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## The Disenchantment of Urban Space. Some Remarks on the *Arcades Project*

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**Abstract.** In the *Arcades Project* many important pages are devoted to Walter Benjamin to the emergence of the labyrinthine exteriority of the modern metropolis, to its peculiar phantasmagorias and to the problem of the critical awakening or disenchantment of urban space itself. According to Benjamin's method of dialectical thought by «polarity», the metropolis is presented, at the same time, as hell and as a space, material and cognitive, of revolution. This article aims to explore the dialectical image of this specific awakening: the barricade. What is more, the intention is to delve into the connections between such an idea of disenchantment and the problem of art (which begins in this century to become reproducible and to confront itself with the laws of the capitalist market), between this dialectical image and the principle of montage, between political revolution and revolution of sensibility.

**Keywords.** Arcades project, metropolis, critical disenchantment, principle of montage, revolution of sensibility.

In the vast philosophical construction site on the nineteenth century – that is, in the *Arcades Project*, as a project that was supposed to analyse the *original configurations* of advanced capitalism – many important pages are devoted to Walter Benjamin to the emergence of the *lab-*

*yrinthine exteriority* of the modern metropolis, to its peculiar phantasmagorias and to the problem of the *critical awakening* or *disenchantment* of urban space itself. According to Benjamin's method of dialectical thought by «polarity» (Lindner [2011]): the metropolis is presented, at the same time, as hell and as a space, material and cognitive, of revolution (on this, more generally on the *Arcades Project*, see Montanelli [2022]; Buck-Morss [1989]). This article aims to explore the dialectical image of this specific awakening: the barricade. A historically determined dialectical image, but one that can once again become readable, actualisable in new critical constellations. What is more, the intention is to delve into the connections between such an idea of disenchantment and the problem of art (which begins in this century to become reproducible and to confront itself with the laws of the capitalist market), between this dialectical image and the principle of montage, between political revolution and revolution of sensibility.

### 1. *Paris, the capital of revolutions (and counter-revolutions)*

Among the notes of the *Arcades Project*, the barricade emerges as the dialectical counter melody of the *passage*, which is the *temple of commodity capital* (see Benjamin [1927-1940]: 37). The *passage* is the monad in which the *original phenomenon*, the matrix of the entire phantasmagorical production of this epoch is enclosed: the commodity as a *sensibly supersensible* fetish (Marx [1867]); the commodity that soon ages and expires together with this *peculiar intrauterine capsule* containing it, due to the greedy fury of capitalism, incapable of keeping up with the development of productive forces in the new century. In such an apparently timeless monad, commodities resemble «immemorial flora» testifying to how, with the advent of industrialisation, they have themselves become a category of the spirit imbuing desire, imagination and the forms of life of modern mass collectivity (Benjamin [1927-1940]: 540). Incidentally, we would like to recall the methodological novelty of Benjamin's project: the way he investigates capitalist relations of production and reproduction in nineteenth century society starting from the superstructure, showing, in his way of understanding the *expressive nexus* between structure and superstructure (see f.e. Ibid.: 392, 460), a prescient affinity with Louis Althusser's overdetermination, according to which the economic structure is «determining, but also determined in one and the same movement, [...] by the various *levels* and *instances* of the social formation that it animates» (Althusser [1962]: 101). Similarly, Benjamin not only does not consider the superstructural aspects of a society to be mere *effects* of economic *causes*, but is convinced that the analysis of development trends in art, architecture, fashions, culture, social movements, politics, etc. can best illuminate the investigation of capitalist relations of production and, thus, the formulation of

revolutionary demands in the context of praxis (see also Benjamin [1936a]: 101-102). Undoubtedly, echoes of Georg Simmel's *Wechselwirkung* also resonate in the understanding of this type of relationship: networks of actions, reactions and feedbacks between economic, social, cultural, individual and supra-individual phenomena that constitute society itself (see at least Simmel [1908]).

