty years after the fall of the Berlin Wall.

This project proposes an audiovisual investigation on the need to rummage through the debris of the memory and the need to believe that in the midst of a reality marked by "the end of the utopias", exist remains and new ways to hope, "minimum acts of faith" that transcend market ideology.

the lines on the floor that we once discovered and didn't want to tread on. After a while watching him repeat the performance, there is in me and in him a silent shame, amid the laughter and jokes generated by his talent to sell.

5

Some children leap from the edge that the crumbling ground has left. Above them, the pines extend beyond the frame. The photographer wanted to record the suspension, but the bodies escape even the moment captured. I think I see a girl in a smudge that has jumped even higher, quasi-figurative, to stare directly into camera. These airborne children seem to exist in their condition of imminent disappearance. I go in search of what made them jump.

ix.

Susana Barriga, Memory for a house. Project of a voyage to the East. Film stills, 2009

SARAH LEHRER-GRAIWER

UNIDENTIFIED FLYING TOWN

Poems For Repeating and Photography

2013

Yes I have this queer feeling.
No I can't find my bathing suit.
Yes I was in the desert.
No I am not OK.
Yes I was visited.
No not abducted.
Yes I'd like them to return.
Yes again please. I want to do another.
No I will not be the same.
Yes they will return, the same.
No no one would know the difference.
Yes I repeat because I repress.
No this chair does not recline.
Yes I repress because I want to repeat.
Yes I'll ask if you can come too.

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x. ROSALIND NASHASHIBI

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xvii. RETURNING TO BERLIN

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ROSALIND NASHASHIBI
Antwerp Morning: Door Handle

Digital print, 8" x10"
2013

ROSALIND NASHASHIBI
Antwerp Morning:
Men Sleeping

Digital print, 8" x10"
2013

ROSALIND NASHASHIBI
Antwerp Morning: Courier

found photograph of 1973 work by Tapta
(Maria Wierusz Kowalski)
Digital print, 8" x10"
2013

SARAH LEHRER-GRAIWER

DOOR TOWN

Poems For Repeating and Photography
2013

Scene: Woman stands in The Same place as before, rings The Same
Bell as before, has been creeped out by The Same red van before
Parked in The Same spot and crammed with The Same sleeping rapists as
before. Woman approaches The Same door; reaches for handle and then
Turns around to look over her shoulder, across The Same street.
A short rain has just stopped, leaving a dry shadow under the red van.
Nothing spoken, just looks passed through glass. No more.
No, yes, one word is spoken: 'banal'

The entire scene lasts less a minute—a full front door assault. Notes:
Take one is rough, exciting, hesitant, nerves.
Take two overcompensates by being overplayed.
Take three is interrupted by the police asking to see permits.
Take four is unreal in a photographic way, flat.
Take five is better.
Take six builds on it but stays grounded, slips into the groove.
Take seven—that's it, nailed the creepy, go with take seven but
Take eight is just in case and also good, as are
Takes nine to...
At this point she is not fake bloody. Woman is actually bloody.

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xi. VANESSA PLACE

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xvii. RETURNING TO BERLIN

VANESSA PLACE

ES MACHT NICHT AUS:
CONCEPTUALISM AS RADICAL MIMESIS

2013

This is my memory of Berlin.

By conceptualism I am referring specifically to the 21st century literary practice that engages in techniques of appropriation, collage, performance, procedure, and poetry, primarily as a means of recasting extant texts as literature, or making writing some other way than the purely creative, or purely communicative. It is writing that is not self-reflexive: if there is a détournement, it's in your head. Similarly, the reframing, processing, etc., tends not to produce richly allusive texts, ripe for postmodern discursive plumbing. Rather, the text-objects are skin-thin, shining surfaces that may do little more than reflect. Which may be plenty.

Though by conceptualism, I am referring generally, that is to say, in the larger sense, to the age of today, where things exist simultaneously, or not at all, more or less accessible, or not at all. It's a digital world, and our clouds, like clouds, assume shapes as we picture them, the shapes shape content as we use them as containers. And then they drift, and perhaps disburse, sometimes into droplets. Which are also more or less the same, and more or less different. For conceptualism is not

post-modern, and therefore doesn't ascribe to the postmodern ideas of différence and repetition. If there is repetition, you're the repeater. Conceptualism simply presents—it is. Like **this**. Like Berlin.

Put another way, the notion of repetition was about a stable *Ding* that we discover, to some horror or another, is unstable. While the card up the sleeve is the still-stable *imago* yet *Ding*-ing in the back of the brain. For postmodernism's dirty secret was its pro forma acknowledgment of and immediate amnesia regarding the fragility of the critic himself as I-witness. Enabling the shock of the punctum, etc. But it's not repetition we're after these days, not anymore, but concomitance. So the sense is not a set sense of fundamental instability or shifting stands, but of a fundamental partiality that is also fundamentally impartial. Thus, the ambiguity that results is not because the work is the animate object in a Barthesian sense (author is dead, critic very much alive) or even a point of excavation in a Foucauldian sense *(idem)*, but rather because, in a bit of a hapless sense, we know that the swatch we're watching is just part of the picture, and like others who find themselves flat on their backs, we look at our clouds and imagine them as forms, and once formed, having content. Though, of course, like their grey-white counterparts, our digital clouds are formed by an interplay of forces, including other combinations, such as State and commerce, us and them, nature and nurture.

xi.

Like my Berlin is Benjamin's Berlin and Kierkegaard's Berlin and why not, as all are served equally digitally, equally realistically, equally now and again.

Or like the McDonald's that are currently in some number that is a lot of countries, existing simultaneously, not one or the other better or worse, all tailored to whatever tastes (McShawarma or Croque McDo) within a certain McTemplate. Better still, like Facebook. Which we serve and which serves us, more or less happily, altogether open to whatever relationship we like, with certain preset boundaries that allow for mutual infidelities. So if I self-appropriate part of a legal brief, and present it (unchanged) as poetry, it goes nowhere fast. Put another way, it does not serve, as the law is intended to serve, as precedent, which is the juridical form of memory. Nor does it persuade in the usual way, but does show how poetry works as witness and how both law and poetry work as rhetorical modes of power, reflecting its various capitals and colours. Like photography can do, now that it is free of its mnemonic duties. See below.

This, for, example, is not a photograph. A photograph is thought to be capable of repetition. **This** is not capable of repetition. Merely existence. It is, then isn't. If it is more than once, so be it. In this sense, it is always a site.

The photograph in this sense is a non-site. It *is*, but it is not *of* the thing that it is. It, like a poem, has content, which, like a good poem, perhaps should bear some relationship to its container. Photographs are no longer capable of repetition because we don't confuse them as being anything more than the artefacts of photography. And photography has become more like memory itself, which we understand is no longer a storage system, but an information delivery system, that is to say, a series of processes, a network of contemporary neural engagements that results in the distinct feeling of "again" again. Why the first bite tastes better than the fifteenth. Thus, a photograph *is*. It's never a repetition, but a product. Of light and chemicals, or electronic digitalization, preceded and followed by more or less intentional manipulations.

(There is a fascinating side note here about the different ways viewers view two exhibitions of Civil War images currently at the Met: one, a collection of landscapes and genre paintings, the other, a collection of battlefield and studio photographs. The exhibitions are separately shown. The audience looks at the paintings, largely large, from a distance, keeping them, so to speak, in regard. The much-smaller photographs are peered at, scanned for points of identification, for punctum-points. The curatorial language used to describe the two shows focuses alternatively on the emotional content of the painted images, though without referencing painting, and on the rarity of the photographic images and the evolution of the camera. Thus the language of the exhibitions—which assumes painting hotter, photograph cooler—plays a chiastic role to the way viewers actually deploy the two mediums.)

Given this, what of it? It could be argued that the photograph is then a partial product of photography, which is another node of another kind of memory engagement, of potential archive. Or as archive itself, as we host photos in the cloud, searchable by image, by size, as if there's a digital difference. "As if"—for this is what the photograph promises. Cohesion. Order. It is not memory, but it helps us to sustain the memory of memory. The distinct contemporary feeling of having felt before. And then, possibly, in the hereafter. Rather than nostalgia, a postmodern sense of sensibility, photography could model a hopeful hunt for futurity. Take a picture, it lasts longer.

