

THESE WALLS HAVE EYES AND EARS

On architectural memory and conservation

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THESE WALLS

HAVE EYES AND EARS



*On architectural memory
and conservation*

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“All for one and one for all!”

With love to my parents Ronald and Patricia, and my husband Jacob

*...These walls have eyes
These walls have ears
They see the mask
That hides the years
One spark of joy
One voice to laugh
Those days foretold
In photograph
They watch us live
They watch us grow
What lies ahead
What lies below
These walls have eyes
These walls have ears...*

-- Robin Gibb, 'These Walls Have Eyes', *Walls Have Eyes*, Polydor, 1985, track 8

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PREFACE

POSITION STATEMENT

Growing up in Australia, as a first-generation Maltese-Australian born to Maltese immigrants, in a privileged middle-class background, I have been afforded education and experiences that I recognise differ to many my age. This difference, however, is precisely how I came to do a PhD on architecture and heritage.

I was fortunate throughout my childhood and into adult life to travel overseas, frequently. This was partly to visit my family in Malta, but at the same time, it was an important part of the wider education that my parents afforded me, to see and experience the world outside of Australia. Both my parents, perhaps influenced by their own upbringing in Malta, have a deep appreciation for history, art and architecture. So, when we travelled back to Malta, we often travelled to other countries along the way, soaking up the culture, history, art and architecture that they all had to offer.

Likely because of this exposure from a young age, ever since early high school, I knew I was destined to study and work in architecture and heritage in some way. In fact, my Year 12 yearbook answer to the question 'Where will you be in 10 years' time' says: "I will be restoring buildings in Australia or in the EU". Thus began my journey in architectural tertiary education. However, I found contemporary architecture school lacking in certain aspects, which prompted me to find how I could pursue heritage, and to test the waters if I even would find it fulfilling after so many years. In 2012 I started my Masters of Heritage Conservation at the University of Sydney, and immediately felt that I was home. I soon obtained a job in the architectural and heritage field, and have been a practicing architectural heritage consultant for the last 14 years.

During my Masters I was exposed to the wonderous world of John Ruskin and Eugène Emmanuel Viollet-le-Duc. Fascinated as I was by these two dead nineteenth century white men, and with a few years practical experience under my belt, I embarked on my Masters Thesis to undertake a comparative analysis of their restoration theories, and apply them to a contemporary heritage case study. Coincidentally at this time, Valletta, the capital of Malta, had been selected to be the 'Capital of Europe 2018'. As a result, there was an influx of EU and Maltese funding to ready the city for this honour. As part of the six-year program of works, the ruins of the *Royal Opera House*, *City Gates* and *Parliament Building and Square* were to finally undergo restoration and adaptive reuse – under the masterplan of Renzo Piano and local architects Architectural Project (now AP Valletta). Teamed with my natural proclivity for Malta, this proved a perfect opportunity to see and analyse an adaptive reuse project for the *Royal Opera House* in person and use it as a case study in my Masters Thesis.

In 2018, fulfilling a long-hoped wish, I visited Moscow and Saint Petersburg in Russia. The way Russia dealt with their Communist past perplexed me. They often shied away from this period, instead focussing on their golden age of Russian Imperialism under the Tsars. This was particularly obvious in Saint Petersburg. I left Russia, questioning, why they chose to ignore or hide certain parts of their memory, and whether this was an authentic representation of Russia. Thus, the seed for my thesis was planted.

This PhD represents an evolution of the initial questions after Russia, to understand why society is selective in the representation of their memories and the past. This was teamed with my professional background in heritage and an understanding of heritage significance criteria and values. Finally, I remembered my Masters education and that eclectic thinker – John Ruskin, and how memory was a pivotal theme in his writings. I too, like Ruskin believe that buildings witness and remember. Knowing

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that this is probably an odd, but common thought, I wondered why do we believe this? I sought answers through science, because I knew that surely the whole lot of us that think this, are not as crazy as we sound. I reached out to Professor Muireann Irish and cold-pitched my thoughts, and asked her if there was a scientific explanation, and whether she would consider assisting in finding the answers. With Professor Irish on board, I reached out to Associate Professor Camron Logan and pitched the idea that this idea in architecture and the humanities was perhaps explainable through memory science. This PhD is a testament to that journey from childhood travel, and adulthood musings about culture, memory and architecture.

ABSTRACT

The desire to keep alive the memory of the past is deeply human and arguably universal. However, the set of claims the conservation movement has made about buildings as witnesses to time and repositories of memory are historically specific. In the nineteenth century, romantic writers used their artistic skills to anthropomorphise buildings as key to humanity's memory, witnesses to the passage of time and human achievement, instigating what would become a long-standing cultural tradition.

The idea that buildings were central to memory was not new, and drew upon a longer tradition of ancient writers and philosophers who emphasised the importance of landscapes and built structures as mnemonic devices, physical cues for memory. A memory cue, however, is different to a witness. Witnessing denotes the mind as the seat of consciousness, the ability to see events and be present. Perceiving architecture as a 'witness' to history and the passage of time, imparts human qualities to inanimate objects. Yet, nineteenth century writers and advocates insisted that we must protect buildings precisely because they were witnesses. This idea persists today and characterises many contemporary claims for the protection of historic places. The question remains however, why do we expect buildings to remember and do memory work? This doctoral project investigates this long-standing cultural tradition.

This thesis argues that the concept of architectural witnessing relies on human perception and the human mind's complex abilities to remember, imagine and position oneself in different spatiotemporal contexts. The research seeks to understand the cultural mechanisms at work in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries which posited buildings as the memory and history of a city, region or nation. It identifies two key historical moments of crisis around memory which has shaped claims about the role of conservation in preserving and prolonging memory. The first crisis was in the early-mid nineteenth century, when a series of European writers and critics attempted to awaken their compatriots to protect memory in response to modernisation which wrought political and economic change. The second was in the mid-late twentieth century in the wake of WWII, which saw an unprecedented destruction and decay of the built environment and cultural heritage across the world. In this period the question of architectural reconstruction was central to the project of remembering.

Using psychology and memory science as the conceptual apparatus the thesis interrogates these two key periods. By doing so the thesis establishes that building conservation, restoration and reconstruction is analogous for the psychological apparatus of memory. It ultimately argues that this is why we expect buildings to remember, and explores the impact this expectation has on collective memory; how society deals with material evidence and authenticity in these periods; and the creative and recreative tendencies of post-war reconstructions as re-imagined through visual media like photography and painting. Re-examination of this cultural tradition and our perception of architectural witnessing clarifies why we imagine that walls have eyes and ears.

STATEMENT OF ORIGINALITY

I, Sarah-Jane Zammit, hereby declare that the content of this thesis is my own work. This thesis has not been submitted for any other degree or purpose. I certify that the intellectual content of this thesis is the product of my own work, and that all assistance received in preparing this thesis and all sources have been acknowledged.

Sarah-Jane Zammit
May 2026

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This thesis has been a labour of love over the last five years, which has been impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic and lockdowns, a two-year physical separation from my boyfriend (now husband), a wedding, endless weekends at open houses, and a house renovation. This is a project which I could not have undertaken without the support, time, enthusiasm, and encouragement of many people, and it truly shows that it takes a village to raise a child (in this case the literary child that is my thesis!).

To my primary supervisor, Associate Professor *Cameron Logan*, thank you for your continued guidance throughout the last five years, helping to mould my academic vigour, and for our entertaining chats.

To my secondary supervisor, Professor *Muireann Irish*, thank you for agreeing to meet with me when I cold-called you to pitch my ideas. You helped me see that a cross-disciplinary approach to my research was viable and something which would be immensely interesting and novel.

Thank you to both supervisors for your endless encouragement and valuable time which you have poured into the development of me as a researcher, and the thesis itself.

To my *colleagues* and *friends*, thank you for your interest and encouragement over the years, some of you are more excited about the closure of this chapter than I am! Thank you for listening to my lectures, reading my articles, and asking engaged questions about my research. It has made me think of productive and practical ways to explain and apply the theoretical musings of the thesis so that I can relay the essence of what the research achieves in a way which is easily understood.

To my husband, *Jacob*, thank you for your patience, love and support; challenging me to finish my thesis faster than you did yours (I think we tied in the end!), and for encouraging me in the first place that a PhD was an experience worth undertaking.

Finally, to my parents *Ronald* and *Patricia*, with deep gratitude, thank you for your endless love and support throughout my life. You both worked hard to give me the best of everything and a fine education, encouraging me to reach new heights, and become the person I am today. You showed and helped me experience the world through years of travel, which nourished my love for history, art, and architecture. Thank you especially to my Mum, for helping to transcribe and digitise all my notes from various books over the last five years.

AUTHORSHIP ATTRIBUTION STATEMENT

Chapter 2: Memory, History and Nation

Part of the contents of **Chapter 2: Memory, History and Nation** has been previously published as part of a Conference Presentation and articles as follows:

- Zammit, S.J., 2022, ***Notre-Dame as the Memory of Paris: Hugo, the Historical Novel and Conservation***, SAHANZ 39th Annual Conference: 'Ngā Pūtahitanga / Crossings', Nov. 25-27 2022, Auckland University, New Zealand
- Zammit, S.J., 2023, 'Notre-Dame as the Memory of Paris: Hugo, the Historical Novel and Conservation', in *Proceedings of the Society of Architectural Historians, Australia and New Zealand: 39, Ngā Pūtahitanga / Crossings*, ed. Julia Gatley and Elizabeth Aitken Rose, pp. 617-31, Auckland: SAHANZ. DOI: 10.55939/a5050pxtvl

I presented a 20 minute conference presentation at the 2022 SAHANZ conference and prepared an accompanying article to be published in the Conference Proceedings. Figures 8 and 9 have been used in these publications.

Chapter 5: Creative and Recreative Memory

Part of the contents of **Chapter 5: Creative and Recreative Memory** has been previously published as part of a Conference Presentation as follows:

- Zammit, S.J., 2025, ***Re-imagining Viollet in Post-War Europe: The image as a regenerative tool***, SAHANZ 41st Annual Conference: 'Extremities', Dec. 3-5 2025, University of Tasmania, Launceston

I presented a 20 minute conference presentation at the 2025 SAHANZ conference and prepared an accompanying article to be published in the Conference Proceedings (still to be published).

In addition to the authorship attribution statements above, in cases where I am not the corresponding author of a published item, permission to include the published material has been granted by the corresponding author.

Sarah-Jane Zammit
May 2026

As supervisor for the candidature upon which this thesis is based, I can confirm that the authorship attribution statements above are correct.

Cameron Logan
May 2026

COLOPHON

This thesis was prepared primarily using *Microsoft Word* through *Microsoft 365*, based on a document theme and styles which was developed by me for the thesis. The font used throughout is *Calibri*.

Research and notes have been organised using the program *Obsidian v1.12.7*

Resource library, footnotes and reference lists have been compiled and managed using *Zotero v7.0.32*.

Where translations of resources have been required, this has relied on the Artificial Intelligence of translation tools *Google Translate* and *Apple Translate*. Where translations are quoted in the text, footnotes will identify that it is my translation noted as 'Author's translation'. This translation has been undertaken to the best of my ability, and has been cross-checked with native speakers to ensure that the overall essence of the text has been conveyed.

The cover artwork has been developed using Artificial Intelligence – *ChatGPT*, *DALL-E* and *Microsoft Co-Pilot*. It has been edited using *Adobe Creative Suite*, primarily *Photoshop 2021*.

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KEY TERMS

The following section outlines key terms that are used within the thesis and provides a brief explanation of the meaning as referred to in the thesis.

ANTHROPOMORPHISE

The term *anthropomorphise* and all its various plurals and tenses has been used in this thesis to describe the attribution of human characteristics to an inanimate object like a building or landscape. This aligns with the Oxford English Dictionary's secondary explanation.¹

In the thesis, a building undergoes anthropomorphism when humans attribute human characteristics like the ability to witness and remember onto the inanimate object.

AUTHENTICITY

The term *authenticity* in a heritage context has been defined firstly by the *Venice Charter 1967* and expanded by the *Nara Document on Authenticity 1994*. This thesis aligns with the understanding that the values of authenticity are based on the conservation of historical periods, and the cultural context in which they belong. The following clauses from the *Nara Document on Authenticity 1994* are relevant:

9. Conservation of cultural heritage in all its forms and historical periods is rooted in the values attributed to the heritage. Our ability to understand these values depends, in part, on the degree to which information sources about these values may be understood as credible or truthful. Knowledge and understanding of these sources of information, in relation to original and subsequent characteristics of the cultural heritage, and their meaning, is a requisite basis for assessing all aspects of authenticity.

11. All judgements about values attributed to cultural properties as well as the credibility of related information sources may differ from culture to culture, and even within the same culture. It is thus not possible to base judgements of values and authenticity within fixed criteria. On the contrary, the respect due to all cultures requires that heritage properties must be considered and judged within the cultural context to which they belong.

13. Depending on the nature of the cultural heritage, its cultural context, and its evolution through time, authenticity judgements may be linked to the worth of a great variety of sources of information. Aspects of the sources may include form and design, materials and substance, use and function, traditions and techniques, location and setting, and spirit and feeling, and other internal and external factors. The use of these sources permits elaboration of the specific artistic, historic, social, and scientific dimensions of the cultural heritage being examined.²

¹ 'Anthropomorphism, n. Meanings, Etymology and More | Oxford English Dictionary', https://www.oed.com/dictionary/anthropomorphism_n.

² Nara Document on Authenticity (1994), https://www.iccrom.org/sites/default/files/publications/2020-05/convern8_06_thenaradocu_ing.pdf.

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COLLECTIVE MEMORY

The term *collective memory* was coined by French sociologist and philosopher Maurice Halbwachs to differentiate between personal or individual memory and the memories of a group. This thesis draws on Maurice Halbwachs' definition when referring to *collective memory*:

Then there is an "individual memory" and a "collective memory." In other words, the individual participates in two types of memory, but adopts a quite different, even contrary, attitude as he participates in the one or the other. On the one hand, he places his own remembrances within the framework of his personality, his own personal life; he considers those of his own that he holds in common with other people only in the aspect that interests him by virtue of distinguishing him from others. On the other hand, he is able to act merely as a group member, helping to evoke and maintain impersonal remembrances of interest to the group. These two memories are often intermingled.³

CONSCIOUSNESS

In this thesis the term *consciousness* when used specifically in a scientific sense refers to the psychological faculty or capacity from which awareness of thought, feeling, volition and understanding of the external world arises. This aligns with the secondary meaning in the Oxford Dictionary for the term.⁴

In reference to history, refer to *historic(al) consciousness*.

CUE

This thesis uses the term *cue* to discuss the ability for an item, often inanimate, to perpetuate remembrance or stimulate memory in an individual.

This closely resonates with the Oxford English Dictionary's third explanation for *memory*.⁵

EPISODIC MEMORY

The term *episodic memory* in this thesis is defined as per Endel Tulving's discussion about the brain process:

Episodic memory is a neurocognitive (brain/mind) system, uniquely different from other memory systems, that enables humans to remember past experiences.⁶

Specifically, it is usually referred to in the context of the thesis as individual memories, recollected by a person.

³ Maurice Halbwachs, *The Collective Memory*, 1st ed, Harper Colophon Books ; CN/800 (Harper & Row, 1980), 50.

⁴ 'Consciousness, n. Meanings, Etymology and More | Oxford English Dictionary', https://www.oed.com/dictionary/consciousness_n.

⁵ 'Memory, n. Meanings, Etymology and More | Oxford English Dictionary', https://www.oed.com/dictionary/memory_n.

⁶ Endel Tulving, 'Episodic Memory: From Mind to Brain', *Annual Review of Psychology* 53, no. 1 (2002): 1.

