Transmedial Cathedrals

Architectural History in and between New Media in Germany

1900–1945

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I, Tom Wilkinson, confirm that the work presented in this thesis is my own. Where information has been derived from other sources, I confirm that this has been indicated in the thesis.
ABSTRACT

Architectural history was produced via a number of new media practices in early twentieth-century Germany; this thesis asks why, how, and for whom – and what kinds of knowledge resulted. Existing studies in this area are monographic, focusing on individual media, actors, or objects, whereas this work examines several communication technologies, as well as both avant-garde and conservative protagonists. It is divided into three chapters. The first considers the production of photobooks by figures such as Paul Schultze-Naumburg, Karl Robert Langewiesche, Sigfried Giedion, and Adolf Behne. The second concerns films about Gothic architecture, both fictional (such as Der Golem) and documentary. The final chapter is devoted to radio broadcasts about architectural history, especially those of Walter Benjamin and Wilhelm Pinder. This synoptic inquiry reveals the changes wrought by media during the period, as the parameters of art-historical discourse were reconfigured and new publics were produced. At the same time, by means of this comparative approach, the boundaries of individual media are opened up to investigate a more fluid zone of intermediality in which the image of the building was unsettled and opened to new uses. In the course of such transmediations, the media were hybridised and the knowledge of history was modernised, undermining the attempts of more reactionary authors to reinforce medial boundaries and to redeem the present by reintroducing it to historical architecture using technological means. Others used the media in more productive ways, critically harnessing their qualities or refashioning them to suit their purposes. However, they too ran up against the obstinacy of the media, which rendered the quest for an oppositional public around art quixotic at best. This situation presents striking parallels to the present day, and this study concludes by considering the ramifications of architectural history’s past engagement with new media for an age of smartphones.
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INTRODUCTION
1. Albrecht Dürer, Der heilige Hieronymus im Gehäus, 1514, engraving, 245 x 188 mm, Victoria and Albert Museum, London.
From the study to the street

*By what means does art come to the masses? Not through exhibitions, lectures or books, but through records, fashion plates, films, and illustrated magazines.*

— Adolf Behne, ‘Art Exhibition Berlin’ (1929)¹

We begin in a study, as so often before.

A scholar sits at his desk, copying by hand from a book we cannot see [fig. 1]. It is questionable, in fact, whether St Jerome – his lion gives him away – can see the book either. Although it is placed to receive the optimal illumination from the window, something peculiar about the geometry of the space pushes the book behind the saint’s elbow. However, Jerome has his own light source: a halo, which shines like a miner’s lamp from his head. The primacy of this inner light is underlined by the opacity of the window: although the bullseye glass lets fall a deal of dappled light into the study, it permits no outwards view. The world is doubly blocked from entering by the dozing lion in the foreground.

Jerome requires something other than worldly light for his work, in any case. He is rendering the Hebrew Bible into Latin, and the delicacy of this task is alluded to by the gourd hanging over his head. This object refers to a passage in the Book of Jonah, which mentions a vigorous plant, קיקיון. Jerome chose to translate this as *hedera*, from the Greek for ivy, rather than using the more conventional Latin *cucurbita*, or gourd.² This innovation was controversial in Jerome’s time, but for Dürer scriptural revelation is subordinate to the inner light. In order to settle on *le mot juste*, Jerome

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2. Albrecht Dürer, *St Jerome*, 1492, woodcut, 190 x 133 mm, Kupferstichkabinett, Öffentliche Kunstsammlung, Basel.
relies on another authority than the book: his judgment ultimately depends on the small crucifix facing him across the desk.

Friedrich Kittler described a later study scene in which a more whimsical translation took place, under the supervision of a very different authority. Faust’s substitution of ‘in the beginning was the act’ for the customary text of John 1:1 marks the birth of German classicism, according to Kittler, whereupon the circulation of slavishly copied texts ends and we enter the realm of hermeneutics: the ‘Aufschreibesystem’ [notation system] 1800. In the process we move from the church-governed Republic of Scholars, which ‘simply heaves words around’,\(^3\) to a system under which writing, now ‘freely’ interpreted (but in actuality controlled by the state) became productive, as the reading of poetry in schools and homes spawned a nation of reader-writers. This set-up was replaced in turn by the Aufschreibesystem 1900, in which lossless reproduction by technological media obviates interpretation and with it, the intervention of Man. Hermeneutics ceases and autopoeisis reigns.

Dürer’s picture, engraved in 1514 and distributed across Europe in numerous copies thereafter, describes – and embodies – a liminal zone in this history. It is a commentary on the saint’s media practice, which Gutenberg had rendered obsolete around 1440. Jerome’s letters had themselves been printed in Basel in 1492 with a frontispiece by Dürer [fig. 2]. This woodcut is relatively crude compared to the image described above – the artist was only twenty-one when he made it – but it is strikingly original in conception: it gives us the scholar’s view, with Hebrew, Greek and Latin manuscripts spread before him, and beyond them, the city to which his letters were now being distributed in print. Twenty-two years later, Dürer stands at the threshold instead and

confidently announces the arrival of the technology that will put Jerome out of a job. But although the engraving, like the letterpress, represents a quantum leap in reproduction, it still requires the involvement of the human hand – which leaves its trace on the monogrammed cartellino in the foreground. This is now the only writing visible in the scholar’s study; paralyzed by indecision, his page may even be blank. The humanist-as-artist, who doesn’t have to search for words but can show, has survived the scribe.

A third image drags Jerome into the twentieth century: now the saint works al fresco on the roof terrace of Le Corbusier’s building at Weissenhof [fig. 3]. The world opens up to the scholar, who no longer copies from a book or looks to a crucifix for guidance, but writes directly, perhaps taking inspiration from the view. This sounds very much like the Aufschreibesystem 1800, with nature as the source of poetry. The skull remains, albeit stripped of its religious connotations in these demystified surroundings – but while it no longer warns of the approaching judgment, neither does it declare this to be the realm of natural man. The architecture presents itself as a grid of industrially produced components, and the heavens are filled by a gigantic clock: mechanical time replaces memento mori. The saint must work to a new tempo, as the title of Behne’s book explains: Eine Stunde Architektur, ‘one hour of architecture’. So although he is no longer trapped in his cell, he is ensnared by the process that broke that bond. Freed from church, university and state control, the scholar succumbs instead to the forces of industrial capital. As such, we are in the Aufschreibesystem 1900.

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4 I respond here to a suggestion by Spyros Papapetos: ‘Jerome embodies the polarity between academic life and civic action, withdrawal into personal space and expansion into public life, and these dualities are projected in his habitats that alternate through the ages.’ Papapetos, ‘Saint Jerome in his Modernist Study: An Afterword to Adolf Behne’s Eine Stunde Architektur’, Pidgin 6 (2009), 269–275 (p. 274).
Or are we? The regulation of time is nothing new to the monastic scribe: it stemmed from the religious orders in the first place. The building looks industrial, but since manufacturing lagged behind Le Corbusier’s ambitions it was actually handcrafted. Likewise, the medium of the image itself simultaneously corresponds to and complicates Kittler’s categories. Max Fischer’s montage brings together photographs of Dürer’s etching and of modern architecture. The chemical process renders historical and contemporary sources equivalent, de-auratizing art and literature in the process. Like the mechanical time that rules this picture, in which the biological span signified by the skull is chopped up into regular, exchangeable particles, the image itself – and space with it – becomes fragmentary. But the saint sits uncomfortably in the grid, obstinately bringing his own perspective with him. The new is peppered with the shrapnel of the old: it is not a case of 1800 / 1900 but of 1800 + 1900. And while the lossless technological medium permits this play of fragmentation and reunification, it does not dictate the outcome. The pieces did not have to fall thus.

The media technology in which this image appears – the photobook – is distributed to a far greater readership than either Jerome’s republic of scholars or Dürer’s customer base of aristocrats, humanists and educated burghers. However, these modern readers are still invisible from the study, open though it is, and we are unsure how they will receive the book. The medium may even be more unilateral than before – in the republic of scholars there was at least an equivalence of unalienated labour. Now that writers and readers are ruled by the same mechanical tempo, is their labour fragmented and specialised on a macro level, or does it become fragmented and specialised subcutaneously; are the readers only readers, or writers and readers in one? Will they understand the saint’s message, and what will they do with it? We will not know until we leave the study to meet them.
4. The scholar on the roof of his study. Der Golem, dir. by Paul Wegener and Carl Boese (Germany, 1920).

5. The scholar presents his findings to the public. Der Golem, dir. by Paul Wegener and Carl Boese (Germany, 1920).
The scholar starts to move. He begins on the roof, as in the previous image, but now he is a natural philosopher, not a philologist, and he looks through his telescope before turning to the book beside him [fig. 4]. His observations predict impending calamity – the expulsion of the Jews from Prague – so he goes to the palace with the intention of educating the court [fig. 5]. This public is no longer composed of solitary readers, but a mass – which is, however, still socially circumscribed. The scholar shows this courtly audience an educational film on the history of the Jews, but it does not produce the intended effect: they are not ready for the new medium, and, despite having been warned by the scholar to remain silent, they respond with jeers. As a result of their laughter, the palace begins to collapse. However, disaster is averted by the scholar’s assistant. The Golem props up the edifice of authority and, in return, the grateful emperor spares the ghetto.

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Scholarly engagements with new media are never straightforward; they do strange things to the material, and if the subject is historical, the results will possess an uneven temporality, neither wholly past nor entirely present. The audience too is often out of sync, both with itself and the means of reproduction. This may result in harmless obscurity; at worst, it can be calamitous. But there are hidden structures at work in favour of the scholar’s aims, too. In Der Golem, the medium of film turns out to be attuned to the Gothic architecture of the palace, potentiating a flash of understanding and/or a resonance disaster. Neither of these can occur, however, without the mediation of the audience – or rather their obstinacy: instead of being seduced into compliant absorption by the spectacularity of the moving image, they insist on discussion. They become a public. In this instance, their obstinacy is inadequate to understanding and
leads instead to collapse – but also, ultimately, to the rescue of the Jews. And although the palace is saved, its fundamental instability has been exposed.

*Zwischenland der Kunstgeschichte*

In twentieth-century Germany, publics and the past met under the sign of several new technologies, amongst them photobooks, film, and radio. Scholars, polemicists, publishers, and politicians seized on these means to produce discourse on historical works of art and architecture. They did so not merely as a means to popularise the discipline, or to circumvent its institutional trammels, but also in an attempt to mould the population. The perception that modernisation had fractured German society prompted endeavours from figures of all political persuasions to influence social formations. Behind the efforts of conservatives stood the enduring notion of the *Kulturnation* and the belief, propagated by the increasingly proletarianised *Bildungsbürgertum* (educated middle class), in the unifying power of education. This article of faith was in fact shared by many figures on the left, albeit complicated by the ideal of an oppositional proletarian culture. Art was seen as especially fecund material for this project, but those who sought to form new publics around it using new media were also moulded by their tools in turn.

By the 1900s, the use of technological media to reproduce works of art was no longer a novelty; the practice coincides with the invention of photography. Some of Fox Talbot’s earliest experiments depicted works of architecture and sculpture, and when one of the first commercial photo libraries, Fratelli Alinari, was established in 1852 in Florence, it

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quickly gained a reputation as a specialist in the reproduction of artworks. The institutionalisation of the technology went hand in hand with the growth of conservation movements: in Germany, the Königlich Preußische Meßbildanstalt was founded in 1885 to record the nation’s monuments. The potential of the medium was quickly recognised by professional art historians, too: Hermann Grimm, who was later to become the first chair of art history at Berlin University, called for the establishment of an art-historical photo collection in 1865, and the use of photographic slides was demonstrated by Bruno Meyer at the first international congress of art historians in Vienna in 1873. These examples demonstrate two of the ways in which photography was utilised by art historians: as a tool of research and of pedagogy. It was also used to produce and distribute knowledge beyond the study and the lecture hall.

This embrace of new media was not, however, universal or unreflective: Wölfflin, for instance, who had pioneered double slide projection, published a series of articles discussing ‘correct’ and ‘incorrect’ modes of photographing sculpture. Others were less enthusiastic still: Wilhelm Waetzoldt warned that immediate experience of the work was always preferable to slideshows. Nevertheless, as the location of Meyer’s slide presentation demonstrates, the invention of technological media developed in tandem with art history’s establishment as a discipline. In fact, as Heinrich Dilly argued, the former facilitated the latter, since it seemingly offered the means of setting art historical

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6 This proposal was at least partly motivated by material concerns: he no longer wished to pay for reproductions himself. Heinrich Dilly, Kunstgeschichte als Institution: Studien zur Geschichte einer Disziplin (Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp, 1979), p. 151.


work on an ‘objective’, ‘scientific basis’. However, ‘It did not lead to scientific
distancing, as Anton Springer had hoped, but to an identification between the real object
and the medium, so that the medium became the object of the discipline.’

Art history has therefore recently been recognised as a ‘photographic practice’. In fact,
it soon became a media practice in broader terms, as photography was joined by film
and radio. These additions to the repertoire brought art history out of the lecture hall
into unaccustomed settings: the cathedral didn’t just visit the studio of the art-lover, as
Benjamin put it, it also penetrated the cinema and the workers’ club. This proliferation
and promiscuity of media is increasingly acknowledged by scholars such as Andreas
Zeising and Barbara Schrödl, who focus their attentions on radio and film,
respectively. However, the interaction between these media – and thus the mediality of
the discourse per se – remains underexamined in this context, despite ongoing
discussions of intermediality as regards the work of art itself.

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10 ‘Sie förderte nicht die Distanzierung des Wissenschaftlers, wie sie Anton Springer
erhofft hatte, sondern eine Identifizierung zwischen Realgegenstand und Medium, so
daß das Medium zum Gegenstand der Disziplin wurde.’ Dilly, Kunstgeschichte als
Institution, p. 157.

11 Angela Matyssek, Kunstgeschichte als fotografische Praxis: Richard Hamann und
Foto Marburg (Berlin: Mann, 2008). See also (for instance) Claire
Zimmerman, Photographic Architecture in the Twentieth Century (Minneapolis:
University of Minnesota Press, 2014).

12 See, for example, Andreas Zeising, “‘Mit den Ohren Sehen’. Kunstgeschichte im
Hörfunk der Weimarer Republik’, Kritische Berichte 1 (2009), 112–26; Barbara
Schrödl, ‘Die Kunstgeschichte und ihre Bildmedien. Der Einsatz von Fotografie und
Film zur Repräsentation von Kunst und die Etablierung einer jungen akademischen
Disziplin’, in Sichtbarkeit und Medium. Austausch, Verknüpfung und Differenz
naturwissenschaftlicher und ästhetischer Bildstrategien, ed. Anja Zimmermann

13 These discussions have intensified thanks to what Rosalind Krauss has questionably
called art’s ‘post-medium condition’. An excellent critique of this debate can be found
in Juliane Rebentisch, Aesthetics of Installation Art, trans. Daniel Hendrickson and
Gerrit Jackson (Berlin: Sternberg, 2012).
For all the attempts to police the borders of media during this period,\textsuperscript{14} Claire Zimmerman has made it clear that there was an extensive and growing Zwischenland der Kunst (between-land of art), as Paul Zucker termed the zone of intermedial practice in 1912.\textsuperscript{15} This was mirrored in historiographic form itself, and the parallelism suggests that disciplinary self-knowledge may be gleaned from art theory, and vice-versa. Of course, there is a question here of the legitimacy of treating historiography on the same terms as art. However, just as art history became a media practice, so too did artistic production \textit{tout court}, especially architecture. It was most frequently received in representation, and so, as Dilly said, the medium became the object – not only for the scholar, but also for the wider audience. The ensuing slippage between discipline and object was a cause of concern for those who sought to set art history on an objective basis, scientifically (or one might say scientistically) conceived.\textsuperscript{16} However, alternative forms of objectivity were also proposed, and these often employed the new media in ways that related to avant-garde practice. I shall therefore not seek to establish a standard of scientific objectivity against which to measure art-historical media practice, but consider it as a contested ground where objectivity claims were pitted against one another.

Besides the relation of medium and object, the relation \textit{between} media is another contested ground of this project, and one that complicates its tripartite structure. The process of exchange is customarily thought of as occurring in one direction, as infant

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item The most nuanced of which was put forward by László Moholy-Nagy in \textit{Malerei–Photographie–Film} (Munich: Langen, 1925).
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
media learn from the old before discovering their own specificity. Hence McLuhan’s
dictum, much favoured by Kittler, that the content of a new medium is always an older
medium – a relation that has since been termed ‘remediation’ by Richard Grusin. But
old dogs can also learn new tricks: Brecht observed in 1931 that ‘The old forms of
media are not unaffected by the newly emerging ones … It is conceivable that other
kinds of writers, dramatists or novelists, can for the moment work more cinematically
than the film people’. Andreas Huyssen has recently called this ‘remediation in reverse’.

In the course of these remediations, objects, images, and texts flit from medium to
medium, chapter to chapter. Naumburg Cathedral, for instance, was photographed by
the conservative Walter Hege, these photographs were made into a cinematically
conceived book introduced by art historian Wilhelm Pinder, the book inspired a
documentary film, and this was re-made into a book by cultural official Edwin Redslob.
Instead of delineating a sequence of discrete formatting operations, however, I shall
show as I follow them that these representations bear the traces of their previous
incarnations even in their new ones, and that processes of horizontal genetic transfer and
Lamarckian heritability resulted in hybrid media composed of mixed and fractured
spaces and temporalities.

However, Huyssen delimits a horizon for such exchange: all remediation eventually
runs up against the Eigensinn (obstinacy or self-meaning) of the individual media. The

17 Marshall McLuhan, Understanding Media: The Extension of Man (London:
Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1964), pp. 23–24. The concept has been expanded upon by
18 Bertolt Brecht, ‘Threepenny Lawsuit’ (1931), in Brecht on Film and Radio, trans. and
19 Andreas Huyssen, Miniature Metropolis: Literature in an Age of Photography and
term comes from Oskar Negt and Alexander Kluge’s 1981 book *Geschichte und Eigensinn* (recently translated as *History and Obstinacy*), where it stands for human resistance on a molecular level: ‘the protest against expropriation reduced to a single point, the result of the expropriation of one’s own senses that interface with the external world.’\(^{20}\) It is a felicitous borrowing and one that I shall adopt here, trying however to look a little more closely than Huyssten into how this medial *Eigensinn* functions.

Whereas Benjamin saw obsolete objects as having escaped the false promise of capital and thereby becoming available for new and potentially revolutionary uses,\(^{21}\) by seeking *Eigensinn* in matter we extend this possibility to the contemporaneous object, the non-obsolete commodity. Since it is composed of temporally heterogeneous elements, some of them anachronistic, it too may comprise particles resistant to their intended use that make it available to *détournement*.

Of course, it would be pure reification to endow media and objects with natural or homogeneous *Eigensinn*.\(^{22}\) Instead, we must recognise that the *Eigensinn* of the medium is constituted by the labour of those who produce works, and hence the diverse elements of which a work is composed varies with each iteration. So although institutional and other disciplinary forces contribute to a certain medial inertia, the medium is constituted and reconstituted in each work. It is as such a *practice*,\(^{23}\) and necessarily hybrid. In what follows, I shall think the limits of media in such terms, rather than as an abstract and


ontological – or even an heuristic – specificity. This has methodological implications for parsing attempts to work with or against media and their Eigensinn.

The wider question here is: to what extent do ‘media determine our situation’, to borrow Kittler’s polemical phrase?\(^\text{24}\) I propose that although our situation is determined by media, we can still frequently determine how we respond to and employ them, and this is where their obstinacy – and ours – comes into play. In fact, such an interpretation is encoded in Kittler’s own book on Aufschreibesystyme, which is after all named with a neologism taken from what Negt and Kluge would call a ‘counterproduct of publicness’:\(^\text{25}\) the memoirs of Judge Daniel Paul Schreber.\(^\text{26}\) As Kittler describes them, these memoirs were a tactical engagement with the institution of psychopathology that had imprisoned Schreber, turning its own language – the language of the case study – against itself. ‘The Memoirs stand and fight in the war of two discourse networks. They constitute a small discourse network with the single purpose of demonstrating the dark reality of another, hostile one.’\(^\text{27}\) By reading Kittler in this way – somewhat against the grain, with the help of Negt and Kluge – I shall uncover the effects of the media on the discipline, and identify attempts to employ the media against the discipline: Schreberian strategies in which the obstinate elements of media were employed in order to turn art-historical discourse against its instrumentalisation as a soldering iron of Kultur.


\(^\text{27}\) Kittler, *Discourse Networks*, p. 297.
Publics and counterpublics

Negt and Kluge’s concept of ‘counterproducts of a counterpublic’ was intended as a corrective to the then-dominant understanding of publicness, a category that is central to this project.\(^{28}\) The discourse of publicness has a history roughly coterminous with that of its object (it is in fact self-constitutive): Kant’s 1784 essay ‘Answer to the Question: What is Enlightenment?’ is seen as the originary moment in the German history of the concept, corresponding to the emergence of the nation state and the growing self-consciousness of the bourgeoisie. The late Wilhelmine and the Weimar periods saw a second expansion of the discourse, provoked by developments in science (the birth of modern sociology), the media (the rise of the popular press and later the invention of the electronic media), and in the form of the German state. A more recent burst of interest was stimulated in the realm of theory by Jürgen Habermas and his respondents: this was moulded by the experience of National Socialism and the technological and social changes of the post-war period. Although subsequent theorists have contested his work on many points, Habermas’s text set the current parameters of public discourse and is thus a pivotal moment in any discussion of the field.

For Kant, the process of enlightenment was founded on the public use of reason, by which he meant ‘that use of it which anyone may make of it as a man of learning before the entire public world of readers [Leserwelt].’\(^ {29}\) Kant’s Leserwelt was however quite limited prior to universal literacy, and generally consisted of monadic cells akin to the study pictured at the opening of this introduction. More general intercourse did occur at

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\(^{28}\) In this work I have translated Öffentlichkeit as ‘publicness’ rather than the more common ‘public sphere’. The latter introduces a spatial element that I wish to avoid.

nodes such as coffee houses and salons, but these were exclusive spaces. Nevertheless for Kant this network, though circumscribed, held liberatory potential: the public use of reason would result in freedom of thought, if not of action (‘Argue as much as you please, but obey!’).  

In 1820 Hegel elaborated a critique of this notion of publicness as a mechanism of enlightenment, which he rejected as being based on a category error: knowledge is not opinion, and only opinion can be developed in public. Instead he identified the universities as the realm of science wherein knowledge advances under the eye of the state. He thereby denied the possibility of a critique of the state originating from within the realm of knowledge, which consequentially became mere representation.

This position could only be rebutted by an outsider, someone who had escaped from the walled garden of the Wilhelmine universities into the public marketplace of ideas. Nietzsche is not usually considered a theorist of the public per se, but in his early works he is deeply concerned with publicness in the new German state. In his life too he was engaged, via his championing of Wagner, in the formation of what he called an ‘aesthetic public’ – a sort of pre-Socratic ideal intended to counter the hegemonic public of ‘educated philistines’ that appeared to him to dominate the new Reich, and the universities, which he understood in Hegelian terms as an enormous mechanism for the production of state-approved thought. One of Nietzsche’s foundational moves, then, is identifying a plurality of publics, and hence the possibility of interpublic antagonism.

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30 Kant, ‘What is Enlightenment?’, p. 55.
33 Nietzsche’s inaugural lectures, given at Basel in 1872, concerned this topic. They have recently been translated into English as *Anti-Education: On the Future of Our*
Nietzsche’s engagement with publics, as with so many of his adventures, was untimely – a case of ‘first as farce’. Discussion in Germany does not recommence in earnest until the birth of the Republic, when Ferdinand Tönnies published his 1922 work Critique of Public Opinion – the first complex analysis of the concept within the new discipline of sociology.\(^{35}\) Tönnies’s approach to the study of the public is double: he is concerned with the delineation of publicness as an ideal type and also with the historical development of publicness and the relationship this has to the rise of the type of social formation he termed Gesellschaft, society (as opposed to the traditional Gemeinschaft, community).\(^{36}\)

Tönnies distinguishes between the amorphous, plural public opinions of social groups and The Public Opinion, a consensual construct bridging these formerly atomised groups that is at once unifying and exclusive, since it represses dissent. He sees the ‘Republic of Scholars’ as an important precursor of the ideal type of public, which is dependent on rational discourse and thus on the expansion of education in bourgeois society. He does not exclude subaltern groups from the public, but believes that only a long period of education and guidance by intellectuals will bring these groups to the

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\(^{34}\) “Public” is, after all, a mere word. In no sense is it a homogeneous and constant quantity’. Friedrich Nietzsche, The Birth of Tragedy: Out of the Spirit of Music (1872), trans. Clifton P. Fadiman (New York: Dover, 1995), p. 79.

\(^{35}\) Ferdinand Tönnies, Kritik der öffentlichen Meinung (Berlin: Springer, 1922); excerpts of which are translated in Ferdinand Tönnies on Public Opinion: Selections and Analyses, ed. Hanno Hardt and Slavko Splichal (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2000). Tönnies was profoundly influenced by Nietzsche, whose categories appear in his writing from the first in his famous Gemeinschaft und Gesellschaft (1887), and they remain until the end, despite his intervening break with Nietzsche, which occurs in ‘Nietzsche Narren’ (1893) and Der Nietzsche Kultus (1897). As these titles suggest, Tönnies’s disagreement with Nietzsche focused primarily on the reception of the latter: that is, on the public that coalesced around his works.

\(^{36}\) These categories were elaborated by Tönnies in his Gemeinschaft und Gesellschaft (Leipzig: Fues, 1887).
stage at which they can form or participate in publics. His emphasis on rationality in public discourse was unusual at a time when many critics complained of the irrationality of crowds, and as such it is a significant precursor to Habermas’s approach. At the same time, however, he anticipates Habermas’s critics with his description of an exclusionary supra-public that grows up over the complex mosaic of antagonistic publics, thereby emphasising both plurality and exclusion as essential elements of publicness.

In 1929 Karl Mannheim published his Ideology and Utopia, which, though not explicitly concerned with publics, contains a significant analysis of the public role of intellectuals. With his notion of the ‘free-floating intellectual’, Mannheim delineates a semi-autonomous, semi-classless stratum of scholars who mediate between the ruler and the ruled, and are able to attach themselves to any class they choose regardless of their personal origin. (As such, they are opposed to conservative thinkers whose thought is radically located, as identified in Mannheim’s habilitation thesis of 1925.)

Mannheim identifies potential in the semi-autonomous status of these intellectuals for an Archimedean synthetic vision of the whole, and thereby mediation between conflicting interests. This optimistic view seems anachronistic considering the deeply partisan nature of the Weimar public; however, Mannheim finds in the fragmented, plural public of Weimar a new potential for synthesis. This transvaluation of an historical situation usually looked upon with a kind of teleological despair (at the time

and in retrospect) offers an appealingly utopian interpretation of plural publics and an implicit critique of social homogenisation.

However, this utopianism is tempered by a final sociological engagement with publics that occurred at the end of the Republic, when Ernst Manheim wrote his habilitation thesis *The Bearers of Public Opinion*. This pioneering historical investigation fleshed out Tönnies’s understanding of the development of *Öffentlichkeit* by delineating the emergence of the all-encompassing publicness of contemporary society from the plural publics of the early modern period. For Ernst Manheim, the bearers of public opinion were groups, some of them clandestine (such as the Freemasons) in early modern Western Europe. His thesis was accepted in 1933 by Hans Freyer, a National Socialist who had forced Tönnies – a critic of the regime – from his post as head of the Germany Sociological Society. (Tönnies had established this body in 1909; Freyer succeeded him.) However, Manheim decided to retract his submission – which, since he was Jewish, could not render him employable even if it were accepted – and left for London. The grim historical irony of his emphasis on the plurality of opinion as the basis for modern liberal politics is inescapable.

These scholars were not primarily concerned with the function of media vis-à-vis publics. At the same time, however, this problem was being investigated with great subtlety by figures such as Bertolt Brecht, Walter Benjamin, Theodor Adorno, and Siegfried Kracauer. Their thought shared a foundational critique of bourgeois publicness that is partly Marxian in derivation but can also be seen as continuing in the vein of Nietzsche’s critique, as well as sharing his proposal of an oppositional aesthetic public. While none of them developed a fully-fledged theory of publicness either

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40 Ernst Manheim, *Die Träger der öffentlichen Meinung. Studien zur Soziologie der Öffentlichkeit*. (Brno:[publisher unknown], 1933).
negatively or positively conceived, they were deeply engaged in the question of how
audiences functioned in modernity. Unlike the previous writers I have mentioned, all of
whom – however precariously – inhabited the republic of scholars, Brecht, Kracauer,
Benjamin, and Adorno were more akin to Karl Mannheim’s ‘free-floating intellectuals’,
working beyond the boundaries of the universities and the interests of the state that they
represented.41 Partly as a result of this, they had personal stakes in the question of media
audiences: the former three depended on them for their livelihood, and Adorno
prioritised a career in music over academia before his exile.

Their reflections on this activity have a direct bearing on the concept of publicness in
this thesis. For all of them, the audiences of bourgeois technological media were not yet
publics possessed of liberatory consciousness, but although media generally worked
against such a development, their audiences nevertheless had the potential to be
transformed into publics – even by the tools of their obfuscation. This would however
depend on a triple refunctioning: of the content of the medium and/or its technological
basis and/or the practices of its distribution and reception. Their opinions divided as to
the practicalities and possibilities of doing so, and changed with the situation; the
experience of dictatorship, exile, and the death of Benjamin revealed the limits of their
‘free-floating’ status in a world governed by capital, and led to a deepening pessimism

41 Adorno is the exception, but although he found more acceptance within the university
system than Benjamin, he was somewhat insulated from it by the independence of his
institutional home. (In any case, he was only habilitated in 1931 and his pre-war
academic career was therefore brief.) The role played in this study by private institutes
as semi-autonomous zones of knowledge production is significant: as well as the
Institute for Social Research in Frankfurt, there was Hans Cürlis’s Institute for Cultural
Research in Berlin. The Warburg-Bibliothek für Kulturwissenschaft in Hamburg is
another example of the type. While some offered spaces for the elaboration of critical
thought by figures who might ordinarily have been excluded from the universities for
political or racist reasons, others – such as Cürlis’s – allowed figures associated with the
state to pursue activities that were officially frowned upon (in Cürlis’s case, the
production of anti-Versailles propaganda films, which I will discuss in Chapter 2).
across the board. Nevertheless, Kracauer especially maintained a utopian hope in the redemptive possibilities of media ‘under erasure’. 42

After 1933, the German discourse of the public went into hibernation until the appearance of Habermas’s *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society* in 1962. The belatedness of this reappearance can be largely attributed to the devastating effect of the Nazi regime on German academia and on Öffentlichkeit itself, and its conceptual reformulation was undoubtedly inflected by this experience: in particular, Habermas’s emphasis on the contemporary decline of publicness is a response to Adorno and Horkheimer’s theory of the culture industry, born of their mingled experiences of Nazi Germany and American exile. 43 This goes some way towards explaining why Habermas sets up a non-existent category of bourgeois society as an ideal type; his critical view of the post-war European social democratic consensus was another significant spur.

Habermas describes the bourgeois public in Kantian terms: it is constituted by the public use of reason, and counteracts the power of the autocratic state in order to protect the private interests of the bourgeoisie. He delineates zones of publicness in eighteenth-century coffee-houses, salons, and – bringing the interest in media developed in the work of the so-called Frankfurt School to bear on this formation – the press. Membership of the public was, he admits, in reality exclusive, based on a degree of property ownership and education that was by no means universal – and yet he implies that as an ideal the bourgeois type of public remains desirable. Although Habermas

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acknowledges the existence of alternative publics, he states at the outset that his book intentionally ‘leaves aside the plebeian public as a variant that in a sense was suppressed in the historical process’ in favour of the dominant liberal bourgeois model. ‘Yet even this [plebeian] public,’ he insists, ‘remains oriented toward the intentions of the bourgeois public.’\textsuperscript{44}

Ten years later, after opposition to post-war democracy had crystallized then dissolved (or fragmented into radical cells), Negt and Kluge’s \textit{Public Sphere and Experience} attempted to pluralise Habermas’s concept further by expanding on the category of the proletarian public, insisting against Habermas on the peculiarity of this public, its distinction from that of the bourgeois, which is in essence exclusive and riven by imminent contradictions. Borrowing from Enzensberger’s Benjaminian-Brechtian essay ‘Constituents of a Theory of the Media’ (1970),\textsuperscript{45} and in direct contradiction of Habermas’s pessimistic position regarding contemporary publicness, they stress the emancipatory potential of the mass media, and indeed the necessity of fighting the bourgeois public at this level, product against product. Furthermore, as the title of their book suggests, they insist on the importance of experience as the foundational element of a proletarian public, a rejection of Habermas’s insistence on the primacy of the abstraction of interpersonal discourse.

The problem posed, and left unsolved, by the book, is \textit{how} to transform experience into a proletarian public. They suggest that this can be done only by creating products that counteract the products of the bourgeois public, and yet they warn that ‘In wanting to


use the mechanisms of the bourgeois public for their cause, [proletarians] become, objectively, traitors to the cause that they are representing. 46 This is because, ‘Insofar as the workers and their organizations make use of the universalizing norms and institutions offered by society (such as newspapers, parliament, political parties, television) in order to stabilize and articulate their interests, they are cut off from their experiential base.’ 47 The question of how to achieve the necessary Umfunktionierung is extremely problematic and remained unresolved in their book.

A pessimistic rejoinder to the new left’s position on mediated publics emerged in the writings of Jean Baudrillard and Friedrich Kittler. Baudrillard absolutely rejected the possibility of refunctioning bourgeois media technologies to liberatory purposes, 48 while Kittler’s 1985 text Aufschreibesysteme 1800 / 1900 (translated as Discourse Networks but literally ‘notation’ or ‘inscription systems’) can be read as a poststructural and post-hermeneutic critique of the foundations of the bourgeois public itself. The disciplinary inscription systems (including media technologies) described by Kittler void the dialogic mechanism that makes the ‘public use of reason’ productive, replacing it with cultural techniques that endlessly reproduce texts, sounds, and images. This McLuhanite move is a useful corrective to Habermas’s disregard for the technical aspect of Öffentlichkeit (a disregard that became total in his later work on communicative reason), but Kittler’s Austreibung des Geistes aus den Geisteswissenschaften (driving the human out of the human sciences) has been criticised as excessively zealous. Nevertheless, it is possible to use his emphasis on techniques and technologies in order to provide a more concrete foundation for a rethinking of Negt and Kluge’s theory. And

46 Negt and Kluge, Public Sphere and Experience, p. 7.
47 Negt and Kluge, Public Sphere and Experience, p. 199.
as I mentioned above, Kittler does share something with Negt and Kluge: in his adoption of Schreber’s term *Aufschreibesystem*, he affirms – against Baudrillard – the possibility of media counterproducts. So, despite his assertion that ‘the oft-quoted structural transformation from the aristocratic to the middle-class publicness, whose travels and letters, printed pamphlets and newspaper critiques are supposed to have undermined the old power system of Europe, never took place’, he leaves the door open for the refocusing of media that is essential to any attempt to produce a counterpublic in a media-determined situation.

More recently, Miriam Hansen has pointed to a possible solution to the problem of the disciplinary effects of bourgeois media on counterpublics by bringing the potential of hybrid medialities and publics to the surface in her work on Benjamin, Kracauer, Adorno, and Negt and Kluge. In her introduction to Negt and Kluge’s *Public Sphere and Experience* she writes: ‘The seams and overlays between different types of publicity, conflicts between short-term economic interests and longstanding ideological norms, bricolages of deterritorialized media and participatory interaction – such hybrid, impure forms provide the blueprints from which counterpublics can and do emerge.’

And of Kracauer’s work she argues:

Photography, running alongside and intersecting with film both institutionally and ideologically, provides radical possibilities that film can draw on. To the convergence of film and photography in contemporary capitalist media culture … [Kracauer] opposes an alternative configuration of intermedial relations in which the unstable specificity of one medium works to cite and interrogate the other.

It must be admitted that Hansen is reading these authors somewhat against the grain: Negt and Kluge argued that media cartels were converging the media into one seamless

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50 Negt and Kluge, *Public Sphere and Experience*, p. xl.
51 Hansen, *Cinema and Experience*, p. 38.
expanse; Kracauer repeatedly attempted to define what was or was not photographic or cinematic. Hansen emphasises the more utopian aspects of their work by borrowing an insight from Adorno’s reception of Wagner: that light gets in between the cracks of the Gesamtkunstwerk.52 I too would like to look through these fissures, and in the conclusion I shall reflect on the possibility of such a strategy, but I shall not save all my observations on intermediality until then. They will crop up throughout the thesis as certain figures weave in and out of the chapters and media, as do ideas and subjects, and as books are made of films, films of books, books of films of books, and radio broadcasts of books.

In conclusion, it should be added that several writers have attended to the question of counterpublics during the Weimar period. Geoff Eley emphasises the antagonistic nature of publics, and makes a Foucauldian critique of Habermas’s stress on rational discourse.53 He also develops a more ambiguous approach to popular culture than Habermas: following Negt and Kluge, he sees the realm of the everyday as a site of potential resistance, ignored at a disastrous cost by the organised labour movement.

W.L. Guttsman’s 1997 book Art for the Workers and Bruce Murray’s 1990 Film and the German Left give historical overviews of their topics, the latter providing a picture of counterpublics around film which ultimately failed, in his opinion, due to the official

52 Theodor W. Adorno, In Search of Wagner (1952), trans. Rodney Livingstone (London: Verso, 2005), pp. 86–102. As Rebentisch has pointed out, Adorno’s concept of intermediality, though far less conservative than the Greenbergians’, merged the aesthetic with the historical and neglected the field of experience, thus ‘underestimating the critical and … even utopian potential of concrete works’. A Negt-and-Klugeian reading goes some way to remedying that lack. Rebentisch, Aesthetics of Installation Art, p. 129.
left’s skepticism of the new media. None of these writers consider the role of art history within proletarian oppositional culture. This lack has been somewhat addressed by the contributors to Joseph Imorde and Andreas Zeising’s edited volume of 2013, *Teilhabe am Schönen. Kunstgeschichte und Volksbildung zwischen Kaiserreich und Diktatur*. However, the theoretical implications of the production of publics around art historical knowledge using the new media of the period have not been worked through in any detail.

Photobook

The framework for understanding media and publics sketched out above will be developed in the three chapters that follow. The first of these concerns photobooks on the subject of architectural history, beginning with Paul Schultze-Naumburg’s *Kulturarbeiten* series (1901–17). It ranges across other series, such as Langewiesche’s *Blauen Bücher* (1907–) and the books of the Deutscher Kunstverlag (1921–), as well as more avant-garde works such as Adolf Behne’s *Eine Stunde Architektur* and Sigfried Giedion’s *Bauen in Frankreich* (both 1928). It therefore covers a period of around forty-five years that sets the temporal limits for this thesis: between the development of a group of new media under imperial rule and their employment by a dictatorship under conditions of total war.

Illustrated books on art were no novelty in the period under consideration: printing technology developed rapidly in the nineteenth century, making such items available to a much broader section of the populace, as did public libraries and programmes of...

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popular education. But the introduction of half-tone rotogravure at the end of the nineteenth century enabled the rapid production of photographic images in vast quantities and at a price that could permit the development of books marketed at a mass audience, just as this audience came into focus as never before – as a pedagogical subject, as a public, as a political collective, and as a market.

This conjuncture attracted the involvement of enterprising publishers and prominent writers from within the academic discipline and beyond, such as Wilhelm Pinder, Edwin Redslob, and Adolf Behne. It also attracted ambitious photographers like Walter Hege, Paul Wolff, and Albert Renger-Patzsch, and academic advocates of photography, such as Richard Hamann. The photobook was not only a means for each of these to distribute their works, but also to reconfigure the status of that work – as science, as art history, as public good, and so on. In the process, the status of the image vis-à-vis the word was also reconfigured – as was the medium of the book.

In my investigation of these books I am able to draw on a growing body of new research, since the photobook (or serial photography, or the photo-essay, as the expanded field is frequently termed) has recently become a subject of intense academic scrutiny. This can be seen as a response to the increasing dematerialisation of photography, and of the book as a whole, and the consequent coming into view of the photobook as an historical artifact. However, for all this activity the art-historical photobook is still largely unexamined.

55 For a discussion of an earlier paradigm of print culture see Dan Karlholm, Art of Illusion: The Representation of Art History in Nineteenth-Century Germany and Beyond (Bern: Lang, 2004).
The medium has a peculiar resonance in the field of architecture since ‘bookspace’ was theorised in this period for the first time by El Lissitzky and Walter Benjamin. This idea, a response to the new prominence of text in urban space in the form of advertising as much as to modernist experiments in layout and typography, suggests that the engagement with built space transformed the domain of readerly space, pointing to the permeability of media in this moment. In this work I combine an examination of the photobook as spatial practice of representing historical architecture with an investigation into the institutional significance of the expanded publishing ecosystem to the discipline of art history and its publics (gleaned in part from an examination of Langewiesche’s archives in Berlin and Vienna), showing that this supposedly normative medium for the production of historical knowledge was in fact one of the most potent forces of its modernisation, due in part to its remediation by newer media.

**Film**

My second chapter concerns film, a medium that is often seen to be representative of its period to an extent that the photobook is not; indeed, it is often portrayed as the Weimar medium par excellence (and was frequently understood as such at the time). Three main types of film about Gothic architecture will be considered here: commercial fiction films featuring architecture (my primary example is 1920’s *Der Golem*); short commercial documentaries, or *Kulturfilme*; and non-commercial teaching or research films developed within the academy. These categories are by no means as clean-cut as my list would suggest; indeed, the boundaries of commercial/non-commercial and fictional/non-fictional are quite fluid and, on occasion, intentionally obscured. I have

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chosen to concentrate primarily on films about Gothic architecture since this was a topic of great interest in academic and non-academic fields throughout this period; and since, as I shall demonstrate, it has a peculiar resonance with the medium. The possibility of visible movement through space and hence of time and history is the major distinguishing feature of the film when compared to other media. This made film, many thought, especially well-suited to representing architecture, and Wilhelm Pinder wrote an article on this topic in 1941.  

The literature on art-historical film is limited to Barbara Schrödl’s several articles on the topic (she has also recently co-edited a book on the topic titled *Architektur im Film*), and Reiner Ziegler’s 2003 book *Kunst und Architektur im Kulturfilm 1919–1945*. The latter offers a very helpful overview of the form, with a focus on its transformation under National Socialism. Schrödl’s work is more theoretically developed, covering a range of aspects, from its disciplinary and institutional significance, to individual works by Hege and Lamb. The broader literature on film in this period is immense, and the attention of writers of the time such as Benjamin, Kracauer and Balázs has also produced a huge secondary literature. One of the reasons that film received such an enormous amount of attention at the time, besides its novelty, was the moral panic about its effects. This was part of the reason that *Kulturfilme* were first produced: in order to counteract the moral turpitude of this exciting and distracting new medium. However, there were also those – such as Balázs, Behne, Kracauer, and Benjamin – who had high

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57 Wilhelm Pinder, ‘Einige Worte zum kunstwissenschaftlichen Unterrichtsfilm’, *Film und Bild: Zeitschrift der Reichsanstalt für Film und Bild* 7 (1941), pp. 11–12.
58 *Architektur im Film. Korrespondenzen zwischen Film, Architekturgeschichte und Architekturtheorie*, ed. Christiane Keim and Barbara Schrödl (Bielefeld: Transcript, 2015).
hopes for the medium’s potential as a means of reconfiguring the human senses, and hence society as a whole.

I shall advance the nascent discourse on art-historical film by setting it in this context. Films on the subject of architecture are peculiarly interesting from this perspective since the contemporary practice had itself become during this period a means of reconfiguring the sensorium – a ‘remediation in reverse’ that was at least partly responding to the mass medium of film. When the architecture of the past was subjected to the film-cameras, this remediation in reverse was reversed once more, and historical buildings were taught to speak the language of film. This double-reversal has significant consequences for art-historical discourse, not least since its results must be, from a positivist-historicist perspective, ‘unhistorical’. This raises fundamental questions about the work of art history and its relationship to the conditions under which it is produced.

**Radio**

Radio, like film, was a medium completely of its period: the first German radio companies were established in October 1923. However, unlike film, radio was largely consumed by private individuals in their homes, where far from being an invisible medium, it was used in conjunction with visual objects such as radio magazines, which published illustrated stories to accompany broadcasts. And unlike both film and the photobook, radio was extracted from the market by its administration by the German state. The consequences and challenges of these constituents of radio for the discourse on art history were highly significant, and form one of the main questions of this chapter. I take as my objects the radio work of two figures: Walter Benjamin, who was

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of course not a professional art historian, and Wilhelm Pinder, who was an extremely successful one. Scripts for broadcasts by both of them on the topic of art and architecture exist, however, and Benjamin was closely involved in questions of radio’s significance, partly through his friendships with Brecht and radio producer Ernst Schoen, and partly because of his own prolific radio activity. The work of these two figures evince very different motivations for the adoption of a new technology for speaking of art and architecture, not least because they – and the medium – straddle the boundary of 1933. My study concludes with Pinder’s script, which was broadcast in the early 1940s. In order to set these two broadcasts in context I delineate an overview of art broadcasting in this period based on an analysis of listings in radio journals.

No work has been done on art history on the radio apart from a pioneering 2009 article on the subject by Andreas Zeising titled ‘Mit den Ohren sehen’, and a further one by the same author, ‘Rembrandt vor dem Mikrofon. Museumspopularisierung und Volksbildung im Rundfunk der 1920er Jahre’ from 2013. There is also a book on the broadcasting of architecture in Britain during the same period by Shundana Yusaf. The topic of German radio has been discussed in broader terms by Wolfgang Schivelbusch in his book on Frankfurt, Peter Jelavich in his excellent book Berlin Alexanderplatz, and by Karl Führer. Benjamin’s radio broadcasts have, like every

other aspect of his work, been discussed quite extensively, and the complete scripts have recently been published in an English edition for the first time. However, they have not been discussed as works of art-historiography, and Pinder’s script, which has only recently been given as part of his Nachlass to the Berlin-Brandenburgische Akademie der Wissenschaften, is unknown.

**Conclusion**

In bringing the analyses of publicness and media delineated above together in these three chapters, I shall show what happened when the scholar left the cell depicted in Dürer’s print and, like the rabbi in Der Golem, went out to meet the public. In the course of this journey – which in some cases (such as the rabbi’s) was no excursion at all, but rather an incursion from the periphery to the centre – the knowledge of art history was put to use in new ways for new audiences. Although it might seem an abrogation of the specificity I insisted on above to affirm an overarching movement across all media, media practitioners, and publics within the context of this study, it will become clear that there was a general and necessary tendency towards the modernisation of historical knowledge, which is to say that even conservatives unwittingly undid their own attempts to redeem the present by reintroducing it to the past.

However, this modernisation was by no means necessarily a liberatory force: certainly, the buildings of the past were de-auratised, stripped of their vestiges of feudal representationality and emptied of bourgeois interiority, but at the same time they were standardised for optimal reception under modern conditions, thereby producing a vista of history that was smoothed-out, eliminating all fractures into which one might fit a
crowbar or stick of dynamite. If there were any obstinate exceptions to this rule –
modernity is, after all, a project of incomple tion – it was because the media were at the
same time studded with fragments of the past, which lay buried like landmines awaiting
detonation.
Introduction: bookspace

*This will destroy that. The book will destroy the edifice.*
– Victor Hugo, *Notre-Dame de Paris* (1831)

*In order for history to present itself, the mere surface coherence offered by photography must be destroyed.*
– Siegfried Kracauer, ‘Photography’ (1927)

Today, the book is commonly viewed – with either nostalgic regret or futuristic enthusiasm – as an antiquated form; it is in a state of irreversible decay, superseded or even on the brink of being eliminated by newer forms of legible technology. But although it is the conventional and most prestigious form for the production and dissemination of scholarly work, the book in its current configuration is a relatively recent medium. Furthermore, it has long been seen as a staging post on the way elsewhere – already in 1923, El Lissitzky had written: ‘The printed page, the infinity of books, must be transcended. THE ELECTRO-LIBRARY.’ To treat the book as a universal constant would therefore neglect its historicity.

The codex has already undergone several dramatic mutations since its invention in late antiquity. In the final decade of the nineteenth century, new means of reproduction –

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3 The former opinion is expressed with almost comic plaintiveness by Mark Moss, who fears that electronic media have driven a wedge between young people and printed history, which has in turn been visualised, narrativised, and mythologised. Moss, *Towards the Visualization of History: The Past as Image* (Lanham: Lexington, 2008). The optimistic tendency may seem more utopian but it is often fuelled by professional angst regarding the transformation of the universities under neoliberalism, for instance in the work of Charlotte Frost: [www.digitalcritic.org](http://www.digitalcritic.org).
5 ‘Der gedruckte Bogen, die Unendlichkeit der Bücher, muß überwunden werden. DIE ELEKTROBIBLIOTHEK.’ El Lissitzky, ‘Topographie der Typographie’, *Merz* 4 (1923), 47.
namely photography and the rotary half-tone press – facilitated the total incorporation of image and text into one mass-produced commodity. Photographs had been used to illustrate books since the paper print’s invention in the mid-nineteenth century, but they had hitherto been bound-in as plate sections or hand-pasted onto the page. Now, thanks to the invention of rotogravure, and new glossy paper that could handle images and type equally well, photographs and text united on the page.

Eventually this would lead to a new type of book, the predominantly photographic Bildband or photobook. The purest form of the Bildband relegated text to image lists and introductions, raising the tantalising possibility of a non-textual means of communication. In his pioneering essay on the subject, Michael Jennings argued that such ‘photo essays’ offered arguments based not on an interplay between text and image, but on photographs alone. However, I concur with Pepper Stetler in jettisoning this ideal form; even the most laconic book has a title. Instead, this chapter encompasses a wider arena – which I shall call the photobook for the sake of convenience – in which text and image combined in a variety of ways. The basic condition of the technology was after all their consubstantiality, and this suggested new forms of reading in which text was viewed as an image and images were read like texts. Diegetic and mimetic modes combined and conflicted in complicated ways, often within the same volume; one way of reading photobooks in this period is as a laboratory for the development of new forms of communication.

6 The commodity status of the book was a matter of debate during the period. Karl Bücher argued for this position, and in favour of the liberalization of the book trade, in his controversial work Der deutsche Buchhandel und die Wissenschaft (Leipzig: Teubner, 1903).


These new techniques coincided with the proliferation of photographic images in illustrated magazines, newspapers and advertisements, and the silent film – an earlier technology that was seen as threatening the book with obsolescence. After the great literarisation of the nineteenth century, when the expansion of education and the rise of the newspaper produced nations of readers, this deluge of images seemed to presage a new, visual turn. In fact, the book – in a move that has been called ‘remediation in reverse’ by Andreas Huyssen – was transformed by this new visual culture, and was not superseded by the supposedly more appealing qualities of film, namely its capacity for registering motion, its affective intensity, its spectacularity. In 1928, typographer and designer Johannes Molzahn coined the word Buchinema to refer to such intermedial objects.

The printed page was also seen to be participating in an exchange with architecture in this period. Lissitzky referred to ‘bookspace’ in the aforementioned article of 1923, and soon this space was subjected to similar transformations as the new architecture. As with architecture, some saw this as a simple matter of applying a new style, whereas others pursued a more radical stylelessness. In 1927 the architectural publisher Georg Biermann wrote to Sigfried Giedion regarding the latter’s Bauen in Frankreich:

‘Simplicity and clarity seem to me to be the style that the time needs, even in book

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9 Especially in Germany: in 1910, 31,281 books were published there, compared to France (12,615), England (10,804) or the USA (13,470). Lynne Tatlock, introduction, Publishing Culture and the ‘Reading Nation’: German Book History in the Long Nineteenth Century, ed. Lynne Tatlock (Rochester, NY: Camden House, 2010), p. 4.
10 Huyssen, Miniature Metropolis, pp. 7–8.
11 Johannes Molzahn, ‘Stop Reading! Look!’ (1928), cited in Stetler, Stop Reading! Look!, p. 3.
12 This relation has recently been thematised across a much broader period by André Tavares, The Anatomy of the Architectural Book (Zurich: Lars Müller, 2016).
architecture,\textsuperscript{14} whereas in 1929 Adolf Behne and Martin Wagner began their journal \textit{Das neue Berlin} with the injunction ‘We don’t want to give this magazine a façade, and we won’t stylize its front.’\textsuperscript{15}

At the same time, thanks to the proliferation of outdoor advertising, the city was being read in new ways – Benjamin’s 1928 book \textit{One-Way Street} is a collection of aphorisms titled with fragments of text snatched from the street. Reading architecture was by no means new; Gregory the Great described the church as the bible of the illiterate, and Ruskin called San Marco a ‘vast illuminated missal’.\textsuperscript{16} However, in the age of technological media, the complementary nature of architecture and the book began to be seen as degenerating into disjuncture and even conflict: ‘this will destroy that. The books will destroy the edifice’, as Victor Hugo had written.\textsuperscript{17} But there were also those who sought to put this newly anachronistic relationship to productive use by mobilising the tension between obstinacy and remediation.

These interactions demonstrate not only the porous borders of media at this time; they also show the related potential of objects to exist in more than one time. In this period the codex was caught in a mixed temporality: half venerable tome, half mail-order catalogue (or typographically avant-garde pamphlet). The form of the book changed with its intended audience, duration of use and retention, and while form and function,

\textsuperscript{14} Biermann to Giedion, 19 November 1927. The former was trying to dissuade the latter from hiring an artist to design the book: in the end, Moholy-Nagy was engaged. Cited by Sokratis Georgiadis in his introduction to Sigfried Giedion, \textit{Building in France, Building in Iron, Building in Ferro-Concrete}, trans. J. Duncan Berry (Santa Monica: Getty, 1995), p. 45.
\textsuperscript{15} ‘Wir wollen dieser Zeitschrift keine Fassade geben, und wir wollen ihre Front nicht stilisieren.’ Martin Wagner and Adolf Behne, ‘Was wir nicht wollen’, \textit{Das neue Berlin} 1 (1929), 1.
\textsuperscript{16} John Ruskin, \textit{The Stones of Venice}, 4\textsuperscript{th} edn, 3 vols (Orpington: George Allen, 1886), II, p. 92.
\textsuperscript{17} Hugo, \textit{Notre-Dame de Paris}, p. 188.
form and content occasionally came together, they were just as likely to tug in opposite directions, dressing lamb as mutton and vice-versa. The mixed time of the book is especially pertinent where the subject is historical architecture, which was transformed and modernised by its representation in this context – indeed, Benjamin’s insight into the mixed time of dialectical images first arose in response to an architectural photobook by Sigfried Giedion, as we will see.

Besides its chameleonic adaptability, the book was also an obstinate object with its own enduring characteristics: its portability, its possesibility, the cheapness and rapidity of its production, the cheapness and ubiquity of its purchase, the rapid and random access of its contents, and the self-direction of its use. The latter two peculiarities made the codex quite unlike the film-scroll; it was the first and in some ways superior technology of time-axis manipulation, to borrow Kittler’s phrase. These obstinacies of the book survived unremediated into the twentieth century where they met a situation freshly receptive to them: as historicism’s long slog through the past ground to a halt, the vision of history was spatialised and burst into fragments. This made the ability to move disjointedly from page to page, moment to moment, newly advantageous. In fact, it was remediation that first brought these obstinacies to consciousness: a complex relation that will be explored further in the chapter. Despite perceptions of a ‘book crisis’ in the aftermath of the Great War, then, the book thrived in the era under consideration.19

One area of publishing that flourished in particular was the art-historical photobook. In 1970, Martin Warnke observed that ‘hardly any other human science invests so much energy in the production of popular literature’, and this was just as true in the period under consideration here. This was motivated by a number of interrelated factors. As mentioned before, new technologies and literarisation created a mass audience and a means of reaching it. The fear that social fragmentation would result from this massification inspired mandarin attempts to unify the nation by cultivating awareness of Germany’s architectural heritage using the same technological means that had caused the situation in the first place. At the same time, academics themselves were facing a professional crisis: an explosion in student numbers led to underemployment and the development of what Fritz Ringer called a déclassé ‘academic proletariat’ which had to find employment outside the universities. During the hyperinflation, declining income from wages and (since academics tended to be rentiers) investments meant that many of those who were employed by universities also had to find other ways of making money. The character of the resulting publishing activity was necessarily coloured by this situation.

It was also transformed by photography, to the extent that Hermann Sörgel could complain in 1918: ‘Today, literature on architecture consists almost entirely of picture-books with accompanying texts’. Although there is some truth in Dan Karholm’s

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objection that this situation was a continuation of an earlier innovation in art-historical publishing, inaugurated by the 1845–56 volumes of engravings accompanying Franz Kugler’s first global survey of art, I would argue that photography was both qualitatively and quantitatively different. Apart from the transformations wrought by photography itself – both to the objects of architectural history and to the discourse – the new printing technology that enabled the production of photobooks did so on an unprecedented scale, for unprecedentedly wide audiences; and quantity has a quality of its own. Confronted with this profusion, several questions arise. Can photography make architectural history visible? If so, how, why, and to whom?

To answer these questions I shall focus on a selection of books concerning architectural history published between 1900 and 1933. These varied widely in tone, form, and content over the period under consideration. The birth of the photobook coincided with a moment of polemical intensity in wider German architectural culture, as reformers agitated for the preservation of the national architectural heritage from industrialisation and the stylistic cacophony of the Gründerzeit. Instead they advocated the conservation and emulation of the modest vernacular style ‘around 1800’, as Paul Mebes was to christen it, which was held to represent the classical era of German bourgeois culture – the age of Goethe and of the textually produced and text-producing individuated personality. The same technological advance and mass production that troubled reformers meant that – thanks to the increasing ease and decreasing cost of book production – they could attempt to reach out to a much wider public with their

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23 Karlholm, *Art of Illusion*, p. 136. In fact one could go further back in the search for origins, at least to Durand’s 1801 *Recueil et parallèle des édifices de tout genre anciens et modernes*.

24 This has been argued by a number of observers: in 1921, Wilhelm Waetzoldt suggested that the discipline’s engagement with photography spawned formalist historiography in his *Deutsche Kunsthistoriker*, II, p. 235. More recently, Claire Zimmerman has argued that the medium transformed both architectural production and historiography in her book *Photographic Architecture*.
publications, spreading an appreciation of national culture among proletarians and the new middle classes. They thereby demonstrated the potential for reform inherent in new technology, which was not seen as intrinsically corrupting. Whether it was adequate to their intentions was another question: the destabilising commodity form advertised itself under the sign of a return to order, and the photographic means of educating new viewers disguised itself as a return to the Romantic era of literariness.

After the traumas of the First World War and the Revolution, Germany experienced several further years of economic and political turmoil. Publishing continued, however, and in the hands of committed populist Karl Robert Langewiesche, books even maintained low prices throughout the hyperinflation. Architectural debate in this period grew more polarised, and conservatives responded to the new order by turning back to a more distant era than Goethe’s – the Middle Ages. This had been the focus of interest in Germany since at least the mid-nineteenth century, when the age of Gothic seemed to offer a model for a culturally and politically unified nation, but in this moment of crisis the distant past took on a new colour, and became an even more attractive refuge. Others responded to the war with pacific visions of an internationalist utopia, often similarly rooted in a fantasy of the medieval past.

