

Repetition, experimentation: games of chance and the urban room for play

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Walter Benjamin's texts on Baudelaire put forward a threefold analogy, surprising at first glance, between the experience of the crowd, typical of modern metropolises, mechanized work and games of chance. While exploring gambling and the gambler in Benjamin's analysis, this article explores the inner ambiguity of the concept of repetition: firstly conceived as belonging to the «time of hell» of the ever-new, it can also be understood as a gateway for understanding the processes of experimentation, which are crucial to modern and contemporary aesthetic experiences. In this sense, urban space can also be conceived as a room for play, vulnerable to and enriched by chance and playful mechanisms encompassing aesthetic and political dimensions.

The gambler is nameless; he has no name of his own and requires no one else's. [...] And what intoxication it is in this city of opportunity, in this network of good fortune, to multiply oneself, to make oneself ubiquitous and be on the lookout for the approach of Lady Luck at any one of ten different street corners.

Walter Benjamin, *The Path to Success in Thirteen Theses*

Gambling

The fourth part of the essay *On Some Motifs in Baudelaire* recalls the words of the poet in *Le Spleen de Paris*, more specifically, in the dedication to Arsene Houssaye, the editor-in-chief of La Presse: «Who among us has not dreamed, in his ambitious moments, of the miracle of a poetic prose, musical, yet without rhythm and without rhyme, supple and resistant enough to adapt to the lyrical stirrings of the soul, the undulations of reverie, and the sudden leaps of consciousness. This obsessive ideal is born, above all, from the experience of giant cities, from the intersecting of their

myriad relations»¹. This quotation occupies a crucial position in Benjamin's reading of Baudelaire, since it clearly sets the basis for the study of the conditions of lyric poetry in an age dominated by the «shock experience» in modern metropolises². At the same time, it refers to a «hidden figure» imprinted in Baudelaire's poetry, the crowd – against whom the poet-fencer strikes his blows. The conceptual background of this study, described in the first chapters, results from an interpretation of Bergson, Proust and Freud. The notion of shock experience runs through strictly poetic aspects, just like new technologies and also sensorial and psychological elements do (the Freudian notion of trauma and the historically conditioned transformations in the relationship between memory, remembrance and consciousness are fundamental here). Indeed, they are combined with the opposition between two forms of experience: *Erfahrung* (meaningful experience involving the assimilation and transmission of knowledge) and *Erlebnis* (the lived and individual experience). The writings on Baudelaire, which were supposed to have a prominent role in the long-term project of *Das Passagen-Werk*, focus on the ambiguous relationship between the ancient and the modern in the nineteenth century, and therefore also evaluate the conditions of experience in modernity³.

Instead of developing these themes, which the secondary literature on Benjamin's thought has already examined thoroughly, I will focus on a specific element that seems less explored: in chapter IX, Benjamin connects

¹ W. Benjamin, "Über einige Motive bei Baudelaire", in *Gesammelte Schriften*, I, Suhrkamp, Frankfurt am Main 1974, pp. 617-618; "On Some Motifs in Baudelaire", translated by H. Zohn, *Selected Writings*. Vol. 4: 1938-1940, The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, Cambridge-Massachusetts-London 2003, p. 320.

² The dedication was previously quoted in the third chapter of «The Paris of the Second Empire in the Work of Baudelaire», opening a section concerning the characterization of the «heroic ideal» in modernity. For a more detailed description of the context and implications of this quotation in both texts, see C. Shmider and M. Werner, "Das Baudelaire-Buch", in B. Lindner (ed. by), *Benjamin-Handbuch*, Metzler, Stuttgart-Weimar 2006, pp. 567-584.

³ In a letter to Gershom Scholem, the influence of modern metropolises is also mentioned in reference to the work of another major figure of modern literature, Franz Kafka. See W. Benjamin, "Briefe an Scholem, 12. Juni 1938", in *Briefe*, Suhrkamp, Frankfurt am Main 1966, pp. 756-764. For further reading on the relation between this letter and the notion of threshold, an important theoretical *locus* to understand the ambiguity of the figures described in *Das Passagen-Werk*, see J. M. Gagnebin, "Limiar: entre a vida e a morte", in *Limiar, Aura e Rememoração*, Editora 34, 2014, pp. 33-50.

three elements: the experience of the passer-by in the crowd, the isolated experiences of the industrial worker and of the gambler:

The shock experience [Chockerlebnis] which the passer-by has in the crowd corresponds to the isolated «experiences» of the worker at his machine. This does not entitle us to assume that Poe knew anything about industrial work processes. Baudelaire, at any rate, did not have the faintest notion of them. He was, however, captivated by a process in which the reflexive mechanism that the machine triggers in the workman can be studied closely, as in a mirror, in the idler. To say that this process is represented in games of chance may appear paradoxical. Where could one find a starker contrast than the one between work and gambling?⁴

The connecting links between these seemingly parted phenomena are the abovementioned experience of shock and, more broadly, the changes occurring throughout the nineteenth century and the first decades of the twentieth in what concerns their relationship with tradition. New forms of experience, new gestures and reflexive mechanisms arise within the urban space, interweaved with the technological processes that were transforming the human bodily-sensorial interaction with the world, particularly within the scope of industrialized work. Recalling Alain's distinction between play and work, Benjamin agrees with a characterization of gambling according to which no game depends on the preceding one, which creates a form of temporality where the past seems to have no influence in the following *coup*. But he disagrees with the distinction between gambling and work, for he maintains that work is an activity that necessarily encompasses the weight of the past. In this sense, «the work that Alain has in mind here is the highly specialized kind (which, like intellectual effort, probably retains certain features of handicraft); it is not that of most factory workers, and least of all unskilled work»⁵. On the other hand, by mentioning the isolated experiences of the worker at his machine, Benjamin refers to a kind of work where past experience and practice are of little use.

The question at the end of the quoted section, which points out the distinction between idleness and work, between play and work, between leisure and «productive» human agency, is in fact a commonplace

⁴ W. Benjamin, "Über einige Motive bei Baudelaire", cit., pp. 632-633; "On Some Motifs in Baudelaire", cit., p. 329.

⁵ Ivi, p. 633; pp. 329-330.

understanding of the universe of play and gambling. Although a classic study like Huizinga's shows the historical conditioning of that distinction, it nevertheless conceives play as an activity that comprises no practical interests⁶. In fact, this sort of idealized concept of play allows Huizinga to neglect games of chance. Caillois, who criticized and tried to improve several aspects of Huizinga's work, reserves a specific place for *alea* (a notion that encompasses gambling and other forms of play where randomness and chance are crucial) in his quadripartite classification: *alea*, *agon*, *mimicry* and *ilinx*. Equally important is the fact that Caillois describes the imbrication of play and technology, an aspect that is at the core of several of Benjamin's remarks on play, particularly in the second version of the essay «Work of Art in the Age of Its Technological Reproducibility».

Throughout the nineteenth century, due to the increase in leisure, sports and gambling, play became an object of mass consumption. Idealized theories of play, detached from any material interest, placed outside the circulation of commodities or the modern economy of leisure time, leave little room for marginal aspects and for an overarching understanding of the impact gambling has had in Western society. Besides, it also leaves little room for the aesthetic consequences of gambling. By this we obviously do not mean games of chance as works of art, but the reflection on the mechanisms intrinsic to the structure of a game which belong to an aesthetic experience in its widest sense: chance, randomness, repetition, body gestures, affections, emotions, typological characteristics (for instance, «futility, emptiness, inability to complete something»⁷). In this sense, not only Benjamin was a gambler himself⁸, but he also paid particular attention to the phenomenon of gambling in its historical and aesthetic dimension⁹.

⁶ J. Huizinga, *Homo Ludens. A Study of the Play-Element in Culture*, Routledge and Keagen Paul, London-Boston-Henley 1980, p. 19.

⁷ W. Benjamin, "Über einige Motive bei Baudelaire", cit., p. 633; "On Some Motifs in Baudelaire", cit., p. 330.

⁸ As reported in several biographical studies and particularly by G. Scholem in *Walter Benjamin – die Geschichte einer Freundschaft*, Suhrkamp, Frankfurt am Main 1975.

⁹ For further reading on the presence of games of chance in modern thinking and literature, both in the thematic sense and as a reflection on the socio-cultural transformation of aesthetic values and mechanisms, see P. Schnyder, *Alea. Zählen und Erzählen im Zeichen des Glücksspiels*, Wallstein, Göttingen 2009.

Aesthetics, in this context, goes beyond the traditional questions and concepts in philosophy of art, such as beauty or the sublime, encompassing the description of perception and body mechanisms – the psychoanalytical and physiological term «innervation» is often used to characterize it – expressed most directly through the gestures of the gambler. This goes along with the several remarks about the moment of placing the bet, a disruptive moment which is an exercise with danger. Gambling can thus be understood as a training practice for our presence of mind (*Geistesgegenwart*)¹⁰.