GENIUS LOCI

The thesis refers to *genius loci* as a descriptor of the essential character, spirit or atmosphere of a place. This concept whilst common in everyday discourse, in this thesis draws upon the essence of the term which John Ruskin alludes to in his book *The Poetry of Architecture*. In the *Poetry of Architecture*, Ruskin describes ways to identify the character and ‘truth’ of a place, through observation and feeling.⁷

HERITAGE

The term *heritage* is a broad term with many applications, however in the context of the research, the thesis has adopted the understanding of *heritage* as described in the *Burra Charter 2013*:

Places of cultural significance enrich people’s lives, often providing a deep and inspirational sense of connection to community and landscape, to the past and to lived experiences. They are historical records, that are important expressions of Australian [and other country’s] identity and experience. Places of cultural significance reflect the diversity of our communities, telling us about who we are and the past that has formed us and the Australian [and other country’s] landscape. They are irreplaceable and precious.⁸

HISTORIC(AL) CONSCIOUSNESS

This discusses *historic(al) consciousness* with reference to the scientific term for *consciousness* but also the humanities understanding as explained by historian and heritage pioneer David Lowenthal in his book *The Past is Foreign Country (Revisited)*. Lowenthal refers to *historic consciousness* as the awareness of the past as something fundamentally different and distant (foreign) from the present:

Consciousness that blesses humans with knowledge of a past also curses us with awareness of time’s awesome duration beyond our own evanescence.⁹

IDENTITY

The term *identity* is both common and complex, with many facets. Generally, however, in this thesis the term identity stems from the Oxford English Dictionary’s description:

Who or what a person or thing is; a distinct impression of a single person or thing presented to or perceived by others; a set of characteristics or a description that distinguishes a person or thing from others.¹⁰

⁷ John Ruskin, *The Poetry of Architecture* (Echo Library, 1837), 9, 34.

⁸ The Burra Charter (2013), 1, <https://australia.icomos.org/wp-content/uploads/The-Burra-Charter-2013-Adopted-31.10.2013.pdf>.

⁹ David Lowenthal, *The Past Is a Foreign Country - Revisited*, Revised and updated edition (Cambridge University Press, 2013), 23.

¹⁰ ‘Identity, n. Meanings, Etymology and More | Oxford English Dictionary’, https://www.oed.com/dictionary/identity_n.

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Scientists Clinton Merck, N Meyume Topcu and William Hirst succinctly summarise the blurred boundaries of what *identity* means and how it influences other terms like *collective memory* and *national identity/memory*:

Although the boundary is not so neat, as many scholars have noted, autobiographical memories shape individual identity, whereas collective memories shape collective identity.¹¹

IMAGINATION

The psychological process of *imagination* is key to understanding and answering the thesis question. Psychologist and neuroscientist Anna Abraham's understanding of *imagination* is helpful to grasp the importance role that *imagination* has in humans understanding themselves and the world around them:

Imagination is what makes our sensory experience meaningful, enabling us to interpret and make sense of it, whether from a conventional perspective or from a fresh, original, individual one. It is what makes perception more than the mere physical stimulation of sense organs. It also produces mental imagery, visual and otherwise, which is what makes it possible for us to think outside the confines of our present perceptual reality, to consider memories of the past and possibilities for the future, and to weigh alternatives against one another. Thus, imagination makes possible all our thinking about what is, what has been, and, perhaps most important, what might be.¹²

Abraham's description of *imagination* is useful background to understanding other related psychological processes discussed in this thesis like *Mental Time Travel*, *Imagined Observer Hypothesis/Effect* and *Scene Construction Theory*.

IMAGINED OBSERVER HYPOTHESIS (OBSERVER EFFECT)

The thesis applies the psychological hypothesis *imagined observer hypothesis* also known as *observer effect* to describe the process which humans undergo when viewing a visual representation or building and extrapolate 'memories' from the item. Philosophy Professor David Davies explanation of the theory is useful to understand the concept:

Imagined Observer Hypothesis (IOH). The IOH holds that, in engaging with a visual representation, I imagine, of myself, that I am observing or witnessing the events that I take to be represented.¹³

¹¹ Clinton Merck et al., 'Collective Mental Time Travel: Creating a Shared Future Through Our Shared Past', *Memory Studies* 9, no. 3 (2016): 291.

¹² Anna Abraham, 'The Imaginative Mind: The Imaginative Mind', *Human Brain Mapping* 37, no. 11 (2016): 4199.

¹³ Anna Abraham, ed., *The Cambridge Handbook of the Imagination*, 1st edn (Cambridge University Press, 2020), 571.

MEMORY

This thesis uses the term *memory* in two distinct ways – one based in the humanities, and the other based in medicine and science. Both usages align with the Oxford English Dictionary’s etymology that the term is derived from Old French (*memorie*) and Latin (*memoria*).

The humanities usage aligns with the Oxford English Dictionary’s first explanation for *memory*:

The action of remembering; recollection, remembrance.¹⁴

The medical and science usage aligns with the Oxford English Dictionary’s secondary explanation for *memory*, which is divided into a number of sub-categories. The relevant sub-categories are outlined below:

The faculty by which things are remembered; the capacity for retaining, perpetuating, or reviving the thought of the things past.

The faculty by which things are remembered considered as residing in the awareness or consciousness of a particular individual or group. Frequently with preceding word or other contextual indication of the extent to which the faculty is developed or the field in which it is most active.¹⁵

MEMORY TRACE

The term *memory trace* is a psychological and scientific term to describe the process of memory storage through the hippocampus, in which there is a memory network which encodes and stores memories until they are reactivated. It relies on the idea of an ‘impression’ being retained within the brain – the trace. This ‘impression’ is something which dates back as early as Plato in 300BC, where he discusses memory through ideas about creating an ‘impression’ on a wax tablet – an image or trace of an action.

Whenever we want to keep in our memory some one [*sic*] of the things that we can see or hear or conceive of for ourselves, we hold the wax tablet under these perceptions or conceptions, and make an impression of them on it...Whatever we imprint, we remember and know as long as its image remains there on the block.¹⁶

In the thesis, the psychological idea of the *memory trace*, the layers of memories stored within the brain, is also correlated with the physical notion of a traces of memory within fabric. This is akin to John Ruskin’s understanding of the *palimpsest* of fabric:

It is in that golden stain of time, that we are to look for the real light, and colour, and preciousness of architecture; and it is not until a building has assumed this character, till it has been entrusted with the fame, and hallowed by the deeds of men, till its walls have been witnesses of suffering, and its pillars rise out of the shadows of death, that its existence, more

¹⁴ ‘Memory, n. Meanings, Etymology and More | Oxford English Dictionary’.

¹⁵ ‘Memory, n. Meanings, Etymology and More | Oxford English Dictionary’.

¹⁶ Plato, Theatetus 191c-d as quoted in Chappell, Sophie-Grace Chappell, ‘Chapter 30: Plato’, in *The Routledge Handbook of Philosophy of Memory*, ed. Sven Bernecker and Kourken Michaelian, Routledge Handbooks (Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, 2019), 393.

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lasting as it is than that of the natural objects of the world around it, can be gifted with even so much as these possess, of language and of life.¹⁷

...while these very marks (the fractures of the stone, the lichens of the mouldering walls, and the graceful lines of the sinking roof) are all delightful in themselves.¹⁸

MENTAL TIME TRAVEL (AND AUTOONOETIC CONSCIOUSNESS)

Autoonoetic consciousness is a psychological term which describes the ability to understand your position in time. The thesis relies on experimental psychologist and cognitive neuroscientist Endel Tulving's explanation:

Autoonoetic (self-knowing) consciousness is the name given to the kind of consciousness that mediates an individual's awareness of his or her existence and identity in subjective time extending from the personal past through the present to the personal future.¹⁹

As per Tulving's theory, *mental time travel* requires the human ability for *autoonoetic consciousness*. His description of the theory is what is used throughout the thesis as an understanding of this ability:

A normal healthy person who possesses autoonoetic consciousness is capable of becoming aware of her own past as well as her own future; she is capable of mental time travel, roaming at will over what has happened as readily as over what might happen, independently of physical laws that govern the universe.²⁰

MNEMONIC DEVICE

A *mnemonic device* is a physical item, or intangible item (like a song) which allows or assists one to remember. Historians and authors Margo Neale and Lynne Kelly's description of this is useful for understanding the term's application in the thesis:

The neuroscience of our brains is the common factor that led cultures all over the world, and throughout time, to create memory devices that brought their landscapes to life and ensured that they would not lose the knowledge essential to survive both physically and culturally.²¹

NATIONAL IDENTITY / NATIONAL MEMORY

The terms *national identity* and *national memory* are used interconnectedly in the thesis. They rely on both the ideas of *collective memory* and *identity*, and are defined as a socially constructed term to describe or forge a collective memory or identity which reflects the nation. The thesis identifies that architecture, and cities are often used to support a collective identity/memory of the nation.

Pierre Nora's discussion of the term in relation to France is useful in grasping the concept:

¹⁷ John Ruskin, *The Seven Lamps of Architecture* (Dover Publications, 1989), 187.

¹⁸ Ruskin, *Poetry of Architecture*, 23.

¹⁹ Endel Tulving, 'Memory and Consciousness', *Canadian Psychology* 26, no. 1 (1985): 1.

²⁰ Tulving, 'Memory and Consciousness', 5.

²¹ Margo Neale and Lynne Kelly, *Songlines: The Power and Promise* (Thames & Hudson, 2020), 14.

This history of memory is realized through the imaginary representations and historical realities that occupy the symbolic sites that form French social and cultural identity.²²

It is also important to understand the role that personal memory and identity have on *national identity/memory*. This concept is understood through Maurice Halbwachs' analysis of *collective memory*, as described by theorist Nicolas Russell:

Halbwachs' focus on past lived experience and his description of collective memory as part of a group's identity are interrelated, because personal identity is closely tied to this particular kind of memory...A group's identity and existence depends on this particular collective memory of its own past: when the nature of a group's collective memory changes, the group itself ceases to exist. The members of that group form a new group with a new identity.²³

NOSTALGIA

This thesis aligns with the Oxford English Dictionary's secondary explanation for *nostalgia*. The etymology of which comes from the Greek *nostos* (return home) and *algia* (longing), but found a new usage in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries:

Sentimental longing *for* or regretful memory of a period of the past, esp. one in an individual's own lifetime; (also) sentimental imagining or evocation of a period of the past.²⁴

The thesis also relies on Svetlana Boym's description of the feeling of *nostalgia*, which she describes as a romance with human fantasy as a way of connecting with real and perceived memories and identities.²⁵

PALIMPSEST

The term *palimpsest* in this thesis draws on John Ruskin's understanding of the term, as a layering of architectural fabric, marks and remnants. Ruskin's idea draws upon the earlier understanding of the term, on which a writing surface is effaced or partially erased of its original text, and overwritten by another.

In an architectural sense, Ruskin applies this idea, to discuss that buildings show elements of the original fabric, even when the passage of time has left marks and other modifications.

SCENE CONSTRUCTION THEORY

The thesis relies on neuroscientist Eleanor Maguire's explanation for the psychological process of *scene construction theory* which has been applied in the thesis to explain how the human mind extrapolates a scene they are seeing through *imagination* and *mental time travel* to understand memory and witnessing within inanimate objects. Maguire's explanation is key to this understanding:

²² Pierre Nora, 'Between Memory and History: Les Lieux De Mémoire', *Representations* 26, no. Special Issue: Memory and Counter-Memory (1989): ix.

²³ Nicolas Russell, 'Collective Memory Before and After Halbwachs', *The French Review* 79, no. 4 (2006): 797.

²⁴ 'Nostalgia, n. Meanings, Etymology and More | Oxford English Dictionary', https://www.oed.com/dictionary/nostalgia_n.

²⁵ Svetlana Boym, *The Future of Nostalgia* (Basic Books, 2001), xiii–xv.

THESE WALLS HAVE EYES AND EARS

The scene construction theory (SCT). The SCT posits that the hippocampus facilitates the construction of atemporal scenes allowing the event details of episodic memories and imagined future experiences to be martialled, bound and played out in a coherent spatial context. In this way, scene construction is held to underpin not only episodic memory and imagining the future but also cognitive functions such as spatial navigation, and perhaps even mind wandering and dreaming.²⁶

SEMANTIC MEMORY

The term *semantic memory* is used to describe the storage of memory that is not individual and episodic to the person. Theorist Nicolas Russell provides a useful explanation:

Semantic memory involves the storage of abstract information and facts. It preserves information about abstract concepts independent of past time or past experience.²⁷

TANGIBLE AND INTANGIBLE HERITAGE

The term *intangible heritage* is always understood as something opposite to *tangible heritage* – such as the physical fabric of a place. Whilst this thesis deals with many aspects of the tangible fabric of a place, it also analyses the role of the *intangible* in human relationships with their surroundings. Urban historians James Lesh and Rebecca Madgin’s description of the interplay between *tangible and intangible heritage* is useful in explaining these terms as they pertain to the thesis:

Place can be tangible in terms of the built form. Place can also simultaneously be intangible in terms of meanings, memories and practices.²⁸

WITNESS

In the thesis, the term *witness*, and *witnessing* denotes the mind as the seat of consciousness, where one sees something happen, is present at the place or period in which the event takes place. This aligns with the Oxford Dictionary’s fourth explanation for *witness*:

To be a witness, spectator, or auditor of (something of interest, importance, or special concern); to experience by personal (esp. ocular) observation; to be present as an observer at; to see with one’s own eyes. In early use said mainly of the eyes or the ears.²⁹

The phrase and title of this thesis ‘These walls have eyes and ears’ comes from this notion that the building is a witness.

²⁶ Eleanor A. Maguire and Sinéad L. Mullally, ‘The Hippocampus: A Manifesto for Change’, *Journal of Experimental Psychology: General* 142, no. 4 (2013): 1181.

²⁷ Russell, ‘Collective Memory Before and After Halbwachs’, 798.

²⁸ Rebecca Madgin and James Lesh, *People-Centred Methodologies for Heritage Conservation: Exploring Emotional Attachments to Historic Urban Places* (Routledge, 2021), 3.

²⁹ ‘Witness, v. Meanings, Etymology and More | Oxford English Dictionary’, https://www.oed.com/dictionary/witness_v.

INTRODUCTION

...we imagine it must be capable of the same feelings, and possess the same faculties, and above all others, memory: it is always telling us about the past, never pointing to the future; we appeal to it, as to a thing which has seen and felt during a life similar to our own.

-- John Ruskin, *The Poetry of Architecture*, 1837, p. 92

INTRODUCTION

The desire to remember the past is a concept which is deeply human and arguably universal. But the set of claims the conservation movement has made about buildings as witnesses to time, and repositories of memory are historically specific. In the nineteenth century, Romantics like John Ruskin, instigated what would become a long-standing cultural tradition, anthropomorphising buildings as key to humanity's memory. The epigraph to this Introduction, outlines one of Ruskin's early forays in the anthropomorphism of the environment. Believing the fabric replete with memory, Ruskin identifies that buildings and landscapes are capable of feeling, and have the same faculty as humans to witness, to see and hear events, and thereby remember them. To Ruskin, the fabric can tell us, the human, about the past. Ruskin was not alone in this period in believing that inanimate objects had a level of consciousness. Many other Romantics, including impassioned writers and artists, used their artistic skills to highlight that buildings and the environment were witnesses to the passage of time and human achievement. In 1833 Edgar Allan Poe wrote the poem 'The Coliseum'. Exploring the historical and metaphorical significance of the Colosseum in Rome, Poe's poem meditates on the former grandeur and decay of empires like Rome, portraying the Colosseum ruin as a haunting structure of remembrance:

We are not impotent – we pallid stones.
Not all our power is gone – not all our fame –
Not all the magic of our high renown –
Not all the wonder that encircles us –
Not all the mysteries that in us lie –
Not all the memories that hang upon
And cling around about us as a garment,
Clothing us in a robe of more than glory.¹

Poe's poem identifies the apparent jeopardy of the Colosseum, that its decay was tantamount to the degradation of society and its ability to witness and be a physical manifestation of this memory. Many others of the period wrote and spoke in similar poetic language about the dilemma of historic buildings in ever changing cities and landscapes. By responding to the sociopolitical upheavals and perceived degradation of the natural and built environment, the Romantic period nurtured a desire to preserve buildings. Emphasising the emotional connection to their surroundings, Romantics believed that the urban and natural environments were witnesses and repositories of memory for both individuals and society collectively. Couched in poetic language, the Romantics made cultural claims whereby the environment, particularly the built environment, acted as an augmentation of the human capabilities of witnessing and memory, and thus, took on the role of bygone societies to tell stories of the past.