(As an aside, I wanted to extend my metaphor and describe the photograph as a "bite," like that first bite. This set me to thinking about the photograph as penis, that is to say, as the stand-in and stand-up substitute for the phallus. The phallus in this Lacanian sense being the Symbolic order that memory would serve, if it were faithful. Which it is, at least within its own frames—see Proust, see history, see the unintended fun of citing Derrida. Think of all the ways of translating Dante. Is this, I wonder, the reason we hoard our phone photographs, compulsively snapshotting and cloudstoring and socialseeding them to no particular gazed end? Just one more bite, and why not? After all, it's tomorrow we stand before, not yesterday.)

If photography has become less about Photography and more about the immateriality of its production, or the materiality of photographing, the gesture of taking and sending a picture (and someone could think about this in terms of the toll of photographing as constant gift-culture), and not about materiality, what about the made photograph as its partial-product? Is the photograph on the wall not then a sculptural object, an object in space that exists as a concrete repository of narrative, of possible (and possibly discursive) allegory and allusion? The photograph qua photograph is a postmodern object insofar as it is a sculptural ruin. A rather traditional sculpture in the sense of dimensionality of stasis, of incapacity for alteration in the moment of reception. Versus an image on screen, which is not a photograph, but an image, that can be altered, that has no corporeal depth (though it does have a code that lies beneath, but then what doesn't?), that can be pinched open or squeezed closed, shopped and enhanced as one likes. The pinchable presence of the variable machine (phone or pad, etc) is the feeling of materiality, but not thought of as such. It's a bit of a magician's trick perhaps, as our gaze centers on the image and not on the frame, but nonetheless. The point there is the mode of delivery is the mode of materiality. So the sculpted photograph does allow for that sense of contained discursion and allegory that is the feeling of memory, rather than memory itself. Famously permitting—and permitting is the key here—the punctum, a peephole into my self.

xi.

Let's go back to Facebook for a minute. If we want a contemporary metaphor for memory-making, or a medium, which is, after all, what social media is, there is Facebook. Just as Twitter is the durable present tense—the medium that replaces film for the illusion of cellular ongoingness—Facebook is the repository for the scrapbook and mirror-imaged past. We've turned, as it were, the punctum into the platform. And the point of art now is not the point (the object or objet du jour), but the platform (the Hirstian dotbiz or any Biennale).

Again, what of it? If, as my title promises, conceptualism is radical mimesis, then what conceptualism in the genre-specific sense does is turn platform back to product. Conceptualism is about production. The production of affect. Not of this affect or that affect, but like life itself, just site-contingent possibilities for affect. As Sontag came to cognize, everything needs its captions. Captions, in this sense, meaning headers. The death of my friend is a horror, the death of my enemy regrettably necessary. Or a real pleasure. Conceptualism takes the Real and realizes it as a site. Less affect infused, more product diffused. The radicality is the radicality of making nothing, the root to which the radical refers: the site is the site of the thing itself, though it may not be its situation. The moment is cordoned off for aesthetic consideration. In this sense, it is nothing but a stop, as Goethe's Faust would say, a point at which this is where you get off.

Notes

[i] Thanks to Dee Morris for pointing out these exhibitions, and their different audience engagements.

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xii. JONATHAN RÉE

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xvii. RETURNING TO BERLIN

JONATHAN RÉE

THE MOMENT OF PERFORMANCE

2011

If you think you know what repetition is, the work of Gottfried Wilhelm von Leibniz may give you pause. Leibniz is remembered today as a philosopher and mathematician, but he made his living as political secretary to the Ducal court of Brunswick, and forty years of courtly routine gave him ample experience of what the rest of us might call repetition. But Leibniz did not permit himself to be bored. Boredom was against his metaphysical principles: any appearance of repetition must be an illusion, he argued, because it was absolutely impossible for the same thing ever to happen twice. 'There is no such thing,' as he put it in a letter to an English colleague shortly before his death in 1716, 'as Two Individuals *indiscernible* from each other.'

Leibniz illustrated the point by recalling a walk in the park with Princess Sophia, who was a devoted disciple of his, as well as mother to King George of England.

> An Ingenious Gentleman of my Acquaintance, discoursing with me, in the presence of Her *Electoral Highness the Princess* Sophia, in the Garden of *Herrenhausen*; thought he could find two Leaves perfectly alike. The Princess defied him to do it, and he ran all over the Garden a long time to look for some; but it was to no purpose.

Leibniz might well chuckle: he knew the search was not going to yield any evidence that would make him change his mind. Suppose the Ingenious Gentleman went on searching till he found two leaves that looked exactly the same, Leibniz could simply place them under his microscope, perfectly confident that they would then 'appear distinguishable from each other.' But this was another tease: Leibniz would not have conceded that the two leaves were 'perfectly alike' even if his microscope failed to disclose any difference between them. The leaves must have been picked up at different times and places, after all, and one must be located above the other, or north of it or south or east or west: they would have followed distinct paths through space and time, in short, and so, as Leibniz saw it, each must have a distinctive life-story of its own.

The Ingenious Gentleman would have felt ill-used, and with reason. He had scuttled round the royal park on an earnest philosophical errand only to be rebuffed with a pedantic quibble. And yet … Leibniz seems to have been on to something. Foraging for leaves was a distraction, and so was his microscope: his argument was an application of his much-vaunted 'principle of the identity of indiscernibles,' which makes the purely logical point that where there is no difference there is perfect sameness – from which it follows that no two things could be indistinguishable since if they were they would not be two things but one. Or, as Bishop Butler would put it a generation later: 'everything is what it is, and not another thing.'

xii.

Leibniz died in Hanover in 1716. Nearly a hundred years later, in Copenhagen in 1813, a boy was born who was to become, you might say, his exact negative counterpart. Søren Kierkegaard was the most uncourtly of logicians, and the most impolitic of philosophers, but he and Leibniz had quite a lot in common. Both of them had a habit of constant scribbling, leaving behind thousands of pages of manuscripts that have called forth Herculean labours of posthumous editing. But whilst Leibniz managed to publish only one solitary volume of philosophy (anonymous) in his lifetime – and he lived to the age of 70 – Kierkegaard turned out no less than 34 (many of them pseudonymous, and some enormously long) by the time he died in 1855, at the age of 42. And whereas Leibniz was deadly earnest about the search for philosophical truth, Kierkegaard never took it quite seriously.

Unlike Leibniz, who meant to be rational in all things, Kierkegaard sided with wild paradox in its battle with the conventions of reason. He was also a self-conscious literary inventor, an exuberant comedian

and a dandified ironist who liked to play cat-and-mouse with his readers. He hit his stride as an author in 1843, when he turned 30 and published no less than six books: three explicitly Christian sets of 'edifying discourses,' and three experiments in narrative fiction. The first of these experiments was the enormous *Either/Or*, supposedly an edition of two mysterious bundles of papers found in a second-hand desk. Then there was the relatively brief Fear and Trembling, which takes the form of a kind of diary recording repeated attempts to understand the story of Abraham and Isaac – none of which is very successful. Finally there was a novella – published on exactly the same day as *Fear and Trembling* – with the title G*jentagelsen*.

'Gjentagelsen' is, we are told, a 'good Danish word,' and 'the Danish language is to be congratulated for giving birth to such a fine philosophical term.' It is probably untranslatable, but something of its meaning can be rendered without too much violence as 'the reprise,' 'taking back,' 'recollection' or 'restoration,' or, easiest of all, *Repetition*.

The title page of *Repetition* did not carry Kierkegaard's own name but a reassuring Latin pseudonym: Constantin Constantius, who sounds like a reliable fellow with a steady pair of hands. There is also a businesslike subtitle – *An essay in experimenting psychology* – and the opening paragraph is reassuringly brisk.

> Modern philosophy will teach us that the whole of life is repetition. The only modern philosopher to have any inkling of this is Leibniz.

That seems so clear that your eye may glide over it without a second thought. But if you come to think about it you will stop with a jolt. If repetition is the great lesson of modern philosophy, how come only one philosopher has had so much as an inkling of it? And of all the philosophers in the world, surely none could have less affinity with the idea of repetition than Leibniz, whose principle of the identity of indiscernibles implied that everything is uniquely itself, and that nothing could possibly be a 'repetition,' least of all 'the whole of life.'

