This chapter reads the historical emergence of the interior through the writings of Benjamin, focusing primarily on *The Arcades Project*. It aims to expand upon Benjamin’s often gnomic pronouncements, and then focus his thinking in terms of two sets of issues concerning the study of the interior. The first set has to do with the evidence the interior furnishes for historical study. The trace of the inhabitant, caught as it is between securing a private identity, and positioning the subject within frames of detection and governance, suggests that one cannot assume its transparency to something like a stable or true essence of bourgeois private life. Indeed, the supposed stability offered by the interior is a reaction to the alienation and disjunctions of the modernizing city, as well as being complicit with the forms of surveillance and governance produced by and through the city. In this way, the trace has effects both within the historical context of bourgeois domesticity, and in the way one may have access to it as a historical context. As an extension of these issues, a second line of investigation engages with the status of the nineteenth century against an ever-shifting context of the present. Emerging through Benjamin’s account of the bourgeois domestic interior is a philosophy of history that reveals critical and illuminating discontinuities in the movement of historical time.

The resources for thinking developed in this reading of Benjamin are used to critique the ways in which historical studies of the interior, privacy and domesticity have been conventionally conceived. These studies have tended to confuse the constricted, mortified inhabitant with its counterpart, the private individual who is supposed to ‘live on’ through history. Following Benjamin’s own historical treatment of the interior, it will be shown that while the effects of the interior’s emergence are felt in palpable ways in the present, it is not because of its progressive, stylistic development, or because of the continuity of its inhabiting subject.

**The short historical life of the bourgeois domestic interior**

‘Against the armature of glass and iron, upholstery offers resistance with its textiles.’3 In this single line, embedded within the voluminous text of Benjamin’s *Arcades Project*, arcade and domestic interior come together. This coming together is, however, arranged around a point of resistance. Arcades offer a structural armature and a hardness of material finish that upholstery and textiles resist in their stuffing and covering. Arcades figure the wedded advance of technology and commerce, the emblem of the modernizing city; upholstery and textiles figure the domestic interior as a site of refuge from the city and its new, alienating forms of experience. Yet this resistance heightens their mutual entanglement. Benjamin writes of arcades themselves as kinds of interiors in the city, spaces that reorganize relations between inside and outside: ‘The domestic interior moves outside. . . . The street becomes room and the room becomes street.’ And: ‘Arcades are houses or passages having no outside – like the dream.’4

In producing *The Arcades Project* as a fragmentary history of the nineteenth century, a history of discontinuity, Benjamin recognized a productive instability in the emergent concept of the interior, and in its associated concepts such as dwelling and domesticity:
It was from the beginning of the nineteenth century that interior views were painted and drawn as ends in themselves, as a specific genre (Figure 1.1). Echoing the Benjaminian short historical life of the interior, Charlotte Gere suggests:

The depiction of rooms for their own sake, rather than as a background to a narrative, anecdotal or portrait painting, germinated, reached its fullest flowering and died within the space of one century. It was not unusual for such interiors to form a group, representing different aspects of several rooms. They were intended to be placed in albums rather than to be framed and hung, and remained an almost secret possession. . . . When the interior view went out of fashion in the second half of the nineteenth century, their very existence seems to have been forgotten. They were rendered obsolete by the development of a photographic camera capable of focusing on a great depth of field and thus able to do the job of the interior view-painter much more quickly and no less efficiently. Some of these [photographic] albums survive, giving an invaluable picture of decorating taste in the period 1880–1910, before they too were forgotten, like the albums of paintings they had superseded. Mario Praz’s rediscovery of this minor but fascinating art barely thirty years ago (his pioneering Illustrated History of Interior Decoration was published in 1964) was a revelation, and the historic no less than aesthetic importance of the subject is now recognized by a group of informed collectors.42

In this passage, Gere shifts from discussing the specificity of this representational practice and its private significance to describing how these representations give on to a much broader conception of visual evidence for a history of the interior. Praz’s
continuous history of Western image making. Stoichita’s argument about meta-painting is compelling in its own terms, that is, as an argument about the emergence of easel painting as such, but it is worth returning to the idea that a genre of the interior view emerged in a specific practice of professional and amateur watercolour painting, and in engravings used to publish interior decoration schemes. As such, this genre emerged outside of fine-art easel painting, and in relation to architecture and techniques of representation proper to architecture.

In these terms, Robin Evans has argued that the interior attained a legibility in representation with difficulty. He notes that the ‘room’ became a new subject matter for architectural drawing from the mid-eighteenth century. This occurred with the emergence of what he calls the developed surface drawing, one which shows all of the inside elevations of any given room folded out relative to the room’s depicted plan (Figure 1.2). Evans notes that this was a more comprehensive
the methods of surveillance suggested to parents, the exhortations, secrets and fears, the presence – both valued and feared – of servants: all this made the family, even when brought down to its smallest dimensions, a complicated network, saturated with multiple, fragmentary and mobile sexualities. To reduce them to the conjugal relationship, and then to project the latter, in the form of a forbidden desire, onto the children, cannot account for the apparatus which, in relation to these sexualities, was less a principle of inhibition than an inciting and multiplying mechanism.9

Psychoanalysis is not simply reducible to the ‘family drama’, but must be considered in relation to a spatialization of its power and effects. In turn, it is useful to consider how this spatialization brought into discourse the particular subjectivities at stake in the domestic interior.