Following the stabilisation of Germany’s economy and its political scene in 1924, many consumers had more disposable income available to spend on books. At the same time, publishers were confronted with several new competitors: film, radio, and illustrated magazines. These new ways of seeing (and hearing) influenced new techniques of book design, photography, and architecture, opening up questions of space and perception that impinged on the built as well as the read. While conservatives and liberals continued to mine the rich seam of Gothic in the quest to establish national culture on a
broader social base, the publicistic activity of some supporters of the *Neues Bauen* extended to histories of the more recent past, as they set out to justify the avant-garde genealogically. In order to achieve this, they had to redeem the ground from which it had sprung, an era reviled by conservatives and by many of their own allies: the nineteenth century.

I have selected a wide variety of photobooks on the subject of architectural history to represent the period outlined above. Although several of them were produced with the involvement of professional art historians, few of these were original works of historiography in academic terms, and many were more operative than disinterested (if, indeed, historical research can ever attain the latter status). Some are presented as works of photographer-auteurs, others as ‘scientific’ selections from anonymously produced archives. Even among those that deal in a less polemical way with the past, there are great variations in approach and tone. Some organise their material typologically, others chronologically, yet others geographically, or in some combination of the above.

In bringing these works together, I present an (admittedly selective) overview of the subject that has not previously been attempted. However, many piles have previously been driven into the archival murk. Since the turn of the century the photobook, as it has been conventionally if not unproblematically termed, has been the focus of much attention, both within and beyond the academy. In 2001, book dealer Andrew Roth published *The Book of 101 Books: Seminal Photographic Books of the Twentieth Century*, inspiring a wave of similar publications.\(^25\) One of the most successful of these is British photographer Martin Parr and photography writer Gerry Badger’s three-

volume work *The Photobook: A History* (2004–14).\(^{26}\) In Germany, Manfred Heiting and
Thomas Wiegand’s *Deutschland im Fotobuch* (2011)\(^ {27}\) was followed by a two-volume
work edited by Heiting and Roland Jaeger, titled *Autopsie: Deutschsprachige Fotobücher 1918–1945* (2012–15).\(^ {28}\) Examinations of other national traditions of
photobook publishing have also been published and exhibited.

Although this activity has had the salutary effect of resituating photography within the
material, public, and economic contexts from which it had long been abstracted, many
of these works are celebratory accounts of an ill-defined genre, usually understood to
comprise books produced by single photographer-auteurs, although other forms are
occasionally and somewhat unreflectively drawn into this matrix. The craze for
photobooks can be partly attributed to the recent dominance of digital media and the
increasing rarity of photographic prints, which has given the physical photograph a
certain historical poignancy.\(^ {29}\) Equally significantly, the booming art market has
identified the photobook as an untapped area for investment, resulting in steeply rising
prices.\(^ {30}\) This somewhat ominously parallels a trend in the early Weimar Republic,
when the German bourgeoisie invested in tangible assets in response to the devaluation
of the mark – leading to a boom in luxury book publishing and collecting.\(^ {31}\)

\(^ {27}\) Thomas Wiegand, *Deutschland im Fotobuch* (Göttingen: Steidl, 2011).
\(^ {28}\) *Autopsie: Deutschsprachige Fotobücher 1918 Bis 1945*, ed. Roland Jaeger and
\(^ {31}\) Ulrich Bach “‘It would be delicious to write books for a new society, but not for the
Benjamin’s discussions of his own book-collecting habits have this economic subtext, and indeed he briefly considered a career as a book dealer.\(^\text{32}\)

The same factors have also stimulated more scholarly approaches to the subject over the last fifteen years. Fotografía Pública: Photography in Print 1919–1939, edited by Horacio Fernandes, accompanied a 1999 exhibition of the same name at Madrid’s Reina Sofia museum.\(^\text{33}\) On the specific subject of German photography, Michael Jennings published an article in 2000 on ‘Agriculture, Industry, and the Birth of the Photo-Essay in the Late Weimar Republic.’ (He is currently working on a book-length examination of the same topic titled The Time Between the Pictures: German History in the Twentieth-Century Photobook.) In the same year, Andy Jones’s article ‘Reading August Sander’s Archive’ took an impressively nuanced view of its subject.\(^\text{34}\) These examples, and their authorship by historians of (respectively) literature and art, point to the cross-disciplinary appeal of the photobook, which is after all a work of both literary and visual culture. The concept of the photobook has itself been interrogated, resulting in an expanded field that has been termed serial photography or the photo-essay, understood variously as encompassing illustrated magazines, photomontage, and even film. Despite this, Jennings’s article concentrated on canonical works associated with the avant-garde, as have most of his successors, thereby rather undoing his expansive approach (tellingly, he retreats from the ‘photo-essay’ to the ‘photobook’ in his forthcoming title).

In the years since these pioneering essays, several others have broached the topic, with varying degrees of success: Daniel Magilow, for instance, a student of Jennings’s whose

\(^{32}\) Walter Benjamin, ‘Unpacking My Library’ (1931), Selected Writings II.II, pp. 486–93.
pioneering 2012 book on serial photography raises more questions than it answers.35 (It does however encompass a truly expanded field including illustrated magazines.) Investigations by historians of the visual have been more fruitful: Sarah James’s *Common Ground*, which examines serial photography in the Cold War Germanies,36 and Pepper Stetler’s *Stop Reading! Look!* The latter is limited to a handful of well-known works; however, Stetler reads these considerably more subtly than Magilow, not as precursors and even producers of crisis, but in a Benjaminian sense,37 as primers in a new way of seeing – albeit one that never quite arrived. This is arguably the case for the avant-garde works that Stetler focuses on, but in looking at a wider selection of photobooks a more complicated picture emerges. Many of these were made by conservatives, and it has been pointed out by Brigitte Werneburg that it was the right who first made use of the photobook.38 However, Werneburg refers to the aftermath of the First World War, and the political categories she employs cannot be applied unmodified to the pre-war period. There is a great deal of truth in her insight that the right seized the new media with just as much, if not more, alacrity than those opposing them. However, these groups were not static across the period covered here – and, as I shall show, the techniques employed by even the most conservative among them ran counter to their explicit arguments by modernising the materials with which they worked.39

37 This was how Benjamin read Sander’s *Antlitz der Zeit*. Benjamin, ‘Little History of Photography’ (1931), *Selected Writings* II.II, pp. 507-30 (p. 520).
Scholarly work on the specific subject of this chapter – photobooks of architectural history – has been less common, and entirely monographic in character. The series of *Blauen Bücher* published by Karl Robert Langewiesche have attracted an exceptional degree of attention in this field, not least because of their great popularity and the extensiveness of the publisher’s archive.⁴⁰ The books of the Deutscher Kunstverlag have been less thoroughly investigated.⁴¹ Kai Gutschow has written on both Adolf Behne and Paul Schultze-Naumburg.⁴² However, to this date no one has attempted a synoptic view of publishing activity in this area. This comparative approach allows certain problems to be isolated and thus examined more thoroughly: the possibility of representing architectural history photographically; the different modes of doing so; the interplay of new and old media; and the means of reaching publics, plurally conceived.

**Types of history ‘um 1800’: Paul Schultze-Naumburg**

*I hate anything that merely instructs me without augmenting or directly invigorating my activity.*

– Goethe, cited by Nietzsche, ‘On the Uses and Disadvantages of History for Life’⁴³

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Reformers at the turn of the century recoiled from the perceived vulgarity and disunity of the thirty-year-old Reich, and looked back instead to the pre-industrial era of German classicism, when supposedly modest bourgeois values reigned in an harmonious culture. These views were propounded in Ferdinand Avenarius’s popular magazine, Der Kunstwart (established 1882) and by his organisation the Dürerbund (founded 1902); the Bund Heimatschutz followed in 1904. In 1907, the Werkbund would sprout from the same seedbed, and many of its members eventually settled on the strategy of Typisierung: the idea that establishing a repertoire of types for industrially produced commodities would resolve the problem of disunity on both synchronic and diachronic levels, as Frederic Schwartz has shown.44

Pepper Stetler argues that this strategy of typification was adopted by Albert Renger-Patzsch and his editor, the art historian Carl Georg Heise, in their 1929 photobook Die Welt ist schön.45 In Stetler’s opinion, this work attempted to tame the profusion of images exercising cultural commentators, and more than this, to perform a re-spiritualisation of the world of commodities, establishing similarity between the apparently dissimilar. The argument is convincing, but seen in this light the work of Renger-Patzsch is a belated postscript to a dormant debate.46 By 1929 there were far more pressing problems at hand than the stylistic disunity of industrial commodities.

In this section I shall turn instead to photobooks produced by figures associated with the Werkbund before the First World War, when the issue of Typisierung was still current. Some of the most popular of these were published by Paul Schultze-Naumburg and Karl Robert Langewiesche, both of whom concentrated on representing the architecture of

45 Stetler, Stop Reading! Look!, pp. 79–80.
46 His anachronicity is noted by Stetler. Stetler, Stop Reading! Look!, p. 101.
Germany’s past. They wished to remind their readers of a more ordered world, before the alienation of labour and the fragmentation of culture, and thereby inspire a recrudescence of the nation’s cultural unity. To achieve this, they applied a term and an ordering strategy – the type – to a field that may be seen as its origin and natural habitat.47

Typology has a long history in architecture, dating back to the eighteenth-century encyclopedists who used the concept to analyse the buildings of the past in order to develop a rational and decorous mode of future production. Yet even its Greek root *tupos* refers to reproductive technology – the minting of coins – and its resurrection in the industrial revolution perpetuated this relationship between the ideal and its technological reproduction (in the form of print media, and later the Daguerreotype). In the early twentieth century, the Werkund’s *Typisierung* of goods was intended to extend this technologically mediated idealism to mass-produced commodities as a means of ordering them. When the concept ‘type’ was reapplied to architectural history by figures from this circle, it carried some of this industrial baggage with it. In the process, instead of spiritualising modernity, the spiritual was modernised.

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Artist, architect, pedagogue, and campaigner Paul Schultze-Naumburg (1869–1949) was a founding member of both the Bund Heimatschutz and the Werkbund. From the turn of the century he published numerous articles and books advocating improved

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design, including one on the topic of women’s underwear – a not uncommon range of interests in this reforming period, although Schultze-Naumburg characteristically drew closer to the body than his peers.\(^\text{48}\) His expanded conception of design was delineated in his nine-part series of *Kulturarbeiten* (1901–17), illustrated with around 2,500 photographs, the majority of which he had taken himself. The volumes were arranged thematically, from *Hausbau* to *Die Gestaltung der Landschaft durch den Menschen*, and touched on ‘works of culture’ as diverse as industrial buildings, planting, and urban planning.

In the foreword included in each volume, Schultze-Naumburg explained that the purpose of the series was

> to work against the appalling devastation of our country in all areas of visible culture. Using continuously repeated oppositions of good and bad solutions to the same (or similar) tasks, it will also force the least practised eyes to compare and so to reflect. Furthermore, it will acquaint readers with good works up to the middle of the nineteenth century, and thereby aid a return to tradition, that is the immediately transmitted record of work [die unmittelbar fortgepflanzte Arbeitsüberlieferung].\(^\text{49}\)

The cause of this devastation was not industrialisation, as one might expect, but historical education, and the means of reconnection with tradition’s ‘immediate transmission’ was to circumvent the corrupting influence of education with photography. For Schultze-Naumburg, then, photography was a means of engaging with the past in a more vital way, a way superior to disciplinary discourse – a form of history

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that was, to use the Nietzschean schema, positively monumental rather than negatively antiquarian.

We can glean Schultze-Naumburg’s thoughts on the medium from a book he published on the subject in 1938 – twenty years after the conclusion of his Kulturarbeiten – titled Bildmäßige Photographie. As the name suggests, he is concerned with the pictorial quality of the technologically reproduced image, but his is a steely romanticism. The book begins with a paean to two technologies: the internal combustion engine and the compact camera. Whereas a previous generation of art historians such as Vöge and Goldschmidt had been railway scholars, Schultze-Naumburg enthusiastically embraced the car (his technophilia was such that Wilhelm Bode remarked that he would be the first artist to paint from a plane.51) The mobility facilitated by Daimler-Benz and Zeiss enabled his rejection of ‘art-historically catalogued monuments that have been recognised as the pinacles of higher development’ in favour of vernacular buildings in suburbs and villages that were easily neglected by the railway traveller.

Schultze-Naumburg states that he chose the medium of photography to illustrate his Kulturarbeiten after first considering drawings. But ‘only a completely impartial representation could be inexorably and persuasively effective here. And only photography can do that.’53 This claim of impartiality is contradicted by the many succeeding discussions in the book of the best way to produce photographs that advance

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53 ‘Unerbittlich und überzeugend wirken konnte hier nur eine völlig unparteiische Darstellung. Und das tat allein das Lichtbild.’ Paul Schultze-Naumburg, Bildmäßige Photographie (Munich: Callwey, 1938), p. 3.
a pictorial accusation, or Bildvorwurf. This is a construction that foregrounds the photograph’s polemic function, which had been developed so successfully by Schultze-Naumburg in the Kulturarbeiten. The choice of lens, for instance, depends on the photographer's Vorwurf: if the accusation concerns the space in which the building stands, a wide-angled lens is preferable, whereas if it concerns the building alone, a longer lens should be used. But this visual polemic is contradicted, or rather masked, by the constantly reiterated demands of naturalism. In the instance of a house – Schultze-Naumburg’s privileged object – ‘The most natural standpoint for the photographer will initially be that unconsciously adopted by the natural observer of the house.’ This natural standpoint of an observer is usually a distant one: in Benjaminian terms, this seems an attempt to preserve the aura of the object.

Schultze-Naumburg chooses a telling example to prove this point: the famous medieval statue of the Rider in Bamberg Cathedral. In order to reproduce the artist’s intention and the visitor’s perception of the wall-mounted sculpture, the photographer should shoot from the floor below, using a telescopic lens rather than a ladder. This allows the photographer to maintain the ‘correct’ perspective – one of neck-craning deference – while getting optically close to the object. The Rider had certainly not been included in Schultze-Naumburg’s catalogues of vernacular culture, but it was reproduced again and again in the period following his Kulturarbeiten, and it will feature prominently in several of the books and films in this thesis.

Whereas Walter Hege, for instance, erected scaffolding to photograph the sculpture in pathetic proximity, Schultze-Naumburg distances himself from this improper approach,

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55 Schultze-Naumburg, Bildmäßige Photographie, p. 16.
arguing instead for the reproduction of the viewpoint dictated by the artwork. In this, Schultze-Naumburg falls in line with a then-common attitude towards the photography of sculpture. Heinrich Wölfflin published three essays on the subject, in 1896, 1897, and 1915, in which he insisted that sculpture – especially Renaissance sculpture, forged in the age of single-point perspective – should be viewed from only one, frontal, viewpoint. Wölfflin warns against the ‘corruption’ caused by artistic photographers sharing their painterly sideways glances with a mass audience via popular art-historical works.56

Schultze-Naumburg is insistent that the photographer should avoid points of view that distort reality, especially inappropriately close ones. So as well as rejecting the pathos of photographers such as Hege with his constant references to Sachlichkeit, ‘sobriety’ or ‘objectivity’ (which are rather disingenuous, given his own book’s title), his decrival of proximity also places him in opposition to those associated with the Neues Sehen, who praised microscopy for revealing a new and truer vision of the material world. Likewise, it contradicts those who enthused over the cinematic close-up for similar reasons, such as the film theorist Béla Balázs. Indeed, Schultze-Naumburg’s description of the effects resulting from proximity brings the experiments of the avant-garde vividly to mind:

‘Everyone knows those photographic distortions that arise when one approaches the object too closely with the lens – something like a donkey, with the head bigger than the entire body, or a man seen from his feet, whose shoe soles grow as tall as a house.’57

These tricks of the camera, Schultze-Naumburg adds, exerted a disastrous influence on nineteenth-century painters such as Degas, but ‘with the recovery of our Volk, there has

57 ‘Ein jeder kennt die photographischen Zerrbilder, die entstehen, wenn man mit der Linse zu nahe an das Objekt heranrückt – ein Esel etwa, be idem der Kopf größer erscheint als der ganze Leib, ode rein von den Füßen her gesehener Mensch, be idem die Schuhsohlen haushoch zu wachsen schein en.’ Schultze-Naumburg, Bildmäßige Photographie, p. 23.
simultaneously been a consequent recovery of our art’ – a phrase that points to his rightward drift in the years since the war.\textsuperscript{58} It is revealing to compare Schultz-\-Naumburg’s condemnation of such distortions of scale to his own approach to photography, which is instead ‘bildmäßige’, pictorial. The photograph should learn from the painting, but not vice-versa. As such, his representational strategy ostensibly accords with his wider aim for the \textit{Kulturarbeiten}: that contemporary works of culture should learn from vernacular precedents. Remediation must not be reversed. However, the camera worked against this, as we will see.

Schultze-Naumburg expressed a desire to reach a wide audience in order that his books would have a practical effect on future production. ‘The books do not refer exclusively to those who call themselves ‘educated’, rather our wish is that it should appeal to the \textit{Volk}: the petty bourgeoisie, the farmers, the workers: those who are most deeply involved in reshaping the face of our land’\textsuperscript{59} He anticipated criticism that his medium was not suitable for his target audience: ‘It will be said: but they don’t read books. I counter: one must try to bring books to even those among the \textit{Volk}, so that they can read them. The statistics of our people’s libraries speak for us. And incidentally, can one think of another attainable means with which one could better effect a wide mass today than with cheap books and illustrations?’\textsuperscript{60} This was of course written after the

\textsuperscript{59} ‘Die Bücher wenden sich auch nicht ausschliesslich an die, die sich “die Gebildeten” nennen, sondern unser Wunsch ist es, das Volk zu gewinnen, den kleinen Bürger, die Bauern, die Arbeiter, diejenigen, die am nachhaltigsten an der Umgestaltung des Antlitzes unseres Land tätig sind.’ Schultz-Naumburg, \textit{Kulturarbeiten}, I, unpaginated foreword, pp. 3–4.
invention of film, but the latter was still considered a disreputable form of popular
entertainment at this moment. The book maintained its double status as the bearer of
both popular and high culture, and Schultze-Naumburg carefully occupied the no man’s
land between these camps, instrumentalising it.

In order to reach his intended audience the tone is conversational, the format small and
portable, the appearance unpretentious, the price, reasonable (the books were available
for 3 marks). The strategy worked inasmuch as it attained a wide audience – the series
reached its fourth edition by 1911 – but were its readers the workers and farmers
addressed in the foreword? Another publisher, Karl Robert Langewiesche, later
discovered that even significantly cheaper books failed to appeal to proletarians, and
this would suggest that Schultze-Naumburg had probably not succeeded either
(although one should not discount the possibility that they were being read in public
libraries, which were well attended by the working classes during the period).\textsuperscript{61}
However, the \textit{Kulturarbeiten} did have an enormous impact on exactly those educated
middle classes that Schultze-Naumburg ostensibly distained: as Julius Posener
remarked, ‘between 1900 and 1925 you could find these books in every bourgeois
household that regarded itself as cultivated.’\textsuperscript{62}

\textsuperscript{61} These included the ostensibly unaligned Volksbibliotheken and Lesehallen, as well as
the libraries of factories, unions, and religious and political factions. In 1906, 400,000
workers borrowed 1.6 million books from the Volksbibliotheken in large cities, out of a
total of 1.4 million readers and 5.4 million loans. Dieter Langewiesche and Klaus
Schönhoven, ‘Arbeiterbibliotheken und Arbeiterlektüre im Wilhelmischen
Deutschland’, \textit{Archiv für Sozialgeschichte} 16 (1976), 135–204 (p. 151).

\textsuperscript{62} ‘In die Jahre zwischen 1900 und 1925 konnte man diese Bände in jedem
bürgerlichen Haushalt finden, welcher für kultiviert gelten wollte.’ Julius Posener,
– Architekt. Vom Kulturreformer der Jahrhundertwende zum Kulturpolitiker im Dritten
The series’ main argument against ornamental accretions and stylistic promiscuity, founded in an appeal to *Sachlichkeit* – which was manifested in the design of the books themselves – also had an effect on the work of architects as diverse as Heinrich Tessenow and Mies van der Rohe, as Kai Gutschow has argued. However, Schultze-Naumburg would develop an implacable aversion to the new architecture during the 1920s. A formerly successful architect, he had designed the last Hohenzollern palace, but in republican Germany he found it difficult to get work. He reacted violently to the ascendancy of the *Neues Bauen*, and left the Werkbund in 1927 as a protest against the predominance of modernists in the organisation’s Stuttgart exhibition. Meanwhile, he associated with Darré, Günther and other race theorists, and published increasingly extreme formulations of his nationalist and racist views in books like *Kunst und Rasse.* He joined the National Socialist party in 1930, and was rewarded with official appointments: in the same year, he became the director of the Staatliche Kunsthochschule in Weimar, which occupied the former home of the Bauhaus. One of his first acts in this role was to destroy Oskar Schlemmer’s famous stairwell mural.

Schultze-Naumburg’s *Kulturarbeiten* are not works of conventional scholarship. He is not interested in theory or historical problems (although he does operate with a simple, constantly reiterated historical narrative of decline), and he refers to no textual sources. He distinguishes his books from ‘historical works’, adding that ‘the purpose of the “Kulturarbeiten” is to refer to life, and not to further science.’ ‘Referring to life’ means to train unpractised eyes in differentiating between good and bad design in order

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63 Gutschow notes that Schultze-Naumburg helped shape the climate from which the Neues Bauen emerged, even praising concrete grain silos in 1908, pre-empting Gropius by five years. Gutschow, ‘Paul Schultze-Naumburg’s *Kulturarbeiten*’, pp. 164-65.
to generate tangible improvements to the nation’s visual culture, but it also has a more vitalistic sense: he means to show that ‘the judgment of our conscious view is not just “beautiful and ugly”, but also “good and bad” in both senses, namely “practically useful and useless” and “morally good and bad”; and that the judgment of the eyes need not correspond to linguistic thought, in which we are accustomed to seeing the only “logical” thought.’

Langewiesche’s conflation of the beautiful with the good originates in the thought of Ruskin and Morris, filtered through the German traditions of Lebensphilosophie and physiognomics. And while it superficially appears to anticipate the ideas of optical consciousness and visual training that are generally associated with the Neues Sehen and the Tayloristic science of psychotechnics, photographic primers associated with the latter tendencies attempted to equip readers with the facility to deal with the sensory (over)stimulation of modern life. By contrast, Schultze-Naumburg sought to elicit a judgment on the same – specifically, a negative one.

To this end, he employed an extremely effective organisational principle. From the first volume he established a strategy of placing examples and counterexamples on facing pages, showing ‘good’ (usually old) and ‘bad’ (always new) instances of various types of structure or urban forms. This binary logic has often been compared to the double slide projection method of Wölfflin, with which the latter produced a perpetual oscillation between classical and baroque styles. An equally pertinent comparison is Pugin’s 1836 book Contrasts, which was similarly polemical in intent, and the illustrations for which took a similarly antagonistic form. Pugin’s illustrations were, as his biographer Rosemary Hill put it, ‘calculatedly unfair’; he distorted his modern

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66 ‘Das Urteil unseres bewussten Anschauens nicht allein “schön und hässlich” lautet, sondern “gut und schlecht”, in beiderlei Sinn, nämlich “praktisch brauchbar und unbrauchbar” und “moralisch gut und schlecht” und dass das Auge sein Urteil nicht vom Sprachdenken zu beziehen braucht, in dem wir das einzig “logische” Denken zu erblicken gewöhnt sind.’ Schultze-Naumburg, Kulturarbeiten, I, unpaginated foreword, p. 3.
counterexamples to make them appear worse, and edited his historical examples to remove any taint of Classicism.\textsuperscript{67} Schultze-Naumburg was also inclined to alter his images in the furtherance of his arguments: they are often taken from unflattering angles in the case of the \textit{Gegenbeispiele}, obscured by telegraph poles, or heavily retouched – sometimes to the point of being more painting than photograph [fig. 6].

His discursive approach also motivates the relationship of text and image on the page: the examples usually have captions specifying the building type and its location, although the architect is very rarely named – these are anonymous works of vernacular building, and their value lies in their production by the \textit{Volk}. (The exception to this rule lies in recent buildings, which are attributed to Messel, Riemerschmid, or Norman Shaw as the case may be.) The counterexamples, by contrast, are entirely unidentified, signifying their deracination; they could be anywhere. This concern with rootedness is reflected in the author’s name – he was born Paul Schultze, and added his birthplace at a later date. It also permeates his works, with increasingly radical inflection after 1918.

Despite his reiteration of the binary principle in every volume’s foreword, however, the system varied greatly over the course of the series. The first volume, \textit{Hausbau} (1901), adheres to it most closely, interspersing the opposed examples through a running text. The second volume (\textit{Gärten}, 1902) follows the format of the previous volume; however, another section composed entirely of photographs of ‘good’ examples was added to the second edition of 1904. These appear in typological sequences, arranged one to a spread. The book performs the process of homogenisation desired by its author: the first half presents the current situation of disunity, the second half, a redeemed world in which confrontation no longer occurs and critique is no longer necessary. The

third and fourth volumes, on villages and town planning, return to the binary model.

The fifth volume, *Kleinbürgerhäuser* (1907), conforms most closely to the ideal type of the *Bildband*: it comprises a short introduction, followed by an unbroken sequence of photographs of ‘good’ examples, one to a spread, with just a brief identificatory caption mentioning the location and building type beneath it. As such it can be seen as inaugurating a format of architectural photobook that would become enormously popular in later years. The final three volumes also abandon the example/counterexample format in favour of a heavily illustrated running text.

Even within his ‘oppositional’ volumes, there are exceptions: images 51–53 of *Gärten*, for instance, show three views of the same building, a small structure on the slope of a vineyard, taken from different positions as if by a passing observer [figs. 7–8]. Schultze-Naumburg explains: ‘I show it in three images with the intention that it will be seen how it always forms a whole with its surroundings, from every side and in every view, as its sleek and smooth walls, its simple roof and the rectangular windows display a wealth of variety and composition, and how it embraces the terrain, so that new and interesting pictures are always arising.’\(^{68}\) In doing so, Schultze-Naumburg begins to enfold movement through space into the book, harnessing the medium’s own spatiality and its relationship to the spatiality of architecture.

Other authors would apply this relationship to other ends: in Max Taut’s *Bauten und Pläne* of 1927, successive images show the same aspect of a building from different distances. The book’s designer Johannes Molzahn does not order the photographs in a


naturalistic sequence of approach; on the contrary, they are disorientingly out of sequence, and thus highlight the way in which the book can be traversed out of order. The obstinacy of the book-form is employed to rub against the grain of the architectural object, and conjure new ways of experiencing space. For Schultze-Naumburg, by contrast, the series plods along, reinforcing sequential reading, and at each step the building resolves into a static picture. Furthermore, the conventional space of the book reinforces a radically located architectural space that is always of a piece with the landscape.

In other instances of exceptions to the antagonistic format, Schultze-Naumburg says that he has led the reader far enough in the correct perception, and they can now proceed alone. In the case of Volume VI, on palaces, he makes the following remark: ‘The temptation was great to carry through the arrangement of example and counterexample to this volume, as in I, II, III and IV. Material for this was sadly not lacking. However, I didn’t want to do the system to death, and besides I didn’t want to limit the number of exemplary works that I show with a corresponding number of poor works.’69 The effect of this decision is to create an impression of a building type – specifically the palace – in the context of which no wrong can be done. And this is reiterated throughout the volumes: despite protestations that practical reasons or mere exhaustion lie behind his abandonment of the binary model, it is always a polemically motivated decision. The format also expresses the Bildvorwurf: a sequence of singular examples hammers home the good ideal, whereas an oscillation between paired examples builds a contrapuntal argument.

Even within the exclusively ‘good’ volume on palaces, there is still an organisational logic at work – or rather, there are several. Schultze-Naumburg begins with an historical overview, divided into ‘The Medieval Palace’ and ‘The Modern Palace’. This is followed by chapters on ‘Plans’ (more in evidence in this volume than elsewhere), ‘Entrance Gates’, ‘Courts’, ‘Drives’, ‘External Staircases’, ‘Parterres’, ‘Terraces’, ‘Hedges, Drives and Avenues’, ‘Defences’, and ‘Outhouses’. So while the ordering principle of history makes an appearance, it is always subordinate to the dominant principle of the type.

The famous Werkbund debate over Typisierung was not to come until later, erupting in 1911 and culminating in a fatal schism at the Cologne Werkbund exhibition of 1914. But already in 1906 Schultze-Naumburg expressed his opposition to the extension of authorial copyright to designers on the basis that it would stunt the development of types and ultimately of style, which in his opinion depended on shared forms.70 He develops this argument in his Kulturarbeiten, in their organisation and in frequent references to the concept of type in their pages. In the third volume, he insists on the principle that anchors the type: the Vitruvian virtue of decorum. Without this, ‘our proletarian houses appear like palaces, palaces like Swiss chalets, farmhouses like prisons, prisons like churches and churches like railway stations.’71 For Schultze-Naumburg, the amorphousness of modern building reflects the unwonted fluidity of modern society. Building reform – in the form of typification – is for him not only a way of reunifying German visual culture, it is also a means of halting the social changes wrought by industrialisation. (Ironically, he was shortly to build a palace – Cecilienhof

– that resembled a British Stockbroker-Tudor mansion). Later, he would extend this principle yet further, advocating eugenics in the cause of preserving human types.\(^7\)

Despite his very broad application of *Typisierung*, Schultze-Naumburg evidently felt some ambiguity about extending it to his own productions. He shot most of the photographs in the books himself, and rather than emphasising their status as industrially mass-produced objects, he frequently refers to his authorship of them in the text. Furthermore, as the title of his *Bildmäßige Photographie* suggests, a number of his photographs were characterised by a pictorial sensibility, which can be attributed more to his own beginnings as a painter of romantic landscapes than in any interest in the works of the so-called Pictorialist photographers of the previous century. However, many of them are more reminiscent of Atget’s contemporaneous photography, and indeed the books are permeated by a tension between pathos and objectivity, aura and its opposite, that characterises Schultze-Naumburg’s work.

This seeming paradox can be seen in a series of images of gates that appears in the second volume on gardens. The majority of these photographs are arranged in Schultze-Naumburg’s customary pairs. Figure 101, for instance, shows a weathered and somewhat overgrown stone portal closed by a wooden gate, with the terraced slope of a vineyard rising behind it. The counterexample, figure 102, shows a more suburban scene [fig. 9]. A low, brick-topped wall is pierced by an elaborate wrought-iron gate, above which a lantern hangs. Of the former Schultze-Naumburg remarks:

> Despite its ornamental decoration, the main form of the whole, which brings the concept ‘portal’ into view, is not so overgrown by ornament that the main form disappears. Figure 102 may also bring the concept of the portal into view, but


only by our good faith; the view itself doesn’t appear. While the stone arch makes the door opening clearly recognisable in figure 101, the thin metal in figure 102 doesn’t clearly separate the door-space from the surrounding space, and the rod becomes a useless curlicue that doesn’t even stimulate ornamental-rhythmical feelings of pleasure, because its forms are meaningless and without expression. Even the objective purpose of bearing the lantern is by no means successfully achieved.73

While the other pairs in this sequence generally follow the agonistic form, there is one exception, announced by the absence of the words ‘example’ and ‘counterexample’ at the top of the page [fig. 10]. The image to the left shows a white gate heavily shaded by foliage, while the opposite page shows a flight of worn stone steps leading to another portal. Schultze-Naumburg explains this departure thus: ‘Figure 111 is for me the most beautiful picture that I have in this collection. It is also a very particular door: it is the door that leads to Goethe’s garden house in the park in Weimar. I oppose no counterexample to it – its beauty speaks for itself.’74 Although Schultze-Naumburg goes on to insist that it is not association but the affective power of the door’s materiality that motivates his judgment, it is clear that Goethe, and particularly his house in Weimar, represented the pinnacle of German culture for reformers during this period. So despite Schultze-Naumburg’s claim that he will not include historical monuments in his Kulturarbeiten, one slips in, and one of particular resonance, since Goethe represents the acme of linguistically constructed individuality. It is unique in not requiring a

73 ‘Trotz seines ornamentalen Schmucks wird die Hauptform des Ganzen, die den Begriff Portal zur Anschauung bringen soll, durch die Ornamentik nicht so überwuchert, dass diese Hauptform verschwindet. Auch Abb. 102 möchte den Begriff des “Portals” zur Anschauung bringen. Aber es bleibt beim guten Willen; die Anschauung selber tritt nicht ein. Während die steinerne Wölbung auf Abb. 101 die Türöffnung klar erkennbar macht, trennt das dünne Eisen auf Abb. 102 den Türraum nicht klar erkennbar vom umgebenden Raum, und der Eisenstab wird zum unnützen Schnörkel, der nicht einmal irgendwelche ornamental-rhythmischen Lustgefühle auslöst, da seine Formen sinnlos und ohne Ausdruck sind. Selbst der sachliche Zweck, die Laterne zu tragen, ist in keener Weise glücklich gelöst.’ Schultze-Naumburg, Kulturarbeiten, II, p. 166.

counterexample to demonstrate its value, because the picture ‘speaks for itself’ – despite its literary associations, it requires no caption. The image conquers the word, which however creeps back in in the text, and in fact, into the image itself: at the lower right hand corner of the photograph, there is a monogram [fig. 11]. This is not the authorial mark of the photographer, however, but of the printer. The atavistic application of the signature to a technologically reproduced image signals the distancing of the author from the work rather than guaranteeing its authenticity by the indexical mark of authorial identity.

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Schultze-Naumburg presents his readers with thousands of photographs of Germany’s vernacular architecture, which he embeds in a simple narrative of decline that exercised numerous commentators around the turn of the century. However, his visual strategy is more complex, and in the end it contradicts his text. Certainly, the opposition of ‘good old’ examples and modern counterexamples is one of the dominant narratives of his Kulturarbeiten, but there are several other organisational principles at work, especially the division and subdivision of the books into types. Within the books there are also sequences of images showing uninterrupted positive examples of certain types, sequences showing different views of the same building, and positive modern examples such as English houses, concrete grain elevators (although even these have pitched roofs), and one of Behrens’s factories for AEG.

The inclusion of the latter demonstrate that Schultze-Naumburg was not relentlessly pessimistic; indeed, the preface appended to later editions confirms that on the contrary he believes that – partly thanks to his own efforts – the standard of German architecture
has risen since the series began, the traditional path rejoined. The fact that tradition was being ‘continued’ by reforming architects, however, suggests that one important aspect of Schultze-Naumburg’s programme was a failure. He explicitly directed his books at the farmer and the worker: the uneducated people who, he said, were directly involved in the shaping of the land. In this he evinced an entirely anachronistic understanding of German society and the economic realities of building under industrial capitalism – an untimeliness that would shortly result in his own radicalisation. The people who were rebuilding a connection to history were in fact very much the kind of urban architectural professionals he blamed for degrading the landscape in the first place, and their return to classicism cannot be attributed to a sea change in popular taste, but to an avant-garde of educated patrons adopting another historicist style – for example the philosopher Alois Riehl, who commissioned Mies’s first, classicising building.75

Besides failing to understand his intended public, the strategy that Schultze-Naumburg adopted to order the architecture of the past, Typisierung, was also a failure in two further senses. Inasmuch as he actually privileged a specific historical moment rather than transhistorical types, it had not been carried out sincerely enough to succeed in escaping the arbitrary historicist revivals that he ostensibly aimed to counteract.

Secondly, as that printer’s monogram on the image of Goethe’s garden gate reveals, photographic Typisierung was entirely inadequate to the task of respiritualisation – if indeed that was at all possible. In fact it had the opposite effect: the seemingly endless series of images performed a thoroughgoing Entzauberung (‘desacralisation’) of the nation’s culture, which was subjected to the same standardising vision no matter what it was, or when and where it originated. The staccato repetition of trellis after trellis, gazebo after gazebo, has more in common with the taxonomic banality of Atget’s

Parisian albums than with the *Bildmäßige Photographie* to which Schultze-Naumburg ostensibly aspired: ‘The stripping of the veil from the object, the destruction of the aura, is the signature of a perception whose “sense for sameness in the world” has so increased that, by means of reproduction, it extracts sameness even from what is unique.’

At the same time, the entirely modern notion of educating the viewer by endlessly reiterating pairs of good and bad photographs has more in common with the psychotechnical training of engineers than with the hermeneutic methods of the world ‘um 1800’ that the books ostensibly aimed to reestablish. In the clash of aims and means at work in Schultze-Naumburg’s project, there is a contradiction between two forms of typification: the textual-historiographic, which is carried out in the interest of a pre-industrial social hierarchy, and the photographic-industrial, which has its correlate in the dissolution of that hierarchy. Typification pursued by technological means results in the former being subsumed by the latter. However, if this strategy of photographic resacralisation was a busted flush, another publisher did at least manage to reach the audience that Schultze-Naumburg had in mind.

**Cultural Fordism: the Blauen Bücher**

The task of educating the new nation’s masses was seized on by a number of so-called *Kulturverleger* (cultural publishers) around the turn of the century. For one of these, Karl Robert Langewiesche, architectural history would play a central role in this process of acculturation. Langewiesche was born to a Protestant publisher in Rheydt, a town in

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the Rhineland, in 1874. In his 1919 memoirs he recalled the town’s bourgeois stiffness, but its working people made a more positive impression:

There are people who call these masses coarse. That is a haughtiness that in later life I have never had reason to share. The first generation of Lower Rhine textile producers to have made the transition from sedate, half-rustic domestic weavers to urban textile workers may well have been earthy and dull. However, I owe to the earthy, half-unthinking and yet so evident eagerness with which these men and women daily pushed before the window of my father’s book and print shop, the first seeds of my life’s ambition to serve with my work precisely these broad masses of the nation who are called uneducated. 77

He announced in 1902 that he would achieve this with what he called ‘modern, superior mass-produced goods’ – a phrase that attracted some ridicule at a moment when mass-produced goods were generally seen as anything but superior, and the opposite of culture. 78 However, as Michael Ponstingl has observed, ‘this apparent paradox refers to one of the most powerful bourgeois discourses around the turn of the turn in which culture and economics were thought together.’ 79 It placed Langewiesche squarely in the milieu that would produce the Werkbund, of which he was occasionally a member.


78 ‘Moderne, vornehme Massenartikel.’ This was how Langewiesche announced his aims in a ‘Gründungsgrundschreiben an den Buchhandel’, 5 May 1902. Reproduced in Klempert, “Die Welt des Schönen”, pp. 30–33.

In the pursuit of his goal Langewiesche evinced an organisational mania that manifested itself across his working methods and its products. His vast archive, which extends even to his doctor’s receipts, was housed in an elaborate built-in filing system in his home office, each drawer labelled with an enamelled plate. This functioned to mesh the organisation of his own mind with the structure of his business. With the forms that he distributed to photographers, booksellers and customers, he attempted to extend this organisation to his suppliers, distributors and consumers, thereby optimising the network of production–distribution–consumption. Finally, his standardised series of books, which largely maintained the same format, price, and even photographic strategies throughout the vagaries of the period in which he initiated his famous *Blauen Bücher* – from 1907 to his death in 1931 – organise architectural history itself into a cultural product optimised for smooth consumption and optimal perceptibility by the masses.

In 1914, Wilhelm Ostwald, proponent of a ‘World Format’ for scientific publications, wrote that ‘Art is necessarily a social product. And socialisation or collectivisation [Sozialisierung oder Vergesellschaftung] cannot take place without the establishment of norms.’

Ostwald added that this process had already begun with books, and indeed, Langewiesche had set out to establish norms for the socialisation of the reception of cultural history, which he formatted accordingly. As such, Langewiesche was not a publisher in the humanist mould but a culture formatting practice, which survived long after its instigator’s death in the systems he had established. In order to distinguish this practice from the man I shall designate it KRL.

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81 Ostwald, ‘Normen’, p. 82.
The efficiencies of KRL kept costs to a minimum, a saving that, in true Fordist fashion, was (partially) passed on to consumers. The result was an unprecedented series of publishing successes. The publisher’s first book assembled excerpts from the work of Thomas Carlyle under the title *Arbeiten und nicht Verzweifeln*, ‘Work and Don’t Despair’ (1902). This pithy summation of the Protestant work ethic was in fact a phrase from Goethe’s poem *Symbolum*, ‘Wir heißen euch hoffen’, which Carlyle had rather freely translated into English as ‘work and despair not’, and which Langewiesche returned to German. It reappeared on the title page as the publisher’s motto, incorporated into a logo with an image of a naked youth hammering a sword against an anvil. Two years later, this logo was altered to show the same figure chiselling a colossal head from a block of stone [figs. 12, 13]. With this emblem, KRL romanticised and mystified the alienated labour of its ideal readers, and also the manufacturing process of its own books – presenting them as the results of handcraft rather than of mass production. At the same time, however, KRL industrialised the reception of culture.

Langewiesche states in the foreword to the Carlyle book that ‘the anthology was prepared in a time when there is less leisure for the reading of older and more voluminous works’.82 Rather than reacting to modernity with the pessimistic cultural critique of the previous generation, reformers such as Langewiesche attempted to reshape cultural heritage in order to fit it into the new perceptual regime and thus bring culture to the masses. Like his Carlyle anthology, his photobooks – with their brief introductory texts and pictorial emphasis – were designed for the consumption of hurried working readers, preceding by two decades the comparable avant-garde

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attempts of László Moholy-Nagy, Walter Benjamin, and Sigfried Giedion to remake the book for the accelerated tempo of modernity.

KRL was thus a modernising practice, by means of which images of Medieval buildings that had been the subject of literary enthusiasm since Goethe’s arrival in Strasbourg in 1770 were stripped of their aura and placed into the hands of a mass audience. Schultze-Naumburg operated similarly but protested that his intentions were otherwise; for Langewiesche, there was no such explicit pretence. The first product of this practice, the Carlyle book, was enormously popular – its first printing of 20,000 copies sold out in three weeks, and in the 33 subsequent printings up to 1942, it sold 301,000 copies. This success would be equalled by several other KRL books. Over the next few years, these included works on topics associated with the Arts and Crafts (including a Ruskin anthology in 1904) and the Lebensreform movements, such as Hans Wegener’s 1906 book *Wir junger Männer. Das sexuelle Problem des gebildeten jungen Mannes vor der Ehe: Reinheit, Kraft und Frauenliebe* (‘We Young Men. The Sexual Problem of Educated Young Men before Marriage: Purity, Strength and Womanly Love’). The titillating topic made the book almost as popular as the Carlyle volume: 283,000 copies had been sold by 1942.

KRL’s success is partly attributable to innovative formatting and marketing strategies and resonant topics, but also to the extremely low cost of its books: the Blauen Bücher were generally priced 1.80 marks. The average cost of an art history book in 1907 was 9.22 marks, so this was a very competitive price, enabled by large print runs and economical bindings.\(^\text{83}\) However, Langewiesche felt that even this had failed to deliver books into the hands of the readers he sought, and so in 1927 he established a second

\(^{83}\) Fritzke, *Die Blauen Bücher*, p. 18.
series named Der Eiserne Hammer, ‘The Iron Hammer’. The rear flap of these little books, which had much briefer introductions than the Blauen Bücher and were priced at only 90 pfennigs, announced their mission: ‘Das Gute für Alle’. ‘For all: that is for the educated and the uneducated, the poor and the rich, the manual worker and the intellectual worker.’ Despite the low cost of KRL’s books, reviewers agreed that the images were of the highest possible quality: this was a true democratisation of the most up-to-date visual technology.

The first book in KRL’s series of books on art and architecture Die Welt des Schönen, ‘the world of beautiful things’, was a 1907 volume on Greek sculpture. Designer Karl Köster gave the book a brand identity that would be applied to all of the following Blauen Bücher. It had a pioneering ‘half bound’ format: a blue card cover sheathed in a blue dust jacket. At the centre, a tipped-in insert showed a photograph of the Aphrodite of Cnidus, which was captioned with the number of images in the volume, the size of the print run, and – in a larger typeface – the publisher’s name. Beneath this appeared, in even larger type, the price [fig. 14]. The nexus of information collected in this emblem stands for KRL as a whole: the acme of high culture is democratised and simultaneously commodified via technologically reproduced images and the mass-production of books. The print-run – representing the replication and dispersal of the book – is displayed as one of its most appealing features. There is also a significant absence: the author and editor of the book, art historian Max Sauerlandt, was not mentioned on the cover of its first edition. The Greek sculpture, origin of Western culture, is presented as self-reproducing by the KRL system. Nietzsche had criticised the dominance of the authorial mark on the book cover in 1879, but now his prognostication has come true: ‘it is the intellect’s ambition to seem no longer to belong
to an individual."84 Freed, it dispenses through the book as mass-produced commodity – where it ceases to be human intellect at all, becoming instead a formatting practice: KRL.

Although KRL set out by formatting the Western canon for modern users, the general tenor of its output would shortly be transformed from ‘social reformer’ to ‘nationalist’, as Langewiesche put it. He recalled that this turn had been sparked by a discussion with the art historian Wilhelm Pinder on the latter’s balcony in 1910, which convinced Langewiesche to focus on German culture, especially art history.85 Pinder (1878–1947) will figure prominently in this work. He was a student of August Schmärsow’s, the initiator of the discourse of space in architectural history.86 Pinder completed his dissertation on the spatial quality of Norman architecture in 1903,87 and went on to become the most successful and prominent art historian in Germany between the wars, a famously charismatic speaker and a writer of popular works that were much read by non-academic audiences.88 His more recent obscurity is due to his enthusiastic support for the National Socialists, and while revisionists have attempted to modify this picture by emphasising the cooling of his ideological fervour from the mid-1930s and the suspicion with which he was regarded by Nazi officials, the nationalist essentialism at the basis of his thought is inherently problematic. Even his most purely theoretical

85 Langewiesche, Buchhändlerische Erinnerungen, p. 113–14.
86 I shall discuss the discourse of space further in the second chapter. For Schmarsow’s pioneering 1893 lecture ‘The Essence of Architectural Creation’ see Empathy, Form and Space: Problems in German Aesthetics 1873–1893, ed. Harry Francis Mallgrave and Eleftherios Ikonomou (Santa Monica: Getty, 1994), pp. 281–97.
87 Wilhelm Pinder, Einleitende Voruntersuchung zu einer Rhythmik romanischer Innenräume in der Normandie (Strasbourg: Heitz & Mündel, 1904).
work, *The Problem of Generations in European Art History* (1926), is permeated by biological determinism. The meeting of Langewiesche and Pinder has therefore been read as a calamitous seduction, but the smooth operation of the KRL system took precedence over Pinder’s xenophobia. In a letter regarding the publisher’s 1930 book *Menschen der Zeit*, ‘People of the Time’, Langewiesche rebuffed Pinder’s instruction ‘No Jews!’ by stating that for commercial reasons, he would include one or two (he did however remove the word ‘German’ from the book’s title as a consequence).

The Pinder–Langewiesche balcony scene union would result in thirteen offspring, beginning in 1910 with the publisher’s first volume on architecture, *Deutsche Dome des Mittelalters*, ‘German Cathedrals of the Middle Ages’. This was followed by volumes on *Deutscher Barock*, ‘German Baroque’ (1912); *Deutsche Burgen und feste Schlösser*, ‘German Castles and Fortified Palaces’ (1913); *Große Bürgerbauten*, ‘Great Civic Buildings’ (1915); *Der Deutsche Park*, ‘The German Park’ (1926); and *Kölner Dom*, ‘Cologne Cathedral’ (1928), the latter in Langewiesche’s cheaper series *Der Eiserne Hammer*. Pinder also edited *Tore, Türmen und Brunnen*, ‘Gates, Towers and Fountains’ (1921) and *Innenräume Deutscher Vergangenheit*, ‘Interiors of the German Past’ (1924) for the publisher.

After Langewiesche’s death in 1931 Pinder continued his association with KRL, which was now led by Langewiesche’s former assistant Hans Köster, resulting in books on *Bamberger Dom*, ‘Bamberg Cathedral’, with photographs by Walter Hege (1932); *Drei

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90 In an official history of the publisher, Gabriele Klempert described the meeting as leading to an ‘unselige Wende’ in Langewiesche’s activity. Klempert, “*Die Welt des Schönen*”, p. 72.

91 Letter from Langewiesche to Pinder, 5 July 1929, Langewiesche Archive, Deutsche Nationalbibliothek, Frankfurt.
Kaiserdom, ‘Three Imperial Cathedrals’, with photographs by Paul Wölff (1933); Deutsche Barockplastik, ‘German Baroque Sculpture’ (1933); Deutsche Wasserburgen, ‘German Moated Castles’, with photographs by Albert Renger-Patsch (1941); and Rembrandts Selbstbildnisse, ‘Rembrandt’s Self-Portraits’ (1943). As the titles of these books show, KRL and Pinder organised their material in a number of ways, and while typology was the dominant mode, they also published monographs on single buildings, as well as stylistic surveys – the first of which concerned the baroque, which had only recently been rescued from opprobrium.

In what follows I shall focus on the first collaboration between the two, 1910’s Deutsche Dome, since it established the form for much of KRL’s output and indeed that of other publishers who were keen to emulate the volume’s success: it sold 300,000 copies by 1942, and another 455,000 up to 1969. The book begins with an eleven-page historical essay by Pinder. There follows a sequence of ninety-six photographs, showing exteriors and interiors of buildings from the Palatine Chapel in Aachen (c.800) to the LorenzKirche in Nürnberg (c.1450), in roughly chronological order. At the rear, an uncoated section shows plans of the buildings.

The introduction does not refer directly to the images, although it does have a similar order. It is periodised in several ways: politically (dynastically, or in terms of the balance of powers between the pope and emperor), geographically (especially as an opposition between France and Germany, but also in terms of a eastern front against the Slavs, and also regionally within Germany), technically-morphologically (as in the development of the vault, or the basilica plan), and according to Zeitgeist (in terms of religious feeling, or the division of the characters of monk and knight, the unity of which Pinder reads as characteristic of the early Middle Ages). However, the opening
and closing paragraphs give priority to a spatio-perceptual history of medieval German architecture. This interpretation clearly bears the impress of Pinder’s teacher, August Schmarsow, but Pinder gives the text his own flavour, peppering it with martial vocabulary – the buildings are *kriegerisch*, ‘warlike’, or *militärisch*. ‘The German church always remained strongest where it stood so to speak in the battlefield, as forearmed, face to the enemy, while it advanced across the earth.’\(^92\) This rhetoric was not uncommon at the time, nor has it been since,\(^93\) a fact that testifies to the enduring popularity of the notion of the artwork as a dominating, even aggressive, force.

Pinder concludes his essay with a statement that reiterates the argument of his dissertation: that towards the end of the Middle Ages the embodied, mobile, spatial experience of architecture was replaced by a static, disembodied and visual one. Painting conquered architecture, and with that ‘the middle ages are at an end.’\(^94\) This echoes the mournful tone of the opening of his essay; the decay in production is reiterated by a second loss, one of reception. The latter is caused by the former, since the move to painting and visuality eventually deadens the spatial sense:

> The artistic activity on which the old cathedrals depended is nearly extinct today. The people of our time, nurtured by the experience of old spaces not even to retain the spatial … A long, one-sided nourishing of the visual sense has taught us to grasp fleeting contingencies as the real, meanwhile the solid structure of the architectural will withdraws from us. Only a conscious, patient attention, an additional and careful sharpening of the sense, will push back to the overgrown beauty of the building. In happy hours there awakes, like an ancient memory, what was essential to the cathedral masters: in ourselves is stimulated the rise and fall, the expansion and contraction of space, as if our own corporeal tension and release, as if our own inner breath – the powerful breath of a forgotten life, a lost health, a lusty, grounded delight, a piece of the earthy youthfulness of


\(^{93}\) Warnke, ‘Weltanschauliche Motive’.

\(^{94}\) ‘Das Mittelalter ist zu Ende.’ Pinder, *Deutsche Dome*, p. xvi.
European humanity.\textsuperscript{95}

The question arises: can a selection of photographs possibly be adequate to this task – can remediation cure remediation? The answer would seem to be negative: ‘The inner life of these buildings is one of strong and physical proximity, which we can no longer create today. Technology, in extending the reach of our action far beyond the human body, has ruined these enthralling physical effects for us.’\textsuperscript{96} This, then, seems a contradictory book, one that cancels itself out: the technological medium of photography destroys the experience of architecture valorised in the introduction, even the possibility of such a feeling, while the introduction refuses the validity of the photographs. This will not be the final example of a book that tears itself apart in its attempt to negotiate the relationship between technology and \textit{Geist}, building and image.

However, the text by Langewiesche on the inner cover assigns another value to the photographs. ‘The selection of these images has as little to do with the narrow concepts of “cathedral” and “episcopal church” as with the size and the general familiarity of the works. It seeks to give the Germans an idea of the tremendous architectural riches that they posses from the Middle Ages.’\textsuperscript{97} The photographs may not convey the spatial essence of architecture emphasised by Pinder, nor do they delineate a coherent type of


the sort that might be the focus of a more ‘scientific’ work, but they can foster – by their simple accumulation – a sense of shared ownership: for KRL the democratisation of architectural knowledge is a means of socialising architecture, albeit in a strictly non-materialist sense. In terms of KRL’s photographic strategy, then, it is number and variety that count – the very profusion of images that would later be seen as a sensory overburdening, the ‘photo-inflation’ described by Ernö Kallai in 1929.\textsuperscript{98} Seen in this light, Pinder’s dissenting foreword is the cry of the author about to be swept away by the deluge of images. However, this is profusion within limits, and the coherence of the objects is produced not by a type but by the standardised photographic approach.

KRL had a ready source for these standardised photographs: the Königlich Preußische Meßbildanstalt (‘Royal Prussian Institute of Measured Images’). This official archive had been established by architectural surveyor Albrecht Meydenbauer in 1885 to record the nation’s historic buildings using a practice of his own invention, photogrammetry. Produced with precisely calibrated cameras, the resulting Meßbilder or ‘measured images’ represented the proportions of their subjects as accurately as possible. The buildings were recorded in one of several standardised image-types: exterior shots, with the façade almost filling the frame, are taken from a perpendicular or raking angle. Interiors were shown using similar perspectives. More distant, contextualising shots were also employed, often from a raised position that showed monumental buildings dominating the town or countryside around it. Other less common image types showed townscapes and building details.\textsuperscript{99} In every instance, the photographer waited for as even a light as possible, and scrupulously avoided the convergence of parallel lines. Meydenbauer opposed his work to ‘artistically effective’ and ‘beautiful’ photography;

on the contrary, the Anstalt’s objectivity was suited for scientific study and conservation work. These were documents rather than images, and the extent to which the image-status of the Meßbilder was denied is reflected in the fact they were not even present as such in the archive; instead it contained only glass negatives, to be printed on demand by clients referring to catalogues.

The inclusion of numerous Meßbilder in Deutsche Dome – and in many subsequent KRL books – depended on the convenience of this extensive, centralised photo archive, on their reliable clarity, and on the regularity of their format. This despite the fact that, in a letter to Pinder regarding a later book on Cologne Cathedral, Langewiesche regretfully remarked that ‘The old Meßbild photos are really very nüchtern [prosaic, dry or sober].’ In fact the precise standardisation that Langewiesche required in images is revealed in a letter to a photographer named Karl Pflanz, which gives the lie to his lament of sobriety. Pflanz had been commissioned to photograph a statue of the writer Franz Stelzhamer in Linz, and the publisher carefully directs all aspects of the image: the framing (‘not the whole monument, just the figure with a little bit of the upper part of the plinth’), the size of the print (‘around 20cm, whether more or less by 1cm naturally does not matter’), and its tonal qualities (‘not too dark and not too light, and on glossy, not matte paper’). The figure should be shown ‘completely from the front, fully en face’. (In another letter Langewiesche even went so far as to instruct a photographer to use a stepladder in order to get the correct angle in photographing a

100 Matyssek, Kunstgeschichte als fotografische Praxis, p. 115. The Meßbilder were taken to Moscow during the war and later used by the GDR to reconstruct monuments such as the Französische Dom.
statue of Bismarck.\textsuperscript{102} Finally, regarding the background Langewiesche requests that ‘it should not be retouched, but leave everything as nature put it in the picture.’\textsuperscript{103} However, while he insisted that his photographers did not manipulate their images, this was not out of a desire to deliver the unaltered photographic document to his readers. The publisher prized the immediacy of the photographic apparatus – in which he includes the photographer – insofar as it provided raw material for his own image-producing labour. The scientific document had to be reformatted for a mass audience.

The textual portion of the archive only extends back to 1911, so we cannot recover the discussions behind the manipulation of photographs in \textit{Deutsche Dome}, but in exchanges regarding later books, Langewiesche occasionally discussed the retouching of images with Pinder. While the two generally maintained friendly relations (Pinder often addressed his publisher as ‘Erasmus’ or even ‘Erasmisime’), differences sometimes arose. Pinder wrote to Langewiesche in 1912: ‘Must we retain the bad retouches on 14 (p42), 20 (p48), 24 (p52), 47 (p75), about which I’ve heard the worst? The factory windows under the cupola of the Frauenkirche, 47, where all must be kept in hazy shadow, have been bitterly criticised from all sides – as I did the first time around!!!!!!!!\textsuperscript{104}

\textsuperscript{102} Letter from Langewiesche to Kaufmann, 27 November 1911, Langewiesche Archive, Deutsche Nationalbibliothek, Frankfurt.

\textsuperscript{103} ‘Aufzunehmen ist bitte also nicht das ganz Denkmal, sondern nur die Figur mit einem kleinen Stückchen vom oberen Ende des Sockels. Und zwar müsste die Photographie die Figur in einer Grösse von etwa 20cm wiedergeben. Auf ein Zentimeter mehr oder weniger kommt es natürlich nicht an. Der Standpunkt sollte so gewählt sein, das seine Aufnahme ganz von vorn, also völlig en face, erzielt wird. Von dem Hintergrunde, der mit auf der Aufnahme erscheinen wird, ist bitte nichts fortzuretouciren, sondern alles zu lassen, wie es die Aufnahme in der Natur ergibt.’ Letter from Langewiesche to Karl Pflanz, 27 March 1912, Langewiesche Archive, Deutsche Nationalbibliothek, Frankfurt.

\textsuperscript{104} ‘Müssen die bösen Retuschen auf 14 (S. 42), 20 (S. 48), 24 (S. 52), 47 (S. 75), über die ich das Schlimmste höre, bestehen bleiben? Die Fabrikfenster unter der Kuppel der Frauenkirche, 47, wo Alles in dunstigem Schatten lagern müsste, warden – wie von mir
While the early textual archive does not exist, the photographic portion does survive at the Albertina in Vienna. Here, the retouching process can be seen in action. In accordance with the operating methods of KRL, the prints are scrupulously organised. This is partly so that they can be reformatted and reused: they are mounted on brown card and placed in envelopes, along with re-photographed prints and tests from the printer. On the envelope is recorded a history of the image: the different editions and occasionally different volumes in which it has appeared. The photographs themselves are surrounding by, and in many cases superscribed with, a forest of marks and notations in crayon, usually in several hands and colours, directing darkening, sharpening, removals of accretions and occasionally of figures, additions of clouds, and cropping.

Some examples from Deutsche Dome give clues as to the rationale behind the process. A photograph of the north portal of Erfurt Cathedral shows, to the left, a section of the town in the background. Visible on one of the shop fronts is a sign announcing Electro-Technische Anstalt (‘electro-technical workshop’). On a duplicate print, this phrase has been carefully painted out, and this is how it appears in the book [figs. 15–17].\textsuperscript{105} This corresponds to a campaign led by the Heimatschutz movement against outdoor advertising, but whereas Schultze-Naumburg recommended a consumer boycott of offending firms in order to return to a pre-modern landscape, here the pre-legible city is restored virtually in order to make it easier to see. This is a radical implementation of the split between the two portions of the photobook; the book is to be read, not the building, and retouching is a means of formatting the image, removing distractions to ensure its optimal perceptibility.