But Constantin is a man in a hurry, and he is not half way through his first paragraph before he makes a rash promise to investigate repetition by means of a practical experiment.

> When I had occupied myself for a long time, at least occasionally, with the problem of whether repetition is possible and what significance it has, and whether things gain or lose by being repeated,

it suddenly occurred to me that I could take a trip to Berlin – I had been there before – to find out whether repetition is possible and what its significance might be.

You would have to be a very passive reader not to be howling with dissatisfaction by now. Apart from getting Leibniz wrong, Constantin has failed to explain what the supposed problem of repetition can be; and in any case, whatever it is, going back to Berlin is hardly going to shed any light on it: no one, not even Leibniz, would deny that people can visit the same city twice. If he needed an excuse for going to Berlin (and Berlin was a popular destination for fashionable young Danes at the time: for example Kierkegaard) he could surely have done better than making up some hare-brained research project about the nature of repetition.

On the other hand, that same opening paragraph did make an intriguing suggestion: that 'repetition' (or rather *gjentagelse*) is another word for what the Greeks called 'recollection' (or *anamnesis*) – in other words Plato's doctrine that genuine knowledge (acquaintance with eternal verities) arises not so much from discovering something excitingly new as from recovering something reassuringly old. (Plato made his point by telling the tale of a slave boy who is led to understand a geometrical theorem not by being taught it directly, but by being asked a series of questions which prompt him to discover it for himself.) The trouble with Platonic recollection, according to Constantin, is that it makes us turn towards the past rather than the future; and the excellence of the modern notion of repetition is that it puts the Platonic procedure into reverse. 'Repetition and recollection are the same movement,' he says, 'only in opposite directions; for what is recollected is repeated backwards, whereas genuine repetition is recollected forwards.' Recollection, it seems, confines us to what is already over and done with, but repetition opens us to the unknown.

xii.

For Constantin, as for Plato, what was true of knowledge was true of love as well. But if there were two forms of knowledge – one based on recollection, the other on repetition – then there must also be two forms of love; and the question was, which of them is better? 'I remember reading that recollection's love is the only happy love,' he says. He could hardly have forgotten it, since the sentence was to be found in Kierkegaard's *Either/Or*. On the other hand, the author of *Either/Or* was hardly to be trusted: 'from what I know of him,' Constantin wrote, 'he can sometimes be a little deceitful.'

For in truth, repetition's love is the only happy love. … It does not suffer from the wistfulness of recollection. It has the blessed security of the moment. … Recollection is like old clothes which, however beautiful they are, do not fit us any more. But repetition is an everlasting garment that is always soft and comfortable. … Recollection is a fine lady, who never quite lives up to the moment; but repetition is a beloved wife who never grows wearisome, for one can only be wearied by the new. … Repetition calls for courage … if you will repetition you are a human being, and the more forcefully you achieve it the more deeply human you are. If you do not grasp that life is a matter of repetition, and that this is its beauty, then you are doomed. … Those who choose repetition – they will truly live. They are not like boys chasing butterflies, or standing on tiptoe to stare at the glories of the world, for they are already familiar with such things. Nor do they resemble the old woman who sits at the spinning-wheel of recollection all day long; they go calmly on their way, cheerful in repetition.

Afterwards, Constantin starts telling the story of a young man who has been swept off his feet by the wrong kind of love – love in the mode of recollection – from which he, Constantin, now proposes to rescue him. But before he comes to the details, he interrupts himself to report on his research trip to Berlin. The journey was accomplished without difficulty – steamship to Stralsund, and fast stagecoach to Berlin – which seemed to reassure Constantin that repetition was possible. But then he found that his old suite of rooms on the Gendarmenmarkt was no longer available ('no repetition here') so he had to make do with one small room by the entrance hall. ('Alas! can this be repetition?') To distract himself, he decides to visit the theatre: – not the Schauspielhaus, which was too earnest, nor the Opera, which was too grand, but the cheap and cheerful Königstädtertheater, where there was to be a performance of Nestroy's *Talisman*, one of his favourite plays, starring one of his favourite comedians, Friedrich Beckmann.

Constantin then sets off on a digression about the 'magic' of theatrical performance – the mysterious process by which we lose ourselves in a world of make-believe where we can identify with one character after another, so that we 'see and hear ourselves like some *Doppelgänger*, splitting ourselves into every possible variation of ourselves, but without ceasing to be ourselves in every variation.' The special charm of farce as opposed to more sedate forms of theatre is that it depends not only on the actors and orchestra, but on the audience too, especially the raucous plebeians on the cheap benches upstairs: the gallery, indeed, is like a

second orchestra, except that it 'does not follow the conductor's baton but only its own inner impulses.' It follows that each performance will be a singularity, a unique adventure, a gamble belonging to its own moment: this audience, this evening, and you. Plans are pointless – there will never be any 'match between plan and execution' – and readiness is all.

When he gets to the theatre, Constantin finds that his favourite box is already occupied, and he ends up sitting amongst a group of bores who seem determined not be amused. Nothing works.

> Beckmann did not strike me as funny, and after enduring it for half an hour I left the theatre, thinking: There is no such thing as repetition. … The next evening I went back to the theatre, but there, the only repetition was the impossibility of repetition.

The experiment in repetition peters out, leaving Constantin none the wiser.

Constantin seems to realise he has made a fool of himself. 'There was no need for me to travel in order to discover that there is no such thing as repetition,' he declares: 'my journey was a waste of time.' So he goes back to Copenhagen and resumes his attempt to rescue the friend who is trapped in the wrong kind of love. We readers, however, are free to recollect his discarded reflections on theatrical performance, and to wonder if they may not contain the materials we need in order to clarify the problem of repetition.

xii.

If we want to know about repetition, perhaps we should stop consulting the philosophers and ask an actor instead. Every performance Beckmann gave was, Constantin has told us, an individual response to a particular theatrical occasion. And yet we know that Constantin went to the Königstädter in order to see a play he had seen several times before; and this suggests a principle that may prove more useful to us than Leibniz's 'identity of indiscernibles' – the principle that *every performance is a performance of something*. In the present case, the identity of the *something* seems obvious: it was a text – the text of Netstroy's *Talisman*, possibly available in a printed libretto inside the theatre – that was being performed every night. But Constantin's interest need not have been so text-bound or so literal: he might also have been looking for 'farce' in general, or 'Nestroy farce,' or 'Königstädter farce,' or a composite of them all, or something rather different: the question which of the range of possible *somethings* should be taken as authoritative may not be open to a definitive settlement but it could be a matter of vital critical debate.

Once you start to look for it, you will notice that every theatrical performance, however unconventional, displays the same *dual structure* – a structure involving an abstract type on the one hand and an indefinite series of possible enactments on the other. That abstract type – the thing-to-be-repeated, or what might be called the *repetitandum*, if there can be such a word – could be defined by a written libretto, but it need not be. Even when Beckmann launched into spur-of-the-moment improvisations, provoked by a shout from the gallery, his performances would still have been performances of some *repetitandum* that could have been realised in other ways: the routine with a ladder or an umbrella or the old man's wig, for instance, or a caper, a patter song, or a funny walk. We may disagree over them, but we can never get away from the principle that such general types are at work in our appreciation of every theatrical performance; or in other words, that every theatrical performance is *a repetition of something*.

The same principle seems to apply to musical performances: every performance is a repetition of something. Some kinds of music depend on notations and detailed scores, and some do not, but all of them involve patterns of repetition, often superimposed on one another. The *repetitandum* could be a particular score-defined work, like Bach's first solo cello suite; or it could be something more generic, like a sonata, a blues, a gavotte, or an air. And *repetitanda* will be found within individual works as well. Classical compositions are full of 'repeat' signs, or instructions like '*da capo al fine*,' telling the performer to go back to the beginning and start again, and all kinds of music make use of units of repetition such as the bar, the tune, the rhythm or the chorus. The same thing comes round again and again, maybe dozens of times; usually it will be repeated with variations – at different speeds or pitches, or with different embellishments or dynamics – but even if the same objective pattern of sound is repeated, it will not have the same meaning the second time round.