The domesticity of psychoanalysis
The spatialization of sexuality gained its discursive form in psychoanalysis in several ways. Initially, the symbolism of the domestic in Freud’s theory of dream interpretation is important to consider. A crucial aspect of this theory had to do with breaking up the manifest appearance of a dream and reassembling the constituent parts into a narrative of interpretation.10 Often, this manifest appearance was associated with the domestic interior. In his writings on dreams, Freud produced a litany of interpretations of their domesticity. In developing these, he drew on and critiqued earlier theorists of dreams who associated parts of a house, especially its interior, with parts of the body. The advance Freud made from these earlier theorists was in suggesting that associations were made in dreams between unconscious impulses and domestic scenes, and further, that sexual imagery was hidden behind these supposedly innocent scenes.11 In one particular example, Freud highlighted the association of a derogatory German term for women, Frauenzimmer (literally, ‘women’s room’),12 with the dream symbolism of rooms:

Rooms in dreams are usually women (‘Frauenzimmer’); if the various ways in and out of them are represented, this interpretation is scarcely open to doubt. In this connection interest in whether the room is open or locked is easily intelligible. . . . A dream of going into a suite of rooms is a brothel or a harem dream. But, as Sachs has shown by some neat examples, it can also be used (by antithesis) to represent marriage.13

This sexualized consideration of the interior as dream symbol is augmented in the later theorization of the psyche by what might be called an organizational consideration. In his introductory lectures on psychoanalysis from the beginning of the twentieth century, Freud used a suite of rooms to explain the structure of the unconscious:

an individual process belongs to begin with to the system of the unconscious and can then, in certain circumstances, pass over into the system of the conscious.
The case study will be recounted in detail to shed light on the importance to Freud of ‘family circumstances’. It was Dora’s father who brought the 18-year-old to see Freud. This action of parental authority was intended to restore order to familial relations, yet it was the action that allowed the instabilities in these relations to be released into discourse. Dora’s father had wanted Freud to “‘talk’ Dora out” of her belief that he was having an affair with Frau K., a close family friend. The affair had started when Frau K. began to nurse Dora’s unwell father, a role which Dora had herself fulfilled, and which her mother did not. Dora also became close to the young Frau K., who acted as a kind of mother figure in place of the lack of attention paid her by her own mother. Herr K. was also interested in Dora, and had propositioned her on an occasion when the families were on holiday together. Dora reacted with disgust at this advance, and a brief while after it had taken place, she informed her parents of it. Herr K. denied that he had made an advance, and made allegations to Dora’s parents about the young woman’s lack of innocence in sexual matters. When Dora tried to persuade her father to break ties with Frau K. sensibly as a result of this event, she suffered an attack which brought to a head a series of repressed symptoms and negative feelings towards her father, whom she had previously adored. It was at this point that Dora was taken to Freud.

Dora recounted to Freud how she felt she had been ‘handed over’ to Herr K. so that her father’s relationship could continue with Frau K. Freud interpreted it as a situation where Dora was actually complicit with the staging of her father’s relationship because of her love for Herr K. Freud interpreted her hysterical symptoms and actions, including her relation to a governess who she was convinced was in love with her father, and whom she had had dismissed, as indications of a repressed love. It was Dora’s identification with the governess that was, according to Freud, the reason for her repudiation of Herr K.’s advance; in the manner of the advance, she felt she was being treated like Herr K. had once treated one of his own servants. Dora had waited two weeks to let her parents know about the incident so, Freud says, that Herr K. could renew his advance, but that two weeks was effectively the period in which she ‘gave her notice’, much as a servant would. Furthermore, Freud suggested that the maintenance of the affair between Dora’s father and Frau K. was actually for Dora’s convenience. One of Dora’s dreams that Freud analyses in detail suggests her desire to depart from her family and Herr K., a vengeance Freud detects as also aimed at himself due to Dora’s premature departure from analysis, giving, in her mind at least, two weeks’ notice.

Freud’s narration and interpretation of the case is about the reorganization of a familial order through Dora’s assent to Herr K. Had his proposition been received by Dora, this would have opened the way for his divorce from his wife, also ostensibly opening the way for Frau K. and Dora’s father’s relationship to have a legitimacy at the expense of Dora’s mother, towards whom no one seems to have been able to be more than tolerant. At the point Freud offered Dora this interpretation, she ceased her analysis. He concludes the case history by recounting that many years after her treatment Dora married a man Freud initially mistakes as a suitor who had appeared in the second of two dreams, whose analysis forms a large part of the case study. The study is neatly tied up by Freud at this supposed restoration of familial values:
similitudes) nor what they represent (their symbolic interpretations), but their constitution as signifier-things in a collection. Like signifiers, that is, they promise a legibility which they deny; like things, they opaquely, mutely point only to themselves.\(^{50}\)

This description emphasizes the thing-like, and the Thing-like, nature of the photographs, their manifestation as flat objects hung on walls, walls they themselves have interiorized, but which in no clear way do they represent.

These arguments concerning Freud’s consulting rooms begin to reach beyond the particularity of their historical circumstance, raising broader issues concerning representation and the constitutive role the interior has in theorizations of psychoanalysis. It is worth reframing the account of psychoanalysis once more to deal with these issues. This will occur through a consideration of the uncanny and the double in psychoanalytic theory.

**The doubled interior of psychoanalytic theory**

**Representing the uncanny**

In his writing about the uncanny, architectural theorist Anthony Vidler has pointed to a sense of a modern unhomely, a phantasmagoric unsettling double that arises out of the cosiness and protection offered by the domestic interior.\(^{51}\) He has traced the emergence of this uncanny in an aesthetic of the sublime that is experienced in relation to the interior, ‘a domesticated version of absolute terror’,\(^{52}\) projected in the fairy tales of E. T. A. Hoffmann and the writings of Edgar Allan Poe:

> Its favourite motif was precisely the contrast between a secure and homely interior and the fearful invasion of an alien presence; on a psychological level, its play was one of doubling, where the other is, strangely enough, experienced as a replica of the self, all the more fearsome because apparently the same.\(^{53}\)

Vidler argues that the development of the uncanny as a sensibility of the nineteenth century also arose with the alienating and anxiety-inducing forms of experience in the burgeoning metropolis, captured in the sense of an estrangement from sure foundations that was coupled with a sense of the march of progress. The conditions of modern estrangement involve for Vidler the interactions between subjects and spaces, but he sees that these interactions are only analysable at the level of their representation. He suggests:

> As a concept, then, the uncanny has, not unnaturally, found its metaphorical home in architecture: first in the house, haunted or not, that pretends to afford the utmost security while opening itself to the secret intrusion of terror, and then in the city, where what was once walled and intimate, the confirmation of community . . . has been rendered strange by the spatial incursions of modernity. In both cases, of course, the ‘uncanny’ is not a property of the space itself nor can it be provoked by any particular spatial conformation; it is, in its aesthetic dimension, a representation of
Contrast this with the Ground-plan of Old Connaught [1859] on the same Plate, and the Mediaeval features of the latter will readily be perceived. The Porch, with its uncentral position; the Hall, with its Screen and Bay-window; its communication, at the Dais end (so to speak) with the Family-rooms, and at the Entry-end, with the offices; the privacy of the Staircase; and the characteristic irregularity, although perfect convenience, of the thoroughfare lines, are especially interesting and ingenious. At the same time the absence of affectation in this plan is worthy of great praise.25

In discussing the plan of Llwyn House, Kerr’s language is couched in terms of abstract principles of composition. The greater space he devotes to Old Connaught allows...
loyalty and pride in work from servants. And he adds: ‘should the mistress not have
the run of her own house?’ But Stevenson believed the private lives of both family
and servants should be respected. It is not through an actual openness that what
Kerr called each community should know of what the other does, but through a kind
of picturing. Stevenson remarks: ‘Household work is not a thing to be ashamed of or
hidden out of sight; it has been a favourite subject with many painters, but a sense
of fitness will keep it to its proper place.’ Here Stevenson is using a trope of picturing
inhabitation which can usefully be compared to Kerr’s sense of imagining inhabitation.
Stevenson asks the reader to treat a particular domestic scene as the subject of
representation, and one sees this scene not as a freely imagined one, but as the
imagination of the way one would perceive a picture, in this case, a framed genre
painting. This situation can be referred back to Scarry’s categories of imagining to
understand the difference between Kerr and Stevenson on this point. Kerr’s sense
of imagining was explained as the production of mimetic content, where no direct
perceptual stimulus of what is to be imagined is given to the subject who imagines.
Imagination can then have a vivacity normally associated with sensory perceptions.
Stevenson’s imaginative act, however, entails the imagining of a perceptual act
that is, the imagining of looking at a representation of an interior scene. Even at
further remove, the imagination of someone in the act of painting an interior scene.
This appears to be a hybrid of the verbal and the visual arts: the mimetic content
imagined is actually the creation of direct visual content which would be the object
of visual perception. This hybrid encourages imagining as looking, bound as looking
is by the close attention to material details, rather than the freer act of imagining
proper, that is, the production of mimetic content, where the compensation for not
directly perceiving the world is an ability to stretch it, and literally make it up, wherein
lies imagining’s vivacity.

In Stevenson’s text, the reader is instructed to imagine a series of interior
genre pictures. The instruction interprets the picture at the same moment that it sets
it before the reader’s imagination. This is demonstrated in Stevenson’s account of a
typical drawing-room, a word-picture he presents in order to argue against what Kerr
argued for, that is, the separation of function into discrete rooms:

Except on rare occasions, the [drawing]-room remains unused, in dignified
and dismal desolation, all the more cheerless that it is kept in perfect order
– the furniture all swathed in brown holland, everything in its proper place,
the books on the round table in the centre of the room (without which,
no lady’s drawing-room is considered to be complete), radiated at equal
distances around its circumference. It serves its purpose, in producing
that consciousness of being as good as our neighbours, in which consists
so much of the happiness of life.

Stevenson follows this description of the drawing-room by advocating the idea of the
general-purpose medieval hall, and after having discussed the planning of domestic
dwellings in full, he again returns to the idea of the hall, both as a form of commu-
nication between rooms, and as a space of inhabitation by the family. He advocates
it as a kind of multi-purpose space, able to reduce the size, and even the necessity
Despite the visual similarities between these two photographs, each captures the creation and inhabitation of an English interior as the result of vastly different geographical possibilities for consumption. These enticing similarities must first be ignored in order to investigate these different possibilities. One will then be in a better position to explain what these similarities mean.

**Clothing and cleanliness**

Via Muthesius, English Arts and Crafts domestic architecture received its first major critical analysis. Muthesius’s three-volume study *Das englische Haus* was published in Germany in 1904–5, immediately after his return there from England. The study
‘whiplash’ line of the Continental versions perhaps was more malleable and capable of more indeterminate forms of expression. Indeed, this line had an anthropomorphizing tendency in that, as Muthesius suggests, ‘one seeks to clarify certain static images more forcibly than before with the vigorous assistance of human “empathy.” The chair becomes something straddle-legged and crouching, the table leg an elastic line like the weight-bearing human foot.’ Colour was also in unison with form: ‘both strive to embody the same emotional constituents of feeling’.

All of these tendencies appeared fruitful to Muthesius in showing possibilities of siting the work of cultural renewal in the interior, and with the individual subject. But they inevitably fell across the shift that marked the difference between the two editions of Style-architecture and Building-art: the initial possibility of the artistic (Jugendstil) dwelling, and the subsequent perception of its failings. In terms of the possibilities for the interior, what would survive the ‘pendular sweep of emotional values’, values highlighted by Walter Benjamin, would be the ‘necessary and constant demands of material, purpose and construction’. Muthesius is perhaps in expounding the values of the English interior above that of the Continental movements rests, ultimately, on a constellation of ‘objective values’ which needed to be promoted to the German bourgeoisie where the more fickle emotional values that were having a momentary appeal at the turn of the twentieth century. Yet these values were still promoted in terms of the subjective affect of the interior felt through inhabitation:

Here, amid the architectural extravagance that the architects promoted, one found all that one desired and for which one thirsted: adaptation to needs and local conditions, unpretentiousness and honesty of feeling; utmost coziness and comfort in the layout of rooms, colour, an uncommonly attractive and painterly (but also reasonable) design, and an economy in building construction. The new English domestic building-art that developed on this basis has now produced valuable results... It has created the only sure foundation for a new artistic culture: the artistic house... In contrast, our new Continental movement will have to wander in journals and exhibitions until we Germans will finally have an artistic house... The sort of inhabitation that Muthesius was promoting for the German bourgeoisie was an imaginative one, the stimuli for which would be found in exhibiting the interior publicly. But the impetus for this thinking can be related to Muthesius’s own inhabitation of an English interior in London. At one level, Muthesius’s description above is a direct doubling of the photograph of him and his wife at home in Hammersmith, the photograph demonstrating an exemplary instance of a couple shaping their own four walls. Yet there is also a large-scale shift evidenced here. In comparing photograph and description, a private and individualized domesticity is placed next to the beginnings of a reform programme for the German nation as a whole. The affectivity that the photograph gave to the Muthesiuses’ remembrances of their life lived in London was borne out in a domesticity conceived at the scale of the German nation. An individualized practice of inhabitation comes to organize a nation’s inhabitation.
an historical unit’. This ‘unit’ treats the history of the modern movement as the transfer of an impetus from Britain to Germany via Muthesius, effectively bypassing the influence of Art Nouveau and Jugendstil, and pushing for the objectivity which can be read as explaining the subsequent programmes of industrial manufacture at the Werkbund and the Bauhaus.

Yet Ian Buruma has written of Pevsner’s association with England in a way that counters the progressive and causative narrative at the heart of Pevsner’s account. As a counterpoint to Pevsner’s claim for the roots of the modern movement in England, Buruma muses on the ‘reality’ of modern England, and more especially London, as largely historicist and anti-modern in architectural character at the time of Pevsner’s arrival there in the early 1930s. Buruma argues that Pevsner was an Anglophile, and he describes his love of English national character in terms similar to those used by Muthesius: an emphasis on straightforwardness and common sense, but with a cast of suspicion for the kind of radicality and avant-gardism that provided the modern movement with its impact in Continental Europe. Modernism, as a Continental phenomenon, may well have been treated with suspicion in England for the very reasons an English sensibility presaged its dissimilarities in Europe. Buruma connects these sorts of difficulties to the Hegelian historical method, or particularly to Pevsner’s Hegelianism, and the way in which this progressivist idea of historical method is itself antithetical to appraisals of English culture by the English themselves. And this difficulty bears witness to a shift in Pevsner’s historical project vis-à-vis England, a shift evidenced in the difference of trajectory between Pioneers of Modern Design, the movement of an English culture out into a European consciousness, and The Englishness of English Art, an appraisal of the difference between English and Continental culture manifest through art. The trajectory of exchange in Pevsner’s actual writing of Pioneers of Modern Design is also important to consider. As Panayotis Tournikiotis observes, Pevsner wrote the book before he left Germany, but it was Pevsner’s first in English, and was published in 1936 when he had made his home in England. Tournikiotis adds that Pevsner’s history was operative in the sense of providing direction for architects, suggesting that the publication of the work in English was meant to provide an impetus for the development of (Continental) modernism there.

**Mobility and fashionized consumption**

Thinking geographically about this narrative of translation between England and Germany shows its progressive trajectory to be problematic. This problematic can be understood through fashion, and the way in which it has actively been disavowed in order to construct this progressive trajectory. Wigley has shown how Muthesius’s role in debates over fashion and style, and his situation of architecture within a logic of fashion, while crucial to the formation of the narratives of the modern movement, has been effaced from them. As was shown previously, Muthesius articulated Sachlichkeit within a logic of the external presentation of cleanliness and hygiene, which he understood through clothing. This articulation presented problems for understanding how the unity of style might be differentiated from the transitoriness of fashion, but Wigley has argued that the logic of clothing as architecture remained...
place. In becoming an external, circulating image, any association with the *mémoire involontaire*, that special memory of the domestic, is lost. The photograph is a veil which cannot be seen through. It is a point of severance.

But with Loos, the photographs of his interiors are not simply mechanical, subject-less copies. They recapture something of the aura of the unique and unexpected. It is useful to consider some manipulations in two sets of photographs in order to understand how the photograph might simultaneously mask but also manipulate a sense of interior spatial experience. One set shows Loos’s Khuner House in Payerbach, Austria (1930), where a picture window is shown with two alternative views (Figures 5.1 and 5.2). The other set shows the music room in Loos’s

5.1 Adolf Loos, Khuner House, Payerbach, Austria, 1930. View of master’s room. By permission Albertina, Vienna. ALA 2292

between frontality and rotation as one between ideation and experience. And what Le Corbusier demands of architectural composition is that it should acknowledge the mutual interdependence of the one on the other. For when it comes to Le Corbusier’s paintings, Krauss suggests that ‘Pictorial space is that which cannot be entered or circulated through; it is irremediably space viewed from a distance, and is therefore eternally resigned to frontality.’ For Krauss, here quoting Léger, the relation between frontality and rotation contributed to ‘giving order to sensation’. This was an order made manifest in the relation between painting and architecture. Krauss writes: ‘Depicted object, painting, room, building: all of them were widening concentric circles in the matrix of sensation; all of them were nested brackets in an equation which was to equal coherence.’