These beliefs however were not new. The nineteenth century Romantics drew upon a long-established tradition. Ancient writers and philosophers including Plato and Aristotle emphasised the importance of the landscape and built structures as mnemonic devices, physical cues for memory. For the Romantics however, buildings were not merely sites of memory, but rather are partaking in the witnessing and remembering themselves. Ancient philosophers identified that the human senses, particularly sight, is important to the idea of memory and imagination. The Romantics extrapolated this further, to posit that through perceptible objects, as well as visual cues found in the natural

¹ Edgar Allan Poe, 'The Coliseum', in *The Works of Edgar Allan Poe in Five Volumes: The Raven Edition* (PF Collier, 1902), <https://poets.org/poem/coliseum>.

landscape and buildings, or in representations like literature, photographs, and paintings, that memories can be experienced and recounted.

To imagine the past, humans rely on their senses. The senses also help to provide a psychological environment which fosters a desire to remember the past, and to see and experience memories through inanimate objects like buildings. This provides a unique environment in which nostalgia can develop, where we can long for personal memories, but also to experience and understand a time that we have never experienced. Contemporary theorist Svetlana Boym explains that the term nostalgia comes from the Greek *nostos* (return home) and *algia* (longing), and is thereby a longing for a home that no longer exists or may have never existed. This feeling comes from a yearning for collective memory and community, to counteract a sentiment of loss and displacement which may be spurred from humanity's fragmented world. Boym explains, however, that this feeling is a romance with human fantasy as a way of connecting with real and perceived memories and identities.² Drawing on society's emotions and perception of history, nostalgia which is prompted by buildings, allows people to straddle the time shift – perceive the past, engage in the present, whilst also imagining the future.

Nostalgia in the nineteenth century was however shaped by different historic, cultural and technological contexts than it was in the twentieth century, making the experience and the expression of this feeling distinct, particularly in relation to the built environment and its conservation.

In the nineteenth century, developing coevally with commercial mass culture, and responding to the sociopolitical upheavals and perceived degradation of the natural and built environment, nostalgia as applied to buildings, became a way for society to rebel against the development of modernity and the passage of time and history. Often this feeling sought to reclaim and conserve fabric, which was part of their history and identity, and was not necessarily part of their immediate present. In this way, key theorists in the Romantic period like Victor Hugo, John Ruskin and Eugène Emmanuel Viollet-le-Duc, through their seminal texts like *Notre-Dame de Paris*, *The Seven Lamps of Architecture* and the *Dictionnaire raisonné de l'architecture française du XIe au XVIe siècle*, sought to catalyse the conservation and restoration of the historic fabric of the past, through society's nostalgic tendencies.

In the twentieth century, in response to the rapid technological changes of the period, mass destruction caused by two world wars, and further sociopolitical upheavals, humanity's nostalgic desire sought to recreate or recapture the fabric of cities and societies which were destroyed. In this period, the history and identity of the fabric was keenly linked to the society which was trying to conserve or restore it. The ways in which the creative and recreative mechanisms in this period can be pushed ultimately sets the landscape of how, and how much these places can be conserved.

During the nineteenth and twentieth centuries the cultural claim about witnessing became an architectural metaphor in both theory and practice. Theorists and practitioners identified that buildings and landscapes are not just memory places and cues for society purely because they exist (in ruin or not) they also have the ability to tell stories of the past events and life, taking on human qualities of witnessing and memory recall. In this way, the humble building or ruin became something else, an anthropomorphised entity unto itself. As theorists in both centuries capitalised on this architectural metaphor, it is important to establish what the terms memory and witness entail.

² Boym, *The Future of Nostalgia*, xiii–xv.

Memory, a term which is derived from Old French (*memorie*) and Latin (*memoria*)³ explains the faculty in which the human mind, can store and retain information from the past.⁴ This can be applied metaphorically to buildings as well. Historically, architecture, acted as a mnemonic device, to help remember events and places, triggering imagery, symbolism, and mental associations. Memory cues became the foundation for memorial architecture, symbolising an event, place, or person.

Witnessing on the other hand denotes the mind as the seat of consciousness, where one sees something happen, is present at the place or period in which events take place.⁵ Perceiving architecture as ‘witness’, imparts human qualities onto an inanimate object. This perception relies heavily on architecture’s perceived ability to remember as a medium of communication or language.⁶ This language is architecture’s ability to witness, record and store memories, but also ascribes a level of cognition in which it can testify, leaving cues and relaying the memory stored within its walls. In this way architecture has been anthropomorphised.

Key to this doctoral research is understanding how this long-standing cultural tradition and expectation of architectural memory and witnessing is reliant on human perception. Whilst buildings and sites have long been used as memory places and cues for memory – like memorials, the integral question for this thesis is how and why buildings and landscapes are anthropomorphised and privileged as witnesses. The thesis asks:

Why do we expect buildings to remember and to do memory work?

The thesis postulates that the perception of memory within buildings and landscapes strongly relates to concepts of consciousness. Human consciousness is central to theories in philosophy, psychology, and memory science, which are used in the thesis as the conceptual apparatus to interrogate this long-standing cultural tradition and architectural metaphor. The research seeks to understand the cultural mechanisms at work in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries which posited buildings as the memory and history of a city, region or nation.

The relationship between memory and the built environment became an increasingly prominent discourse in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Pervading architectural and sociological theory, popular literature and architectural practice, interests in architecture and memory became increasingly less concerned with architecture’s memorial value as a monument or mnemonic device; but rather began to focus on the role memory and its cues play in the perception of architecture, and its ability to witness. Considering this, the doctoral research investigates literature, theories and

³ ‘Memory, n. Meanings, Etymology and More | Oxford English Dictionary’.

⁴ Pierre Nora, ‘Between Memory and History: Les Lieux de Memoire’, *Representations*, No. 26, Special Issue: Memory and Counter-Memory, Spring 1989, p. 22.

⁵ ‘Witness, v. Meanings, Etymology and More | Oxford English Dictionary’.

⁶ Adrian Forty outlines in his book *Words and Buildings: A Vocabulary of Modern Architecture* six categories of architectural metaphors which are predominant in architectural discourse. These categories are:

1. Against invention
2. To describe what made architecture an art
3. To describe the historical origins of architecture
4. To discuss architecture as a medium of communication
5. Analogies with grammar; and
6. Semiotic and structuralist applications to architecture.

Adrian Forty, *Words and Buildings: A Vocabulary of Modern Architecture*, Thames and Hudson, London, 2000, pp. 63-85.

historical accounts in three main fields: Memory – both through the sciences and humanities, Memory and Architecture; and Architectural Restoration and Conservation.

As scientific research into memory and imagination continued to develop into the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, the research indicated that the “neurocognitive machinery by which humans flexibly (re)construct past, future, and atemporal representations”⁷ requires both personal experience and acquired knowledge – *episodic* and *semantic memory*, respectively. Furthermore, psychologists identified that memory and imagination cannot be separated from our material, cultural and social environment, but rather memory occurs through an active creative engagement with the world, whereby the imagined world or memory can be created or recreated – transforming the reality of an object or scene (like the built environment) into a *memory trace*.⁸ In this way, contemporary research reaffirms that through literature, art, photography, and buildings, the physical and visual media can ignite our imagination, enabling us to engage with our perceptions of what it means for buildings to act as witnesses to history and to even possess memory. Reorganising information we possess through our senses and perceptions of buildings and landscapes, or through our knowledge of these places, we can create a complex understanding and (re)imagining of the past, present and the future.⁹ By re-examining literature, theories and historical accounts across the nineteenth and twentieth centuries through psychology and memory science, the research from this thesis is a significant contribution to the existing research and knowledge of architectural memory and witnessing in these two centuries.

The nineteenth and twentieth centuries have been identified by the doctoral research as two historical moments of crisis around memory and conservation. The first coincided with the political and economic upheavals of the early and mid-nineteenth century, and the second with the destruction and depredations of WWII. Whilst both respond to sociopolitical upheavals, the way these periods are dealt with by theorists and practitioners has had a lasting impact on subsequent generations. Using psychology and memory science as the conceptual apparatus by which to analyse these periods, the thesis interrogates how writers and advocates changed the way that their respective societies viewed and protected buildings and cityscapes. The doctoral thesis establishes **why we expect buildings to remember**, and the impact this has on collective memory, how society deals with material evidence and authenticity in these periods, and the creative and recreative tendencies of post-war reconstructions as re-imagined through visual media like photography and painting. Doing so, the thesis provides key contributions to understanding the long-standing anthropomorphic vision of buildings, and why we believe walls have eyes and ears.

⁷ Muireann Irish, ‘Chapter 27: On the Interaction Between Episodic and Semantic Representations - Constructing a Unified Account of Imagination’ in Abraham, *The Cambridge Handbook of the Imagination*, 447.

⁸ Koukouti and Lambros, ‘Chapter 3’ in Abraham, *The Cambridge Handbook of the Imagination*, 38; Martin Bressani, *Architecture and the Historical Imagination: Eugène-Emmanuel Viollet-Le-Duc, 1814-1879* (Ashgate Publishing Company, 2014), 57.

⁹ Anna Abraham and Andreja Bubic, ‘Semantic Memory as the Root of Imagination’, *Frontiers in Psychology* 6, no. 325 (2015): 1; Abraham, ‘The Imaginative Mind’, 4204; Arne Dietrich and Sandra Zakka, ‘Chapter 9: Capturing the Imagination’ in Abraham, *The Cambridge Handbook of the Imagination*, 138.

METHODOLOGY

INTRODUCTION

To understand the human tendency to perceive the built environment as replete with memories of the past, this thesis questions and re-examines the long-established theories about architectural witnessing through contemporary memory science and a psychological framework.

We talk about the built environment as though it were a witness to humanity, capable of telling stories of the past, long after we are gone. The thesis asks:

Why do we expect buildings to remember and to do memory work?

Considering the aims of the thesis, and in the context of the discourse of the psychological processes of memory in architecture and conservation, this chapter outlines the research methodology for this thesis. The thesis brings together various manifestations of the built environment: historical narrative, poetry, nineteenth century architectural theory, post-WWII reconstruction, mid-twentieth century architectural theory, painting and photography. It investigates how the concepts of witnessing and memory in each manifestation of architecture can be understood through contemporary memory science and psychology. In doing so, it seeks to show the significant influence that human perception and the mind's complex abilities to remember and imagine have on the understanding of the built environment.

The thesis is organised into three parts, exploring the ideas of memory, imagination, and contemporary memory science through the nineteenth century conservation movement, and the post-war conservation theories and practice of the twentieth century. The three parts of the thesis are interlinked, with each building upon the analysis and findings of the previous part to develop a nuanced understanding of the relationship between human psychology and the built environment, and its conservation.

Part One focuses on understanding the background to memory studies, focusing on the scientific advances of contemporary memory science and psychology. The theories analysed in **Part One** form the conceptual apparatus for interrogation of the nineteenth century literature and theories in **Part Two**, and the case studies examined in **Part Three** of the thesis, acting as the analytical framework to the thesis' research question.

Parts Two and Three can additionally be read as standalone analyses which interrogate two periods of conservation crisis – the nineteenth century, c.1810-1850s (**Part Two**) and twentieth century, post-WWII (**Part Three**).

PHASES OF CRISIS

Through the research, the thesis identified two key periods which shaped architecture and the conservation movement we know today. These two periods are c.1810-1850s, and the post-WWII period in the twentieth century. These two periods in history are referred to in the thesis as 'Phases of Crisis', and form **Parts Two and Three** of this thesis respectively. This term is used to specifically define that these two epochs featured distinct periods of substantial social upheaval and transformation of the built and natural environments. The thesis posits that it is these two key phases of crisis which impacted the theories and practice surrounding architecture and its conservation, and provide a genesis for claims that buildings and cities are agents of memory, in response to the social and environmental upheavals of their periods.

In the nineteenth century, the French Revolution and the Industrial Revolution, whilst primarily occurring in France and England, influenced many of the ideas and practices across Europe and much of the western world. During this period, beginning around c.1810 and continuing well into the mid-1800s, there was a significant increase in literary and artistic activity, concerned with memory and imagination, most notably those associated with the Romantic Movement. This period saw a significant shift in thinking about their surroundings, one which infiltrated literature and art, through key Romantic theorists and writers like Sir Walter Scott, Victor Hugo and John Ruskin. Whilst the literature and art criticism of the Romantics is well known, it has not necessarily been analysed in relation to the idea of place as witness. Highlighting the importance of the nation-state, the Romantics encouraged society to personally connect and reconnect with the collective memory and history, and in doing so, they catalysed change in society's appreciation and protection of significant places. **Chapter 2 and Chapter 3** of the thesis examines this distinct period in the nineteenth century through a literary analysis of Sir Walter Scott, Victor Hugo and John Ruskin's key texts, to understand the claims the Romantics made about the built environment and memory. Through this analysis, the works of these authors are re-examined through contemporary psychology and memory science, to understand how imaginative spaces created in literature and art, can help answer the question: **Why do we expect buildings to remember and to do memory work?**

The destruction and consequences of war, particularly WWII, saw further shifts in societal thinking and engagement with their surroundings. The psychological trauma and fragmentation caused by the global conflagration influenced ideas about place and memory, and promoted a reconstructive impulse that peaked during the post-war period. Where the thesis identifies that the nineteenth century crisis and memory claims revolved around literature and art, the twentieth century's claims about memory are keenly understood through reconstruction case studies. **Chapter 4 and Chapter 5** of the thesis examine this post-WWII period through four case studies – the *Frauenkirche* in Dresden, the *Royal Opera House* in Malta, *Warsaw* and *Saint-Malo*. The actions and controversies surrounding their destruction and reconstruction are re-examined through contemporary psychology and memory science to understand themes of authenticity in conservation after destruction, and the ability to reconstruct through creative extrapolation from images. These case studies, and the post-WWII period differ to the nineteenth century in how they can shed light on the thesis question, **Why do we expect buildings to remember and to do memory work?** The case studies provide not only physical examples of memory claims in action, but also highlight the importance of image and technology like photography which directly influenced social connection and memory with a place, providing added impulse to restore; whilst the nineteenth century relied on literary sources to paint an imaginative picture of the memories and built environment in question.

Given the two periods prompted distinct claims about memory, there are distinct reasons for choosing to re-examine these phases of crisis through two different qualitative means – literature analysis and

case study analysis. Doing so, the thesis provides new contribution to our understanding of the discourse and claims about memory and the built environment from these periods. It seeks to illuminate the patterns of claims within these two periods, and how the literature and case studies have influenced the expectation for buildings to be replete with memory and witnesses to the past.

However, despite their differences, **Parts Two and Three** of the thesis are interlinked. The nineteenth century claims about society's connection to place through identity, nationhood and memory are fundamental to understanding the conservation practices of the twentieth century in a post-war context. The psychological trauma of significant societal upheaval and destruction in both centuries underlines the relationship between humanity and their environment, and why humans have a unique connection to place and fabric, imbuing it with memory and identity. The crises of these periods comes when this place and fabric is lost or destroyed, fundamentally changing and questioning society's connection to the place, and the memories and identity which they associate with them. The impetus to conserve or not to conserve is driven by this sense of connection, and in turn by the psychological engagement of the viewer. The various manifestations and interlinkages of the two phases of crises are therefore significant to understanding the question: **Why do we expect buildings to remember and to do memory work?**

INTER-DISCIPLINARY RESEARCH

IDENTIFIED KNOWLEDGE GAP

This thesis uses an inter-disciplinary qualitative approach to examining the research question. When seeking to understand the fundamental reason why humans often see buildings as replete with memory and are capable of human qualities like witnessing, a gap was identified in how we approach this question and the greater architectural conservation field.

While the research has shown that there is a litany of established knowledge in memory and heritage studies about buildings and memory, there is little or no analysis or discussion about the psychology behind this idea. Why do inanimate objects like buildings witness or remember? Surely there is a human relationship at play.

This thesis therefore seeks to provide insight into this human element to the fundamental question: **Why do we expect buildings to remember and to do memory work?** Whilst this thesis does not seek to sit within the memory/heritage study field, it draws on key works from those fields to further understand a wider disciplinary perspective on memory and its relationship to the built environment.

The thesis instead seeks to re-examine established architectural history, conservation theories and practice of the nineteenth century and post-war periods through a new lens: contemporary memory science and psychology. In doing so, the thesis seeks to provide a novel contribution to the architectural conservation field through an understanding of the human capacity for memory and imagination, and the psychological relationship with the built environment, and subsequent concepts of memory and witnessing within the architectural fabric which surrounds us.

As such, **Part One** of this thesis forms the conceptual apparatus for interrogation of the theories and case studies examined in **Parts Two and Three**, and is the analytical framework to the thesis' research question.