The time of hell

The gambler offers his body and soul (as the characters in Senefelder lithograph¹¹) to a form of temporality in which he is always starting anew, and this is one of the traces that make him, among others, a central figure in Benjamin's characterization of modernity. Again, the link between modern technologies and the economy of leisure is crucial here. Like the optics of myriorama – a nineteenth century popular optical toy consisting of a set of cards, often depicting a landscape, that can be arranged in a multitude of combinations – the actions of the gambler involve a kind of fragmentation in which the elements are constantly rearranged, contributing to a form of discontinuity.

Careful investigation into the relation between the optics of the myriorama and the time of the modern, of the newest. They are related, certainly, as the fundamental coordinates of this world. It is a world of strict discontinuity; what is always again new is not something old that remains, or something past that

10 «The proscription of gambling could have its deepest roots in the fact that a natural gift of humanity, one which, directed toward the highest objects, elevates the human being beyond himself, only drags him down when applied to one of the meanest objects: money. The gift in question is presence of mind. Its highest manifestation is the reading that in each case is divinatory». W. Benjamin, *Das Passagen-Werk*, in *Gesammelte Schriften*, V, Suhrkamp, Frankfurt am Main 1982, p. 639; *The Arcades Project*, translated by H. Eiland and K. McLaughlin, The Belknap Press of University Press, Cambridge-Massachusetts-London 1999, [O 13, 3], p. 513. For the relation between gambling, innervation (*Innervation*), presence of mind (*Geistesgegenwart*) and the time of interpretation (*Deuten*), see Bettine Menke, *Sprachfiguren. Name – Allegorie – Bild nach Walter Benjamin*, Fink Verlag, München 1991, pp. 349-360 and H. Weidmann, «Geistesgegenwart: Das Spiel in Walter Benjamins Passagenarbeit», in *MLN*, 107, 3, «German Issue», April 1992, pp. 521-547.

¹¹ W. Benjamin, «Über einige Motive bei Baudelaire», cit., p. 633; «On Some Motifs in Baudelaire», cit., p. 330.

recurs, but one and the same crossed by countless intermittences. (Thus, the gambler lives in intermittence.) Intermittence means that every look in space meets with a new constellation. Intermittence the measure of time in film. And what follows from this: time of hell, and the chapter on origin in the book on Baroque. [G° 19]¹²

It is not that the same thing happens over and over again (therefore, it is not the eternal return), «but rather that the face of the world, the colossal head, precisely in what is newest never alters – that this “newest” remains, in every respect, the same»¹³. Modern time is thus the equivalent to the time of repetition, «the vertigo of a fall that never reaches its end»¹⁴. What is at stake here is empty time, the replication of the always-new that characterizes the gambler and distinguishes him from the flâneur and the poet. The latter are also figures of modern urban life, but they are able to live in a different form of temporality. Instead of becoming numb amongst the crowd, the flâneur is capable of absorbing its energy, of recharging his inner self through shock experiences; the poet, although deprived of the categories of traditional experience and devoid of his inner self, is still capable of creating images out of the urban experience, transfiguring it.

In the case of the gambler, can the destructive gesture that starts everything all over again have any form of productive potential? How can we, so to speak, push the Benjaminian analysis a bit further? In order to tackle these questions, we need to find a form of repetition outside the hell of the ever-same, capable of creating a space for experimentation. This idea is linked with the notion of play in a different context in Benjamin’s work, that simultaneously absorbs and deflects elements of gambling. In this sense, the destruction of tradition, the transformation of inherited values, open the way to the possibility of creating a space for chance and imagination. The widespread expansion of gambling, together with other urban, cultural and technological changes in modernity, plays a decisive role in this ambiguous and tense process.

¹² Ivi, *Das Passagen-Werk*, cit., p. 1011; *The Arcades Project*, cit., p. 843.

¹³ *Ibidem*.

¹⁴ M. F. Molder, *O Químico e o Alquimista – Benjamin, Leitor de Baudelaire*, Relógio D’Água, Lisboa 2011, p. 129.

