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LOUIS-PHILIPPE OR THE INTERIOR

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- For the private citizen, for the first time the living-space became distinguished from the place of work. The former constituted itself as the interior. The counting-house was its complement. The private citizen who in the counting house took reality into account, required of the interior that it should maintain him in his illusions. This necessity was all the more pressing since he had no intention of adding social preoccupations to his business ones. In the creation of his private environment he suppressed them both. From this sprang the phantasmagorias of the interior. This represented the universe for the private citizen. In it he assembled the distant in space and in time. His drawing-room was a box in the world-theatre. (Benjamin, 83)

- The interior was not only the private citizen’s universe, it was also his casing. Living means leaving traces. In the interior, these were stressed. Coverings and antimacassars, boxes and casings, were devised in abundance, in which the traces of everyday objects were moulded. The resident’s own traces were also moulded in the interior. The detective story appeared, which investigated these traces. The Philosophy of Furniture, as much as his detective stories, shows Poe to have been the first physiognomist of the interior. The criminals of the first detective novels were neither gentlemen nor apaches, but middle-class private citizens. (Benjamin, 84)

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Walter Benjamin, “Louis-Philippe or the Interior” in The Arcades Project, (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 1999).