\textsuperscript{105} Images 2000/630/186 and 2000/630/187, IV BOX 562, Langewiesche photo archive, Albertina, Vienna.

\textsuperscript{\textsuperscript{105} Images 2000/630/186 and 2000/630/187, IV BOX 562, Langewiesche photo archive, Albertina, Vienna.}
Another photograph shows the west front of Strasbourg Cathedral rising over the city’s roofs [figs. 18–20].\textsuperscript{106} The more distant transept fades into the background, and is half hidden in darkness. An inspection of the photographic print in the Albertina collection reveals this to be an unnatural shadow: the retouching brush has been liberally applied in order to disguise the presence of scaffolding, which demonstrates the building’s material status as the subject of labour, its historicity as a subject of time. In the course of these erasures, the photograph becomes the subject of labour instead. The collection’s former curator Michael Ponstingl interpreted KRL’s retouching as an attempt to ‘drive out history: nothing in the shot should commemorate a concrete historical moment.’\textsuperscript{107} It was a common enough strategy at the time: in a 1902 book on architectural photography, Hans Schmidt advised a ‘fading-out of the unattractive’, by which he meant streetlamps and overhead wires.\textsuperscript{108} This remains standard practice in architectural magazines and photographers’ studios today, and has provoked much critical comment;\textsuperscript{109} however, in the context of architectural historiography it is peculiarly problematic.

The individual contemporary photograph, after all, cannot show the past, and it cannot narrate a sequence of events leading us to this point. By contrast, the historical photograph can give us some idea of the past – for instance, Roger Fenton’s photographs of ‘the Valley of the Shadow of Death’ tells us something about what the Crimean War looked like, and Atget shows us what Paris looked like before Hausmann.

\textsuperscript{106} Image 2000/630/203, IV BOX 563, Langewiesche photo archive, Albertina, Vienna.
\textsuperscript{107} "Geschichte auszutreiben”. Nichts sollte an dem konkreten historischen Augenblick der Aufnahme gemahnen.’ Michael Ponstingl, ‘Re/Touché, Herr Langewiesche!’, \textit{Fotogeschichte. Beiträge zur Geschichte und Ästhetik der Fotografie} 98 (2005), 93–96 (p. 96).

History can also be revealed by photographic series: a sequence of historical photographs from construction via inhabitation to demolition can narrate a history of a single building, and a series of photographs taken at the same moment of objects produced at different times – for instance, medieval buildings from the Palatine Chapel in Aachen to the Lorenzkirche in Nürnberg – can be used to reveal (or to construct) the morphological development of a type or style.

In neither case are we given an unmediated view into history, but this medial status is historically valuable in itself. However, there is a difference between the two. Fenton was in the Crimea in 1854, so even if he did move the cannonballs around he still tells us about the contemporary moment, but Meydenbauer’s photographer was not in Aachen in 800 when the chapel was being built, and cannot reveal its original form. The Meßbildanstalt’s photographs – and the arrangement of them by Pinder – certainly tell us other things: what the chapel looked like at the end of the nineteenth century, what was considered worth photographing (and how) by cultural officials, what objects academics thought belonged to an architectural type and how they should be placed in historical sequence. These are valuable pieces of information, but their communication was evidently not the primary aim of Pinder or of KRL. On the contrary, the technique of retouching was employed to try and obscure the instant of its capture, so that – as Michael Ponstingl said – the images no longer represent the building as it stood circa 1900, but rather as it was thought to exist in its original form. As such, it was another aspect of KRL’s formatting and standardising practice, used in this instance to render all the photographs originary and not records of a diversity of historical traces: modernisation obscures modernity.

In his 1927 essay on photography, Siegfried Kracauer introduces two terms that may be useful here: the memory image and the photographic image. ‘Compared to photography, memory’s records are full of gaps … An individual retains memories because they are personally significant. Thus they are organised according to a principle which is essentially different from the organising principle of photography. Photography grasps what is given as a spatial (or temporal) continuum; memory images retain what is given only insofar as it has significance.’

Kracauer’s notion of the gapless reproduction of the photograph accords with Kittler’s idea that the essential characteristic of the media after 1900 is their ability to record noise – or rather, their inability not to record it, their indiscrimination.

So what are we to make of these over-painted photographs: with their visual noise removed, have they been brought closer, somehow, to the memory image? Like the formation of the memory image, the process of elimination depends on what the retoucher finds significant, and while the photographer also directs his lens at what he considers significant, whatever enters the frame contingently will also be recorded indiscriminately. These importunate objects are the retoucher’s quarry, to be hunted down and eliminated. However, although the retoucher’s brush inserts gaps into the photographic spatial continuum, this is not done in order to adequate the image to memory, but to history.

What has history to do with memory? In Kracauer’s schema, historicism is – like photography – opposed to memory. Just as photography records the spatial continuum in its plenitude, historicism – ‘the photography of time’ – is an attempt to record the temporal continuum without missing anything out, thereby revealing the unbroken chain

that leads us back to the meaning-giving origin. With this in mind, the photographic portion of Deutsche Dome appears as a manifestation of photographic historicism, according to which ‘the complete mirroring of an intratemporal sequence simultaneously contains the meaning of all that occurred in that time’.\textsuperscript{113}

Kracauer opposes what he calls ‘actual history’ to this micrological fixation: in actual history, memory images are assessed as to their truth content and condensed into a ‘last image’ or ‘monogram’, as an example of which he cites the fairy tale rather than any instance of academic historiography. Kracauer adds that photography too can attain actual history, but at a cost: ‘In order for history to present itself, the mere surface coherence offered by photography must be destroyed’.\textsuperscript{114} By this measure, the visible is not necessarily the true, which can only be identified by the labour of the ‘liberated consciousness’ overcoming the ‘compulsion of nature’ and the ‘demonic drives.’ In terms of memory, these are manifested in the arbitrary remembrance of events according to their significance to the personal subconscious, whereas in the context of photography, the compulsion of nature could be compared to the mechanical process, which circumvents conscious control.

Kracauer’s injunction to destroy the surface coherence of the photograph is usually read as a defense of montage, the juxtaposition of discontinuous fragments which may occur either in space (as collage) or time (in film), or in some combination of the two dimensions – as in the photobook. Here, montage occurs sequentially, as in a film, if there is only one image to a spread. In cases where more than one image occupies a spread, there is also simultaneous montage. This allows for the development of

\textsuperscript{113} Kracauer, ‘Photography’, pp. 49–50.
\textsuperscript{114} Kracauer, ‘Photography’, p. 52.
contrapuntal rhythms that complicate the steady flow of ‘one thing after another’. In the process, history itself is spatialised.

There are yet other modes of montage that literally destroy the surface of the individual image, such as the collages of Kurt Schwitters and Hannah Höch. These are not employed by KRL – at least, not explicitly. However, retouching also manifests this destructive tendency, since it breaks up the surface coherence of the photograph, although it is carried out under the guise of a perfection of the same. And while there are other means of constructing a history in montaged photographs – as we will see, means that instrumentalise breaks rather than disguising them with brush strokes – it is clear that retouching is not necessarily an erasure: while in Stalinist Russia it was used thus, John Heartfield’s images aimed to expose the true structure of the present, despite creating a smooth picture surface. Whatever the motivation behind the brush, the procedure is the same. So while Pinder may have expressed a desire to redeem the present in his introduction, the obstinacy of KRL’s photographic practice resulted in an inevitable modernisation of the past: the cathedral was formatted and standardised for optimum consumption under modern conditions. In a perverse fulfilment of Pinder’s injunction in the foreword that only ‘a conscious, patient attention, an additional and careful sharpening of the sense, will push back to the overgrown beauty of the building’, here the work is performed for the hurried reader, using precisely the technological means that Pinder abjured.

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While Langewiesche and Pinder occasionally mentioned retouching photographs in their letters, the sequencing of the images was less explicitly discussed. It appears that it
21. Wilhelm Pinder, image list for *Deutscher Barock*, undated (c.1912), Langewiesche Archive, Nationalbibliothek, Frankfurt.
was so self-evident that it did not require comment. Instead, the two exchanged annotated lists of images, as well as parcels of photographs and catalogues from the Meßbildanstalt, and occasionally met to discuss the order in detail. Two exemplary documents relating to the book on Baroque, published in 1912, shows a development from a sketch, in Pinder’s unmistakable and almost unreadable handwriting, to a firmer list [fig. 21].

Readers of the book also found the sequence of images self-explanatory. In a review published in the *Monatshefte für Kunstwissenschaft*, *Deutsche Dome* is described as ‘a valuable attempt to make the German public familiar with the German art of the Middle Ages’, which will also be very useful to the art historian, ‘because it reproduces the valuable pages of the Meßbildanstalt.’ The article focuses on these images, some of which are judged incongruous, especially those focusing on details or sculptures, but in general the choice is felt to demonstrate a ‘complete mastery of the material’. ‘Within the self-evidently historical sequence of reproductions one traces the ordering hand of a discerning person. The value accorded to suitable juxtapositions is shown by the preliminary note.’ The author of the review was Burkhard Meier, who was later to become the chief editor of the Deutscher Kunstverlag. In this capacity he would employ Pinder to write the introductions to two further photobooks on cathedrals.

Meier’s reference to the ‘preliminary note’ is somewhat mystifying, since the text in question makes no reference to the ordering of the images. This suggests that the self-evidence of the sequence is so powerful, the chronological-developmental ordering of

architectural history so naturalised, that it produced a phantom explanation in the mind of the reviewer. Confirming the normativity of historicist chronology, it was only in the case of some later titles that diverged from this ‘natural’ order that Langewiesche did feel the need to explain the sequential logic of the images. In the case of Große Bürgerbauten, for instance, Langewiesche wrote that ‘the order and sequence of images occurs according to landscapes’, and goes on to describe a sequence of roughly sketched trajectories through Germany. In Tore, Türme und Brunnen, Langewiesche states that, like its previous books Burgen and Bürgerbauten, this volume does not have a ‘historical-stylistic, but an approximate geographic ordering’. Innenräume Deutscher Vergangenheit is described in similar terms. However, this was always a secondary logic: as is stated in Bürgerbauten, ‘good harmony (especially among those images standing opposite one another) appears more important than strictly-observed geographic lines’. What this ‘harmony’ might entail is left hanging in the air; however, it suggests that the obstinacy of the image is such that it has the power to trump the ‘natural’ order of chronology.

A closer examination of the sequencing of the first edition of the Dome book reveals that here too more than one logic is at work. The ninety-six images follow roughly the same chronological sequence as the text, moving from the pre-Romanesque of Aachen, via Romanesque and Gothic, to the late Gothic of the Lorenzkirche in Nürnberg. This accords with Kracauer’s reading of historicism, ‘the complete mirroring of an intratemporal sequence’. However, there are exceptions. Northern brick Gothic buildings are grouped together, for instance, and some buildings appear in several views spread out through the book – Mainz Cathedral is shown in images 11, 21 and 38, for

instance. Of course, the cathedrals were built over very extended periods – a thousand years, in the case of Cologne – so it is not impossible that the dispersal of buildings through the series reflects this, by showing parts completed at different times at their appropriate point in the series. The final section of the book, the image key, confirms this in some instances by firmly stating a date – but this is not the case with Mainz. The information for image 11 tells us instead that the building presents us with many questions, and the text for image 21 simply refers us back to 11. (The text for image 38, by contrast, tells us that the subject of the picture – the Martinschor – does place it with its neighbours, which all come from the first half of the twelfth century.) Returning to image 21 itself, however, the reason for its placement become clear. Because the images are printed on both sides of the page, the possibility of creating pairs within the series arises; the book is a sequence that proceeds in two rhythms. In this case, the nave of Mainz is compared to the nave of Speyer, another of the three famous Rhinish ‘Kaiserdoms’. The preceding spread, by contrast, compares the interiors of Jerichow and Paulinzella. These two pairs are evidently intended to demonstrate the development of vaulting: the first two images are flat-roofed buildings, whereas the latter two have groin vaults.

In another instance, the lower portion of the west front of Strasbourg is shown in image 52, while the upper part does not appear until image 59. This is not so easily attributed to a morphological logic, since 52’s partner is an image of the ambulatory of Magdeburg, and 59’s is the apse of Freiburg. In this case, the logic of the format ruled: the images are roughly of the same period, and thus the building could be dismembered and morphological consistency between pairs abandoned in order to bring together images of the same orientation. 52 and 53 are both oriented horizontally, and it is the rule of KRL never to have portrait and landscape images together on the same spread.
This would impede the smooth consumption of the book by demanding that the reader turn it more than necessary. In order to avoid this, images were occasionally heavily cropped to force them into the correct orientation.

The logic of historicist chronology is complicated by the medial logic of the book, which introduces a rhythm of its own to the history of Gothic architecture. Is this the complex chronology of ‘actual history’ that Kracauer sought, in which elements are selected according to their truth content by the ‘liberated consciousness’? Not entirely, I would argue: while truth is sought, it is easily defeated by the medial logic of the book. For all the lapses described above, the image sequence is arranged to reflect a historicist chronology as strictly as possible, and the interruptions, delays, jumps, and lacunae are produced not in the quest for truth but by the obstinacy of the medium. The ‘liberated consciousness’ is subsumed beneath KRL’s formatting practice, and alternative temporalities – the nonsimultaneity that Pinder would later theorise, for instance – are not intentionally cultivated here. This would change in later photobooks to which he put his name.

**Mining the archives: Deutscher Kunstverlag**

In 1921, at the initiative of the Preußischen Ministeriums für Wissenschaft, Kunst und Volksbildung, a publishing house was established under the name Deutscher Kunstverlag (DKV) with the aim of exploiting the collection of the Meßbildanstalt. The latter was simultaneously renamed the Staatliche Bildstelle and incorporated into the same organisation. It seems probable that this attempt by the bureaucrats to monetise their own archive was inspired by the extraordinary success that Langewiesche had

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117 The most substantial account of the Deutscher Kunstverlag is Jaeger, ‘Pflege der deutschen Kunst’.
enjoyed in incorporating Meßbilder into his own book series.

At the outset, the Kunstverlag comprised a number of partners, most of them publishers: Insel, A.E. Seemann, Deutsche Verlagsanstalt, Julius Hoffmann Verlag, G. Grote, Julius Bard, Walter de Gruyter, and a Berlin banking house. Its offices occupied the same building as the Culture Ministry, alongside a bookshop-cum-gallery named Bild und Buch – a spatial demonstration of the incorporation of the project into the state. In its first years, when the economic situation was deeply uncertain, DKV issued only small, illustrated guides to the Berlin royal palaces and parks, which had recently been opened to the public for the first time. These were later joined by other books in a series titled Deutsche Kunst.

In 1922, the DKV began another series named Deutsche Lande. One of these volumes, Das alte Straßburg (1923), featured prewar photographs by Paul Wolff, and was prefaced with a lament for the loss of the city to the French. Strasbourg Cathedral, the focus of many of the photographs, was a touchstone of both the German Gothic revival – traceable to its appreciation in an essay by Goethe of 1771–72 – and of German nationalism, thanks to its geographic location. Thus it was from the outset an emblem of nationalistic art history. That this particular book on the subject was published by a quasi-governmental body – while the official policy was the acceptance of the terms of Versailles – shows art history functioning as the subconscious of the state, a realm in which forbidden aspirations could be expressed. After 1933 these dreams were to be realised when art history was weaponised in the service of geopolitics, a development for which the ground had been laid by the republican government.

When the economy stabilised in 1924, Walter de Gruyter bought out the other partners, and DKV came under the leadership of two men: the art historian Burkhard Meier and de Gruyter’s sales representative Gerhard Lüdtke. In the same year, it began a series titled Deutsche Dome with a book on Naumburg Cathedral, which comprised dramatic photographs by Walter Hege and an introduction, or Beschreibung (‘description’) as the title page has it, by Wilhelm Pinder [fig. 22]. This peculiar designation seems to relegate the art historian to an echoer of the image, not explaining or interpreting but merely replicating it in words. (It also brings to mind the contemporaneous role of the film narrator, who stood in darkened cinemas explaining the action of silent films.) Significantly, Hege’s name appears above Pinder’s, an arrangement that occurs in several books in the series; unlike in Langewiesche’s books, the image is now explicitly prioritised over the word.

It is striking that this company established to exploit the archive of the Meßbildanstalt – which had first proved its commercial potential in a book on Deutsche Dome – chose to illustrate its own first publication on a cathedral with photographs that not only came from outside the archive, but also radically broke with the Meßbildanstalt’s ‘scientific’ visual protocols. But the Anstalt had already changed significantly since its foundation in 1885 by Meydenbauer, who had retired in 1909. After the war the organisation experienced serious financial difficulties, and from 1921 – when it was incorporated into DKV as the Staatliche Bildstelle – no further Meßbilder were produced. Hand-held cameras were used instead, and the photographs in the collection were cropped and retouched to make them more commercially attractive. Taken under the protection of the capitalist state, in a moment of crisis the veil of academic disinterest is stripped from the historical archive to reveal its commodity character, a situation that feels strikingly familiar today.
Angela Matyssek has written an incisive analysis of DKV’s Deutsche Dome series, which she interprets as representing the two poles of art-historical photography in the later years of the Weimar Republic: the documentary mode on the one hand, and on the other, an attempt to reproduce the ‘eternity’ and ‘majesty’ of the artwork.\footnote{Matyssek, \textit{Kunstgeschichte als fotografische Praxis}, pp. 254–73.} I am more interested in the way that photographs are employed to produce history within the specific structure of bookspace, but I shall refer to her argument where it pertains to what follows. The first four books in the series comprised Hege/Pinder collaborations on the cathedrals of Naumburg (1924) and Bamberg (1927); a book on Strasbourg Cathedral with an introduction by Hans Weigert and photographs selected by Richard Hamann (1928); and \textit{Norddeutsche Backsteindome}, ‘North German Brick Cathedrals’ with photographs by Albert Renger-Patzsch and an introduction by Werner Burmeister (1929). These were all written by nationalists, and Pinder, his student Weigert, and Burmeister would all go on to work with the National Socialist regime, as would Hege. Nevertheless, as Matyssek points out, despite the ideological proximity of their authors, these volumes fail to cohere as a series. Not only do they conflict with each other, they also contradict themselves, as the rhetorical strategies of the textual portions clash with the photographic elements.

The first volume by Hege and Pinder set the format for the series. The books are larger than Langewiesche’s, they are cloth-bound, and their covers are stamped with motifs taken from the cathedrals represented within – which effectively identifies the bookspace with the architectural space in question. The paper is also heavier, the printing superior, and the cost correspondingly higher: between 18 and 32 marks. These, then, were not intended for workers and farmers, but for the middle classes, for the ‘educated’, and their contents reflect this. Pinder’s introduction is written in his
customary florid style, but it is scholarly and methodical – and fifty-two pages long. The publisher’s commercial aspirations may have been one of the reasons for the choice of Hege as photo-author for the Naumburg book; although relatively unknown at this point, his images must have struck Meier as more marketable than the *Meßbilder*.

Hege was born in Naumburg in 1893, and studied painting with Hugo Gugg. (Gugg was an associate of Schultze-Naumburg’s; the latter would later hire Hege as a professor at the Staatliche Kunsthochschule that supplanted the Bauhaus in Weimar.) He also studied with the prominent portrait photographer Hugo Erfurth. Hege began photographing Naumburg Cathedral regularly in the early 1920s, and published a six-volume portfolio of these images in 1923.¹¹⁹ It was a selection of these images that appeared in the DKV volume the following year.

Hege’s photography tends towards psychological intensity conjured with strongly contrasting chiaroscuro, close-ups, and occasional vertiginous angles [fig. 23]. In its affective intensity, it is less the inheritor of the Pictorialist tradition than the contemporary of Expressionist cinematography – and indeed Hege would go on to make a number of short films, some of them on the subject of cathedrals, which will be discussed in more detail in the following chapter. Film also had a more direct impact on new images added to later editions of the book. Following the publication of the first edition, Hege had made a film of Bamberg cathedral, and this experience fed back into his photographic technique. Whereas he had previously spent a great deal of time waiting for specific light conditions, he now employed electrical lighting that allowed him to produce the chiaroscuro effects himself: a very literal manifestation of the

¹¹⁹ Beckmann, ‘Walter Heges Bildbände’.
‘directorial mode’ of photography described by A.D. Coleman.\textsuperscript{120}

As Matyssek points out, this cinematic sensibility also pervades the bookspace of the volume: the rhythm of the sequence, the use of images that circle or close in on certain features, the juxtaposition of images on spreads – this creates a cinematic montage in time for the reader. What Matyssek misses is that this narratological potential of the photographs also features in Pinder’s analysis, if only to be dismissed:

Each figure is a complex in itself, a complete fiery forge of possible deeds, here covered and smoldering, there emitting flames. A secret, gigantic excitement spreads itself through the room – it is as if an atmosphere chafes against an atmosphere, and kindles. And so it appears as if a scene is intended here … Thus arises that ‘as if’ a drama – but it is only a collection of grandiose character actors.\textsuperscript{121}

This group of monadic figurines is emblematic of Pinder’s theory of generations, which would find full theoretical expression two years later in his book \textit{The Problem of Generations in European Art History} (1926). He developed this theory to explain the ‘simultaneity of the nonsimultaneous’, the fact that each historical moment cannot be resolved into a coherent and unified \textit{Zeitgeist}. Instead, he argued that each generation has its own fate, which unfurls in the same chronological time but according to its own inexorable logic. These fates or ‘entelechies’ are uninfluenced by external forces: the generations, like the figures in Naumburg cathedral, do not speak to one another. So unlike Pinder’s earlier photobook, \textit{Deutsche Dome}, in which technology was described as the enemy of architectural understanding, here the art historian has come to a


rapprochement with the medium: as we shall see, the photographs are used by the historian to illustrate his own theoretical construction, albeit in his opposition to them. This shows Pinder coming to terms with remediation, as a new technology – photography, specifically moving photography – yields new knowledge in an older medium, the book.

Pinder begins and concludes his text with a remark on the photographs. In doing so he immediately distinguishes the two portions of the book, despite Matyssek’s assertion that they share a pathetic and submissive stance vis-à-vis the artwork. In fact, Pinder is at pains to distance himself from the images: ‘They are made with much warm affection, unconcerned, of course, with the theoretical demands of science, but nevertheless always – even in ‘incorrect’ angles and lighting – only representing what is present, what is real, even a few times what is seldom or never recorded.’ To unpick this statement: Hege’s photographs are not ‘correct’, which refers to the idea expressed by Wölfflin that sculpture dictates a specific point of view. Pinder himself subscribed to this notion, as is revealed by a 1941 essay of his on art-historical film in which he insisted that sculptures should not be turned while they are being shot, since this confounds the intention of the artist. Why then does he relax his guard in this instance?

122 Matyssek, Kunstgeschichte als fotografische Praxis, p. 264.
123 ‘Sie sind mit viel warmer Liebe gemacht, ubekümmert gewiß um theoretische Forderungen der Wissenschaft, aber doch immer, auch in “unvorschriftsmäßiger” Drehung und Beleuchtung, nur Vorhandenes, Wirkliches, einige Male auch selten oder nie Festgehaltenes wiedergebend.’ Pinder, Der Naumburger Dom, p. 51.
124 Wilhelm Pinder, ‘Einige Worte zum kunstwissenschaftlichen Unterrichtsfilm’, Film und Bild: Zeitschrift der Reichsanstalt für Film und Bild 7 (1941), 11–2. I shall discuss this further in the next chapter.
A look at the introduction of the second Hege/Pinder volume throws more light on
Pinder’s position vis-à-vis photography. Pinder begins with a long and rather dense note
on Hege’s contribution:

Photographs give less and more than originals. If they represent sculpture, the
loss of colour is the least [significant]. Frequently, impressions of colour and
material are retained to an astonishing extent. However, tactility is lacking, and
the confusion of scale is misleading: the large appears small, and the small,
large. Often the lack of corporeality can be compensated to a surprising degree
by the correct selection of multiple views. The distortion of scale remains an
evil. However, this evil always has its advantages. The expert too can often
discover essentials from illustrations. It is no dishonour for him – as long as he
knows to compare the original. The lineament of a total form is often revealed
completely by the small; the deepest detail is revealed by great scale. Views that
were not definitely intended can be especially instructive: they can give us the
proximity with which the creator saw his work as he made it. ‘Painterly shots’
can also unlock important things: possibilities of form about which the creator
himself had no inkling, and nevertheless unconscious core values are conscious
possibilities of the future. Reproductions isolate essentials: they can, like
physical experiments, entail the instructive isolation of valuable situations, from
which disturbing secondary impressions are excluded.\textsuperscript{125}

There are a number of points made here, one of the most suggestive of which is that
‘incorrect’ angles are valuable because they can reveal not what the artist intended but
what he saw as he worked; in other words, they can reveal the process rather than the

\textsuperscript{125} ‘Photographien geben weniger und mehr als Originale. Stellen sie Steinplastik dar,
so ist der Verlust der Farbigkeit der geringste; oft ist erstaunlich viel vom Farben- und
Stoffeindruck gerettet. Es fehlt aber die Greifbarkeit; und irreführend ist die Verzerrung
der Maßstäbe: das Große erscheint klein, das Kleine groß. Das Fehlen der
Körperhaftigkeit kann oft durch richtige Wahl mehrerer Ansichten überraschend
ausgeglichen werden. Die Verzerrung der Maßstäbe bleibt ein Übel. Aber überall hat
auch das Übel seine Vorzüge. Auch der Fachmann erkennt oft Wesentliches aus der
Abbildung. Es ist kein Schande für ihn – sofern er das Original zu vergleichen weiß.
Der Zug einer Gesamtform wird durch den kleinen, die Tiefe eines Details durch den
großen Maßstab oft erst ganz verdeutlicht. Ansichten, die nicht die endgültig gemeinten
sind, können besonders lehrreich sein: sie können uns die Nähe geben, in der der
Schaffende sein Werk bei der Arbeit sah. Auch „malerische Aufnahmen“ können
Wichtiges erschließen: Möglichkeiten der Form, die der Schaffende selbst nicht ahnte
und die gleichwohl unbewußte Keimwerte künftiger bewußter Möglichkeiten sind.
Abbildungen isolieren Wesentliches; sie können, wie physikalische Experimente,
lehrreiche Isolation wertvoller Situationen bedeuten, indem sie störende
Nebeneindrücke fernhalten.’ Wilhelm Pinder and Walter Hege, \textit{Der Bamberger Dom
und seine Bildwerke}, 2\textsuperscript{nd} edn (Berlin: Deutscher Kunstverlag, 1933), p. 5.
idea. Along with Pinder’s assertion of the material traces revealed by the medium, this refers to the documentary function of photography, and as such is a distinctly different appraisal of the medium to that of Schultze-Naumburg and Langewiesche. Pinder also suggests that photographs of past art can stimulate future art: he thus shares, to a lesser degree perhaps, the aim voiced by Schultze-Naumburg that the photographic history of art should have a practical effect on production. It is significant that Pinder terms these productive images ‘painterly’: they have to be made with an artistic sensibility if they are to speak to artists.

Unlike Schultze-Naumburg, however, Pinder is not repulsed by distortions of scale or close-ups – it is precisely these, he thinks, that can be most productive. It was likely these techniques, as used in this book, that Schultze-Naumburg was thinking of when he discussed photographing the Bamberg Rider in his own 1938 book on Bildmäßige Photographie, condemning the use of scaffolding to get closer to the object and ‘unnatural’ viewpoints. The difference in their approaches is partly attributable to the stance of the two men towards contemporary art: Pinder did not share Schultze-Naumburg’s extreme aversion to recent developments, and as such could appreciate the potential of photographic ‘distortion’, whereas the latter bemoaned the effect that this had had on modern painting. Nevertheless, despite his approval of Hege’s photographs, Pinder carefully differentiates them from his own work: they are ‘painterly’, ‘unscientific’, ‘incorrect’ – whereas, by implication, we are to understand that his writing manifests the opposite tendencies. The photographs thereby function as a means of validating Pinder’s approach, and in fact Pinder’s care in distinguishing between himself and Hege might suggest an apprehension that his own work – which is

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126 For a discussion of the problem inherent in an understanding of aesthetic experience of a mere recapitulation of the process of creation, see Rebentisch, Aesthetics of Installation Art, pp. 88–89.
excessively impressionistic by today’s standards – might be tarred by the same brush. Artistic photographs, however, by staying within the realm of art, do not encroach on the scientist’s ground, and even work to guarantee its objectivity.

Pinder also distinguishes the two sections of the books in another way. He begins the Naumburg book with an assertion of the building’s special character: it is, like Bamberg, an expression of ‘innerdeutsche Kultur’, untainted by foreign influence – that is, by France. As such, it occupies a peculiar temporality: ‘that mysterious simultaneity of the day before yesterday and the day after tomorrow that permits no simple today, and belongs to German destiny.’ Here, Pinder is referring once more to the ideas behind his theory of generations. He makes another reference to nonsimultaneity in the Bamberg book, but this time, the fragmentary temporality of the object is mirrored by the bookspace itself: ‘A unity like Bamberg Cathedral is simultaneously a past becoming and a present that has become. This double character is brought out in our book in that the plates of the experience sequence [Tafeln der Erlebnisfolge] correspond to the present, and the text and its illustrations correspond to the temporal sequence of history [Zeitfolge der Geschichte].’ The two logics of the book are thus: the textual portion is chronologically ordered, following movement through time, and the photographs are experientially ordered, following movement through space (as such, they are cinematographic). The two temporalities, chronological and experiential, are portrayed as divergent, and yet they unite in the art-historical object.

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Pinder identifies different media as suitable for representing different temporalities (and he will later specify film as the most appropriate medium for the representation of architecture and sculpture). But this is not a strict division, since photographs and text work together in the introduction to produce the *Zeitfolge der Geschichte* in all its non-simultaneity, and indeed photographs could do this alone, by the intermixture of different architectural modes within an image sequence. This then is not necessarily an argument about medium specificity, but an affirmation of the multiple potentialities of the image and word in producing knowledge of the artwork. In these terms, there is a strong distinction between Pinder’s work and that of Schultze-Naumburg: whereas the latter sought to produce an impression of (lost) historical coherence, Pinder now works against this. Instead, Pinder projects the modern sensation of fragmentation backwards into eternity. He affirms the lack of communication between chronologically and spatially proximate elements, emblematised by the famous donor portraits in Naumburg Cathedral, by insisting on the authorship of elements within the same spatial ensemble by different masters, representing different generations. For Pinder, even coherent space can be temporally fragmented, to such an extent that the elements are entirely non-communicative: his project is in this regard fundamentally modernist, albeit in the pessimistic vein of *The Waste Land*. This fractured space-time is mirrored in the bookspace itself.

Pinder’s theory of generational nonsimultaneity first developed out of an analysis of medieval sculpture in Würzburg, the spatiality of which – its ensemble character – provoked questions about the periodization of proximate but dissimilar elements (it would also spur Panofsky to reflect on the non-simultaneity of historical time in his

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1927 essay on the sculpture at Reims\textsuperscript{130}). It is probable that photography, spatialised in bookspace, intensified the awareness of nonsimultaneity, since it enabled the juxtaposition of widely divergent objects that had been created in the same historical moment: Pinder certainly used it in this way. In the photobook, this non-simultaneity can be brought out in a number of ways; the structure of the codex itself allows the production of complex temporalities, ‘actual history’ as Kracauer put it, in which there is both an overarching sequential thrust and a second tempo of runs and spreads. It is possible to take this in a more radical direction – one that reintroduces the agency that Pinder drains from history with his fatalism. By arranging the images in a way that highlights the fact that bookspace is not necessarily traversed sequentially – as Johannes Molzahn did in his design of Bauten und Pläne (1927) – nonsequential use is thereby encouraged. Whether this challenge was taken up by more avant-garde producers of photobooks on architectural history will be a question for the next section of this chapter.

In contrast to the Hege/Pinder volumes, Richard Hamann and Hans Weigert’s book on Strasbourg is quite unarticulated. Here, the images are not authored by a photographer at all, but selected by an art historian. Hamann was chair of art history at Marburg, and in 1913 he had founded the Bildarchiv there, from which many of these photographs were chosen (rather than ‘describing’ the images, he retains the more conventional title of editor). While the ‘description’ by Weigert focuses relentlessly on the national significance of Strasbourg, Hamann uses his foreword to discuss the scientific status of the photographs. He is especially concerned to distinguish his approach to the medium

from that of the Hege/Pinder books – his opening sentence states that ‘The image offered to readers in this volume of German Cathedrals is not in any sense the same as in the previous volumes’. By contrast, he wishes to restrict photography to its role as a servant of art (dienende Aufgabe), free of any artistic pretensions in its own right, and as such he returns to sequencing his images in chronological order. At the same time, the images themselves are relatively unmanipulated compared to those in previous books considered in this chapter: unlike the retouched Meßbild of Strasbourg that appeared in Pinder’s Deutsche Dome, here the scaffolding on the flank and front of the building is left exposed. Although, as Matyssek points out, the photographs in the this book and those in the two Naumburg and Bamberg volumes are in fact occasionally indistinguishable, ‘The strict separation [insisted upon by Hamann] was also a rhetorical stabilisation of scientific authority.’ Hamann retreats from the Zwischenland der Kunstgeschichte, the no man’s land between art and science straddled by the Hege/Pinder volume.

While Hamann had taken exception to the previous book in the series, in the final instance I shall examine here – the Renger-Patzsch/Burmeister volume on brick Gothic of 1929 (dated 1930 on its title page) – conflict breaks out between the covers. Many of Renger-Patzsch’s images are in the standard mode of architectural photography familiar from the books we have hitherto encountered, but others employ vertiginous angles, and several are cropped in order to reveal repetitive forms. As Pepper Stetler remarked in


the context of Renger-Patzsch’s other book of the same year, *Die Welt ist schön*, this approach, when applied to mass-produced commodities, seemed aimed at ordering the incoherent modern world [fig. 24]. When reapplied to the supposedly unified era of the Gothic, this typological gaze – which fragments and decontextualises in order to reveal repetitive formal types – has an estranging effect. This is especially clear when compared to the other architectural photography we have encountered so far, which tended to prioritise the long view (in Schultze-Naumburg’s case, this was an explicit precept), and the building as an organic whole.

In contrast, Renger-Patzsch’s raking, close-cropped view of flying buttresses on the Marienkirche in Lübeck emphasises the repetitive form of the members [fig. 25], as does a view of whitewashed capitals in a church in Gadebusch taken from a high gallery [fig. 26]. These forms, it is implied, could be infinitely extended beyond the frame: the building is no longer an idealised whole, but a series of operations, a ‘code without cessation’ as Michael Hays described Hilbersheimer’s Hochhausstadt project of 1924. In turning a mode of vision developed in his advertising photography on the Gothic church, Renger-Patzsch modernises historical architecture. However, he does this more radically than Schultze-Naumburg, who still paid lip service to painterly conventions and merely arranged his photographs typologically: now, by contrast, the visual mode itself conforms to the industrial-typological organising principle, which is decontextualising, deracinating, dependent on the equivalence and exchangeability of all objects. But although is is anachronistic in one sense, in this instance it is also peculiarly appropriate to the subject: brick-built Gothic is composed of mass-produced, prefabricated building materials. It thus reveals the present in the past: it is, to employ a phrase of Benjamin’s that I shall discuss further in the next section, a dialectical image.

This seems to have been the cause of some disagreement between the book’s contributors, since a prominent note on the contents page informs us that the ‘ordering and captioning of the images was undertaken by Dr Werner Burmeister’. Burmeister also wrote a defamatory foreword on the subject of the images, and while this was not printed, Matyssek notes that unlike the other volumes, he does not include any photographs in his introduction, and foregoes a frontispiece. The images and introduction are even printed on different papers. However, this separation is not complete: the text invades the space of the image in the form of Burmeister’s captions, which go far beyond the customary statement of location and the name of the building.

In addition to this information, evocative phrases refer both to art-historical interpretations and also to the mode of photography. For instance, the image of buttresses is described as ‘Fantasia of masses in a steep upwards view’, the shot of capitals in the church in Gadebusch is labelled ‘Organic-sumptuous interior form of the early period’, while an interior shot of the ambulatory of the Marienstidenkapelle in Lübeck is described with Wölfflinian inflexion (and perhaps a hint of disapproval) as ‘View through painterly-incoherent spatial form’.

Art historian Carl Georg Heise wrote to Renger-Patzsch describing these captions as ‘completely idiotic’: ‘I had already been annoyed by the poetic journalistic style of the description of the contents. However, I had never in my worst dreams imagined that this should reappear under every image... Captions are disturbing to your photographs in any case, it is unnecessary to extend them, it is utter madness, the more so since the whole point of the list of plates would have been to accommodate them if you wanted to completely dispense with them.’


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Patzsch’s who had edited and introduced his book *Die Welt ist schön*, the plate section of which is entirely free of text. Here, on the other hand, the word engages in paragonic conflict with the image – one that Matyssek notes but does not fully explore.

In Benjamin’s phrase captions are ‘anchors’ preventing photographic images from floating off into unconstrained signification. ‘Free-floating contemplation is no longer appropriate to them. They unsettle the viewer; he feels challenged to find a particular way to approach them. At the same time, illustrated magazines begin to put up signposts for him – whether these are right or wrong is irrelevant. For the first time, captions become obligatory.’\(^\text{135}\) In this instance, however, the signposts do not free the photographs from mere fashionable cliché so that they can become revolutionary tools (as Benjamin elaborated in ‘The Author as Producer’, with Renger-Patzsch in mind).\(^\text{136}\) Instead they work to counteract ‘free-floating contemplation’ by reinserting the viewing subject, as dislodged by the representational mode. If, as Michael Hays said of Hilbersheimer’s photomontages, endless repetition replaces the humanist subject bodied-forth in perspective with a subject ‘constituted by the system’,\(^\text{137}\) these captions can be considered quotations from an authoritative viewer who stands behind the reader’s shoulder, intoning reassertions of our unitary subjectivity into our ear. In doing so, the very emptiness of these sentences, their redundant doubling of the work of the images, demonstrates that the obstinacy of the image has conquered the word.

\(^{136}\) Benjamin, ‘The Author As Producer’, *Selected Writings* II.II, pp. 768–82 (p. 775).
\(^{137}\) Hays, *Modernism and the Posthumanist Subject*, p. 176.
In attempting to publicise and monetise the Meßbildanstalt archive – aims that were not realised in this series of volumes on cathedrals, drawing as they did on other photographic sources – the DKV produced a bookspace that crossed the territories of art and science, with occasionally explosive results. The scars on the Renger-Patzsch/Burmeister volume reveal the conflict resulting when photography met text on the edge of disciplinary boundaries. The audience addressed by the art historian is quite different from that addressed by the photographer, and while both struggled to produce a space for the discourse of architectural history within the realm of commercial publishing, the results were incoherent. In the case of the Hege and Pinder collaborations, on the other hand, the distinct approaches of the two authors were acknowledged as a reflection of divergent modes of architectural understanding, the experiential versus the historiographic, and indeed this difference was put to work as a means of representing the complex temporality of the object – without, however, producing a true dialectic between these elements, which must remain incommunicado according to Pinder’s monadic schema. Finally, in the book on Strasbourg edited by Hamann, the art historian rejects experience and tames the image by taking its production under his disciplinary aegis, ordering the photographic portion as a micrological series. No ‘actual history’ can be produced here in the realm of historicist conformity. I shall now turn to other figures who were less concerned with the maintenance of disciplinary propriety and who harnessed the dialectics of image and text, experience and history, in different, more productive ways.
The dialectical image: Sigfried Giedion and Adolf Behne (1928)

Towards the end of the 1920s, the profusion of photobooks on historical architecture was confronted by a burst of publishing activity around the *Neues Bauen*. The resulting books varied in tone from surveys to more explicitly argumentative works. In the former category, Langewiesche commissioned a series of four books on Germany’s modern architecture from Walter Müller-Wulckow, which appeared from 1925 to 1930,\(^{138}\) Adolf Platz’s significantly more expensive *Die Baukunst der neuesten Zeit* was first published in 1927.\(^{139}\) A wave of more polemical works attended the Werkbund’s 1927 exhibition in Stuttgart, among them Werner Gräff (who was publicist for the event) and Willi Baumeister’s *Bau und Wohnung*, Walter Curt Behrendt’s *Der Sieg des neuen Baustils* and Ludwig Hilbersheimer’s *Internationale neue Baukunst*, all published in 1927.\(^{140}\) These were concerned with new buildings and as such do not come into the purview of this investigation; however, there was also Adolf Behne’s *Eine Stunde Architektur*, ‘One Hour of Architecture’, which situated the new architecture in its


\(^{139}\) Adolf Platz, *Die Baukunst der neuesten Zeit* (Berlin: Propyläen, 1927). The first edition contained only German and Dutch buildings: a second edition appeared in 1930, enlarged by more recent and international works.

\(^{140}\) Werner Gräff and Willi Baumeister, *Bau und Wohnung* (Stuttgart: [publisher unknown], 1927); Walter Curt Behrendt, *Der Sieg des neuen Baustils* (Stuttgart: Akademischer Verlag, 1927); Ludwig Hilbersheimer, *Internationale neue Baukunst* (Stuttgart: Julius Hoffmann, 1927). More critical responses also appeared, such as Werner Hegemann’s *Reihenhausfassaden* (Berlin: Wasmuth, 1929) which was also published in English as *Facades of Buildings: Fronts of Old and Modern Business and Dwelling Houses* (London: Ernest Benn, 1929), and Paul Schultze-Naumburg’s exceptionally bigoted work *Das Gesicht des deutschen Hauses* (Munich: Callwey, 1929), which was designated as part of the *Kulturarbeiten* series.
historical context, published in 1928.\footnote{141} In the same year, Sigfried Giedion published his 
\textit{Bauen in Frankreich, Bauen in Eisen, Bauen in Eisenbeton}, ‘Building in France, 
Building in Iron, Building in Reinforced Concrete’, which also attempted a genealogy 
of the \textit{Neues Bauen}, but pointedly looked beyond Germany in its search for origins.

The authors of these works, Adolf Behne (1885–1948) and Sigfried Giedion (1888– 
1968), were two of the most prominent propagandists for the new architecture. Both had 
studied art history under Wölfflin: Behne in Berlin (where he was also taught by 
Simmel), Giedion in Munich. Behne became closely involved with the avant-garde 
following his graduation in 1912, and his politics grew increasingly socialist,\footnote{142} which 
was a significant barrier to an academic career in the last years of the empire. Instead he 
earned a living teaching at the \textit{Volkshochschulen} in Berlin and by his very prolific 
journalism. Giedion, who came from a wealthy Swiss family, completed his dissertation 
in 1922, and was converted to the cause of modern architecture after visiting the 
Bauhaus exhibition in Weimar the following year. He was one of the founding members 
of the Congrès Internationale d’Architecture Moderne (CIAM) in 1928, becoming the 
body’s first general secretary.

\footnote{141} Adolf Behne, \textit{Eine Stunde Architektur} (Stuttgart: Akademischer Verlag, 1928). This 
book has briefly been discussed by Frederic J. Schwartz, ‘Form Follows Fetish: Adolf 
Behne and the Problem of \textit{Sachlichkeit}’, \textit{Oxford Art Journal} 21, no. 2 (1998), 45–77; in 
Rosemarie Haag Bletter’s introduction to Adolf Behne, \textit{The Modern Functional 
Building}, trans. Michael Robinson (Santa Monica: Getty, 1996); and by Spyros 
published by Akademischer Verlag that included Werner Gräff’s \textit{Eine Stunde Auto} 
(1928) and Jan Tschichold’s \textit{Eine Stunde Druckgestaltung} (1930). All were designed by 
Paul Renner. A volume by Cornelis van Eesterens titled \textit{Eine Stunde Städtebau} was 
planned but never appeared. 
\footnote{142} Behne’s politics have been the subject of some debate: he avoided explicit 
statements of position, but he seems to have a parliamentary socialist rather than a 
revolutionary. For a summary see Rosemarie Haag Bletter’s introduction to Behne, \textit{The 
Modern Functional Building}, pp. 6–8.
That both Behne and Giedion should turn to historical investigations in the later 1920s is a reflection of the situation in which the new architecture then found itself. The search for origins did not begin at this point – Le Corbusier had previously identified antecedents in American industrial architecture, understood as Platonic monuments, and indeed in Greece itself. This was a manifestation of the post-war rappel a l’ordre and largely developed from within the new architecture. By contrast, I would argue that – contrary to Sokratis Georgiadis’s assertion that ‘at the time Bauen in Frankreich … was being written, the movement felt no explicit need for historical justification’ – the search for ancestors was crystallised in Germany in the later 1920s by external forces: the Neues Bauen’s critics, who grew ever more vociferous as its representatives won prestigious appointments and commissions.143 These critics – the most vicious of whom was Schultz-Naumburg – denounced the new architecture as historically and geographically illegitimate. It may seem perversely provocative, then, that in reaction Behne and Giedion should turn with filial piety to a period that had been equally condemned by both their critics and their colleagues – the nineteenth century.

Figures of the previous generation such as Loos (b.1870) and Schultz-Naumburg (b.1869) had been united in rejecting the nineteenth century’s architecture as inauthentic and incoherent; Behne and Giedion rejected these judgments in turn, using photography to redeem it.144 They did so for different reasons, for different audiences, and in

143 Sokratis Georgiadis, Sigfried Giedion: An Intellectual Biography, trans. Colin Hall (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1993), p. 42. Although Giedion began his book in 1926, before the reaction against Weissenhof reached fever pitch, the conservatives in the Werkbund had been agitating against the exhibition since it was awarded to Mies, and in 1925 the Bauhaus had already been forced out of Weimar by the Nationalists.

144 The reviewers of Bauen in Frankreich were clear that this was a distinguishing feature of the book. Alfred Gellhorn, for instance, saw it as a ‘clearance of the nineteenth century’s name’. Cited in Sokratis Georgiadis’s introduction to Sigfried Giedion, Building in France, Building in Iron, Building in Ferro-Concrete, trans. J. Duncan Berry (Santa Monica: Getty, 1995), p. 51. However, there were similar efforts
markedly different ways. Their covers are exemplary of their approaches: Behne’s book has a photomontage by Max Fischer showing Dürer’s St Jerome transplanted to the roof of Le Corbusier’s Doppelhaus at Weissenhof; Giedion’s cover, designed by Moholy-Nagy, shows a negative photograph of the Pont Transbordeur in Marseilles superimposed with the volume’s title [figs. 27, 28]. These designs announce the arguments within: Behne focuses on the fitness of architecture to the user’s needs, whereas Giedion is concerned with engineering. However, the books share a method: both strip away the façade to find what lies beneath – in Behne’s case, the plan, in Giedion’s, the structure – and these are both shown to have unexpected antecedents.

Giedion’s book was designed in collaboration with László Moholy-Nagy (as the surviving proofs show, Giedion was largely responsible for the internal layout, while Moholy-Nagy created the cover) [fig. 29]. Formally, it looks something like a book-length ‘Typofoto’ in the mould of Moholy-Nagy’s ‘Film Sketch’, which had appeared in the latter’s 1925 book Malerei–Photographie–Film [fig. 30]. In the section on Le Corbusier’s housing in Pessac, Giedion famously observes that ‘only film can make the new architecture comprehensible [faßbar, ‘tangible’ or ‘graspable’].’ Thanks to Moholy-Nagy’s cinematic ‘Typofoto’ design, however, bookspace is remediated by film, and subjected to the same frenetic montage as Potemkin. Unlike the film-remediated bookspace of the Hege/Pinder volumes for Deutscher Kunstverlag, here historiography interpenetrates the Erlebnisfolge, and history itself is subjected to montage and to jump cuts.

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afloat: the ‘beauty of the metropolis’ had been discovered by August Endell in a book of the same name of 1908. A further reappraisal had been carried out by Ludwig Hilbersheimer in his Großstadtdarchitektur of 1927, in which he identified the operas of the nineteenth century as a step towards the expression of the free plan, despite their historicist accretions. Ludwig Hilbersheimer, Metropolisarchitecture, trans. Richard Anderson and Julie Dawson (New York: GSAPP Books, 2012), pp. 218–19.

145 His publisher Biermann attempted to dissuade Giedion from hiring an artist to design the book. Geogiadis, introduction to Giedion, Building in France, p. 45.

146 Giedion, Building in France, p. 176.

Giedion took many of the photographs in *Bauen in Frankreich* himself, and these, along with numerous drawings, are interspersed through a running text, with occasional black bars and arrows creating connections between images. The text is broken up into sections and subsections by titles, and the images are accompanied by captions, which are often long and discursive. Like Langewiesche before them, and Benjamin’s *One-Way Street* of the same year, both writers present their books as a refunctioned medium suited for modern perceptual conditions. Behne announces his architectural history as fit for one hour’s consumption – about the length of an average feature film at the time – while Giedion prefaces his work with the following statement:

**PRELIMINARY REMARK**

This book is written and designed so that it is possible for the hurried reader to understand the developmental path from the captioned illustrations; the text furnishes closer explication; the footnotes provide more extensive references.

In its complex temporality, Giedion’s book is also comparable to the 1927 Pinder/Hege volume on Bamberg. *Bauen in Frankreich* is similarly multi-speed, but unlike Pinder, Giedion does not explicitly state that this is an attempt to parallel the mixed time of the object; rather it is presented as adequate to the non-simultaneity of the reader, of contemporary life. It can be read as a picture book by the hurried, and yet its footnotes also provide deeper detail for slower perusal. It could potentially also cater not only to temporal multiplicities within the reading subject but also to multiple publics: it could be used by both expert and inexpert audiences.

But what kind of history is this? The title itself introduces an element of confusion, announcing both national and material approaches. (In fact Giedion and his publisher

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147 For a discussion of Giedion’s photography see Sigfried Giedion und die Fotografie: Bildinszenierungen der Moderne, ed. Werner Oechslin and Gregor Harbusch (Zurich: GTA, 2010).

had difficulty agreeing on an appropriate name). The two major sections of the book, on Iron and Ferroconcrete, are both subdivided into periods: history is organised by and subordinate to material. Giedion opens with a statement of the historian’s position:

The task of the historian is first to recognise the seeds and to indicate – across all layers of debris – the continuity of development. The historian, unfortunately, has used the perspective of his occupation to give eternal legitimation to the past and thereby to kill the future, or at least to obstruct its development. Today the historian’s task appears to be the opposite: to extract from the vast complexity of the past those elements that will be the point of departure for the future. Giedion opens with a statement of the historian’s position:

This is quite explicitly history in the Nietzschean monumental mode that Manfredo Tafuri would reject as ‘operative’ in 1968. Tafuri, referring specifically to Giedion’s 1941 book, *Space, Time, and Architecture*, states that ‘The need of artistic avant-gardes to legitimise themselves has always led to a paradox: the new is justified by deforming the past … Instead of making history one makes ideology: which, besides betraying the task of history, hides the real possibilities of transforming reality.’ Such a history, while claiming to be progressive, tends to conservatism, since it clings to the past and insists on ‘the continuity of development’ instead of discovering lacunae. This is a Benjaminian critique that does not acknowledge the debt Benjamin owed to Giedion – specifically, to *Bauen in Frankreich* – and while it may be applicable to *Space, Time, and Architecture* it is not entirely true of Giedion’s earlier book, which does announce a break, backdating the origin of modern building to the invention of structural iron in the nineteenth century.

Nonetheless, the book’s *modus operandi* is to reveal submerged relationships. The means by which this is achieved is photography, or rather ‘Typofoto’: a cinematic remediation of the book. As was then conventional, Giedion opposes himself to the

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‘historicizing masks’ of the nineteenth century. However, he discovers value behind these masks, and uses photography to remove them. As in the cover image, which employs a negative to create an x-ray image, the lens will ‘scrape the decorative sludge off’ to find the true structure of the building and of time itself.152 These x-ray images continue through the book, for instance on a spread showing two photographs of the Eiffel Tower and Mart Stam’s design for the Rokin Dam in Amsterdam [fig. 31]. In neither of the depictions of the Eiffel Tower do we see the building whole: instead, cropped views within the structure function to estrange the familiar silhouette (‘undoubtedly a product of its age’153) and prioritise the network of structural members. The cropping suggests that these members extend beyond the frame – Giedion notes in the caption, ‘one reaches the conclusion viewing both buildings ARCHITECTURE NO LONGER HAS RIGID BOUNDARIES.’154 The girders of the Eiffel Tower literally break architecture’s boundary, in the form of a black arrow pointing from 1889 (the date of the tower) to 1926, when Stam made his design. The structural members of nineteenth century engineering are revealed as the structural members of history, subcutaneously joining the buildings of the past to those of the present and the future. Durchdringung in space becomes Durchdringung in time.

This insight was seized upon by Walter Benjamin.155 Giedion had asked his publisher to forward a copy to Benjamin, and the latter replied: ‘I am studying in your book … the difference between radical conviction and radical knowledge that refreshes the heart. You possess the latter, and therefore you are able to illuminate, or rather to uncover, the

152 Giedion, Building in France, p. 132.
153 Giedion, Building in France, p. 143.
154 Giedion, Building in France, p. 145.
tradition by observing the present."\textsuperscript{156} Benjamin would incorporate this approach into
his so-called Arcades Project, applying Giedion’s historical procedure to culture as a
whole: ‘Just as Giedion taught us to read the basic features of modern architecture in the
buildings from the middle of the nineteenth century, so we want to read modern life and
modern forms from the life and from the apparently secondary, lost forms of that
period.’\textsuperscript{157} This is Benjamin’s ‘Copernican revolution in historical perception.’\textsuperscript{158} For
Benjamin, Giedion’s book was a key that unlocked an arcane historical understanding
and prompted his development of the concept of the dialectical image, in which past and
present interpenetrate and thus illuminate the revolutionary energies smouldering in the
discarded rubbish of history.

Benjamin framed the task of revealing these energies thus:

\begin{quote}
A central problem of historical materialism that ought to be seen in the end:
Must the Marxist understanding of history necessarily be acquired at the expense
of the perceptibility of history? Or: in what way is it possible to conjoin a
heightened graphicness [\textit{Anschaulichkeit}] to the realization of the Marxist
method? The first stage in this undertaking will be to carry over the principle of
montage into history … To grasp the construction of history as such.\textsuperscript{159}
\end{quote}

The very structure of history in Giedion’s book – revealed by the principle of montage,
which brought together images as disparate as Eiffel’s florid 1878 exhibition hall and
Gropius’s 1926 Bauhaus – was adopted by Benjamin as an organisational tool for his
Arcades Project, which collects vast numbers of citations, interspersed with
commentaries, to reveal the wreckage of the nineteenth century as a dialectical image,
\textit{durchgedrängt} with the contemporary moment.

\textsuperscript{156} Benjamin to Giedion, 15 February 29, cited in Sokratis Georgiadis’s introduction to
Giedion, \textit{Building in France}, p. 53.
\textsuperscript{157} Benjamin, cited in Sokratis Georgiadis’s introduction to Giedion, \textit{Building in
France}, p. 76.
\textsuperscript{158} Walter Benjamin, \textit{The Arcades Project}, ed. Rolf Tiedemann, trans. Howard Eiland
\textsuperscript{159} Benjamin, \textit{Arcades Project}, p. 461.
However, if Giedion does achieve this in *Bauen in Frankreich*, Tafuri’s accusation still remains to be answered: does this history ‘hide the real possibilities of transforming reality’? The book ends with the rather weak hope that a new material will be invented to advance the history of building, as iron and ferroconcrete had previously done. However, Benjamin reads Giedion more dialectically than he himself seems capable. Although Giedion does make passing reference to the optical transformations wrought by new constructions, Benjamin focuses on Giedion’s photographs, ‘excellent examples’ of the ways that ‘magnificent urban views’ were opened up by nineteenth century engineering, which were at first only accessible by the worker and the engineer. He adds the word ‘Marxism’ to this observation: in this Lukácsian argument, access to knowledge is very literally determined by one’s relationship to the means of production, and the materials of the past are thereby already producing the conditions under which the future will be realised. In order to reach this position, however, Benjamin has read Giedion somewhat against the grain. The latter certainly does not provide what Tafuri sought, and found elsewhere in Hilbersheimer’s emphasis on the systemic changes necessary to socialise building. That Benjamin is able to locate this in Giedion’s photography speaks of the obstinacy of the photographs, irreducible to the relational nexus and textual context – the bookspace – in which they have been presented.

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Unlike Giedion, Behne does not begin his book *Eine Stunde Architektur* with a programmatic textual statement of the historian’s role. Instead, there is a photomontage frontispiece that establishes the book’s central actor – the human subject of architecture – and the argument that will follow [fig. 32]. However, this is presented in a somewhat deceptive manner. We are shown a series of heads: a mask from east Papua New Guinea

(a German colony until 1914), a knight’s helmet, an engraving of two Prussian officers by Otto Greiner, and a photograph of Paul Scheerbart, the famous advocate of crystalline architecture. This presents a concept of architectural progress that takes us from the warlike encumbrance of historical form, to the modern visionary – bareheaded, bespectacled, and pacifist. Although this forms the basis of Behne’s argument, this sequentiality will not be mirrored in the bookspace itself: historicist logic appears in this frontispiece as a kind of parody, to be undermined by the sequence of pages, and indeed contradicted by later montages in the book. In fact, it is a filmstrip, and as such it is susceptible to montage in a way that the historicist Zeitfolge der Geschichte is not.

Scheerbart had died in 1915 and he is not mentioned in the text, so his presence here may seem mysterious, especially since Behne was ostensibly more interested in Sachlichkeit (objectivity, sobriety) and Zweckmäßigkeit (functionality, utility) than crystal visions at this point. Nevertheless, Behne continued to keep Scheerbart’s memory alive in articles well into the 1930s, and the argument in Eine Stunde Architektur is Scheerbian in its vitalism. Indeed, Scheerbart is the modern Saint Jerome depicted on the cover: the medieval mystic beloved of Expressionism does not, as Rosemarie Haag Bletter asserts, simply become ‘a shorthand device for revealing the “new man” at the center of Sachlichkeit’. Rather, the saint – represented by St Jerome and Scheerbart – is sublated as function itself. Behne states at the end of the book:

161 For a discussion of Behne’s employment of these terms, see Schwartz, ‘Form Follows Fetish’.
'Function is the real saint in art history. It assists people to freedom over the world.'\textsuperscript{164} This was criticised as an overstatement at the time,\textsuperscript{165} but it is better understood as a strategic move on Behne’s part to make visible the connecting members between the pre-war avant-gardes and the architecture of the later 1920s. The saint on the roof terrace is an act of remembrance, like Behne’s other memorials for Scheerbart, designed to ward off the risk of a return to formalism – what he called in the book ‘pseudo-constructivist machine formalism’.\textsuperscript{166} In order to do this, he returns us to the primitive at the beginning of the sequence of images in the frontispiece, thus undermining the historicist logic it purports to represent.

The saint is also a figure of the author, who has left the study to work in the open air. Behne was never a member of the republic of scholars: rather than working for a university he taught at several Volkshochschulen in Berlin from 1912 until 1933. These institutions had been established after 1870 to spread higher learning among those not registered at universities. Their attendees were initially drawn from the middle classes but following the lapse of the Anti-Socialist Law in 1890, new Volkshochschulen were established to cater to working-class students. As Kai Gutshow has shown, Behne’s courses covered the basics of art appreciation such as ‘Antique Art’, ‘Representation in European Art’, ‘Introduction to Viewing Art’, and also more current topics including ‘The New Art: Futurism, Expressionism, Cubism and Dadaism’, ‘The New Art as an Expression of our Times’, ‘Art and Politics’, and ‘Industrial and Commercial

\textsuperscript{165} ‘H.H.’, review of \textit{Eine Stunde Architektur, Kunstblatt} 12, no. 12 (1928), 382.
\textsuperscript{166} Behne, \textit{Eine Stunde Architektur}, p. 55. The petrification of functionality into style and formalism was a recurrent theme of Behne’s in these years, and would erupt in the Dammerstock debate of 1930, when Behne criticised Gropius’s Zeilenbauten as mechanistic.
Buildings. Behne’s publishing activity expanded this educational mission beyond the classroom and into the domestic sphere.