Musical repetition, together with repetition in theatre and for that matter in dance, can perhaps be seen as a derivative from repetition in language. No one can understand a language without realising, implicitly at least, that every linguistic sign is a *repetitandum*, open to being uttered in infinitely many ways. A rose can be called 'rose' in every vocal style you can imagine, and in every local accent, but every version needs to be understood as a pronunciation of one and the same word. (If you prefer, you could say that the same phoneme can have an infinite number of phonetic realisations.) No doubt the workings of the linguistic arts – from theatre and epic through prose to lyrical poetry – depend in

part on this principle; and so do philosophical performances, as when Kierkegaard, or rather Constantin, takes a theme from Leibniz or Plato, turns it inside out and makes it his own. And perhaps the same thing can be said about experience as a whole: that it always involves acts of repetition – not a passive past-oriented reception of a stimulus, but the positive and forward-looking act of classifying it in terms of general types or *repetitanda*, such as leaves, oak leaves, or leaves that look like the one I found earlier.

Performers of all kinds have always been prey to vanity: audience admiration can go to their heads, sometimes disastrously. But the remedy lies within performance itself – in the humility (not humiliation) bred by the principle that every performance is a repetition of something. The greatest performers are those who know that their performance is not about themselves, but about whatever it is they are repeating – the 'work,' however it may be defined, that transcends the occasion in the sense that it could be performed again but in different ways: a *repetitandum* before which performers and audience bow their heads in humble recognition. The art is in the repetition, and everything else is celebrity and spin.

However wide-ranging the principles of repetition and performance, they might be thought to lose their validity when it comes to the so-called visual arts, where a special premium is customarily placed on uniqueness and originality. The old-fashioned art-world is obsessed with the unique authenticity of the original drawing or painting or sculpture as it issued from the artist's hand; and the world of contemporary art, though it may scorn old-fashioned authenticity, is haunted by a similar fascination with the uniqueness of particular artistic occasions, often associated with the idea of 'performance.' Not that there is anything new in the association between performance and visual art. Eighteenth-century critics, for instance, would freely describe a sculpture, a painting, or a building as a 'performance,' with the implication that it was to be appreciated in terms of *repetitanda* that could be enacted in many different ways. I suspect there might be something to be said for resuscitating this way of talking about art, if only because it calls for a certain modest circumspection on the part of the artist: a sense of being dwarfed by the array of works – past, present and future – in which one dreams that one's own may eventually find their place.

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xiii. OLIVIER RICHON

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xvii. RETURNING TO BERLIN

OLIVIER RICHON

TO COPY (1)

2013

L'objet d'art est par définition un crocodile empaillé

—Alfred Jarry

Following an old tradition, books from the collection Critique of the Editions de Minuit repeat their cover page for the title page inside the book. Not exactly though, as the blue logo of Critique, made of a capital C intertwined with another but inverted C, is absent from the title page. In Vincent Descombes's *Le Même et l'Autre* (the Same and the Other), the title page is repeated twice, with the addition of a caution addressed to the reader:

'This page reproduces the previous one. Other it is the same. But in order for the reader not to dismiss this second title page, attributing it, for instance, to a binding mistake, I had to write this warning which is not present on the first page. In order to be the same, it had to be other.'

Yet perhaps it became too other, as a few signs are absent on that second page and were present on the first. Absent is the logo of Minuit, a star with one of its points touching the beginning of the letter m, and eclipsed is the inscription LES EDITIONS DE MINUIT at the bottom of the page. The concept of repetition introduces the book to the reader, but the practice of repetition does not quite follow. It is as if the pure repetition of the title page was not acceptable or judged unnecessary. Here conceptual repetition did not translate into a literal visual repetition. If literal repetition did not quite happen, what remains

nevertheless is the procedure of staging an argument about repetition, sameness and otherness.

The stage belongs to the theatre. In French, *répétition* also means rehearsal. It is the work that takes place to prepare the first theatrical representation, the first night of the play. Staging also belongs to photography: from the often dubious practice of staging an event to that of staging things and people, as in the still life or the tableau vivant. Staging requires rehearsing positions and poses. Although belonging to bourgeois family entertainment, the tableau vivant, Roland Barthes once remarked, is also a Sadean device: the characters appears to be framed, lit and immobile. Their stillness turn them into fetish objects, their immobility fragments and freezes the narration. In the Sadean text, the tableau vivant requites an organization of roles and poses. Order is the prerequisite of the disorder of what will follow. Bodies are choreographed, rehearsal is needed. The scene needs to be constructed as an image before becoming the stage for an event. The sexual activity that follows is the repetition as action of the tableau vivant. Here repetition requires detachment. Action is carried out, as Madame de Clairwill puts it, '*avec phlegme, avec cette apathie qui permet aux passions de se voiler*': a phlegmatic and apathetic repetition. A machine.

Stillness, one of the conditions of most photographs, involves a type of rehearsal. The still life is a careful staging of objects on display. The picture is taken as much as it is made; it occurs when the rehearsal of the position of objects in relation to one another is complete, when the objects have been moved left and right, so that they appear optically at ease. Repetition as rehearsal. It is this condition that enables the picture to be made, a picture as still or perhaps as stiff as an embalmed body, like that of Alfred Jarry's stuffed crocodile.

A shift takes place between things, people and the rehearsal of their poses; mediation occurs in the act of constructing and recording a photograph. This mediation, or transformation, can remain unnoticed and invisible. Does it mean that the subject of the photograph is not necessarily primary, that it does not come first, even if it appears to? That nothing comes first just by itself is the subject of Neanderthal Man, from Italo Calvino's Impossible Interviews:

Neander: That's what you say. Were you there? Me yes, I was there. You no'

(…)

Interviewer: That's a useful point, I think. Mr Neander's great merit isn't so much the simple fact of being there, but of having already been there, having been there then before so many others. Precedence is a quality no one would wish to deny Mr Neander. However much, … even before that, as further research has demonstrated – and as you yourself can confirm, isn't that right Mr Neander? – we find traces, many traces, and on a number of continents, of human beings, yes already human humans…

Neander: My dad…

Interviewer: Right back as far as a million years before…

Neander: My gran…

Interviewer: Hence your precedence, Mr Neander, no one can deny you, though it would seem a relative precedence: let's say you are the first…

Neander: Before you anyway…

Interviewer: Agreed but that's not the point. What I mean is that you were the first to be believed to be the first by those who came after.

The first needs the arrival of those who come after to be first, and cannot be first just by itself. Its firstness is delayed until it meets those who come after.

xiii.

Erasmus Darwin's Quill, from the painting by Joseph Wright of Derby, circa 1792

OLIVIER RICHON

TO COPY (2)

2013

In the late 18th century, Thomas Wedgwood and the chemist Humphrey Davy attempted to fix shadows of profiles on surfaces like paper and white leather, surfaces coated with light sensitive silver nitrate. Some historians place them amongst the first inventors of the process of photography. The experiment recalls a founding myth of Western painting: to copy or to preserve a profile by tracing the outline of its shadow.

The use of leather as a surface brings to mind the use of parchment, this thin animal skin used for writing that was superseded by paper from the middle ages onwards. The image on parchment that Wedgwood and Davy achieved produced an inversion of tones and values. What surrounds the profile gets darker, and the profile appears as a white shadow. The paper was placed in a glass case normally used for a stuffed bird. This ingenious apparatus connects in thought portraiture with taxidermy as an origin for photography. The Parchment is turned into a photosensitive skin. Light is a new type of ink. These pre-photographic experiments address in some way the question of Mimesis. They announce an expansion of the notion of mimesis, prompted by the invention and dissemination of photography as a practice of reproduction and representation. Wedgwood was influenced by ideas from Erasmus Darwin concerning copying as a technology. Darwin was

working on what he called a bigrapher, an instrument that he perfected in 1778. The apparatus consisted of two quills fastened together. As the hand wrote a word with one quill, the other quill mechanically reproduced that word on another sheet of paper. This enabled duplicates of writing to be made at the same time as the original was being produced. A great idea and instrument, which paradoxically would also faithfully reproduce errors: slips of the pens and of the tongue as well as crossed out words. A letter and its perfect duplicate are now in the British Library. The letter describes the act of writing and of duplicating itself, proposing a *mise en abîme* of its own activity.