Play

In Benjamin's work, the concept of play gravitates around three main motifs or contexts: firstly, the approaches on play dealing with aesthetic tradition and artistic reflection; secondly, the texts dedicated to toys, to childhood games and their relationship with mimetic experiences; thirdly, the games of chance, the bodily and mental features of the gambler and the very figure of the gambler in his historical dimension. Even if each of these motifs seems to delimit a specific domain which calls for particular approaches, they share a few common aspects, such as an enduring reflection on the body and gestures, the notion of repetition and the confluence with the historical dimension. We can thus say that Benjamin's work doesn't allow us to deduce a theory of play with well-defined principles; but, on the other hand, the peculiarity of his thinking and the unfinished but pertinent character of some of his notes and texts seem to demand further developments.

Conceiving the importance of gambling for aesthetic experience and for artistic practices seems a difficult task. A quick reading of a section of *Critique of Judgement* (§ 54 – Comment) on *Glücksspiel* shows how Kant immediately dismisses it as having no relation to art. He analyses three forms of play (*Spiel*), games of chance (*Glücksspiel*), music (*Tonspiel*) and thought-play or wit (*Gedankenspiel*), and concedes that they provoke healthy affects and bodily movements. Nevertheless, they are far from reaching the importance of the «free play of the faculties»: «since games of chance are not a beautiful play, we shall here set it aside»¹⁵. Taking into consideration the fundamental role the third critique plays in our understanding of aesthetical issues, as well as its importance for normative concepts in aesthetic judgement, what results from this split? And though we can easily concede that a game of chance is not a work of art, which of its elements can be said to have entered the realm of artistic practices?

This later question leads us to another aspect: play, and implicitly chance, belong to the self-referential elements characterizing the creative

¹⁵ I. Kant, *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, translated by P. Guyer, Hackett, Indianapolis-Cambridge 1987, (sez. 331-332) p. 208.

processes in modern and contemporary art, as well as in the rupture with the organic unity of works of art and their autonomy as objects – thus contributing to the open character and the mobility of aesthetic processes and experiences¹⁶. This strand of modern art, which shares affinities with Dadaism or surrealism, often adopts playful mechanisms based on chance, randomness, unexpected montages and experimentation with materials. Duchamp's «3 stoppages étalon» has paradigmatic value in this strand. Just to mention two contemporary examples, we can say that the playful works of John Baldessari or the humorous but also political performative practices of Francis Alÿs, often occurring in urban spaces, can unsurprisingly be considered heirs of that strand.

As we can see in his essays on Baudelaire, most of Benjamin's texts are directed towards a historical reflection encompassing and intersecting the social, political, artistic and corporeal realms of human experience. In this vein, it is often between the individual and collective dimensions that the issue of play finds its most productive analyses. Furthermore, it should not be dissociated from an anthropologic context, or, more precisely, an existential dimension. The element of play finds its deepest roots at the very core of human existence and it's irreducible to a ludic dimension, to a notion of amusement or to a mere economy of leisure (even if there is an obvious economy of play, and toys are submitted to the economic and technologic culture of a given epoch¹⁷). This idea is clearly shown in the review of Karl Gröber's *Spielzeug und Spielen*. The three aspects Benjamin mentions as fundamental for a renewed theory of play – the morphology of play gestures, the study of enigmatic dualities and the law of repetition – point towards the abovementioned existential dimension¹⁸. The law of repetition is

¹⁶ T. Wetzlar, "Spiel", in K. Barck *et alli* (ed. by), *Ästhetische Grundbegriffe*, Metzler, Stuttgart-Weimar 2010, pp. 580-581.

¹⁷ W. Benjamin, "Spielzeug und Spielen", in *Gesammelte Schriften*, III, Suhrkamp, Frankfurt am Main 1972, p. 130; "Toys and Play", translated by R. Livingstone, in *Selected Writings*, vol. 2: 1927-1930, Harvard University Press, Cambridge-Massachusetts-London 2005, p. 119.

¹⁸ This essential quality is also mentioned by Huizinga: «In this faculty of repetition lies one of the most essential qualities of play. It holds good not only of play as a whole but also of its inner structure. In nearly all the higher forms of play the elements of repetition and alternation (as in the refrain), are like the warp and woof of a fabric». J. Huizinga, *Homo Ludens*, cit., p. 10.