Yet there is evidence to suggest that the discrepancy at the core of the interior’s doubleness lurks within this supposed compositional solution in the wake of the interior’s liquidation. Le Corbusier himself was distinctly aware of an interference between the paintings and the space in Maison La Roche. It emerged most clearly when he was thinking through the distribution of the paintings around the house. Tim Benton quotes from a letter Le Corbusier sent to Ozenfant over the issue of the hang, one that eventually led to a falling out between the two men. Le Corbusier writes:

It’s about La Roche’s paintings: He asked me to take care of the hanging of the pictures in such a way that the arrangement should fit in with the architecture. . . . He insisted on reserving the gallery exclusively for Purism, having himself removed the Picassos which I had hung there. When I dropped in at La Roche’s yesterday on a practical matter, I noted the great transformations which you made. Nothing could please me
take your pick – into a professedly more ‘healthy’ sense of movement and openness. But the mechanism for this translation was the interior’s doubleness, a particular construal of, but also problem with, the relation between a spatial and an image-based condition. What is interesting to consider here, finally, is how this modernist engagement with the interior’s doubleness leverages a larger issue, one to do with how architecture claims its disciplinary role within the industrialized metropolis. In *The Modulor*, Le Corbusier’s definition of architecture as a phenomenon experienced in movement was coupled with an expanded definition of architecture to encompass the infrastructural. The modulor grid would act as a regulating net spreading out from the vision of a modulor man in motion, encompassing an urbanized field. Le Corbusier’s speculative urban schemes, from, for example, the Ville Contemporaine (1922), to the Obus plans for Algiers (1932–42), show a desire to link the organization of movement and the organization of dwellings. Benjamin has a compelling interpretation of such plans:

Le Corbusier’s ‘contemporary city’ is yet another settlement along a highway. Only the fact that now its precincts are travelled over by autos, and that aeroplanes now land in its midst changes everything. An effort must be made to secure a foothold here from which to cast a productive glance, a form-and-distance-creating glance, on the nineteenth century.  

In the Obus plans, fragments of the old city of Algiers were to be rearticulated within a scheme that would see architecture-become-urbanism give a new visual and perceptual identity to the city. The sinuous lines of the plans concretize an image of the unifying *promenade architecturale* at the urban level. Manfredo Tafuri has seen the failure of such plans, and the conception of architecture’s agency they embody, in terms of architecture’s utopian thinking. At one level, the failure had to do with the image of totality that the plans portrayed, and the subsequent difficulty in realizing this image as architecture. For Tafuri, the desire for such a ‘total’ realization stemmed from a misconstrual of architecture’s disciplinary agency in the face of the external forces that drove urban planning.

But with the Maison La Roche, there is a more subtle and perhaps more compelling realization of the *promenade architecturale* as an urban condition. It was a promenade effected as an interior condition, but where this was made coextensive with the existing city. And it was a promenade that eventually gave way to the reality that there needed to be pictures on walls. From its completion, Maison La Roche was open Tuesday and Friday afternoons for public viewing of the La Roche collection. While it may have been a very select public that had their names recorded in La Roche’s golden visitor’s book, the promenade acted as a continuation of the experience of the urban field. The architectural unity asserted at its end was one of relation between interior and urban field, a recognition of their interdependence spatially and experientially.

**The interior archaic and new**

For Benjamin, what was new in the architecture and urbanism of Le Corbusier was precisely the vantage it offered on the past. Thus Le Corbusier’s promenades offered...
ways that were themselves effects of this semantic development. But understanding the interior in a way that also recognizes its elusiveness means that many of the certainties that are usually associated with the term and its material manifestations are questioned. These are the certainties of a continuous, developing history of the interior, a simplified, affirming psychology of the interior, and a sense that the interior is subservient to architecture as the primary ‘space provider’ in culture. Considering the emergence of the interior means entertaining the idea that it is not what ‘we’ know it to be. The effects of its emergence have been more diffuse, yet more pervasive, than those highlighted when it is defined in terms of what is already assumed, or what seems to be essential.

It is perhaps most useful to understand these certainties not as what this account of the interior has ideologically opposed, but rather to understand that they are themselves effects of the interior’s emergence, points of stability which attempt to counter the uncertainty and disjunction at the core of this emergence. The critical potential of recognizing the interior’s emergence is shown here. Rather than simply being seen as one among many cultural and social phenomena, the interior can be treated as a critical tool for understanding key formations of the modern of which it is inextricably a part.

One of the aims of this book has been to propose that ‘we’ change our ways by embracing some other condition of the private and domesticity it might support, as if there was simply a choice to be made. Rather, it is the very framing in terms of ‘we’, the naturalization of the (bourgeois) domestic subject as the pre-requisite and assumed centre of consideration, that needs to be questioned as a final stage in this study of the interior’s emergence. To pursue this idea, examples of architectural and social-scientific literature will be investigated to see how they deal with changes in domesticity brought about by the presence of electronic media. These considerations extend the discussion of the relation between domesticity and the media from Chapter 5, the focus in this instance being placed on how the subjectivities and formations of the interior might be rethought through new media and technology.

Un-privacy

In his survey of late-twentieth-century architectural design for houses, Terence Riley has identified a condition of the ‘un-private house’ consequent upon the infiltration of electronic media. To support this claim, Riley develops a conception of domestic privacy through accounts such as A History of Private Life, and Witold Rybczynski’s Home: A Short History of an Idea. Following these, he argues that the house has been associated with privacy since the seventeenth century. He also recognizes that the house does not cut the public world off from the private. Indeed, various media form a link between them, and in the nineteenth century, the development of rooms such as the study and the library became the context for the bourgeoisie to engage with the media in the form of books, newspapers and magazines. The presence of such media in the private house is consistent with the idea that it is the interior, itself a concept involving the sense of its mediation in images, that provides the context for this presence as one of its defining characteristics. Yet Riley’s historical account leads towards the characterization of a contemporary situation where the boundaries
consideration because of the way in which it reconstitutes many of the key terms that have been discussed in this book, including the family, the city, geography, subjectivity and the image.