Wedgwood and Davey used a glass box for the display of birds for their experiments. What sort of bird was this box made for, and could it be a parrot, known for copying human speech, just as Darwin's bigrapher copied words mechanically, one quill parroting the other? The parrot can be an allegory or rather a caricature of Mimesis. This bird features prominently in Gustave Flaubert's *Un Coeur Simple*. It is the pet of the servant *Felicité*. Following the death of her bird, she has it stuffed. A religious woman, she can see a resemblance between her stuffed parrot and the Holy Ghost. *Félicité* develops the habit of telling her prayers on her knees in front of the stuffed bird. She is in ecstasy when the sun strikes the glass eye of the animal, producing a suggestive luminous ray. Whether dead or alive, *Félicité's* parrot mimics. It is language and image. As a speaking bird it used to offer an image of language. As a stuffed bird it offers an image of life and becomes a religious prop, a frozen image, a tableau mort-vivant.

In Raymond Roussel's *Nouvelles Impressions d'Afrique*, meaning seems to arise from the chance encounter between rhyming words. The text is accompanied by elegant and elliptical illustrations; the images do not really illustrate the text, as the text does not follow a series of events. One of the illustrations shows a well dressed man on the street, looking at a parrot on its perch behind a window so it seems. Both look at each other, the parrot's head being at right angle from the man's head. In the text, the parrot is present in one sentence: *pour que le perroquet distinctemnt radote* (so that the parrot drivels distinctly). Roussel gave instructions to the illustrator, H-A Zo: a parrot on its perch appearing to talk to a passer by. But talking is not what a picture is meant to do.

xiii.

Felicité's parrot, Darwin's mechanical quill, Wedgwood and Davy's chemical profiles in a bird's box have a certain kinship with aspects of *Bouvard et Pécuchet*, Flaubert's unfinished masterpiece. *Bouvard et Pécuchet* are two clerks whose job is to copy letters. They never cease to be astonished by sameness. Their friendship is sealed instantly when they discover they both have an identical idea, like writing their names inside their hats. They both attempt to digest an encyclopedic knowledge, they put theory into practice, and when it fails they go to another theory and so on. Wedgwood and Davy's photographic experiments are known for their failure. This is how they are remembered. The light sensitive paper or parchment would get darker and darker under daylight. They failed to stop the action of light on silver nitrate, thus causing the image to darken into oblivion. It demonstrated that, contrary to common opinion, it is from light that comes darkness.

The experiment offers a poetics of failure, and failure is linked to a gradual erasure of the image. It is a blackness producing apparatus. It is a visual equivalent to a page saturated with ink, as the one we encounter in Laurence Sterne's *Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy*. Sterne's notorious black page would be the consequence of writing too much, repeatedly, covering the page until it gets filled with ink. Blackness would be an excess of writing, just as a black photographic print is the outcome of an excess of light. Is photography then just literature; is writing with ink just like writing with light?

Notes

Vincent Descombes **Le Même et l'Autre**. Minuit 1979. Translated as Modern French Philosophy. Cambridge University Press 1980

Italo Calvino **Numbers in the Dark**, Vintage 1996

Alan Barnes **Negative and Positive Images. Erasmus Darwin, Tom Wedgwood and the Origins of Photography; in The Genius of Erasmus Darwin**, Aldershot 2005

Roland Barthes **Sade Fourier Loyola**, John Hopkins University Press. 1997

Raymond Roussel **Nouvelles Impressions d'Afrique**, Léo Scheer 2004

xiii.

Erasmus Darwin's Quill, from the painting by Joseph Wright of Derby, circa 1792

xiii.

OLIVIER RICHON
Imaginary Continent

Weltkulturen Museum, Frankfurt 2013
C-Type print

OLIVIER RICHON
Aufklärung

Weltkulturen Museum, Frankfurt 2013
C-Type print

xvi.

SARAH LEHRER-GRAIWER
TOWN RE-CON

Poems For Repeating and Photography
2013

In and of itself it is a body bag without the bag.
The bag is to come. I remember, the bag is to come and
The bag is a painting
And everyone will ask, but how does the body fit in that kind of bag?
To which, I remember, the body will say, but I have already done it so many times
Before surely I can get in the bag again. I haven't gained weight.
And besides in is not the right preposition, it is and
—the body fits and the bag-that-is-a-painting fits in the portrait-cum-still-life-that-
Is-this-picture.
Just stuff it in, photo bomb it like a painted prophet of the Enlightenment.

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xiv. KIM SCHOEN

xv.

xvi.

xvii. RETURNING TO BERLIN

KIM SCHOEN

AN EXPERIMENT IN REPETITION

August 2013

> *"I ... shall proceed to speak a little of the investigative journey I made to test the possibility and meaning of repetition. Without anyone knowing about it (lest any gossip render me incapable of the experiment and in another way weary of repetition), I went by steamship to Stralsund and took a seat in the Schnellpost [express coach] to Berlin."*
>
> —*SK CC 150*

> *"If you've heard this story before, don't stop me, because I'd like to hear it again."*
>
> —*Groucho Marx*

I've immediately destroyed the possibility of repetition by missing my flight.

The first time I travelled to Berlin, I ran into an acquaintance from Los Angeles in the London Luton airport, then tried to act surprised at the coincidence (as another friend had mentioned he might be on the flight). After an exchange of mock delight, I shared my cheese sandwich with him in the Luton lounge. It was nice to have a random travel companion, but I was used to traveling alone and generally prefer it;

I remembered why as he squat down by the money exchange desk and sent himself into a full panic, believing he had lost his travelers checks, and indeed, his entire wallet. I stood by, watching the unprofessional nature of his despair. We continued on to board, and we were seated together. I feigned interest in his snapshots.

We landed, and awkwardly faced away from one another on the S-Bahn into Alexanderplatz. I remember him leaning on my back as a rest, an insouciant gesture meant to elicit camaraderie, but which only made me bristle. That was my first journey into Berlin. The second time, where I was consciously on an investigative journey about the nature of repetition having decided to repeat Kierkegaard's adventure, I luxuriated in my bed for about twenty-five minutes too long, brushing my hair, singing along to the radio, comfortable in my trust of London buses and the power of over three hours to get to a location an hour away. This lolly-gagging set off a chain of events I realized would put me about a half hour short of arriving on time for my flight at Luton. I realized this while on a bus on the M4, motionless in traffic. But I had taken the bus the last time; I recalled there was traffic that day as well, and I had made it with enough time to spare then. This time, my heart rate started to accelerate. Even as I knew I wouldn't make it, somehow I still ran frantically with my bag up to the check-in gates without a boarding pass, panting and looking shocked as the security guard told me no one without a boarding pass could go beyond those gates. The flight was still on the ground and I irrationally believed time could still be on my side. The plane took off without me.

Finding myself on the other side of time, in another life I never thought I would have to inhabit, was the stuff of nightmares—literally, as I have been having the same one over and over since I was in my teens, where I am perennially packing clothing from, say, a dirt gap underneath the house, or trying to catch a non-existent cab, or waiting in a line just about fifty people too long and I miss my flight—usually to somewhere I really want to go, like Paris. However, I had never dreamed of missing a flight to Berlin, so it was a new and old sensation simultaneously; I experienced the difference between the night-sweating terror of missing a dream flight, and the somewhat irritating and mundane fact of now having to take an hour and a half train to Gatwick to catch another EasyJet flight five hours later.

xiv.

The first time I traveled to Berlin, it was after much hemming and hawing about whether or not to stay in a hotel or impose on a newly made acquaintance; furthermore, one who wasn't even there, as he was teaching in Sheffield on a long commute. But his wife and newborn child were

in the flat in Prenzlauer Berg. I always prefer to stay with people rather than on one's own, providing people are accommodating and up for that sort of thing. One never knows if they are hosting distant acquaintances either out of a sense of openness and charm, never knowing themselves when they, indeed, might need an open door and a host with a good local map, or whether it is merely veiled embarrassment at wishing to say no. I worried about the fact of the newborn child. But after many text messages sent back and forth from the airport, I received sufficient encouragement that I should cancel my hotel and stay with them. So I called the hotel I had booked, to lie and say that I had missed my flight, and wouldn't be able to make it.