We know that Paris is for Benjamin the metropolis *par excellence* of this epoch of renewed capitalist accumulation. The plan of Paris is itself a *palimpsest*, where history is erased, overwritten, interpolated. It is up to materialistic, stratigraphic philosophy to bring to light the interweaving of the heterogeneous historical times that make up modernity, against the naturalising process of capitalism. However, the nineteenth century is also the century of revolutions. Or rather, it is also a century of transition: from bourgeois revolutions to class struggles, Paris being the capital of these struggles. Benjamin quotes Engels: «[a]nd only France has a Paris, a city in which European civilization attains its fullest flowering (...) and from which arise, at regular intervals, those tremors which shake the terrestrial globe» (Benjamin [1927-1940]: 704-705; see also Engels [1898-1899]: 512). Elsewhere, he also quotes Hofmannsthal: Paris is endowed with the «kind of beauty proper to (...) volcanic landscapes». Paris is like Vesuvius: «a menacing, hazardous (...) ever-active hotbed of revolution. But just as the slopes of Vesuvius, thanks to the layers of lava that cover them, have been transformed into paradisaal orchards, so the lava of revolutions provides uniquely fertile ground for the blossoming of art, festivity, fashion» (Benjamin [1927-1940]: 83). *Revolutions and counter-revolutions*: the latter consisting not only of repression, but of forms of appropriation, valorisation (more or less *aestheticised*, more or less depoliticised) of the innovations generated by insurrections.

The articulation of class struggles in the course of the nineteenth century – which bifurcate its beginning, 1789 – has a decisive influence on the transformations of urban space: from the wooden paving of Parisian streets under Louis Philippe, following the barricades of July 1830, and then of 1831 and 1832; to the revolutions of February and in particular those of June 1848, then Haussmann's radical project for the Second Empire; finally, the last great upheaval, the Commune in 1871 (on this, see also Löwy [2019]: 95-118). In his *exposé*, Benjamin follows the historical interpretation offered by Marx and Engels: if in 1830 the proletariat was still fighting alongside the bourgeoisie against the feudal regime and the monarchy, in 1848, it rejected the bourgeois republic and constituted itself as an autonomous political subject, becoming a class in the fight against domination, which in turn became «*terrorism*» of the bourgeoisie. *Fraternité*, the instrument of pacification able to guarantee the exploitation of one class by the other, exploded in the «civil war» between labour and capital (Marx [1850]: 69, 57; see also Benjamin [1927-1940]: 123). After the defeat of June 1848, the very fear of the mass pressure of the proletariat constituted as a

class and the division of the bourgeoisie between legitimists and Orleanists was behind the rise to power of the «pseudo-democratic» Louis Bonaparte, from December 1852 Emperor Napoleon III (Engels [1895]: 513; on this, see also Marx [1852]). So, *domestic peace* was obtained with external, colonial wars, monumental splendour, corruption, speculation, the *end of pauperism*<sup>1</sup>, in the form of the *expulsion of poverty*.

## 2. *L'artiste démolisseur – but the city is divided again*

Prefect Baron Haussmann achieved this political programme through urban planning. The true goal of this «*artiste démolisseur*» was in fact to «make the erection of barricades in the streets of Paris impossible for all time» (Benjamin [1927-1940]: 12). Entire working-class neighbourhoods were destroyed in the name of public health, though actually to prevent civil war. The clean, «better» air of Haussmann's transformation of the city was that of «armed force»: the large roads that cut through the working-class neighbourhoods allowed easy entry to the army, and direct connections to the barracks (Ibid.: 128)<sup>2</sup>. The old capital was gutted to develop a modern network able to enclose the *banlieue*, according to the *old imperial ideal of terrorist-revolutionary centralisation* (Ibid.: 133). It is a disorienting network, however, as it is rather the most recent form of metropolitan *labyrinth*: space is pierced everywhere by the same geometric, rectilinear streets, on whose sides, according to the continuous play of perspective, rows of houses stand one next to the other, all the same (Ibid.: 146, 136). The myth of eternal recurrence also shapes the new metropolis. The annexation of the suburbs goes hand in hand with the expulsion of the poor and working-class population, as they are dispersed to the provinces or ghettos in the suburbs. In other words, the earthquake that devastated and rebuilt the city coincided with a process of *new primitive accumulation* (Marx [1867]: Book One, Part VII, Ch. 24). It was the eternal recurrence of the primitive act of capitalism, from the seventeenth to the nineteenth century (which also links Benjamin's book on Baroque to *The Arcades Project*): new enclosures, dispossessions, redefinition of hierarchical relations of exploitation; repression and, at the same time, population-government through narcotising distractions, debauchery and fraudulent concessions. Benjamin writes: «The mighty seek to secure their position with blood (police), with cunning (fashion), with magic (pomp)» (Benjamin [1927-1940]: 133). Speculation was one of the pivots of

1 In his attempt to present himself as a friend of the people, Louis Bonaparte among other things authored an essay entitled *Extinction du pauperisme* (1844).