SCIENTIFIC AND PSYCHOLOGICAL THEORISTS

Through research on basic memory science and psychology theory, key scientific theorists who discussed memory, psychology and imagination in a way which had the potential to have applications for the history and conservation of the built environment were identified.

Pivotal to the key theories applied in the thesis is the work developed by Endel Tulving in the 1970s and 1980s, which became the basis on which many contemporary memory scientists and psychologist analyse and prove or disprove new theories. Tulving's theories explain the human ability to travel backwards and forwards in time through their memories and imagination.¹⁰ Coined *mental time travel* – the thesis analyses existing literature and case studies within architecture and conservation to explain how humans have developed the capacity to interact with buildings, and understand a unique perception of time. In turn, this psychological process and the relationship with the built environment helps to delineate why we believe that buildings have 'eyes and ears', able to witness the past, and tell us stories in the future. Intersecting Tulving's scientific theories with contemporaries founded in the humanities such as philosophers Maurice Halbwachs¹¹, Pierre Nora¹² and Svetlana Boym¹³, provides key contributions to understanding how a building or a place can become a portal to, and symbol of the past.

Developing upon ancient philosophers like Plato and Aristotle,¹⁴ the contemporary scientific and psychological theories identified specific human anatomical and psychological processes of the brain's *hippocampus* to support and elaborate on these historic claims. In conjunction with Tulving's theories of *mental time travel*, the theorists focusing on *memory traces* and *imagination* were also key to the thesis – and worked hand-in-hand with Tulving's theories of memory.

These included Lynn Nadel and Morris Moscovitch who coined the term *multiple trace theory* to describe how the *hippocampus* can encode memories, and at the time of retrieval can be influenced by cues and contextual elements in the present, leading to the creation of multiple different and new *memory traces*. These multiple traces overlap with the initial trace, strengthening the trace's contents.¹⁵ The application of the overlapping and strengthening of *memory trace(s)* provides insight into why socially connected memories, like collective and national memories, are often stronger and more pervasive, as they can be continually strengthened by various manifestations of architecture

¹⁰ Tulving, 'Memory and Consciousness'; Endel Tulving, 'Chapter 2: Origin of Autonoesis in Episodic Memory', in *The Nature of Remembering: Essays in Honor of Robert G. Crowder.*, ed. Henry L. Roediger et al. (American Psychological Association, 2001).

¹¹ Halbwachs, *The Collective Memory*; Maurice Halbwachs and Lewis A. Coser, *On Collective Memory* (University of Chicago Press, 1992).

¹² Nora, 'Between Memory and History'; Pierre Nora and Lawrence D. Kritzman, eds, *Realms of Memory: Rethinking the French Past - Volume 1: Conflicts and Divisions*, European Perspectives (Columbia University Press, 1996); Pierre Nora et al., eds, *Realms of Memory: Rethinking the French Past - Volume 3: Symbols*, Realms of Memory (Columbia University Press, 1998).

¹³ Boym, *The Future of Nostalgia*.

¹⁴ Aristotle, 'De Memoria: On Memory and Reminiscence (350BC)', in *The Works of Aristotle*, ed. W. D. Ross, trans. J. I. Beare (Clarendon Press, 1908), <http://classics.mit.edu/Aristotle/memory.html>; Aristotle, 'De Anima: On the Soul (350BC)', in *In The Basic Works of Aristotle*, ed. Richard McKeon, trans. J. A. Smith (Random House, 1941), <http://classics.mit.edu/Aristotle/soul.html>.

¹⁵ Felipe De Brigard, 'The Nature of Memory Traces: The Nature of Memory Traces', *Philosophy Compass* 9, no. 6 (2014): 410; Robert J. Sutherland et al., 'Has Multiple Trace Theory Been Refuted?', *Hippocampus* 30, no. 8 (2020): 842; Morris Moscovitch et al., 'Functional Neuroanatomy of Remote Episodic, Semantic and Spatial Memory: A Unified Account Based on Multiple Trace Theory: A Unified Account Based on Multiple Trace Theory', *M. Moscovitch Et Al.*, *Journal of Anatomy* 207, no. 1 (2005): 42, 52–53.

cues like buildings, literature, photographs, and art. *Memory traces* may be one way the human brain anthropomorphises buildings, expecting them to elicit memories.

Another key theorist was neuroscientist Eleanor Maguire and her theories on *scene construction* which uses the brain's ability to encode and retrieve memories, paired with imagination to create spatially coherent scenes which could be retrieved when a person undergoes *mental time travel*. Maguire's theories provided key contribution to understanding how objects like buildings could serve as a scene-defining cue, enabling humans to reconstruct the past and imagine historic scenes or 'memories' through the building fabric. Her theories were also applied to reconstruction through images, identifying that whilst the image provides a limited scene through its framing, the viewer can extrapolate this beyond the physical boundaries of the image, *boundary extension*, to augment the viewed scene, and recreate something which may not have existed.¹⁶

The scientific works of these key theorists, alongside their contemporaries in the scientific field of memory and psychology is the apparatus through which this thesis examines established knowledge via fiction and theory from the nineteenth century and architectural case studies for the post-WWII period. Doing so, the research provides new avenues to understand the perennial concept that buildings are replete with memory. By applying scientific theory to a humanities subject, the thesis seeks to explain the unique relationship between humans and the built environment, and **why we expect buildings to remember and to do memory work.**

IDENTIFYING THEORISTS

The process for identifying key architectural and conservation writers and theorists in the nineteenth century began with an exploration of John Ruskin's famous quote from *The Seven Lamps of Architecture*:

"We may live without her, and worship without her, but we cannot remember without her..."¹⁷

This quote set the foundation for identifying those who, like Ruskin, saw architecture as the gateway to history and memory, and in turn championed conservation to support memory and contract with a living history. Ruskin's involvement as a key proponent in the nineteenth century conservation movement for this thesis was a significant choice. His vast contribution to nineteenth century conservation theory provides key insights into not only his personal thoughts on the matter, but the prevailing concepts about architecture, fabric and memory in this period.¹⁸ Imbedded within his architectural and art theory and criticism are important contributions and seeds of thought which give clues to the genesis of nineteenth century beliefs that architecture is witness and has the ability to do memory work. However, not all theorists of this period thought as Ruskin did. Indeed, not all Romantics were of a like mind. Whilst others like Augustus Pugin or William Morris may have been

¹⁶ Eleanor A. Maguire et al., 'Scenes, Spaces, and Memory Traces: What Does the Hippocampus Do?', *The Neuroscientist* 22, no. 5 (2016): 432–39; Maguire and Mullally, 'The Hippocampus: A Manifesto for Change'.

¹⁷ Ruskin, *The Seven Lamps of Architecture*, 178.

¹⁸ Ruskin's vast contribution to the nineteenth century conservation theory is examined in this thesis primarily through the following literature: Ruskin, *Poetry of Architecture*; Ruskin, *The Seven Lamps of Architecture*; John Ruskin, *The Stones of Venice: Study of Venetian Architecture*, Kindle Edition, 3 vols (e-artnow, 2021).

discussed as comparison to Ruskin in this thesis, it was important for the thesis' greater theoretical arc to establish a fundamental development during this period which sought to frame architecture as replete with memory, and identify and answer questions of why it was so.

The choice for Victor Hugo made sense in this context. He was a great champion of French architecture as key to the nation's memory and identity, and was prolific in his political literature calling for its conservation. The analysis of Hugo's *Notre-Dame de Paris* highlighted the unique role of the novel as a tool for conservation. The historical novel, which was developed during this period, was a new manifestation of architecture which had untapped potential to help understand the thesis' research question. Through the novel, Hugo not only memorialises the architecture, but calls for conservation, and extolls the memorial function of the building and city, drawing key links to the reader about nationhood and identity.

To compliment the theories of Hugo through his historical novel, the thesis analyses others who likewise used their novels or other literary media as a political tool to catalyse change in nineteenth century society, garnering support for the conservation movement. Sir Walter Scott fit this category precisely, and provides a contrasting position in the United Kingdom vs Hugo's France. Hugo and Scott thus set the scene for a comparative literature of their historic novels – the *Waverly Novels*¹⁹ and *Notre-dame de Paris*,²⁰ as well as poetry and other political writings.²¹ These pieces are used to examine the literary and narrative techniques of the authors through a contemporary memory science lens, to help provide new contributions to the understanding of their role in the nineteenth century conservation movement and the question of why buildings remember.

Some might question why; the nineteenth century's other great conservation theorist Eugène Emmanuel Viollet-le-Duc was not discussed in **Part Two** of the thesis. Viollet was always on the opposing side to Ruskin's theories – he was the 'scrape' to Ruskin's 'anti-scrape'. As such, Viollet, whilst a significant figure in the nineteenth century conservation movement, did not quite fit the criteria for 'theorist who saw architecture as a gateway to history and memory'. Firstly, his theories were always backed by his architectural practice, whilst Ruskin, Hugo and Scott remained firmly ensconced in literature and criticism. Secondly, his theories were more aligned with restoration and adaptation for new uses. For this reason, Viollet's theories play a significant role in understanding the conservation practices of the twentieth century, and the influence his ideas had on practitioners of this period, particularly in the post-war period, but also the understanding of memory through architecture and other media. By examining Viollet's theories out of context in the twentieth century, original contribution can be provided to the architecture and conservation fields.

Viollet's opening words from 'On Restoration' found in his *Dictionnaire raisonné de l'architecture française du XIe au XVIe siècle* (Dictionnaire) began an exploration to understand his potential influence on the twentieth century and to find other likeminded theorists and practitioners from this period:

¹⁹ Walter Scott, *Waverley* (Penguin Classics, 2011); Walter Scott, *The Antiquary* (Delphi Classics, 2017); Walter Scott, *Quentin Durward* (Project Gutenberg, 1823).

²⁰ Victor Hugo, *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*, Amazon Classics Edition (Amazon Classics, 1831).

²¹ Victor Hugo, 'La Bande Noire', in *Nouvelles Ordes* (Chez Ladvocat, 1823), https://fr.wikisource.org/wiki/Odes_et_Ballades/La_Bande_noire; Victor Hugo, 'Note Sur La Destruction Des Monuments En France', *Revue Des Deux Mondes*, 1825, https://fr.wikisource.org/wiki/Litt%C3%A9rature_et_philosophie_m%C3%AAl%C3%A9es/1825-1832_Guerre_aux_d%C3%A9molisseurs_!; Victor Hugo and Danny Smith, 'War on the Demolishers!', *West 86th: A Journal of Decorative Arts, Design History, and Material Culture* 25, no. 2 (2018): 224–48.

The term Restoration and the thing itself are both modern. To restore a building is not to preserve it, to repair or rebuild it; it is to reinstate it in a condition of completeness which could never have existed at any given time.²²

One such architect and theorist was Gustavo Giovannoni who worked during the inter-war period and through WWII. Giovannoni understood the need for restoration and reconstruction as a response to widespread destruction, but adapted for contemporary living – to a ‘completeness’ that may not have existed before. Giovannoni’s theories²³ which are explored in **Part Three** of the thesis, highlight the influence Viollet’s nineteenth century theories had over Giovannoni’s twentieth century theories and practice. This is particularly evident in the emphasis that both architects and theorist make about the ‘image’ and visual character of the city, and how this plays an important role in the identity, but also the restoration of architecture at the larger urban scale. The ‘image’, they believed, was the *genius loci* or spirit of the city, and was directly related to society’s psychological links with the fabric in relation to memory and identity.

Contemporary theorist and architect, Aldo Rossi, saw the city as a theatre of human interaction, where the historic fabric absorbs events and feelings from the past, but new fabric has the potential for future memory. Rossi also believed that the city was the repository of collective memory, the *genius loci*, of the city, and destroying this was tantamount to destroying society’s memory and identity. Rossi, much like Hugo in the nineteenth century, saw architecture as metonymical, a vital part of the nation that stood in for the whole.

The twentieth century theorists help to analyse the case studies in **Chapter 5**, and provide a new perspective to the conservation and reconstruction of the war-torn cities of *Warsaw* and *Saint-Malo*, couched in nineteenth century theories, applied in a twentieth century post-mass destruction context. The theorists also highlight the significant influence that the ‘image’, the impression of the city as a collective, has on the recreation of the character and identity of these cities, providing a different facet to explaining why buildings are expected to do memory work.

IDENTIFYING CASE STUDIES

In **Chapters 4 and 5**, four architectural case studies are analysed in the thesis, investigating claims about memory and witnessing in architecture during the twentieth century. These case studies draw on the influence of Viollet (and other nineteenth century theorists and critics) on the practitioners and advocates of the twentieth century conservation movement, and the restoration/reconstruction efforts post-destruction caused by the world wars.

The case studies were selected based on their ability to contribute to the understanding of memory concepts within architecture, and further knowledge in relation to the research question. Furthermore, it was important to the thesis to re-examine not only the well-known case studies, but to compare these to lesser-known ones. This comparison was designed to allow the analysis to juxtapose the crises of the known examples to those of the lesser-known, and in doing so, question to

²² C. Wethered and Eugène-Emmanuel Viollet-le-Duc, *On Restoration, By E. Viollet-Le-Duc [Tr. From an Article in His Dictionnaire Raisone De L’Architecture Francaise] and a Notice of His Works in Connection with the Historical Monuments of France* (Nabu, 2009), 9.

²³ Gustavo Giovannoni and Steven W. Semes, *New Building in Old Cities: Writings by Gustavo Giovannoni on Architectural and Urban Conservation*, ed. Francesco Siravo and Jeffrey W. Cody (Getty Conservation Institute, 2024).

what extent the notoriety may have had on the implications and understanding of memory and identity in these places, and whether this has impacted the impulse to restore. Furthermore, the selection of case studies purposely identified cases of different scales to analyse. Doing so, the thesis was designed to garner knowledge on the significance of the scale change on the memory concepts and conservation at play in these case studies.

The selection of case studies started first with the well-known examples. At the individual building scale, the *Frauenkirche* in Dresden was selected for its significant contribution to reconstruction in a post-war context, particularly in its adherence to conservation theories like anastylosis. Whilst the *Frauenkirche* is well-known for its conservation efforts, and its history as a site of memory and mourning, little has been researched into the significance of the transformation of the ruin back to a building as a memory place, and the psychological ramifications of this modification of memory and identity. This unique aspect reminded me of another war-torn building that was also left as a ruin for most of the twentieth century and had significant resistance to the chosen redevelopment plan. This case study was the *Royal Opera House* in Malta. The *Royal Opera House* was selected for the reasons why it differed from the *Frauenkirche*. Where the *Frauenkirche* found a new significance as a memorial to the atrocities of war, the *Royal Opera House* remained an ignored eyesore in the city; *Frauenkirche* was reconstructed, ignoring this new layer of memory, whilst the *Royal Opera House* was left unrestored and adapted for new use. Both case studies are significant for the interplay of collective memory and national identity and the backlash which they caused, and provides different perspectives to understand societal connection to buildings and the memory work they are believed to undertake.

At the urban scale, the cities of *Warsaw* and *Saint-Malo* were selected as they represent whole urban landscapes which were reconstructed based on old images – paintings and postcards/tourist images respectively. By recreating the ‘image’ of the city, these two case studies identify the shift from the two-dimensional representation of the city’s identity back into the three-dimensional. These city examples provide a significant contribution to understanding the role that collective memory and societal interaction have with a place, and the influence this has on the claims of memory and witnessing, and the subsequent conservation and reconstruction process and outcome. *Warsaw* was selected as a World Heritage Listed example of reconstruction at the urban scale based on eighteenth century paintings. *Warsaw* is well-known for its metonymical connection with the culture and identity of Poland, and how Bellotto’s eighteenth century paintings were used to recreate the ‘image’ and identity of the ‘golden age’ of *Warsaw* and Poland. In contrast, the city of *Saint-Malo*, also obliterated during WWII, was used as the second case study at the urban scale. *Saint-Malo* was also reconstructed in the post-war period, utilising the tourist postcard and photographs of the iconic sea-side city. *Saint-Malo*’s reconstruction controversies are comparatively less known than *Warsaw*, yet follows the same principles as its well-known counterpart. The city has a metonymical connection with the culture and identity of the Malouins, and the tourist photographs represent the ‘image’ and identity of the city which was seen as significant to reconstruct. However, there is little literature on the practical reconstruction theories used to recreate the ‘image’ of *Warsaw* and *Saint-Malo*, and the implications that the creative licence of the reconstruction based on images, has had on the authenticity of the city and the romanticised memory it portrays to the viewer.