Odd that this next time I would journey to Berlin, I would *actually miss* my flight. I had, this time as well, booked a hotel for one night, online, named the *Honigmond*. Only later did I realize I had booked a single room at the Honeymoon Hotel, and this may have contributed to my eagerness to cancel it as my arrival was delayed until midnight. I called another friend I had met the first time I was in Berlin, and took her up on the offer of staying at her flat for the night. I reasoned that I would be tired after journeying fourteen hours on a trip that should have taken four, and that it would be nice to stay with someone I knew. Again, I cancelled a hotel room in Berlin.

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Kierkegaard's strategy, whereupon he returns "to ascertain whether or not a repetition is possible," is a kind of farce. It is the joke of twice, and interesting that he only uses the double experience, via the single recurrence, to make this assessment. For if he had returned to Berlin again and again, surely his associations and judgements, his lived experiences and therefore his memories would exponentially unfold and change the character of his impressions of Berlin, and indeed, of repetition itself. But of course, absolute repetition is not possible, in the sense that time alters all, and in Kierkegaard's interest in telling a good story, only one example is needed to prove this: that what we think of as repetition is merely a resemblance to the original (and the vex: *all* moments are originals), which occurred in time once (with all its chaotic variables), and now holds itself up in memory to do with what we will.

At the beginning of his second trip to Berlin, Kierkegaard (under his pseudonym Constantin Constantius) *does* experience a small intimation of repetition, in that a horrible carriage-journey is repeated: “On my previous journey I had the end seat inside the carriage near the front (some consider this a great prize), and then for thirty-six hours was so shaken together with my nearest neighbors, all too near, that upon reaching Hamburg I had not merely lost my mind but lost my legs too.” As expected, his second trip was equally horrible; even though he moves to the ‘coupé’, he states: “Everything was repeated.” But from there the second trip unravels in terms of his experiment; upon his return to Berlin, the whole city is covered in a cloud of dust from Ash Wednesday (on his first trip this phenomenon did not occur, "presumably, because it was winter"), the enchanting play of shadows from the candlelight in his first lodging is now gone; he becomes piqued, irritated by the foreignness in his hoped-for repetitions: the clouds of dust that plague him, the lack of candles that make his same residence gloomy and dead. He concludes no repetition is to be found in this double trip.

Twice, the double, taking us into the terrain of the uncanny. The uncanny unsettles, the term Freud uses is *Das Unheimliche*, un-homely, where something is familiar and foreign at the same time. We may experience this sensation in repetition, this ‘same but different,’ this 'familiar but foreign' feeling. In dreams for example, where this schism of the same but not the same lingers. Photographs offer us this sense as well. A kind of déjà vu: already seen.

Think about what happens when you take a snapshot: it's an instantaneous *recognition*—something you photograph is something you have seen before, something you have learned is worth photographing. One *remembers* that this is a scene that would look good photographed. Rosalind Krauss tells us: "...the priorness and repetition of pictures is necessary to the singularity of the picturesque...for the beholder it depends on being recognized as such, a re-cognition made possible only by prior example."[1] Towards this singularity, one acts. The framing, the cropping, the light source, the decisive moment, Cartier-Bresson, Levitt, Winogrand. In effect, here you go blind to the moment. The camera goes up and the scene is seen through its lens and your memory, rather than with your own eyes. This moment of disappearance in your lived reality recurs to you later, as a seeming double of the moment.

The intention of a snapshot may be to preserve and repeat the moment, but paradoxically it is a moment one has not really existed fully within. So viewing the snapshot returns as the *single* instance of really

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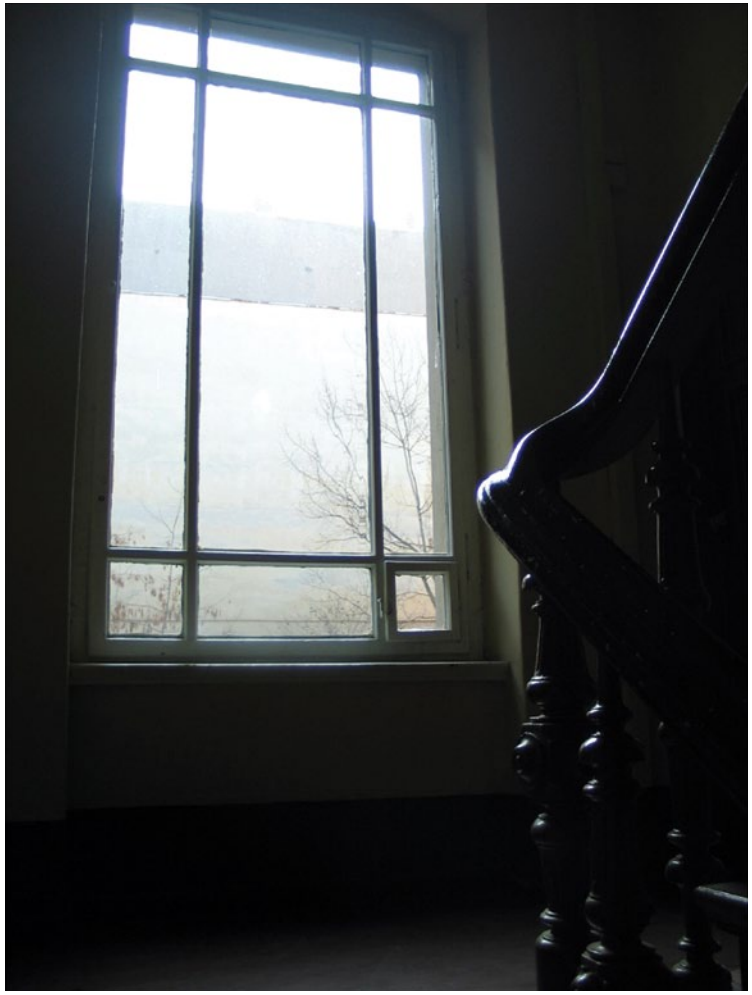
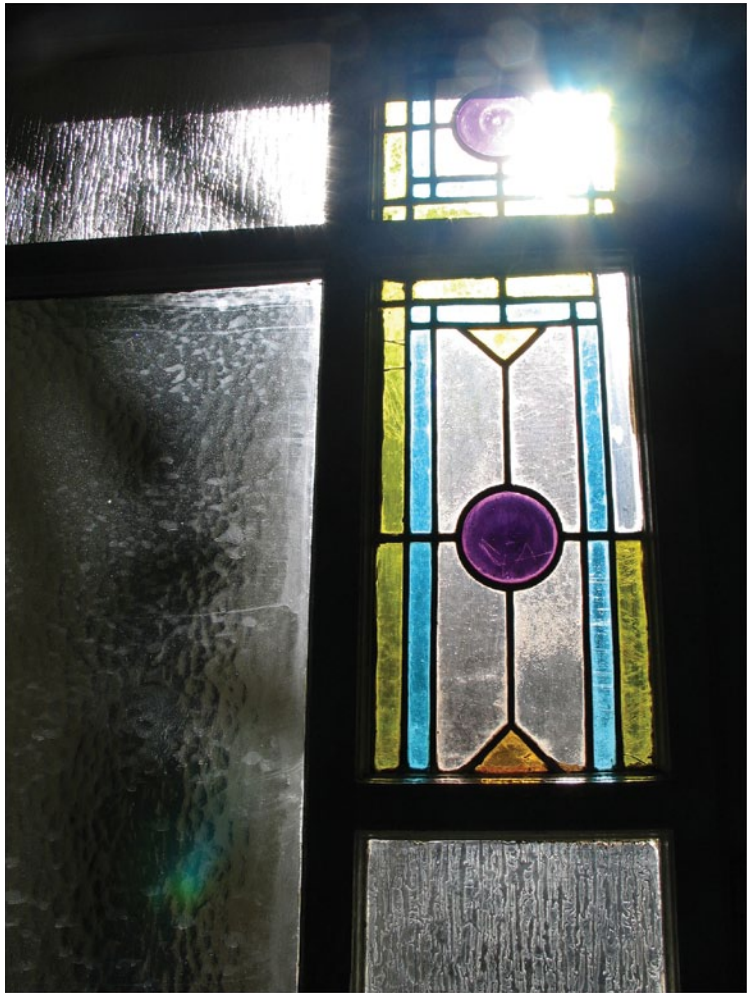
xiv.





xiv.