His book is organised quite differently from Giedion’s. The latter is governed by a material split between iron (representing the nineteenth century) and reinforced concrete (representing the present), whereas Behne makes no such overarching divisions. And although, compared to Giedion’s ‘Typofoto’, Behne’s book observes a strict separation of text on the recto and images on the verso, the latter include photographs, plans, and illustrations taken from historical and contemporary sources, frequently two or three to a page, sometimes montaged. These often originate from very different historical periods. On page eight, for instance, there is a drawing of a castle from the *Tres riches heurs* and beneath it an aerial photograph of Berlin’s *Mietskaserne*, or tenement buildings [fig. 33]. On the facing page, Behne states:

> The widely held point of view is as follows: how dreadful are these metropolitan streets, and how beautiful the old castles in contrast. How deep have our architects sunk! Is a castle really superior to a *Mietskaserne*? (We have deliberately not selected a modern masterpiece, but a lowest common denominator) … Whoever compares a castle and a *Mietskaserne* as achievements, and who studies the plans and their relationships to their environments as closely as their facades, would probably come to another conclusion.168

In its prioritisation of the plan, this argument was by now somewhat conventional, but Behne was extraordinarily provocative in his choice of exemplar. The filthy, overcrowded *Mietskasernen* (literally ‘rental barracks’), as Berlin’s tenement buildings were known, had been the concern of social reformers since before the turn of the

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century.\(^\text{169}\) When he became city architect in 1926, Martin Wagner took up the campaign against the tenements with the support of Behne and his friend, the architect Bruno Taut. Behne himself had criticised them in his 1927 book *Neues Wohnen – Neues Bauen*, where he had described them as being precisely medieval, ‘the last castles’ in their isolated fortress.\(^\text{170}\)

In 1930, the urbanist Werner Hegemann would publish his monumental work on Berlin, which dedicated 500 pages to condemning Wilhelmine planning and domestic architecture, and Walter Benjamin adopted this narrative as the basis for a radio broadcast on the *Mietskaserne* for children, to which I shall turn in the next chapter. In a slightly later review of Hegemann’s book, Benjamin took a more critical view. ‘It never occurs to him that these barrackslike tenements, however dreadful as housing, have created streets whose windows reflect not only suffering and crime, but also the morning and evening sun with a desolate nobility found nowhere else.’\(^\text{171}\) Benjamin adds: ‘That which we wish to destroy cannot be presented simply as an abstract negative or as a counterexample’ – a clear reference to the polemical photographic practice established by Schultze-Naumburg.\(^\text{172}\)

Had Behne already performed this dialectical operation in his book of 1928 (it should perhaps be noted that Benjamin owned a copy of *Eine Stunde Architektur*), or does he simply invert the terms of Schultze-Naumburg’s historical binary: instead of opposing


good old things to bad new ones, pitting bad old things against good new ones? As we have already seen, neither writer employed quite such a simple narrative: Schultzze-Naumburg acknowledged some recent building, albeit only because it represented a return to tradition, and Behne positively revalued nineteenth-century architecture. He also performs some more complicated historical operations: he states that older buildings were in fact adequate to former needs, but needs change, and so must buildings, rather than becoming trapped in formal stasis.

This position is conveyed in the book’s most complex image [fig. 34]. An oval image of a Native American chief standing on the porch of a Doric temple is inserted at the heart of another photograph showing a network of steel beams. The image list at the back of the book tells us that the Doric building is the grave of Karl May, the enormously popular author of German-language Wild West fantasy novels who had died in 1912, the chief is Big Snake, and the beams belong to a bridge being constructed in the USA. Here, then, are three concentric Americas: the modern America of rational engineering, within which we see the romantic literary German version of America – embodied in a house of death – and then at the heart stands the authentic and originary living American. The facing text gives a clue as to how we should read this montage of elements: ‘primitive’ architectures were good in their day, but the senseless repetition of traditional forms has led to petrification. We must burst through the walls of this tomb to reattain the vitality of unencumbered function – embodied in the living ‘primitive’, the chief.

With this montage, which undoes the micrological progression of the historicist sequence in the book’s frontispiece, it seems to me that Behne comes somewhere near to Benjamin’s dialectical image. Does he also overcome what Tafuri understood as
‘operative history’? Behne certainly acknowledges historical breaks. Indeed, he begins his book with an absolute break: old houses weren’t dwellings, he insists, whereas now dwelling has begun. As we’ve already seen, Giedion himself acknowledges breaks, but they take very different views as to where those fractures occur. Unlike Giedion, Behne chooses a political event rather than a material innovation as his starting point: nothing other than the ‘great French Revolution signified the death-blow to style’ (and for Behne, style is the triumph of form over life).\(^{173}\)

Behne also differs from Giedion in proposing a historical method that seeks a route to historical accuracy, while acknowledging the presence of the viewer:

In order to understand a time and its creations, and in order to form a correct historical judgment of the same, we must first construct an index-people [Indexmenschen], and from them the critique can proceed. The questions should always be, how were their needs, and not ours, fulfilled? And how do we find these index-people? In no other way at first than we measure the achievements of their devices according to our needs, because that is the only way that proffers itself to us immediately.\(^{174}\)

This is a significantly more nuanced position than Giedion’s, bespeaking Behne’s Simmelian education. Giedion disarms us with his frank confession that the historian is within his own history, but then proceeds to shape the past quite freely. Behne, on the other hand, performs a more dialectical operation, using the present to measure the past, and vice-versa. We are still within the hermeneutic circle, but it is at its most virtuous.

Whatever the relative degree of subtly with which Behne and Giedion realised their

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36. Dedication to Diana Mosley in a copy of Edwin Redslab’s *Deutsche Bauten als Dokumente deutscher Geschichte* (Berlin: Deutscher Kunstverlag, 1928).
critical histories, they still had to contend not only with a reactionary opposition – represented at its most extreme by Schultzze-Naumburg, who in the same year that these books were published issued his own appalling Kunst und Rasse, and was by 1930 installed in the former Weimar home of the Bauhaus – they also ran up against the official narrative of architectural history. This official history was not wholly reactionary – in fact it was coloured by its author’s engagement with the avant-garde, as we shall see. However the result presented an image of a state unsuccessfully negotiating the divergent demands made upon it by various actors.

The owl of Minerva: Edwin Redslob (1928/29)

Whereas Behne, like Schultzze-Naumburg and Langewiesche before him, aimed at the people with his architectural history, Deutscher Kunstverlag aimed at the middle classes and Giedion at hurried urban experts, the final book in this chapter was written by a bureaucrat for an audience of bureaucrats. It is difficult to ascertain to what extent any of these readerships became publics: there was a great deal of interaction between Langewiesche and his readers, as his correspondence attests, and the publication of reviews of several of the books constitute a public of sorts. But in general, it is difficult to trace publicness in regards to books: they may have been discussed in classrooms, private dwellings, in book clubs, or even in motion, on trains – as in the final scene of Kuhle Wampe – but the evidence is lacking [fig. 35].

In this particular instance, however, it is clear that the public is no public at all: the state speaks only to itself. The author in question was Edwin Redslob, the Reichskunstwart or ‘Reich Art Intendant’ of the Weimar Republic. Redslob (1884–1973) had trained as an art historian, and became the youngest museum director in Germany when he was made
head of the Erfurt Museum in 1912, at the age of twenty-eight. He was closely involved with the pre-war avant-gardes and, despite the controversy attending his curatorial support for contemporary art, in 1919, at the suggestion of the Werkbund, he was given the post of Reichskunstwart (the title clearly echoes that of Avenarius’s magazine Der Kunstwart).\textsuperscript{175}

In this capacity he had responsibility for Die künstlerische Formgebung des Reichs, ‘the artistic design of the Reich’, to borrow the title of a pamphlet he wrote on the subject.\textsuperscript{176} This entailed overseeing the design of flags, coats of arms, postage stamps, documents, banknotes, coins, medals, and other insignia, as well as official festivals such as the annual Constitution Day celebrations and the memorial for assassinated Foreign Minister Walther Rathenau. The role seems a peculiar one to contemporary eyes, but republican officials understood that the embattled new nation desperately needed to reinforce its legitimacy. The means seized to do so evinced a heady mixture of conservative and modernising tendencies, as national traditions were invented employing the most up-to-date methods of brand identity.

In 1928, at the request of the Reichstagspräsident, Redslob wrote a book titled Deutsche Bauten als Dokumente deutscher Geschichte (‘German Buildings as Documents of German History’). The volume was printed by Deutscher Kunstverlag for distribution to the delegates of the 25\textsuperscript{th} Congress of the Inter-Parliamentary Union, which was held that year in Berlin (one of the recipients was Diana Mosley, wife of the leader of the British Union of Fascists) [fig. 36]. It comprises a fifteen-page historical introduction, followed by eighty photographs of German architecture. A year later, Wasmuth published an

\textsuperscript{176} Edwin Redslob, Die künstlerische Formgebung des Reichs (Berlin: Werkkunst Verlag, 1926).

enlarged, 106-image edition for public retail, its contents enriched (as a preliminary note tells us) ‘especially by examples of historically important German buildings from beyond the borders of the Reich.’\(^{177}\) That this expanded view of the borders of German architecture should have been thought more suitable for a domestic audience than for international parliamentarians is telling.\(^{178}\) Furthermore, although the second edition has more images, these are selected from within a shrunken historical range: while the bureaucrats’ edition included recent works such as AEG’s Small Motors Factory, the Wertheim department store, the Jahrhunderthalle, and the Chilehaus, the public version terminates in 1894 with the Reichstag [figs. 37, 38].

The book’s introduction, which is identical in both of its editions, begins with the assertion that ‘History is not only lived and written – it is also built’,\(^{179}\) and goes on to cover – with very broad strokes – the story of German architecture from Aachen to the present day. The final architect to appear in the introduction is Paul Wallot, designer of the Reichstag. ‘In this sequence,’ Redslob concludes, ‘one can experience the flow of German history – the development and emancipation of all strata of the Volk, the creation of an all-inclusive nation [Alle verbindenen Volksganzen], recognisable as a living unity.’\(^{180}\) Although the image section of the public version – concluding as it does

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\(^{178}\) As a semi-official art-historical critique of Versailles, Redslob’s book is comparable to the films of Hans Cürlis as a quasi-autonomous realm of foreign policy critique, although since it proceeds by innuendo rather than polemic, it seems to have elicited little comment (see chapter 2).


\(^{180}\) ‘An dieser Reihe kann man den Gang der deutschen Geschichte erleben – die Entwicklung und Befreiung aller Volksschichten, die Schaffung eines als lebendige
with the Paulskirche and the Reichstag – might create the impression of an Hegelian self-satisfaction in the current form of the nation state as the end of history, in the final paragraphs of his introduction Redslob leaves a speculative opening for the possibility of a future architecture that will resolve an outstanding contradiction in contemporary life. ‘We stand at the beginning of a forward-looking, lively and impulsive movement. The current problems of the age are clearly grasped and the sense unconsciously emerges that, despite all the feuding of everything spiritual with the technical rationalism of the time, buildings are not just functional forms [Zweckform], but on the contrary they are in themselves symbols.’\(^{181}\) He ends by calling for ‘buildings in which the unfolding of the power of Germany will be expressed, holy symbols, documents of history, highest representation of the people.’\(^{182}\)

In the context of the public edition, Redslob’s demand – unmatched by photographs of built examples – implies dissatisfaction with the extant symbols of the nation and the Republic’s capacity to create them. In fact, although Wallot’s building is the last to be mentioned, the most recent architect named in the introduction is Bruno Taut. In the context of a discussion of the development of the palace in the sixteenth century, Redslob observes that ‘One can say that in the imperial cities … in a certain sense the palace replaced the church as that main motif designated by a modern architect, Bruno Taut, as the “Stadtkrone”’.\(^{183}\) This reference to Taut’s concept of the Stadtkrone or ‘city Einheit erkennbaren, Alle verbindenden Volksganzen.’ Redslob, Deutsche Bauten, pp. 20–21.

\(^{181}\) ‘Wir stehen am Anfang einer vorwärtsgerichteten, lebensvoll treibenden Bewegung. Die aktuellen Probleme der Zeit wurden klar erfaßt und unbewußt entwickelt sich auch, trotz der Befehdung alles Geistigen durch den technischen Rationalismus der Zeit, der Sinn dafür, daß Bauten nicht nur Zweckform, daß sie vielmehr in sich Symbol sind.’ Redslob, Deutsche Bauten, p. 20.


\(^{183}\) Redslob, Deutsche Bauten, p. 13.
crown’ – the only specific discussion of modern architecture that appears in the text – comes ten years after the publication of Taut’s book on the subject, and long after the energies of Expressionist utopianism had dissipated.\(^{184}\) As in Behne’s book of the same year, however, the Expressionist spectre is invoked, precisely at the moment of the *Neues Bauen*’s ‘triumph’. This has very different effects in each of the two editions of Redslob’s book: in the bureaucrats’ edition it seems intended to demonstrate the sublation of Expressionist energies in the *Neues Bauen*. In the public version, on the other hand, where photographic history ceases with the Reichstag, it seems instead to critique the present by referring to the unfulfilled promise of the past.

This double strategy is a strange and potentially dangerous game for this avant-gardist-turned-functionary to play. Although it may seem fairly straightforward at first glance – boosting the nation’s modernity to foreign officials versus emphasis on democratic tradition for the fractious citizenry – the question remains: why leave the text unchanged, thus potentially fostering dissatisfaction in a domestic audience? Another striking omission from Redslob’s *sotto voce* expressionist revival is the internationalism that had characterised many contributors to the earlier movement, especially Taut. Taut’s 1919 book *Die Stadtkrone* – in its own right, a photobook on architectural history – was dominated by images of international examples of the ‘city crown’, most pointedly in a spread juxtaposing Mont St Michel with Strasbourg Cathedral, that thorn in the side of German national feeling, which had at the time Taut was writing just been ceded to France. Nevertheless, Taut tells us that socialism – the philosophy to be embodied in the future Stadtkrone – ‘bridges any gap between fighting classes and nations to unite humanity’.\(^{185}\) By contrast, Redslob’s photographs are exclusively

\(^{184}\) Bruno Taut et al., *Die Stadtkrone* (Jena: Diederichs, 1919).

German – that is to say, Greater German – prompting one to wonder whether, if the Republic’s own architectural self-portrait had not been permeated by such jingoism, would the building pictured on the last page of German history still have gone up in flames a few years later.

**Conclusion: The Past Made New**

Publishing on architectural history did not cease at this point. In 1933, Deutscher Kunstverlag was taken over by de Gruyter, and in 1939 it set out alone under the direction of its chief editor Burkhard Meier. Fraktur had been adopted as the house typeface the year before, and further editions were expanded with the borders of the Reich – the book on *Norddeutsche Backsteingotik*, for instance, was enriched in 1942 with examples from Poland. Publication continued throughout the war, and as it reached its crisis there was a burst in activity: a series of over seventy-five cheap pamphlets titled *Führer zu großen Baudenkmalern*, ‘Guides to Great Architectural Monuments’ – many of which had already been bombed into rubble. The last of these to be issued before Germany’s defeat was dedicated to the New Reich Chancellery.

Langewiesche had died in 1931, but his publishing house continued under the direction of his wife and assistant, issuing nationalist titles such as 1938’s *Deutschland über Alles: Ehrenmale des Weltkrieges*, ‘Deutschland über Alles: Memorials of the World War’. After the war many of their publications continued to be reissued unaltered, although the Iron Hammer series was renamed Das Gute für Alle. The final edition of Pinder’s *Deutsche Dome* was published in 1969, and at the following year’s Deutschen Kunsthistorikertage in Cologne Martin Warnke gave his controversial talk on the rhetoric of submission to domination that permeated popular art historical literature in
the post-war period. As part of the same panel, Berthold Hinz’s historiographic paper on the *Bamberg Rider* highlighted the perpetuation of nationalist enthusiasm across the boundary of 1945.\(^{186}\)

Behne and Redslob were both removed from their jobs in 1933 and went into what has questionably been called ‘internal exile’: they spent the war years hiding in history, publishing inoffensive books on Dürer and Goethe. Other art historians who had been dismissed from official roles managed to find ways to profit from the new situation: Wilhelm Waetzoldt, for instance, who had been Director of the State Museums in Berlin, was removed from this role in 1933 for supporting modern art and employing Jews. However, his 1938 book *Du und die Kunst* found a very wide readership and was distributed in a special edition to members of the Hitler Youth.

Others found success elsewhere: thanks to the intervention of Gropius, Sigfried Giedion was appointed Charles Eliot Norton Professor of Poetry at Harvard for the year 1938-39, and his lectures given in this capacity were published in 1941 as *Space, Time, and Architecture*. This heavily illustrated book would become the standard work of modernist architectural historiography. Its photographic strategy was much like that employed in *Bauen in Frankreich*, in that it constructed a rhizomatic structure beneath the surface of history. However, this was no longer limited to nineteenth century engineering and its current inheritors, but enormously expanded in space and time, to encompass baroque and transatlantic architectures, as well as artworks in other media. Here, one can justifiably agree with Banham that Giedion’s ‘art-historical training tends to make him assume that things that look alike must have some connection.’\(^{187}\) The


book is currently in its fifth edition.

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The photobooks considered in this chapter evince a number of different means and aims in the quest to bring architectural history to the masses – means and aims, it should be clear, that did not always correspond. The self-portrait of the republican state presented to its citizens by Edwin Redslob is a chronological arrangement of canonical buildings that seemingly accords with Kracauer’s description of historicism – ‘the complete mirroring of an intratemporal sequence’ – and concludes with an Hegelian peroration from the steps of the Reichstag. However, the impression that the movement of history has been realized in democracy is somewhat undermined by the textual portion of the book, which strikes a Wagnerian chord at the finish, questioning the adequacy of the republic’s architectural manifestations. Furthermore, this sequence does not and cannot include everything. Not only is the micrological urge practically unfullfillable, it is necessarily exclusive. What is chosen for exclusion is very telling.

The rejected elements are swept up by two sorts of ragpicker: Schultze-Naumburg, who attempts to redeem the present by returning to vernacular tradition, and Behne and Giedion, who seek instead to redeem the past – the vilified remnants of the nineteenth century – by finding within them the seeds of present good tendencies. The methods applied by these ragpickers are divergent: Schultze-Naumburg proceeds by accumulating photographs, the obstinacy of which finally confounds his ostensible aim: Goethe’s house is drained of meaning and becomes an empty, prefabricated dwelling unit. This modernising vision is also employed by Langewiesche, who lacks, however, Schultze-Naumburg’s pessimistic view of the present and the feeling that it must be redeemed. Instead, in the practice he instigated, all culture is intentionally submitted to a process of formatting for optimal receptibility under modern conditions.
sequence itself is subordinated to this logic, and is jettisoned when it interferes with the obstinate structure of bookspace.

This tension between historiography and medium came to a violent climax in the books of the Deutscher Kunstverlag, where, in a bookspace that uneasily straddled commercial and scientific territory, various actors adopted competing and sometimes self-contradictory strategies. The most sophisticated of the contributors to the series is Pinder, who used the obstinacy of bookspace to illuminate his own argument regarding the radical fracture of historical time into non-communicative monads: the Erlebnisfolge of the image section is a cinematic remediation in reverse, which is acknowledged as valid and yet scrupulously separated from the historical Beschreibung, which attempts to draw a line between itself and the encroaching tide of modern vision – while simultaneously projecting that vision’s fragmented spatio-temporality into history. By contrast, Behne and Giedion employ the structure of their own, avant-garde bookspaces to produce an understanding of history that is fragmented but dialectical. In these two instances, the precarious obstinacy of the photobook is mobilized in two divergent directions: Pinder plays the risky game of inviting remediation between the covers while seeking to reinforce the separation of historicist text and experiential image, while Giedion and Behne seek to bring to bring out the disruptive logic inherent in bookspace via a process of remediation.

These interactions between history and medium are certainly various, but one general tendency is discernible across the board: the modernisation of the past. The codex was remediated by its contact with new technologies in this period: photography had a self-evidently transformative effect, but film too exerted a profound influence. In making architectural history perceptible to a mass audience using this remediated yet enduringly
obstinate object, even conservative actors employed methods that could not help but transform and modernise the media and objects of their discourse.

40. *Der Golem. Wie er in die Welt kam*, dir. by Paul Wegener and Carl Boese (Germany, 1920).
41. *Der Golem. Wie er in die Welt kam*, dir. by Paul Wegener and Carl Boese (Germany, 1920).
Introduction: cathedrals of light

The book breaks up the stone: one church into a thousand books. Out of the visible spirit develops a legible spirit, out of the visual culture, a conceptual one ... Today, however, another machine is at work.

– Béla Bálazs, ‘Kinokritik!’ (1922)¹

The frame of the screen is filled by a room. It is the throne-chamber of a palace, the rear wall of which is covered with an extravagant screen of blind tracery. At the centre of this second screen is a second frame – a niche. A succession of figures take turns inhabiting this aperture. Like mechanical figures on a town hall clock they move in and out of the niche, an emperor ceding his place to a rabbi, who conjures in his place magical, moving images, and finally a living image made of stone – a golem – which inhabits the niche because of a catastrophe: the collapse of the palace and hence of the niche, the frame. The golem’s occupancy saves this structural complex, the ‘palace-frame’, from collapse, but it also returns the creature to petrification by trapping him beneath its weight [figs. 39–41].

These events constitute a central episode of the 1920 film Der Golem (dir. Carl Boese and Paul Wegener), the sets for which were created by the architect Hans Poelzig. At first, Poelzig’s design provides a legitimising context for the action: the niche is a zone of authority from which the emperor commands and the rabbi conjures. But this blind aperture – this static symbol of domination – is punctured by the film-within-the-film, which brings transparency, light, and depth where previously there were none. The introduction of the anachronistic technological medium also brings real movement

where there had been only the *suggestion* of movement: the static fire of the
Flamboyant screen is kindled, and starts to flicker.²

Ultimately, these cinematic augmentations lead to the collapse of the palace-frame – but only through the mediation of the audience (they laugh, despite having been warned not to by the rabbi). The golem is then commanded to protect the edifice of authority that subjugates the people from which it emanated. The golem might be understood as Marx’s *Gesamtarbeiter*, representing the power of these people en masse, and its biddability is their tragedy: for what if it had let the palace fall? Not only would the palace have been smashed but also the frame of the screen, our screen – for the event that elicits the inadequate response of the audience, and hence the collapse, is the threatened escape from the film-within-the-film of a uniquely disruptive figure, able to traverse both time and space in a non-linear fashion: the Wandering Jew. This figure represents the solvent power of film itself, and *Der Golem* is an allegory of the necessity of its containment.

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Feature films that recreated historical architecture in their sets, like *Der Golem*, and those that used historical buildings as locations, for instance the many films about Frederick the Great shot in and around the Rococo palaces of Potsdam, were just two of the contexts in which the objects of art-historical enquiry entered the German cinema of the 1920s and 1930s [fig. 42]. It may be objected that the concerns of the discipline, which I have foregrounded in the preceding description of Wegener’s film, were quite

42. *Das Flötenkonzert von Sanssouci*, dir. by Gustav Ucicky (Germany, 1930).
foreign to commercial productions. Nevertheless, as filmmaker and art historian Hans Cürlis wrote in a 1924 essay titled ‘Visual Art in Film’, ‘the last method has certainly acquainted the widest mass of the public with art-historically significant buildings.’

And it is possible that dramatic scenarios enacted within historical buildings are capable of shedding light, however indirectly, on their significance; for instance in Der Golem, to which I shall return.

In addition to such fictional works, numerous documentaries were made on the topic of art and architectural history by the Kulturfilm departments of major studios in this period, as well as by figures and institutions more closely integrated with the academic discipline. These bodies ostensibly intended to guide the audience beyond mere acquaintance onto the firmer ground of understanding. In this chapter I shall consider several of the films they made with this aim in mind, focusing on those concerned with medieval architecture, which was then a topic of great interest for specialists, artists, and the public alike. This Gotikboom, as Magdalena Bushart has termed it, produced a whole subgenre of Domfilme that vary widely in technique, content, and approach to the buildings they depict. This profusion raises several questions: why did people make art-historical films – and why especially on the subject of Gothic architecture? What sort of art-historical knowledge was thereby produced, and for whom? And why did the moving image fail to become a medium of art-historical work to the same extent that its static antecedent had?

Space–time–film

Thus time sheds its qualitative, variable, flowing nature; it freezes into an exactly delimited, quantifiable continuum filled with quantifiable ‘things’...: in short, it becomes space.

– Georg Lukács, ‘Reification and the Consciousness of the Proletariat’ (1923)

One of the primary reasons given by architects, filmmakers, and architectural historians in the first half of the twentieth century for the use of film to represent architecture was the unparalleled ability of the medium to represent space. This proposition may seem self-evident – it certainly did to many commentators at the time – but what film does to architectural space is not so straightforward. On the most basic level, it flattens space, translating three-dimensional depth into two-dimensional movement in time. In its first decades, film also stripped sound and colour from the architectural experience. Editing allows space to be cut up, to become a montage, and so film can produce new spaces that do not exist beyond the screen. Furthermore, cinematic presentation removes autonomy from the viewer and places the direction of his or her movement through space in the hands of the filmmaker. However, the cinema was not the only physical space created by film, and in other spaces transformed by the projection of moving images – palaces, for example – there were also some rather less passive audiences.

The self-evidence of the proposition rests on a prior assumption: that space is an essential quality of architecture. That idea may seem indisputable today, but it only gained widespread currency shortly after the invention of film. In 1893, August Schmarsow announced what Paul Frankl waspishly called his ‘discovery of the

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obvious’: the primary significance of space in architecture, and of the motion of the body as the means of perceiving it. 7 For Schmarsow, ‘the history of architecture is the history of the sense of space’. 8 Space is therefore doubly temporal: it exists in the time of experience, and in historical time. By historicising space, Schmarsow also fragmented it. This is one of the abiding characteristics of the debate over space and time between 1890 and 1925, when history became spatial and vice versa, and both time and space began to be seen as heterogeneous and fractured.

Obvious though Schmarsow’s thesis may have seemed to Frankl by 1960, at the time it had a powerful impact, not least on Frankl himself. Perhaps most importantly, it promised to assuage the status anxiety of architectural scholarship – then vacillating between cultural history, materialism (as Semper’s thought was caricatured), and the first shoots of stylistic analysis – by identifying an historical constant for empirical investigation. It thereby seemed to offer a means of setting future work on a scientific basis.

Secondly, Schmarsow’s spatial turn promised to resolve a problem thrown up by the discipline’s favoured tool, photography. Photography had been a part of the art historian’s kit for several years – institutional collections of photographs of artworks were being established by the mid-nineteenth century, and Hermann Grimm gave his

7 This was the date of Schmarsow’s inaugural lecture at Leipzig, titled ‘The Essence of Architectural Creation’. Frankl made his disparaging remark in his gargantuan compendium The Gothic: Literary Sources and Interpretations through Eight Centuries, trans. Priscilla Silz (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1960), p. 702. In his opinion the spatial turn in architectural theory had begun with Hegel. For an analysis and anthology of contemporaneous debates over space, see Empathy, Form and Space, ed. Mallgrave and Ikonomou.

first art-historical slide lectures at the University of Berlin in the early 1890s. But while the new medium was widely appreciated by architectural historians, especially for its supposedly scientific objectivity and, more practically, for its ability to eliminate space between the observer and distant, immobile objects of study, it simultaneously eliminated motion through and around space. (Although it should be borne in mind that the encounter with the photograph, even in its digital form, is always physical and hence spatial; as Negt and Kluge put it, ‘the eye works’ when moving over a two-dimensional plane). The discourse of space offered the possibility of redressing the spatial lack of photography.

Finally, the theoretical, i.e. the linguistic, recreation of the experience of space allowed art historians to produce a new discourse that ensured the necessity of their ekphrastic labour in the face of this potentially threatening new mode of representation – for in a world of cheap picture postcards and photobooks, what need was there for art historians? Was not art-historical language now just a barrier between the object (or its seemingly transparent representation by photography) and the viewer? Perhaps not, if the element of spatial experience had to be described – and this craft soon became an industry, which continues today in the work of the architectural phenomenologists.

Meanwhile, another form of spatial analysis developed into the practice of Kunstgeographie, which borrowed from the nascent discipline of geography in order to systematise conventional art-historical ideas about the relationship between artwork and

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10 They thereby return to Helmholtz and Wundt’s insights into vision, albeit with a materialist inflection. Negt and Kluge, History and Obstinacy, p. 75.
place. This promised an alternative means of setting the discipline on a scientific footing, one grounded in site as a concrete terrestrial location rather than space as a phenomenological category of experience.

The term *Kunstgeographie* was coined in 1910 by Hugo Hassinger in an essay on urban studies – a field that he had established – in which he speculated about the geographic spread of urban house types in Germany.\(^{11}\) History was constituted by movement through space, as styles and motifs diffused across a territory. Many later writers on this theme – such as Strzygowski, Pinder, Swoboda, and Frey – took a deterministic view of geographic location, inflected by nationalistic and racist ideas. However, the principles of *Kunstgeographie* were also adopted by Wölfflin and Frankl (among others) with a less dubious political intent. Warburg too – with his famous call for an art history without borders – can be seen as producing *Kunstgeographie* in an alternative, internationalist mode, one that was not taken up by his contemporaries.\(^{12}\)

At the same time, work continued in the phenomenological vein opened by Schmarsow, notably in the writings of Frankl and those of Schmarsow’s student, Wilhelm Pinder. Both used Schmarsow’s insights to develop a historical morphology of space. In his doctoral thesis of 1904, Pinder described a transition from ‘rhythmicised space to a unified visualisation of space, from the motorically experienced to the stilled, laid-out space’ during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.\(^{13}\)

A quarter of a century later, the discourse of space was taken in several new directions in a cluster of works by Cassirer, Panofsky, Mannheim, and Heidegger (other examples

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\(^{12}\) This point is made by Kaufmann, *Towards a Geography of Art*, pp. 68–9.

\(^{13}\) Pinder [origin unspecified], cited in Nagel, *Medieval Modern*, p. 258.
could also be drawn into this matrix, such as Pinder’s 1926 book on generations). In order to explain this grouping one could make a ‘Zeitgeist’ claim for the currency of discussions of space and time after Einstein. This argument as it pertains to art rests on a dubious assertion of causality, as Linda Dalrymple Henderson has shown. However, it is more convincingly applied to the realm of theory: Ortega y Gasset claimed a link between Einstein’s thought and his own perspectivism in 1916, in 1921 Cassirer published his book on relativity (which he took as a confirmation of his own neo-Kantian ideas), and the following year Bergson debated with Einstein in Paris.

Material factors were at work, too. Although the years following 1924 were a time of relative stability in Germany, these works came out of the preceding years of political and economic trauma. 1918 represented a fracture in both historical time and geopolitical space. Germany, only recently united, was fragmented once more, and while for conservatives the revolution marked a cataclysmic break with the nation’s past, for Marxists it also marked a rupture in that its failure confounded their teleology. These conditions certainly contributed to the popularity of Kunstgeographie in this period; their relation to the more abstract works listed below is less straightforward, but the possibility of a connection should be borne in mind.

More generally, the fragmentation of time under industrial capital – which Marx had observed as having a spatialising effect in 1867 – had begun to penetrate unmistakeably into the superstructure. Hence Lukács’s reassertion of this insight in his essay of 1923, which had such an enormous effect on all who read it (including Mannheim, and perhaps also Heidegger). While for Marx the technologies of the first industrial revolution had spatialised time in the workplace and in infrastructure, for Lukács and

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other commentators on the spatialisation of time, the second industrial revolution had confirmed Marx’s model by bringing this spatialisation of time into the domain of culture, precisely via those technologies under consideration here: photography, film, and radio. Of course, not all of the thinkers on space around 1925 were following in this tradition, but if they cannot be said to be responding directly to Lukács they were certainly working within the milieu he described.

At the time of Schmarsow’s epochal intervention in architectural theory, psychology had been under sustained attack as a basis for the human sciences, and its obsolescence left a gap that was occupied by post-Diltheyan hermeneutics. This was given a neo-Kantian inflection by Cassirer, whose Philosophy of Symbolic Form (the first two volumes of which appeared in 1923 and 1925) extends Kantian critique to the realm of culture. In so doing, Cassirer confronts the problem of space as an object of culture. He proposed that our abstract space of science developed out of an earlier, mythic space composed of discrete locales. He would later speculate that ‘the problem of space may become the starting point for a new self-reflection of aesthetics.’

Panofsky took up Cassirer’s neo-Kantianism, and his titular concept (although, as Christopher Wood has pointed out, this was a rather superficial borrowing) to work through the iconological significance of space in his essay on ‘Perspective as Symbolic Form’ of 1925. In this work, modulations in the representation of space are traced in order to delineate a history of perception, which bears some similarities to Pinder’s: late

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15 In a paper on ‘Mythischer, ästhetischer und theoretischer Raum’ which he delivered at the IV Kongreß für Ästhetik und allgemeine Kunstwissenschaft in Hamburg in 1931. The theme of the congress was ‘Gestaltung von Raum und Zeit in der Kunst’. Ernst Cassirer, Symbol, Technik, Sprache (Hamburg: Mainer, 1985), pp. 93–119 (p. 95).
Gothic space, Panofsky says, had an unprecedented transparency, as the molecular spaces of earlier churches were united in one smooth expanse.\footnote{17 Erwin Panofsky, \textit{Perspective as Symbolic Form} (1925), trans. Christopher Wood (New York: Zone, 1997), pp. 53–54.}

Also in 1925, Karl Mannheim’s habilitation thesis on conservative thought considered space from a sociologically oriented hermeneutic position. Mannheim defines historical changes in ‘styles of thought’ partly in terms of their differing spatiality. The roots of German conservative thought lie in the Romantic reaction to Enlightenment universalism and its system of political economy, bourgeois capitalism.\footnote{18 Mannheim was habilitated in 1925. An article based on his thesis was first published in German in 1927, and an expanded English version, ‘Conservative Thought’, followed in 1953. The full MS of the thesis has been translated into English as Karl Mannheim, \textit{Conservatism: A Contribution to the Sociology of Knowledge}, ed. Volker Meja, Nico Stehr, and David Kettler, trans. David Kettler and Volker Meja (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1986).} For Mannheim, ‘The conservative experiences the past as being one with the present; hence, his concept of history tends to be spatial rather than temporal.’\footnote{19 Karl Mannheim, ‘Conservative Thought’, in \textit{From Karl Mannheim}, ed. Kurt Wolff (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1971), pp. 260–350 (p. 298).} This was not a characteristic that appeared \textit{ex nihilo}; rather, romantic conservatism excavated characteristics that had been buried by rationalism in order to set them up as its opposite: ‘we may understand this better, if we recall for typically feudal groups … history is rooted in the soil.’\footnote{20 Mannheim, ‘Conservative Thought’, p. 298.}

Mannheim is nothing if not dialectical, however, and he observes that in the process of their resurrection these impulses were themselves rationalised. As a consequence of this transformation, they were prepared for the use of conservatism’s apparent opposite, which he terms proletarian thought. This is similarly critical of bourgeois capitalism; it also has an irrational element in the form of its chiliasm (although it is ultimately supra-
rational, in that it sublates bourgeois rationality); and it is similarly spatial, although its historical sense is a materialist one. Mannheim distinguishes further: conservatism looks to organic spatial entities (families, estates), whereas proletarian thought is interested in agglomerative collectives. I would add that a further distinction lies in the (spatial, relational, temporal) fixity of conservative space, and the fluidity of its proletarian counterpart.

Two years later, in *Being and Time*, Heidegger developed a more stringently philosophical conception of space. His project had a foundational negative element. Heidegger rejects neo-Kantianism and psychologism in general, attempting instead to set phenomenology on a firm ontological basis. In his discussion of the location of *Dasein*, he also rejects Cartesian notions of abstract geometrical space. At the same time, Heidegger notoriously elides the body, which had been the vehicle of phenomenological experience of space for Schmarsow. Space, for Heidegger, is still to be understood phenomenologically, but in a severely abstract sense. The relationship of space to history is obscure, but it can at least be said that spatiality is subject to change: the space of *Dasein* is defined by its ‘de-severance’ – its proximity to things, specifically ‘equipment’. However, this proximity is under threat of a fall into distance. Here Heidegger clearly manifests a tendency towards Mannheim’s conception of located conservative thought. His later work, especially the 1951 lecture on dwelling, reinforces this stance.

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21 The parallel to Cassirer’s work has not gone unnoticed – and indeed, Heidegger possessed a review copy of the second volume of the *Philosophy of Symbolic Forms* while he was working on *Being and Time*. Edward Skidelsky, *Ernst Cassirer: The Last Philosopher of Culture* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008), p. 205.


As well as theoretical works, the quarter century also saw an explosion of avant-garde practices revolutionising artistic and architectural conceptions of space.24 These were the years of *Gestaltung*, ‘forming’ or ‘design’: Lissitzky’s Proun Room appeared in the Grosse Berliner Kunstaustellung in 1923, the first issue of *G* appeared the same year; 1925 saw the Absolute Film matinee, and the publication of Moholy-Nagy’s *Malerei–Photographie–Film*. This post-constructivist moment was one of the spurs to Panofsky’s investigation into representations of space: he refers dismissively to Lissitzky’s concept of ‘post-Euclidean’ space in the notes to his essay on perspective, but he can hardly be read outside of this context.25 Mannheim was perhaps less well acquainted with contemporary art but he was certainly aware of art-historical work – he states that his investigation into styles of thought was inspired by art history, and he and Panofsky refer to each other several times in their writings of this period.26 It is therefore likely that Mannheim’s interest in spatiality was informed by art-historical discourse; he mentions the problem in his 1923 essay on *Weltanschauung*, which was published in the *Jahrbuch für Kunstgeschichte*.27

That these investigations into space emerged simultaneously with new technologies of spatial reproduction raises questions as to the way they mediated the relationship between the two developments. Several of their authors were attentive to technology: Panofsky’s thesis is centrally concerned with technologies of vision and the way that these relate to changing perceptions of space. Panofsky was also deeply interested by film, as is evidenced by his essay on movies, published in a number of versions from 1923.

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1936 onwards. The two matters meet here in his famous, albeit not entirely original statement: ‘film spatialises time’. This situates film squarely within the paradigm of capitalist spatiality as described by Lukács, but it also has a second resonance: understood in these terms, the medium has something in common with the feudal notion of time described in Mannheim’s schema.

Bettina Bildhauer has recently made a similar comparison. ‘The unmistakeable reference of so much Wilhelmine and Weimar film to the Middle Ages,’ she asserts, ‘is an attempt not to escape the challenges of recent modernity, but to meet them, and one of those challenges was the newly problematic nature of time... Medieval films engage with the newly dominant perception of time – as non-linear, with special weight given to the moment rather than to temporal sequence.’

To expand on this insight: film represents a ‘flashing-up’ of a spatialised temporality that was last dominant in the Middle Ages, which had been challenged successively during the Renaissance (when space was abstracted) and the Enlightenment (when time was universalised), and was then suppressed by the instrumentalisation of these

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28 Panofsky’s essay exists in several versions, the first being ‘On Movies’ (1936) and the last, ‘Style and Medium in the Motion Pictures’ (1947). Thomas Levin’s essay on this piece of writing refers the reader to Elie Faure’s work of 1922 on what the latter called Cineplastics for an earlier example of a debate over time and space in film. Bergson had already criticized contemporary science on the basis that it spatialised time in Time and Free Will (1889). Thomas Y. Levin, ‘Iconology at the Movies: Panofsky’s Film Theory’, The Yale Journal of Criticism 9, no. 1 (1996), 27–55.
29 Bettina Bildhauer, Filming the Middle Ages (London: Reaktion, 2011), p. 27. Kracauer offered some corroborations for this view in his 1963 essay ‘Time and History’: ‘the Church ... had to reconcile with each other two divergent times: a vertical time pointing heavenward and a horizontal, or chronological, time framing the succession of incoherent happenings. Medieval chronicles, with the incoherent mixture of elements from both salvation history and mundane history, nicely reflect this attempt simultaneously to move within secular time and away from it.’ Siegfried Kracauer, ‘Time and History’, History and Theory 6, no. 6 (1966) 65–78 (p. 65). The article was originally published in Zeugnisse: Theodor W. Adorno zum 60. Geburtstag (Frankfurt a.M.: Euiropäische Verlagsanstalt, 1963), pp. 50–64, and was later incorporated into the chapter on the Wandering Jew in Kracauer’s posthumously published book on history by its editor Paul Oskar Kristeller. In that book, Panofsky compares such mixed time to film. Kracauer, History: The Last Things Before the Last, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1969), pp. 139–63.
developments in the Industrial Revolution. But although spatial time returned in film, as in so many other areas of science and culture, this return was an ambiguous one. Although it was often motivated by the romantic anti-capitalism of conservatives, it was performed using a technological medium and as such tantalisingly seemed (to Kracauer, for instance) to offer a materialist challenge to abstraction. According to Mannheim’s schema, film therefore straddled conservative and proletarian thought.

Mannheim also discusses technologies of vision, specifically the historical instance of the microscope. He cites the eighteenth-century jurist Justus Möser: ‘Can you tell me one single beautiful object of the physical world that retains its beauty under the microscope? Does not the most beautiful skin get knolls and furrows?... Everything therefore has its own point of view from which it is beautiful.’\(^{30}\) The conservative insistence on spatial fixity determines reactions to developments in technologies of vision, in this instance the microscope that brings the viewer and object into close proximity. The contrast to contemporary enthusiasm over microscopic vision (from Moholy-Nagy, Balázs, etc.) is pronounced.

Heidegger represents a contemporaneous manifestation of the conservative tendency described by Mannheim. Technology has a problematic relationship to Dasein. In Being and Time he describes how a technological medium might fulfil the requirements of Dasein while simultaneously perverting them: ‘An essential tendency towards nearness lies in Dasein. All kinds of increasing speed which we are more or less compelled to go along with today push for overcoming distance. With the “radio”, for example, Da-sein is bringing about today de-distancing of the “world” which is unforeseeable in its meaning for Da-sein, by way of expanding and destroying the everyday surrounding

world.' In accordance with the proximity-drive of Dasein, technology brings us closer to the world-in-quotations, which is presumably the world scientifically conceived, while simultaneously destroying the quotation-mark-less world of everyday experience. With this in mind, it is hard to believe that Heidegger would conceive of film as an adequate means of representing authentic dwelling, or the radically located ‘place’ that features prominently in his later writings. Rather, the use of film to represent phenomenal space would surely produce only an ersatz proximity. Benjamin would identify a similar tendency in his Artwork essay of 1935–39, but he took an entirely more positive view of the drive to de-distancing, which he saw as being born of a legitimate demand of the masses and abetted by the new technologies of vision.32

In the work of these theorists, the historicity of the relationship between medium and space is often only lightly touched on. Panofsky works out the most thorough analysis, arguing that both medium and vision are manifestations of a deeper Kunsthollen, and so they change in step. This is an unmediated picture of historical development, and one that he would modify in an appendix to his 1927 essay on the sculpture at Rheims.33 (As noted above, Benjamin’s later essay interposes the masses as the mediating term in this relation.) Heidegger similarly draws a link between media and the deep strata of Dasein, but for him this is a more complex relation, since media can also simultaneously thwart Dasein. For his part, Mannheim does not confront the question head-on, but in his heterogeneous temporality, technologies associated with the dominant current mode of thought – bourgeois, abstract thought in his schema – are opposed by representatives of other groups, whether conservative or proletarian. This opens up the possibility of dialectical movement in mediated spatiality.

33 Panofsky, ‘Reflections on Historical Time’.
It was Mannheim’s innovation – anticipating Benjamin by ten years, in fact – to systematically link spatialities to political constellations, thus complicating Lukács’s more monolithic view of historical spatiality. More recently, Lefebvre foregrounded this political aspect of spatiality, while attempting a definition of space and an analysis of where it comes from. For Lefebvre, space is not a vacuum – rather it is produced by social practices and as such is replete with ideology. He identifies three aspects of space: spatial practice (the social experience and everyday use of space), representational space (theoretical and ideological discourse regarding space) and representations of space (the sedimentation of ideology in plans, maps and other media). These are not prioritised, but interact in a dialectical way.

This insight can be used as a basis for understanding the historical relationship between space and media. ‘The production of space’, Lefebvre asserts, ‘acts retroactively upon the past, disclosing aspects and moments of it hitherto uncomprehended. The past appears in a different light.’ But the light shed by the abstract space of capital (as represented in the cinema, for instance) arguably creates only an objectivity effect, concealing its motivation behind an illusion of transparency, where ‘space appears as luminous, as intelligible, as giving action free reign’ – thanks in this instance to the effortless swoop of the camera. The ‘impersonal pseudo-subject’ represented by the

\[34\] The late nineteenth-century spatial turn was strangely overlooked by the representatives of the spatial turn of the late 1950s and 1960s – Bachelard, Bollnow, Foucault, and Lefebvre. Lefebvre and his epigones completely ignore the tradition of spatial enquiry in German art history, which results in assertions such as this: ‘Since 1980 … there has been … an unprecedented generalization of the debate on the theorization of space and time, geography and history, not only in social theory but in broader realms of critical discourse in art [and] architecture’. Edward Soja, Postmodern Geographies: the Reassertion of Space in Critical Social Theory (London: Verso, 1989), p. 44.


\[36\] Lefebvre, Production of Space, p. 27.
camera moving through this transparent space has, ‘hidden within-it, concealed by its illusory transparency the real “subject”, namely state (political) power.’

In several of the films in question, this is undoubtedly the case; but there are nevertheless other forces in play, and other kinds of space in production. In the conjunction of architectural space and the curious concrete-abstract space of film, new types of space are created comprising elements of both. The tendency of the admixture – to conservatism or otherwise – is dependent on the situational matrix: the actors, their contexts, their bases, and the practices under which they operate. To give an example from Lefebvre: Renaissance perspective was derived from the avenues of cypresses that radiated from Tuscan country villas, joining the landowner to his tenant farmers. ‘Out of this process emerged, then, a new representation of space: the visual perspective shown in the work of painters and given form first by architects … Knowledge emerged from a practice.’

We may question if this was indeed where perspectival construction originated – Lefebvre’s grasp of art history is idiosyncratic – but his assertion that knowledge emerges from spatial practice is worth heeding. Likewise, his emphasis on the disciplinary aspect of such ‘cultural techniques’ – which has been echoed by Bernhard Siegert in recent years. What kind of knowledge does the spatial practice of filmmaking produce, and to what disciplinary end?

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37 Lefebvre, Production of Space, p. 51.
38 Lefebvre, Production of Space, p. 78–79.
39 ‘Space as such does not exist independently of cultural techniques of spatial control.’ Bernhard Siegert, ‘Cultural Techniques: Or the End of the Intellectual Postwar Era in German Media Theory’, Theory, Culture and Society 30, no. 6 (2013), 48–65 (p. 57).
In 1896 – three years after Schmarsow’s lecture inaugurated the spatial era – the film camera was set in motion for the first time, when the Lumière brothers stood a tripod on the rear of a train leaving Jerusalem [fig. 43]. This presented the possibility of optically replicating the experience of bodily movement through space. However, at the time film seemed to many observers – especially to mandarin Wilhelmine academics – a disreputable form of popular entertainment. Besides this distaste, which stemmed from a desire to maintain the fraying cordon around high culture, Barbara Schrödl has speculated that there was also an element of offended professional \textit{amour propre} involved in their rejection of film, which threatened to obviate the necessity of a living lecturer interpreting slides for an audience – and hence of the recently developed practice of spatial analysis.\textsuperscript{41} For the contemporary producers of architecture – for instance, Le Corbusier, in regard to whose buildings Giedion observed ‘only film can make the new architecture intelligible \textit{[fassbar]}\textsuperscript{42} – cinema seemed to offer a new epistemological foundation for the production of space, and equally significantly, a powerful marketing tool. But what did film have to offer the architecture of the past?

It was not until after the war that the new medium began to be taken seriously by more adventurous art historians.\textsuperscript{43} One of its first proponents was Hermann Sörgel, whose 1918 book \textit{Einführung in die Architektur-Ästhetik}, ‘Introduction to Architecture-

\textsuperscript{42} The second part of this familiar phrase is very rarely quoted: ‘But even then only in a very limited excerpt.’ Giedion, \textit{Building in France}, p. 173.
\textsuperscript{43} Lutz Robbers has pointed out that Fritz Wichert had already called for the scientific use of film in 1912, albeit not specifically in the realm of architectural history. Lutz Robbers, ‘Architekturgeschichte im Zeitalter des Films’ in \textit{Architektur im Film. Korrespondenzen zwischen Film, Architekturgeschichte und Architekturtheorie}, ed. Christiane Keim & Barbara Schrödl (Bielefeld: Transcript, 2015) pp. 149–74 (pp. 153–54).
Aesthetics’, asserted Schmarsow’s spatiality against Wölfflin and Hildebrand’s opticality. From this position, Sörgel criticises the flattening effect of photography on architecture, in the photobook and the slideshow, and proposes the use of film in its place: ‘The screening of moving cinematographic images instead of fixed projected pictures would present a significant improvement for architecture lectures. The fact that the cinematograph is capable of optically sensing space from a fixed position, would strongly support the all-sided, spatial imagination.’

Hans Cürlis was one of the first to put this into practice. He founded his Institute for Cultural Research in 1919 in Berlin with the express aim of producing films. In his 1924 essay on ‘Visual Art in Film’, Cürlis wrote: ‘A space doesn’t just want to be seen, it also wants to be felt corporeally; one must walk through it. Here too, film comes as close as possible to the required mediation of the perception. The recording will be made from a moving trolley and in accordance with architectonic laws in order to achieve the strongest possible spatial impression.’ To figures such as Sörgel and Cürlis, the introduction of moving images to the discipline seemed to present a means of reproducing that spatial element lacking in still photography, and art-historical films began to be produced by specialist bodies, such as Cürlis’s Institute. Like film theorist Béla Balázs, whose comment about the book-torn church appeared at the beginning of the chapter, these pioneers hoped that they could put the broken pieces of the artwork – including all of its dimensions and the experience of the viewer – back together again with film.

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Although both of these writers seized on the possibility of film to represent space, neither explicitly considered the question of how to represent history cinematically. In the following films, a number of different approaches are tried, the range of possibilities expanding as the technology itself develops: a succession of styles represented by still images with taxonomic intertitles, discontinuous montage, fictional narrative, dramatic reconstruction, or exegetical voiceover. Several of these film-structures seem to be remediations of bookspace, but on closer examination the relation will appear more complex than this, since bookspace was simultaneously being remediately by film.

Besides the question of intermediality, a further question arises as to the relationship between historical and cinematic time. The fragmentation of historical time during this period – reflected in works such as Benjamin’s *Trauerspiel* book, completed in 1925, or Pinder’s 1926 book on generations – would seem to suggest that film is an ideal medium for its representation. This depends on the presumption that the rupture of montage is an essential cinematic characteristic in this period. However, the more conventional form – the feature film – employed narratives that tended to work against rupture, splicing the frames more tightly than any glue. In short, cinematic practices varied considerably – not least in terms of the context of projection, which leads us into the realm of cinematic publics, a question that will be addressed further below.
44. Kaiser-Wilhelm-Gedächtniskirche at night, 1930.
Light–matter–film

Though it was the dominant practice, conventional narrative was not the only cinematic mode. Figures such as Richter, Moholy-Nagy, and Lissitzky zoomed in on the element of light as an unstable locus for working out questions about form and matter in space and time.47 Their works constitute part of a larger history of light manipulation. As Monika Wagner has observed, in the nineteenth century photography had made light visible as a material for the first time, while simultaneously dematerialising the objects it captured.48 From 1882, when Siemens electrified Potsdamer Platz, light also became a medium of Gestaltung (‘shaping’ or ‘design’) in space, in the form of floodlighting, streetlighting, and illuminated advertising. In addition to creating form this also dissolved it, transforming surface into depth, and breaking through solid planes to mingle interior and exterior space. Soon architects began to consciously incorporate such lighting effects into buildings, such as Tessenow’s Hellerau Festhalle, Taut’s pavilions, Mies’s Friedrichstraße project, and Mendelsohn’s department stores and cinemas.49

Writing on shop window displays in 1929, Adolf Behne identified a thread running through both commercial and avant-garde forms of Lichtgestaltung:

Constructivism, whose death has been so gladly foretold, is in the bloom of health here, without profaning its ideals. Its wish and will arose, after all, from daily habits and daily needs. Certainly, the constructivism of lighting technicians and shop window decorators appears to be different from the constructivism of the painter. The latter was severe and earnest, and the former is agreeable to the point of coquetry. But it was precisely its jaunty amiability, its blithe

adaptability, which won it the masses – who had entirely eluded the earnestness of the painters. Sociologically speaking the modern window display fulfils an important function: it brings the masses to a new level of art, gradually compensating for the mile-wide chasm between the two; helping to prepare new pioneers for a new advance.50

The optimism of Behne’s concluding sentence might have made sense in the mid-1920s, but in the year of the Wall Street Crash it seems almost delusional. In the same year, Kracauer expressed a more critical view of the illumination of cities, arguing that ‘the light blinds more than it illuminates’51 – and indeed a line could be drawn from consumerist display to Nazi spectacles such as the Lichtdome, which Speer explicitly conceived as hiding unwanted elements.52 However, in the 1920s light architecture had presented other possibilities along the lines sketched out by Behne, and Kracauer himself acknowledged alternatives, even at a later hour. In 1930 he described the illumination spilling from the cinema facades on Kurfürstendamm and its reflection by the Kaiser Wilhelm Memorial Church in the middle of the road [fig. 44]. This excess light, Kracauer observed, re-enchanted the dead architecture of the Kaiserzeit.53 This remark is evidently made in a spirit of bitter irony, however, it is the question of excess that is important here: the superfluous remnants of industrial commerce and

52 Speer recalled of his 1933 Day of National Labour celebration at Templehof: ‘The mountain of flags made radiant by thousands of lights stood with its glowing red in stark contrast to the dark blue of the evening sky, while all irrelevant and intrusive elements sank away into the evening twilight.’ Cited in Frances Guerin, A Culture of Light: Cinema and Technology in 1920s Germany (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2005), p. 237.
entertainment are de-instrumentalised, and are therefore still available for reuse. It also turns what Kracauer might have called the Raumbild of the nineteenth century into a dialectical image, where the disdained and obsolete architecture of the past is illuminated and redeemed by the present.

At the same time that electrical light was transforming urban space, the absolute filmmakers argued that the movement of light through space in time constituted the special competence of the new medium of film: it was a storage technology for this phenomenon, which also played back using the same principle [fig. 45]. The light-essentialism of Richter et al. was not without its critics. Kracauer emphasised film’s photographic basis instead, which in his opinion made its relationship to material reality essential. Lissitzky, on the other hand, criticised the experiments of Eggeling and Richter for their planarity, which he claimed ignored the other dimensions of visuality. Lissitzky proposed instead what he called ‘a-material materiality’, which would require forming ‘imaginary space by means of a material object’. This was perhaps most fully realised in artistic practice by Moholy-Nagy’s Light Prop (1922–30), which employed a combination of mechanically moving parts and lights to create a spatial environment defined by light and shadow [fig. 46]. The principles of cinema were thereby extended beyond the screen into three-dimensional space. Here, avant-garde practice followed the example of commerce: the use of miniature projectors to transform city surfaces into advertisements had been popularised by the invention of the Atrax projector in 1921 [fig. 47]. These were frequently installed in window displays to lure passersby into

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54 See the essays collected in Der absolute Film: Documente der Medienavantgarde (1912–1936), ed. Christian Kiening and Heinrich Adolf (Zurich: Chronos, 2012).

47. Advertisement for the Atrax Advertisement Projector, 1921.
shops by beaming moving images onto the pavement. Kracauer’s image of the illuminated Gedächtniskirche suggests that filmic remediations of city space were not isolated to such commercial applications.

Just as the newly rebalanced or unbalanced relationship between space and time had a special significance in the filming of medieval art, so too did this nexus of light and matter – since Gothic architecture was seen at the time as being defined by the dematerialisation of stone into light, by Worringer, Jantzen, and Sedlmayr among others. Panofsky too would focus on this question after the war, partaking in what Monika Wagner called an ‘orgy of neoplatonic metaphysics of light’ in art-historical discourse. One of Panofsky’s most strikingly cinematic images is a description of the light falling across the interior of Van Eyck’s *Madonna in the Church*, which he observed derives from an unnatural direction [fig. 48]. Panofsky reads this as divine light, but the result is that the church becomes a space for the display of unnatural light effects: a cinema, in other words, or more specifically, an equivalent to Moholy-Nagy’s expanded cinema. Sedlmayr’s postwar work evinces a more conservative exploration of this problematic: he enthused over light-effects in cathedrals, while criticising the

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56 Michael Cowan, ‘Taking it to the Street: Screening the Advertising Film in the Weimar Republic’, *Screen* 54, no. 4 (2013), 463–79.
57 This is how Monika Wagner describes the postwar work of Panofsky, Sedlmayr et al., using a phrase borrowed from Panofsky’s book on Suger. It should be noted, however, that the origin of this work lies in the 1920s and 1930s. Wagner, *Das Material der Kunst*, p. 261.
excessive illumination of modernist architecture, which emanated in his opinion from a hunger for light among those who had lost the true light.59

The Gothic cathedral had been a central concern of art-historical research and avant-garde art in Germany since the nation’s unification. A particularly important moment in this history is the 1911 publication of Wilhelm Worringer’s Formprobleme der Gotik, which grew in popularity through the war, and was reprinted for the 12th time in 1920.60 Worringer’s idea that Gothic dematerialisation of stone was a process of spiritualisation would be enormously influential,61 as would his concept of a ‘secret Gothic’, which was unmoored from both its historical and geographic contexts and emanated instead from the race-psychology of its creators.62 For the avant-gardes, this meant that Gothic could be liberated from its historical obsolescence for utopian use, in combination with Ruskinian ideas of medieval society’s prelapsarian social and stylistic unity: Feininger’s crystal cathedral appeared on the Bauhaus prospectus in 1919, and Behrens built a bizarre pavilion in the form of a medieval masons’ lodge at the Exhibition of Applied Arts in Munich in 1922.63 For some, the adoption of Gothic was internationalist,64 but many Expressionists shared Worringer’s nationalism.65

60 Bushart, Der Geist der Gotik, p. 21.
61 Wilhelm Worringer, Formprobleme der Gotik (Munich: Piper, 1918), p. 69.
64 ‘States disappear, and with them their armed might.’ Bruno Taut, ‘The Earth, a Good Dwelling Place’ (1919) cited in Kathleen James-Chakraborty, ‘The Drama of Illumination: Visions of Community from Wilhelmine to Nazi Germany’ in Art, Culture and Media under the Third Reich, ed. R. Etlin (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002), pp. 181–201 (p. 188).
65 ‘Behind the aesthetic and stylistic innovations, behind the innovatory impulse, which can be claimed for the artistic development of the twentieth century, lies an anti-modern, indeed a reactionary ideology, which has more to do with the aims of
Later, the proponents of Kunstgeographie also published numerous works on the subject. Following in the footsteps of Worringer (and ultimately Goethe), they tended with various degrees of chauvinism to emphasise the German origin of Gothic, or at least, the Germanness of the ‘true’ Gothic; however, unlike Worringer they radically relocated Gothic, essentialising the bond between artwork and place. Such claims eventually extended to the Germanness of Gothic works that lay beyond the borders of the nation as defined at Versailles – with obvious geopolitical implications. As Adolf Behne had prophetically observed in 1917, nationalist writers ‘annexed’ Gothic ‘with exactly the same sonorous reasons used by the nationalists on this side and that to carry out their land–annexation business.’