While the storyline of 24 – a group of counter-terrorist operatives attempt to foil a complex assassination plot within the space of 24 hours – belongs to the hybrid genre of the action thriller, Hight argues that the characters’ relations to one another are entirely oedipalized, in this way replicating a family structure. This structuring takes place at the scale of the city: 24 constructs an image of the suburbanized metropolis, in this case Los Angeles, as a network of interiors. This network is imaged through the way in which action takes place in discrete interiorized locales which give no indication of an exterior. As Hight suggests:

Throughout the programme, the *oikos* no longer possesses a formal organic unity; instead, domesticities are continually divided into smaller pockets of space orchestrated by the interaction between various members. Although each of these spaces is coded as domestic, the characters orbit each other in an escalating claustrophobic estrangement. In each episode, characters move through up to a dozen or more social networks, each time folding one into another and multiplying connections.14

This condition is articulated not as the loss of a previously secure and discrete sense of the interior, nor as its simple expansion, but as a condition of suburbanization. This articulates a shift in how the interior is constructed through media transmission and reception. The multiplying connections between the programme’s characters are enabled by communications technologies such as mobile phones and the internet. The crucial characteristic of the connectivity between the discrete, interiorized locales of action – and the structural conceit of the television programme – is its simultaneity. This simultaneity impacts upon how the suburbanism of Los Angeles is understood spatially, or, rather, it points towards a metropolitan organization where relations conventionally defined by distance are overwritten by the simultaneity of mediated relations. Hight notes how Los Angeles is never depicted in its suburban vastness. The mobile interiors of the Chevy Suburban SUVs that transport characters between the different scenes of action serve as locales of communication, where telephone calls and data transfers deliver information, circumventing the need for actual movement. Indeed, the spatial movement of these vehicles is factored out of the programme’s 24-hour conceit. As Hight suggests, if the characters had to be delivered to geographically separated locations for action to take place, the entire 24 hours of the programme would be taken up in travel time, and nothing would actually happen. Instead, interactions via communications technologies construct these characters as true cybernetic organisms, their interior being the ‘static vehicle’.15

All of these relationships are communicated by the programme’s montage:

24’s montage regularly breaks into multiple split screens with as many as seven separate frames. Sometimes a character in one frame communicates (either in person or by electronic device) to one in another frame,
First, as Riley and Morley recognize, this would involve the idea that the interior is implicated in both the reception and the transmission of electronic media. But what is crucial here is the idea that the interior is also something transmissible. This does not simply mean that images of interiors are the content of media transmissions, though in many instances they are. Rather, taking up the idea of the image as machinic, the interior is not simply represented by the image, but is actually constituted through a condition of transmission and reception. Such a condition can produce a spatialized interior in locales such as SUVs and open-plan offices. These interiors are not different in kind – and do not necessarily replace – the more recognizable domestic interiors of the suburban metropolis. Indeed, interiors can be constituted in this way at these more conventional locales. As Hight has shown, the production of interiors through electronic media does not rely on, or merely corrupt, conventional concepts or manifestations of domesticity. Rather, it produces new ones.  

But this condition of newness is not simply the next in line of developments. In the way architecture’s engagement with mass media was understood in Chapter 5, it is a condition illuminated in relation to what it appears to render outmoded. This sense of illumination is made by a conceptual consistency which has been dealt with through this book: the interior in its doubleness. Such a conceptual consistency does not imply the continuity of forms or experiences of the interior. It can cope with discontinuity in the movement of historical time, and does not have recourse to categories such as style, or notions such as the progressive development of essential domestic qualities. In the context of these concluding thoughts, such a conceptual consistency actually makes it impossible to think about the interior in a conventional way as something infiltrated by electronic media, and thereby having sacrificed its ‘naturally domestic’ qualities. And in the way new modes of domesticity and the interior’s formation become thinkable through electronic media, such a conceptual consistency highlights how certain qualities of domesticity have in fact become naturalized.

Even though the interior is still a current and pervasive concept, this does not simply mean that its bourgeois or even its modernist manifestations are recognizable today, or are simply different options to be chosen, though at the level of consumer culture, the interior is indeed imaged in terms of such ‘styles’. Rather, that it is still possible to speak of the interior means that one’s thinking is organized around the interior’s doubleness: the interior is constituted by and recognized through the relation between image and space. These images and spaces do not have any essential characteristics. As such, it is possible to shift between different concepts of the image, and to consider different spatialities that might link to these. Throughout this book, the image has been considered in terms of either imaginal or representational concepts. In considering current questions, the machinic offers itself as a particularly useful conceptualization of the image, one that can deal with new formations of the interior, and the forms of life they might structure. The spatiality of the interior, never wholly separate from such imagistic considerations, never simply the three-dimensional reality of the interior, might be conceived of in a conventional enclosed sense, or wholly outside of such an architecturally based designation. While
the interior’s relation to architecture has been a major concern of the book, one might begin to think of its relation to different concepts and instances of spacing and structuring. What the idea of the interior’s historical emergence might reveal, in the end, is a sense of how one might be able to think differently about the history and future orientation of what has come to be known as domesticity.
(With reference to painting, *interior painting*, or simply, *interior*, genre painting which has as its principal object the representation of the architecture and effects of light in the interior of houses and other buildings. Equally one could speak of a painting which represents scenes of domestic life in the interior of a house.) Available HTTP: <http://portail.atilf.fr/dictionnaires/onelook.htm>. The *Trésor de la langue française* dates *tableau d’intérieur* to 1829. Available HTTP: <http://atilf.atilf.fr/tlf.htm>. German derives its usage for *interieur* from the French, recognizing its meaning in the post-nineteenth-century sense of the interior of a room, its decoration, and its sense as a representation of such conditions. The more particular sense given by the *Duden Wörterbuch für interieur* as image is as follows: ‘(bild Kunst) *einen Innenraum darstellendes Bild, besonders in der niederländischen Malerei des 17. Jh.s.*’ (art image) the inner room as a representational image, particularly in Dutch painting of the seventeenth century). *Duden. Das große Wörterbuch der deutschen Sprache*, Mannheim: Duden Verlag, 1999. This suggests that the naming of the domestic scenes of Dutch seventeenth-century painting was a nineteenth-century occurrence. See Chapter 1 for a discussion of the place of Dutch painting in relation to the history of the interior.