These four case studies help to further explain the interconnected role of human interaction with buildings, and how the psychological aspects of memory, nostalgia, and imagination come into question with how we understand buildings to remember.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The approach to the literature review in this thesis is an unconventional one, but is guided by the research design and ability to analyse scholarly research through a re-examination of history and theory.

The thesis methodology as has been explained in the sections prior, identifies that two key phases of crisis structure the analysis of this thesis, where the literature and case studies have been selected based on their ability to contribute or provide new knowledge to answer the research question. Throughout, the underlying interrogative apparatus remains the contemporary science and psychological theories which the thesis posits would help us to understand the research question.

Aspects of the literature review are to be read through the theoretical and historical analysis, and interrogation of key texts and case studies throughout the chapters of the thesis. The thesis has been designed in this way, to carefully analyse and synthesise the scholarly research and key theoretical ideas at the chapter it is pertinent to, rather than front loading at the beginning of the thesis. In this way, the thesis should be read as one would a history, where each chapter is a narrative argument that builds upon the literary analysis and findings in the chapter and from other chapters in the thesis, drawing clear links between the theorists, key texts, and case studies.

The next section of the thesis, entitled '**How Buildings Came to Remember**' provides a synopsis of the historical and theoretical literature that has been encountered in the thesis, summarising in a thematic way the theories, theorists and case studies encountered in the research, and their importance to understanding the research question.

HOW BUILDINGS CAME TO REMEMBER

The thesis traces the foundations of memory theory and imagination back to the works of Aristotle in his key historic texts *De Memoria*²⁴ and *De Anima*²⁵, which builds on Plato's earlier theories of the physical *memory trace*, expanding to discuss the concepts of *phantasia* (imagination) and *phantasmata* (*memory traces*). For Aristotle, these *phantasmata* are fragments of images which are left in our minds, and through which the ancient Greek philosophers believed humans were able to exercise perception, using their senses to remember and imagine. Much like Plato's wax tablet in his treatise *Theatetus*,²⁶ the *phantasmata* leaves an impression in the mind of the perceiver, where academic Christina Papachristou explains the brain provides the environment "to create, to recombine or reproduce and to call up mental images of objects, events, faces or scenes, which are not present to the senses"²⁷ enabling us to mentally travel through different spatiotemporal contexts. Beginning in the early modern period Plato and Aristotle's theories generated a litany of philosophical, psychological, and scientific quests to understand the nature of memory. From John Locke's *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (1689) where *memory traces* are stored as images in a storeroom (the brain);²⁸ to Frances Amelia Yates's *The Art of Memory* (1966) which follows the historical evolution of mnemonic systems, insisting that the first step to a *memory trace* is to imprint on the memory a series of loci or place;²⁹ to contemporary memory and imagination theorists like Eleanor Maguire,³⁰ Felipe de Brigard³¹ and Anna Abraham³² who seek to understand the role and nature of *memory traces*, nostalgia and imagination, through a deeper understanding of the scientific theories of *episodic and semantic memories* and the process by which brain structures like the *hippocampus* work to encode and store these *phantasmatas* within the memory networks of the brain.

Pivotal to the key theories used to interrogate the thesis question are the ground-breaking research in memory developed by Endel Tulving in the 1970s and 1980s.³³ Tulving's theories explained the evolutionary emergence of *autonoetic consciousness* and the ability for humans to look backwards and forwards in time, and engage their *episodic and semantic memories* and imagination.³⁴ These theories help to explain how humans have developed the capacity to interact with buildings, and the perception of time. Tulving highlights that through the perspective shifting qualities of *autonoetic*

²⁴ Aristotle, 'De Memoria'.

²⁵ Aristotle, 'De Anima'.

²⁶ Chappell, 'Plato'.

²⁷ Christina S. Papachristou, 'Three Kinds or Grades of Phantasia in Aristotle's De Anima', *Journal of Ancient Philosophy* 7, no. 1 (2013): 29.

²⁸ Bertrand Russell, *The Analytics of the Mind*, 1921, 186 as quoted in Sarah K. Robbins, 'Chapter 6: Memory Traces', in *The Routledge Handbook of Philosophy of Memory*, ed. Sven Bernecker and Kourken Michaelian, Routledge Handbooks (Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, 2017), 79.

²⁹ Frances Amelia Yates, *The Art of Memory* (Routledge, 2013), 3.

³⁰ Maguire and Mullally, 'The Hippocampus: A Manifesto for Change'; Maguire et al., 'Scenes, Spaces, and Memory Traces'.

³¹ Felipe De Brigard, 'Reconstructing Memory' (PhD Dissertation, University of North Carolina, 2011), <https://cdr.lib.unc.edu/concern/dissertations/wh246s97k>; De Brigard, 'The Nature of Memory Traces'; Carlos Muñoz-Suárez and Felipe De Brigard, eds, *Content and Consciousness Revisited* (Springer International Publishing, 2015); Felipe De Brigard, 'Nostalgia Reimagined', *Aeon*, 2020, <https://aeon.co/essays/nostalgia-doesnt-need-real-memories-an-imagined-past-works-as-well>.

³² Abraham and Bubic, 'Semantic Memory as the Root of Imagination'; Abraham, 'The Imaginative Mind'; Abraham, *The Cambridge Handbook of the Imagination*.

³³ Tulving, 'Memory and Consciousness'.

³⁴ Tulving, 'Origin of Autonoesis in Episodic Memory'.

consciousness and the recreative qualities of imagination,³⁵ humans can mentally travel through time, placing themselves in the past, in the future, or in counterfactual situations, and thus can examine their own thoughts while crossing the spatiotemporal divide, a phenomenon Tulving coined *mental time travel*.³⁶

Whilst psychology and neuroscience provided the scientific foundations to the doctoral research, memory theories were also interrogated from the humanities, particularly the key theoretical works of French historians and philosophers Maurice Halbwachs, Pierre Nora and Russian-American cultural theorist Svetlana Boym. Halbwachs theories relating to collective memory as outlined in his seminal works *On Collective Memory*³⁷ and *The Collective Memory*³⁸ have been critical to understanding society's perception of memory as a reconstruction of the past, but also its relationship with identity. Like the neuroscientific theories, Halbwachs identifies that collective memory requires the support of a group (a social framework) which is delimited in space and time,³⁹ and therefore requires activation of the counterfactual abilities of the mind which Tulving would identify decades later. This is significant to understanding that through the social construction of memory, humans emphasise the need for significance and poignancy in the built environment which they interact with. Whilst Nora's theories outlined in his key works 'Between Memory and History'⁴⁰ and the *Realms of Memory*,⁴¹ particularly *lieux de memoire* (sites of memory), have been key to intersecting the psychological and physical realms of memory, and understanding how a building or place can become a portal to, and symbol of the past. Nora's theories are also influential in understanding the significance of architectural fragments and visual media in post-war or post-destructive contexts, whereby a fragment (ruin), a photograph or image can also become a memory cue, a *lieux de memoire*, because the real environment, *milieux de memoire*, no longer exists.⁴² Boym's theories on nostalgia take a humanities approach to a scientific theory. In Boym's *The Future of Nostalgia*,⁴³ she presents nostalgia as a yearning for collective memory and community, and a rebellion against the fragmented world, a defence mechanism against progress and historical upheavals which impact society's ability to connect with their memories and identity.⁴⁴ This is significant to the understanding the psychological processes which may spur the impetus to conserve and restore, in face of the destruction and upheavals that society are impacted by. These three theorists provide a nuanced perspective of a humanities understanding of psychology and human connection with space and place, helping to analyse why humans expect buildings to remember and do memory work.

Nora's theories also facilitated an understanding of the historical and social developments of the nineteenth century and impacts of the Industrial Revolution. These social developments saw a significant change in society's understanding and interest in their history and environment, leading to the development of Antiquarianism and the first forays into conservation. Historians Rosemary

³⁵ David Davies, 'Chapter 34: Imagination in the Philosophy of Art' in Abraham, *The Cambridge Handbook of the Imagination*, 469.

³⁶ Tulving, 'Episodic Memory', 5.

³⁷ Halbwachs and Coser, *On Collective Memory*.

³⁸ Halbwachs, *The Collective Memory*.

³⁹ Halbwachs and Coser, *On Collective Memory*, 22.

⁴⁰ Nora, 'Between Memory and History'.

⁴¹ Nora and Kritzman, *Realms of Memory: Volume 1*; Nora et al., *Realms of Memory: Volume 3*.

⁴² Nora, 'Between Memory and History', 7.

⁴³ Boym, *The Future of Nostalgia*.

⁴⁴ Boym, *The Future of Nostalgia*, xiv–xv.

Sweet,⁴⁵ Rosemary Hill,⁴⁶ Jukka Jokilehto,⁴⁷ and Miles Glendenning⁴⁸ provide contemporary analysis of the historical developments of the conservation movement from its origins in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, particularly the influence of Romanticism in the nineteenth century. These contemporary texts identify that literature, particularly the novel, emerged in the nineteenth century as the ideal vehicle to engage the reader in a historic past. Precipitating an awareness of present conditions (or absence of a quality in the past), saw the development of a new genre – the historical novel. Historical novelists used imagery and literary devices to employ the reader’s sense of nostalgia and imagination to engage with both the past and present, facilitating the setting which allows the reader to consider the situation of both these periods; an idea which was echoed by Tulving later in the twentieth century. Two key proponents in this period were Victor Hugo and Sir Walter Scott, who used their historical novels and other literary works as political tools to catalyse change in societal thought, romanticising the idea of buildings and landscapes as witnesses to the national story and thereby evoking national collective memory in the reader. Contemporary work in comparative literature of theorist Nicola Minott-Ahl,⁴⁹ Gilbert D. Chaitin,⁵⁰ and Rumiko Handa,⁵¹ highlight the influence of the Romantic period, and particularly the influence Romantic writers had on the psyche of the nation, the development of identity, and conservation of this identity and memory in France, Scotland and England. This identified a clear ‘phase of crisis’ during the nineteenth century c.1810-1850. This ‘phase of crisis’ was defined by the upheavals of the French Revolution and Industrial Revolution, and became the setting for artistic exploration of the psychological effects of this period. Through this exploration, writers like Scott and Hugo used literature to target the imagination and nostalgia of the reader in order to catalyse a personal and societal reaction, highlighting the need for conservation of their identity, nationhood, buildings and cities, but most importantly their collective memories. It is through an examination of the historic literature and contemporary analysis, that a greater understanding of the influence that this period had on the concepts of memory and witnessing can be found, and helps to answer the research question.

In this vein, during this significant first ‘phase of crisis’, the seminal works by the nineteenth century’s most influential English critic and theorist of art and architecture John Ruskin, especially *The Poetry of Architecture*,⁵² *The Seven Lamps of Architecture*,⁵³ and *The Stones of Venice*,⁵⁴ are foundational to understanding the significance of the Romantic sensibility in relation to the perception of memory and

⁴⁵ Rosemary Sweet, ‘Antiquaries and Antiquities in Eighteenth-Century England’, *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 34, no. 2 (2001): 181–206; Rosemary Sweet, *Antiquarianism and History*, 2008, 1–3.

⁴⁶ Rosemary Hill, *Time’s Witness: History in the Age of Romanticism* (PENGUIN BOOKS, 2023).

⁴⁷ Jukka Jokilehto, ‘A History of Architectural Conservation’ (PhD Dissertation, University of York, 1986); Jukka Jokilehto, *A History of Architectural Conservation*, Repr, Series in Conservation and Museology (Routledge, 2002).

⁴⁸ Miles Glendenning, *The Conservation Movement: A History of Architectural Preservation: Antiquity to Modernity* (Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, 2013).

⁴⁹ Nicola Minott-Ahl, ‘The Construction of a Cause: Gothic Architecture and the Nineteenth Century Novel’ (PhD Dissertation, University of New York, 2003); Nicola Minott-Ahl, ‘Nation/Building: Hugo’s “Notre-Dame de Paris” and the Novelist as Post-Revolutionary Historian’, *Partial Answers: Journal of Literature and the History of Ideas* 10, no. 2 (2012): 251–71; Nicola Minott-Ahl, *The Architectural Novel: The Construction of National Identities in Nineteenth-Century England and France* (Sussex Academic Press, 2021).

⁵⁰ Gilbert D. Chaitin, ‘Victor Hugo and the Hieroglyphic Novel’, *Nineteenth-Century French Studies* 19, no. 1 (1990): 36–53.

⁵¹ Rumiko Handa, ‘Ruins in Sir Walter Scott’s Historical Novel: A Case of Diachronic Interpretation of Architecture’, 2010, 1–10; Rumiko Handa, ‘Sir Walter Scott and Kenilworth Castle: Ruins Restored by Historical Imagination’, *Preservation Education & Research* 5 (2012): 29–44, 112.

⁵² Ruskin, *Poetry of Architecture*.

⁵³ Ruskin, *The Seven Lamps of Architecture*.

⁵⁴ Ruskin, *The Stones of Venice*.

witnessing in architecture. Ruskin's poetic musings and theories identify his engagement with buildings as anthropomorphised repositories of memory and witnesses to the past. Whilst much of the contemporary analysis, from writers like George P. Landow,⁵⁵ Andrew Ballantyne,⁵⁶ and Francis O'Gorman,⁵⁷ focus on the aesthetic and conservation theories relating to ruins, restoration and preservation of identity in Ruskin's work; by intersecting and re-examining Ruskin's theories with contemporary memory science, the thesis analyses the memory function of architecture and how this has influenced the conservation movement from the nineteenth century to the present. Ruskin believed that buildings sat at the intersection between past and present and by mediating them as a way to connect through time, the building became evidence of history for society in the present to interpret. Linking back to key theories of imagination, Ruskin believed that human imagination and perception of buildings were integral to understanding the physical evidence of the past, and influenced his ideas about architectural witnessing and memory. A re-examination of Ruskin's work, alongside Hugo and Scott provide new contributions to the field, and a wider understanding of the reciprocal role humans have in the concepts of architectural witnessing and memory.

Whilst the nineteenth century conservation theories of Ruskin and Eugène Viollet-le-Duc became the foundation for twentieth century conservation charters *The Athens Charter (1931)*⁵⁸ and *The Venice Charter (1964)*,⁵⁹ the scope of destruction and fragmentation caused by two world wars in the twentieth century was something which the nineteenth century theorists could not have anticipated. This twentieth century period, specifically the post-WWII period becomes the second 'phase of crisis' identified in this thesis. Key to this period is the impact on cultural heritage, and questions of authenticity when faced with contested pasts and conservation of buildings and cities, particularly in their destruction, in which they take on new meanings and memories. Authors Katherine Hodgkin and Suzannah Radstone in the book *Contested Pasts: The Politics of Memory*,⁶⁰ re-emphasise the ancient Greek philosophers on the importance of physical space and its relationship with identity. Hodgkin and Radstone claim that changes to this environment can bring nostalgia, which is a powerful catalyst to reclaim what was lost.⁶¹ Whilst theorist Gabriel Moshenska⁶² identifies that heritage due to conflict results in curated ruins. These curated ruins are distinguished between 'clean' and 'dirty' – where one is cleaned up, and or reconstructed, whilst the other is a pile of broken fragments which have been left as they had fallen within the original footprint of the structure.⁶³ These concepts are key to the thesis' case studies in **Chapter 4** – the *Frauenkirche* in Dresden and *Royal Opera House* in Malta, both left as ruins after WWII, and are further analysed in terms of how this has impacted the public's relationship with the memory and identity imbued in the stones. Both architectural case

⁵⁵ George P. Landow, *The Aesthetic and Critical Theories of John Ruskin* (Princeton University Press, 1971); George P. Landow, *Ruskin*, Past Masters Series (Oxford University Press, 1985), <https://victorianweb.org/authors/ruskin/pm/contents.html>.

⁵⁶ Andrew Ballantyne, *John Ruskin* (Reaktion Books, 2015).

⁵⁷ Francis O'Gorman, 'Ruskin's Memorial Landscapes', *Worldviews: Global Religions, Culture, and Ecology* 5, no. 1 (2001): 20–34; Francis O'Gorman, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to John Ruskin*, Cambridge Companions to Literature (Cambridge University Press, 2015).

⁵⁸ The Athens Charter for the Restoration of Historic Monuments (1931).

⁵⁹ International Charter for the Conservation and Restoration of Monuments and Sites (The Venice Charter) (1964).