Mannheim, with his discussion of the spatiality of conservative and proletarian thought, offers an indication of why the ‘recognisability’ of Gothic was so widespread at this time. For both conservatives and others, the Gothic offered an enticing vision of a pre-capitalist utopia, either radically localised or radically international, produced by collectives that could be seen either as a primitive class or an organic community. Worringer ambiguously straddles both of these positions, a fact which explains his popularity across political divides.

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66 See Kaufmann, Towards a Geography of Art, pp. 68–88.
In this chapter I shall not attempt to resolve the complexities of space–time and light–matter by proposing a smoothed-out ontology of film as medium; instead I shall explore how they were worked through, or played off against each other, in concrete products and a mutating network of practices. The variety and contradictions exhibited by these demonstrate, in fact, that the medium of film is not a stable or hermetically sealed category: it was frequently remediated by other media, such as books and cathedrals. It can however be said that there was something about the conjunction of space and light in Gothic architecture that was curiously attuned to a similar conjunction in film, pointing again to what Benjamin called a ‘flashing-up’ in the context of the dialectical image: ‘The historical index of the images not only says that they belong to a particular time; it says, above all, that they attain to legibility only at a particular time … each present day is determined by the images that are synchronic with it; each “now” is the now of a particular recognizability.’\(^{68}\) Not only is a specific recognisability necessary in order to grasp this flashing-up, but also a specific medium, and in the moment under consideration, as the image of the cathedral flashed up in Weimar Germany, this medium seemed to be film.

**Cinematic collective**

What the audience did with this recognisability is the final, crucial node in the art-historical film complex. Again, as with the elements of space and light, which are prominent in both the medium of film and the Gothic, the question of audience – particularly the mass audience – is crucial to both medium *and* object in the *Domfilm*. It was widely recognised that film employed collective modes of production and reception, although the significance of this was interpreted in a variety of ways. For

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Brecht, writing in the wake of the *Threepenny Opera* lawsuit in 1931, ‘a collective cannot work without a clear point of reference and evening entertainment is no such clear point.’ Filmmakers in such instances remain a loose association of antagonistic individuals. However, if the necessary aim is settled on – a pedagogic aim, that is – then the ‘collective can only create works which are able to make “collectives” of the audience.’ The process behind this transformation is not explained, but in any case such pedagogically aimed, collective *Umfunctionierung* was exceedingly difficult in the political and economic circumstances following 1929; *Kuhle Wampe* (dir. Slatan Dudow, 1932) is a rare example. Even the short *Kulturfilm*, which perhaps offered a more promising prospect since it was relatively cheap to produce and ostensibly educational in intention, was rarely if ever produced by a collective. In most cases, the pedagogic aim was very far from the one that Brecht had in mind, and the films are conceived in the same terms as a bourgeois artwork: the internally coherent creation of an auteur, hand-crafted rather than the product of industrial processes.

For others writers, such as Balázs, cinematic collectivity was reminiscent of the Middle Ages, when the cathedrals were built and used by masses. After the war, Panofsky and Hauser also compared the collective labour of film production to that of cathedral production. Such observations derived in part from a long-established belief that architecture was properly the work of masses, an idea that originated with Ruskin and Morris. For them, Gothic especially was the work of collectives – represented by the *Bauhütten* or mason’s lodges – and so they commended its revival as an antidote for

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70 Panofsky makes this comparison in *Abbot Suger on the Abbey Church of St.-Denis and Its Art Treasures* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979), p. 14; and in ‘Style and Medium in the Motion Pictures’ (the 1947 version, not the 1936 version), pp. 29-30. This timeline suggests that he was re-reading the medium of film through his engagement with Suger: intriguingly, he does not take the discussion in the direction of light mysticism that is the focus of his work on Suger. Arnold Hauser, *The Social History of Art*, 2 vols (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1951), I, p. 247.
alienating modernity. In Germany this idea took a nationalistic turn after August Reichensberger’s c.1840 campaign for mass-participation in the completion of Cologne cathedral – the mass in question being not a class, nor even a confession, but a Volk. Collectivity had been suppressed by industrialisation, bourgeois individualism and its media – processes that Pinder detected in the fifteenth century cathedral, as reception in motion and collective creation gave way to the dominance of master builders and static observation of the sacrament as if in a transparent, theatrical – or perhaps even cinematic – space.  

But now – in the era of film – this architectural collectivity was to rise again, precisely via the industrial media, or so Benjamin was to argue in the Artwork essay.

But what form was this cinematic collectivity to take, and what was it supposed to achieve? In a 1928 article titled ‘DerFilm als Pädagoge’ (‘Film as Pedagogue’), published in Das neue Frankfurt, Behne wrote hopefully that ‘people who have been educated to a new communal seeing [by film] will now position themselves differently to all things, more friendly and more trusting’. According to this reformist position, the technology of film can be used to heal society by binding its fractious members into a community – one united by its reification, its empathy for things. Of course, this hardly turned out to be the case, or if it did, it did not necessarily have the positive result that Behne accorded it. Besides the question of reification, films such as Der ewige Jude, ‘The Eternal/Wandering Jew’ (dir. Fritz Hippler, 1940), are a stark reminder that the medium is not the only part of the message, and that friendliness is not the sole aim of cinema.

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71 Pinder, cited in Nagel, Medieval Modern, p. 258.
72 ‘Denn Menschen, die so zu einem neuen verbindenden Sehen erzogen sind, werden nun zu allen Dingen anders stehen, vetrauensvoller und freundschaftlicher.’ Adolf Behne, ‘Der Film als Pädagoge’, Das neue Frankfurt 2, nos.11–12 (1928), 203.
Benjamin probed more deeply into the specific mechanism by which the film audience worked as a collective, moving, like Kracauer, from an analysis of collectivity in production to collectivity in reception, and simultaneously extending the concept of labour to the latter. According to Benjamin the collective audience regulated the individual viewers’ responses (especially visceral ones such as laughter and shock) as they reacted both to the events on screen and to the reactions of those around them, thereby diffusing the fascist potential of the medium. Benjamin was well aware that the cinema audience was a problematic grouping, since it was divided along class lines and unlikely to form a revolutionary mass (although he suppressed this insight in the published versions of his Artwork essay73); neither was it capable of forming a classical bourgeois public, but it is precisely in this lack that its potential lay.

Nevertheless, it is hard not to agree with Adorno that the self-regulatory process Benjamin describes seems wide open to employment as a mechanism of conformity rather than a school of collectivity. But we should resurrect Benjamin’s insight into the contingency of the audience – it is various, and its make-up is not the same in all places and at all times – in order to challenge the idea of the monolithic film audience, united in passivity in the Wagnerian gloom of the cinema.74 Such a benighted, silenced audience could never become a public. Neither could an audience of perfect homogeneity: without discourse, which as Mannheim said must originate in difference, there is no public.75 So in the disharmony of the cinema audience lay a potential for

73 Hansen, Cinema and Experience, pp. 97–98.
74 The innovation of darkening the auditorium during performances has been attributed to Wagner. Previously, the space was brightly lit and the scene of much social interaction. Juliet Koss, Modernism After Wagner (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2010), p. 57. Kittler also makes much of this change in Gramophone, Film, Typewriter, p. 121.
75 Mannheim, Ideology and Utopia, pp. 154–58.
49. Tageslichtkino in Bruno Taut’s Monument des Eisens, Leipzig, 1913.
some kind of public, but what form could this take? How could it be actualised? And would this be a fertile ground for the production of art-historical knowledge?

In cinema’s infancy (the period that Benjamin was, arguably, valorising in his Artwork essay), pre-Wagnerian alternatives to twilit devotion had been the norm. Storefront cinemas, circus blacktop tents and – as visualised in Der Golem – royal courts were by no means scenes of silent absorption, and these viewing conditions were programatically recreated by some later cinema builders and promoters: the cinema inside Taut’s 1913 ‘Monument des Eisens’ (Monument of Iron), for instance, where 200 visitors viewed promotional films about the iron industry in a room into which daylight streamed through clerestory windows [fig. 49]. Behne praised the way that in this ‘Tageslichtkino’ (daylight cinema), the speaker narrating the films was visible to the audience – thereby mediating the image with a living, expert voice.

Such lecturers providing a running commentary were common in the early days of the medium. They functioned as a human caption, anchoring the otherwise potentially indeterminate moving images on screen. They were also able to respond to interjections, translate the so-called international visual language of film into local spoken languages, and even to offer an interpretative resistance to such universalism grounded in concrete specificity, thus demonstrating ‘the capacity of sound to create a new space, neither on the screen nor entirely unrelated to it, a space of the “auditorium”’.  

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77 Adolf Behne, ‘Der Kino im Leipziger Monument des Eisens’, Bild und Film 2, nos. 11/12 (1913), 269–71.  
… in which meaning can be played with.” This presents quite a challenge to Balázs’s view of silent cinema as a non-verbal and hence international language. From a Benjaiminian perspective, the visibility of the film’s interpreter in Taut’s building is crucial because it allows the audience to be trained not only by the voice, but also by the Haltung, the bodily attitude of the interpreter towards the film. The body gesticulating and speaking between the audience and the screen seems to be animated by the latter; it transmits this animation to the mass – but not immediately, rather with the potential for reinterpretations and resistance.

A comparable modification of viewing conditions was attempted in the early 1920s by Hans Cürlis. He investigated the possibilities of ‘daylight projectors’ – devices that used back-projection in order to allow screenings in un-darkened rooms [fig. 50]. He hoped that this technology would broaden the audience by permitting the screening of films in extra-cinematic contexts, especially schools. This would also have facilitated intra-audience discussion and pedagogic intervention. The cost of such devices eventually proved prohibitive, but despite the institutionalisation of the medium criticised by Kracauer, extra-cinematic projection remained one means of socialising the audience.80 Apart from commercial applications of outdoor projection, examples included the establishment of organisations such as the Social Democrats’ Volksfilmbühne, which operated from 1922 to 1925, and the Volksfilmverband, which was established in 1928 as an unaligned group but was eventually taken over by the Communist Party. The latter was very successful in its brief existence, organising over 700 screenings across Germany each year by 1929. Lectures and discussions frequently formed part of its

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80 Cowan, ‘Taking it to the Street’.

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50. ‘Tageslichtprojektor’ demonstrated in front of the Brandenburg Gate, 1920, with a screening for ‘Opfertage für Oberschlesien’: ‘eine ganz neue Propagandaart’.

programmes. It also had its own journal, *Film und Volk* (later the *Arbeiterbühne und Film*), which competed with legions of other publications, from the conservative *Kinematograph* to the liberal *Lichtbildbühne*, to publicise, debate and criticise individual films and the industry itself. And just as the socialised audience – a public, by any other name – survived the medium’s institutionalisation, so too did the film lecturer: although it has been generally agreed that the role vanished as narrative feature films became the dominant mode, I shall argue that in several cases it survived by being absorbed into the film itself. However, this survival was a vestigial one; the lecturer in this form was stripped of any potential for resistance, reinterpretation, or dialogue with the audience.

**Moving culture in frozen time: Hans Cürlis and the Kulturfilm**

Cürlis was one of the earliest producers of art-historical films in Germany. He had studied art history and cultural history from 1911 to 1914 in Berlin, Munich, and Kiel, and he was inspired by the example of Erwin Hanslik’s Kulturforschung institute in Vienna to establish his own institute in Berlin in 1919. Cürlis set out with the express intention of producing films, and to this end he employed a number of figures who would go on to find success in the German film industry, for instance Lotte Reiniger, whose shadow-puppet-style animations were employed in short fantasy films for children.

Cürlis’s Institute assumed an ‘objective’, apolitical stance vis-à-vis its factual subjects, but this was contradicted by numerous films demonstrating that its director had a fierce antipathy to the Treaty of Versailles: he made twenty films on the subject between 1919

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81 For an overview of these activities see Murray, *Film and the German Left*. 82 Gunning, ‘The Scene of Speaking’, p. 70.
and 1926. This led in 1921 to questions being asked in the Reichstag about Cürlis’s role as film advisor to the foreign office, which was subsequently terminated. But he was evidently undeterred, and his continuing output of anti-Versailles films was joined by a series calling for the return of Germany’s overseas dominions, such as 1927’s Die Weltgeschichte als Kolonialgeschichte (World History as Colonial History) [fig. 51].

The films about art made under Cürlis’s supervision were less controversial – at least, in political terms. In 1919, the first year of the Institut’s life, Cürlis and his colleague Carl Koch (who was later to collaborate with Moholy-Nagy on the Filmskizze) made a series of ten eight-minute studies of small sculptures in the Berlin museums, rotating the artworks on a turning plinth as they filmed them. The films were intended to be used by schools as a substitute for museum visits, thus fulfilling one of the recurrent aims of art historical film: the annulment of distance for pedagogic purposes.

In fact, Cürlis later asserted that such films could even improve on the museum experience by revealing things otherwise invisible to the visitor. In his previously cited essay of 1924 he wrote: ‘It is harder to enjoy sculpture than painting. The exhibition of sculpture, the possibility of really being able to see it from all sides, everything that contributes decisively to the formation of a judgment. In museums, most small sculptures stand in cases, and anyway it is very rare that one can actually turn the piece … It is even harder to gain a opinion via slides or photographs.’ But with film the artwork is finally made visible to the observer – precisely by showing it from all angles, and not from one privileged angle dictated by curators, photographers, or art historians.

He went further: film, he argued, could reveal things in the artwork that were hidden from the human eye. Like his collaboration with Koch, this locates Cürlis’s thought in the milieu of the Neues Sehen.

Cürlis submitted the films – which have since been lost – for the assessment of the Zentralinstitut für Erziehung und Unterricht (Central Institute for Education and Teaching), where a panel led by art historian Professor Felix Lampe considered them for distribution. The films were however rejected, Lampe’s committee especially criticising the movement of the sculptures.\(^{84}\) One might ask why it was precisely their motion that displeased the panel of educators; Cürlis felt that the reason for their objection was that they thought sculpture was static by nature, and should stay still.\(^{85}\)

This was not an extraordinary position: it corresponded to the previously cited essays published by Wölfflin on the photography of sculpture, in 1896, 1897, and 1915. Wölfflin, citing Hildebrand, insisted that sculpture should be shot from only one, frontal, viewpoint.\(^{86}\) The apparent freedom of the viewing subject promised by the transmutation of Wölfflinian stereoscopy into three-dimensional cinematic space was an even more disruptive proposition. Möser’s microscope comes to mind here:\(^{87}\) the conservative rejection of an earlier optical technology reveals an enduring resistance to the way in which established hierarchies (in this instance, a hierarchy of distance) are upset by innovations in technologies of vision. In the age of film, the close-up – regarded by Balázs and others as the cinematic technique par excellence – continues this impertinent proximity to the face, but the principle of movement is entirely new, and this threatens to unsettle the conservative principle of location. In technological

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\(^{84}\) Ziegler, *Kunst und Architektur*, p. 44.

\(^{85}\) Ziegler, *Kunst und Architektur*, p. 44.

\(^{86}\) Wölfflin, ‘How One Should Photograph Sculpture’.

\(^{87}\) Mannheim, *Conservative Thought*, p. 328.
terms, still photography was by then familiar enough to have receded into invisibility as a medium, and was thus not so problematic in this sense, whereas the novelty of movement brought to the fore the mediation of film.

But if Cürlis’s films could not provide the grounds for art-historical knowledge as understood by the discipline at the time, could they furnish some other type of knowledge – what Negt and Kluge might have called an art-historical ‘counterproduct’? In a limited sense, this is the case: they attempt to short-circuit at least one form of the disciplinary mediation of the artwork. Cürlis’s understanding of objectivity was quite different from the conventional replication of one-point perspective dictated by Wölfflin. Instead, he advocated an ultra-objective Neues Sehen approach, in which the technology would no longer be remediated by older techniques – single point perspective – but would transform the encounter with the artwork instead. Thus, Cürlis wrote, film could improve on the experience of visiting an object in a museum. But although this innovation was rejected, Cürlis was still subscribing to the disciplinary aim of replicating the intention of the artist: he merely claimed to have achieved this more authentically with his new tools.

However, the counterproduct also has a more radical potential. Are there any Schreberian strategies in art-historical film – counterproducts subversive in intent, operating by détournement? Cürlis’s case is ambiguous. The fact that he submitted his films for the approval of the Central Institute of Education may suggests that he had no such subversive intention – however, his use of Foreign Office funding to produce anti-Versailles films shows that he was quite capable of employing the state’s systems of media production to his own purposes. The fact of their rejection suggests another

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potential, one unmotivated by conservatism: the ability of film in this moment to puncture the familiarity of photographic representation. This could have been harnessed, like a shock-effect, to cloud the apparent transparency of media, revealing their constructed nature – and beyond this, more radically, the impossibility of immediate experience in culture, and hence the constructed nature of all experience. This was what Kracauer called the *va banque Spiel* of photography in his essay of 1927. Brecht also pointed to this kind of *Umfunktionierung* in his famous statement of 1931:

> A photograph of the Krupp Works or the AEG reveals almost nothing about these institutions. Reality as such has slipped into the domain of the functional. The reification of human relations, the factory, for example, no longer discloses those relations. So there is indeed ‘something to construct’, something ‘artificial’, ‘invented’. Hence, there is in fact a need for art. But the old concept of art, derived from experience, is obsolete.

Could art-historical film have fulfilled this need for a new kind of constructed representation, one that moved beyond the attempt to merely represent immediate experience of the object or of architectural space? Kracauer’s essay concludes with just such a suggestion: film intimates the possibility of reconfiguring a fragmentary and alienated world, which we had been forced to confront by photography, into a ‘valid organization of things’.

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Cürlis was not the only person making films about art-historical subjects at this early stage: from the early 1920s short documentaries flowed in torrents from the major studios, especially Ufa (Universum Film AG). Towards the end of the First World War, official recognition of the propaganda value of film had led figures in the German High

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Command, including Ludendorff himself, to overcome objections to the corrupting new medium and work towards the establishment of a national film company. On 18 December 1917, Ufa was founded with twenty-five million marks from Deutsche Bank and industrialists including AEG and Bosch. The German government also secretly bought an eight-million-mark stake, and one of the members of Ufa’s board of directors was Ludendorff’s propaganda specialist Major Alexander Grau, making the company closely integrated into the state – especially those of its elements originating from the pre-revolutionary elite.92

Less than a year after Ufa was founded, a new department was established within the company for the production of a genre peculiar to Germany, the Kulturfilm. These short films were designed at first to be screened in extra-cinematic contexts, for example in universities and schools, and covered a broad range of topics. They were in part a response to the prewar cinema reform movement that had aimed to eliminate commercial Schundfilme (trash films). Kulturfilme were explicitly conceived as an antidote to the immoral titillation and enervating stimulation of such ‘trash’, employing the ‘objective’ and ‘scientific’ nature of film technology to its proper end: education. As Panofsky recalled in 1936, ‘until a few years ago it was the attitude of the socially or intellectually prominent that one might with propriety see, if anything, such austerely educational films as the Married Life of the Starfish ... but never a narrative film.’93 However, although education was their ostensible aim, there was a certain fuzziness in their definition: Lehrfilme, ‘educational films’; Unterrichtsfilme, ‘teaching films’; Kulturfilme, ‘culture films’; Werbefilme, ‘advertising films’; Industriefilme, ‘industrial

films’; and Propagandafilme, ‘propaganda films’ were all to a degree interchangeable. Ufa distributed many Werbefilme to cinemas as Kulturfilme, and an internal document commented with pride that its Industriefilme often ‘took on the character of Kulturfilme.’ In the words of Barry Fulks, ‘Masquerading as a quintessential expression of unsullied German Kultur, the German Kulturfilm was in actuality the vessel for a multitude of political, economic and ideological impulses.’

Kulturfilme were enormously successful in this period, in economic terms. They began to be screened regularly as part of the B programme in cinemas at home and abroad – during the hyperinflationary period when domestic demand wilted, it was the popularity of German films in the USA, including Kulturfilme, that helped keep the industry afloat. This popularity did not emanate from audiences, however: Kulturfilme did not have to appeal to cinema-goers, who turned up to watch the main feature, not its accompanying side dishes. After the so-called stabilisation of the economy around 1924, the national film industry went into crisis once more, as foreign buyers turned away from increasingly expensive German imports, and at the same time American films flooded the domestic market. However, Kulturfilme continued to be produced in great numbers – partly because they could be made cheaply and quickly. In 1926 the Lustbarkeitsteuer (entertainment tax) was, after a long campaign by the film industry, reduced for Lehr- and Kulturfilme, which gave the production of such films an additional boost.

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94 Barry Fulks, ‘Film Culture and ‘Kulturfilm’: Walter Ruttmann, the Avant-Garde Film, and the ‘Kulturfilm’ in Weimar Germany and the Third Reich’ (PhD dissertation, University of Wisconsin Madison, 1982–3), p. 73.
95 Fulks, ‘Film Culture’, p. 73.
In 1926, a specialist catalogue listed 6,000 such films that had been produced since the war.\textsuperscript{96} Writing after the Second World War, Kracauer cited an Ufa brochure of the 1920s that asserted: ‘The world is beautiful; its mirror is the \textit{Kulturfilm}.\textsuperscript{97} Kracauer’s postwar judgment of the \textit{Kulturfilme} is a reiteration of his 1920s critique of pseudo-Sachlichkeit: ‘They mirrored the beautiful world; but their concern with the beauty of “nimble-footed Chinese before palanquins” made them overlook the misery these beautiful coolies endured … Through their escapist neutrality the Ufa \textit{Kulturfilme} revealed that their submission to the rules of the republican “system” was by no means tantamount to true acceptance.’\textsuperscript{98} For Kracauer (who had initially been excited by \textit{Kulturfilme} and even by the \textit{Bergfilme} of Leni Riefenstahl) this moment of ‘stabilisation’ actually marked a stagnation, a ‘frozen ground’, and after 1924 ‘the decline of the German screen is nothing but the reflection of a widespread inner paralysis.’\textsuperscript{99}

In fact, the German film industry was marked by its close involvement with the state military apparatus from the very outset (as Kittler emphasised),\textsuperscript{100} and there was little room for ‘decline’ in Kracauer’s terms. This does not mean that counterproducts were not possible, but to seek them in the documentary productions of the major studios is largely fruitless, for it is here that the medium displays its pseudo-objectivity most ostentatiously. Nevertheless – to insist on a Kracauerian analysis against Kracauer himself – these films are still interesting as surface manifestations and as such can productively be subjected to a perverse analysis revealing the disjuncture between


\textsuperscript{98} Kracauer, \textit{From Caligari to Hitler}, p. 143.

\textsuperscript{99} Kracauer, \textit{From Caligari to Hitler}, p. 137.

\textsuperscript{100} Kittler, \textit{Gramophone, Film, Typewriter}, pp. 128–30.
surface and core, or even the absence of any such hermeneutic bond.\textsuperscript{101} This is where Kracauer and Kittler meet: in the no-longer-existing interval between surface and essence. The art-historical \textit{Kulturfilm} is a particularly revealing locus for this hermeneutic decay because its object – the artwork – was once the ultimate privileged object of interpretation. However, when attempts were made to replicate these practices in the new medium, they were transformed, becoming gestures producing patterns of correspondence on the surface of the screen. But if these performative and gestural interpretations did not convey much of value (in disciplinary terms) about the artworks, they were not without meaning.

In some instances, these interpretative gestures were literal. One of the earliest films to be made on the subject of Gothic architecture was Hans Cürlis’s 1924 \textit{Der Geist der Gotik} (\textit{The Spirit of Gothic}, now lost). He described the film as being structured according to ‘characteristic phenomena’, for instance ‘the cathedral over the city’, ‘columns and arches’, ‘the window’, and ‘living stone’. These sound like the \textit{Meßbild} formats we encountered in the previous chapter: the film is apparently remediating the canons of architectural photography. Startlingly, Cürlis then mentions that representations of sculpture in the film are ‘augmented by motifs from the “Gothic dances of Charlotte Bara”’ in which ‘unusually powerful and convincingly Gothic bodily feeling is expressed.’\textsuperscript{102}

Charlotte Bara was a well-known expressive dancer of the time whose choreography was inspired by ancient Egyptian and medieval sculpture, and was often referred to as

\textsuperscript{101} On Kracauer’s anti-hermeneutic procedure, see Schwartz, \textit{Blind Spots}, pp. 137–44. 
‘Gothic’ by her contemporaries [fig. 52]. The juxtaposition of images of Bara dancing with medieval art demonstrates the potential of art historical film to make connections between the past and present, which can be enormously effective, no matter how spurious. This visual strategy reflects the tendency in contemporaneous art historical discourse to uncover a ‘secret Gothic’, unmoored from historical conditions, an idea propagated by Worringer’s 1911 *Formprobleme*. (Cürlis may have absorbed this idea via Karl Scheffler’s 1917 book *Der Geist der Gotik*, after which his film was named.\(^\text{103}\)) This art-historical method of discovering hidden correspondences found a sympathetic accomplice in the photographic media: Wölfflin produced a perpetual oscillation between classical and baroque with his double slide projection method, and Warburg traced the ‘wanderings of the spirit’ with his image-atlas Mnemosyne; but in cinema it reached its zenith.\(^\text{104}\) The medium exists in parallel time to that of the audience, and it could visually merge these times, as in the opening sequence of Riefenstahl’s *Olympia* (1936), where Myron’s *Discobolus* fades into a living athlete [fig. 53]. Here correspondence is no longer intimated by juxtaposition; rather identity is effected by the cross-fade – which also brings the inert artwork to life.

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103 Karl Scheffler, *Der Geist der Gotik* (Leipzig: Insel, 1917). Scheffler (1869–1951) was a prominent art critic and editor of the journal *Kunst und Künstler*. His book on Gothic follows Worringer’s ideas closely, although in his foreword he asserts his own priority. Joanna Ziegler calls Scheffler one of the few art historians writing on Gothic to take Worringer seriously. Joanna E. Ziegler, ‘Worringer’s Theory of Transcendental Space in Gothic Architecture: A Medievalist’s Perspective’, in *Invisible Cathedrals: the Expressionist Art History of Wilhelm Worringer*, ed. Neil Donahue (University Park: Pennsylvania State University, 1995), pp. 105-18 (p. 117). However, Frankl was disparaging about Scheffler’s book, calling it ‘indicative of what the half-educated public around 1917 wanted to hear about Gothic; at the same time it is characteristic … of the nationalistic trend that postulated a Nordic or Germanic or German “racial” admixture as a necessary condition of Gothic’. Frankl, *The Gothic*, p. 738.

52. Charlotte Bara and Gordon Ludwig, son of Emil Ludwig, date unknown.

53. *Olympia*, dir. by Leni Riefenstahl (Germany, 1936).
By bringing Bara into his film, Cürlis attempted a similar strategy. At the same time, he also incorporated the physical/vocal interpreter of the film, which Behne had thought so crucial to Taut’s Tageslichtkino, into the film itself: a living intermediary is no longer necessary, a lighted auditorium is no longer necessary, if the audience’s Haltung towards the artwork can be schooled by the interpretative human image on the screen. But this kind of physical interpretation would itself not be necessary for very much longer: in 1929 the first German sound film was produced, marking the end of Bara, interpreters, and what Balázs had seen as the mute international language of film. In one stroke, film was transformed from a puppeteer of architecture into an architectural ventriloquist: communication was no longer (solely) dependent on bringing the inorganic to life, since verbal communication could now be enfolded in the medium. Furthermore, the editable soundtrack and the technique of the voiceover meant that sounds could be detached from their living sources and could emanate from matter instead: the artwork could be given a voice.

Several years after Cürlis’s film, a number of Kulturfilme on the subject of Gothic architecture were released. Of these, Ufa’s 1932 sound-film Die steinernen Wunder von Naumburg (The Stone Wonders of Naumburg) was one of the first and most influential. The film won gold medals at the Venice and Milan film festivals in 1933, and was widely regarded as an unprecedentedly successful attempt to film a building. One of its directors, Rudolf Bamberger (b. Mainz, 1888) had begun his career as a stage and film architect. In 1927 he traveled to Hollywood in search of work, and after his return to Germany he set up a production company and made several Kulturfilme, hiring photographer Curt Oertel as his cameraman. Two of their productions concerned German cathedrals, the first of these being the Naumburg film (the second was on

Mainz). Bamberger and Oertel’s precise roles in the production are difficult to ascertain since Bamberger – who was Jewish – was forced to stop working in the industry in 1934 (he was killed in Auschwitz in the winter of 1944), and the film was subsequently frequently attributed to Oertel alone, often by Oertel himself. In 1933 their film was recut and re-released as Die Naumburger Passion. This version has since been lost, but the censor’s record notes that the film’s new intertitles referred to the ‘racial struggle’ of the ‘Ostkolonisation’ (colonisation of the east) in the time of the cathedral’s construction, a favourite subject of National Socialist-aligned art historiography.\textsuperscript{106}

The first, extant version of the Naumburg film is less imperialistic. It begins with an introductory voiceover explaining the national art-historical significance of the church, accompanied by establishing shots of the building from the distance, locating the building in both the German context and the local Saxon landscape. The narrator tells us that although the identity of the building’s makers are lost to us, ‘their work speaks to us’. This is a marker that the voice we hear belongs to the cathedral: however, it will not persist throughout the film. We then approach the church and are introduced to the donor portraits in the west choir – the voiceover informs us that these sculptures come ‘from over the centuries in close human relationship to us’. Then the voiceover ends and, to the sound of Bach, we are given a dumb show of the figures. We are not always shown them in the sequence they would appear to a visitor to the cathedral, and so the filmmakers create a film space related to but distinct from the architectural space of the cathedral. Like Riegl’s Gruppenporträt, it is a space defined by psychological engagement with the figures on the part of the viewer-filmmaker, which is projected onto the sculptures themselves: an empathic reading transmitted to the audience via camera angles, movements, and montage. The camera creates relationships between the

\textsuperscript{106} Ziegler, \textit{Kunst und Architektur}, p. 55.
figures by cutting back and forth between them. In this way, the famous statues of Ekkehard and Uta, for instance, are made to relate to one another, and the sculptural ensemble is endowed with a psychological narrative of sorts [figs. 54–57]. Next we are shown the high reliefs on the west choir screen, which represent the last supper, the arrest of Christ, and the hand-washing of Pilate. The camera animates these groups too, by panning back and forth, intercutting with dissolves and wipes. Finally we are shown the passion group in the centre of the choir screen, which is filmed to a slower, funereal tempo.

The film made a lasting impression on writers, and became almost canonical. Looking back on it in 1938, Bruno Rehlinger wrote that “the cinematic capturing of sculpture, through the succession of shots and the mobility of the camera, gives these works new expression not endowed on them by the hands of their creators. Balázs, borrowing a term from musical terminology, named this “variations on a theme.””¹⁰⁷ This is a strikingly Neues Sehen reading for such a late date.

One year earlier, Willy Döll (author of the screenplay for Prometheus Film’s Mutter Krausens Fahrt in Glück) had praised the way that its directors had managed to bring the donor portraits to life. However, Döll complained that because the film lacked a dramatically effective storyline for these stone figures, in the end the audience would

54. *Die steinernen Wunder von Naumburg*, dir. by Curt Oertel and Rudolf Bamberger (Germany, 1932).

55. *Die steinernen Wunder von Naumburg*, dir. by Curt Oertel and Rudolf Bamberger (Germany, 1932).
56. *Die steinernen Wunder von Naumburg*, dir. by Curt Oertel and Rudolf Bamberger (Germany, 1932).

57. *Die steinernen Wunder von Naumburg*, dir. by Curt Oertel and Rudolf Bamberger (Germany, 1932).

60. *Die steinernen Wunder von Naumburg*, dir. by Curt Oertel and Rudolf Bamberger (Germany, 1932).
not fully grasp the cultural history of the German Volk. More recently, Reiner Ziegler has disputed this judgment, claiming that the filmmakers achieved a narrative in a different way – with purely cinematic means. He observes that their approach seemingly follows a comment made by Wilhelm Pinder in his text for the 1925 book of photographs of Naumburg cathedral by Walter Hege: that the tableaux on the west choir screen could be considered as if they were theatrical stagings. I would go further: the film remediates the bookspace itself. The cutting from figure to figure, the close-ups of the faces, the succession of long-, mid-, and close-shots, and the starkly contrasting chiaroscuro, all emulate Hege’s photographs [fig. 58]. Furthermore, the separation of the voiceover section at the beginning and the voiceless shots of sculpture that follow imitates the structural division of the Hege/Pinder volumes for the Deutsche Kunstverlag into Beschreibung (description) and Bilder (images). The idea of medium specificity that Ziegler uses to discuss the film is therefore inadequate: the film borrows the form of the photobook, which in itself was influenced by cinematic techniques. Media are in this moment a connected series of intermedial feedback loops.

The final part of the film introduces a new element: the living human form, which has until this point been absent. We cut from the sculpted crucifixion to a group of children playing in the cloister. This ludic refunctioning of sacred space brings to mind Benjamin’s concept of Spielraum, ‘room for play’ – which, as Anthony Vidler has pointed out, is a word borrowed from Schmarsow. But the potential of playful activity to create space is quickly curtailed by architecture’s disciplinary impingement on the body. One of the children wanders away from the others and puts her face against

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108 Ziegler, Kunst und Architektur, p. 58.
the metalwork of a grille which bars her path; the spikes of its star-shaped bosses press into her cheeks like the crown of thorns into the head of Christ, an image which immediately preceded this scene [figs. 59, 60]. Her eyes look up, and we follow them, cutting to shots panning up the architectural elements, and then to an exterior shot panning up to the towers.

The implication of this visualisation of the ideal audience is that throughout the film our view of the cathedral has been the vision of a child. This ‘innocent’ vision, unsullied and fresh – even Christ-like, as the crown-of-thorns motif suggests – is mediated by the camera, which claims to shrive the vision of the audience, returning a childlike sense of wonder.\textsuperscript{111} The childish imitation of Christ also identifies the viewer with the artwork, a model of the empathetic mode of viewing employed by the film, and as such this strategy marks another return to a previous mode of film, one attempted by Cürlis with his use of Charlotte Bara as a physical interpreter of architecture. In the age of sound such silent-age tropes remain; not mere vestiges but reminders that – just as blockbusters packed with special effects have been described as a return to Tom Gunning’s ‘cinema of attractions’\textsuperscript{112} – the history of the medium is not a simple trajectory but a complex one marked by recurrences and resurrections.

\textsuperscript{111} The place of the child in the cinema, and the sympathy of their modes of seeing, were established ideas: in his 1924 book Der sichtbare Mensch, Balázs had written ‘Die Kinder sehen die Welt in Großaufnahmen.’ Der sichtbarer Mensch, oder die Kultur des Films, in Balázs, Schriften zum Film, 2 vols (Munich, 1982-84), I, pp. 43-143 (p. 111). But cinema’s influence on children was also criticised, for instance in a 1931 article ‘Kind und Film’ in Arbeiterbühne und Film. The author proposed a solution: ‘We must go to the movies with our children! Just as the husband does with his wife, just ... as political groups should, so that afterwards they can discuss what they have seen.’ Trude Sand, ‘Kind und Film’, Arbeiterbühne und Film (June 1931), pp. 25–26, cited in Murray, Film and the German Left, p. 230.

\textsuperscript{112} The Cinema of Attractions Reloaded, ed. Strauven.
What kind of art-historical knowledge is produced by such a film? Its double structure – the pseudo-objective historical voiceover of the introductory section, which overlays distant, motionless images of the cathedral, and the voiceless (or rather, silently ventriloquistic) pathos of the roving close-up studies of sculpture – replicates the double temporality of the Hege/Pinder books’ *Zeitfolge* and *Erlebnisfolge*. Like the books, it also juxtaposes two spatialities: distant and de-distanced visions. And like the books, it mobilises these different visual and spatial modes in the service of two different forms of historical knowledge, but it adds to these the dimension of movement. While this intensifies the potency of the *Erlebnisfolge*, the irrevocable movement of the film sequence in the time of the audience also revokes the self-directionality of bookspace, the random access of its contents, and the possibility of moving from one section to another – and thus the possibility of the user building knowledge through their own media practice, in their own time of experience. This disciplinary manipulation of the bodies of its viewers is figured in the final image of the child: the physical impression made on her body by the fabric of the cathedral mirrors our own submission beneath the material of the film. As such, it accommodates the drive to proximity identified by Benjamin, which for him can be mediated by mimesis, but in this instance our faces are rammed up against the object so violently that proximity becomes identity and the ‘room for play’ necessary for mimesis closes. Since we are identifying with dead matter, reification ensues.
Unnatural light: Walter Hege and Carl Lamb

*Behind the visible appearance of a thing lurks its caricature, behind the lifelessness of a thing an uncanny, ghostly life, and so all actual things become grotesque.*

– Wilhelm Worringer, *Form-Problems of Gothic*\(^{113}\)

Reification does not just still the living; it also animates the dead. After the success of *Die steinernen Wunder von Naumburg*, several other *Domfilme* quickly followed, developing aspects of its interpretative variety into more homogeneous statements. The tendency to subjectivity was most fully realised by the architectural photographer and filmmaker Walter Hege. In 1931, Hege began working on a script for a film about Naumburg Cathedral. It was a topic dear to him: he had been born in the city in 1893, began photographing its cathedral regularly in the early 1920s, and published a six-volume portfolio of these images in 1923. His book for Deutscher Kunstverlag followed at the end of 1924, with its ‘description’ by Pinder.\(^{114}\) It was his experience of photographing the building that inspired his move to film, for he despaired, he said, of being able to convey ‘the many changing light effects, the many possible standpoints’ with a single still image.\(^{115}\) However, he had to abandon the project when he discovered that Rudolf Bamberger and Curt Oertel were nearing completion of their film on the same topic for Ufa.\(^{116}\) Nevertheless, Hege went on to feature medieval architecture in several of his films.

After aborting his Naumburg project, Hege’s career as a filmmaker began with a nature film, *Am Horst der wilden Adler* (On the Nest of the Wild Eagle), in 1932. His second film, *Auf den Spuren der Hanse* (Hanseatic Traces), was made in 1933 for Ufa, which


\(^{114}\) Beckmann, ‘Walter Heges Bildhände’.

\(^{115}\) ‘Die vielen wechselnden Beleuchtungen, die vielen möglichen Standpunkte.’ Walter Hege, ‘Vom Dombuch zum Domfilm’, *Film-Kurier* (26 October 1938), 74–77 (p. 74).

had by this time been taken under the aegis of Goebbels’s propaganda ministry. The subtitle, ‘A Film of Living Witness to a Glittering Epoch in Germany’s World-Stature,’ reflects the tone of the work, which documents the architecture of the medieval Baltic cities of the Hanseatic league. As Peter Lahn put it, ‘through the “time machine” of cinematography, his dramatisation could be synchronised [gleichgeschaltet] with National Socialist consciousness.’ The retroactive imposition of Gleichschaltung (‘bringing into line’), the Nazi policy of forced ideological homogeneity, on German history is visualised in a shot showing swastika flags fluttering in an old street leading to Prenzlau cathedral. It is as if the Hansa themselves, imagined in propaganda as Nordic ancestors of the German middle classes and embodied here by their architecture, were celebrating the arrival of the new regime. To reinforce this message the film ends with the words ‘That is the stone-inscribed history of the German Hansa, our inheritance from a greater era!’

The subject of Hege’s 1937–8 film Das steinerne Buch (The Stone Book) was long familiar to the director. He had published a book of photographs of Bamberg cathedral ten years earlier, which, like his book on Naumburg, was introduced by Wilhelm Pinder. The film took around a year to complete, and the production was laborious; in order to shoot his close-ups of the sculptures the construction of a high scaffold was required. The plot recycles a concept Hege had worked on at the beginning of the decade for his projected film about Naumburg cathedral. He had planned to use the life story of the cathedral’s sexton – envisioning Paul Wegener in the role – as a narrative framework, for, he wrote:

\[118\] Hege and Pinder, Der Bamberger Dom.
It is easily possible to bring this art to current powerful experience by means of the feature film [Spieldfilm], and to bring this art close to the simplest members of the people [Volk]. It is only necessary to place the artworks with parallel occurrences [Paralelgeschehnisse] of our contemporary era, because that which is contained in the figures is formed in an artistically elevated present.  

Although Hege did not make this film, his employment of ‘the means of the feature film’ in his film on Bamberg achieves what Willy Döll had criticised as lacking from Oertel and Bamberger’s film about Naumburg Cathedral, by ordering the art-historical discourse with the structure of a fictional narrative. The Paralelgeschehnisse within this story – a trope of several of Hege’s films – functioned to bring art history into line with the ideology of the present by taking ‘what is contained in the figures’ and forming it in an ‘artistically elevated present’.

The Bamberg film concerns two young men and the sexton who guides them around the cathedral; their antiquated dress could place the action in any era. After touring the building twice – the first at night, lit by torches, the second by day – the film culminates with the famous equestrian sculpture known as the Bamberg Rider. The sculpture was a recurrent subject of Hege’s and a mainstay of German nationalism. It is given special emphasis by appearing in three successive and ever-closer shots, until we are left with a close-up of its face looming heroically over us [fig. 61]. Meanwhile the Sexton informs us that ‘in this time, over which decay and discord reigned, a great sculptor created this

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120 The historiography of the Rider is examined by Hinz, ‘Der “Bamberger Reiter”’.

Hege provided an illustration of the Rider for Paul Schultze-Naumburg’s Kunst und Rasse (Munich: Callwey, 1928).
form which was yearned for by our Volk: the Rider.' Thus the Middle Ages are
associated with the present day as Paralelgeschehnisse: both are periods of decay, both
will be redeemed by a warrior.

The nocturnal setting of the first visit to the cathedral allowed Hege to use spotlights to
pick out certain subjects. It was an effect he had previously used in the first edition of
his Naumburg book, where details of carvings, such as the face of the crucified Christ,
are highlighted or thrown into deep chiaroscuro – although in his still photographs Hege
at first employed only natural light, waiting patiently for the effects he found most
striking [fig. 62]. In the film, on the other hand, these lights represent the glow of the
lantern carried by the men, and thereby visualise their own line of sight – which forces
our own eyes to follow theirs. The men illuminate the cathedral by looking at it; it does
not illuminate them. Together with the camera’s constant dollying and panning this
illumination made – in Hege’s words – the ‘artworks become uncannily lifelike’, their
expressions appearing to change as the camera and lights moved around them. The
chiaroscuro illumination employed by Hege is more obviously artificial, and relies more
emphatically on the fall of darkness, than the light appearing in the previous film I
considered – and indeed than in any of the other Domfilme I shall consider. Here

121 ‘In dieser Zeit, da überall Zerfall und Zwietracht herrschten, schuf einer der großen
Bildhauer die Gestalt, nach der die Sehnsucht unseres Volkes verlangte, den Reiter.’
Cited by Barbara Schrödl, ‘Architektur, Film und die Kunstgeschichte im
Nationalsozialismus’, in Kunstgeschichte im Nationalsozialismus. Beiträge zur
Fuhrmeister, and Michael H. Sprenger (Weimar: Verlag und Datenbank für
122 ‘Die Kunstwerke uns so unheimlich lebendig werden.’ Walter Hege, ‘Ein Besuch bei
Prof. Dr. Walter Hege. Neue Kulturfilme vom Bamberger Dom und den Bauten des
Führers’, Filmkurier, 19 March 1938, 2. Cited in Schrödl, ‘Architektur, Film, und die
Kunstgeschichte’, p. 314.

63. Walter Hege, Zeppelinfeld, Nuremberg, c.1936.
electrical light is a medium but it is not, contra McLuhan, without a message.\textsuperscript{123} These moving lights and spot-lit faces are unmistakably reminiscent of National Socialist spectacles, the most famous of which were Speer’s \textit{Lichtdome}, ‘cathedrals of light’ [fig. 63]. It also realises a tendency explored in Moholy-Nagy’s Light-Prop on a grand scale: the cathedral as expanded cinema.

The torchlight establishes an equivalence between the men and the sculptures, which are both similarly lit: they are the living inheritors of this tradition – which is in some instances monstrous – but despite their corporeality, they are petrified in contemplation by the animated sculpture [figs. 64, 65]. Like the child in the previous film I discussed, these men are revenants of an earlier mode of filmmaking in which the silent images required the mediation of a living body. Their youth is essential because it is, as Benjamin saw it, a period of life within which ‘languages emanating from matter’ speak to us more clearly.\textsuperscript{124} But rather than developing a Benjaminian mimetic consciousness, which appropriates the waste products of consumerism and refunctions them, what the young men learn from these grotesques is to become grotesque themselves: it is a lesson in reification. At the same time, the sculptures are animated and returned to life in the present.

\textit{As with Die steinernen Wunder}, however, the audience is given more than a dumb show to guide its response: there is also the narrator’s voice, in this case, one issuing from a visible body, rather than a voiceover. This voice’s point of origin, the body of the sexton, is very clearly an expert, but not a scientist: he is instead someone with a

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item[124] Walter Benjamin, ‘On Language as Such and on the Language of Man’ (1916), \textit{Selected Writings} I, pp. 62–74 (p. 73).
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
64. *Das steinerne Buch*, dir. by Walter Hege (Germany, 1938).

65. *Das steinerne Buch*, dir. by Walter Hege (Germany, 1938).
concrete connection with the building, one forged by long experience and use. The bodies of the young men respond both to this voice and directly to the building. The voice guides their responses to the building, shapes them, sets them on the correct path: it helps them to read Das steinerne Buch, spells out the letters for them (and for the audience). This narrative, from ignorance (darkness and the gargoyles) to understanding (daylight and the Reiter), models a type of art-historical cognition, which it enacts at the same time as it conveys knowledge.

It was Hege’s opinion that this was a truer way of presenting the artwork. However, by following this strategy, Hege fails to present us with anything beside a variation on the theme of the cathedral. In his final, posthumously published book, Kracauer argued that history (and photography) belonged in an antechamber before the final end of art and philosophy: not a fully formed or homogeneous work but a preliminary, a basis, which thereby escapes reification. The anteroom is the realm of materialist concretion as opposed to the abstraction of the work with a capital W: as such it is the space where the battle over the object of the cathedral can take place between those two forces of concretion in Mannheim’s schema, the conservative and the proletarian.

This raises the question: does film join the photograph in Kracauer’s anteroom? This instance suggests the contrary. In his photography essay of 1927, Kracauer had concluded that film demonstrates the potential reconfigurability of matter. In fact, this film is presented as a Work. Here, the cathedral, which had been torn apart by the book, is put back together by the film – but as a book. And the book is petrified: we can no longer turn the pages ourselves, directing our own route through it. Instead we are taken from A to Z by the filmmaker and his stand-in, the sexton, who reads the stone book for us. Kracauer had written that ‘In order for history to present itself, the
mere surface coherence offered by photography must be destroyed. Das steinerne Buch does not destroy the surface coherence of the photograph – quite the opposite.

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If Hege’s stone book took the Domfilm beyond the anteroom into the realm of Works, another film, made by a student of Wilhelm Pinder’s named Carl Lamb, manifests the opposite tendency: an attempt to make an art-historical film of scientific status. Lamb’s doctorate, titled ‘On the Development of Painterly Architecture in South Bavaria in the first half of the Eighteenth Century’, was completed in 1935; the next year, responding to a suggestion by Pinder, he made a film based on this research titled Raum im kreisenden Licht (Space in Circulating Light).

The film employs time-lapse photography – the first time this technique was used in an art historical context – and a motor-driven camera to capture the changing effects of sunlight falling into five churches throughout the day, with an especial focus on the Wieskirche in Steingaden. In employing the latest technology to provide a view of architecture not usually available to the human eye, the film can be seen as falling into the milieu of the Neues Sehen. The changing light within a church would be familiar to an habitué, but not to the casual visitor – and never in such a compressed temporality. As such, this film seems to present a document that could be employed for the production of art-historical knowledge; it seems to occupy Kracauer’s anteroom.

The film is also equipped with a voiceover that provides an analysis of the objects deriving from *Kunstgeographie*:

The works of a naturally developed architecture have a distinct relationship to the landscape from which they originate, and to the position of the light that illuminates them. The south and its eternal summer is an abundance of gleaming sun, and the Italian architects push the light back to a restful altitude [drängen das Licht zurück in ruhende Höhe]. In the north, where the beams fall obliquely on the earth, architects seek the weak light of nature. In the interior of the space, the light circulates [Im Inneren des Raumes kreist das Licht].

The space-forming element light is, via the ability of the film camera to technologically manipulate time, revealed to be natural and hence ahistorical, *timeless*: an unchanging part of geography.

However, against this explicit project the film also performs a similar function to Moholy-Nagy’s *Light Prop*, a device for the production of light-forms in space and time beyond the limits of the screen. As such it turns the church into a cinema: an architectural space designed for viewing moving lights. This corresponds to a current in architectural historiography that understood the building as an optical device: just as nineteenth-century iron constructions such as the Pont Transbordeur in Marseilles were being interpreted in these terms by Giedion, Moholy-Nagy, and Benjamin, Panofsky and Pinder similarly conceived the high Gothic cathedral: a transparent space of spectacularity, which

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128 Barbara Schrödl has argued that Lamb’s film was informed by his experience of avant-garde and commercial light practices in Weimar Berlin. In describing his own film as ‘Augenmusik’, Lamb borrowed a term coined by Bernhard Diebold to describe Ruttmann’s absolute film *Opus 1* of 1921. Schrödl, ‘Erfassung des Lichts’, p. 188.

129 Mertins, ‘Walter Benjamin and the Tectonic Unconscious’.
unlike the Romanesque was no longer felt by the body in motion but viewed by static and disembodied eye.\textsuperscript{130} Sedlmayr’s obscure idea that the stained glass window is not transparent but a ‘self-lighting wall’ finds its true significance in this context: the cathedral, reconceived as cinema.\textsuperscript{131}

In the case of Lamb’s film, what the lights in the church-cinema ostensibly tell us is that life on earth is radically situated. Here then is another instance of technologically mediated conservative location, but the truth is that in the age of electrical light, geographic location no longer determined the illumination of the building: thanks to floodlighting and interior illumination, the effects of latitude could be eliminated. Light was now abstracted from space, and the film – the very medium being used to demonstrate the location of the Wieskirche – was at the same time the medium of its dislocation.

The films of Lamb and Hege – both associates of Pinder – use light in apparently opposed ways to produce architectural knowledge. Hege’s artificial lights produce the spatially mediated correspondence between the past and present; Lamb’s ‘natural’ light-in-time produces the spatial fixity of the church. They are thus both Mannheimian conservative strategies of the sort discussed in the introduction to this chapter. However, unnatural light is not necessarily oriented thus. In his essay on photography of 1927, Kracauer relates a conversation between Goethe and Eckermann about a Rubens landscape in

\textsuperscript{130} Pinder, \textit{Deutsche Dome}, p. xvi.
\textsuperscript{131} Sedlmayr, \textit{Die Entstehung der Kathedrale}, p. 54. A ‘self-lighting wall’ also featured prominently in Mies’s Barcelona Pavilion: although it is little-discussed in the literature, this double-wall of frosted glass, filled with light bulbs, was the only artificial light source in the building. Robbers draws a line between this and the Hellerau Festsaal. Robbers, ‘Modern Architecture in the Age of Cinema’, pp. 366–67.
which two sources of sunlight are identifiable. Goethe explains to the perplexed Eckermann:

This is how Rubens proves his greatness, and shows to the world that he stands above nature with a free spirit, fashioning it according to his higher purposes. The double light is indeed violent, and you could even say that it is contrary to nature. But if it is contrary to nature, I also say that it is higher than nature; I say that it is the bold hand of the master, whereby he demonstrates in a brilliant way that art is not entirely subject to natural necessity but rather has laws of its own.\textsuperscript{132}

This unnatural light is a demonstration of art’s autonomy, and hence of human freedom.

\textbf{Art historian as medium: Wilhelm Pinder versus Siegfried Kracauer}

\begin{quote}
An immeasurable chilling of human relationships by mechanical, commercial, and political abstractions conditions an immeasurable reaction in the ideal of a shimmering community overflowing through all of its supporters.
\end{quote}

\begin{flushright}
– Helmuth Plessner, \textit{The Limits of Community} (1924)\textsuperscript{133}
\end{flushright}

The seemingly paradoxical motivation to fix the building and its viewer in space using the moving medium of film found theoretical expression in an article published by Wilhelm Pinder in 1941.\textsuperscript{134} Under the heading ‘A few words on the art-science teaching film’, Pinder began: ‘Film moves, but artworks do not move. Therein lies the difficulty. Artworks do not move, but we do, when we experience them. Therein lies the opportunity. The difficulty is being open to the opportunity. Therein lies the task.’\textsuperscript{135} Making reference to his teacher Schmarsow (and borrowing in several places from his lecture of 1893), Pinder

\textsuperscript{132} Kracauer, ‘Photography’, p. 52.
\textsuperscript{134} Wilhelm Pinder, ‘Einige Worte zum kunstwissenschaftlichen Unterrichtsfilm’, \textit{Film und Bild: Zeitschrift der Reichsanstalt für Film und Bild} 7 (1941), pp. 11–12.
goes on to explain that each artwork determines its mode of viewing, and that
this direction is encoded in its form. ‘The creator of the artwork directs thus with
his commands: this is how you will hear, this is how you will see, that is where
you will go (and in such a rhythm), there will you stand, and you will only
experience these forms that I have selected according to my own system’. The
art historian’s job is to guide the viewer along this predetermined path. Film,
being capable of spatial reproduction, is peculiarly suited to aide this process in
the case of architecture – on one condition:

It [film] must spell out what the educational and instructive word – the scientific
word – wants to impress on the learner about the essence of the individual work
and about the historical relationships between all works. It must therefore serve
the linguistically composed thoughts, which themselves are aligned to the
appreciation of visually composed forms.

Contrary to Balázs’s idea that film offered a means of escaping the conceptual
abstraction of the word via a return to pre-linguistic visual language, film – Pinder
insists – must be made to follow the logic of the book. In this way, the future of the
professional mode of discourse can be ensured in the new medium, via remediation –
albeit strictly unilateral remediation. As Schultze-Naumburg had insisted in his 1938
book on Bildmäßige Photografie, there is to be no remediation in reverse: the older
medium must not learn from the new. This, however, ran contrary to Pinder’s own
theory of generations. As I argued in the previous chapter, this was – in its fractured
temporality – a back-projection of a technologically mediated understanding of time.

136 ‘So hat der Schöpfer des Werkes mit diesen seinen Befehl ausgerichtet: so sollst du
hören, so sollst du sehen, dorthin und in solchem Rhythmus sollst du gehen, dort sollst
du stehen, und nur eben diese Formen sollst du erleben, die ich erlesen habe zu eigener
137 ‘Er muß das verdeutlichen, was das belehrende und führende Wort, das
wissenschaftliche Wort, über das Wesen des einzelnen Werkes und über die
geschichtlichen Zusammenhänge aller dem Lernenden einprägen will. Er muß also
durchaus dem sprachlich gefaßten Denken dienen, das selber wieder auf das
Pinder’s disciplinary curtailment of film’s *Eigensinn* via unilateral remediation is remarkable for its explicitness; it is doubly remarkable because, in the same article, he insists on the medium specificity of sculpture, architecture, and painting – and indeed film itself, which is spatial and thus attuned to architecture. But this specificity ends when it comes to the relationship with the word, under which film’s *Eigensinn* can and must be subsumed. The date of Pinder’s intervention indicates that this article is an attempt to put film back on the straight and narrow, coming long after the first flourishing of the *Kulturfilm*. It should therefore be understood as a critique of earlier art-historical films, in which a multitude of interpretative stances were tried out, and which did not generally attempt to produce equivalents of the ‘scientific word’.

But Pinder goes beyond this call for a linguistically ordered, scientific film into the description of an iron hermeneutic according to which the artwork is didactic, hammering its reception home into the mind of the viewer. This is a one-way street of both artistic creation and reception, distributed via a completely transparent and immediate medium. The radical immediacy so enacted echoes an earlier ecstatic experience of Pinder’s own, as detailed in his contribution to the infamous ‘Rally of German Scientists’ in 1933 [fig. 66]:

There was no longer theatre, there was no longer a separation into actor and spectator, stage and public, here there was no longer any public, here was the community again. All worked together. That is more than an image – the image was the last weak residue of all that still remained from nineteenth century art. That is style, by which I mean the inseparable unification of community to form, unconsciously created symbol for content.

In an extraordinary passage that follows this, he likens his experience to sculptures in Gothic cathedrals: ‘thus were the statues of Bamberg and Naumburg created, not to be
66: Wilhelm Pinder, seated to the right of Heidegger (circled) at the Rally of German Scientists, Leipzig, 11 November 1933.
enjoyed but to form sacred feelings; not to be observed, but to be there.\textsuperscript{138} This is not merely a matter of re-enchanting the artwork, but of affecting an absolute identity with the artwork, by which means the intermediary becomes the embodiment of his subject and the public, that bourgeois phantasy, vanishes in a haze of refeudalisation.

The parallels with the practices of spectatorship visualised in the films \textit{Die steinernen Wunder von Naumburg} and \textit{Das steinerne Buch} are striking, as with Cürlis’s film in which Charlotte Bara mimetically expressed the cathedral through ‘Gothic dance’. For Pinder in 1933, as for Hege, Bamberger, Oertel, and Cürlis, the time had come to dissolve the bourgeois public into community. This was to be a realisation of the drive to style first expressed in Nietzsche’s \textit{Birth of Tragedy} (which the latter had then abandoned in his post-Wagnerian crisis), but rather than applying only to an aesthetic public of spiritual aristocrats, it was to subsume an entire nation under the homogeneous status of the artwork – except, of course, for those deemed incongruent with the new style.\textsuperscript{139}

But Pinder’s revolutionary ardour cooled. In the essay of 1941, by contrast, there is a reaffirmation of hierarchy akin to that expressed by Wölflin when faced with the


\textsuperscript{139} In this scenario, Marlite Halbertsma has pointed out, Pinder also embodies the aestheticization of politics that Benjamin had identified as a distinguishing mark of fascism. Halbertsma, \textit{Wilhelm Pinder}, p. 158. Benjamin, ‘The Work of Art’, pp. 120-22.
photography of sculpture, or that of Justus Möser before the microscope: confronted with visual technologies that threaten to free the observer in space, conservative thought formulates rules for location, erecting borders and policing them scrupulously. The artwork is there, the observer is here and shall feel thus. The art-historian is no longer the embodiment of his subject, or merged with the public in an homogeneous community: instead he is subsumed into film in the most radical enactment of the enfoldment of the narrator into the medium yet. Thus transfigured, he stands between audience and artwork as the guarantor of this transaction, while the medium acts as the guarantor of his continued relevance, but only on the condition that it is scientifically and linguistically refunctioned.

If we return to Kracauer’s observations regarding Rubens’s unnatural light at this point, we find that Pinder – even in his more temperate reflections – denies the potential of art as a realm of human freedom. While for Pinder, film must immediately transmit the form of the artwork and ultimately the intention of the artist, for Kracauer the unnatural light in the Rubens’s painting returns in the unnatural light of the cinema, but now – in this final va banque spiel of photography, in which nature has been deauratised and the heat of community cooled to a societal frigidity, and smashed – the fragments are available for recombination in new forms. Pinder pushes the film out of the anteroom into the realm of Works, where he can covertly become a Work once more by subsuming himself in the medium; Kracauer pushes the Work back into the anteroom. The films we have considered so far do not in any sense confirm Kracauer’s utopian understanding of the medium, and he would grow pessimistic in response to this tendency to film-as-Work. However, there were exceptions.

\[140\] For an analysis of this dialectic in the realm of postwar aesthetic theory, see Rebentisch, *Aesthetics of Installation Art*, pp. 75–140.
Soluble cathedral: Victor Schamoni

The final *Domfilm* I shall consider was produced by Victor Schamoni (1901–42), scion of a devout Catholic family in the Rhineland. He completed his doctoral dissertation, titled *Über die ästhetischen Möglichkeiten der Photographie und des photographischen Bewegungsbildes* (On the Aesthetic Possibilities of Photography and the Photographic Moving Image) – one of the first art-historical theses on the topic of film – under Martin Wackernagel in Münster in 1926. After this he worked in Berlin as a film critic and publicist. While visiting Paris he made the acquaintance of René Clair and Man Ray, and in 1929 he selected the films to be screened at the Werkbund exhibition *Der gute Film* at the Kunstbibliothek in Berlin. From 1930 he was head of the Westfälischen Landeslichtspiele, an organisation he had established to produce and screen films (such as Dreyer’s *Jeanne d’Arc* and Picabia’s *Entr’acte*) in Westphalia.

