

'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
 photographic plate from which an image may be
 sentence of this fragment, Benjamin recalls
 reads: 'If one looks upon history as a text, then
ibid is what a recent author says of literary
 as 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
 Benjamin's account, the comparison, however,
 ing phrase of this sentence indicates: 'if one
 consequence 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)³

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-
ncealment 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.⁴ 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
 photograph – but
 used in this case
 use.

change in the
 'producibility'
 'For the first
 artistic tasks
 now devolved
in ins Objektiv
 This freeing
 an event ('for
 time in world
 age is that art
 technical art is,
 but claimed by

which Benjamin
 describes this
 exhibition value

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

instrument of
 'ons'. In each
 a value that
 only known
 with an under-
 ce of a work
 question is, if
 p, what is in
 a there is no
 nce, what is
 image – *das*
 terms of what
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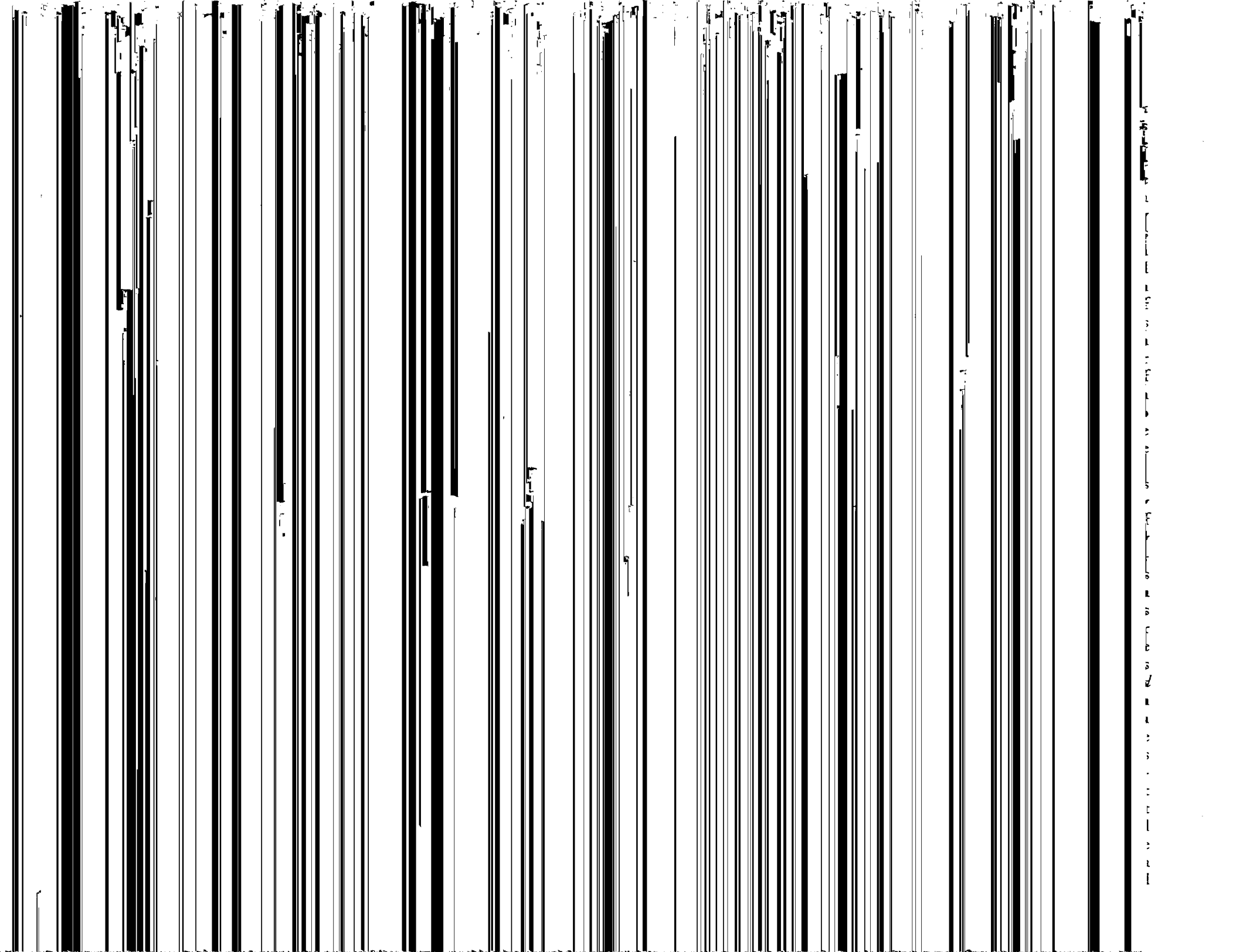
Benjamin writes: 'What determine my course. To the "main lines" of Benjamin uses here, returning through the sentence preceding this disturbance does a return. Benjamin undertaking of a sea magnetic North Pole. North Pole - Benjamin's source of deviation; the North Pole go ation is exhibited for from the photographic image as any other understood as the image, in the fragment reference to the future image in all its details before the passage of time. Time does not However, time as a condition for this future, events - a condition of time and every print is the defined time of its

Benjamin recounts a time as a technical

toramas is brought with the well-known ends painting and condition [*technischen*], being, can and must continuous segment neability [*chronolo-*] the photograph is

ed by Benjamin on different reason. In

at can be made from it),
perty of exhibitionability
fines 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
Is 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.
ducibility' 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
alectical 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



the German

the technical
 appearance
 of history.
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 this coming
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Walter Benjamin and History

Edited by Andrew Benjamin



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