KIM SCHOEN
BERLIN 1

8 x10 Light-jet print
2013

KIM SCHOEN
RETURNING TO BERLIN 1

8 x10 Light-jet print
2013

KIM SCHOEN
BERLIN 2

8 x10 Light-jet print
2013

KIM SCHOEN
RETURNING TO BERLIN 2

8 x10 Light-jet print
2013

KIM SCHOEN
BERLIN 3

8 x10 Light-jet print
2013

KIM SCHOEN
RETURNING TO BERLIN 3

8 x10 Light-jet print
2013

seeing whatever one was looking at in the first place. In this way, the shock of your existence is allowed to prove itself to you. You can look at yourself looking.

Except you weren't really looking. It was only you yourself looking that is doubled. Vito Acconci's project of photographing every time he blinked (*Blinks*, 1970) still proves canny—one doesn't look when one takes a snapshot. So in a sense, the play of photographing means getting to see what you missed: the surprise of the instant, an instant later. This re-shuffling of time has it's *petite* thrills. Even if you are seeing a close resemblance in what you think you saw, it always has its surprises. As Winogrand said, "I photograph to find out what something will look like photographed."

But Winogrand's approach has a different temporal emphasis than most of us taking snapshots: he was after the *what might occur* in a picture. But most people taking snapshots see what we remember is worth seeing—or see what we want to remember. This is different than allowing the future to ambush us. It is a 'knowing in advance of seeing.'

And this knowing in advance of seeing, or finding what you are looking for, or looking for what you know, has its future corollary: "nostalgic-to-be." This term was used recently in the New York Times in an article on the health benefits of nostalgia. "I don't miss an opportunity to build nostalgic-to-be memories," Dr. Sedikides says. "We call this anticipatory nostalgia and have even started a line of relevant research." The researchers obviously feel nostalgia has gotten a bad reputation; they want to clean out the cobwebs—all those soldiers and their malaise—and make nostalgia an exercise in the good health of living a meaningful life.

In contrast to pushing the past forward in 'anticipatory nostalgia' is the app Snapchat. From a New Yorker article on the phenomenon: "Snapchat is a photo- and video-messaging service that deletes images and videos from a recipient's phone within ten seconds; every shot is ephemeral. As of this past February, the service handled sixty million photos a day." The founders of Snapchat say that through this deletion, their mission is to change the notion of what a photograph is and use it as a means of "communication." I think by communication they mean that everybody makes mistakes. In an interview with founder Evan Spiegel, Spiegel says that the service allows you to "free yourself from an amorphous collection of who you've been forever."

Who you've been forever—now you can be only what you are next.

Deletion as an artifical shove towards forgetting probably works, although occasionally you must remember that you photographed something. In the avalanche of snapshotting (there are 2.5 billion cameraphones in use) Snapchat functions as a kind of 'mop-squad' (as Stephen Colbert has called it), deleting and sending out little pieces of code to follow the image to ensure its deletion. (Whether or not you believe the pictures are really gone is another matter.)

What we see in these trends a sense of a temporal itchiness; a wish to either retreat-to-build, or delete-to-move-forward; in other words: to escape the uncertainty of the future, or the embarrassment of the past.

But Kierkegaard tries to tell us that just as one cannot live in an endless fog of remembrance, that "one can only be wearied by the new." Rather than these nostalgic or manic leaps backwards and forwards, repetition has a unique temporal movement in Kierkegaard's thought: "what is recollected is repeated backwards, whereas genuine repetition is recollected forwards." The embrace of what has been, willed forward into unknown terrain: repetition is properly *the time of one's life*.

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Comedy and tragedy have their perfection, Kierkegaard states, but when neither pleases him, 'he turns to farce.' It is in this spirit I have further extended Kierkegaard's experiment for this symposium in the form of snapshots.

xiv.

I have thought a lot about the comedy and perhaps hysteria in all this picture-taking we engage in. Even if one is serious about the absurd in their photographic practice, as I consider myself to be, is it not truly absurd to be taking so many snapshots? I began to wonder while reading Kierkegaard's description of his theater-going experience in Berlin—could the snapshot be considered farce? There are aspects of farce I see in the act of taking a snapshot: speed, unruliness, inclusiveness. Everyone can participate in it.

Also, as Kierkegaard writes, "all the characters in a farce are sketched on the abstract scale of the general." He describes it as the "spaciousness of the abstraction" and it is something a person taking snapshots (as well as a viewer viewing them) can 'move around' in.

Because it is not predetermined what particulars will align to fit the abstraction, and in this sense, as every performance of the same play is a new performance, every snapshot is its own performance, and its details have the potential to provoke great feeling (versus the deadening power of having to look at something again). The impulse to perform the same always allows for a *vibrato* of the new. As Jonathan Rée writes in his text on Kierkegaard in this book, "Every performance is a performance of something—in other words of something larger than itself, of something abstract, or typical, or generic." And it is our own participation in this—our own emphases, glances, and blinks—that animate this spacious abstraction, and will the performance onwards.

Notes

1 Rosalind Krauss, **The Originality of the Avant-Garde and Other Modernist Myths** (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT P, 1985) 166

Unless otherwise noted, references to Kierkegaard are from: Søren Kierkegaard, **Fear and Trembling** and **Repetition**, trans. Howard H. Hong and Edna V Hong (New York: Princeton UP 1983)

SARAH LEHRER-GRAIWER

STAIRS TOWN

Poems For Repeating and Photography
2013

I started out in search of ordinary things
Like what's on the other side of that door or that glass,
And how many fires are in a flame.
And which one is my home.
No it was not like that. It was like red
I could only see reds. Only drink reds.
Redsemblance would have to wait to be unpacked
After the trip like metaphors and I kept sleeping
Hard and deep even as I put one foot in front of the other.
The other foot in front of the other. Again and again, going down. Then
One foot behind my head. The other heeled in my perenium
—Seeking balance. Hold still.
There is tragic and there is comic repetition.

i.

ii.

iii.

iv.

v.

vi.

vii.

viii.

ix.

x.

xi.

xii.

xiii.

xiv.

xv. DUNCAN WOOLDRIDGE

xvi.

xvii. RETURNING TO BERLIN

DUNCAN WOOLDRIDGE

REPETITION AND FORGETTING

2013

In this short text, I would like to suggest that we have begun collectively to move away from repetition. Not as a rejected model of practice, but as a slowly obliterated notion of time and memory affected by a new sense of the eternal present. Repetition is lost in the permanent present of a post-Fordist information economy. In this text, I will argue for an engagement rooted in the physicality of the world around us, and will suggest that such physicality in fact contains a radical potential for an experience that is singular, and which allows once again for repetition. To do this, I will follow Jonathan Crary's recent suggestion that the extension of our operations towards a 24/7 state of a permanent presentness, places us outside of rhythm and time. I will suggest that this obliterates distinction, and threatens repetition—whether as a phenomenon we experience, or as a willed or enacted event.

I want to begin by outlining a few forms of repetition, to describe their properties and what is at stake: the first is located in Kierkegaard and the response to his text by Alain Robbe-Grillet, in his novelistic homage, 'Repetition', where an idea of the return is embodied physically by revisiting a place, in this case Berlin. That is to say, there is a form of repetition enacted by the body; and a second conception of repetition, which sees it related to history and cultural memory, connected to what Gilles Deleuze says when he refers to Péguy, that repetition is anticipated

in the taking place of the event: he says "it is not Federation Day which commemorates or represents the fall of the Bastille, but the fall of the Bastille which celebrates and repeats in advance all the Federation Days". A gross simplification of this should understand Péguy's and Deleuze's inversion of repetition as a repetition productive of difference, producing multiplicity and not uniformity. Finally, this inverted repetition also recalls something rooted in the practice of writers and artists, where repetition is enacted and produced, repetition or appropriation, and especially the Pataphysical idea of 'plagiarism by anticipation', in which copies emerge in advance of its model (Yves Klein produced a drawing in which Kazimir Malevich views a future Klein, using him as a model for his Suprematist reductions of painting, but the Salon of Incoherent Artists of 1888 in fact pre-empted this, by producing iconic works of 20th century art before the fact). Repetition becomes a model of the event.