In 1936, he reworked a section of his thesis and published it as *Das Lichtspiel. Möglichkeiten des absoluten Films* (The Light-Play: Possibilities of Absolute Film). This anachronistic defense of the absolute film – a form of abstract filmmaking which had been abandoned by its proponents ten years previously and which no longer seemed to hold out much ‘possibility’ – appeared in the same year as Walter Benjamin’s similarly anachronistic defense of an earlier mode of filmmaking (and viewing) in the *Artwork* essay, but unlike Benjamin’s work, Schamoni’s was published in Germany, which perhaps explains his decision to concentrate on film’s non-representational mode.

Schamoni begins his book with a discussion of the history of non-representational art, particularly music and architecture, discussing the latter in terms of rhythm and

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Schmarsow’s phenomenology of space. Schamoni argues that recent non-representational art developed from these earlier abstract media: ‘It had to be possible to create the relationships of forms that seem so exciting in the function-driven forms of architecture and the representational pictures of painters, similarly free from all connection to functions or images.’ Absolute film, Schamoni argues, can achieve this freedom – but unlike the non-objective art of the abstract painters, it can do so in time and motion.

However, Schamoni’s own films from the early 1930s are by no means non-representational. One of these, produced during his leadership of the Westfälischen Landeslichtspiele, is titled Soest – Westfalens ehrenreiche Hansastadt (Soest – Westphalia’s Garlanded Hansa City). The silent film, which was made c.1930–31, shows the old Hanseatic architecture of the town, and a variety of traditional customs, including a parade of people in medieval costumes, a livestock fair, and people being dunked in the duck pond (the authenticity of this practice is underscored by intercutting an image from an old manuscript). To a certain extent then, the film resembles Hege’s later Heimatschutz film Auf die spuren der Hanse (Hanseatic Traces).

However, unlike Hege, Schamoni does not mystify the moment of production by excluding contemporary elements: there are also shots of an exhibition of works by Soest-born Expressionist Wilhelm Morgner, boys follow a water truck outside St Patrokli, and a vegetable market throngs with shoppers in modern dress. An aerial shot

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143 *Soest*, dir. Victor Schamoni (Westfälischen Landeslichtspiele, 1930-1), https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aJadVs9TbM

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reveals that the half-timbered houses are linked by cables, a striking image demonstrating technological networks modernising urban space that functions as an emblem of the film itself. A flat-roofed modern villa appears in another shot, cars drive through the narrow streets, and a fair arrives in town.

Schamoni is evidently fascinated by the movement of the fair rides, and as well as shots of these against the town’s buildings, he incorporates shots from the rides, which puts the camera in disorienting motion and gives vertiginous, wheeling views of the church and other buildings. Though this part of the film is clearly inspired by the avant-garde works with which Schamoni was familiar, it is not non-representational; instead, Schamoni – like Ruttmann in his post-absolute phase – uses rhythm to abstract the real world of architecture and people, breaking them down into formal elements in motion (a case of what Devin Fore has called ‘realism after modernism’). These fragments whirl around the axis of the church [figs. 67, 68].

The relationship is an ambiguous one: does the church anchor the maelstrom, or is it itself fragmented by the technologically accelerated tempo of modern life? It is a very different view, after all, to that of Pinder, who described the same building as ‘straddling the earth as heavily as a bull.’ This then is another dematerialisation, but perhaps not in the direction of spiritualisation: Schamoni’s wife recalled that he was distancing himself from the church at this time. But neither is it a reactionary critique. If we compare the motif to a similar rollercoaster sequence in Ruttmann’s Berlin – which leads from the whirl of headlines to despair and suicide – this appears an

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68. *Soest – Westfalens ehrenreiche Hansstadt*, dir. by Victor Schamoni (Germany, c.1930–1).
altogether less negative vision of modernity. For Schamoni, modernity is at home in the traditional community and its built fabric, and although the techniques of modernity fracture space, they also unite it (via the wires linking the houses, for instance). Life may have changed, but it is still centred on the old loci of the market square and the church.

These themes are developed in a 1932 film of Schamoni’s, which was, according to his wife, inspired by a wish to ‘make a film about Cologne Cathedral as an art historical and religious document in the middle of a modern metropolis.’\textsuperscript{147} This raises the tantalizing possibility of a moving dialectical image, redeeming the past for the present by finding the modern within it. Like Bamberger and Oertel’s film about Naumburg, however, it was made on the cusp of the new age, and like Bamberger and Oertel’s film, it existed in two versions on either side of the divide. The first version was titled\textit{ Der Dom zu Köln}, ‘The Cathedral of Cologne’. Schamoni then sold the footage to a Kulturfilm producer named Ada van Roon, who re-edited it and issued it in 1933 under the name\textit{ Deutsche Glocken am Rhein}, ‘German Bells on the Rhine’.\textsuperscript{148} It is this version that exists in the German Film Archives in Berlin.

A film with the title\textit{ Der Dom zu Köln} has been made available online by the Schamoni Foundation but it is doubtful whether this is Schamoni’s work: it is exactly the same as

\textsuperscript{147} ‘Schamoni wollte einen Film drehen über den Kölner Dom als kunsthistorisches und religiöses Dokument inmitten einer modernen Großstadt.’ Schamoni, \textit{Meine Schamonis}, p. 63.

\textsuperscript{148} This was the pseudonym of Adelheid Magdalene Schneider (b.Berlin 1882), a stage actress who began writing scripts for her husband’s theatrical productions and films in 1919. She later moved into writing Kulturfilme, and established her own production company in 1931. Her 1933 film\textit{ Deutsche Glocken am Rhein} was her directorial debut – and also her penultimate production. I have been unable to ascertain whether she was prevented by making further films by the new regime; this seems unlikely, since another of her films was titled\textit{ Der 1. Mai 1933. Der Feiertag der nationalen Arbeit}, and her husband Gernot Bock-Stieber was later to produce and direct a film on racial hygiene,\textit{ Opfer der Vergangenheit} (1937).
the longer film in the Berlin archives, apart from having had its beginning and end removed. The Schamoni version is most likely lost, and the film presented by the Schamoni Foundation is simply an abbreviated version of Deutsche Glocken am Rhein, cut perhaps because the voiceover in the introductory and concluding sections is at its most nationalistic. In any case, it seems unlikely that the voiceover is Schamoni’s work, since his writings give little indication of nationalistic tendencies; instead he was what could be called a Catholic Modernist.

The year before making his Cologne film, Schamoni had published an article titled ‘Film as Social Document’ in a Catholic newspaper, in which he argued that Catholics should follow the example of the Russians in making films that confront social problems, rather than romanticising or obfuscating them, as most ‘liberal’ Weimar film had done. Furthermore, he added, they should offer concrete solutions to these problems. Seen in this light, it seems probable that Schamoni’s film was intended to be a combination of art historical exegesis and social commentary.

However, we will never know whether Schamoni’s film offered any concrete solutions to the pressing problems of 1932, since the surviving version takes a different tack. It begins in darkness, with the sound of bells – a common trope in the genre. What happens next is much rarer: we hear the sound of a steam engine drowning out the bells, and the darkness lifts to reveal shots of the cathedral and the trains below [fig. 69]. Unlike the other Domfilme I have discussed – which attempt to turn back time on their

149 Der Dom zu Köln, dir. Victor Schamoni [?] ([distributor unknown], 1932[?]), https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oXJj1qhQ7nw
150 This was not a unique position, especially in Cologne – see for instance the work of the church architect Gottfried Böhm, as discussed by James-Chakraborty, German Architecture, 63–69.
151 Victor Schamoni, ‘Film also soziales Dokument’, Der Schildgenossen 11, no. 1 (1931), pp. 75–78.
objects and exclude any traces of the historical context and means of their production – industrial modernity is at heart of this film. This seems entirely apposite, since much of the cathedral was built in the nineteenth century; however, although this fact is referred to by the narrator it is by no means stressed, and the medieval character of the building is instead the focus of the script’s attention. This argument between narrator and filmmaker, voice and image, offers an intriguing parallel to the 1929 Deutscher Kunstverlag volume on Backsteingotik, in which the introduction and captions by Werner Burmeister had struggled against the photographs of Renger-Patzsch. In this case, the forcefield has been decisively resolved in one direction: after 1933, the image-fragments were reconfigured to suit the logic of the word.

Nevertheless, these fragments retain their obstinate power, and the narrator’s emphasis on the medieval building is constantly undermined by the images on screen. There are shots of people passing by in the street in modern dress, including a crippled man on crutches, and a man entertains children with puppets of Mickey and Mini Mouse. A young couple, just married, emerge onto the cathedral steps and the wedding photographer gets to work. Meanwhile a man sells photographic postcards of the cathedral from a stall, and another hawks plaster models of the building [fig. 70]. These mass-produced reproductions of the church are, like the puppets, emblems of the film itself. They might suggest a concern with the industrial present, perhaps even a materialist reading of the film as a medium. But in another sequence, shots of trains with plumes of smoke passing the station are intercut with shots of a religious procession, in which smoke rises from censers to wreath the building. As in Soest, this introduces an element of ambiguity: is modernity being spiritualised here, or the spiritual modernised?

152 Puppets also appear in Schamoni’s Soest film, figuring in both cases as a sign of the medium’s animation of the inorganic: here they also refer to the culture industry.
69. *Der Dom zu Köln / Deutsche Glocken am Rhein*, dir. by Victor Schamoni / Ada van Roon (Germany, 1932/33).

70. *Der Dom zu Köln / Deutsche Glocken am Rhein*, dir. by Victor Schamoni / Ada van Roon (Germany, 1932/33).
The narrator would certainly have us take the former view: he continually reminds us of the continuities between the present and the imagined pristine moment of historical origin in the Middle Ages. ‘The cathedral is a place of pilgrimage for the faithful and for art lovers. As in all pilgrimage sites, we also find here around the church a crowd of people … Beggars in their places, street vendors …’ The beggar is not the product of the Depression, but an historical constant. Rather than a comment on the economic system, the voice of the cathedral reminds us that poverty is an inevitable part of life – hardly a manifestation of Schamoni’s aim of dealing objectively with ‘social problems’.

Thanks to the disjuncture between voice and image, however, the relationship between past and present explored in the film is not one of simple continuity. Compared to other Domfilme – for instance Hege’s Das steinerne Buch, which portrays the past as something repeated in the present – here history is a two-way street. The narrator describes the industrial present as the enemy of the cathedral, despite being the point of origin for much of the building. As the voiceover tells us:

The most important task at the cathedral before it faced the twentieth century was ... to halt the decline of the stones’ unity ... Right next to the cathedral, locomotives burn an abundance of coal. Sulphurous gas is thereby released, which quickly corrodes the stone completely. There is no other means to counteract this process than the regular replacement of the crumbling stones ... Very shortly the appearance of the building will be, down to its last stone, a creation of the twentieth century.\footnote{Deutsche Glocken am Rhein, dir. Ada van Roon ([distributor unknown], 1933).}

The building is dissolved, fragmented, by industrial modernity – by pollution from the trains – but the building was also created by industrial modernity: its roof, although we are not informed of this fact, is constructed from the same Krupp steel that brings the trains alongside it, and the twentieth century will one day replenish all of its stones [figs. 71, 72]. The building is also dissolved and reconstituted by the industrial medium in which it is represented. The cinematic techniques in play here – shots from crazy angles of trains, cathedral, cars, steamboats, flying buttresses, close up of pistons,
71. Der Dom zu Köln / Deutsche Glocken am Rhein, dir. by Victor Schamoni / Ada van Roon (Germany, 1932/33).

72. The iron roof of Cologne Cathedral.
images of men at work on the cathedral, shots from above, from planes – are fragmentary, *disorienting*. They are avant-garde in derivation, owing a great deal to the ‘city symphony’ films of Ruttmann and Vertov.

Furthermore, the film itself is dissolved and reformed in a different configuration, from Schamoni’s *Der Dom zu Köln* to Ada van Roon’s *Deutsche Glocken*. This reconfigurability, the *va banque Spiel* that is a peculiarity of the medium, takes us to a narrative that is not progressive: things change, they dissolve, and they are reformed – but in exactly the same configuration. Schamoni hoped that film, because of its technological basis, would shake viewers from the comfortable pathos of traditional art forms as they dealt with social conditions. But the technical reconfigurability of film meant that his solution, if indeed it was presented in his version, was lost. The message we are left with instead is akin to the reactionary modernist credo of *The Leopard*: everything must change for everything to stay the same.

**Conclusion: escape from the niche**

*I realised in a flash the many existing parallels between history and the photographic media, historical reality and camera-reality.*


The twin movements of dematerialisation and reconstitution thematised in *Deutsche Glocken am Rhein* take us back to the scene from *Der Golem* at the beginning of this chapter, in which the emperor’s palace, made transparent and immaterial by the untimely introduction of cinema, begins to collapse. This dissolution is, like the process described in *Deutsche Glocken*, a result of modernity and its media, despite the film’s medieval setting – all that is solid melts into air. As Bettina Bildhauer has argued, this

decomposition of classical time and space is an especial focus of medieval film in Weimar.¹⁵⁵

Paul Wegener’s film of 1920 retells the legend of a rabbi in sixteenth-century Prague and his monstrous creation. In Wegener’s version, Rabbi Löw is summoned from the ghetto to provide entertainment for the court. However, the rabbi had earlier read in the stars that the emperor was planning to banish his community from the city, and so he seizes the opportunity to present a history of the Jews. He does this via a vision – a film-within-the-film, or more specifically a Kulturfilm, a B movie that has been absorbed into the body of the feature, with the rabbi as the vestigial film lecturer. This film shows a procession of the patriarchs through the desert. It seems probable that this ambiguous movement represents the exodus, and is therefore a depiction of the plight that will befall the Jews once again if they are exiled from the city.

An intertitle tells us that the rabbi introduces his magical film with a warning: ‘I shall show you our people’s history and our patriarchs. And if you value your lives, let no one speak or laugh.’ But although the rabbi has instructed his audience to maintain silence, they jeer at one of the figures crossing the screen: Ahasuerus, the Wandering Jew, who interrupts his progress across the desert to walk implacably towards the viewers, filling the screen and the niche. It is this moment that elicits the mocking response of the viewers – unlike the other figures in the film-within-the-film, the Wandering Jew threatens to break through this magical membrane that separates (and unites) past, present, and future. As Guerin puts it, ‘this is a tale that is as much about history, centred on the historical figure who wanders through centuries, as it is a story of

¹⁵⁵ Bildhauer, *Filming the Middle Ages*, p. 27.
magic.’ The figure of the eternal Jew is troubling in this regard: an unchanging historical constant, who bursts through into the present moment – any present moment.

This mysterious figure reappears in Kracauer’s writings on history of the 1960s. ‘It occurs to me that the only reliable informant on these matters, which are so difficult to ascertain, is a legendary figure – Ahasuerus, the Wandering Jew … He alone in all history has had the unsought opportunity to experience the process of becoming and decaying itself.’ Perhaps not so alone: the reader might notice that the figure of the historian, as portrayed in Kracauer’s book, is himself not unlike Ahasuerus; he is ‘the son of at least two times – his own and the time he is investigating. His mind is in a measure unlocalizable; it perambulates without a fixed abode.’ In light of the National Socialists’ employment of the ‘Ewige Jude’ as an irredeemable constant, the exiled Kracauer’s reclamation of this figure as an historical observer of unparalleled acuity is a radical act of identification: not with a niche-bound statue of a ruler, as in Pinder’s case, but with a figure in eternal motion.

It is also an assertion of the potential of experience – with reference to his personal experience – to provide an Archimedean point from which history, antinomic though it is, might be grasped in its totality. ‘It is only in this state of self-effacement, or homelessness, that the historian can commune with the material of his concern.’ In Der Golem, the Wandering Jew’s technological mediation in the film-within-the-film suggests that as well as figuring as the historian, he can also be understood as an

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159 *Der ewige Jude*, dir. Fritz Hippler (Terra, 1940) also prominently featured the Bamberg Rider.
160 Kracauer, *History*, p. 84.
emblem of the medium itself, which dissolves space and time. He thus returns us to Kracauer’s anteroom, where photography and history cohabit.

The context of the Wandering Jew’s irruption is significant: the film-within-the-film overlays and animates the Gothic tracery of Poelzig’s screen, thus bringing the dead style to life. The simultaneous dissolution of the screen in cinematic light enacts Worringer’s dematerialisation of stone, but this is no process of spiritualisation: instead the technological present crashes through the fictive historic architecture of Poelzig’s set. The logic of disintegration in 1920 was one of Taylorist dismemberment, not assumption into the heavenly ether. Furthermore, this dissolution permits the intrusion of the Jewish other into a space which is not just Christian but irreducibly German: Poelzig’s Gothic screen is of a style that had recently identified as Deutsche Sondergotik (German Special Gothic), as a 1913 book by Kurt Gerstenberg was titled.¹⁶¹

Gerstenberg – a student of Wöfflin’s – sets out from the premise that style originates in race, and goes on to criticise Schmarsow for being insufficiently cognisant of this fact: there is, he thinks, a peculiarly Nordic Raumanschauung, ‘space-view’. This imaginary space may only be traversed in one authorised direction: Jewish migration from the east to Germany was a focus of much bigotry during the Weimar period, and the procession

¹⁶¹ Poelzig was no amateur of Gothic, despite Rudolf Kurtz’s assertion that ‘Poelzig's Golem-city has nothing of the aspect of a medieval town, and everything of a Gothic dream’. Rudolf Kurtz, Expressionismus und Film (1926; repr. Zurich: Chronos, 2007), p. 122. Between 1889 and 1894 he had studied architecture at the Technische Hochschule in Charlottenburg, Berlin, where he was taught by Karl Schäfer. Schäfer – whose other students included Paul Schmitthenner and Hermann Muthesius – was one of the most expert living exponents of Gothic architecture. He had formerly worked in the Dombauamt of Paderborn, where he directed the restoration and maintenance of the cathedral, and he built widely in the neo-Gothic style. Schäfer had a profound effect on his student Poelzig, who referred to him in conversation and in writing until the end of his own life. See Julius Posener, Hans Poelzig: Reflections on His Life and Work, trans. Christine Charlesworth (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1992), pp. 23–24.
of the patriarchs displayed in Wegener’s film could be understood as an ambiguous allusion to this. Journeys could however be made in the other direction: the identification of Sondergotik works in other lands (the film is set in Prague) facilitated the Drang nach Osten (eastwards push) of art historians later working on Ostforschung (east-research). Film, however, dissolves this Deutscher Sonderraum, as expressed in the architecture of the screen and the palace.

The appearance of a Jewish figure in a Gothic setting may have been disruptive in the context of the film but it was not unprecedented or ahistorical: several of the German cathedrals in the films I have discussed feature prominent depictions of Jews. The frieze on the choir screen in Naumburg, for instance, is covered with men wearing pointed hats, Judenhüte, and Bamberg Cathedral – like several others of the thirteenth century, including Strasbourg – features a pair of sculptures representing ‘Ecclesia’ and ‘Synagoga’ standing at either side of the so-called Fürstenportal [figs. 73–5]. Though this array is an allegorical representation utilising an ahistorical conception of time (spatialised rather than chronological), it had currency for the thirteenth-century viewer, as Nina Rowe writes: ‘a triumphant Ecclesia, and a vanquished Synagoga, against the backdrop of a scene of divine justice, collectively advanced a fiction of the rectitude of Jewish protection and repression as metonym for cosmic stability.’

162 This item of clothing was originally worn by Jewish tradition, but when this tradition began to die out in the thirteenth century many cities dictated its use in order to identify Jews more clearly, and it became an object of resentment.
73. Anti-Semitism in stone, from Walter Hege and Wilhelm Pinder, Der Naumburger Dom und seine Bildwerke (Berlin: Deutscher Kunstverlag, 1926).
74. Ecclesia and Synagoga, from Walter Hege and Wilhelm Pinder, *Der Bamberger Dom und seine Bildwerke* (Berlin: Deutscher Kunstverlag, 1933).

75. Ecclesia and Synagoga flank the Fürstenportal of Bamberg Cathedral. These figures are not permitted motion, even though – in Panofsky’s estimation – it was
their emergence from the wall that initiated high Gothic spatiality. In his essay on perspective of 1924–25, he wrote that in high Gothic art

Alongside the emancipation of plastic bodies is achieved … the emancipation of a spatial sphere comprehending these bodies. An expressive symbol of this is the high Gothic statue which cannot live without its baldachin; for the baldachin not only connects the statue to the mass of the building, but also delimits and assigns to it a particular chunk of space.

Ecclesia and Synagoga do indeed have their own baldachins, the former representing the heavenly Jerusalem, the latter an orientalising temple (even the nuggets of space inhabited by these figures are identified as Christian or Jewish). Panofsky adds that while

the high Gothic church is decidedly a spatial construction … [it] is still fragmented into a quantity of clearly divided individual bays, which only in late Gothic will flow into one another. Yet the stage is already a fragment of a world that, even if still built out of limited and individually added cells of space, nevertheless already seems capable of an unlimited extension.164

It is here that Panofsky makes his notorious statement, ‘At this point we can almost predict where “modern” perspective will unfold.’ But not yet: there remains for him a distinct incommensurability between the one-point perspective of the Renaissance and the cellular space of the high Gothic church.

The camera, of course, has often (if questionably) been understood as a simple extension of the visual regime of the Renaissance: camera = camera obscura.165 Whether or not this is the case, the film camera transforms the still camera’s perspective, not least with its capacity for recording motion through space, for one of the crucial elements of single-point perspective is the static observer. Furthermore, montage permits an agglomeration of cellular spaces that have more in common with

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the Gothic statues and spaces described by Panofsky than with Brunelleschi’s discovery.

Although these films vary in the degree to which they fragment their subjects, the general result is closer to the cellular space of the Gothic than to the abstract space of the post-Renaissance world – despite their attempts to create the impression of a smooth, immediate, and utterly transparent space. This does not of course accompany a return to feudalism but it does mark a valorisation of one of its essential attributes: spatialisation, specifically the manorial system by which peasants were bound to the soil. This rootedness was a major concern of the right during the 1920s and 1930s, when *Blut und Boden* ideology reached the height of its popularity. Escape from the niche represents a transgression of this tenet, and undermines the edifice of any system depending on stasis or territoriality. Recall that Pinder insisted that statues should not move in cinematic space, Wölfflin’s strictures about the photography of sculpture and Justus Möser’s rejection of microscopy.

A return of social space to a cellular structure while maintaining a superficial ideology of transparency – which permits surveillance across all sectors – is the contradictory (and for this reason ultimately untenable) strategy of the *Domfilme*. This is not the least made impossible because the fracture of cinematic space is structural, paralleling capital’s solvent tendencies. If we return to Mannheim’s insights into conservatism, it appears that film practices are generally mobilised to organically locate Gothic space, and hence are a manifestation of conservative thought. However, this works against the *Eigensinn* of the medium, which – though spatialising – is agglomerative and agglomerating.

deracinating, and hence ‘proletarian’. This contradictory mixture may take different forms and may tend towards one pole or the other, but in any case it means that film is unable to step into the realm of abstraction that Mannheim associated with bourgeois thought and which is the basis of scientistic ideologies.

To return to Lefebvre’s question: what knowledge of space, then, does the practice of film produce? And what knowledge of history? The first question has already been answered – in the foregoing discussion, it has emerged that film does not immediately represent the embodied experience of space hoped for by its academic supporters. This space is not architectural: it may share characteristics with Gothic space, but in the end it is cinematic.

In answer to the second question, let us turn to Kittler and Kracauer, both of whom, for their own separate reasons, see twentieth-century media as ending the era of the hermeneutic. Kittler denied that knowledge in the sense of classical hermeneutics could be produced by technological media – the latter reproduce themselves without the need of human intervention and thus render interpretation not just unnecessary but impossible, and the disciplinary modes of spectatorship visualised in several of the films in this chapter tend to confirm the idea that art-historical film functioning as a regime of bodily practices had exited the classical episteme. Kracauer saw film closing the gap between surface and depth in which the hermeneutic takes place. But unlike Kittler, Kracauer saw this as presenting room for play: photography is in this sense the va banque Spiel of history, but he adds that destroying the surface coherence of the photograph is necessary in order that ‘actual’ history might be revealed.
Does film permit us to attempt this, as he implies at the end of his essay on photography? Even if the medium works by a principle of discontinuity and radical reconfigurability, the shock effects of montage are subsumed in the majority of cases beneath the dominant organisational logic of narrative (as Kracauer himself later acknowledged). As such, the film or the work of history that pretends to inhabit the same space as the artwork and the philosophical system presents itself as a false totality. But this is unachievable, as both the film and the work of history are anteroom products: uneven mixtures of analysis and document, of the concrete and the abstract.

However, since Kracauer made this distinction, both the work of art and the philosophical system have tended, in their more reflexively critical forms, to relinquish their own status of totality; previously the (inappropriate) model for products of the anteroom, they themselves have since entered that space, and become contingent, shot through with fragments of concretion, programmatically incomplete. That the films I have been considering should (generally) attempt to assume the wholeness of the work of history, aesthetically conceived, just at the moment that this process of history’s own relinquishment of that mode was beginning, is a mark of the bankruptcy of this mode. It had percolated into the realm of mere historicist kitsch.

Not that all of these films are to be understood as such: Schamoni and Lamb both attempted to go beyond this by placing an emphasis on film’s documentary potential. In Lamb’s film, comparison and analysis are undertaken in order to test a hypothesis. This is as close as film comes to history in its ‘scientific’ mode. Schamoni on the other hand is attempting another form of objectivity, since he intended a work of social documentary proposing ‘concrete solutions’ that rested partly on art-historical insights. Even Walter Hege’s self-confessedly subjective practice can be seen as manifesting a
drive to objectivity, in the sense that it was intended to represent the experience of the viewer. It was valued as such by Wilhelm Pinder: despite his own insistence that photography follow the straight and narrow of the ‘scientific word’, he saw Hege’s work as an objective representation of subjective experience, which, as a student of Schmarsow’s, was central to his phenomenological understanding of the artwork. In Hege’s film this objective-subjectivity is presented via a fictional plot. As such, it leaves the historiographic anteroom to become a work of art in its own right.

The scientific status of the work of history does not just lie in its form, but also in its use. The work of history reproduces itself, generating other works of history in a circulatory economy of critique and interpretation. It could not be said of these films that they did the same. The more commercial among them were used by cinema owners to fill an evening’s programme at a reduced rate (thanks to the relief of the Lustbarkeitsteuer for educational films). Even the most ‘scientific’ of these films, Lamb’s Raum im kreisenden Licht, made no discernable impact on the study of architectural history – until, that is, its recent recuperation by the historiographers of art-history’s media. The film could not be taken from a shelf and searched using an index, nor could it be woven into intertextual superstructures using the conventional practice of citation. As a storage device for historical knowledge, the codex was not surpassed by returning to the scroll, and this was recognised by academic practitioners at the time – who consequentially ignored the medium. These films cannot therefore be considered works of scientific art history in a functional sense, since they produced no further scientific work.

However, they did have a pervasive impact within the Zwischenland der Kunstgeschichte, on those other media practices by which art-historical knowledge was
being produced beyond the limits of academia. Hege’s work on *Das steinerne Buch*, for instance, would inform his own later photobooks for the Deutscher Kunstverlag: his experience of using electrical lighting for film encouraged him to apply the same technique to still photography. Hege’s photobooks also had a direct impact on Bamberger and Oertel’s *Die steinernen Wunder vom Naumburg*, which in turn led directly to another book by the Reichskunstwart Edwin Redslob – to which I shall return in the conclusion. More generally, film was the model for typographic innovations such as Molzahn’s book for Taut, and Behne’s book on Heinrich Zille, which featured a ‘film strip’ sequence of images.\textsuperscript{167} It also lay behind Moholy-Nagy’s ‘Typofoto’ designs for *Malerei–Photographie–Film* and Giedion’s *Bauen in Frankreich* – the latter of which provoked Benjamin’s attempt to produce *textual* dialectical images in the Arcades Project. So although these films had little discernible effect within academic historiography, an alternative zone of knowledge production had been staked out, in which intermedial practices flourished in what Rolf Sachsse has judiciously called a *Kreisverkehr*, a gyratory system, of remediation.\textsuperscript{168} And although the knowledge about the space of history produced in this zone was paralleled in academia by writers such as Pinder and Panofsky, it was not given the materialist foundations that underpinned Benjamin’s investigations. These can be attributed to the incorporation – via remediation – of what Kracauer called photography’s anteroom status.

And what of the other possibilities of the medium detected by Kracauer? Is there such a thing as a cinematic counterproduct, working towards a less abstract knowledge of art and of history – one that produces ‘actual history’ as part of a counterpublic, rather than historicism within the republic of scholars? Film might seem suited to this work since it


is a congeries of abstract and concrete elements – but can the latter be excavated and used in the production of a counterpublic, or do they remain subsumed beneath abstraction and false wholeness? My previous comments on Buchkinema suggest that this is indeed possible, albeit – as Miriam Hansen suggested – predominantly within the Zwischenland der Kunstgeschichte, and not in the space of the cinema proper. That the cinema audience can be socialised and made into a public is confirmed by my earlier examples of the Tageslichtkino and so on, but this was of course not the dominant mode of viewing in this period. Instead, darkness reigned.

Towards the end of History and Obstinacy, Negt and Kluge critique the lack of relationality in Kant’s essay on enlightenment. They remark that

It is a simple enlightenment that brings forth only the courage to use one’s own understanding without the understanding of another. The public use of reason, which ‘anyone may make use of it as a man of learning addressing the entire reading public,’ is less attractive for an entire collective than the Cathedral of Light at the Nuremberg Rally.\(^{169}\)

A comparable spectacular seduction of the audience is attempted in several of the Domfilme: Die steinernen Wunder von Naumburg pictures its audience as children, their eyes returned to innocence by the transparent medium of film. Das steinerne Buch, on the other hand, sees its audience as young men, picking out the details of the cathedral by torchlight under the tutelage of the sexton. The titles of both are indicative: one is a case of stony miracles, which should be apprehended in a state of wonderful contemplation, whereas the other is a stony book, made legible by the filmmaker’s technique. Neither of these strategies produces a public – nor for that matter does the more scientific film attempted by Lamb: as Nietzsche described it in his inaugural

\(^{169}\) Negt and Kluge citing Kant’s essay on enlightenment, History and Obstinacy, p. 381. Translation modified.
lecture, the ‘acroamatic machine’ of the university was no public at all. However, the non-engagement of publicness by these films does not mean that the production of a cinematic public by cinematic means is impossible.

Negt and Kluge continue: ‘the specific labour of enlightenment must initially be to provoke the naturally existing moments of contact or to create them using art.’ Let us now return to the one film in this chapter that envisaged a cinematic public provoked to contact using art: Der Golem. In the end, the collapse of the palace in Der Golem is not the direct result of the penetration of the Sondergotik screen by cinematic light, nor of the threatened escape of the Jewish other from the niche, no matter how solvent or undermining these threats might be. These two events – the introduction of film and the collapse of the palace – are mediated by perception: it is the response of the audience that leads to catastrophe. This audience is composed of courtiers, and they are as ignorant of the correct mode of viewing the anachronistic medium as they are oblivious to the traumatic event it represents. Their laughter is a manifestation of what Adorno called bourgeois sadism, and one could interpret the collapse of the palace – synecdoche of state power – as a direct result of their inadequacies, of their asynchrony with technological modernity.

But the golem steps in, and here I return to the question posed at the beginning of the chapter: what would have happened if it had refused? In fact, this question can be disregarded (for now), because the outcome of the golem’s biddability is not tragedy: on the contrary, it is the rescindment of the order to expel the Jews from Prague. Instead of

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171 Negt and Kluge, History and Obstinacy, p. 383.
the golem’s conquered obstinacy, we should instead focus on the ‘felicitous stupidity’ of the rabbi and his audience, which come together with this happy result.\footnote{This is the phrase Devin Fore uses to characterise those moments in which Eigensinn erupts in the absence of a resolved Gesamtarbeiter with the proletarian class consciousness in which this characteristic could accumulate. Negt and Kluge, \textit{History and Obstinciacy}, p. 37.} The rabbi, foolish in his belief that the courtiers will be sympathetic to his history film, is confronted by an unruly audience, foolish in its lack of expertise and self-preservation. The audience’s foolishness manifests itself in an anachronistic \textit{discussion before the screen}: they become a public. And although this is by no means a counterpublic, together these two follies add up to the deliverance of the ghetto.
RADIO
Introduction: desert operation

*Radio is about to replace the book.*

– Alfred Kuhn, ‘Visual Art on the Radio’ (1927)¹

*The author takes leave of his Works for their sake, and, like an engineer who starts drilling for oil in the desert, he starts operations in carefully calculated sites in the desert of the present day. Such sites are the theatre, the anecdote, and the radio.*

– Walter Benjamin, ‘Bert Brecht’ (1930)²

‘Isn’t it a crazy idea to talk about a painter on the radio?’ – so asked Walter Benjamin at the beginning of an episode of Berlin children’s hour in 1930.³ He spent the next half hour discussing the artist Theodor Hosemann, so the idea was perhaps not quite as crazy as all that. Indeed, more than 130 radio talks were broadcast the same year on the topic of art and architecture, a cataract of discourse that prompts several questions. Firstly, why *might* Benjamin’s audience have thought this exercise foolish? Why broadcast art, and to whom? And what happens to image in the age of radio?⁴

Tuning into Benjamin may come as some surprise to the unprepared listener. In the rarefied atmosphere of his post-war academic reception it is easy for us to forget that – partly because of his original rejection by academia – Benjamin was a well-known public figure in his day. His works were rarely published in academic journals; rather they appeared in the feuilleton section of newspapers and on the airwaves. He made over eighty broadcasts between 1929 and 1932 – the majority of them on the children’s hours of the Frankfurt and Berlin stations – speaking on such diverse topics as Russian

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¹ ‘Der Rundfunk ist im Begriff, das Buch zu verdrängen.’ Alfred Kuhn, ‘Bildende Kunst im Rundfunk’, *Der Deutsche Rundfunk* 5, no. 10 (1927), 653–54 (p. 653).
⁴ This question has previously been considered by Andreas Zeising in ‘Mit den Öhren sehen’ and ‘Rembrandt vor dem Mikrofon’.
literature, train crashes, and puppet theatre. As part of the project of reintegrating his fragmentary oeuvre into the academic superstructure it has been noted (by writers such as Sabine Schiller-Lerg, Susan Buck-Morss, and Jeffrey Mehlman) that the radio work occupies the same terrain as his more theoretical pieces, taking on ‘the uncanny cast of Benjaminian miniatures, of theoretical “toys”’.

It is certainly the case that his talks for children concern the inimitably Benjaminian subjects of false messiahs, catastrophes, and the work of the art in the age of mechanical reproduction. Indeed Benjamin’s many writings on the experience of childhood, and on art for children in the form of theatre and illustrated books, demonstrate an abiding interest in the topic. So despite his disparaging remarks about his ‘bread and butter’ radio work, these broadcasts constitute an important, uniquely engaged facet of his work. Engaged in both political and technical senses: his radio work represents his most intimate and protracted involvement with a technical medium. For this reason an

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5 Benjamin’s writings on radio encompass an interview with Schoen (Gesammelte Schriften IV, pp. 548–51); letters to the same (Gesammelte Schriften II, pp. 1497–1505); the fragments ‘Situation im Rundfunk’ (Gesammelte Schriften II, p. 1505) and ‘Reflexionen zum Rundfunk’ (Gesammelte Schriften II, pp. 1506–1507); and the texts ‘Hörmodelle’ (Gesammelte Schriften IV, p. 628), ‘Theater und Rundfunk’ (Gesammelte Schriften II, pp. 773–76), and ‘Zweierlei Volks tümlichkeit’ (Gesammelte Schriften IV, pp. 671–73).


7 Benjamin wrote to Scholem of his ‘windige Rundfunkangelegenheiten’ and expressed the hope that in ‘absehbarer Zeit die Brotarbeit, wenigstens journalistische, so sehr wie nur möglich einzuschränken … Ich bin nicht unzufrieden, daß mir im Organisatorischen, Technischen schon jetzt ein bestimmte Scheidung ist, indem ich fast nichts mehr von dem, was ich als Brotarbeit, sei es in Zeitschriften, sei es im Rundfunk, ansehen muß, mehr niederschribe sondern derartige Dinge einfach diktiere.’ Letter of 25 January 1930 cited in Benjamin, Gesammelte Schriften II.III, p. 1441.
investigation of these broadcasts will cast new light on their author’s theoretical work on the image in the age of mechanical reproduction.

The broadcasts are not, however, equivalent to his written texts. This is made quite clear by the repeated use of the pronouns ich and du in his radio scripts. Although such familiarities are a common rhetorical strategy amongst radio speakers (especially when addressing children), in Benjamin’s case this is no mere phatic chatter. In an autobiographical work of 1932 he claimed that ‘If I write better German than most writers of my generation, it is thanks largely to twenty years’ observance of one little rule: never use the word “I” except in letters.’ As far as Benjamin is concerned, then, these radio pieces follow very different rules from his published texts. They are more like letters. The letter, however, is usually private and invites response, whereas the radio talk is a monologous unfolding of subjectivity to a mass audience composed of individuals.

In the following chapter I shall investigate the problematic status of these broadcasts by considering three of Benjamin’s radio talks that concern the image. The first of these is about Berlin’s Mietskaserne or tenement buildings; the second, the collapse of the bridge over the river Tay; and the final one, which I mentioned above, concerns the work of the artist Theodor Hosemann. A close analysis of these texts – listening between the lines – reveals answers to some of the questions I posed at the beginning of this chapter.

Some, but perhaps not all – for in the absence of recordings (very few wax cylinders survive from radio’s first decades), we cannot really tune in to Benjamin’s voice.

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Instead we have his scripts, around thirty of which do survive thanks to a newspaper editor in occupied Paris who disobeyed Gestapo orders to destroy them [fig. 76]. As objects these typed and annotated pages are very far from the speech acts that preceded (they were dictated) and succeeded them. The script is a chrysalis, a dry husk that interrupts two different yet related life forms: the crawling compositional stage of extempore speech, and the winged voice that flies invisibly from microphone to receiver. After these two ephemeral creatures are dead the papery chrysalis is all that remains. In this sequence ontogeny recapitulates phylogeny: from speech, via text, to what Walter Ong called ‘secondary orality.’ But although ‘this new orality has striking resemblances to the old in its participatory mystique, its fostering of a communal sense, its concentration on the present moment … it is essentially a more deliberate and self-conscious orality, based permanently on the use of writing and print.’

Benjamin’s radio talks were not delivered spontaneously, they were read: as I shall discuss below, this disciplinary curtailment of improvisation was politically motivated. This is of particular importance in Benjamin’s case since he insisted that ‘improvisation rules.’ His late story Auf die Minute (On the Minute) illustrates the danger of prevarication, of failing to make the all-important decision required to mesh our gears with the engine of history – all-important because ‘every second of time [is] the strait

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9 Walter Ong, Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the Word (London: Routledge, 1982), p. 136. Geoffrey Winthrop-Young has criticized Ong’s ‘naturalisation’ of ‘pre-technological’ speech on the basis of Kittler’s recasting of all cultural behaviours as techniques. However, while it is certainly the case that there were institutional and discursive determinants of pre-technological speech, it would be ahistorical to disregard the effect of new technologies for this reason. Geoffrey Winthrop-Young, ‘The Kultur of Cultural Techniques: Conceptual Inertia and the Parasitic Materialities of Ontologization’, Cultural Politics 10, no. 3 (2014), 376–88 (p. 383).

10 Walter Benjamin, ‘Programm Eines Proletarischen Kindertheaters’, Gesammelte Schriften II.II, p. 767. He reiterated his evaluation in One-Way Street: ‘strength lies in improvisation.’ In these early works the emphasis is on ‘bodily presence of mind’: what he was to later term the ‘mimetic faculty.’ Benjamin, One-Way Street, pp. 49, 99, 160–63.
gate through which the Messiah might enter.’

In this tale a radio speaker misreads the studio clock and is left, after some panicked ad-libs, with silence:

In this chamber made for technology and the people who rule by means of it, I was suddenly overcome by a new shudder, which was related to the oldest shudder known to man. I lent myself my own ears, which suddenly perceived nothing except the sound of silence. But I recognized that silence as the silence of death, which at that very moment was snatching me away in thousands of ears and thousands of homes.

But despite his harrowing experience in the studio, the speaker in Benjamin’s story finds that his listeners had barely noticed: his later enquiries reveal one friend merely thought that his radio had cut out for a minute. Of course, the result for those who misread the clock in Weimar was not an overabundance of airtime, but rather its opposite: the piece was published under Benjamin’s pseudonym ‘Detlef Holz’ in the Frankfurter Zeitung in 1934 – by which point its author had been silenced. So there is a ghost haunting my machine: the living voice, which has now fallen silent. The text is its epitaph.

Kittler’s concern with Aufschreibesysteme – ‘notation’ or ‘inscription systems’ that write us – cannot therefore be adopted wholesale as a framework for the discussion of radio, the ephemeral medium par excellence. Transmission is not transcription. There is no archive, at least not of radio’s early days, and in radio nothing is inscribed: instead text is performed, with all the opportunities for improvisation, interruption, and awkward silences that this provides. But despite these reservations about ‘Kittlerising’ radio, his work still poses pertinent questions about the medium’s effect on discourse. His ideas are especially germane to a discussion of Benjamin’s broadcasts, in that

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previous writers on this topic have tended to leave the medium unexamined, ignoring its technical, economic, and institutional specificity (and historicity: Benjamin was speaking at a pivotal moment in the development of German broadcasting).

Furthermore, Benjamin and Kittler share some – perhaps unexpected – common ground: as Benjamin’s mechanised reading of Riegl reveals, they both prioritise technology as a motor for historical change. Indeed, figures of the left such as Benjamin, Brecht, Enzensberger, and Negt and Kluge all agree with Kittler that medium, to a greater or lesser degree, dictates message. Negt and Kluge, for instance, assert that ‘In wanting to use the mechanisms of the bourgeois public sphere for their cause [representatives of the labour movement] become, objectively, traitors to the cause that they are representing.’

This work is therefore partly an attempt to find out exactly to what extent ‘media determine our situation,’ and to what extent this situation is open to redirection.

This comes down to the audience. The questions of whom Benjamin was addressing, whom he thought he was addressing, and why, are crucial to understanding his radio activity, and to understanding the work of art history on the radio. These enquiries take us into the arena of the public. Although Habermas – contrary to the assertions of some of his critics – was aware of the historical exclusivity of his ideal type, his neglect of the proletarian public renders his work of limited utility for understanding the public activity of oppositional figures such as Benjamin, whose anti-Kantian programme places him outside the scope of Habermas’s analysis.

Benjamin’s strategy of an ‘Author as Producer’ talking to an audience of experts was picked up and developed by Negt and Kluge in their 1972 work Öffentlichkeit und

13 Negt and Kluge, Public Sphere and Experience, p. 7.
Erfahrung (Publicness and Experience). This riposte to Habermas attempts to delineate the proletarian public on its own terms, expanding the category of production and publicness to incorporate ‘childrearing, factory work, and watching television within one’s own four walls.’ Negt and Kluge insist that ‘the only antidotes to the production of the illusory public sphere are the counterproducts of a proletarian public sphere: idea against idea, product against product’ Evaluating the historical possibility of such strategies is central to my investigation of radio, as of other media.

Finally, I shall ask where Benjamin’s audience went, for his radio talks were given as last rites over the German republic. After 1933 the air was filled with different voices. One of these belonged to Wilhem Pinder. A discussion of Pinder’s previously unstudied broadcast on the *Ausstrahlung der deutschen Kunst* (‘Transmission’ or ‘Diffusion of German Art’) concludes my investigation into art history on the radio. In the face of the totalising art history of the Third Reich, was Benjamin’s radio activity fatally belated – an exercise in whistling in the wind?

**Sound and vision**

*Man is a synthesis of all his sensory faculties, i.e. at any given stage he is most perfect when his constituent faculties are developed to the limit of their potential.*


‘Listen up,’ Benjamin told the audience of Berlin children’s hour on 12 April 1930, ‘because what you’re about to hear you’re unlikely to come across in any class, whether it be German, geography, or citizenship – and yet it might be important to you, because

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14 Negt and Kluge, *Public Sphere and Experience*, p. xliii.
15 Negt and Kluge, *Public Sphere and Experience*, p. 79.
you should all understand what the struggle against the *Mietskaserne* [tenement, literally ‘rental barracks’], which Greater Berlin has been waging since 1925, is all about.¹⁷ Benjamin situates his discussion of Berlin’s architecture with surgical precision. It is apart from the official discourse of the school curriculum, falling beyond (or between) the tightly circumscribed ambit of the traditional academic disciplines. His approach to architecture will not be purely linguistic (as one might get in a German class), spatial (geography), or political in a bourgeois sense (citizenship). Instead he orients the talk within a well-defined public discourse on the *Neues Bauen*, the ‘new architecture’ that had been exercising cultural commentators in Germany since the mid-1920s: specifically, the piece is an affirmatory response to the urbanist Werner Hegemann’s 1930 polemic against Wilhelmine planning, *Das steinerne Berlin*.¹⁸

As we saw in the first chapter, Benjamin was also to review Hegemann’s book for the *Frankfurter Zeitung* in September that year, but his second appraisal was less unreservedly positive: he criticised Hegemann’s undialectical approach to the *Mietskasernen* for neglecting their positive experiential qualities.¹⁹ One could question Benjamin’s idealisation of slums here – he was after all a child of Berlin’s bourgeois West End – however, the point still stands. In the radio talk he also refers to Adolf Behne, ‘who has done so much for the new Berlin’, and whose 1928 book *Eine Stunde Architektur* – a copy of which Benjamin owned – took a more dialectical approach to

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¹⁷ ‘Macht die Ohren auf, ihr könnt jetzt hören, was ihr so leicht nicht im deutschen Unterricht und nicht in der Erdkunde und nicht in Staatsbürgerkunde zu hören bekommt und das für euch doch einmal wichtig sein kann. Denn ihr sollt alle verstehen, worum es sich be idem großen Kampf gegen die Mietskaserne handelt, den Groß-Berlin seit dem Jahre 1925 zu führen begonnen hat.’ Walter Benjamin, ‘Die Mietskaserne’, *Gesammelte Schriften* VII.II, p. 118.


¹⁹ Benjamin, ‘A Jacobin of Our Time’. 

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the *Mietskaserne*, and in a more concrete manner. Instead of praising the way their windows reflected sunlight, as Benjamin did, Behne asserts that the tenements represented a genuine advance on earlier forms of accommodation, such as castles, which were widely preferred by his conservative contemporaries. The question arises: did Benjamin entirely neglect this dialectical position in his earlier radio programme, and if so, why?

Benjamin continues his talk with a brief outline – derived from Hegemann’s book – of the history of the capital’s tenements. As their name suggests, the *Mietskasernen* originated in Prussian militarism rather than geographical necessity: in order to reduce desertions, Friedrich the Great turned the city into an enormous barracks where soldiers could live with their families. The results of this decision were baleful: the dark and airless courtyards – sometimes five deep – of these buildings compromised the health of Berliners. More devastating still were the economic consequences, as land prices, and therefore rents, were artificially inflated, which naturally led to overcrowding. The effects, Benjamin adds, are felt today: at the infamous address No. 132 Ackerstraße, over 1,000 people lived in utter squalor.

When I mention 132 Ackerstraße I am able to replace or augment descriptions of the architecture by inserting a photograph of the building [fig. 77]. Things were not so simple for Benjamin, however. In discussing architecture on the radio he faced a unique challenge: how to represent the visual in an invisible medium. Is this not a ‘crazy idea’, as he asked at the beginning of another broadcast on art? Indeed, Benjamin attempts to avoid ekphrasis altogether by stating that he won’t describe his subject. This is a claim he repeats in his talk on Theodor Hosemann.
Benjamin’s reluctance to resort to linguistic recreations of the image might seem a typical modernist assertion of medium specificity, but this would be incongruous in his case. Instead it makes more sense to place it in the context of a contemporary position in art historical methodology: the Vienna School’s attempt to develop a ‘strenge Kunstwissenschaft’ (rigorous study of art). An article published by Otto Pächt in 1930/1, ‘The End of the Image Theory,’ rejects poetic rhapsodising over art, the stock-in-trade of traditional connoisseurship: instead description must ‘emerge from the centre of an immanent aesthetic frame of reference and articulate the essential structural characteristics of the subject.’

Benjamin was sympathetic to the Strukturanalyse of the Vienna School, although as Christopher Wood has pointed out, he tended to overstate the materialism of their approach. Nevertheless, it is clear that an appeal to ‘essential structural characteristics’ lends itself to materialist, as well as to formalist, interpretation. A more perilous chasm is opened by Pächt’s assertion that his rigorous approach to language differentiates him, and his fellow ‘scientists of art’, from popularisers of art-historical discourse: a strategy of ‘dubious merit’ that Benjamin himself was engaged in.

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20 Prohibition of intermediality was never a concern of Benjamin’s; on the contrary, he was profoundly interested by hybrid forms such as Denkbilder, Baroque emblem books and graphology.
Benjamin was not unaware of this danger, which he was to discuss in his 1932 article ‘Two Types of Popularity.’ There he argues that, while the popularisation of scientific knowledge had previously depended on abbreviation and omission, and hence simplification, this procedure was transformed precisely by the mediation of knowledge in radio, which

requires a thorough refashioning and re-constellation of the material from the perspective of popularity [Popularität]. It is thus not enough to use some contemporary occasion to effectively stimulate interest, in order to offer to the now expectantly attentive listener nothing more than what he can hear in the first year of school. Rather, everything depends on conveying to him the certainty that his own interest has a substantive value for the material itself – that his inquiries, even if not spoken into the microphone, require new scientific findings. In the process, the prevailing superficial relationship between science and the popular [Volkstumlichkeit] is replaced by a procedure which science itself can hardly avoid. For what is at stake here is a popularity that not only orients knowledge toward the public sphere, but also simultaneously orients the public sphere toward knowledge. In a word: the truly popular interest is always active. It transforms the material of science and penetrates that science.25

Benjamin’s art history for children arguably manages the dialectical mediation described above, thereby bringing this practice of ‘art science’ into the realm of publicness, while simultaneously avoiding populist flourishes or connoisseurial cliché.

He employs three strategies in pursuit of this aim. First, despite his self-proclaimed rejection of description, in his repeated references to the sensual qualities of buildings –

25 Benjamin, ‘Two Types of Popularity’, p. 405. This echoes the concluding passage of Sedlmayr’s 1931 essay ‘Toward a Rigorous Study of Art’: ‘This sort of popularization will consciously reorganize the viewer’s perceptions (as today’s good popular literature already attempts to do), rather than imparting disparate “insights” about the works or fragmentary bits of intellectual knowledge dissolved in an emotional fog. This sort of popularization will thus strive for organization – with the closest proximity to the object and to life – in an area that was previously restructured only incidentally and haphazardly.’ Hans Sedlmayr, ‘Toward a Rigorous Study of Art’ (1931), trans. Mia Fineman, pp. 133–79 (pp. 175–76).
their gloominess, their severity, their bellicosity – Benjamin constructs an image. He constantly entreats his listeners to look: ‘You can see for yourselves.’ But his listeners are, at the moment of hearing, in their own homes; even if these homes are located in Mietskasernen, his listeners cannot simultaneously stand in the street, where ‘If one looks into the row of courtyards from outside, it’s as if you were looking into a tunnel.’²⁶ Such visual rhetoric is of course a familiar part of everyday speech, but in this instance, when his object is visual and his medium invisible, it appears freshly problematic.

In fact Benjamin goes further than using visual language and describes specific images, such as an aerial photograph where the Mietskasernen appear ‘grim, hard, dark, and warlike [kriegerisch], compared to the peaceful new houses, which appear to nestle amicably together in their gardens.’²⁷ Such photographs were familiar weapons in the Neues Bauen armory: in the book Berlin in Bildern (Berlin in Images) of the previous year, illustrated by the photographs of Sasha Stone and introduced by Adolf Behne, a photograph shows serried ranks of Mietskasernen confronting a new development by Bruno Taut [fig. 78]. But rather than simply describing an image, Benjamin’s genealogy of the Mietskaserne reveals that his use of descriptive terms such as kriegerisch conforms to a materialist reading of Pächt’s stricture to ‘articulate the essential structural characteristics of the subject,’ since these buildings originated in Prussian militarism. This is a photographic remediation of language performed in an imageless medium, where Benjamin’s words become images of the subject. Later, in ‘The Author

₂⁶ ‘Ihr könnt es euch ansehen. Wenn man von außen in die Flucht der Höfe hineinschaut, ist es als wenn man in einen Tunnel sähe.’ Benjamin, ‘Die Mietskaserne’, p. 120.
as Producer’, he will theorise this procedure: at this stage it remains an experimental practice.

Via this procedure, Benjamin makes language itself into an image, a strategy that Andreas Huyssen has recently discussed in his book on ‘metropolitan miniatures’. I would argue that Benjamin did not limit this strategy to his Denkbilder, and nor was it solely an analogue of the Baroque emblem employed in order to compete with new visual technologies. Rather, it is a Brechtian Umfunktionierung of radio that proceeds by photographic remediation of the word. Significantly, he chooses the word Kriegerisch to describe the buildings – the same type of language used by Pinder to describe architecture in Deutsche Dome and elsewhere. Indeed, it is tempting to read Pächt’s observation that ‘even in scholarship, there are powerful currents with a disturbing affinity for the “image theory”’ as an oblique reference to the famously floral Pinder (Wilhelm Fraenger is named in the footnotes as an example of this ‘Expressionist’ tendency). It is striking that Benjamin chooses to refunction precisely the martial vocabulary of poetising scholarship – thus demonstrating the redemptive power of technology over even the most degraded language.

Benjamin’s second strategy is to turn to the lived experience of the audience to compensate for the necessary inadequacy of his verbal description. ‘I don’t need to tell you how the topic of today’s talk relates to Berlin. And as for the Mietskaserne, I’m afraid that I don’t need to describe them to you either. You know all about them.’

Benjamin alludes to the necessity of relating his talk to Berlin because it was part of a

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series on the capital (several episodes of which were quite tangential to the topic indeed).\footnote{The series was intended to be directed by Alfred Döblin, but in the end he only gave the first talk, and most of the subsequent episodes were presented by Benjamin.} However, in this case the connection should, he says, be obvious. Because German radio was geographically circumscribed – listeners had a choice of only two stations, one regional and one national – he could appeal to the expertise of his audience when talking about local matters and thus avoid the need for descriptions.

Finally, Benjamin could rely on the fact that although radio is an invisible medium the experience of its audience is never purely auditory, as two paintings from the late 1920s show. Here radio listeners use print media to create a polysensory gamut, a domestic Gesamtkunstwerk. In Kurt Günther’s Radionist (1927) a bourgeois radio listener tunes in to an opera broadcast, as the libretto clutched in his hand suggests [fig. 79]. The reading of libretti was common practice amongst opera audiences until Richard Wagner insisted on dimming the auditorium lights during performances in order to concentrate attention on the stage. In doing so the inventor of the Gesamtkunstwerk took multimediality out of the hands of the audience, but in the age of radio this power is returned.

The second painting, Max Radler’s Radiohörer of 1930, shows a very different listener [fig. 80]. Instead of dressing for the opera this man sits hunched over his radio set in his shirtsleeves. In the former image the radio set sits demurely in the background and – clad in wood like the other furniture – is as well-dressed as its owner. Now, however, technology is central, hugged close to the man’s heart and exposed in all its bristling mechanical Unheimlichkeit. The wires that attach this worker’s ears to the set also connect him to the industrial landscape outside his window, to the factory where he works. The suggestion that the network of information is plugged directly into the
80. Max Radler, *Radiohörer*, 1930, oil on canvas, 630 x 490 mm, Städtische Galerie im Lembachhaus und Kunstbau, Munich.
network of capitalist production – with the circuit completed by the human head between the terminals of the headphones – was not exactly the case for German radio: as I shall discuss later, the medium was insulated from the market. In any case, though the Radiohörer’s socio-economic status is quite different from that of the opera listener, they have one thing in common. As before, this experience is intermedial: a copy of a radio journal lies before him.

The crowded Weimar newspaper market thronged with such publications. Each radio station had its own illustrated weekly, besides which there were a national listings magazine and various other radio journals targeted at particular political or social groups. Apart from programme information these magazines also contained illustrated stories to accompany broadcasts. Articles were printed in the Südwestdeutsche Rundfunk-Zeitung, for example, to accompany talks by Sigfried Giedion and Kurt Schwitters: viewed in concert with the radio broadcast they created a multimedia experience composed of image, text, and sound, extending in time and space according to the behaviour of the audience [figs. 81, 82]. One could flick rapidly back and forth through the pages while listening to a particular broadcast, for example; skim read an article on tuna fishing while tuning in to opera; or studiously examine an image referred to by the radio speaker. Alternatively, like the Radiohörer in Radler’s painting, it is possible to switch off the senses one by one – he has chosen to close his eyes to the radio journal, but he could quite as easily have turned off the radio to immerse himself in text. This latecomer to the new media of the second industrial revolution remediated the printed page once more, as film had done before it. However, unlike film, radio did not just reconfigure the format of the page – it also overlayed it and invaded the experiential time of its user.
81. Article accompanying Sigfried Giedion’s programme on ‘Le Corbusier und das neue Bauen’, *Südwestdeutsche Rundfunk-Zeitung* 6, no. 7 (1930), 4.

In *Öffentlichkeit und Erfahrung* Negt and Kluge identify this state of affairs as a correlate of the Taylorist phase of capitalism:

The development of these [traditional] media corresponds to a reception situation in which people’s entire perceptual system is itself, through a division of labour, fragmented. The senses are enlisted in a specialized manner: radio monopolizes hearing; books, newspapers and television develop reading and seeing, film is concerned with movement (above all in film’s authentic phase of development as silent film). 32

Expanding this fracture into the neurological realm, Kittler asserts that in the *Aufschreibesystem* of 1900:

language breaks down into individual elements: into optical, acoustical, sensory and motoric nervous impulses and only then into signifier/ signified/referent … Because not every local centre [of the brain] has direct nerve connections to every other, there is no unity of the transcendental signified capable of organically developing speaking and hearing, writing and reading out of one another. 33

‘Things and words were to be separated from one another. The eye was thenceforth destined to see and only see, the ear to hear and only hear,’ as Foucault wrote of an earlier period. 34

But – and here Negt and Kluge have neglected real experience – it was arguably *because of* the fragmentation of the sensorium during this period that audiences were able to create their own montage of diverse elements, reintegrating the senses in new combinations: everyone her own bricoleuse. 35 The film viewer, as we have seen, could in some instances also hear a commentary by a living narrator, as in the daylight cinema

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33 Kittler, *Discourse Networks*, p. 216.
35 Their book as a whole tends to perform the split against which they argue: history precipitates to the appendices, to paraphrase Jameson, and *Erfahrung* becomes its opposite, a metaphysical category. Fredric Jameson, ‘On Negt and Kluge’, *October* 46 (1988), 151–77 (p. 151). However, in their second collaboration, *History and Obstinacy*, the form of the book is radically fragmented so that ‘with each reader a new montage is to be created, and the work finds its provisional completion only in the hand and “in the head” of the reader.’ Christopher Pavsek, ‘History and Obstinacy: Negt and Kluge’s Redemption of Labor,’ *New German Critique* 68 (1996), 137–63 (p. 140).
in Taut’s Monument des Eisens. For the radio listener, this situation is brought into the
domestic sphere: she juxtaposes text, image, and sound in a discontinuous yet
simultaneous experience as she flicks through her magazine, and, in a crucial
divergence from film- or photomontage, the final combination of sensual experiences is
left up to her.