interestingly described in accordance with the Freudian compulsion to repetition in *Beyond the Principle of Pleasure*, but gets its deepest inspiration in Goethe and in the happiness of doing one thing more than once. According to this law, play and habits intersect in different ways, not only because most of our habits in childhood are acquired through play and games, but also because habits, like play, enter our lives and mark them with the traces of our happiness and of our sorrows. In this sense, play is a way of learning. That a child repeats something hundreds or thousands of times,

is not only the way to master frightening fundamental experiences – by deadening one’s own response, by arbitrarily conjuring up experiences, or through parody; it also means enjoying one’s victories and triumphs over and over again, with total intensity. An adult relieves his heart from its terrors and doubles happiness by turning it into a story. A child creates the entire event anew and starts again right from the beginning. Here, perhaps, is the deepest explanation for the two meanings of the German word *Spielen*: the element of repetition is what is actually common to them. Not a «doing as if» but a «doing the same thing over and over again», the transformation of a shattering experience into habit – that is the essence of play.¹⁹

It is important to note that the two meanings of *Spielen* are «to play» in the dramatic sense and «games». This reinforces the abovementioned existential and anthropological dimension of play, which is linked with the possibility of repairing the past, i.e. of dealing with it in a healthy way. The link between repetition and trauma – «the transformation of a shattering experience into habit» – is thus transformed into a notion of repetition as difference, capable of simultaneously referring to and diverting from the primordial event by projecting its productive potential in the future²⁰. The concept of repetition in Benjamin writings oscillates between two extremes: «one, Nietzsche’s eternal return congealed in the law of the commodity, with fashion as both disguise and perpetuation of the ever-same (Baudelaire); the other, dialectically embedded in the first, repetition as the striving for a past happiness that Proust pursued to the point of asphyxiation – a repetition that Deleuze has taught us to read as the production of that past

¹⁹ W. Benjamin, “Spielzeug und Spielen”, cit., p.131; “Toys and Play”, cit., p. 120.

²⁰ M. B. Hansen, *Cinema and Experience. Siegfried Kracauer, Walter Benjamin, and Theodor W. Adorno*, University of California Press, Berkeley-Los Angeles-London 2012, p. 194.

in the very movement of repetition»²¹. In this sense, the notion of repetition doesn't lose its ambiguity, which, as we have seen before, is also inherent to the repetitive gesture of the Taylorist worker or the gambler.

Room for play

From the four versions of the *The Work of Art* essay, the second is the one that better develops the issue of play. Together with the well-known distinction between cult value and exhibition value and the correspondent features that characterize the increase in the latter, Benjamin emphasises a parallel distinction between first and second technology, which refer to two cultural and historical periods of the relationship between mankind and technology. Photography and cinema flourish within the historical period covered by the second technology. Mimesis, and its inner polarity between semblance and play, is conceived as the *Urphänomen* of all artistic activity. For Benjamin, the passage from the first to the second technology implicates decreasing the beautiful semblance (of the «object *in* its veil» – in this text, it's an equivalent to aura). This decrease «is matched by a huge gain in the scope for play [*Spielraum*]»²².

In this context, repetition is presented as an endless variation of essays and test procedures (*Versuchsanordnung*), and therefore as a sort of experimentation. «The once and for all [*Ein für allemal*] applies to the first technology (it deals with irreparable lapse or sacrificial death, which lasts for eternity). The once is as good as never [*Einmal ist keinmal*] applies to the second (it operates by means of experiments and endless varied test procedures). The origin of the second technology lies at the point where, by an unconscious ruse, human beings first began to distance themselves from nature. It lies, in other words, in play»²³. The increase in ludic elements in

²¹ Ivi, p. 195.

²² W. Benjamin, "Das Kunstwerk im Zeitalter seiner technischen Reproduzierbarkeit" (zweite Fassung), in *Gesammelte Schriften*, VII, Suhrkamp, Frankfurt am Main 1989, n. 22, p. 369; «The Work of Art in the Age of Its Technological Reproducibility» (second version), translated by E. Jephcott and H. Zohn, in *Selected Writings*, vol. 3: 1935-1938, Harvard University Press, Cambridge-Massachusetts-London 2002, n. 22, p. 127.

²³ Ivi, p. 359. Ivi, p. 107. Translation changed. For a detailed analysis of this passage, see M. B. Hansen, *Cinema and Experience*, cit., pp. 189-204.

art and its relation with experimentation, a notion that has become part of the artistic milieu at least since modernism, echoes in the examples Benjamin gathered in his notes: «Ludic elements in the new art: futurism, atonal music, *poésie pure*, detective novel, cinema»²⁴. And he also mentions the revolutionary role that Duchamp played in the reconfiguration of art, and particularly in the redefinition of what a work of art might be, hence highlighting the importance of chance, which, as in the case of the production of surrealist objects, can open great room for play (*Spielraum*) in artistic creation²⁵.