⁶⁰ Katherine Hodgkin, 'Introduction: Contested Pasts', in *Contested Pasts: The Politics of Memory*, First issued in paperback, ed. Katharine Hodgkin and Susannah Radstone, Routledge Studies in Memory and Narrative (Routledge, 2003).

⁶¹ Hodgkin, 'Introduction: Contested Pasts', 12.

⁶² Gabriel Moshenska, 'Working with Memory in the Archaeology of Modern Conflict', *Cambridge Archaeological Journal* 20, no. 1 (2010): 33–48; Gabriel Moshenska, 'Curated Ruins and the Endurance of Conflict Heritage', *Conservation and Management of Archaeological Sites* 17, no. 1 (2015): 77–90.

⁶³ Moshenska, 'Curated Ruins and the Endurance of Conflict Heritage', 79–80.

studies provide different perspectives and contributions to the knowledge about societal connection with monuments and the memory work they are believed to undertake on behalf of the individual and the collective.

The theories of nineteenth century theorist and architect Viollet-le-Duc are interrogated through his influence on twentieth century architectural theory, urban planning and conservation theories, particularly in post-war contexts. Viollet's seminal article 'On Restoration'⁶⁴ is analysed through contemporary theorists, such as Martin Bressani⁶⁵ and Aron Vinegar,⁶⁶ who discuss Viollet's theories of restoration in relation to his imagination and architectural creativity. These theories are paralleled with twentieth century conservation architect and urban planner, Gustavo Giovannoni who Steven Semes⁶⁷ has dedicated his work to studying, and describes as the "'middle way' between the pure conservation views of Englishmen John Ruskin and William Morris and the stylistic restoration of Frenchman Eugène Viollet-le-Duc."⁶⁸ Both Viollet and Giovannoni, practiced a creative and recreative architecture, which sought to conserve memory, taking creative liberties with conservation. This is a significant difference to the theories and practices of the Romantics, who sought to conserve in-situ or restore a place to its former period of 'glory'. These twentieth century practices and developments in the post-war period identify a changing relationship with memory and the importance of authenticity in the fabric. Viollet and Giovannoni's architectural theories are extrapolated against the artistic theories of photography and art like Roland Barthes' *Camera Lucida*,⁶⁹ which identifies that a visual medium can capture a moment in time, and act as a visual cue for memory, but also a visual aid for reconstruction. Photography brings the research back to Aristotelian theories of memory, where the photograph becomes an imprint of the past. However, as historian and critic Adrian Forty explains in his book *The Art of Forgetting*,⁷⁰ the photograph is also the perfect medium to perpetuate forgetting, as once captured, the physical evidence of the past is no longer needed – thereby transitioning the memory from the three-dimensional to the two-dimensional plane. These concepts are integral to the case studies analysed in **Chapter 5** – *Warsaw* and *Saint-Malo*, both ruined in WWII, their conservation and reconstruction efforts illustrating the important shift between architecture as witness, to witness through the image. These two city case studies provide significant contributions to understanding the role that images have on collective memory and societal interaction with place. The analysis of the cities highlights different claims about memory and witnessing, which has subsequent impacts on conservation and reconstruction processes.

⁶⁴ Wethered and Viollet-le-Duc, *On Restoration, By E. Viollet-Le-Duc [Tr. From an Article in His Dictionnaire Raisone De L'Architecture Francaise] and a Notice of His Works in Connection with the Historical Monuments of France*.

⁶⁵ Martin Bressani, 'Notes on Viollet-Le-Duc's Philosophy of History: Dialectics and Technology', *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 48, no. 4 (1989): 327–50; Bressani, *Architecture and the Historical Imagination*.

⁶⁶ Aron Vinegar, 'Memory as Construction in Viollet-Le-Duc's Architectural Imagination', *Paroles Gelées* 16, no. 2 (1998): 43–55.

⁶⁷ Steven Semes, 'New Design in Old Cities: Gustavo Giovannoni on Architecture and Conservation', *Change Over Time* 7, no. 2 (2017): 212–33; Steven W. Semes, 'Gustavo Giovannoni: The Complete Architect', in *Putting Tradition into Practice: Heritage, Place and Design*, vol. 3, ed. Giuseppe Amoroso (Springer International Publishing, 2018).

⁶⁸ Semes, 'Gustavo Giovannoni', 237.

⁶⁹ Roland Barthes, *Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography*, 1st American ed (Hill and Wang, 1981).

⁷⁰ Adrian Forty and Susanne Küchler, eds, *The Art of Forgetting*, Materializing Culture (Berg, 2001).

PART I
TO WITNESS, REMEMBER, AND IMAGINE

CHAPTER 1
WITNESSING AND MEMORY

It took biological evolution a long time to build a time machine in the brain, and it has managed to do it only once, but the consequences have been enormous: By virtue of their mental control over time, human beings now wield powers on earth that in many ways rival or even exceed those of nature itself. It is difficult to imagine a marvel of nature greater than that.

-- Endel Tulving, 'Episodic Memory: From Mind to Brain', 2002, p. 20

INTRODUCTION

Biological evolution, as identified by Endel Tulving in the chapter's epigraph created a 'time machine' in the human brain, which enables humans to transcend the immediate present, revisit the past and envision the future. Tulving's research and key findings in the 1970s and 1980s identified the distinction between the human brain and the animal brain, further helping to identify the human brain's ability to foster the desire to remember and imagine.

The human desire to remember and capture elements of the past is a concept as old as the oldest ancient civilisations. The desire to remember is deeply ingrained in human nature, driven by both psychological and evolutionary factors, and helps provide humans with the essential functions to navigate life, and form and connect identities and relationships with other humans, animals and their environment. While theoretical reflection on the mind's ability to remember and imagine goes back to the ancient Greek philosophers, it is the work of contemporary memory science which identifies the intricate ways in which the human brain stores, retrieves and reconstructs past experiences, allowing individuals to navigate time, learn and look to the future.

Memory, however, as identified by ancient civilisations, is not merely a passive device which records. Rather, it is an active process that involves complex interactions between humans, the environment and elements which create cues that trigger reactions with the five senses, activating regions of the brains such as the *hippocampus* and prefrontal cortex. This process allows humans to form personal narratives, recall experiences, and predict what may lie ahead.

Imagination, which is closely linked to memory, allows humans to extend their mental reach beyond what they have directly experienced, beyond their *episodic memory*. Drawing upon past experiences, emotions, and the learnt and collective past (*semantic memory*), imagination allows humans to build new mental constructs, generate ideas, innovate and create; but importantly for this thesis, this mental process allows humans to recreate the past, allowing for a cognitive exploration and visualisation of memories and scene creation.

Chapter 1 analyses the development of memory theory in both the sciences and humanities to understand the fundamentals of research on the human brain and its ability to create memories and help humans interact with the world around them. The literature and theories from this chapter form the conceptual apparatus of the thesis, and are used to re-examine the theoretical foundations of architectural conservation and the phases of crisis surrounding it in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. These distinct periods are a result of the substantial social upheaval and environmental changes which occurred due to the Industrial Revolution, WWI and WWII, and provide a genesis for buildings and cities as agents of memory.

Memory and imagination research, and theories from the twentieth century provide a structure to understand the assumptions and controversies in conservation during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, and provides a unique tool to understand the built environment, and answer the research question: **why do we expect buildings to remember and to do memory work?** Throughout the thesis, it becomes increasingly apparent that the built environment echoes many aspects of humanity's capacity to remember and imagine. Whether it be nineteenth century theorists anthropomorphising buildings and landscapes; or twentieth century conservation crises post-WWII which was reflected in nostalgic desire and urge to recreate and recapture the past; the built environment is an effective tool for memory. Through contemporary memory science, research shows that human memory and the

built environment are closely bound together, dependent on each other. The conceptual apparatus highlights that the material and visual cue of the built fabric is in dialogue with human psychology. It is directly related to society's connection with their identity and history, and the process through which they seek to protect, conserve or rebuild this identity and history in its built manifestations.

The first section of the chapter entitled **'Memory and Imagination'** examines the historical development of memory and imagination theories. Focusing initially on the oral traditions of ancient civilisations, the section begins with the world's oldest continuous civilisation, the Aboriginal Australians and the concepts of Songlines and Dreaming. Core to these concepts is the belief that that time and place are part of an endless continuum, whereby the environment, in particular the landscape is an archive of knowledge and history. This notion is key to humanity's development of physical structures of memory, first through Neolithic monuments and megalithic structures, to the memory palaces of the ancient Greeks. The ancient Greeks are the first to provide written theories identifying *loci* as the 'spirit' of a place, a method for imparting memory to locations, and using them as cues for their long orations. The concept of the *loci* became a continued influence on human understanding of their environment and is fundamental to the nineteenth and twentieth century conservation theories which sought to protect buildings and places based on a perceived 'spirit' and memory of those places. Ancient Greek philosophers Plato and Aristotle provide some of the earliest theoretical writings of the importance of human senses and the ability for these to interact with the brain to create impressions, activate imagination and produce *memory traces*. Aristotle also provided the first theories about nostalgia, a concept which would become a significant contributor to the understanding of the human desire to remember and understand the past, and imagine a time which they have never experienced.

The subsequent section entitled **'Memory Traces'** seeks to understand the scientific development and understanding of the *memory trace*, first identified in Plato's theories in fourth century BCE. This section analyses the cognitive functions of the human brain, and its ability to store and retrieve information and memories through the medial temporal lobes, particularly a structure known as the *hippocampus*. The *hippocampus* is the hub of a core memory network, which encodes and stores information in the neocortex and retrieves these *memory traces* when a cue reactivates them. The scientific theories behind *episodic memory* and *semantic memory* are discussed, establishing the ability for humans to remember their past experiences, and store abstract information and facts that are independent of their own experiences, such as historical events. Both these processes are important to scene construction and the brain's ability to navigate the past, and imagine the future through a process known as *mental time travel*.

The final section, **'Mental Time Travel'** investigates the development of contemporary memory science's understanding of the brain's ability to time travel. The section begins the narrative on the ancient philosophical theories of consciousness and imagination, providing context for the human ability to produce mental imagery and think outside of reality to imagine the past and future. Tulving's theory about *mental time travel*, identifies that the human brain's ability for *autonoetic consciousness* (the ability to mentally place ourselves in the past or future, and examine our own thoughts) is key to the ability for the human mind to travel through spatiotemporal contexts. By understanding how memory and imagination intersect, contemporary memory science delves into how these faculties contribute to the richness of the human experience, from recalling the past to envisioning and creating the future.

Through an understanding of the human capacity to store and retrieve *memory traces*, *mentally time travel*, and imagine, the thesis recasts and questions the perception of memory in relation to

architecture, in order to analyse **why we expect buildings to remember and do memory work**. Through a greater understanding of the role that human consciousness plays in this perception, the interaction with collective and historic narratives, and with personal memories, the thesis interrogates how by remembering the past and imagining the future, society has engaged with, connected to and anthropomorphised buildings as repositories of collective and personal memories.

MEMORY AND IMAGINATION

Ancient civilisations which were predominantly oral based were heavily dependent on memories for their individual and collective survival, and therefore often used the landscape and built structures as cues for memory – mnemonic devices. The world’s oldest continuous civilisation, Aboriginal Australians, according to authors Margo Neale and Lynne Kelly, believe that “time and place are infinite and everywhere. Everything is part of a continuum, an endless flow of life and ideas emanating from Country...”¹ To Aboriginal Australians, Country is not only the land on which they live, but an archive of knowledge and history through which engagement in song, dance, mythology and art, Aboriginal elders are able to retain vast stores of factual information to create what is known as Songlines and Dreaming. Understanding that the human brain loves narratives and storytelling, and is particularly good at associating memories and places through cues such as art, landforms and structures, Songlines are like pathways of knowledge, which cross spatiotemporal contexts leaving memory traces which inform the past and the future.² Other Indigenous cultures around the world, like those found in Africa and the Americas also use the landscape as a mnemonic device, using trails and handmade tools to link past events to specific locations and histories. This thesis however does not seek to analyse the memory practices of indigenous cultures and ancient civilisations, rather it emphasises the human propensity to engage in imagination and memory practice, and provides historical context to the development of memory concepts in humanities and science.

Indigenous cultures in Australia, and in many other parts of the world, make no distinction between the animate and inanimate in the world – they believe that everything is living, be it people, animals, plants, land, structures, water or air. This personification of inanimate elements hones into the core neurological requirement of human brains to create both witnesses and cues to foster memories and their retrieval. It draws upon the imagination of the person to create a knowledge system which brings their environment to life, ensuring they are equipped with the essential knowledge to survive both physically and culturally.

In the Neolithic period some societies moved away from using the landscape to support memory, instead these societies began to develop and construct monuments and megalithic structures like Stonehenge, in England, Ħaġar Qim, in Malta, and Göbekli Tepe, in Turkey. The stones and megalithic structures in these civilisations functioned in a similar way to how Songlines operate, acting as mnemonic devices for memory and ceremonial practice of the society. The stones were utilised as witnesses not only to the original landscape from which they were quarried, but also memory tools for the civilisation that constructed them. Kelly explains, that these sites, have become compelling to contemporary society as a cypher of mysterious past societies, and whilst these societies and their

¹ Neale and Kelly, *Songlines*, 1.

² Neale and Kelly, *Songlines*, 2, 52, 87 and 90.

THESE WALLS HAVE EYES AND EARS

cultures are long gone, the extant fabric has witnessed not only these societies and their use of the space, but also the passage of time.³

The development of physical structures of memory within the environment, like the famous memory palaces and theatres of knowledge used by ancient Greek philosophers, use the same memory technique of the *loci*, which is at the core of the practice of Songlines and Dreaming.⁴ The *loci* considered to be the 'spirit' of the place, is a method of imparting memory to a location. Using locations as cues for their long orations, ancient Greek philosophers like Aristotle and Plato were able to convey vast amounts of knowledge to their audience using simple techniques practiced by civilisations for generations.

As early as 350BCE Aristotle identifies the mechanisms involved in memory in both his *De Anima* (On the Soul)⁵ and *De Memoria et Reminiscentia* (On Memory and Reminiscence)⁶ as comprising the following three basic features:

1. Memory is always of the past, never of the present or of the future
2. Memory belongs to several known animals
3. Memory belongs to the sensing faculty⁷

Here, Aristotle identifies three key aspects to memory. First, memory is dependent on temporal distance, as "to remember the future is not possible."⁸ The key here is the etymology of the word 'remember' as it relates to recollection of things past, and therefore implies that time has elapsed. Memory therefore hinges on a sense of temporal distance from the present and an understanding of one's continuity across subjective time. This temporal distance allows for the development of constructive imagination and thought where we can find an escape from the confines of our time and space.

Second, memory is something which many animals including humans are capable of. Both humans and animals have the ability to perceive time; and all have perception. Humans, however, are the only known species which can recollect and imagine – combining old images (or memories) with new sensory information and data.⁹

Lastly, memory is directly related to the faculty of our senses. Emphasising the role that the five senses contribute to perception and remembrance, Aristotle speculates that it is through a process of fantasy and imagination, and interacting with perception or cognition which leads to the creation of

³ Lynne Kelly, *The Memory Code: The Traditional Aboriginal Memory Technique That Unlocks the Secrets of Stonehenge, Easter Island and Ancient Monuments the World Over* (Allen & Unwin, 2016), 135, 158; Neale and Kelly, *Songlines*, 15.

⁴ Neale and Kelly, *Songlines*, 97; Kelly, *The Memory Code*, xiii.

⁵ Aristotle and J.A. Smith, 'De Anima: On the Soul', 350BCE, <http://classics.mit.edu/Aristotle/soul.html>.