Even if she chooses to stick to the instructions of the speaker, the live enunciation of the
caption liberates the image from its textual anchor so that it can set sail on a sea of
possibility; and even if this possibility is radically curtailed by the institution radio, the
punctuality of the spoken caption temporalises a word–image bond that typically
presents itself as permanent. This era, however, was ending. The talkie rose to
dominance between 1927 and 1930, re-tethering the voice to the body – a process that
culminated in the invention of television – and in the realm of production, Negt and
Kluge claim, the rise of the media cartel reintegrated the whole in a seamless capitalised
expanse.

**Jedermann sein eigener Monteur**

And yet for the audience of imageless radio, bricolage lived on as an anachronistic
survivor of reintegration. One of Benjamin’s final broadcasts was a talk on ‘The
Railway Disaster at the Firth of Tay,’ aired on Berlin children’s hour on 4 February
1932 (many of his broadcasts at this late stage concern disasters, earthquakes, floods,
and fires). Like his talk on the *Mietskaserne*, this broadcast emanates from an encounter
with a book – in this instance, Giedion’s *Bauen in Frankreich* of 1928, which had had
such a profound effect on Benjamin. However, he does not mention Giedion, directing
his listeners instead to an accompanying article: ‘If you look up the *Funkstunde* [the
official organ of Berlin radio], you will find a picture of the damaged bridge that appeared at the time in the *Leipziger Illustrierte.*

Sabine Schiller-Lerg has rightly observed that Benjamin’s scripts are a montage of diverse textual elements and sources; I would add that – as in his reference to the photograph in the *Mietskaserne* talk – they also incorporate visual material, and as such they are hybrid media practices in and of themselves. What is more, they intentionally produce a montage in the realm of experience: the listener is invited to view the image as she hears the words. Benjamin announces that, like the photomonteur John Heartfield, he has excised the image from a familiar news source: the *Leipziger Illustrierte.* Like Heartfield, Benjamin uses the word to reffunction the image – but unlike Heartfield, Benjamin leaves the image intact and speaks the caption that gives it a different meaning. The caption is thus transformed from an anchor to something more performative, undermining the reifying effect of printed text. And unlike Heartfield, Benjamin leaves the work of completing this composite work to the hands (and ears, and eyes) of the listener.

Benjamin begins his talk on the Tay Bridge – his enunciated caption – by describing the naivety of early reactions to developments in iron manufacture, citing the construction of winter gardens and arcades, and the science fiction fantasy *Un Autre Monde* (1844)

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38 Benjamin’s brief remarks on the caption are ambiguous. In the Artwork essay he calls captions ‘signposts’, a means of particularizing the free-floating image that has now become obligatory, but adds that ‘whether these are right or wrong is irrelevant.’ Walter Benjamin, ‘Little History of Photography’ (1931), *Selected Writings* II.II, pp. 507–30 (p. 527); ‘The Author as Producer’ (1934), *Selected Writings* II.II, pp. 768–82 (p. 775); ‘The Work of Art’, second version (1935) *Selected Writings* III, pp. 101–33 (p. 108).
in which iron rings encircle Saturn, as examples of the failure of imagination to keep up with technology [fig. 83]. However, he notes, ‘Suitable applications were soon discovered, and this gave rise to buildings of a completely new type – constructions that had no precedent in the past.’ The railway was one of these new types of building, and Benjamin now describes the construction of the bridge over the Tay, which, due to the challenging site and the violent weather in that part of Scotland, took six years. He then reads an extended excerpt from Fontane’s poem on the subject, which tells of an epic battle of man against nature, technology against weather: the two go head-to-head as the steam from the engine merges with the storm clouds above, and the driver declares ‘Wir kriegen es unter, das Element.’ But poetry, with its mouldy theme of hubristic striving against nature, is as inadequate to this subject as the bridge was to the onslaught of the weather.

Benjamin suggests as much by following Fontane’s verse with his direction to turn to the photograph of the collapsed bridge in the Funkstunde, implicitly equating the poem with the science fiction fantasy he cited earlier. Both are anachronistic survivors of a former age; like the rococo scrollwork of iron arcades, they are failed attempts to aestheticise technology. In contrast, the mechanical medium of photography is adequate to the representation of the technological subject (Benjamin would make this technologised version of Riegl explicit in his ‘Artwork’ essay). Referring to the photograph Benjamin observes that ‘Even though the iron construction is evident at a

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83. J.J. Grandville (pseud. Jean Ignace Isidore Gérard), ‘The Bridge of Infinities’, from

84. The Tay Bridge, c. 1879.
glance, this bridge still had much in common with wooden bridges. Building in iron was in its infancy, and had not yet become confident of its own strengths’ [fig. 84]. The collapse of the bridge, in other words, cannot be attributed to the sin of hubris, but to the failure of consciousness to keep pace with technological developments and the resulting imposition of old forms on new media. Likewise, poetic language – precisely in its pseudo-photographic phase – collapses in the face of the mechanical image.

Benjamin concludes his talk with a description of ‘the building in which iron first displayed itself with pride and utter self-confidence’: the Eiffel Tower. However, technology has moved on once more since the tower’s construction. ‘When the Eiffel Tower was built, it served no practical purpose of any kind; it was simply a landmark – a wonder of the world, as people say. But it was followed by the invention of radio telegraphy, and, at a stroke, the huge construction suddenly acquired a meaning. Today the Eiffel Tower is a Paris radio transmitter.’ Here the parallel with Giedion’s Bauen in Frankreich becomes explicit, but Benjamin does something else with the tower: it is not just an optical device, a means of transforming the world receptively, as it was for Giedion, but also a means of communication, of production. Radio’s bestowal of meaning on the architecture of the Eiffel Tower is an emblem for Benjamin’s talk, in which radio bestows meaning on the image of the collapsed bridge – without the finality of a printed caption.

43 Michael Baxandall notes that a contemporary enquiry found that the disaster had been caused by ‘scandalous metallurgical slovenliness’ and other design flaws: its engineer Thomas Bouch never worked again. Michael Baxandall, Patterns of Intention: On the Historical Explanation of Pictures (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985), p. 20.
44 Fontane’s own journalism was – as he himself was well aware – out of joint with history. After writing (moderately) revolutionary articles during 1848, financial exigency impelled him to seek employment as a pro-government propagandist. ‘Today,’ he wrote in a letter of 30 October 1851, ‘I have sold myself to the reaction for thirty pieces of silver a month.’ Gordon Craig, Theodor Fontane: Literature and History in the Bismarck Reich (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), p. 16.
In the notes of his ‘Arcades Project,’ inspired by Giedion’s book, Benjamin develops the idea of the dialectical image: ‘The historical index of the images not only says that they belong to a particular time; it says, above all, that they attain to legibility only at a particular time … each present day is determined by the images that are synchronic with it; each “now” is the now of a particular recognizability.’\(^{46}\) The radio talk is a model of thought adequate to technology – and also to the historical image. But this is image to an extent unmoored from the purely visual. Instead it inhabits the Zwischenland der Kunst, and in fact it is precisely this intermedial status – the voice overlaying the image, the image subsumed into text – that activates its dialectical status, its mixed temporality.

In his essay ‘The Author as Producer’ of 1934, Benjamin was to explicitly advocate that this hybridity should be enfolded into writerly practice. Returning to Brecht’s observation regarding a photograph of the Krupp factory – but with a telling change of subject – he asserts that photography ‘can no longer record a Mietskaserne or a refuse heap without transforming it.’ The solution to this problem is Umfunktionierung – more specifically, remediation:

Here we have a flagrant example of what it means to supply a productive apparatus without changing it. To change it would have meant overthrowing another of the barriers, transcending another of the antitheses, that fetter the production of intellectuals – in this case, the barrier between writing and image. What we require of the photographer is the ability to give his picture a caption that wrenches it from modish commerce and gives it a revolutionary use value. But we will make this demand most emphatically when we – the writers – take up photography. Here, too, therefore, technical progress is for the author as producer the foundation of his political progress. In other words, only by transcending the specialization in the process of intellectual production – a specialization that, in the bourgeois view, constitutes its order – can one make this production politically useful.\(^{47}\)

For Benjamin, remediation is the only way to circumvent the absorption of a medium into the realm of capitalist phantasmagoria. In practical terms, this would mean

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\(^{46}\) Benjamin, The Arcades Project, pp. 462–63.

\(^{47}\) Benjamin, ‘Die Mietskaserne’, p. 775.
expanding Benjamin’s application of Viennese *Strukturanalyse* beyond dealings with the visual image into the realm of the real. The resulting photographic writing – one could call it, after Moholy-Nagy, FOTOTYPO – would be in essence a technique from art historiography that had been developed in the darkroom of radio, where the image itself is invisible.

**Expert listener**

The ‘flashing-up’ of the historical image facilitated by Benjamin’s radio talk does not just illuminate the past, it also offers a warning about the future: ‘I wish to portray this disaster as no more than a minor episode in a great struggle from which human beings have emerged victorious and shall remain victorious unless they themselves destroy the work of their hands once more.’

The fatal disaster of the bridge over the Tay is in danger of being repeated by misapprehension of other technologies of the second industrial revolution – the radio, the photograph, film. What then is adequate understanding? Does everyone possess it, or must it be cultivated?

The danger of Benjamin’s unresolved bricolage is now exposed, like the shaky struts of a precarious structure: although its irresolution allows the listener/viewer an unprecedented degree of freedom in creating the experience of the montage herself, it also relies on the ability of the listener/viewer to adequately cognise the situation, to be – like a camera photographing an iron bridge – equal to the task at hand, capable of recognising the moment and seizing it. It relies on a punctuality on the part of the audience that matches that of the speaker, and thus opens that strait gate through which

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the messiah approaches. But what if the audience is not up to the task – what if they languish in the realm of iron curlicues, bridges to Saturn, and romantic poetastery?49

The problem of an untrained audience was recognised by a number of Benjamin’s contemporaries. Rudolf Arnheim, the film critic and perceptual psychologist, wrote a book on radio while in Italian exile in the mid 1930s (it was published in London in 1936). In a chapter titled ‘The Psychology of the Listener’ Arnheim observed of radio that ‘good can only come of it if the listener does not let one broadcast after another pour out on him quite mechanically, but selects when and what he shall listen to according to his individuality and his state of mind at the time in question.’50 Instead of passivity, Arnheim advocated ‘the art of not listening-in’, adding however that his must be taught by means other than the wireless: ‘civic and school education.’51

In fact, Arnheim didn’t need to tell audiences to switch off. Early radio listeners had gone one better: they discovered that if they raised the volume sufficiently on their receivers the latter became transmitters which could thereby jam the broadcasts in the local area, producing high-pitched sounds from nearby sets. The practice of oscillation, as it was called in England, was sufficiently widespread to elicit concerted campaigns from the RRG, which reacted with alarm to the primitive Umfunktionierung of sets and set up the Ausschuß für Rundfunkstörungen in 1929 partly to combat this phenomenon.52

49 In his 1936 response to the Artwork essay, Adorno made a similar criticism of Benjamin’s ‘blind confidence’ in the revolutionary power of cinema. Adorno et al., Aesthetics and Politics, p. 123.
51 Arnheim, Radio, p. 274.
Benjamin had little regard for such purely negative behaviour, writing in an unpublished fragment of 1931 that ‘the public has become quite helpless, quite inexpert in its critical reactions, and has seen itself more or less reduced to sabotage (switching off).’ Instead he called for expert listeners, whom he maintained – in an argument that he would apply to film in the Artwork essay – could be trained radiophonically, by the ‘voice, the diction, and the language – in a word, the formal and technical side of the broadcast.’ This is one of the earliest appearances of the concept of the expert in Benjamin’s writings: tellingly, he introduces it in the context of a discussion of radio, a medium in which Benjamin himself had been working as an expert for three years.

Frederic Schwartz has pointed out that by the mid 1930s, when Benjamin formulated his most elaborate conceptualisation of the expert, his time as a figure of proletarian knowledge had passed into oblivion, as the contradictory forces of embourgeoisement and proletarianisation dragged his class of origin beneath the waves of fascist demagoguery. But in 1931, the period of Benjamin’s peak radio activity, the expert was still a valid category – if only just – and montage still seemed capable of breaking up the as-yet-imperfectly-formed phantasmagoria that would later be welded together by fascism.

The specific ‘formal and technical’ means for training expert listeners were not to be expressed in theoretical terms until three years later, however, when Benjamin – now in

56 The expert was introduced to Berlin the same year by Tretyakov, who lectured on the status of the writer-as-expert in the Soviet Union. The concept appears at around the same time in Brecht’s ‘The Literarization of the Theatre (Notes to the Threepenny Opera)’. Schwartz, Blind Spots, pp. 86–87.
Paris – composed his essay ‘The Author as Producer’. Referring to Brecht’s Epic Theatre, Benjamin makes clear that montage is the technique proper to radio, which, using the ‘organizing function’ of the interruption, brings the audience to a new level of expertise. ‘It arrests the action in its course, and thereby compels the listener to adopt an attitude vis-à-vis the process.’ This is clearly a Brechtian ruse, but Benjamin insists that the technique originates in film and radio – in fact, one might observe, in his own radio activity five years earlier. His use of fragmentary, varied, and contradictory materials – Fontane’s poem, *Un Autre Monde*, the photograph of the bridge – is revealed as a strategy for jolting his audience into an awareness of the mediation of history, including the mediation occurring as we listen. Far from taking his cue from Brecht, Benjamin had been thinking along these lines since at least 1925: the ‘Epistemo-Critical Prologue’ of his book on *Trauerspiel* refers to the ‘art of interruption’.

By the time he wrote ‘The Author as Producer’, however, all his channels to the German public had been sealed, and interruption appeared a failed strategy. His story *Auf die Minute* of the same year suggests that Benjamin was not unaware of this failure. How does the audience respond in this instance? Does it learn anything from the interruption? In fact the friend to whom the speaker directs his inquiries assumes that technological failure was the reason for the cessation of discourse, missing the actual cause of the silence: the failure of the speaker to tell the time, his misreading of the studio clock – his nonsimultaneity. Benjamin seems to be writing an unflattering obituary of his own radio work, painting himself as inadequate to the task presented by

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57 At the same time Arnheim was in Rome writing his book on radio, which contains a chapter titled ‘Author and Producer’.
the moment of danger – and his listeners as similarly deficient. Benjamin had, however, bought a kind of insurance against this failure, as a closer examination of his audience reveals.

‘Greetings, Invisibles!’

‘Public’ is, after all, a mere word. In no sense is it a homogeneous and constant quantity.

– Friedrich Nietzsche, The Birth of Tragedy

In order to think about Benjamin’s audience, let’s return to his talk on the Mietskaserne. As we have already seen, Benjamin studiously placed his talk beyond the academic disciplines. But if his subject is not something you might come across in school, neither is it a part of public discourse:

It has always been said that Berliners are critical. It’s quite true. They are quick-witted, they won’t let the wool be pulled over their eyes, they’re smart. But when it comes to the houses in which they live, it must be said that for centuries they’ve been led up the garden path. And if at first the command to build came from authorities through which the absolute monarch spoke, even now – now that the city is self-governing – things are not much better. In fact they’re worse. Perhaps Berliners have had so much room to exercise their critical wit and reason because they have very rarely thought to put it to any practical use.

A closer inspection of the concept of the public – in the form of a concrete example of the mass media’s own representation of the bourgeois public – illuminates why

60 ‘Verehrte Unsichtbare!’, as Benjamin greeted his listeners at the opening of a radio talk on ‘Kinderliteratur,’ broadcast 15 August 1929. Walter Benjamin, ‘Kinderliteratur,’ Gesammelte Schriften VII.I, p. 250.
62 ‘Man sagt immer, die Berliner wären so kritisch. Das stimmt schon. Sie sind schlagfertig, sie lassen sich nicht leicht etwas vormachen, sie sind helle. Aber was die Häuser und was die Wohnungen angeht, in denen sie leben, da muß man schon sagen, daß sie jahrhundertenlang auf jeden Leim gekrochen sind. Und wenn sie anfangs sich auf die Obrigkeit, auf den absoluten König herausreden konnten, der befahl, so und so muß gebaut werden, so ist es spater, als sie Selbstverwaltung ihrer Stadt hatten, kein bißchen besser sondern schlimmer geworden. Und vielleicht haben sie manchmal nur darum so viel Spielraum für ihren kritischen Witz und Verstand gehabt, weil sie allzuselten daran gedacht haben, in der Praxis ihn anzuwenden.’ Benjamin, ‘Die Mietskaserne,’ p. 118.
Benjamin was so scathing.

*Die Gartenlaube* (The Garden Bower) was the first periodical to reach a mass audience in Germany: at the peak of its popularity in 1875, 385,000 copies were being printed a week. Its masthead displays an idealised picture of its readers, the bourgeoisie gathering in the semi-private space of the garden bower to discuss the text [fig. 85]. Beneath this leafy roof, where domesticity is naturalised and nature domesticated, the civic roles of the father and son are thrown off in order to return to a Rousseauian primitivity: disinterested man, concerned only with truth. The public’s activities are squarely centered on the family and mediated by the press, proximity to which is modulated by gender and class (there is no private realm safe from domination).

The paterfamilias reads from the magazine to his assembled family, while his son sits to the right and points out a section; perhaps he is making a critical comment. The son’s wife holds her child on her knee so that he can see and hear more clearly, devoting herself to his attentiveness at the expense of her own engagement. In the foreground there are two other women. Although they appear to be having a private conversation the figure on the left is pointing at the magazine, suggesting that they are discussing its contents (but not interrupting the voice of the father). Meanwhile in the background the faint figure of a maid carries a tray from the table. Her head, however, is turned towards the scene, suggesting that the lower orders too may benefit from the magazine’s contents. This is only permissible because it does not disrupt domestic labour nor encourage dissent: her distance precludes response.

The *mise-en-abyme* of the masthead on the masthead stands for the infinite reproducibility of the press, and also for the *symbolic* enfoldment of dialogue within the
85. Masthead of *Die Gartenlaube*, 1853.

medium, emblematised here by the chattering readers in their garden bower. In fact the letter page – which Habermas maintains made the early press a dialogic medium – was a mere sop to polyvocality, a carefully corralled arena of opinion separated from the realm of the unambiguously factual. Furthermore, the publication of letters – in other words, the making public of opinion – lay entirely at the discretion of the editor, and in this age of the mass press, his backers. Indeed dialogue always exists beyond the text, and cannot, with its essentially punctual temporality, be reproduced by it.63 Seen in this light, the garden bower is simply a simulacrum of a public – a diorama of bourgeois ideology. In Kittler’s harsh analysis, ‘The oft-quoted structural transformation from the aristocratic to the middle-class publicness, whose travels and letters, printed pamphlets and newspaper critiques are supposed to have undermined the old power system of Europe, never took place.’64

The history of Die Gartenlaube reveals the truth in this: it was founded by Ernst Keil, a liberal who had spent nine months in prison for publishing anti-government propaganda in the aftermath of the failed 1848 revolution. On his release he decided that freedom is only possible ‘in a relatively uniformly educated, uniformly virtuous society with the same interests’, and established the magazine to address this circumscribed public.65 Die Gartenlaube was never intended to be a forum for debate: Keil pulled his own teeth in order to avoid censure and create a self-reproducing image of national bourgeois unanimity. From this early self-censoring vehicle of liberal ideology, Die Gartenlaube degenerated to a fount of nationalist chauvinism.

63 For a revealing, less pessimistic reading of the temporality of discourse in the press, see Michael Warner, Publics and Counterpublics (New York: Zone, 2002), pp. 90–95.
This bourgeois public of toothless chatterers is identical with Benjamin’s Berliners, who have in the past only ‘had so much room to exercise their critical wit and reason because they have very rarely thought to put it to any practical use.’ The public is a talking shop, the development of which was permitted only because it promised never to become praxis, and the ineffectuality of which actually increased with the end of despotism. It seems unlikely that this audience could be up to the task of putting image and sound together in order to grasp the current situation. And the terrible consequences of this inaction, this failure to engage with the present, were becoming evident. As Benjamin spoke, the ‘self governance’ of the German people was clearly ending: in the previous month Brüning had become chancellor and was soon to begin ruling by emergency decree, a fateful step back to absolutism.

As we saw earlier, Benjamin also criticised a second forum for the potential discussion of art – the school. He himself had been denied any chance of gaining an academic position when his habilitation thesis was rejected by Frankfurt University in 1925, and was thus forced into the perilous existence of a freelance journalist. Benjamin’s experience of the polarity of academia/publicness ran counter to traditional theorisations, however: ‘By the public use of one’s reason,’ Kant wrote in his 1794 essay ‘Answer to the Question: What is Enlightenment?’, ‘I mean that use which anyone may make of it as a man of learning addressing the entire public world of readers [Leserwelt].’ But contrary to Kant’s assertion, the republic of scholars is no basis for public discourse.

Habermas makes this clear when he critically cites Hegel’s observations on this topic in the *Outlines of a Philosophy of Right* (1820). Hegel’s objection begins with an epistemological critique of public opinion:

The formal subjective freedom of individuals consists in their having and expressing their own judgments, opinions and recommendations on matters of universal concern. This freedom is collectively manifested as what is called ‘public opinion,’ in which what is universal in and for itself, the substantial and the true, is linked with its opposite, the purely particular and distinctive opinions of the many. *Public opinion as it exists is thus a standing self-contradiction, knowledge as appearance.*

Indeed, knowledge goes beyond appearance – beyond ideology – only in science:

The sciences, however, are not to be found anywhere in the field of opinion and subjective views, provided of course that they are indeed sciences. Their exposition is not a matter of clever turns of phrase, allusiveness, half-utterances, and semi-retticences, but consist in the unambiguous, determinate, and open expression of meaning and purport. It follows that they do not fall under the character of public opinion.68

For Hegel, scientific and public discourses are nonidentical because knowledge and opinion are fundamentally different things. But because it is integrated with the network of state power, the dissemination system for scientific information – the university and school – is not a forum for free debate either. Hegel did not recognize this as a problem, seeing the proper role of scholars – part of his ‘universal estate’ of bureaucrats – as publicists for the state. As Habermas notes, ‘The public sphere thus demoted to a “means of education” counted no longer as a principle of enlightenment and as a sphere in which reason realized itself. The public sphere served only to integrate subjective opinions into the objectivity assumed by the spirit in the form of the state.’69

Others had identified this problem before Habermas, for instance Nietzsche and Benjamin – and with a more critical understanding of what ‘public reason’ might

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69 Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*, p. 120.
involve, or repress. Nietzsche termed the educational system an ‘acroamatic’ machine, after the didactic pedagogy employed by Aristotle. ‘One speaking mouth with many ears, and half as many writing hands – that is the external academic apparatus, the educational machine [Bildungsmaschine] in action.’

Nietzsche continues (in a passage often cited by Kittler):

Furthermore, the proprietor of this one mouth is severed from and independent of the owners of the many ears; and this double independence is enthusiastically praised as ‘academic freedom.’ And in order to extend this freedom, the one may speak what he likes and the other may hear what he likes; only, behind both groups stands the state, at a modest distance and with the slightly strained expression of a supervisor, in order to remind them from time to time that it is the aim, the goal, and the embodiment, of this curious speaking and hearing procedure.

In contrast to the public we spied through the leaves of a garden bower, the acroamatic machine can be pictured thus: an elevated figure at the lectern superintending his silent students, pens in their hands, below [fig. 86]. Unlike the idealised chatterers in the bower, these listeners have no avenue for dissent and may not confer – but in both cases, the state is the ultimate arbiter and beneficiary of the discourse, which in the winter of 1828 concerned precisely aesthetics. Aptly, this diagram of the state’s system of knowledge production was drawn by Franz Kugler – a Prussian cultural official and one of the founders of the academic discipline of art history.

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71 ‘Im Übrigen ist der Inhaber dieses Mundes von den Besitzern der vielen Ohren getrennt und unabhängig: und diese doppelte Selbständigkeit preist man mit Hochgefühl als “akademische Freiheit.” Übrigens kann der Eine – um diese Freiheit noch zu erhöhen – ungefähr reden, was er will, der Ander ungefähr hören, was er will: nur daß hinter beiden Gruppen in bescheidener Entfernung der Staat mit einer gewissen gespannten Aufsehermiene steht, um von Zeit zu Zeit daran zu erinnern, daß er Zweck, Ziel und Inbegriff der sonderbaren Sprech- und Hörprozedur sei.’ Nietzsche, ‘Über die Zukunft’. Kittler cites this passage several times, first in Discourse Networks and then in the lectures published as Optical Media, trans. Anthony Ems (Cambridge: Polity, 2009), pp. 20–21.

87. Bayreuth Festspielhaus, c.1895.

88. The aesthetic public unveiled: Kurt Raab recreates the George Kreis in *Satansbraten*, dir. by Rainer Werner Fassbinder (Germany, 1975).
Nietzsche sought to extricate himself from this machinery by constructing what he called an ‘aesthetic public’ around the reception of Wagner’s works.\(^\text{73}\) He abandoned a promising academic career in order to do so, engaging enthusiastically (if disastrously) with the press to promote Wagner’s project.\(^\text{74}\) At around the same time he was, having served as a medical orderly in the Franco-Prussian War of 1870–1, becoming painfully aware of the idiocy of German nationalism, as the famous opening lines of his essay on David Strauss reveal. So the aesthetic public was to be a counter public based on the reception of art, in which a group of spiritual aristocrats would unite in ecstatic communion against the prevailing philistinism and cultural chauvinism of the new Germany: a happy island between the Scylla of the universities and the Charybdis of the mass public, twin monstrous offspring of the modern state. However, as Nietzsche discovered in Bayreuth, his cherished aesthetic public was nothing but a bunch of anti-Semitic \textit{Bildungsphilister} (educated philistines), riddled with the same ideology as the public that it supposedly opposed [fig. 87].

Having already rejected the republic of scholars in order to pursue this chimerical aesthetic public, Nietzsche was now forced into a wilderness of cheap hotels and off-season spa resorts. His next book (which was prefaced with a quotation from Voltaire – a calculated snub to Wagner) abjured mythopoeic art worship in favour of the scientistic pursuit of ‘small, unpretentious truths’ – a partial return to the enlightenment project, recognising (in a startling \textit{Aufhebung} of the thought of his former enemy, Hegel) the historical relativity of knowledge. Despite moving on in his philosophy, however, Nietzsche revealed the scars of his Wagnerian skirmish in an abiding horror of publics:

\[\text{Wir hatten an ein aesthetisches Publicum geglaubt und den einzelnen Zuschauer für um so befähigter gehalten, je mehr er im Stande war, das Kunstwerk als Kunst d.h. aesthetisch zu nehmen.} \]


\(^\text{74}\) A reading of Nietzsche as publicist is proposed by Braatz, \textit{Friedrich Nietzsche – eine Studie zur Theorie der Öffentlichen Meinung}. 

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Zarathustra’s failed trip to the marketplace is the self-portrait of a mocked prophet. Appropriately, the final book of Zarathustra did not even get as far as the marketplace: ‘The public,’ Kittler notes, ‘shrinks to private printings and private addresses.’

Benjamin’s radio activity can be read as a critical engagement with Nietzsche’s aesthetic counterpublic, although for Benjamin this idea was mediated by the George-Kreis, the disciples of the poet Stefan George. Though the members of this group numbered only around forty, their work was extremely influential in the Weimar Republic, and Benjamin was a close observer of their movements. The Kreis derived their ideal of ecstatic abjection before the dictatorial creator from Nietzsche’s early, pre-Bayreuth works, and imagined themselves an aesthetic counterpublic, a ‘secret Germany’ of the spiritual elect.

Benjamin, like Nietzsche and the George-Kreis, sought a counterpublic based on the reception of art, noting approvingly that ‘it required a Nietzsche to raise doubts about the possibility of reconciling the spirit of Weimar and Sedan’. Like Nietzsche, Benjamin positioned his counterpublic outside the acroamatic machine (his extra-mural position not, of course, a matter of choice). And like Nietzsche after Bayreuth, Benjamin was well aware of where this strategy had led and might lead once more. Few

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75 Kittler, Discourse Networks, p. 201.
77 Benjamin criticized the mystical irrationalism of the George Kreis in his essay on Goethe’s Elective Affinities (1924; Selected Writings I, pp. 297–360), which was published under the aegis of Hoffmanstahl, an ex-member of the same group. He returned to the subject in a review of Max Kommerell’s Der Dichter als Führer in der deutschen Klassik titled ‘Against a Masterpiece’ (1930; Selected Writings II.I, pp. 378–85); and in an article titled ‘Stefan George in Retrospect’ (1933; Selected Writings II.II, pp. 706–11).
78 Benjamin, ‘Against a Masterpiece,’ p. 383.
members of the George-Kreis were so perspicacious, however – as Benjamin wrote in 1933, ‘The generation for whom George’s most beautiful and most perfect poems provided something of a refuge was doomed. The darkness that with the war had gathered above its head only what had long been brewing in its heart seemed to that generation, as to the poet whose verses fulfilled it, to be the epitome of the forces of nature.’\(^{79}\) This was because, as Nietzsche was to realise after Bayreuth, and as Benjamin later said of the George-Kreis, the ‘secret Germany’ of hermetic counterpublics is ultimately ‘nothing but the arsenal of official Germany, in which the magic hood of invisibility hangs next to the helmet of steel.’\(^{80}\) The hushed candlelit salon, the shady garden bower, and the lecture hall, are all nodes in the network of state power [fig. 88].

But the similarities between Benjamin and Nietzsche end here. Nietzsche, repelled by the Wagnerian counterpublic’s saturation with the very same ideals of the nation state from which it was meant to be a haven, went into Zarathustrian mountain retreat. His aristocratic individualism could never permit a direct appeal to the masses. But unlike Nietzsche and the George Kreis – George wrote in his elegy for Nietzsche ‘down there the masses dumbly plod – don’t hurry them!’ – Benjamin’s public activity was explicitly politicised and aimed at a mass audience.\(^{81}\) This audience was not to remain an undifferentiated, passive mass: as I discussed above, the technique of interruption, of montage, was to shake it into critical awareness, producing expert listeners – producing producers.

\(^{79}\) Benjamin, ‘Stefan George in Retrospect,’ p. 710–11.
\(^{80}\) Benjamin, ‘Against a Masterpiece,’ p. 384.
Benjamin’s view of that ideological smokescreen, the letter page, makes clear the distance he has traveled from the idlers in the garden bower:

For centuries it was in the nature of literature that a small number of writers confronted many thousands of readers. With the growth and extension of the press … an increasing number of readers – in isolated cases, at first – turned into writers. It began with the space set aside for “letters to the editor” in the daily press, and has now reached a point where there is hardly a European engaged in the work process who could not, in principle, find an opportunity to publish somewhere or other an account of a work experience, a complaint, a report, or something of the kind. Thus, the distinction between author and public is about to lose its axiomatic character.82

Instead of operating like a Kantian scholar – supported by the state – Benjamin’s productive readers depended on their ‘engagement in the work process’. In contrast, ‘the public use of reason’ seems a bourgeois practice on the verge of obsolescence.

The problem was that the tendrils of state power penetrated the medium of Benjamin’s counterpublic activity just as deeply as they had penetrated the ideology of the George Kreis and the Wagnerians before it – and furthermore, this medium was divorced from the work process. Indeed, just as Nietzsche had chosen to lecture at a university on the problems of university lecturing, Benjamin’s medium for the critique of the acroamatic machine was itself based on that same Hegelian apparatus (Arnheim described it in Nietzschean terms: ‘Wireless is one person speaking without hearing and all the rest listening without being able to speak’).83 The early history of German radio shows why this was the case.

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82 Benjamin, ‘The Work of Art’, p. 33. Compare Kittler’s view on the ‘reader as producer’ in the Aufschreibesystem 1800: ‘The continuous transition from authors to readers to authors was a kind of mobilization … German poetry is so constituted that – beyond any particularities of content or philosophical differences of opinion – it programs its readers for the proliferation of Poetry.’ Kittler, Discourse Networks, p. 109.

83 Arnheim, Radio, p. 272.
An invisible spectre haunted the deathbed of Imperial Germany. At the end of 1918, one hundred and ninety thousand troops trained in telecommunications returned from the Western front equipped with radio sets and revolutionary fervor.\(^4\) Taking part in the workers’ and soldiers’ soviets that sprang up all over Germany in the November Revolution, these wireless renegades established a Central Radio Committee in order to spread information throughout the disintegrating Reich. Despite the crushing of the revolution and the restoration of government control over the airwaves by April 1919, this so-called Funkerspuk (radio haunting) needed exorcism by the book – or rather the word of law. The spectral rhizome of a proletarian information network had to be uprooted for good, and the authoritarian control of radio that persisted throughout the medium’s first decade can be partly attributed to this motive.

In late Wilhelmine Germany radio had been used exclusively for military communications, any possible future civilian use of the medium being placed under the jurisdiction of the Postal Ministry (war was the father of radio, even its non-combative uses: radio entertainments for the troops were pioneered by Hans Bredow, later head of the Reichs Rundfunk Gesellschaft).\(^5\) After the Funkerspuk had passed, the new republican government reinforced the state monopoly. Unlicensed listening and transmission were made criminal offences in 1924, a response to fears that unregulated radio use provided ‘the opportunity for subversive circles to create a comprehensive secret communications network, which in times of crisis could seriously endanger the

\(^{4}\) Kittler, *Gramophone, Film, Typewriter*, p. 97.

\(^{5}\) Meanwhile, military sound detection technology was being developed by Max Wertheimer and Erich von Hornbostel, the founders of gestalt psychology: their ‘Wertbostel’ device was capable of locating enemy craft, and was successfully used at the front after 1916. D. Brett King and Michael Wertheimer, *Max Wertheimer & Gestalt Theory* (New Brunswick: Transaction, 2005), p. 121.
actions of the constitutional regime.\textsuperscript{86} The preceding year had indeed been replete with crises (hyperinflation, Hitler’s attempted coup, the French occupation of the Ruhr, and Communist uprisings among them), and the establishment of a state monopoly over the medium of radio was intended to help set the ship of state on an even keel. In the year following October 1923, eight regional broadcasting companies were granted operating licenses, and in 1926 these were joined by the national station Deutsche Welle, the only long-wave broadcaster [fig. 89]. Listeners thus had a choice of only two stations.

\textbf{The acroamatic machine}

These restrictions were intended to create a strictly regulated medium. Bureaucrats of the early republic abhorred the situation of the German press, which they perceived as being excessively factional, and the commercialisation of the cinema, which was funded by big business and media cartels.\textsuperscript{87} These twin forces – politicisation and commercialisation – were felt to exert a baleful influence on existing media, causing on the one hand an inimical cacophony of dissenting opinion, and on the other a populist approach that churned out immoral, unedifying, and inferior products in the pursuit of profit. In order to counteract these tendencies the Postal Ministry granted broadcasting licenses only to groups or individuals without political affiliations, prevented competition by creating regional monopolies, and limited the amount of profit that could be made by setting a license fee of two marks per month and a maximum shareholder dividend of ten per cent. The ministry, on the other hand, took around fifty per cent of profits made by the stations, making radio the only state-controlled mass

\textsuperscript{86} Letter from the Minister of the Interior to Erich Stolz, 3 March 1924, cited in Peter Jelavich, \textit{Berlin Alexanderplatz: Radio, Film, and the Death of Weimar Culture} (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006), p. 36.

89. German broadcasting companies, stations, and transmission areas in the 1920s.
medium of Weimar Germany and a significant source of revenue for the government. In other words, radio was to be depublicised and extracted from the market, thus preventing it from being used to develop what Negt and Kluge call ‘counterproducts of a proletarian public’. Indeed, cut off from the productive forces of society, there is no place for the worker – who was constituted by those forces – here, and the radio becomes a quasi-feudal medium for state representation.

The regional stations were moderated by political and cultural oversight boards whose job it was to censor programme content. All material deemed to be potentially sensitive had to be run past these bodies, and they referred any particularly tricky matters to the appropriate ministry, thus ensuring that the government had a final say on programming. It was partly for this reason that typed scripts survive of Benjamin’s broadcasts, thus giving the lie to the possibility of any real improvisation: if Benjamin had substantially deviated from his moderated texts, his radio career would have been quickly curtailed.

The oversight boards were made up of representatives of the gamut of political affiliations in the Republic – excluding parties of the far left and right, whose fundamentally anti-republican views were felt to be iniquitous. Although the Nazis eventually crept onto the airwaves, the Communist Party (KPD) was in fact never granted permission to broadcast, and had to resort to other methods in order to break into the closed network. One common tactic was to shout slogans into open microphones at public events, but sometimes more radical means were adopted: on one occasion KPD members kidnapped a socialist on his way to an interview and replaced him with an impostor who proceeded to deliver an impassioned anti-militarist speech.

88 Negt and Kluge, *Public Sphere and Experience*, p. 80.
Apart from such direct interventions, there was a more general debate surrounding the ‘nonpartisan’ broadcasting so desired by the founders of German radio. The concept of impartiality was itself contested, some defining it as a total avoidance of political topics while others (such as Alfred Döblin and Kurt Tucholsky) advocated a balanced plurality of views. This debate corresponded to a general unease that never quite deserted the Weimar body politic. Some perceived the strength of pluralism – Karl Mannheim, for example, saw a new opportunity for synthesis precisely in the radical fracture of Weimar politics – but many more in the young nation found the dissent essential to the democratic process disquieting.

In fact, as Peter Jelavich notes, up to about 1928 ‘radio’s “impartiality” was profoundly normative in practice.’ The main reason for the normative tendency of the infant medium was the composition of radio’s ruling classes. The bureaucrats who controlled the civil service, including the Postal Ministry that oversaw the radio, had been educated in the rarefied atmosphere of the Imperial universities and were, generally speaking, profoundly conservative, even anti-republican. They were products of Nietzsche’s acroamatic machine, and by monopolising radio the mandarins found a means to massively expand and perfect the ‘republic’ of scholars – the distribution network for knowledge with which they were most familiar.

Radio was therefore no mediated public: it was not a site for reasoned debate but a gigantic didactic apparatus for incorporating the entire nation into one body. The views of Dr Hans Bredow, leader of the Reichs Rundfunk Gesellschaft (National Radio Corporation or RRG), are symptomatic of this impulse. In a mission statement

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89 Jelavich, Berlin Alexanderplatz, p. 53.
published in the first issue of the national radio magazine *Der deutsche Rundfunk*, he wrote:

The German people are economically impoverished and it is undeniable that spiritual impoverishment is increasing too, for who today can afford books and magazines, the pleasure of good music, or entertaining and educational lectures? Recreation, entertainment, and variety turn the spirit from everyday cares, and refresh and increase joy in labour, whereas a joyless people are listless. This is where radio comes in, and if it can succeed in providing artistic and spiritually elevated lectures of every sort to all sectors of the population; if simultaneously it can open up a new field of industry providing blue and white collar jobs, then radio will be have a constructive effect, and the German people have a right to it.  

**Medium of exclusion**

*And who was ‘everybody’?*  
– Brecht, ‘Radio as a Means of Communication’ (1932)  

Bredow’s thoughts extend beyond what has sometimes been characterized as a simple paternalistic drive to educate the masses into the *Kulturation*. Evidently, great hope was placed in the power of the acroamatic machine to heal the economic and spiritual wounds of the fledgling republic, still wracked by political and financial crises at this early stage of its existence, by reaching out to all parts of the populace. These hopes of a mass audience (if not the same aims) were shared, it should be added, by Benjamin, as his short piece on ‘Two Types of Popularity’ demonstrates. Nevertheless, this unifying, healing power was – like the leafy shade of the garden bower – exclusive and divisive.

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As discussed above, representatives of political parties felt to be beyond the pale were not given airtime. Bredow and the other radio mandarins wanted the new medium to speak to the nation, its breath unifying the whole – not encouraging dissent.

And although it was intended that radio would be available to all strata of society, in fact the medium was in its first decade the preserve of urban elites. Despite Germany having one of the highest number of radio listeners in the world – 2,635,567 in 1929, second only to the USA – radio was not ethereally omnipresent but circumscribed geographically, economically, and socially. The limitations of early radio technology meant that – unless one possessed a more expensive set – transmissions could only be heard within a restricted radius of transmitters. Because these were mostly located in large cities, rural listeners were thin on the ground (this only began to change with the introduction of more powerful transmitters between 1930 and 1934).

At the same time, the price of radio sets and of the monthly license meant that only the relatively well off could afford to join the ethereal republic: although the working class constituted forty-three per cent of the total population, in 1928 only a quarter of radio subscribers came from this background. Radio executives noted this problem with concern, but it was only addressed in 1933 when the Nazis subsidized the production of radio sets, designing a Volksempfänger (People’s Receiver) that pumped the voice of the Führer into every home [fig. 90]. Of course, ‘black listening’ – tuning in without a license – and the construction of homemade sets were doubtless common practices; even so, until the end of the Republic words intended for the proletariat were largely spoken into the void.

90. Volksempfänger, c.1933–45.
Besides its socio-economic circumscription, radio was also culturally exclusive. It is difficult to establish a very accurate picture of programming at the end of the 1920s, but over fifty per cent of airtime was devoted to music. Most of this was of a distinctly serious nature: Wagner was a constant presence at prime time, as were Beethoven and the other Romantic composers, whereas ‘light’ music was broadcast only in the morning, and dance music was relegated to late-night slots. The second most prevalent type of programme was the lecture, also broadcast at prime time and usually concerning the arts and humanities.

These facts reflect the educational mission of the radio mandarins – but the targets of their mission did not share their interests, as a sociological survey of one thousand families conducted in 1933–34 reveals (as Karl Führer notes, this survey is our only source for listener’s preferences, and its uniqueness and date speak volumes about the disregard of Weimar broadcasters for the concerns of their audience). While 80.4 per cent of civil servants and professionals enjoyed classical concerts, only 7.9 per cent of unskilled and 10.5 per cent of skilled workers felt the same, preferring instead light and dance music (one respondent commented ‘for heaven’s sake, no more demanding music with an opus’). Lectures were also divisive: those on scientific topics were enjoyed by 1.6 per cent of workers, 7 per cent of white-collar workers, and 23.6 per cent of higher civil servants. However, technical lectures (Fachvorträge) were enjoyed by 12.7 percent of unskilled and 18.8 per cent of skilled workers, suggesting that listeners – unsurprisingly – tended to respond to subjects touching their personal or class interests. In any case, the result of this unswervingly didactic approach was that radio became a closed network speaking only to itself. In fact many of those listeners with similar

95 Führer, ‘Medium of Modernity’, p. 751.
backgrounds to the programmers also found this material dry and tedious. ‘The call for a “light programme,” which we find so embarrassing, often comes precisely from the so-called higher social strata and the bourgeois middle class,’ wrote Kurt von Boeckmann, director of Munich radio.\(^6\) Indeed listeners wrote letters of complaint in their thousands, and there was a very high rate of license cancellations – many doing so giving ‘lack of time and interest’ as their reason.

A final element of radio’s exclusivity was its technical denial of discourse. Until about 1927 radio could only be listened to with headphones, which forbade discussion amongst the audience. Instead, listeners like Kurt Günther’s \textit{Radionist}, or Max Radler’s \textit{Radiohörer} had to sit in attitudes of intense absorption, isolated by sound. Furthermore, as Brecht observed in his essay ‘Radio as a Means of Communication’ (1932), despite the technical similarity of the speaker and the microphone, radio in its bourgeois form is an essentially one-way system for the distribution of information: an acroamatic machine.

Brecht advocated refunctioning the medium in order to create a bidirectional communication technology, an aspiration later ridiculed by Baudrillard and that Brecht himself admitted was utopian. Benjamin concurred – although he advocated textual rather than technical \textit{Umfunktionierung}. Indeed such concerns were already very widespread in the mid-1920s, and some rather more practical remedies than Brecht’s were suggested. The Worker’s Radio Club, for example, rallied under the slogan ‘Radio listeners, demand your right for codetermination!’ in October 1926, and frequent calls were made for consumer input to be allowed in programming, often based on the model

\(^6\) Jelavich, \textit{Berlin Alexanderplatz}, p. 69.
of the cooperative ‘People’s Theatre’ (*Volksbühne*) movement.\(^{97}\) Such ideas were never realized, but other means *were* adopted in an attempt to break up the monologous medium.

**Teraphim**

Considering the technological, political, economic, and cultural exclusivity of radio, one might be justified in wondering exactly why – and how – Walter Benjamin was broadcasting oppositional polemics on art in the early 1930s. In fact the medium had mutated in several ways since its foundation. As noted above, radio became somewhat less technologically exclusive around 1926–27, when the receiver ceased to be a barbarous device bristling with valves to which listeners had to attach themselves with wires and headphones. Instead integrated loudspeakers and walnut veneer turned the futuristic interloper of the early 1920s into a piece of Biedermeyer furniture, differentiated from the sideboard and dresser only by its voice. As Karl Führer notes, these changes were not superficial but dictated new modes of listening: audiences became capable of distracted listening, since they could now move about the room performing other activities instead of sitting wired to the set in an attitude of absorbed reverence.\(^{98}\) Furthermore, they could also discuss broadcasts as they listened, an option denied to headphone wearers – although as the date of Max Radler’s 1930 painting suggests, workers tended to listen anachronistically, their income dictating the use of outmoded, relatively inexpensive headphone sets.

But although radio’s audience remained largely monocultural until 1933, the fact that Benjamin was given airtime at all demonstrates that a new plurality had arisen *behind*

\(^{97}\) Jelavich, *Berlin Alexanderplatz*, pp. 72–73.
the microphone. This was motivated by changes in the political sphere: the Reichstag elections of May 1928 resulted in a coalition led by the Social Democrats, who were now able to significantly reduce radio censorship, especially in areas with Social Democratic governments such as Frankfurt and Berlin. At the same time a new breed of programmer came to the fore. Preeminent among these were Hans Flesch, artistic director of Frankfurt Radio, and his assistant Ernst Schoen. It was under the aegis of these two men that Benjamin had made his first radio broadcast, on the topic of young Russian writers, in 1927. In 1929 Flesch was appointed director of the Berlin Funkstunde, the most prestigious station in the country, and Schoen was promoted to take his place in Frankfurt.

Taking advantage of the newly relaxed political atmosphere, Flesch and Schoen began to commission regular broadcasts by previously marginalised figures. The appointment of Schoen – who was called at the time a ‘radio avant-gardist’ – bore immediate fruit in Frankfurt. In February Brecht was invited to read from his works, and with the broadcast in July of the Baden-Baden music festival (run by Paul Hindemith), new music found unprecedented prominence in programming. Starting in August, Benjamin – a school friend of Schoen’s – was given a regular monthly slot, as were other figures associated with the Frankfurt Institute for Social Research, such as Theodor Adorno and Leo Löwenthal.

99 Schivelbusch, *Intellektuellendämmerung*.
101 The history of the media practice of figures associated with the Frankfurt School remains to be written: particularly striking is the fact that Adorno, despite his later critique of the culture industry, regularly broadcast in Weimar and on several occasions presented selections of new music. He also broadcast on the topic of art in general, asking ‘Why is the New Art so Hard to Understand?’ on 29 July 1931. This speech is
A ‘Conversation with Ernst Schoen’, written by Benjamin and published in a special radio edition of the journal *Literarische Welt* in 1929, outlines the former’s intentions: to be a sort of anti-Bredow. ‘Originally,’ Schoen says:

radio programming meant – to put it briefly – culture with a mile-high C. They thought that in radio they had got their hands on a gigantic instrument of popular education. Lecture series, courses, overblown didactic events of all kinds were begun, and all ended in fiasco. Guess what? The listener wanted entertainment. And radio hadn’t provided it: the aridity and technical narrow-mindedness of its educational features were only equaled by its meager, abysmal ‘light entertainment.’

Schoen’s solution is that ‘every listener will get what he wants, and a little more (namely, what we want).’

Meanwhile, Flesch’s control of programming at Berlin reinforced the relatively liberal atmosphere of that station (Alfred Braun, literary director of the station, had already commissioned an adaptation of Brecht’s *Mann ist Mann* in 1927 – the first of his works to be broadcast), with the consequence that Benjamin also found regular work there. He was a frequent speaker on Berlin’s children’s hour, broadcasting – among other things – a series on the topic of Berlin, of which the talks on the *Mietskaserne* and Theodor Hosemann are both examples.

available in an English translation by Susan Gillespie in Adorno, *Essays on Music*, ed. Richard Leppert, trans. Susan H. Gillespie (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), pp. 127–34. This is extraordinary in the light of his findings at the Princeton radio research project – that music is fatally damaged by the limitations of broadcast technology. Indeed Adorno would go on to broadcast music again in the Federal Republic, and although technology had by then rendered his notion of the ‘hearing stripe’ antiquated, his decision to present excerpts from works seems bizarre in view of his essay on the fetish character of music.

102 “… was ursprünglich die Programmgestaltung des Rundfunks bestimmte. Das war, kurz gesagt, die Kultur mit einem haushohen K. Man glaubte im Rundfunk das Instrument eines riesenhaften Volksbildungsbetriebs in der Hand zu halten. Vortragszyklen, Unterrichtskurse, großaufgezogene didaktische Veranstaltungen aller Art setzten ein und endeten mit einem Fiasco. Denn was zeigte sich? Der Hörer will Unterhaltung. Und da hatte der Rundfunk nichts zu bieten: der Trockenheit und fachlichen Beschränktheit des belehrenden entsprachen Dürftigkeit und Tiefstand des ‘bunten’ Teils …” … Schoen gab die Lösung aus: “Jedem Hörer was er haben will und noch ein bißchen mehr (namlich von dem, was wir wollen).” Walter Benjamin, ‘Gespräch mit Ernst Schoen’, *Gesammelte Schriften* IV, pp. 548–51 (pp. 548–49).
91. Programmes on the subject of art per radio station in 1930. Table drawn by the author based on an analysis of radio listing journals.
Liberalisation had a significant impact on the broadcasting of art and art history. This can be attributed in no small degree to the changing complexion of the cultural advisory boards, as well as the general management of the stations. The presence of art historians on these boards was testimony to the importance attributed to the discipline in popular education. Fritz Wichert – co-publisher with Ernst May of *Das neue Frankfurt*, and a campaigner for the expansion of art’s audience – was a member of the cultural advisory board of the national station, while a similar position was held in Berlin by the director of the state museums, Wilhelm Waetzoldt (both were relieved of their positions in 1933, in part due to their championing of modern art).

A cursory glance at radio schedules from 1925 reveals a medium concerned with the most conventional art-historical topics, broadcasting live from exhibition opening or lectures by museum directors. Such broadcasts were however infrequent. By 1930 things had changed significantly. In that year there were approximately 138 programmes on the subject of art. Although this only amounted to roughly 0.2 per cent of airtime, these were generally broadcast at primetime, and (as far as one can tell from the limited information provided by listings magazines) covered a very wide range of topics. The variation between stations is marked: those in liberal regions, such as the Berlin Funkstunde, Südwestdeutscher Rundfunk, and Westdeutscher Rundfunk, broadcast many talks by left-leaning writers and artists [fig. 91].

Broadcasts on art in 1930 included Sigfried Giedion speaking on ‘Le Corbusier and the New Building’ on Südwestdeutscher Rundfunk, and Westdeutscher Rundfunk.

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103 Südwestdeutscher Rundfunk, 17 February 1930.
commissioned a series of nine programmes on a similar topic.\textsuperscript{104} The first in the series, titled ‘new building, new dwelling in the metropolis’ was presented by Walter Stern,\textsuperscript{105} with subsequent episodes presented by the Frankfurt city architect Ernst May (on ‘standardisation [\textit{typisierung}] and industrialization in domestic architecture’),\textsuperscript{106} and Walter Gropius (on ‘building materials, building techniques and building forms’),\textsuperscript{107} among others. I have cited these titles in lower case, and indeed that is how they were printed in the listings magazine \textit{Der deutsche Rundfunk} – in a sans serif typeface surrounded by a sea of Fraktur. Other speakers included the art historian Wilhelm Worringer, who presented the somewhat more conventionally titled series ‘Journey Through the Styles of Art. From the Romanesque to the Contemporary’\textsuperscript{108}; Adolf Behne, who spoke twice (once on art criticism,\textsuperscript{109} and another time on ‘National and International in the New Building’);\textsuperscript{110} the Expressionist sculptor, commercial designer, filmmaker and journalist, William Wauer, who presented a series on the national station titled ‘The Experience of the Artwork’;\textsuperscript{111} Kurt Schwitters, who broadcast on ‘Design (\textit{Gestaltung}) in Painting, Sculpture, Architecture and Typography’\textsuperscript{112} and on the following day read his tone-poem ‘Lautsonate’;\textsuperscript{113} Emmy Hennings, who also read from her poems\textsuperscript{114} and spoke on the subject of her late partner, the Dadaist Hugo Ball;\textsuperscript{115} and Raoul Hausmann, who lectured on ‘The End of the New Objectivity in Visual Art.’\textsuperscript{116}

\textsuperscript{104} With Berlin and Frankfurt, Radio Cologne formed a triumvirate of liberal broadcasters. Between 1926 and 1933 it was directed by Ernst Hardt, who had trained as an actor under Max Reinhardt and was an associate of Brecht’s.

\textsuperscript{105} Westdeutscher Rundfunk, 19 January 1930.

\textsuperscript{106} Westdeutscher Rundfunk, 21 January 1930.

\textsuperscript{107} Westdeutscher Rundfunk, 24 January 1930.

\textsuperscript{108} Ostmarken-Rundfunk, 10 March 1930, 19 March 1930, 24 March 1930, 29 March 1930, 1 April 1930, 4 April 1930, 7 April 1930.

\textsuperscript{109} Südwestdeutscher Rundfunk, 6 January 1930.

\textsuperscript{110} Ostmarken-Rundfunk, 24 November 1930.

\textsuperscript{111} Deutsche Welle, 15 January 1930, 22 January 1930, 7 February 1930, 14 February 1930, 21 February 1930, 28 February 1930.

\textsuperscript{112} Südwestdeutscher Rundfunk, 26 May 1930; repeated on 9 September 1930.

\textsuperscript{113} Südwestdeutscher Rundfunk, 27 May 1930.

\textsuperscript{114} Südwestdeutscher Rundfunk, 8 June 1930.
This impressive list, which is by no means complete, may give a somewhat one-sided impression of broadcasting in 1930. Many other voices were audible, for example, the radically conservative writer Ernst Jünger read from his works on Frankfurt Radio, and on the same night that Benjamin broadcast on Berlin children’s hour, a Dr. J. Wagenbach spoke on the nationalist topic of ‘Volk and Soil [Boden].’ There was also a variety of voices speaking on the topic of art history: for example, traditional connoisseurship continued to be broadcast, as in the case of a talk by a Professor Count Valentin Suboff on ‘Conservation and Art Collections’. Plurality was by this point thriving on the airwaves, albeit within carefully defined limits (as mentioned earlier, members of the KPD were still banned from speaking).

Apart from a plurality of voices, a new discursive tendency arose in radio. As a contemporary observer wrote:

Schoen ascribes a particular importance to discussion before the microphone. With this he doesn’t just aim to break up the dead form of the lecture, but also to illuminate real problems, uncut by any censor and taken from all points of the political compass … Assent and dissent are the same to him, if only the listener will occupy himself with the radio and its programmes, grapple with it, and allow it to guide him through debates. The listener should reflect and not just listen; should take part, and not just let these things wash over him.

115 Westdeutscher Rundfunk 21.4.30.
116 Südwestdeutscher Rundfunk, 15 September 1930.
117 Südwestdeutscher Rundfunk, 24 February 1930.
118 Funk-Stunde Berlin, 14 April 1930.
119 Funk-Stunde Berlin, 10 July 1930.
Schoen’s dialogic broadcasting seems to offer a solution to the limitation that so many critics had perceived in radio: its monologous, didactic tendency. Liberalisation brought the opportunity for unscripted debate to be aired for the first time, an extremely controversial development. By performing discourse within the medium, the new breed of programmer hoped to engage the listener and to convert the acroamatic machine into a catalyst for critical thought. Likewise, Benjamin’s collage broadcasts, which incorporated material from many disparate sources, was – as Sabine Schiller-Lerg pointed out – a means of performing an internal dialogue in the medium.

But was this really very different from the letter page in the bourgeois press, or the masthead of Die Gartenlaube: a merely symbolic enfoldment of the dialogue? There is, after all, still no equivalence between audience and medium, which remains a one-way street. Is mediation not still the death of discourse? If, as Negt and Kluge suggest, ‘the only antidotes to the production of the illusory public sphere are the counterproducts of a proletarian public sphere,’ then the total state control of radio in Weimar Germany – and its extraction from the market – seemingly made for a hopeless situation.

Benjamin added a postscript to Schoen’s programme for an anti-Bredovian radio: ‘this will only be achieved via politicisation’. But the politicisation of radio after seven years of acroamatic ‘impartiality’ was neither straightforward nor without risk. A letter from Benjamin to Schoen dated 4 April 1930 lists thirteen related problems, among them ‘trivialisation of radio’, ‘filling crucial ministerial posts with Wilhelmine big-wigs’, ‘corruption in the relationship between press and radio’, ‘internal sabotage of your

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121 A series of discussions aired on the national station, Gedanken zur Zeit, pioneered this trend from November 1927. They were produced by Hans Flesch, Hermann Schubotz of Deutsche Welle, and Fritz Wichert, head of the national station’s cultural advisory board. Discussion of political matters was, however, only permitted after the 1928 elections, and even then a special political oversight board was formed to censor the series.


123 Negt and Kluge, Public Sphere and Experience, p. 80.
work’, and ‘censorship of literary work.’ Tellingly, the article in which this argument was to be published never saw print. Censorship was still rife and radical dissent still forbidden.

In any case, the partial liberalisation of radio – the inclusion of plurality and dialogue within the medium – came too late. The stabilisation period of the Weimar Republic had culminated in the elections of May 1928, and led to the gradual relaxation of broadcasting policy – but at the same time the political and economic situation of Germany had taken a violent turn for the worse. In the wake of the crash, radio license cancellations soared, and the medium became – at least on the receiving end – more than ever a bourgeois technology. Benjamin’s talk on the subject of the Mietskaserne seems to be blithely unconcerned with such political realities. In fact by this point the last post would have been more appropriate than a clarion call for the New Berlin: public investment in new building had already begun to decline by 1927, and after 1929 it collapsed entirely. But despite the approaching catastrophe, Benjamin continued to broadcast art history to children. An examination of one last talk shows why.

The language of things

It was in the context of a talk on the Wilhelmine illustrator Theodor Hosemann (broadcast on Berlin Funkstunde on 14 April 1930) that Benjamin asked the question I posed at the beginning of this chapter: is it not a crazy idea to talk about art on the radio? Avoiding his own question, he goes on to state that he will not describe any

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paintings at all: instead he will tell us how Hosemann came to his art and how people responded to it. These hints at the themes of his talk, the social production of art and its reception, provide a listening guide for the young audience.