2 This is a quotation from Georges Laronze's biography of Haussmann (*Le baron Haussmann*, F. Alcan, Paris 1932), from which Benjamin draws much material.

this renewed capitalist accumulation of land, property, finance. Another transition that took place in the nineteenth century, moreover, is that from the still partly feudal forms of gambling to stock exchange gambling. The Haussmannisation of Paris was a speculative venture that facilitated the growth of financial capital, the establishment of the market as the new *order* of the economy and of life, which became the *eternal law of nature* (see Ibid.: 12, 23-24; see also the convolutes on gambling and the one on stock exchange: 489-515, 779-785). Haussmann erased the city's past in order to *eternalise the present*. Benjamin copies the following passage from *Histoire de Paris* by Dubech and D'Espezel (1926): «The most striking feature of (...) [Haussmann's] projects is their scorn for historical experience...Haussmann lays out an artificial city, like something in Canada or the Far West...» (Ibid.: 132). The only relationship with the past is that defined by fashion: the past, that is, which is captured in the clamour of the latest novelty, which lasts the time of a shock, and is immediately suppressed and replaced by another *new* one. And so on indefinitely, according to the rhythm of perennial, unexpected change (eternal return of the same, indeed).

The gutting of working-class neighbourhoods was therefore aimed not only at preventing barricades, but also at erasing their history. The foundations of the monumental *culture* of the Second Empire are to be found in the bloody *barbarism* of June 1848 and in the process of planned removal of historical class memory, of interpolation of the manuscript of the republican-democratic tradition<sup>3</sup>. However, in the spring of 1871, with the Commune, «[t]he barricade is resurrected [...]. It is stronger and better secured than ever» (Ibid.: 12, 24). Marx writes that the Commune «conspired against civilization [*Zivilisation*]» (Marx [1871]: 350), that is, it overturned the relationship between culture and barbarism, shed light on the violence behind the former and affirmed the *positive concept* of the latter, that of the *true constructors* (Benjamin [1933]: 732)<sup>4</sup>, who aim to erase domination and exploitation and not the past, who rewrite history by giving back to the oppressed the voice that has been silenced. Marx also writes that the Commune used fire «strictly as a means of defence» against the massacre of the «Social Republic», of the democratic, federalist, internationalist «self-government of the producers» (Marx [1871]: 351, 330, 332). In the case of the Commune, it was not the «vandalism of triumph» (e.g. of Christians against pagans), nor was it the Haussmannian vandalism, the «razing historic Paris to make place for the Paris of the sightseer» (Ibid.: 351). With the Commune, the *spectre of communism* brutally crushed in 1848 was reincarnated in the real world with a *tiger's leap* (Benjamin [1940a]: 395).

3 For the culture-barbarism nexus, the reference is obviously to Benjamin (1940a): 391-392.

4 For the positive concept of barbarism in Benjamin, see at least Raulet (2004).

The apparently compact and shapeless mass, treated as «external population» (Benjamin [1927-1940]: 141)<sup>5</sup>, was dissolved and reorganised, taking on a new partisan form, making the city *divided* again<sup>6</sup>.

### 3. *Awakening: open space for the city*

The barricade is for Benjamin the dialectical image of such a gnoseological and political disclosure. We know that the *Jetzt der Erkennbarkeit* is the time of the revolutionary *chance* and that the knowing subject of this “now” is not individual and abstract, but collective and partisan: in Benjamin’s *Theses* it is «the struggling, oppressed class» (Benjamin [1940a]: 394). Moreover, from the very beginning of his work on the *Arcades*, Benjamin states that he intends to «show how the whole set of issues with which this project is concerned is illuminated in the process of the proletariat’s becoming conscious of itself» (Benjamin [1927-1940]: 863). What is at stake is an intimate connection between historical knowledge, class consciousness and political praxis – reference to Rosa Luxemburg is strong, indeed the Spartacus League is also referred to in the aforementioned thesis. As an emblem of nineteenth century revolutions, the barricade is therefore emblematic of the form in which the link between praxis and knowledge was then expressed.