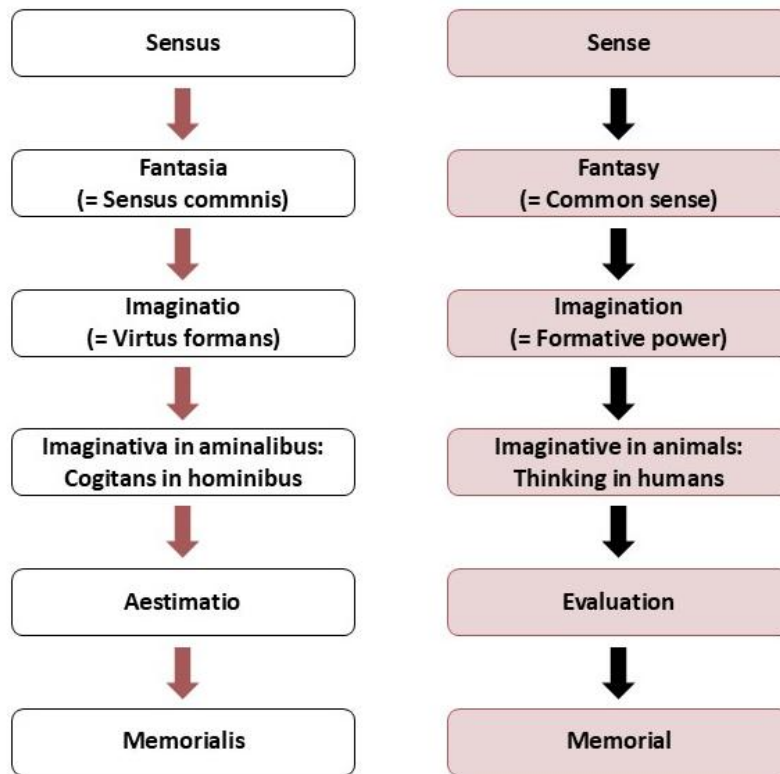
⁶ Aristotle and J.I. Beare, 'De Memoria: On Memory and Reminiscence', 350BCE, <http://classics.mit.edu/Aristotle/memory.html>.

⁷ David Bloch, *Aristotle on Memory and Recollection: Text, Translation, Interpretation, and Reception in Western Scholasticism* (BRILL, 2007), 120.

⁸ Aristotle, 'De Memoria'.

⁹ Papachristou, 'Three Kinds or Grades of Phantasia in Aristotle's De Anima', 42; Jack M. Greenstein, 'Icons and Memory: Aristotle on Remembrance', *Articles, Public*, no. 15 (January 1997): 9.

memories.¹⁰ This idea is outlined in Figure 1, which explains Aristotle’s theory about memory’s relationship with the senses.



1 Avicennian theory of memory based on Aristotelian theory of memory and the external senses. Translation from Latin to English by Author. Source: Author’s diagram, adapted from Bloch, 2007, p. 148.

According to Aristotle, and later Roman poet and philosopher Cicero, sight is the most highly developed of all the senses, through which humans can participate in and produce *phantasia* (imagination).¹¹ The word *phantasia* comes from the Greek *phaos* which means to be ‘visible’ or to have images ‘appear’. In order to remember and imagine, Aristotle believed that humans “employ *phantasmata* which are bodily marks (*tupoi*) that are carved in the matter of the heart or *proton aisthetikon*.”¹² These *tupoi* are like *memory traces*, which leave fragments of images (*phantasmata*) in our brains – the “primary perceptive part of the soul”¹³ (the *proton aisthetikon*) – through which we are able to exercise perception and use our senses to understand the memory cues and imagine. The sense of sight is particularly important to the idea that memory and imagination can be generated through perceptible objects and visual cues such as nature and architecture, or through representations like photographs and paintings.

A causal result of perception and the sensorial impressions, imagination and memory imprint a *phantasmata*, an image or *memory trace*, within the brain of the perceiver, much like the way Aristotle

¹⁰ Yates, *The Art of Memory*, 32; Bloch, *Aristotle on Memory and Recollection*, 148.

¹¹ Aristotle, ‘De Anima’; Yates, *The Art of Memory*, 4.

¹² John E. Sisko, ‘Space, Time and Phantasms in Aristotle, De Memoria 2, 452b7-25’, *The Classical Quarterly* 47, no. 1 (1997): 167.

¹³ Aristotle, ‘De Memoria’; Greenstein, ‘Icons and Memory: Aristotle on Remembrance’, 13.

describes “the way in which a piece of wax takes on the impress (*semeion*) from a signet-ring without the iron or gold.”¹⁴ Contemporary analysis and research by academics like Christina Papachristou explain that this process which Aristotle describes, provides an environment where the human mind has the “capacity or power...to create, to recombine or reproduce and to call up mental images of objects, events, faces or scenes, which are not present to the senses.”¹⁵ According to Aristotle, remembering and imagining consists of two types of *phantasmata* which impacts how the brain uses them to formulate either memories or imagination. The first type relates to images created for a specific reason to commemorate an event, a cue like a memorial; whereas the second type is related to the image or memory which is dependent on time, and is a physical witness to an event, like an impression in wax.¹⁶ The process of the creation of *phantasmata* is significant to understanding how imagination and *memory traces* can be used to not only mentally travel through different spatiotemporal zones, but also connect with fabric and imbue it with a human quality like witnessing and memory.

Aristotle’s theoretical discussions of memory and imagination highlight that memory may be a function of *phantasia*, as both involve the physical senses and thought. He proposes two types of imagination in his writings – the “‘sensitive imagination’, which is stimulated by our senses – seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, and touching; and the ‘deliberate imagination’, which is superior to the other and more involved in cognitive process and the understanding of social life and is located in the mind, and absent from the body.”¹⁷ Philosophers and scientists who have succeeded Aristotle have agreed with the Aristotelian theory that memory and imagination are nearly identical in their function and mental processes within the brain. Whilst both memory and imagination create a collection of *memory traces* (*phantasmatas*) from sensory interactions and perceptions, the key difference between the two lies in memory’s reliance on temporal distance and the ability for these memories to be verified through sitting in a particular time and place.

By the Middle Ages and later in the Early Modern period, the ‘art of memory’ reached a new and more complex understanding of what it means to imagine and remember, combining many elements of mnemonic devices and techniques developed by oral based societies with the psychological foundations outlined by Aristotle and his peers. ‘Memory Theatre’ (c.1519-1544) like the one designed by Italian philosopher Giulio Camillo (see Figure 2) highlights that the human mind uses images, symbols, and physical spaces, like buildings, as mnemonic devices to create mental associations which assist in remembering the past. Other philosophers like Italian philosopher and monk Giordano Bruno continued to interrogate the complex psychological apparatus related to the derivation of *phantasmata* from sensory impressions and perceptions. Bruno and his contemporaries examined how these *memory traces* travel through the brain’s ‘compartments’ creating different zones from which humans can draw upon imagination, reason and intellect.¹⁸ This research provided the first theoretical insight into what was later identified as the cognitive processes of the *multiple trace theory*.

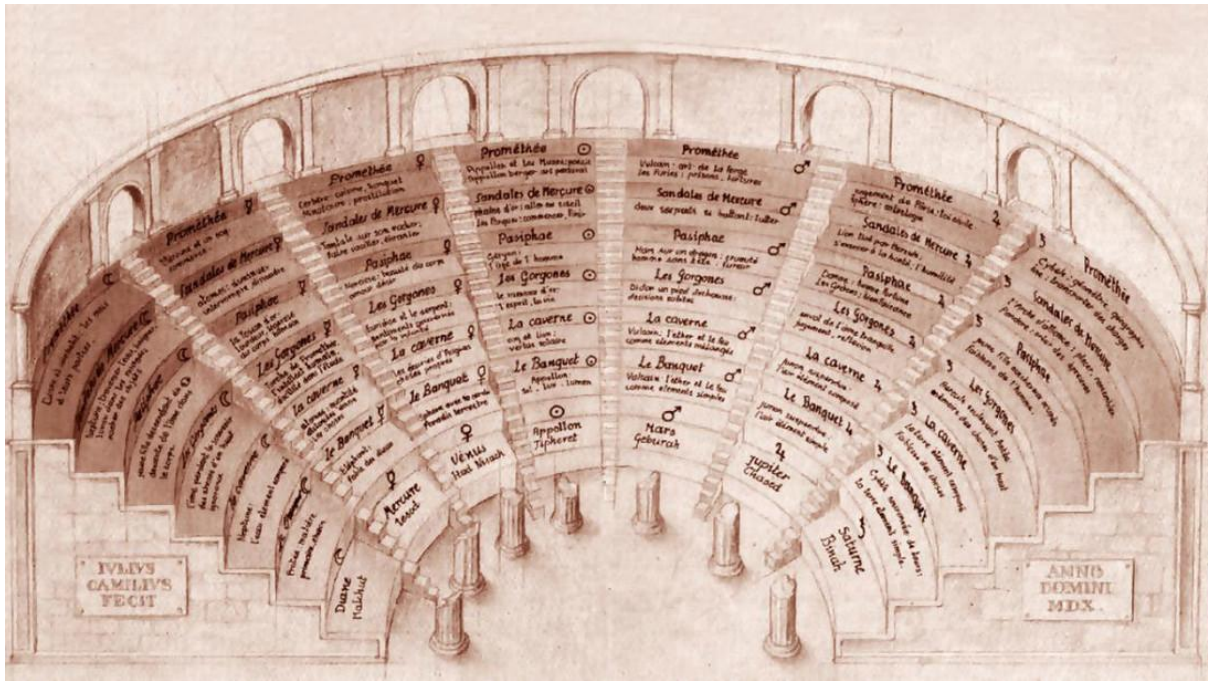
¹⁴ Aristotle, ‘De Anima’; Greenstein, ‘Icons and Memory: Aristotle on Remembrance’, 11.

¹⁵ Papachristou, ‘Three Kinds or Grades of Phantasia in Aristotle’s De Anima’, 29.

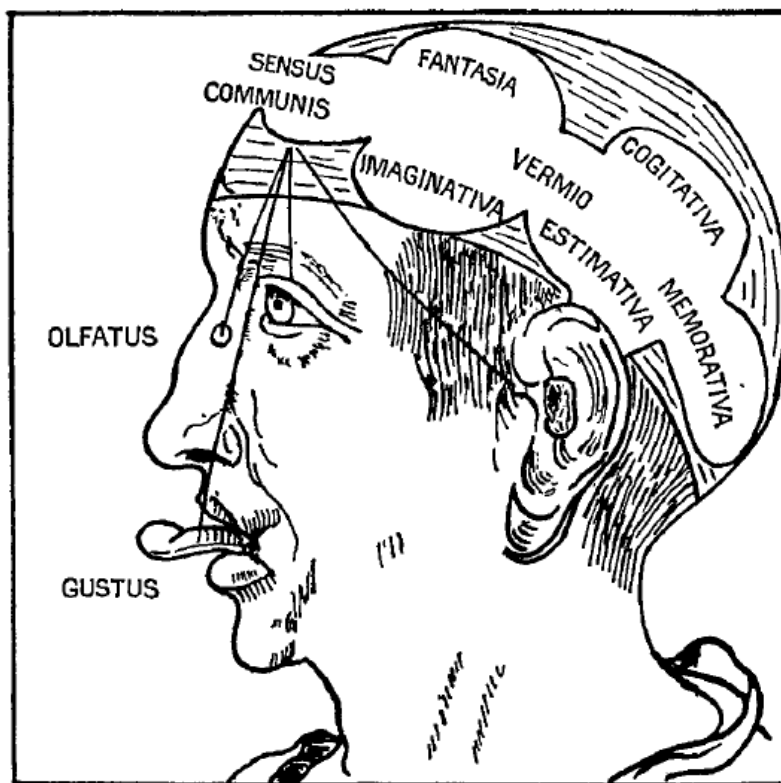
¹⁶ De Brigard, ‘The Nature of Memory Traces’, 403; Sisko, ‘Space, Time and Phantasms in Aristotle, De Memoria 2, 452b7-25’, 168.

¹⁷ Maria Danae Koukouti and Lambros Malafouris, ‘Chapter 3: Material Imagination: An Anthropological Perspective’ in Abraham, *The Cambridge Handbook of the Imagination*, 31.

¹⁸ Yates, *The Art of Memory*, 157; 256–57.



2 Giulio Camillo's Memory Theatre (c.1519-1544).
 Source: <https://wsimag.com/culture/28090-the-art-of-memory>, accessed 25/07/21.



3 Diagram of Faculty Psychology. Redrawn from a diagram in Romberch, Congestorium artificiose memorie.
 Source: Frances Yates, The Art of Memory, Figure 9, p. 256.

In his treatises, Aristotle also identified that sensorial interaction and perception is required to undergo *appetition* (a concept similar to nostalgia). Humans must use their senses to imagine, be nostalgic and to desire – providing a psychological environment in which memories incite a longing for the past, but also long for a time that we have never experienced, and thereby crossing the spatiotemporal divide.¹⁹ This process, was further reiterated by Bruno in the Early Modern period, described as the ‘Faculty Psychology’, which explains that impressions identified by the sense pass through the ‘*senus communis*’ (common sense) through to other parts of the brain’s psyche, like imagination and fantasy (see Figure 3).

Nostalgia was originally scientifically classified as a medical disorder, a sadness and ‘homesickness’, a symptom of an ‘afflicted imagination’.²⁰ Derived from the Greek *nostos* meaning to return to home, and *algos* meaning pain, nostalgia was a common theme in Ancient Greek literature like Homer’s *Odyssey*, which follows the epic twenty-year journey of Odysseus home to Ithaca. However, nostalgia, much like memory, is afforded perspective through time – influencing how one mentally processes events and their behaviour. Nostalgia, as theorist Svetlana Boym describes is a “yearning for a different time – the time of our childhood, the slower rhythms of our dreams.”²¹ In Odysseus’ case, he yearned for a time before the battle of Troy, a period of stability and slower rhythm of everyday life in Ithaca. The pain (*algos*) and urge to return home (*nostos*) was driven by a rebellion against time’s passing. In a contemporary equivalent, nostalgia is a longing for the past, a rebellion against modernity. Boym explains that contemporary nostalgia is a rebellion against the developments and progress that result in the specific era, and the inevitable distancing from events and life within history.²² Nostalgia prompted by buildings, however, allows the imagining individual to straddle the time shift – both able to perceive the past, and engage in the present, while imagining the future. In doing so, a building can tell a story, fostering memory, but also provide lessons from the past – *magistra vitae*.²³

The sensory experience which is fundamental to creating memories and understanding the layers of *memory traces* and fragments is important to how architecture can act as a cue for visual and nostalgic imagination. As Boym writes, “the renovated ‘old stones’ become places for transit between the ghosts of the past and the imperatives of the present.”²⁴ These ‘old stones’ reflect the layers of the city and evidence of time’s passing, and the inhabitation and survival of society. Boym identifies this as ‘porosity’ in the city. Porous like the material, ‘porosity’ is Boym’s metaphor for time in the city, and the embedding of temporal dimensional cues in physical space.²⁵ These cues help to recollect and recreate historical scenarios, and/or create possible new ones which provide best possible explanations for the situations from the data and sensory information provided. Boym’s theories help to understand how nostalgia and imagination can trigger a connection with *memory traces* both within fabric and in human memory, to travel through time, and engage with buildings and cities in a way which transforms them into a witness and repository of memory.

¹⁹ Aristotle, ‘De Anima’; Jacky Bowring, ‘Melancholy, Memories, and Six Nostalgias: Postquake Christchurch and the Problems of Recalling the Past’, *Change Over Time* 3, no. 1 (2013): 92.

²⁰ Identified in 17th Century by Physician Johannes Hofer -- in Maria Cohut, *What Is the Role of Nostalgia in the Human Psyche?*, 1 January 2021, <https://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/why-do-we-need-nostalgia>.

²¹ Boym, *The Future of Nostalgia*, xv.

²² Boym, *The Future of Nostalgia*, xv.

²³ *Magistra vitae* - Latin for ‘life’s teacher’, used in Cicero’s *De Oratore* as a personification of time and history - in Giovanni Galli, ‘Nostalgia, Architecture, Ruins, and Their Preservation’, *Change Over Time* 3, no. 1 (2013): 14.

²⁴ Boym, *The Future of Nostalgia*, 76.

²⁵ Boym, *The Future of Nostalgia*, 76.

Nineteenth century writers like Victor Hugo and Sir Walter Scott utilised this surge of interest and human propensity for nostalgia and anemoia (nostalgia for a time you did not know) to engage the reader's imagination. Depicting the world of the past while engaging with the world of the present, literature can engage the imagination, facilitate time travel, and influence society's collective memory and their perception of witnessing and memory in the built environment.