To set the scene, Benjamin quotes at length from a letter in which Hosemann describes his impoverished childhood in post-Napoleonic Düsseldorf. Benjamin notes that the many poor families depicted in Hosemann’s prints may have been inspired by these early experiences (here Benjamin digresses to observe that the sentimental stories that Hosemann was commissioned to illustrate were rather one-sided: on occasion, he says, the well-behaved children in the pictures doubtless put pepper in their teacher’s pipe) [fig. 92]. Next Benjamin describes Hosemann’s apprenticeship in the lithographic firm of Winckelmann, for which the artist worked his entire life. When Winckelmann moved his operations to Berlin Hosemann went with him, and soon, says Benjamin, ‘through keen observation and attentive study of Berlin life he came closer than anyone else to his time.’

Benjamin thus describes Hosemann as a Baudelairean painter of modern life, but one whose career was intimately entwined with a new medium for the technical reproduction of art. ‘His art came well and truly out of craft [Handwerk]. He imbued his work with no lofty ideas or real artistic development, other than his ever-increasing skill.’ Nevertheless, his precision and dexterity produced a multifarious portrait of Berlin, as broad in range as August Sander’s photographic studies of Weimar types. But despite his evident love for the city, Berliners received his work with ingratitude.

Hosemann’s work wasn’t distinguished or high-minded enough for them. He didn’t concern himself with the question of artistic genres, with the strict separation of history painting and every-day scenes. ‘At that time Berliners exercised themselves over such stuff … But – thank God – there were others. The people [Volk] and the children. Those for whom he worked.’

Through his love for the Volk and for the Berliners in particular, he met the ‘discoverer’ of the Berlin Volk and dialect, the satirist Adolf Glaßbrenner. The first fruit of their collaboration was published in 1834: a volume in the series Berlin as it is – and Drinks. Benjamin compares this publication, and numerous similar ones with titles such as Colourful Berlin, Jolly Soldier Pictures, and Berlin Gossip, to the illustrated magazines of his day, but, he notes, there was something specifically of their time about these books. They belonged to the Vormärz, the years between the war of liberation against Napoleon and the March revolution of 1848 when, despite earlier promises of liberalisation, an extreme reaction set in. In this climate of strict censorship satirical cartoons were banned, and writers had to find indirect means to express themselves if they wished to avoid the attention of the police.

The same went for Glaßbrenner, who harboured revolutionary beliefs: ‘We are divided,’ he wrote, ‘from the greater part of the Volk by our eccentric customs and education, by our money, language and clothing. But unless we reunite ourselves with the Volk, unless we become their equals, there will be no freedom.’

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ideas Glaßbrenner created his famous types, such as no-good Nante who represented the Berlin proletariat, and the rentier Buffay, who when the chips were down turned out to think no differently from his social opposite [fig. 93]. As in art so in life, Benjamin adds: in 1848 Nante and Buffay were to meet before the Berlin palace.

Benjamin’s interest in Hosemann is motivated by four aspects of this topic. One, he is a pioneer of techniques of mechanical reproduction whose media practice anticipates the *Illustrierte* of the Weimar period. Two, he is an illustrator of children’s books, which Benjamin assiduously collected (and the significance of which to Benjamin’s epistemology I shall consider below). Three, he was ‘closer to his time than any other’, a painter of modern life who created a typology of Berlin classes that anticipates August Sander’s work. Four, although he was personally somewhat ‘creepingly conformist’, his work with Glaßbrenner – like the dialect of no-good Nante – was a manifestation of resistance to the *Vormärz*.

The parallels to the contemporary situation, as the Weimar Republic petrified into dictatorship, were painfully apparent. This discussion of historical censorship was therefore highly apposite, not least because its medium itself was, despite liberalisation in places such as Berlin and Frankfurt, still very strictly controlled by the central government. And Glaßbrenner’s interest in reaching a mass audience was certainly shared by Benjamin – although he harboured no illusions about the simplicity of this process: ‘the solidarity of the specialist with the proletariat … can only be a mediated one.’ This must begin with an *Umfunktionierung* of the channel of mediation ‘to adapt this [productive] apparatus to the purposes of the proletarian revolution.’

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Had he, in radio, found his medium? The economic circumscription of radio’s audience, and the intransigence of radio as an institution in the face of Benjamin and Schoen’s project suggest otherwise – Brecht’s utopian programme notwithstanding. Furthermore, the abstraction of radio from the means of production fundamentally denied the identification of ‘the author as producer’ Benjamin belatedly proposed in 1934. As Baudrillard acidly observed, the left’s programme for technologically refashioned media was ever quixotic. But Benjamin was not addressing the Volk in these talks, nor the proletariat.

‘To conclude,’ Benjamin says, ‘I won’t describe one of Hosemann’s pictures; instead I shall read an excerpt from a court case against no-good Nante.’ In the following (untranslatable) dialogue between Nante and the judge, Glaßbrenner demonstrates – to comic effect – that the Berlin dialect is incomprehensible to authority. After several misunderstandings, the judge cuts Nante’s baffling reply short with the words ‘Very sad, but I haven’t the time to listen to your story. You may go.’ Michael Warner, writing on Publics and Counterpublics, incisively demands of Habermas’s neo-Kantian ideal type: whose reason? In Glaßbrenner’s tale the no-man’s land of incommensurability between two discourse systems is shown to be a refuge from domination. Everyday language – a counterpublic conducted in its own code – is thus a site of potential resistance.

‘Here,’ Benjamin admits at the end of his talk, ‘I have given you the speaking Nante instead of the drawn one. But it doesn’t matter if today Hosemann has crept behind Glaßbrenner, because one day we will hear more from Glaßbrenner, and then

132 Baudrillard, ‘Requiem for the Media.’
133 Warner, Publics and Counterpublics, p. 51.
Hosemann will reemerge from behind him.¹³⁴ Benjamin prepares his listeners for the worst, which was rapidly and perceptibly approaching. If we go back to his opening question – ‘isn’t it a crazy idea to talk about a painter on the radio?’ – this is the answer he supplies: soon we won’t be able to talk about such things directly, and we will have to return to Glaßbrenner’s circumlocution. (Indeed, his radio talk proves that this was already the case.) And then Hosemann will creep out from behind Glaßbrenner – the image will emerge from behind the word.¹³⁵

Benjamin had written on this subject many years earlier:

The language of sculpture or painting is founded on certain kind of thing-languages … in them we find a translation of the language of things into an infinitely higher language, which may still be of the same sphere. We are concerned here with nameless, nonacoustic languages, languages issuing from matter.¹³⁶

His speech circumvents ekphrasis because things can speak for themselves. Indeed, as his talk on the Tay Bridge demonstrated, language is often inadequate to the object: very often, in fact, compromised by dominant codes. When these codes become too strong – or when censorship and oppression become too great – resistance must become pre-verbal. That is when the image returns. But how do we read such material

¹³⁵ Frazer S. Clark notes that Glaßbrenner had performed a similar operation. Cartoons were strictly censored in the Vormärz period, and so Hosemann’s contribution to Berlin wie es ist – und trinkt were quite innocuous. One of these pictures shows a Guckkästner, an itinerant showman who used a kind of portable magic lantern housed in a box, the images of which were viewed through peepholes. This figure, which recurs frequently in Glaßbrenner’s work, allowed the latter to describe the satirical cartoons that are only visible within the Guckkästner’s box – a strategy that managed to evade the censor’s notice for a while by remediating the satirical image in words. It is interesting to compare the employment of visual technology in Glaßbrenner’s work to the rejection of the same in the work of conservative writers such as Justus Möser and Heidegger. Clark, Zerrbild und Zeitgeist, pp. 195–206.
languages? Certainly not – and here Kittler agrees once more with Benjamin – with the hermeneutic interpretative methods of classical German scholarship.

In 1933 Benjamin expanded on his idea, first explored in 1916’s ‘On Language as Such and on the Language of Man’, of the ‘mimetic faculty’: a pre-verbal mode of cognition in which the body approximates the world. His return to this concept at this late stage suggests that the idea had taken on a new relevance. Indeed mimesis circumvents languages encoded by certain power systems – their common sense – and proffers hope in a world after resistant languages have been snuffed out. This process was now being fulfilled by what Victor Klemperer called *Lingua Tertii Imperii*, the totalising vocabulary of the Third Reich. The transvaluation of the word-image bond required by mimesis will open new channels of communication, and new modes of resistance. But the language of things is not accessible to all.

When Benjamin says ‘thank God, there were others: the Volk and the children,’ of Hosemann’s rejection by a bourgeois audience, he goes some way to explaining why he is talking on the children’s hour. Although the radio could not reach the Volk, prohibitively priced as it was, he could reach children, and he saw children as a potentially revolutionary group. In his unpublished ‘Programme for a Proletarian Children’s Theatre,’ written with the communist dramatist Asja Lacis in 1928, he described the importance of the education of children, the latter being ‘the most powerful, yet also the most dangerous’ force for nascent proletarian movements.¹³⁷

He had epistemological reasons too, for his choice of audience. Benjamin’s orientation towards children can be seen as the last in a long line of attempts to identify a group

¹³⁷ Walter Benjamin, ‘Program for a Proletarian Children’s Theater’, *Selected Writings* II.1, pp. 201–06 (p. 201).
with privileged access to truth based on their social constitution. Hegel’s universal estate of bureaucrats and scholars is one manifestation of this strategy, and Marx’s identification of the proletariat as the revolutionary class can be understood as a reaction against Hegel’s anachronistic adherence to the estate system. Marx’s theory poses the problem, however, of how the proletariat can come to revolutionary consciousness in the face of pervasive bourgeois ideology. Benjamin’s contemporary Lukács suggested the most original answer to this question: only the proletariat – by virtue of their own entanglement in the network of production – have access to unreified consciousness. 

Karl Mannheim responded to his friend Lukács’s theory by borrowing Alfred Weber’s idea of the ‘free-floating intellectual’. Weber had reidentified the scholar, with whom we began our mini-history of class-consciousness, as the privileged consciousness of the present. But for Weber the scholar had to be unaffiliated: the ideological conformity of Hegel’s universal estate with the state left no scope for true universality.

Mannheim adopted Weber’s free-floating intellectual but gave it an economic basis adapted from the work of Lukács. The scholar (as Benjamin was only too well aware) had lost his earlier social status. No longer the well-remunerated servant of the Hegelian state, the proletarianised free floating intellectual now lived from hand to mouth. But with potential penury came potential freedom of affiliation, and furthermore, proletarianisation brought unreified consciousness. Benjamin was just such a ‘free floating intellectual’, but if he wished to engage with the proletariat the radio was not his medium. As we have seen, the radio was structurally exempted from the network of production inhabited by the proletariat, thereby denying that privileged understanding that Lukács had theorised – and in any case, few workers could afford to tune in.

95. Theodor Hosemann, Armut im Vormärz (detail), 1840, lithograph.
Instead, Benjamin – by expanding the concept of production to encompass ‘play’ – was able to identify another social group with unreified consciousness: children. In 1933 he observed that ‘Children’s play is everywhere permeated by mimetic modes of behaviour … The child plays at being not only a shopkeeper but also a windmill and a train. Of what use to him is this schooling of his mimetic faculty?’\textsuperscript{138} His radio audience was this privileged band of mimics, who could play at being trains, and – why not? – collapsing railway bridges. Children, with their unreified consciousness, are capable of recognising the ‘nonsensuous similarity that establishes the ties not only between the spoken and the signified but also between the written and the signified, and equally between the spoken and the written.’\textsuperscript{139}

Indeed radio, when considered in its intermedial context, is a perfect medium for the demonstration of these equivalences, as Benjamin’s article on ‘Graphology Old and New’, published in the Süddeutsche Rundfunk-Zeitung in 1930, shows [fig. 94]. Here all the stages of literacy are brought together in a diagrammatic array. Script is enfolded by type, and the two are enfolded in secondary orality, which – related to the printed text but nonidentical with the same – spills out from the loudspeaker, surrounding listener and text. Paradoxically it is the very \textit{invisibility} of the medium of radio that, in the simultaneous montage of media, lays the ground for post-hermeneutic reading of the visual, which depends on an insight into non-sensuous similarity: the word as image, as \textit{thing}.

Unreified consciousness permits not only a certain mode of mimetic cognition, but also a specialised means of production (an expansion of the traditional Marxist category that

\textsuperscript{138} Benjamin, ‘On the Mimetic Faculty’, \textit{Selected Writings} II.II, pp. 720–22 (p. 720).
\textsuperscript{139} Benjamin, ‘On the Mimetic Faculty’, p. 722.
would later be developed by Negt and Kluge). Writing on ‘Old Forgotten Children’s Books’ in 1924, Benjamin noted that:

Children are particularly fond of haunting any site where things are being visibly worked on. They are irresistibly drawn by the detritus generated by building, gardening, housework, tailoring, or carpentry. In waste products they recognize the face that the world of things turns directly and solely to them. In using these things, they do not so much imitate the works of adults as bring together, in the artifact produced in play, materials of widely differing kinds in a new, intuitive relationship [fig. 95].

Benjamin shares children’s affinity for the waste products of construction processes – in fact his radio talks, like much of his work, are built from waste products of the culture industry of the previous century: old letters from forgotten artists, photographs of collapsed bridges, and comic dialogues seventy years old.

This bricolage technique is thus revealed as an attempt to touch his listeners by appropriating their means of production, and to demonstrate the applications of this bricolage in the political life-world: as he wrote in his ‘Programme for a Proletarian Children’s Theater,’ ‘the task of the leader is to release children’s signals from the hazardous magical world of sheer fantasy and apply them to materials.’ Children are for Benjamin – to borrow the phrase he used to describe Siegfried Kracauer – *ragpickers*. Their hunting ground is the scrap heap of history, their treasures the waste products of the historical culture industry. Once excreted from the system of objects, things lose their aura and reveal instead ‘the revolutionary energies that appear in the outmoded’, becoming candidates for *Umfunktionierung* and recombination.

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140 Negt and Kluge take up this expansion of the category of production. *Public Sphere and Experience*, p. xliii.
142 Benjamin, ‘Program for a Proletarian Children’s Theater’, p. 204.
Benjamin’s audience of rag pickers is unlike Kracauer, however, in one important respect: it works not at the dawn of revolution but as the sun sets over the ruins of the Weimar Republic. It is hard to avoid the impression that Benjamin’s theoretical response to the crisis of the Weimar Republic was fatally belated. His most highly developed analyses of this phenomenon in the realm of the aesthetic, 1934’s ‘The Author as Producer’ and the Artwork essay (various versions, 1935-9), were both written in exile. By this time his return to the concept of the expert was anachronistic. But, as the ‘Theses on Feuerbach’ suggest, praxis precedes theory. We cannot seize the moment with theory, only with the eye, the hand – the voice. Benjamin’s radio activity was punctually auf die Minute – regardless of his own later judgment. His Parisian writings were a post facto justification of this activity, composed when he had time for theory. Meanwhile the expert audience of his discourse, those mimetic rag pickers, had become the children of the Third Reich. Perhaps the owl of Minerva spreads its wings only at dusk: but after the systematic demolition of German Kultur, a new potential for the reconfiguration of its fragments might emerge in the hands of these Trümmerkinder [fig. 96].
97. A worker family listens to the *Volksempfänger*, c.1933–45, Bundesarchiv/146-1978-056-04A.
98. Paul Padua, *Der Führer spricht*, 1939, oil on canvas, 2070 x 1810 mm.
99. ‘All Germany hears the Führer with the People’s Receiver’, 1936.

100. ‘Radio Everywhere!’, 1935.
101. Radio producer Hans Flesch (second from right) in Oranienburg Concentration Camp, 1933, Bundesarchiv/183-R88978.

102. Warning pasted on the Volksempfänger (‘Think about it: Listening to foreign stations is a crime against the national security of our people. It is punishable by a lengthy prison sentence, by order of the Führer’), c.1939–45, Gedenkstätte Deutscher Widerstand, Berlin.
103. ‘Decree of Extraordinary Radio Measures, 1 September 1939. In modern warfare, the combatants fight not only with military weapons, but also with means that can influence and wear down the Volk psychologically. One such means is radio...’.
The voice of the father

*It matters little through which sense I realize that in the dark I have blundered into a pig-sty.*

– Erich von Hornbostel, ‘On the Unity of the Senses’ (1927)

Benjamin’s audience did not disappear when his voice fell silent. Instead, other voices addressed it – other voices with an equal appreciation of the importance of youth. A photograph sets the scene [fig. 97]. A proletarian family sits listening to the *Volksempfänger* in the corner. As in the masthead of *Die Gartenlaube*, the father turns the pages of a magazine, but now the pages are filled with images, not words: photographs of Hitler, Göring, and Goebbels greeting children. These images tell us whose voice is speaking to the family through the loudspeaker, taking the place of the father in the garden bower – and thanks to the Nazi policy of *Gleichschaltung*, the enforcement of ideological conformity in all aspects of life, there is no possibility of a productive interruption: there can be no montage when all elements are identical. Instead of reading from the magazine the father sits in silence, as do his children who are lined up next to the radio like sparrows on a wire. The mother no longer has to help them to the word: she sits knitting instead, casting a satisfied gaze over her brood.

Although the headphones of the earlier paintings have been replaced by the loudspeaker, discourse is still absent, and – unlike in the garden bower – there is no longer any need to pretend. The public has been united in silence by the voice of the Führer. A contemporary painting demonstrates that this arrangement was part of the official iconography of the period – and that radio continued to remediate the image, even at its most atavistically pre-mechanical [fig. 98].

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144 Erich von Hornbostel, ‘The Unity of the Senses’, *Psyche* 7, no. 28 (1927), 83–89 (p. 83).
Weimar’s strictly controlled radio network was like manna to the National Socialists [figs. 99, 100]. Goebbels took broadcasting under his control and the independence of regional companies was quashed. Advocates of plurality were eliminated in the Rundfunkprozess (radio trial) of 1934, during which Ernst Schoen and his erstwhile boss Hans Flesch were incarcerated in Oranienberg concentration camp [fig. 101]. As well as unifying radio’s output the Nazis subsidised the production of cheap radio sets, creating a truly mass medium for the first time.

The Volksempfänger, already on sale in August 1933, was designed to make tuning into unofficial stations more difficult – they were less sensitive than existing models, lacked shortwave bands, and did not have conventional markings on their dials. When war broke out the regional stations were eliminated, listening to foreign stations was made a crime, and dire warnings to this effect were printed on receivers themselves [figs. 102, 103]. The entire nation was finally united as one undifferentiated public. The realisation of Hegel’s ideological machine, it was also the realisation of the ideal of German radio’s founders: a nation incorporated into one body by the acroamatic voice. In this extreme formulation it reveals the exclusionary logic of the Kantian bourgeois public, the borders of which become the fences of concentration camps.145

An examination of radio listings for 1933 reveals – unsurprisingly – that the complexion of programming had changed fundamentally since 1930. What may surprise, however, is the comprehensiveness and rapidity of this change, even before the Rundfunkprozess began. There is a new and stifling obsession with race, nation, and eugenics, and a complete elimination of competing voices. Over two days alone in December the

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145 Habermas claims that the fascist public was only a pseudo-public, since it was ‘post-literary’: a judgment convincingly contested by Andrew Hewitt, Fascist Modernism: Aesthetics, Politics, and the Avant-Garde (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1993), pp. 177–81.
following lectures were aired: ‘Sterilisation? A Radio Conversation;’¹⁴⁶ ‘Sport and Race;’¹⁴⁷ ‘Gobineau as Precursor of Today’s Racial Movement;’¹⁴⁸ ‘The Jews and their “Morality”;’¹⁴⁹ and perhaps most disturbingly, a programme for children titled ‘Blood and Honour: an Outline of our New Mentality’; like Benjamin, the Nazis identified the young as an essential constituency.¹⁵⁰

Almost exactly the same proportion of airtime was devoted to the discussion of art as in 1930, but these programmes also took on a new ideological uniformity. Although there was certainly a preoccupation with German art before the Machtergreifung, this now assumes a specific political orientation: for example, the Nazi architect Kurt Frick spoke on ‘Technology in the service of the New Germany’;¹⁵¹ the architecture critic Karl Vogel spoke on ‘National Socialist Architecture’;¹⁵² and others lectured on ‘The New Building Style, the Style of the Third Reich’;¹⁵³ ‘Cultural Politics in the Third Reich’;¹⁵⁴ and ‘National Socialist Art and Art Politics’.¹⁵⁵ There were also live broadcasts from the ‘Day of German Art’ in Munich.¹⁵⁶

Presaging the events of 1939, there were no fewer than five broadcasts on the topic of Veit Stoß, a Nuremberg-born sculptor who worked primarily in Poland. Although these were planned to coincide with the anniversary of Stoß’s death, there is no doubt that another agenda is at work here: one is titled, for example, ‘Forgotten Germans: Veit

¹⁴⁶ Funk-Stunde Berlin, 15 December 1933.
¹⁴⁷ Deutsche Welle, 15 December 1933.
¹⁴⁸ Süddeutscher Rundfunk, 14 December 1933.
¹⁴⁹ Mitteldeutscher Rundfunk, 14 December 1933.
¹⁵⁰ Deutsche Welle, 14 December 1933.
¹⁵¹ Ostmarken-Rundfunk, 23 May 1933.
¹⁵² Westdeutscher Rundfunk, 12 September 1933.
¹⁵³ Süddeutscher Rundfunk, 8 October 1933.
¹⁵⁴ Mitteldeutscher Rundfunk, 17 October 1933.
¹⁵⁵ Deutsche Stunde in Bayern, 30 May 1933.
¹⁵⁶ Deutsche Stunde in Bayern 7 October 1933 and 14 October 1933.
Stoß, a Nuremberg Woodcarver in the Polish Capital,157 another simply, ‘Veit Stoß, a German Artist’.158 More talks, titled ‘Folk Art in the Siebenbürgen’159 and ‘Daniel Chodowiecki, an East German Illustrator in the Time of Frederic the Great’,160 confirm that there is a prevailing interest in the Germanness of Eastern Europe. The title of the talk on Chodowiecki is particularly telling, since Chodowiecki was not happy with his ‘East Germanness’: though he lived in Berlin most of his life he considered himself very much a Pole, and lamented the partition of Poland that occurred in his lifetime.

This preoccupation corresponded to the academic movement that preceded the invasion of Poland, the Ostforschung (eastern research) by sociologists, anthropologists, and historians used to justify the beginning of the war and the ethnic cleansing of annexed countries.161 Historians of art also played an important role in Ostforschung, for example by drawing up lists of art to be looted after the invasion of various states.162 The works of Veit Stoß featured prominently on such documents – indeed, the Nuremberg-born artist was a bee in the bonnet of many Nationalist historians who lamented the fact that most of his works were in Poland.163 The famous Stoß altarpiece from St Mary’s in Krakow was, despite having been dismantled and hidden in the

157 Funk-Stunde Berlin, 3 May 1933.
158 Deutsche Stunde in Bayern, 9 June 1933.
159 Deutsche Welle, 4 September 1933.
160 Ostmarken-Rundfunk, 2 November 1933.
cathedral at Sandomierz, found by the Germans and shipped back to Berlin very shortly after the invasion.

**Transmission**

One young radio listener recalled the experience of tuning in during these years:

> I remember clearly that when I was a boy, certainly in the forties (and thus during the war), I heard a speech of my father’s on the radio – to be sure, I don’t recall the speech’s contents; only that his voice, which differed in certain respects from the familiar sound, disconcerted and interested me.\(^{164}\)

The strange voice belonged to the art historian Wilhelm Pinder. We have come across Pinder in the previous two chapters, first as an author of photobooks and secondly as a writer on art-historical film. It should come as little surprise, then, to find that he also engaged with the medium of radio.

In Pinder’s *Nachlass*, recently donated to the Berlin-Brandenburgische Akademie der Wissenschaften, there are notes for a radio lecture titled *Ausstrahlung(en) der deutschen Kunst*, the ‘transmission(s)’ or ‘broadcast(s) of German art’ [fig. 104]. The theme was a favourite of Pinder’s: he gave similarly named talks on several occasions,\(^{165}\) and co-edited a series of books with the same title.\(^{166}\) The word *Ausstrahlung* is ambiguous, suggesting both a radio transmission and the diffusion of an idea or tradition. It is also a

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\(^{166}\) Jutta Held, ‘Kunstgeschichte im “Dritten Reich”. Wilhelm Pinder und Hans Jantzen an der Münchner Universität’, in *Kunstgeschichte an den Universitäten im*
104. Notes for Pinder’s *Ausstrahlung* talk, c.1940, Berlin-Brandenburgische Akademie der Wissenschaften.
word that Benjamin frequently used in conjunction with his concept of the aura, in the sense of ‘emanation’ or ‘radiation’: it is possible that Pinder, like Benjamin, derived the word from the work of Ludwig Klages, erstwhile member of the George Kreis.167

Pinder’s script is as tantalising as its title: it is more image than text. Reading this image requires a certain kind of cognition – not Benjaminian mimesis, however, but what Gombrich called ‘making and matching.’ The context in which Gombrich hit on this method is strangely apposite. In a martial origin myth to gladden Kittler’s heart, Gombrich writes:

I was employed for six years by the British Broadcasting Corporation in their ‘Monitoring Service’, or listening post, where we kept constant watch on radio transmissions from friend and foe. It was in this context that the importance of guided projection in our understanding of symbolic material was brought home to me. Some of the transmissions which interested us most were barely audible, and it became quite an art, or even a sport, to interpret the few whiffs of speech sound that were all we really had on the wax cylinders on which these broadcasts had been recorded. It was then we learned to what an extent our knowledge and expectations influence our hearing. You had to know what might be said in order to hear what was said.168

(Intriguingly, Rudolf Arnheim – the other neo-Kantian perceptual psychologist of art – was also employed by the BBC in a similar capacity during the war: perhaps their professional skills made them peculiarly attractive to the War Office; doubtless their politics even more so). As Gombrich notes, when using a pre-established schema as a framework for interpretation ‘The problem then was a twofold one – to think of possibilities and to retain one’s critical faculty.’169 Pinder’s talk is, as we will see, itself

169 Gombrich, Art and Illusion, p. 171.
an exercise in ‘making and matching’ – but the extent to which he satisfied Gombrich’s second condition is open to question.

Certain proper names emerge repeatedly from the confused strokes of Pinder’s text-image, such as those of Veit Stoß, Albrecht Dürer, and other ‘German’ artists of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Early in the text there is a discussion of European nations and the word ‘borders’ recurs again and again. Then Pinder moves on to the topic of the expansion of the German tribes into Eastern Europe in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, their migration into Hungary and the establishment of the Siebenbürgen settlements. Next he focuses on Poland, and the contribution of German artists and architects to that country. Names such as Veit Stoß and Hans Dürer, brother of Albrecht, and Johann Halle, who introduced printing to Poland, are mentioned. The subsequent discussion is apparently very wide-ranging, covering (among other topics) Kiev, Moscow, the German architect Peter Parler, builder of the cathedral of St Vitus and the Charles Bridge in Prague, and the sculptor Bernt Notke, who worked in northern Europe. In conclusion Pinder adds some comments linking his talk to concerns of the present. These include the observation that ‘art is always a part of life, German art a part of German life’, and concern an ‘organisierte Völkerwanderung’ (organized migration) and the ‘borders of Poland’.

His enclosure of the words organisierte Völkerwanderung within quotation marks alerts us to the status of this phrase, a prime example of Lingua Tertii Imperii (Klemperer notes that both ‘organisieren’ and, of course, ‘Volk’ are recurring features of National Socialist rhetoric). Like Benjamin’s adoption of Neues Bauen phraseology, this identifies the speaker with an established discourse on art and architecture. Pinder’s

Ausstrahlung lecture – broadcast sometime in the early 1940s – provides a post factum justification for eastward expansion in its claims regarding the benefits that German culture have bestowed on Europe, and therefore the Germanness of other European countries. Other art historians published similar texts at the time, amongst them Erich Bachmann and Dagobert Frey. In Thomas DaCosta Kaufmann’s words, ‘As the Wehrmacht rolled eastwards, Germanic art history moved with it.’

Frey edited a series of books on German art in the east that included a 1944 volume by Gustav Barthel on Die Ausstrahlungen der Kunst des Veit Stoss im Osten, and Frey and Barthel were directly involved in the looting of Polish artworks and the destruction of Warsaw Castle, for which Jewish slave labour was employed [fig. 105].

Pinder’s talk is an example of Kunstgeographie, a recently developed branch of German art history of which he was a pioneer. But in this talk, and in the other examples cited above, the terms of conventional Kunstgeographie are reversed: instead of geography determining artistic style, the artwork determines geography. In the process, it homogenises space. Pinder’s speech was thus an attempt to undo his theory of 1926, which had radicalised difference. As such it was not unique in his oeuvre: when it was broadcast, the third part of his four volume opus Vom Wesen und Werden deutscher Formen had just been published. The introduction to the first volume, published in 1935, makes similar claims about the Germanness of eastern European and Scandinavian art.

171 DaCosta Kaufmann, Toward a Geography of Art, p. 86.
172 For an extensive discussion of Kunstgeographie, see DaKosta Kaufmann, Toward a Geography of Art, pp. 68–88.
105. Gustav Barthel, *Die Ausstrahlungen der Kunst des Veit Stoss im Osten* (Munich, 1944). Note the Stoss-like figure of Prometheus being attacked by vultures – or are they Russian eagles?
Indeed, Pinder’s media practice is itself a means to synchronise the asynchronous: radio (even more, now that it has been *Gleichgeschaltet*) propagates universal, identical time. It is also a means to collocate the dislocated: just as German expansion had reintegrated the fragmented ‘Germanic’ nations surrounding its modern borders, the radio Reich reached out to Germans across an expanding sector of Europe – but in Nazi-occupied Poland the indigenous population were forbidden to own receivers altogether, thus revealing once more the exclusionary logic of the public. Pinder depended on an illusion created in the minds of his listeners: that the artworks mentioned in his speech were, no matter where, united by their Germanness, and thus united the lands in which they stood. Like Benjamin’s radio talks, his speech montages disparate elements, but unlike Benjamin he papers over the cracks to create an illusion of wholeness. The act of montage is performed by the speaker rather than the audience, who are to remain an uncritical, undifferentiated mass. What chance did Benjamin’s erstwhile listeners have in the face of this relentlessly unifying logic?

**Conclusion: *Trümmerkinder***

> From next door the radio voice penetrated once again, now with shrill clarity, announcing the High Treason Law, providing death by the executioner’s blade for every one of the despicable creatures, it said, that earned their filthy blood money through espionage and sabotage.

> – Peter Weiss, *The Aesthetics of Resistance*  

Earlier I described Benjamin’s radio work as a recapitulation of the phylogeny of communication – from original orality, via script, to secondary orality. Now the process goes into reverse. As Klemperer observes, in the Third Reich all language aspires to the condition of oratory – and, one might add, the image acquires a similarly hectoring

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quality.\textsuperscript{174} Primary orality also returns in the remnants of an oppositional public that survived around the discussion of art, a phenomenon that Peter Weiss attempted to recreate in his novel \textit{The Aesthetics of Resistance}.

This was of necessity an unmediated, pre-scriptural public. Art criticism was banned outright by Goebbels, and resistance cells were invariably destroyed whenever they sought mediation, whether by mimeographed fliers or covert radio transmissions. (The protagonist of Weiss’s book, Hans Coppi, was a radio operator for the group led by Harro Schulze-Boysen. He was executed in Berlin on 22 December 1942.) So instead, the youths met on the steps of the Pergamon Altar to secretly discuss ancient art:

A gigantic wrestling, emerging from the grey wall, recalling a perfection, sinking back into formlessness. A hand, stretching from the rough ground, ready to clutch, attached to the shoulder across empty surface, a barked face, with yawning cracks, a wide-open mouth, blankly gaping, the face surrounded by the flowing locks of the beard, the tempestuous folds of a garment, everything close to its weathered end and close to its origin [fig. 106].\textsuperscript{175}

The young revolutionaries’ (were these former members of Benjamin’s audience?) discussion of ‘these only-just-created, already-dying faces’ evinces something like mimetic consciousness:

Historic events appeared in mythical disguise, enormously palpable, arousing terror, admiration, yet not understandable as man-made, but endurable only as a more-than-personal power that wanted enthralled, enslaved people galore, though few at the top … The initiates, the specialists talked about art, praising the harmony of movement, the coordination of gestures; the others, however, who were not even familiar with the concept of ‘cultured’, stared furtively into the gaping maws, felt the swoop of the paw in their own flesh.\textsuperscript{176}

The subject of their discourse encourages a reading through Riegl’s optic/haptic split. The submersion of the individual figure beneath the grey stone enacts the sinking of meaning into heroic history, of person into mass, of person into \textit{thing}. This occurs most

\textsuperscript{174} Klemperer, p. 22.
\textsuperscript{175} Weiss, \textit{Aesthetics of Resistance}, p. 3.
\textsuperscript{176} Weiss, \textit{Aesthetics of Resistance}, p. 5.
straightforwardly in the plane of the purely visual. The consciousness that can ‘grasp’ individual actuality, on the other hand, is necessarily unreified. Benjamin’s mimetic consciousness is revealed as a materialist approach to haptic perception.

What Riegl misses, however, here becomes crucial: the bald lacunae, fissures in the surface of the relief, history’s amputations – these are essential to montage. There can be no montage without rupture. Riegl introduces historical discontinuity between modes of perception, but it took Benjamin to illuminate – in his talk on the Tay Bridge disaster, for example – the productive possibilities of disunion for the present moment. 177 His fragmented intermedial assemblages were models of such a strategy. But for the audience-readers of a gleichgeschaltet culture, productive fracture can only be sought in the realm of unmediated experience – specifically, experience of the past, when the simultaneity of the nonsimultaneous reveals the fracture of history and thus a hope, hopefully a productive hope, for future change.

The Pergamon museum was largely destroyed by bombs during the Second World War, and the parts of the altar that had been hidden in the tunnels of Zoo station were captured by the Red Army and taken to the Hermitage. The fragments reconfigured take on a new meaning. Another relief sculpture, Veit Stoß’s altarpiece, was returned to Krakow after the war [fig. 107]. The image, which had been hidden briefly from words, returns for inscription. Weiss’s protagonists did not survive to become Trümmerkinder, however: they were hanged in Plötzensee or shot in faraway Spanish fields. Mimetic consciousness is, after all, a dangerous thing.

177 A reading of Nietzsche’s essay on history seems indicated: a quotation in the ‘Theses on the Philosophy of History’ reveals Benjamin’s familiarity with that work.
107. US soldiers packing looted figures from the Veit Stoss altarpiece from St Mary’s Basilica, Krakow, in order to return them to Poland, 1946.
The book of the film of the book of the film: Naumburg in Kreisverkehr

In 1933, the former Reichskunstwart Edwin Redslob wrote the introduction and captions for a book to accompany Bamberger and Oertel’s film on Naumburg Cathedral that had been released the previous year, Die steinernen Wunder von Naumburg [fig. 108]. In fact, this 1933 book is not simply a remediation of the 1932 film; the latter was in turn a remediation of Walter Hege and Wilhelm Pinder’s 1924 book on Naumburg, which had itself been cinematic in conception. The Kreisverkehr of media spins maddeningly, like the infamous Manoli Cigarettes advertisement in Berlin that inspired the phrase bist du Manoli? (meaning ‘are you mad?’) – or like the fair rides around the church in Victor Schamoni’s film Soest. However, as in Soest, though the fragments of the building whirl powerful forces are exerted to prevent them from disintegrating into incoherence and insignificance.

The transmediations described above did not just transfer structural form and visual motifs, but also authorial roles. On the title page of the Naumburg book, the contents are described as ‘fifty shots taken with the film camera by C. Oertel and R. Bamberger, described and interpreted by Edwin Redslob.’¹ The phrase ‘beschrieben und gedeutet’ is a curious one, subordinating the art historian to a parergon of his own book, and it echoes the role attributed to the authors of the texts in the cathedral series of the Deutscher Kunstverlag, one of which was the Hege/Pinder volume on which the film Die steinernen Wunder von Naumburg was based. The medium draws the art historian into a powerful forcefield, subordinating his historicist logic to the logic of the

photobook – as had also happened to Pinder in his work for Langewiesche. At the same
time, the photobook is subjected to the logic of the film, becoming Buchkinema.

Pinder would later attempt to reassert the mastery of the art historian over his media by
insisting that they obey the logic of the scientific word, essentially subsuming the art
historian into the medium as a disciplinary strategy. But although this was intended as a
counterstrike, it is also the logical culmination of the process we have followed as the
historian was swallowed by the medium: from lecturer before a slide show, to
announcer in front of the movie screen, to announcer incorporated into the film itself as
a silent interpreter of the represented objects through bodily Haltung, to the announcer
as a disembodied voice ventriloquising the architecture. Now, the medium itself
becomes the historian. However, Pinder’s dream of the totally mediated art historian as
a guarantee of scientific integrity largely remained unfulfilled: instead, the obstinacy of
the media prevailed.

In the book Die steinernen Wunder von Naumburg, Redslob takes a different tack in his
attempt to control the signification of the mediated image. Inside the front cover, he
explains the intermedial practice under which the volume operates:

Whatever holds this book in their hand will be astonished and enraptured to
receive artistic impressions of the wonders of Naumburg that they have never
experienced before – nor ever could experience. By optical means, which only
the modern film camera offers with its possibilities of movement and lighting,
hidden beauties are here brought into the light and images arise that have an
almost shocking [erschütternd] effect.
So one of the greatest creations of German art is made newly available for the
people of today: Naumburg’s stone wonder newly discovered and newly seen
with the means of the present – comprehended and explained out of the spirit
and the intentions of the time of its creation.²

² ‘Wer dies Buch zur Hand nimmt, wird erstaunt und entzückt sein, künstlerische
Eindrücke von den Wunderm Naumburgs zu empfangen, wie er sie noch nicht erlebt hat
– auch nicht erleben konnte. Mit optischen Mitteln, die nur die modern Filmkamera mit
ihren Bewegungs- und Beleuchtungsmöglichkeiten bietet, sind hier verborgene
Schönheiten ans Licht gebracht und Bilder entstanden, die geradezu erschütternd
This sets up the double logic of the book: the images are high-tech mediations of the architecture, which make the historic architecture available to the present day. This is a typically Neues Sehen understanding of the power of film, and the bookspace attempts to remediate filmspace by arranging the stills in sequences that replicate the logic of the close up, of the pan, and of the montage.

However, these images will also be erfaßt und erklärt with words from the time of the building’s creation [fig. 109]. As well as quotations from the Bible and literary sources, we are also treated to historicist platitudes. For instance, beneath a close-up of the hand of one of the famous donor portraits we read: ‘All the majesty and tenderness of the early Gothic is expressed in Uta’s hand. The Thuringian Minnesinger Heinrich von Morungen sings: ‘If you would, lead me with your sweet hand high over the battlements from thence.’\(^3\) We thereby grasp the building in a double temporality – or rather, a triple temporality, since these two elements are combined in our own reading experience. However, although this hybrid media practice may sound superficially similar to Walter Benjamin’s collaged radio talks on the Mietskaserne and the Bridge over the River Tay, it is in fact quite different: here the words are conjoined as printed captions to the image, and the space of experience is not open to chance meetings or creative rupture. Instead of using elements from the present to redeem the past, the past – in the form of quotations – is used to discipline the optical ‘means of the present’. And while Benjamin advocated – contra Pinder – that the writer subsume optical media into

\[\text{wirken. So ist also eine der größten Schöpfungen deutscher Kunst für den heutigen Menschen neu erschlossen: Naumburgs steinerne Wunder, mit den Mitteln der Gegenwart neu entdeckt und neu gesehen – erfaßt und erklärt aus dem Geiste und aus den Absichten der Entstehungszeit.' Oertel et al., Die Steinernen Wunder, unpaginated (text inside front cover).}\]

himself, thereby undermining the logic of the text, these words do no such thing, maintaining instead their auratic homogeneity as quotations from the canon.

Both Pinder and Benjamin attempted to employ the media in more productive ways than the historiographic kitsch that prevailed in the mass media of their time. However, Pinder’s wish for a strictly scientific film ran up against the obstinacy of the medium, and as his own book on Naumburg showed, the scrupulous maintenance of a *cordon sanitaire* between experiential image sequences and historicist text within bookspace was a stable-door-closing exercise. The horse had long bolted, as his conception of history reveals; the theory of generations is a radically fragmented view of time that projects his own pessimistic encounter with modernity and its media backwards into the past.

Benjamin’s attempt to remediate language itself by making it photographic was less Canute-like: rather than policing boundaries, or disciplining new media with the logic of the old, he sought to mobilise the hybridity of media in pursuit of a revolutionary practice. However, by the time he formulated this programme theoretically he was in Parisian exile, and what followed was silence. Not total silence: art-historical film, books and radio programmes continued to be made in great numbers, and arguably Benjamin’s demand for a writing remediated by photography was fulfilled, as Pinder’s case reveals – albeit not in the sense he intended. Instead of authors using remediation to blast through the fossilised strata that compromised attempts to write freely, photography’s reactionary employment for reificatory purposes only deepened, and infected writing. The result was a pseudo-photographic doubling of the image, as in Werner Burmeister’s captions for Renger-Patzsch’s book on *Backsteingotik*. 
In general, while conservative writers such as Pinder and Schultze-Naumburg perpetrated a deluded modernisation of history – aiming to critically refunction new media in the service of reaction, they betrayed their own aims – and Benjamin, Behne and Giedion had the opposite experience, in that they attempted to critically refunction recalcitrant media in the service of (to a greater or lesser extent) advance, the abiding tendency was represented by practices like those of Langewiesche and Cürlis, which, though tending to nationalism, were not as conservative as Pinder or Schultze-Naumburg. They can therefore be considered less as reactionary modernists than as nationalist modernists who seized the new media without attempting to refunction them either as reactionary or utopian practices, and in going with the flow were uninhibitedly molded by their own tools.

**Anti-Kulturfilm: the project continues**

*It would be just as pig-headed, and a piece of the cultural conservatism that only benefits the culture industry, to reject the mass media in favour of handmade paper ... if anywhere, it is here that the Brechtian project of ‘Umfunktionierung’ has its place.*

– Adorno on his radio broadcasts in a letter to Hans Magnus Enzensberger, 1962

This was the dominant mode of art-historical media practice of the time, and it was to remain almost unchallenged for thirty years. Hans Cürlis directed films on the regime’s favoured sculptors, Josef Thorak and Arno Breker, during the war, and another titled *Three Masters Carve in Wood* in 1953. Curt Oertel, the director of 1932’s *Die steinernen Wunder von Naumburg* – who had erased his co-director Bamberger’s name after the latter was killed in Auschwitz – also continued to make films on art after the war. His 1938 feature on Michelangelo was re-edited as an English-language film *The Titan* in 1950. It won an Oscar.

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Langewiesche continued issuing many of its pre-war Blauen Bücher relatively unaltered into the late 1960s, including Pinder’s *Deutsche Dome* (Pinder sold over a million books in total for the publisher). After the war Walter Hege was classified as ‘category V: exonerated’, but was not offered any further academic positions. However, his long career in photography did not go unrecognised, and in the 1950s he began to be accorded a great deal of respect. Several of his films were reissued, albeit under new titles – 1934’s *Erlebte Heimat* became 1952’s *Das grüne Herz* – and in the last five years of his life his work was included in fifteen exhibitions and awarded numerous prizes. He continued to contribute to Langewiesche books, including a volume on Naumburg Cathedral in 1949. One image shows the cathedral’s crypt, illuminated as if by a subterranean sun: a closer examination of the print reveals that the cables trailing towards the hidden light source have been carefully painted out [fig. 110].

In 1950, Sedlmayr published his controversial book *The Origin of the Cathedral* with its bizarre concept of the ‘self-lighting wall’: ironically, the cinematic remediation of architecture that had originated in the early 1920s was perpetuated most assiduously by conservatives.

However, in the late 1960s a new self-criticality appeared in art-historical discourse as a younger generation of academics rose to prominence. This change was preceded by work beyond the ossified and only lightly denazified universities. In 1960, Alexander Kluge (b.1932) – who had developed an interest in filmmaking at the suggestion of his friend Adorno – directed his first film, a twelve-minute short titled *Brutalität in Stein*, in collaboration with Peter Schamoni. The latter was the son of Victor Schamoni, the

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director of the film about Cologne Cathedral that had appeared in 1932 only to be recut to a more nationalistic narrative in 1933. The subject of *Brutality in Stone* is the architecture of the National Socialist period, and as such it has been described as an ‘anti-*Kulturfilm* … an act of subversion, analysis and revenge’. It might also, I suggest, be considered a direct act of revenge for the bastardisation of the work of Schamoni *père*, who had died in battle in 1942.

The film opens with a short didactic text:

> Every building bequeathed to us by history testifies to the spirit of its builders and of their time, even if it long ago stopped serving its original purpose. As witnesses preserved in stone, the surviving monuments of the National Socialist Party revive the memory of the epoch that culminated in the most terrible catastrophe in German history.

This ironically reiterates Hitler’s own frequently stated belief that ‘The conclusive expression of the value of every great age is to be found in its building works. When a Volk inwardly experiences great times, they will also give these times outward form. Their word is then a word of stone.’ But in this instance, the testimony is not of greatness, but a Benjaminian document of barbarism. However, as Eike Wenzel has pointed out, this introduction – which would lead one to expect a historicist interpretation of architectural artefacts – is confounded by the following film. Instead of an authoritative hermeneutic exegesis, we are presented with a heterogeneous

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assemblance of temporally divergent elements.\textsuperscript{11}

In the first half of the film, the Zeppelinfeld at Nuremburg – site of Albert Speer’s most famous \textit{Lichtdom} – is represented in a rapid succession of shots. (The twelve-minute film comprises around 200 shots in total, making the medium just as fragmentary as its subject). The first shot shows a deep war-wound in the stone, telling us that we are viewing the building after the catastrophe. Over these contemporaneous images of the ruined architecture, we hear snippets of historical sound interspersed with the laconic, matter-of-fact voiceover. The singing and cheers of a crowd overlay the desolate arena and Hitler’s voice proclaims that ‘only the pettiest of minds can see the life of a revolution in destruction alone. We saw it, on the contrary, in a gigantic effort of construction’ – a sentiment that would not have been out of place in the post-constructivist Weimar avant-garde. The voiceover tells us that we are seeing ‘motifs from the \textit{Parteitagsgelände’}, but these are seen obliquely or partially, and they are not placed in holistic context by any visual or textual logic. Grandeur is reduced to banal particles: cornices, steps, corners [fig. 111].

Then the visual logic changes: rapid montage is replaced by a slow travelling shot down a colonnade, over which we hear ‘reminiscences of the commandant of Auschwitz, Rudolf Höss’ [fig. 112]. The calmly related details of mass murder make for a grotesque contrast to the apparent serenity of the architecture, as the public mask of the regime is forced to speak its hidden truth – but after a while the logic of mechanised killing begins to parallel the relentless succession of column after column. Is this the hermeneutic bond between architecture and culture we have been promised?

Hitler’s observation on constructive revolution is then reiterated. This announces the second half of the film, in which we see ‘Pictures of the Future’: plans for Nazi

\textsuperscript{11} Wenzel, ‘Construction Site Film’, pp. 182–83.
111. *Brutalität in Stein*, dir. by Alexander Kluge and Peter Schamoni (Germany, 1960).

112. *Brutalität in Stein*, dir. by Alexander Kluge and Peter Schamoni (Germany, 1960).
113. *Brutalität in Stein*, dir. by Alexander Kluge and Peter Schamoni (Germany, 1960).

114. *Brutalität in Stein*, dir. by Alexander Kluge and Peter Schamoni (Germany, 1960).
monuments and cities, especially for the rebuilding of Berlin as Reich Capital Germania. But while the voiceover announces an ‘Umgestaltung [reconfiguration] of German cities’, we hear at the same time a sarcastic commentary of air raid sirens and explosions. Over footage of a model of Germania, the voiceover reads from a directive from the Führer of 1942 on the construction of the Reichshaupstadt. This is quickly followed by another directive from 1943 ordering a million dwellings for bombed-out persons. The abjection of the homes decribed – three to four metre square holes in the ground covered by planks – contrasts risibly with the grandiose designs on screen [figs. 113, 114]. Finally, we hear a fanfare, an explosion, and see heaps of ruined stones from Nuremberg. Aesthetically, these fulfill Hitler’s ‘theory’ of ruin value, but this ruined film refuses to allow them to testify to a great past.

The use of incongruent sound to critique the image is strikingly reminiscent of the way that Schamoni père’s film of Cologne Cathedral was subjected to détournement by the same method in 1933. However, in this instance the voice is not unitary and authorial but a collage of fragmentary sounds and voices. The subject of the film is not so much a historical moment as history itself, which exists in a dialectical forcefield between past, present, and future. As such, the film reconnects with the project of the dialectical image initiated by Benjamin, Giedion and Behne in the late 1920s.

As well as looking to the past, Schamoni and Kluge’s film also looked to the future, for it ushered in a new era of German film. In 1962, Kluge and Schamoni would be two of the signatories of the Oberhausen Manifesto, which declared itself against the ‘Daddy’s Cinema’ of the morally compromised older generation, thereby initiating the New German Cinema of which Brutalität in Stein is the first example. This was not merely a repetition of a failed project, however, for Kluge had learned from history:
This new film needs new freedoms. Freedom from the conventions of the established industry. Freedom from the outside influence of commercial partners. Freedom from control by special interest groups.

We have concrete intellectual, formal, and economic ideas regarding the production of the new German film. Together, we are prepared to take economic risks.\textsuperscript{12}

In the same year that this was written, Habermas (another of Adorno’s protégés) published his defense of the bourgeois public, including its mediation via the press. By contrast, Kluge understood that the failure of attempts to refunction bourgeois media during the Weimar Republic could only be combated by radically altering their structure. He therefore lobbied for the funding of films by the government, but while this solved the problem of commercial pressure, it risked film falling into the realm of the acroamatic machine, as radio had in the 1920s. Editorial independence was therefore of the essence.

Kluge also embraced the new media of the time. He later extended his activities to encompass television broadcasting by establishing the Development Company for Television Programmes (dctp) in 1988, which successfully lobbied for the right to broadcast on three of Germany’s commercial channels. The videos made by dctp – which now number in their hundreds – concern the most diverse topics, from the Staufer emperors, to Dada, to ‘The Future of the Milky Way’. Formally, they resemble Kluge’s films in that they collage interviews with stills and stock footage – and thus they follow the model of Benjamin’s radio broadcasts of fifty years earlier. Often appearing late at night between soft porn and reruns of American sitcoms, this results in some strange programming experiences, akin to ‘stumbling on a literary bookshop in the middle of a

red-light district’, as one observer has put it.\textsuperscript{13}

\textbf{From the street to the study: art history in the age of social media}

\textit{Janet: [whispered] Experiment no. 3. Sit in a church and watch the light move across the wall.}

– Janet Cardiff and George Bures Miller, \textit{Villa Medici Walk} (1998)\textsuperscript{14}

Today it might be assumed that such heroic labours as were undertaken by Kluge to ensure the financial and editorial independence of his media practices have been rendered unnecessary by the advent of the \textit{new} new media. In these, more optimistic observers have detected the potential for free self-determination by producers of ‘content’ no longer reliant on media cartels, publishers, or state broadcasters for support – and a concomitant freedom from censorship. Furthermore, this apparent seizure of the means of production raised the hope of a simultaneous bidirectionality, in which the author-as-producer converses with an audience of producers, and the boundary between the audiences and author is thereby eliminated – not in the exclusionary ecstasy of community, but as the final realisation of a mediated public.

However, an examination of digital art-historical practices reveals a generally conservative tendency of remediation – an attempt to discipline the new media’s promiscuity by submitting it to the logic of the scientific word, as Pinder might have put it. Early digital media experiments sought to directly replicate old forms in new, such as the CD ROM \textit{The Art Historian} (1999), which attempted to fulfills Pinder’s dream of the fully-mediated professional by presenting twenty-five narrated slide-shows, from prehistoric art to the present. Arguably, this remediatory programme continues online in


projects such as the *Dictionary of Art Historians* – an invaluable resource, and one that has an advantage over the CD ROM in that it is updateable, but it lacks wiki-style editability, and is thus a mono-directional remediation of textual scholarship. Likewise, the digitization of critical and theoretical texts – often in contravention of copyright law – is creating a vast online library on websites such as *Monoskop*. This is not only of enormous practical value, it also expands the readership beyond those who can afford books or have access to academic libraries, and furthermore, it facilitates new modes of digital humanities, in that everything becomes easily searchable.

Neither of these projects, however, takes advantage of the multimedia capabilities of the web. The online version of Warburg’s Mnemosyne Atlas hosted by Cornell University is a more interesting experiment in this regard, as is Columbia’s *Mapping Gothic France* site [figs. 115, 116]. The latter has a stirringly ambitious mission statement:

> Whereas pictures can be satisfactorily represented in two dimensions on a computer screen, space – especially Gothic space – demands a different approach, one which embraces not only the architectonic volume but also time and narrative. *Mapping Gothic France* builds upon a theoretical framework derived from the work of Henri Lefèbvre [sic] (*The Production of Space*) that seeks to establish linkages between the architectural space of individual buildings, geo-political space, and the social space resulting from the interaction (collaboration and conflict) between multiple agents – builders and users.\(^{15}\)

However, although the information on the site is undoubtedly useful – the revisionist reading of Sedlmayr is particularly interesting – and although it inventively uses mapping software, 3D photographs (to be viewed with special glasses), juxtaposable plans and 360 degree panoramas to fulfill its aim of representing spatial relationships in new ways, one might legitimately wonder about the social space of the representation itself, as experienced by the users of the website.


In fact, all of the above are examples of what might be called art-historical web 1.0, but since the advent of social media – so-called web 2.0 – and smartphones, the new media have acquired a new spatiality, in that they can be carried into space, and a new potential for publicness, in that one may comment on, contribute to, and edit pages. Academic art history generally has yet to catch up with these developments, and there is an obvious reason for this: whereas knowledge production occurring within institutional frameworks that have simply been replicated online have generally encountered little resistance from an epistemological perspective (copyright holders may take a dimmer view, however), in web 2.0 institutional barriers are removed, and in consequence – as Joyce put it in his hypertextual novel – ‘here comes everybody’.

To critics, this will seem too much like Hegel’s negative view of publicness: a realm of opinion where authentic knowledge cannot be produced. And indeed, although thriving non-academic publics have developed around art history online, their merit is debatable. Popular Instagram profiles and Tumblr blogs such as *Fuck Yeah Brutalism* disseminate images of historical buildings to tens of thousands of followers, but comment is usually limited to a simple ‘like’ or ‘share’. However, this is not the limit of online publicness, and Twitter debates around historical architecture (for instance) can be regarded as genuine publics, in which knowledge is disseminated and even produced. As such, they resemble – at least superficially – the public of author-producer experts aspired to by Benjamin.

Taking a broader view of what might constitute historical knowledge, some promising examples of germinal practices are also being developed within the newly mobile new media. These are most evident, perhaps unsurprisingly, in the work of artists. Janet Cardiff and George Bures Miller, for example, use sound and video to create augmented

118. Participants in Janet Cardiff and George Bures Miller’s *Alter Bahnhof Video Walk*, Kassel, Germany, 2012.
experiences of spaces and buildings. In their *Alter Bahnhof Video Walk* of 2012, visitors to Kassel station were given smartphones and headphones, and moved around the station following the instructions spoken by the narrators [fig. 117]. The video that they watched on the phones was shot to synchronise with their movements, but it also incorporates actors staging performances in the building. As a result, the artists say:

An alternate world opens up where reality and fiction meld in a disturbing and uncanny way that has been referred to as ‘physical cinema’. The participants watch things unfold on the small screen but feel the presence of those events deeply because of being situated in the exact location where the footage was shot. As they follow the moving images (and try to frame them as if they were the camera operator) a strange confusion of realities occurs. In this confusion, the past and present conflate.\textsuperscript{16}

It may be objected that this directorial voice is just as imperious Pinder’s ideal art-historical film, but the audience is not constrained by the cinema seat – is perfectly free, in fact, to pause or even resist the instructions of the artists, which thereby reveal their own authoritarian tendency, rather than hiding it by subsuming it beneath the representational strategy. One reviewer explained the experience thus:

The station in the video appeared, at first, to be the same station I was moving through. But it was home to a soundscape that seemed more immediate to me than the noises that reached my ears from the present, one that was populated by ghostly commuters from some unspecified time in the past. Cardiff’s cool, breathy voice was my nearly constant companion, pointing out features of the building’s history, or sharing a dream, or issuing simple instructions. It was a game of sorts to try to follow her, and I was pleased with myself for adjusting so smoothly. It wasn’t until I found myself ducking to avoid someone approaching on-screen that I realized how unmoored I had become.\textsuperscript{17}

The media practice does not envelop the viewer by creating a seamless representation: quite the contrary, it works precisely by mobilising fractures in time, space, and representation, thereby revealing its own mediality. Historical knowledge could be transformed by this newly mobile technology, and the experience of space would


thereby become a critically augmented reality: a dialectical space inhabited and created in real time by its users.

Spatial media practices such as this have the potential to transform the reception of architectural historiography. But although the experience of the audience occurs in public space, and not in the dark and silent cinema, and although it is produced in collaboration with the audience, the generative power of the public is still to be incorporated into the production of art-historical knowledge in these new new media devices: the headphones preclude simultaneous communication with other users, and although the audience has been freed from the cinema, its experience is atomised [fig. 118]. Perhaps this is about to change: as cheap virtual reality headsets such as Oculus Rift come onto the market, real-time engagement with other users will become possible, thus facilitating the development of a digital public around art history. However, such utopian aspirations must be tempered by an awareness of the retrograde developments that technological advances have historically brought with them; in this instance, as the public enters virtual space, its every interaction is commodified and subjected to almost inescapable surveillance. On the other hand, retreating into the ivory tower is no longer an option: the intellectual independence of the universities is simultaneously coming under threat from combined forces of securitisation and marketisation. This, combined with the increasing precarity of academic labour, makes the Zwischenland der Kunstgeschichte freshly significant as an area of knowledge production – despite and indeed because of its own unfreedom, which makes it an important battlefield and laboratory for testing the potential of new media.

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In bringing together three art-historical media – photobooks, film, and radio – this thesis has developed a fuller picture of the proliferation and promiscuity of media practices than has hitherto been attempted in the literature, which has focused instead on individual media, actors, and objects. It has thereby shed new light not only on the way that media were used by art historians; it also gives a clearer picture of the historical status of the media per se as hybrid practices.

I have also attempted to show, where I can, how these practices were experienced by audiences and publics; however, a lack of evidence is a constant frustration for anyone attempting to understand historical reception. There is only one survey of German radio listeners in this period, for instance, and the voices of ordinary film viewers are almost entirely absent. We can make up for this to an extent by reading reviews, excavating practices of spectatorship (and readership, and listenership) as envisioned in visual sources and other documents, examine statistics regarding media expenditure, and read news reports on the intentional sabotage of radio broadcasts by frustrated listeners. As such, publics have emerged in a hazy outline, but this project could be furthered by conducting additional research in this vein (for instance, by examining court records pertaining to radio saboteurs, or library lending statistics).

It might also be objected that the theory of media could have been brought into sharper definition, but as I hope I have demonstrated, the media were in a process of constant flux in this period, as representations moved between film, photobook, and radio, and were shot through with fragments of other media in the process. As such, media were forcefields of conflicting temporalities and spatialities. This situation has not resolved into a ‘postmedium’ condition. Obstinacy precludes it, and even if it were possible, it would not represent some kind of fall from an era of firmly defined media. Instead of
taking this pessimistic and reactionary view, I hope I have shown that – as Miriam Hansen said, and Karl Mannheim would have agreed – it is precisely in the unceasing flux of hybridity that fractures open for moments of relatively unfettered construction.
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