In one sense, if we think of the city as a place of habits, where our gestures tend to repeat themselves, devoid of meaning, up to a point where the automatism of our daily lives seems to cage us inexorably in a world of anonymity, urban repetition can thus be seen as a form of anesthetization. But the path we are following in this article, inspired by the very ambiguity of Benjamin's concepts, allows us to understand repetition as closer to the experimental procedures of the *Einmal ist Keinmal*. Cinema, for instance, «manages to assure us of a vast and unsuspected field of action [*Spielraum*]. Our bars and city streets, our offices and furnished rooms, our railroad stations and our factories seemed to close relentlessly around us. Then came film and exploded this prison-world with the dynamite of the split second, so that now we can set off calmly on journeys of adventure among its far-flung debris»²⁶. What is at stake in photography and cinema are the new technologic conditions for the playful transfiguration of the world. Playful, in this sense, encompasses a political and utopic dimension. The German word *Spielraum* also means room for manoeuvre, implicitly referring to a dimension of free movement. Therefore, it is also a threshold, an undetermined space where chance and imagination may become productive. This is true for experimentation in art practices, but also for our

²⁴ W. Benjamin, "Paralipomena und Varia zur zweiten Fassung von 'Das Kunstwerk im Zeitalter seiner technischen Reproduzierbarkeit'", in *Gesammelte Schriften*, I, Suhrkamp, Frankfurt am Main 1974, p. 1048.

²⁵ Ivi, pp. 1045-46.

²⁶ W. Benjamin, "Das Kunstwerk im Zeitalter seiner technischen Reproduzierbarkeit" (zweite Fassung), cit., p. 376; "The Work of Art in the Age of Its Technological Reproducibility" (second version), p. 117.

understanding of and daily relationship with public spaces. Benjamin was always attracted by the urban and architectural elements from Southern Europe. In Naples, for instance, he pinpoints the grey qualities of the stone that dominates the city and the caves hewn in it: «as porous as this stone is the architecture. Building and action interpenetrate in the courtyards, arcades and stairways. In everything, they preserve the scope [*Spielraum*] to become a theatre of new, unforeseen constellations. The stamp of the definitive is avoided»²⁷. The experience of a more porous relationship with urban space²⁸, whether or not transfigured by the lenses of photography or cinema, encompasses the destruction of what in *Das Passagen-Werk* is described as the bourgeois relationship between interior and exterior, inherited from the nineteenth century. Such movements as the Situationist International follow this direction. A passage of Guy Debord's *The Society of Spectacle* echoes Benjamin's formulations:

Proletarian revolution is this *critique of human geography* through which individuals and communities could create places and events commensurate with the appropriation no longer just of their work, but of their entire history. The ever-changing playing field of this new world and the freely chosen variations in the rules of the game will regenerate a diversity of local scenes that are independent without being insular. And this diversity will revive the possibility of authentic *journeys* – journeys within an authentic life that is itself understood as a journey containing its whole meaning within itself.²⁹

This urbanism of «collective play», to use an expression by Brian Elliot while characterizing two of the most important dimensions of architecture in Benjamin's thinking³⁰, can thus be conceived as a form of dismantling the protective shell we still erect today to protect ourselves from the shocks that are part of urban life – they are certainly different from the nineteenth century ones, but they still exist. Through gambling mechanisms or other

²⁷ Walter Benjamin, "Neapel", in *Gesammelte Schriften*, IV, Suhrkamp, Frankfurt am Main 1972, p. 309; "Naples", translated by E. Jephcott, *Selected Writings*, vol. 1: 1913-1926, Harvard University Press, Cambridge-Massachusetts-London 2004, p. 416

²⁸ See A. Benjamin, "Porosity at the Edge: Working through Walter Benjamin's 'Naples'", in Gevork Hartoonian (ed. by), *Walter Benjamin and Architecture*, Routledge, London-New York 2010, pp. 39-50.

²⁹ G. Debord, *The Society of the Spectacle*, translated by K. Knabb, Rebel Press, London 2000, p. 99.

³⁰ The other major tendency would be the urbanism of memory, with Aldo Rossi as its reference. See B. Elliot, *Benjamin for Architects*, Routledge, London-New York 2011, pp. 122-132.

playful procedures, the tools to create a differential space at the core of repetition are at the reach of our gestures.