

'SS OF HISTORY, OR  
 APHYIN NUCE:  
 ATTENUATION OF  
 NEGATIVE

D S. FERRIS

*for the cultural-historical dialectic ... The  
 ment will appear distinctly only in so far as  
 negative. On the other hand, every negation  
 'for the delineation of the lively, the positive.  
 ince that a new partition be applied to this  
 ponent so that, by a displacement of the  
 aterial), a positive element emerges anew in  
 a what was previously signified. And so on,  
 st is brought into the present in a historical*

N1a, 3

to the posthumous text 'On the Concept of  
 Dialectical Image', Walter Benjamin borrows  
 Monglond in the introduction to his 1930  
 while speaking of the ability of a literary text  
 at the time of its conception, Monglond  
 (epic plate from which an image may be  
 sentence of this fragment, Benjamin recalls  
 rds: 'If one looks upon history as a text, then  
*ihn*) is what a recent author says of literary  
 s which can be compared to those held fast  
 238/SW 4: 405). The comparison is called  
 g of history in terms of the process used to  
 njamin's account, the comparison, however,  
 ing phrase of this sentence indicates: 'if one  
 usequence of this conditional phrase, history  
 photography is said to do more than any

its local habitation is the  
nd 1900, captured Paris  
been justly said that he  
me scene, also, is devoid  
its evidence. With Atget,  
n the historical process  
significance [*Das macht*  
: 485/SW 4: 258)<sup>3</sup>

scenes recorded by Atget  
le but also superior signi-  
fication value of the image,  
es. Photography not only  
ng it out of concealment.  
concealed in the photo-  
nconcealment occur? Is it a  
e the attraction of such a  
ography), the example of  
ing out the political does  
as if, by its nature, photo-  
Rather, Benjamin derives  
of comparison: they are  
ch the human subject is  
ch a scene. The political  
strictly in accordance to  
igs out this significance  
um. Atget's photographs  
hem because of a choice  
r human presence.<sup>4</sup> As a  
rd of a street from which  
excluded rather than the  
onstration of exhibition  
ing within the medium.  
y given this exhibitional  
n', an 'abode' or a 'place'  
reveals the crucial place  
istory. The question will  
al since it is through the  
al significance of history  
in the passage just cited  
is a question of how the

*object*, Benjamin locates  
following manner: 'The

t). The image  
 appearance in  
 the point of an  
 recognized not  
 tograph – but  
 and in this case  
 ue.

change in the  
 'producibility'  
 'For the first  
 artistic tasks  
 now devolved  
*ins Objektiv*  
 This freeing  
 an event ('for  
 time in world  
 ge is that art  
 hical art is,  
 h claimed by

ch Benjamin  
 describes this  
 ibration value

ute emphasis  
 magic which  
 . the absolute  
 comes a form  
 (W 4: 257)

strument of  
 ons'. In each  
 . a value that  
 only known  
 ch an under-  
 ce of a work  
 uestion is, if  
 p, what is in  
 n there is no  
 nce, what is  
 image – *das*  
 rms of what  
 y way of the

tory  
tory,  
both  
this

role  
the  
. As  
N of  
eurs  
the  
such  
unft  
llen  
ture  
e to  
nch  
one  
s an  
osti-  
this  
g of

s of  
says  
*tils*);  
out  
rage  
*llen*  
phy,  
ven  
nin,  
t to  
at it  
the  
1.2:  
mes  
cess  
s of  
the  
age,  
*der*  
its  
ond

Benjamin writes: "What determine my course. . . by the 'main lines' of . . . Benjamin uses here, . . . turning through the . . . the sentence preceding . . . this disturbance does . . . a return. Benjamin . . . undertaking of a sea . . . magnetic North Pole. . . North Pole – Benjamin's . . . source of deviation; . . . the North Pole go . . . ation is exhibited for . . . from the photographic . . . image as any other . . . understood as the image . . . gh, in the fragment . . . erence to the future . . . nage in all its details . . . before the passage of . . . oper. Time does not . . . However, time as a . . . sible for this future, . . . events – a condition . . . e and every print is . . . e defined time of its . . ."