The dialectical movement conceived by Benjamin – his *Dialektik im Stillstand* – consists in capturing an image in its «hesitant stillness [*immobilité hésitante*]», in the moment of maximum tension between opposites (Benjamin [1940b]: 149, where he quotes Henri Focillon’s *Vie des formes*). It is the *Jetzt* of possible awakening. It is the veil of appearance, i.e. of dreams, of «opposing dream images» (Benjamin [1927-1940]: 883) that becomes immobilised, rippling. In the specific case of the barricades, the *Traumbild* of a liberated society, one that is on the march towards progress, pacified and inter-classist, comes to a halt in the *dialektisches Bild* which brings to light the historical truth of exploitative social relations. The utopian pole of the dream image is for Benjamin as much to be criticised as the catastrophic one: golden age and hell are two sides of the same coin. «The true meaning of utopia: it is a precipitate of collective dreams» (Ibid.: 906). With the *Communist Manifesto*, the failure to elaborate the material and historical conditions of the possible general transformation of society is transfigured into the imagination of fantastic conditions (see Marx, Engels [1848]: 514-517). The importance of the Commune also derives from having critically set

5 This is a quotation from G. Plechanov, *Über die Anfänge der Lehre vom Klassenkampf* (1903).

6 Allusion is made here to Loraux (1997).



utopia aside; Marx writes: «They [the communards] have no ready-made utopias to introduce *par décret du peuple*. They know that in order to work out their own emancipation [...], they will have to pass through long struggles, through a series of historic processes, transforming circumstances and men» (Marx [1871]: 335).

Of course, the bloodshed and failure of the Commune also marks the end of the barricade-form, its ineffectiveness, given the disproportionate use of force by the state. What begins to take hold is the strike-form, which plays a pivotal role in the transition from the First to the Second International (and we know it attracted the attention of the young Benjamin, just consider the 1921 essay on the *Critique of Violence*)<sup>7</sup>. In any case, what matters here is that the barricades, in particular those of the Commune, exemplify *the expressive mode* of nineteenth century *awakening*. The barricade is emblematic of the knowledge that provides the way out of the labyrinth of capitalist *religion*. In Marx's words:

The religious reflections of the real world can, in any case, vanish only when the practical relations of everyday life between man and man, and man and nature, generally present themselves to him in a transparent and rational form. The veil is not removed from the countenance of the social life-process, i.e. the process of material production, until it becomes production by freely associated men, and stands under their conscious and planned control. (Marx [1867]: 173)

The Commune grasped the way the social and the political are essentially co-extensive, it rethought the problem of power starting from the need to redistribute the wealth produced by social co-operation: once the process of production was understood, the expropriated aimed to *expropriate the expropriators*, to re-appropriate the means of production (and reproduction) in order to transform the «means of enslaving and exploiting labour» into «instruments of free and associated labour» (Marx [1871]: 335).

Thus, the spectral objectivity of commodities, the phantasmagoria of their absolutely arbitrary value, of their price tag, for Marx as for Benjamin, can dissolve. As with the Baroque allegory, subjectivity comes to the fore: that which materially produces value and which, abstracting from human labour, triggers the dynamic of fetishism, the eruption of the allegorical, with all its antinomies, which generates alienation and a form of relativism that seems to have no end (see Benjamin [1925]). The narcotic of eternity, of the natural quality of capitalist law is here revealed as such.

When revolt breaks out, «history is the judge» (Benjamin [1927-1940]: 730)<sup>8</sup>. The aquatic, vegetal, timeless monad exemplified by the *passage* is shattered,

7 On the ineffectiveness of the barricade, Benjamin quotes Engels' (1895) *Introduction* to Karl Marx's *The Class Struggles in France*, see Benjamin (1927-1940): 123.

8 It is a quotation from K. Marx, *Die Revolutionen von 1848 und das Proletariat* (1856).

and from it another monad emerges, that of the dialectical image that brings the qualitative character of time back to the foreground, rendering every single moment of the oppressed past citable, and thus redeemable in revolutionary action. Historical-materialist knowledge and revolution *disenchant time and also space*. Already in the essay on *Surrealism* Benjamin writes that «only revolt completely exposes [...] [the] Surrealist face» of Paris: «deserted streets in which whistles and shots dictate the outcome» (Benjamin [1929a]: 211). In the *Arcades Project* Benjamin writes: «in the final analysis, only the revolution creates an open space for the city. Fresh air doctrine of revolutions. Revolution disenchants the city» (Benjamin [1927-1940]: 422). The revolution clears the field, it empties the city before construction, sweeps away the phantasmagoria of the *intérieur*, of bourgeois individualism, of the false dichotomies between public and private, nature and technology, the monumentality and verticality of power, its hierarchies. It is once again the *barbaric attitude of poverty of experience*: to draw, one must clear the table (see Benjamin [1933]: 732). Desecrate, in a literal sense, the sacredness of the capitalist world in order to return objects to the sphere of use: having dispelled the aura that veils the creation of value, the enigma of commodities dissolves, they go back to being human products.