9 The domestic interior gives a spatial and representational sense to a subjective notion of interiority that, according to Carolyn Steedman, arose with prominence in the late eighteenth century through the figure of the child, and the idea of childhood for the bourgeoisie. Childhood took hold into the nineteenth century as the history of the self, a history which then became theorized by Freud around the turn of the twentieth century through the unconscious. Thus the personal history that a child embodied came to define an adult concept of interiority. See Carolyn Steedman, *Strange Dislocations: Childhood and the Idea of Human Interiority*, 1780–1930, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1995, p. 4. In her study of paintings of bourgeois interiors, Susan Sidlauskas emphasizes ‘two different kinds of interiors: the body and the inner chamber of the house’, where ‘the imaginative relation between the body and its surroundings must always be in doubt’. Susan Sidlauskas, *Body, Place and Self in Nineteenth-Century Painting*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000, p. 2, emphasis in original. Further on, she argues that ‘Subjectivity became interiority when it was staged in the space that was identified with its most intense, authentic expression: the domestic interior’ (p. 19). Here Sidlauskas recognizes the mutual implication and inseparability of subjectivity and interiority – as well as subject and interior – with the rise of the bourgeois domestic interior: ‘Subjectivity was not simply pictured within the domestic interior; it was here that it came into being’ (p. 20, emphasis in original).

10 Peter Gay, *The Bourgeois Experience: Victoria to Freud*, 5 vols, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984–99, vol. 1, p. 43. In a seminal article, John Lukacs has laid out the historical characteristics of what he calls the bourgeois spirit, which is not reducible to the sociologically verifiable characteristics of a class. He sees that this spirit reached its apogee in the nineteenth century through the way in which domestic arrangements carried crucial significations of bourgeois life. Yet his account suggests that the domestic interior was the prerequisite for such an amplification of domesticity, rather than being historically emergent in relation to the newly articulated domestic needs of the bourgeoisie, as this book will argue. See John Lukacs, ‘The Bourgeois Interior’, *American Scholar*, vol. 39, no. 4, 1970, pp. 616–30.

11 While it is important to realize the difference between spatialities, decorative styles and modes of inhabitation of interiors in different European centres of culture, this study emphasizes the concept of the interior as one which, in an interpretive sense, is mobile across these differences. See, for example, the way in which Donald Olsen describes the difference between domestic


13 It should be noted that ‘space’ as a specifically architectural concept denoting three-dimensional volume only became conceptualized towards the end of the nineteenth century, and it could be argued that it owes its conceptualization to the cultural significance of the bourgeois domestic interior. One of the key theorizers of space was August Schmarsow, who tied his conceptualization to the comfortableness of the interior: ‘the true artistic expression of the interioral sense of space will certainly be greeted with pleasure and enjoyed with gratitude in all those enduring places where the work of our civilisation is done, down to the domestic seclusion and cozy setting of our private lives.’ August Schmarsow, ‘The Essence of Architectural Creation’, in Harry Francis Mallgrave and Eleftherios Ikonomou (eds), *Empathy, Form and Space: Problems in German Aesthetics, 1873–1893*, Santa Monica: Getty Center for the History of Art and the Humanities, 1994, p. 296. Similarly, one might read Gottfried Semper’s mid-nineteenth-century attempt to provide a foundational theory for architecture in his four elements as one concerned with claiming the interior as foundational for architecture. His theory gives priority to the hearth-surrounding woven enclosure as the primary element in architectural creation. Supporting structure, what might be thought to be properly architectural, is rendered secondary. See Gottfried Semper, *The Four Elements of Architecture and Other Writings*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989, pp. 101–10.


16 In his discussion of classical notions of domesticity in the Renaissance treatises of Alberti, Mark Wigley has argued that ideas about family, household and gender are unable to be located at an originary historical point, one which a classical term such as oikos (household) might suggest. He
Notes

5 Benjamin, The Arcades Project, p. 220 [I4,4].


11 Asendorf, Batteries of Life, p. 6.


13 Another way to describe momentary experiences would be to call them the commodification of experience, their packaging as multiple, discrete, non-continuous but rapidly and continuously produced ‘events’.


16 Stewart, On Longing, p. 166.


20 Benjamin, The Arcades Project, p. 211 [H4a,1].

21 Benjamin, The Arcades Project, p. 206 [H1a,5].

22 Benjamin, The Arcades Project, p. 206 [H2,3]. Benjamin casts this somewhat differently in ‘Unpacking my Library’: ‘ownership is the most intimate relationship that one can have to things. Not that they come alive in him; it is he who lives in them. So I have erected before you one of his dwellings, with books as the building stones; and now he is going to disappear inside, as is only fitting’. Benjamin, ‘Unpacking my Library’, p. 492.

23 Benjamin, The Arcades Project, p. 211 [H5,1].


25 Benjamin, The Arcades Project, pp. 220–1 [I4,4].


27 Here is Benjamin’s own gnomic note to this effect: ‘Multiplication of traces through the modern administrative apparatus.’ Benjamin, The Arcades Project, p. 225 [I6a,4]. In his investigation of the trace in criminological uses of photography and in detective fiction, Tom Gunning emphasizes the major effect of modernity as a change in experience brought about through mobility. Specifically in relation to the use of the photograph as evidence, its indexical quality is overtaken by its ability to be detached and to circulate separately from its referent. See Tom Gunning, ‘Tracing the Individual Body: Photography, Detectives and Early Cinema’, in Leo Charney and Vanessa R. Schwartz (eds), Cinema and the Invention of Modern Life, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995, pp. 15–45. In this context, Benjamin’s invocation of detective fiction in relation to the traces left in the interior speaks of the experience of modernity as the ambivalence between a stabilization of one’s identity in the interior, and the possibility of one’s traces themselves becoming mobile, and being treated within the frame of criminality. On experience and detective fiction, see my ‘Evidence, Experience and Conjecture: Reading the Interior through Benjamin and Bloch’, Home Cultures, vol. 2, no. 3, 2005, pp. 285–97.