It is important to note that these models are configured in their relation to time and moreover, the function, even the failure, of memory. Robbe-Grillet's detective Henri Robin, uncertain of his experience, encounters a city which he only progressively comes to realize he has visited before; Deleuze and Péguy's account of repetition sees it produce an anticipation of the future: repetition remains something that can only be acknowledged by identifying something 'that has been' or the 'that which is to come'.

Discussing Jean-Luc Godard's 'In Praise of Love', Jonathan Crary, in his recent book *24/7* describes the realization that "something fundamental has changed in the way in which we see, or fail to see, the world." Crary suggests that for Godard, this failure "stems from a damaged relationship to past and to memory. We are swamped with images and information about the past and its recent catastrophes – but there is also a growing incapacity to engage these traces in way that could move beyond them." For Crary, the 24/7 present of the future – the mixing of work and life, and the integration of technological devices is not the epistemological break that is often suggested to us, but a successively escalating rhythm of technological consumption which attacks any notion of the outside. He identifies sleep as a space that remains, despite various attempts to undermine its value or colonize its potential, as a radical outside.

In Gabriel Garcia Marquez's *100 Years of Solitude*, the protagonists of Macondo, who remain awake with insomnia, progressively lose their ability to remember. They write placards and leave messages to recall key events or ideas, even the location or function of objects, but to no avail: as time progresses, they begin to forget the meaning of words. ("Thus they

went on living in a reality that was slipping away, momentarily captured by words, but which would escape irremediably when they forgot the values of the written letters."). For Marquez, the note or reminder is insufficient when it is external to us; when we depend wholly upon an external source for our memory, we lose any sense of control we may have possessed.

In an echo of this external attempt to cling on to memory, Viktor Mayer Schonenberger, in his book *Delete*, describes the progressive quest to increase storage and construct artificial forms of recall. For Mayer Schonenberger, this is uniquely disconcerting: within its prescribed parameters, artificial memory by principle leaves no event unrecorded, we cannot escape what might be done, not merely in the naivety of youth or the heat of the moment, but moreover, in what we perceive to be private or solitary space. But something additional is also at stake: we lose the very sense of our ability to determine our own memory: we submit to a new, supposedly neutral recording mechanism (as if the post-structuralist critique of power is bypassed)—what is at stake is our self-determined ability to take responsibility for what we remember and forget. For memory is a prioritizing mechanism, one which stores, even conceals items within our memory, and repetition is our encounter with our own selected memory, as well our encounter with that which we have left behind. As Mayer Schonenberger suggests, the quest is not only to remember, but also to be able to forget.

What is clear about memory in a period of digital storage is that what happens to our memory also happens to our images. Both are delegated away to digital storage, and a retrieval process is activated that we call upon through what David Joselit, in After Art, has called 'the epistemology of search'. The search, for Joselit, is what now determines our primary activities. A search without end, the digital image is sought out and brought to us and quickly disposed of. Chance is managed by algorithms external to our control. We encounter the photograph or the memory only to pass it by. We spend a fraction of a second on things that we once interrogated and queried; images and memories melt into air.

Yet Crary makes a prescient remark when he describes the surprising solidity of objects outside and beyond the world of the screen. He states: "in the last two decades, one became familiar with the transitional moments when one shuts off an apparatus after having been immersed in any televisual or digital ambience for an extended period. There is inevitably a brief interval before the world fully recomposes itself into its unthought and unseen familiarity. It is an instant of disorientation when one's immediate surroundings – for example, a room and its contents

– seem both vague and oppressive in their time-worn materiality, their heaviness, their vulnerability to dilapidation, but also their inflexible resistance to being clicked away in an instant". And there seems to be some specific potential here: what Crary describes is the realization of our bodily and material sense of the world. The body and its fragility, and the objects curious solidity: these momentarily function as reminders that the world is constructed by relations actualized in the physical world, in which multiple senses are stimulated and experienced (it should be an obvious point to stress the materiality and sensory dimensions of the infrastructure which makes the world wide web possible). The world becomes clear to us when we re-encounter the vulnerable material histories with our world of the senses.

If the experience of images, and moreover, our memory, is affected by digital retrieval and storage, we might venture an observation: the digital file (and here my concern is the photograph, but we could equally refer to the essay or text) is, for all of the technophilia that surrounds the internet and its transparency, an object both saved and yet endlessly destroyed. Its permanency of storage, so commonly remarked upon, is counteracted by our inability, so often overlooked, to perceive it in its own time or on its own terms. Ulises Ali Meijas has written compellingly of the constraints which are imposed by the 'nodocentrism' of the network, in which that which does not conform to the model of the network becomes invisible. The controlled digital image is clicked away, and remains an object of easy but dispensable transmissibility, an object with little or no agency of its own.

I want to conclude then by proposing a suggestion to contest or disrupt the disappearance of memory and therefore, of repetition. But first, an observation: much recent photography is marked by its interest in manifestations of the image as an object, the photograph as a thing. I would like to suggest that such physical photographs contain a radical potential: they are intentionally present, and strangely disruptive. They have, as Jonathan Crary might state, an "inflexible resistance to being clicked away in an instant". This is new to the photographic image, which has so often been perceived as industrially thin and infinitely communicative. The materiality of the image is more apparent in the light of the supposedly immateriality of the web (and I will leave this discussion for another time). Photography now invites us to understand its presence in space, to resist easily transmissibility and absorbance, and therefore to allow repetition. And we too as receivers of these image/objects, strive for this sense of presence, which manifests itself in unusual ways.

xv.

XV.

DUNCAN WOOLDRIDGE
Touching

digital inkjet print
2013

DUNCAN WOOLDRIDGE
Touching

digital inkjet print
2013

DUNCAN WOOLDRIDGE
Touching

digital inkjet print
2013

DUNCAN WOOLDRIDGE
Touching

digital inkjet print
2013

My modest proposal is this: to consider the touch, to consider the movement and placement of the object, its situation and presence in space, and our ability to also, perhaps transgressively, reach over the barrier and touch what is in front of us. For touch here might be understood as a multi-sensory encounter, a memory outside of the succession of information presented one-dimensionally to us, a continuous present which eliminates rhythm, respite, and therefore, the potential for repetition. The physical image/object, which we can touch and even record our experience of touching, is paradoxically an object which can insist on its presence, and be distinct in its absence. It so it is this distinct presence and absence which is the very possibility of repetition, of our own singular memory and experience – it is this which is at stake in our encounter with images.

In this text I have sought to begin to draw out some complex links between a description of our present modes of communication, and the diminishing possibilities for repetition within it. The technological media with which we communicate constructs, as we have seen, a perpetual present which constricts time. It attempts to not only supplement memory, but remove from us the very obligation to remember. A simple example of how we now delegate away memorable phone numbers or important dates would suffice here, but we might also recall our dependence upon memory for language and knowledge itself. This gradual loss of memory, I have argued, makes difficult the recognizing of repetition as it occurs. The 24/7 perpetual present, as Jonathan Crary has stated, challenges the very rhythms (day and night, work and non-work dualities, seasonal variation) that allow for distinction and respite, for space and consciousness.

I have suggested here that the materiality of the object allows for a sense of the world that engages time, a time that re-opens the possibility to remember. Crary has suggested in his writings that sleep is a space where we can unconsciously resist the passage of time. To this, I have suggested that touch, and the activation of the senses, intentionally places us at a remove from the attention and absorption of the screen. To touch is to perceive the world around us, outside of the passage of information or the procession of perpetually flickering visuals. As an aside, I have suggested that the materiality of recent photography might too be read as a resistance to being clicked away. These objects and senses, which return to us a sense of rhythm and of specificity, reject the indiscriminate flow of information, extract themselves from it, and make possible the experience of repetition in its full conceptual, historical and sensorial complexity.

SARAH LEHRER-GRAIWER

TOUCHING TOWN

Poems For Repeating and Photography
2013

Surprise maybe it is all about you after all. You
And your registered finger prints.
How many pokes does it take to find a cure?
Poke. Poke. Poke. Poke. Poke. Poke. Poke.
Flash. Flash. Flash. Flash. Flash. Flash.
Pop. Pop. Pop. Pop. Pop. Pop. Pop.
Click. Click. Click. Click. Click. Click. Click.
Snap. Snap. Snap. Snap. Snap. Snap. Snap.
Post. Post. Post. Post. Post. Post. Post.
Print. Print. Print. Print. Print. Print. Print.