#### 4. *Principle of montage: or the new sensibility*

Benjamin sees the principle of montage operating in the barricade – just as Charles Fourier spoke of the building of the barricades as «an example of “*travail non salarié mais passionné*”» (Benjamin [1927-1940]: 141)<sup>9</sup>. A casual, creative, experimental way of re-using things, which are extrapolated from their usual contexts and given a new order. It is also the re-appropriation of the technique of citation, finally wrested from the «arena» of fashion where «the ruling class gives the commands» (Benjamin [1940a]: 395). Omnibuses, barrels, paving stones, sand, all sorts of furniture, baskets, wheels, ropes serve the artwork-barricade. *Artwork*, like the one built by the communard shoemaker Napoléon Gaillard in Place de la Concorde, two storeys high, with ramparts, stepped gables, pavilions, in front of which, as if to sign it, the author had his picture taken (on this, see also Ross [2015])<sup>10</sup>.

9 Unlike the English edition, we leave the expression in French here, as in the German edition, with reference to Fourier.

10 Benjamin (1927-1940): 138, quotes the caption of a plate dedicated to the *Barricade des fédérés construite par Gaillard père* from the volume *Les ruines de Paris. 100 photographies par A. Liébert*, éditées par la photographie américaine A. Liébert, Paris 1871.





*Barricade des fédérés* built by, among others, Louis Napoléon Gaillard (known as *Gaillard père*) [second from the left], 1871. Artist: Hippolyte-Auguste Collard. Credit Line: The Elisha Whittelsey Collection, The Elisha Whittelsey Fund, 1959. CC0 The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York

Art, technique and craftsmanship, poetry and labour rediscover their harmonious collaboration – we recall that this is the century, with the birth of the applied arts industry, of the dispute between the *École Polytechnique* and the *École des Beaux-Art*, between «the builder of the new school and the artist of the old type» (Benjamin [1927-1940]: 887). The revolution questions pure art and fetish-culture as disinterested realms of creation and freedom. By eroding the sphere of the sacred, i.e. of worship, of ritual, i.e. of appearance, the *sphere of play* gains prominence, the centre of gravity of the synchronic polarity of all artistic activity shifts. What Benjamin has in mind, from an ontogenetic perspective, is children's play, i.e. actions that are both destructive and constructive, essentially desecrating, and gnoseological: when children play, they use and reuse, demolish and re-assemble objects, materials, pieces of things, extracting them from their original context and inventing a new one each time. It is a *permanent alteration of any auratic fixation* (see Benjamin [1936a]; also, f.e. Benjamin [1929b]; on this, see also Montanelli [2017]: 61-102; Montanelli [2018]: 265-269; Leslie [2018]).

Referring to Donald Winnicott's (1971) transitional object, we may say that fetish is in this case an instrument of knowledge, which opens up the «potential space» through which self and the external world are constituted. Infants need destruction in order to understand «[t]he spirit from which these products emanate – the entire process of their production and not merely its result», to construct a «vital relationship» with them (Benjamin [1930]: 123), exactly the opposite of the alienation generated by commodity fetishism. In his *Morale du joujou*, Baudelaire describes the childish playful impulse in a similar manner, offering an illuminating analogy between this behaviour and revolt. His conclusions, however, are different:

Quand ce désir s'est fiché dans la moelle cérébrale de l'enfant, il remplit ses doigts et ses ongles d'une agilité et d'une force singulières. L'enfant tourne, retourne son joujou, il le gratte, il le secoue, le cogne contre les murs, le jette par terre. De temps en temps il lui fait recommencer ses mouvements mécaniques, quelquefois en sens inverse [...]. L'enfant, comme le peuple qui assiège les Tuileries, fait un suprême effort ; enfin il l'entrouvre, il est le plus fort. Mais où est l'âme ? C'est ici que commencent l'hébètement et la tristesse. (Baudelaire [1853] : 587)