Compare Fuss: ‘a principle of photographic likenesses, of double exposures and exposed doubles, animates and reanimates the transferential scene. Insofar as the mechanism of transference works precisely by means of a double exposure – a superimposition of one figure onto another – the process of psychoanalysis can be seen to operate as a form of photographic development. Like photography, the technology of transference performs a kind of spirit work in which the phantoms of missing or lost others come back to life in the person of the analyst.’ Fuss, ‘Freud’s Ear’, pp. 103–4.


20 Maresfield Gardens suggests: ‘After Freud’s death in 1939, his wife Martha made no changes to the study during the rest of her life and Anna Freud, the youngest of Freud’s six children, subsequently kept it just as it was in her father’s lifetime. She herself lived and practiced psychoanalysis at 20 Maresfield Gardens for over 40 years’ (p. 3). Photographs of the room, now part of the Freud Museum in London, appear in the guidebook. In being able to visit this space, however, one must also forget that ‘this is how it was’.

See Yosef Hayim Yerushlami, ‘The Purloined Kiddush Cups: Reopening the Case on Freud’s Jewish Identity’, supplement to Sigmund Freud and Art, n.p., for a discussion of evidence provided by Engelman’s photographs.

Fuss does argue that the photographs ‘have themselves become the museum – miniature sites of preservation and display’, Fuss, ‘Freud’s Ear’, p. 73.


Fuss, ‘Freud’s Ear’, p. 73.


Vidler, The Architectural Uncanny, p. 3.

Vidler, The Architectural Uncanny, p. 3.

Vidler, The Architectural Uncanny, p. 11.

A similar focus on the representation of spaces of unease occurs in Susan Sidlauskas’s reading of the interior paintings of Degas, Sargent, Vuillard and Sickert. She explores the way in which ‘the signs of subjectivity [were] . . . embedded directly in the lineaments of compositional structure’. Susan Sidlauskas, Body, Place and Self in Nineteenth-Century Painting, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000, p. 13. She uses theories of empathy between a spectator and a painting to explore the way in which a spectator might experience ‘a visceral response [to a painting], a bodily empathy, for the discomfort of their protagonists’ (pp. 2–3). Like Vidler, Sidlauskas escapes the sense of representation being transparent to the material evidence of an interior, and instead looks at the ways in which the techniques of depiction give on to a reading of domestic subjectivity itself. But she too reads space solely within representation, even as she writes about a viewer’s bodily empathy. Sharon Marcus’s analysis of the textual representation of the interior is engaged with a similar methodological problematic as Vidler and Sidlauskas. Marcus analyses the negotiation of private and public realms in the context of nineteenth-century Paris and London: ‘My focus throughout is on discourses about apartment houses, not on apartment houses themselves’, the novel being treated as a privileged site of discourse about nineteenth-century domesticity. Sharon Marcus, Apartment Stories: City and Home in Nineteenth-Century Paris and London, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999, p. 9. Here again there is a desire to focus interpretation within representation. Marcus’s concept of a topography of narration emphasizes this: ‘By topography I mean the ways that narration itself (and not simply
3 Imagining the interior: Plan and comfort


5 Franklin, The Gentleman’s Country House, p. 129.

6 For a broader argument about the emergence of comfort as a domestic sensibility in the Anglo-American context from the eighteenth century, see John Crowley, ‘The Sensibility of Comfort’,...
Notes


60 Colomina uses Krauss’s argument about Purist paintings to describe the way in which an interior might be delimited by the horizontal window. Krauss argues that ‘distance or depth in the painting becomes no longer a matter of representing the space separating one object from another in the real world. Instead distance is transformed into a representation of the caesura between the appearance of the object and the object itself.’ Krauss, ‘Léger, Le Corbusier, and Purism’, p. 53. Emphasis in original. Quoted in Colomina, *Privacy and Publicity*, p. 133.

61 Rather than moments of pause for an appreciation of frontality, the balconies in the Maison La Roche maintain the movement of the eye through a space that the body cannot walk. See the account of the relations between image, perception and experience at the Maison La Roche in John Macarthur, ‘The Image as an Architectural Material’, *South Atlantic Quarterly*, vol. 101, no. 3, 2002, pp. 684–5.


63 From 1926, the gallery underwent a series of renovations, mostly to do with heating, flooring and insulation. Charlotte Perriand and Le Corbusier designed and installed a fixed table in the gallery as well as strip lighting to offer both direct and indirect light. The idea of a cabinet for the paintings was considered during these renovations. See Sbriglio, *The Villas La Roche-Jeanneret*, pp. 93–7. F. R. Yerbury’s photograph (Figure 5.5) shows the gallery in its pre-renovated state.

64 Le Corbusier, *The Modulor*.


67 See Sbriglio, *The Villas La Roche-Jeanneret*, p. 102.


70 Benjamin, *The Arcades Project*, p. 220 [I4,4].

71 On the relation between Loos and Kraus, see Schwarzer, *German Architectural Theory*, pp. 239–44.


73 Benjamin, ‘Experience and Poverty’, p. 733.

74 See Benjamin, ‘On the Concept of History’, in *Selected Writings*, vol. 4, p. 392.


Conclusion: Mediatized domesticity

1 The power of nostalgia as a way of dealing with change is made clear in Akiko Busch, *Geography of Home: Writings about Where We Live*, New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1999. She suggests, without critical intent, that ‘For all the lures of the electronic hearth, the real hearth continues to have a sustaining appeal in our collective memory.’ This sentiment culminates in the following claim: ‘It occurs to me that the bedroom, the kitchen, and the basement reflect the three basic realms of home: the private and necessary sanctuary, the place of nourishment and community, the area where things get made. So long as the places we live can accommodate these three very different human activities, it might be called home’ (pp. 23–4).
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