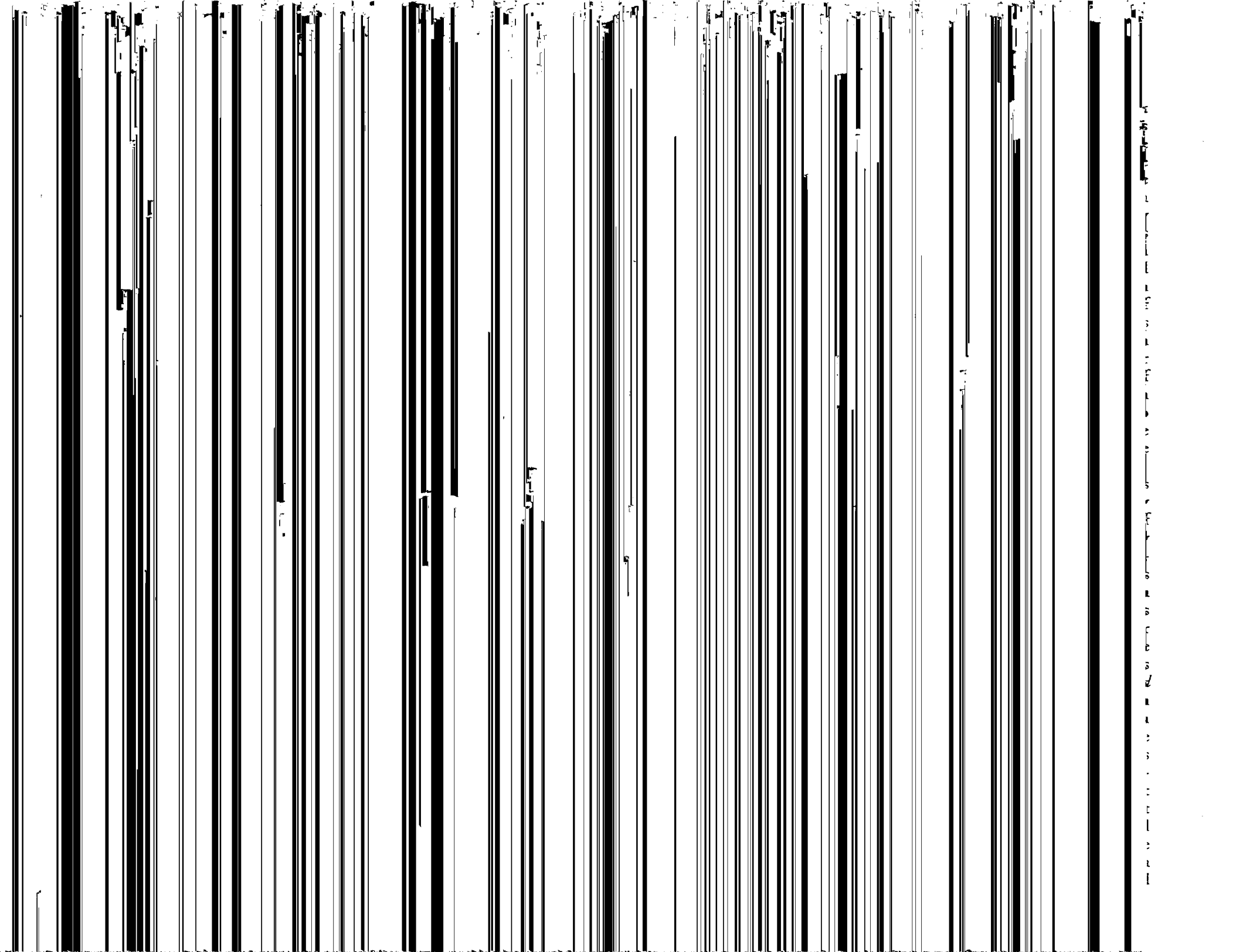
Benjamin recounts a . . . time as a technical . . .

oramas is brought . . . with the well-known . . . ends painting and . . . condition [*technischen* . . . ting, can and must . . . continuous segment . . . neability [*chronolo-* . . . the photograph is . . .

ed by Benjamin on . . . different reason. In . . .

at can be made from it),  
 property of exhibitionability  
 defines this ability when he  
 le, a multiplicity of prints  
 e question of an authentic  
 This definition privileges  
 e print that possesses the  
 not with respect to what  
 a local habitation, not a  
 ose: to produce reproduc-  
 er and therefore no claim  
 er. Here, the prints allow  
 tive whose property may  
 those prints. Monglond's  
 ls us that photography, in  
 of reproducibility, is only  
 that permits it to possess  
 the effect of a difference  
 e emphasis on exhibition  
 gy takes its first historical  
 this difference, Benjamin  
 the image produced from  
 ition value of the photo-  
 significance of an image,  
 ce of such an image. Such  
 repetition of this process.  
 'reducibility' essay does this  
 ition value is what estab-  
 of recognizing deviation  
 ic is already in a certain  
 this exhibitional pole, in  
 is set against itself. To be  
 n steps – and steps in the

of history is maintained  
 dialectical Image', then the  
 what could not have been  
 t in which the image was  
 essay on photography ('A  
 . 'The Work of Art in the  
 explains the possibility of  
 nce to what he terms the  
 s the appearance of such



German

technical  
 pearance  
 f history.  
 at allows  
 the lens  
 er short,  
 lity and  
 s coming  
 hibition-  
 nctions')  
 at stake  
 hich his  
 of itself  
 with the  
 on to the  
 points to  
 t. Where  
 self in a  
 val of an  
 nversely:  
 ation by  
 enology  
 or rather,

*Auge* to  
 se signi-  
 Only in  
 enjamin  
 not the  
 mission.  
 istorical  
 eived as  
 t, would  
 eference.  
 y arises  
 st if not  
 radition  
 etic pole  
 on is the  
 re terms  
 on value  
 ge is in



en with  
 [ep.<sup>26</sup> It  
 Benjamin.  
 n), this  
 tion of  
 constel-

Thesis  
 hich the  
*tellung*  
 erstood  
 ng) to a  
 place in  
 It is in  
 n order  
 has no  
 did not  
 uld not  
 r would  
*de*), that  
 historical  
 progress  
 ation of  
 t, in the  
 (I). Yet,  
 dialectical  
 'now of  
 existence:  
 mage in  
 .print of  
 ding [*des*  
*t*]' (N3,  
 d in this  
 ver, one  
 e phrase  
 nages] is  
 zability'.  
 dialectical  
 Benjamin  
 iscussed  
 ructure  
 Indeed,  
 that has  
 moment

y, for-  
the first  
index'  
time  
t can  
is the  
o on.  
nage:  
same  
mage  
ce in  
ecog-  
rd of  
on a  
min's  
prical  
tition  
case,  
from  
o say  
*project*  
pre-

story  
own  
nder-  
ald.<sup>32</sup>  
l not  
d not  
- as  
n on  
y, in  
ow in  
ition  
bes it  
other  
le of  
ough  
en in  
o the  
mage  
guise  
1, *ad*

*Walter Benjamin and History*

Edited by Andrew Benjamin



*vi*  
*vii*

1

3

**ris**

19

38

**nd**

69

88

**cht**

102

**axis**  
**is**  
**le of**

118

137

**ity**

156

171

182

197

215

227

253

256