«What exists he reduces to rubble-not for the sake of the rubble, but for that of the way leading through it» (Benjamin [1931]: 542). This, on the other hand, is what Benjamin writes of the *destructive character*, relevant to both the revolutionary and the childlike character – this is Benjamin's different conclusion to Baudelaire's. Destruction is followed by the activity of reassembling elements. It is a *Noch-einmal*, once again, which means always doing anew, *ein Immer-wieder-tun*, doing «over and over again» (Benjamin [1928]: 120) and which opens up the *space of action* (*Spiel-Raum*, literally, «scope for play») «allied» to what Benjamin calls the *second technology*: i.e., the «endlessly varied test procedures», aimed at perfecting, ameliorating nature, not dominating it. What is at stake is «an interplay [*ein Zusammen-spiel*]» with nature – again, the reference is to Fourier's *jeu harmonien*; in other words, the dissolution of the false dualism between nature and technique (Benjamin [1936a]: 107; on the theme of perfective *mimesis* in Benjamin, see also Desideri [2019]).

Indigence and construction are thought of together. And, once the fundamental relations of capitalist production have been clarified, certain utopian motifs can also be extrapolated from their idyllic and naive context and be *reused* in the context of revolutionary praxis: this is the case of Fourier's aforementioned *travail passionné*; or of Paul Scheerbart's glass architecture (1914), which envisages horizontal structures capable of reactivating the *sensoriality* that pertains to the *surface* of things, as opposed to the confused depth of interiority, to the vertical axis of the concentrationist and totalitarian paradigm, which from the Tower of Babel onwards manifests itself in the

human will to dominate (see Benjamin [1919] and Benjamin [1939-1940]; Scheerbart [1913])<sup>11</sup>.

The demolition of the Vendôme Column, during the Commune, which also involved Gustave Courbet, is a famous episode in history. It was an iconoclastic action, aimed at demolishing not only the celebratory symbol of Napoleon's military expeditions, but more generally the *enchantment of monumental art* – which in the twentieth century for Benjamin became synonymous with fascism (see Benjamin [1936b]) –, the mythologem of pure aestheticism, the «visual-phallic» regime that allows nothing to exist outside itself (Lefebvre [1973]). The barricades of the Commune have a special significance, because their *principle of montage* as a source of *playful innovation*, based on *reversibility*, not on violent hypostatisation, extended beyond the civil war and translated into a widespread experimentation that was able to hold together the re-appropriation of the public sphere, of the city, the deconstruction of social orders and roles, emancipation from exploited labour, *a revolution in the domain of sensibility*. It is also the re-appropriation of the dimension of the *threshold*: when the capitalist mode of production is no longer understood as an eternal law of nature, the historical idea of the transition to this mode of production resurfaces, together with the possibility of opposing it, and of transforming reality<sup>12</sup>. In just over two months this *potential space* was reactivated, giving rise to a new construction of the world and the self, singular and collective: this is what the Commune was. New environments, new ways of meeting and coming together took shape, for the first time art was thought of in relation to historical, technical, social changes – in its «functional» essence (Benjamin [1936b]: 479) –, thus becoming something perfectly integrated into everyday life, no longer the idle and elitist opposite of everyday life, or a superficial compensation for work (on this, see also Ross [2013]). Extending the aesthetic dimension into everyday life, something that was promoted first and foremost by the *Fédération des Artistes*, aimed not only at making art accessible to all, but above all at making art an integral part of «the creative *process* of making»: it was a new «sensuous relationship to the materials [...] and to one's own process and labour [...], to the steps taken in making itself and to the remaking, in turn, of one's own capacities» (Ross [2015]: 99; see also *Fédération des Artistes* [1871]) –

11 On the importance of Scheerbart for Benjamin and, in particular, the fantasy novel *Lesabéndio*, from his youthful years and the unfinished project of a work on *Politik*, of which *Lesabéndio-Kritik* was to have been the third part, see Desideri (2014); Steiner (2000); Palma (2008): 163-189; Gentili (2016).

12 A famous passage from the *Arcades Project* on the threshold problem: «We have grown very poor in threshold experiences [...]. A *Schwelle* <threshold> is a zone. Transformation, passage, wave action are in the word *schwellen*, and etymology ought not to overlook these senses» (Benjamin [1927-1940]: 494).

a harmonious interplay between manual and intellectual sphere, between nature and technology; communal growth and wealth, polytechnicity, with Marx, *multilaterality of the human being* (Marx [1844]: 298-301).

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