As scientific research into memory and imagination continued to develop into the twentieth and twenty-first centuries (particularly post-1970s), cognitive neuropsychologist Muireann Irish explains that the research continuously indicated that the "neurocognitive machinery by which humans flexibly (re)construct past, future, and atemporal representations"²⁶ required both personal and acquired knowledge – *episodic* and *semantic memory*. Memory and imagination cannot be separated from our material, cultural and social environment, but rather it occurs through an active creative engagement with the world, whereby the imagined world or memory can be created or recreated – transforming the reality of an object or scene (like the built environment) into a *phantasm*. In this way, imagination enables us to engage with our perceptions of what it means for a building to witness and possess memory. With a reintegration and reshuffling of the information we possess through our senses and perception of the existing materials (cue), or through our knowledge (memory), we can create a complex understanding and (re)imagining of the past, present and the future.

Relying on sensory experiences of the world around us, as well as our personal and acquired knowledge, philosopher David Davies explains that through the *imagined observer hypothesis* theory, by engaging with a visual representation, we are actually observing or witnessing the events depicted in the film, image, or even represented in the building fabric as a palimpsest.²⁷ This can occur in two ways, either through a third person perspective where we act as an outside observer on the scene being constructed, or from a field perspective where we experience the scene as if we are witnessing it ourselves.²⁸ A third person perspective could occur through interaction with a painting or a photograph which can help activate the viewer's imagination to facilitate *scene construction*, and provide the perception of 'looking in', observing ourselves within the scene. Whilst participating in a re-enactment would help to facilitate a field perspective, where as a participant we are recreating and witnessing the memory and events for ourselves. The *imagined observer hypothesis* is further described by psychologist Martin Conway through the mechanics of memory science. Conway explains that by using a combination of our *episodic and semantic memory*, we can situate ourselves as either an observer or direct participant, which helps us to understand the present visual perspective (image, scene etcetera), and interpret the visual memory (*phantasmata*).²⁹ In this way, the built environment becomes both the witness and the cue, as the physical element is both witness to the event, but also a cue which triggers the mind to recreate or remember the event as if we were present in the specific moment in time.

The power of the human mind to produce, remember or recreate is key to how the mechanisms of imagination can reframe the concepts of witnessing and memory in architecture, and help to garner new perspectives why we expect buildings to remember and do memory work. These mechanisms are also the foundation to further scientific developments in the understanding of the cognitive

²⁶ Muireann Irish, 'Chapter 27: On the Interaction Between Episodic and Semantic Representations - Constructing a Unified Account of Imagination' in Abraham, *The Cambridge Handbook of the Imagination*, 447.

²⁷ David Davies, 'Chapter 34: Imagination in the Philosophy of Art' in Abraham, *The Cambridge Handbook of the Imagination*, 568 and 571.

²⁸ Heather K. Mclsaac and Eric Eich, 'Vantage Point in Episodic Memory', *Psychonomic Bulletin & Review* 9, no. 1 (2002): 146.

²⁹ Martin A. Conway, 'Episodic Memories', *Neuropsychologia* 47, no. 11 (2009): 2306.

faculties which allow for the encoding, storage and recall of *memory traces*; as well as psychological theories like *mental time travel*, which identify that the brain has the “power capable of transforming and renewing whatever it adopts...”³⁰

MEMORY TRACES

The discussion of memory and the *memory trace*, finds its origins in the philosophical teachings of Plato in 300BCE. As Aristotle’s predecessor, Plato laid the foundations for Aristotle’s account of memory, particularly memory’s relationship with time. Plato was also the first to discuss the idea of the image (*memory trace*) in his discussion of the ‘Wax Tablet’ in the treatise *Theatetus* (191c-d). In his discussion, Plato identifies that the ‘soul’ (the mind) has the ability to receive imprints as “whenever we want to keep in our memory some one [*sic*] of the things that we can see or hear or conceive of for ourselves, we hold the wax tablet under these perceptions or conceptions, and make an impression of them on it...Whatever we imprint, we remember and know as long as its image remains there on the block.”³¹

Plato’s discussion of *memory traces* in the form of a wax tablet has generated a litany of philosophical, psychological and scientific quests to understand the nature of the *memory trace* – from Aristotle’s *phantasmata* in his *De Memoria* and *De Anima* (350BCE), to John Locke’s *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (1689) where the *memory traces* of ideas are stored as images in a storeroom (the brain); with the persistent metaphor revolving around the central idea that “memory demands an image”.³² However, the ‘Golden Age’ of memory research began at the turn of the twentieth century, when scientific studies into memory, *memory traces* and the neural mechanisms of the brain began in earnest. This ‘Golden Age’ of research, philosopher Felipe De Brigard explains, identified that *memory traces* are like mental representations of the past which are causally derived, and reflect the objects and events experienced during their conception.³³ The *memory trace* undergoes ‘consolidation’ as part of the causal chain which links two events – the past (*memory trace*) and the present (cue), causing the act of remembrance, but is predicated on temporal distance.³⁴

The term ‘consolidation’ (introduced by German experimental psychologists Georg Elias Müller and Alfons Pilzecker in 1900) describes the time-dependent process required by the *memory trace* to assimilate with other memories and be stored permanently in the brain.³⁵ The ‘consolidation’ of the *memory traces* within the causal chain process, results in a multi-level neural mechanism which encodes experiences and then reconstructs these during retrieval when a cue, like a building, triggers a *memory trace*.³⁶ This encoding and retrieval process is posited to rely upon memory ‘pattern

³⁰ Ruskin, *The Seven Lamps of Architecture*, 153.

³¹ Plato, *Theatetus* 191c-d as quoted in Chappell, ‘Plato’, 393.

³² Bertrand Russell, *The Analytics of the Mind*, 1921, 186 as quoted in Robbins, ‘Memory Traces’, 79.

³³ De Brigard, ‘The Nature of Memory Traces’, 403.

³⁴ Felipe De Brigard, ‘Reconstructing Memory’ (Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina, 2011), 18, <https://cdr.lib.unc.edu/concern/dissertations/wh246s97k>.

³⁵ Moscovitch et al., ‘Functional Neuroanatomy of Remote Episodic, Semantic and Spatial Memory’, 36.

³⁶ De Brigard, ‘Reconstructing Memory’, 3–4.

completion', whereby the various elements of the original memory representation are reactivated, which reinforces the mnemonic content of the cue.³⁷

In 1904, German zoologist (later an evolutionary biologist and memory researcher) Richard Semon introduced the term *engram* to describe the neural mechanisms which allow for the storage or 'consolidation' of memories and creation of *memory traces*. Semon proposed that an experience "activates a subset of cells that undergo off-line, persistent chemical and/or physical changes to become an engram [*memory trace*]. Subsequent reactivation of this engram induces memory retrieval."³⁸ Semon further defined the *engram* as being produced by stimulus, which is prone to modifications and degradation through time, but formed a connected complex of *memory traces* which were 'excited' (retrieved) by the interaction with external cues; and was able to assimilate the newly acquired memories with the existing complex of *memory traces* and knowledge.³⁹ Important to this process is the sensory aspect, as sensory interaction is both key to the initial formation of memories and *memory traces*, but also key to a cue, like sight, touch, smell or sound, which helps to facilitate the retrieval and/or reactivation of a *memory trace*, and help to facilitate the engagement with the built environment as a memory tool.

Key to the creation of *memory traces* are two small seahorse shaped structures located in the medial temporal lobes of the brain, known as the *hippocampus*. One of the most studied brain structures in neuroscience, the *hippocampus* was first discovered and identified in 1564 by pioneering Italian anatomist and surgeon Julius Caesar Aranzi. Traditionally, the *hippocampus* has been associated with memory and spatial cognition, however recent investigations, including those by neuroscientist Elanor Maguire, have increasingly linked hippocampal function to include aspects of perception and imagination, including the imagination of fictitious and future scenes.⁴⁰

The *hippocampus* supports processes in the brain related to encoding, storing and retrieving of information and memories, a process known as the 'Encoding-Storage-Retrieval (ESR) Model'.⁴¹ *Memory traces* are central to the ESR Model, with neuroimaging studies indicating that the *hippocampus* is the hub of a core memory network in the brain, encoding and storing *memory traces* within the neocortex until such time they are reactivated through a cue in the present.⁴² Increasingly the *hippocampus* has been shown to facilitate scene construction which is essential for *episodic memory* but also imagination, spatial navigation, and perception of retrieved *memory traces*, all of which are integral to the concepts of *mental time travel*.⁴³

Scene construction theory postulates that the *hippocampus* facilitates the construction of spatially coherent scenes, anticipating and synthesising representations of the world beyond the immediate present, but also including recollection of past experiences and imagined experiences which have not occurred. According to Maguire, *scene construction theory* asserts that *episodic memory* encoding

³⁷ Louis Renoult et al., 'From Knowing to Remembering: The Semantic–Episodic Distinction', *Trends in Cognitive Sciences* 23, no. 12 (2019): 1043.

³⁸ Sheena A. Josselyn and Susumu Tonegawa, 'Memory Engrams: Recalling the Past and Imagining the Future', *Science* 367, no. 6473 (2020): 1.

³⁹ Moscovitch et al., 'Functional Neuroanatomy of Remote Episodic, Semantic and Spatial Memory', 36; Josselyn and Tonegawa, 'Memory Engrams', 1.

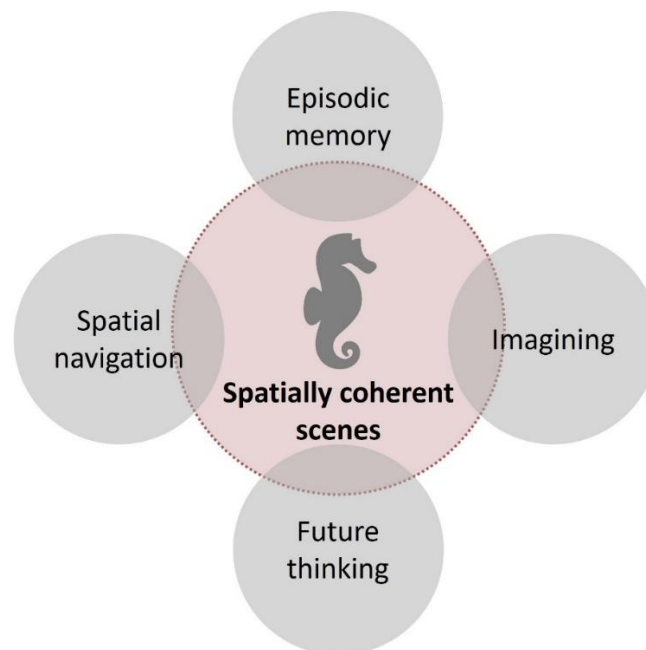
⁴⁰ Maguire et al., 'Scenes, Spaces, and Memory Traces', 432.

⁴¹ As discussed in Daniel Schacter, *The Seven Sins of Memory*, 2001, 138 as quoted in Robbins, 'Memory Traces', 83.

⁴² Robbins, 'Memory Traces', 83; Moscovitch et al., 'Functional Neuroanatomy of Remote Episodic, Semantic and Spatial Memory', 51.

⁴³ Maguire et al., 'Scenes, Spaces, and Memory Traces', 433.

and retrieval, navigation, and imagination include many mental processes which are not the primary concern of the *hippocampus* (as depicted in the diagram in Figure 4). Despite this, the theory proposes that each of these processes relies on the *hippocampus* for a key component – the construction of spatially coherent scenes, crucial to other concepts like *mental time travel*.⁴⁴



- 4 Scene Construction Theory relies on the hippocampus' ability to create spatially coherent scenes to help facilitate imagination, spatial navigation, future thinking and episodic memory encoding and retrieval.

Source: Author's diagram, adapted from Maguire and Mullaly, 2013, p. 1182.

According to pioneering and experimental psychologist and cognitive neuroscientist Endel Tulving, *Episodic memory* is a "neurocognitive (brain/mind) system, uniquely different from other memory systems, that enables humans to remember past experiences"⁴⁵ and focuses primarily on an individual's memories of moments which have occurred in their personal history. *Semantic memory* on the other hand relies on the storage of abstract information and facts, preserving this information irrelevant of the intersection of past time and/or experiences.⁴⁶ It usually involves memories and information which are acquired and is often associated with historical events and collective memory, which are not necessarily a result of an event which the individual has experienced personally. *Episodic memory* however cannot exist independently and requires *semantic memory* to navigate the past.

Tulving viewed the episodic memory system as a complex system which enables the creation and retrieval of memories to occur. He summarises the memory process as both simple and straightforward, emphasising the existence of a *memory trace* and its relationship with time (past or present):

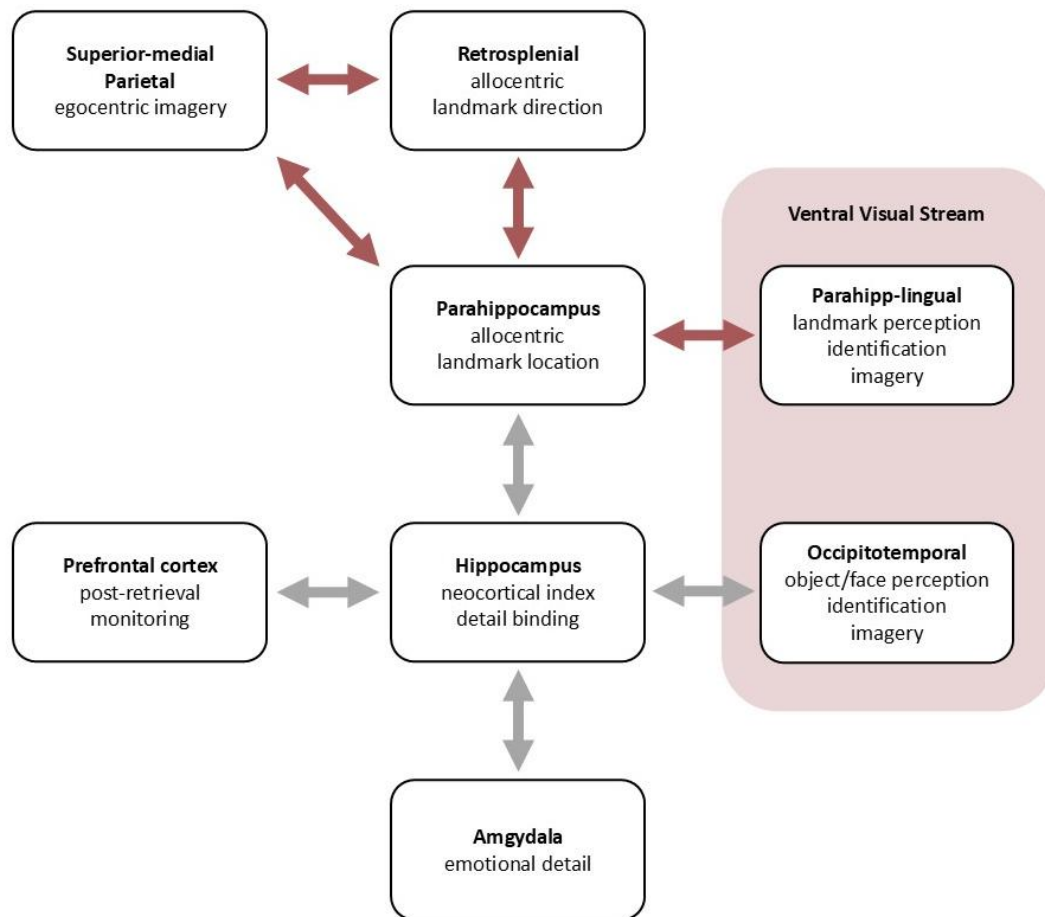
⁴⁴ Maguire and Mullaly, 'The Hippocampus: A Manifesto for Change', 1180–81; Maguire et al., 'Scenes, Spaces, and Memory Traces', 433.

⁴⁵ Tulving, 'Episodic Memory', 1.

⁴⁶ Russell, 'Collective Memory Before and After Halbwachs', 798.

An event happens, a person experiences it, memory traces are laid down representing the event, the past vanishes and is replaced by the present. The memory traces of the event continue to exist in the present, they are retrieved, and the person remembers the event. This, in a nutshell, has been the understanding of how memory works. It is simple and straightforward; there is no need or room for magic, or marvel.⁴⁷

The standard consolidation model of memory proposes that the role of the *hippocampus* is to integrate and bind together various pieces of memory data which are transmitted through to the cortex to form a complete and static *memory trace*. The consolidation of this *memory trace* would occur slowly through repeated reactivation in the hippocampal-cortical networks (as depicted in Figure 5), however as the memory matures the standard model outlines that the role of the *hippocampus* diminishes.⁴⁸



5 Graphic illustration of the hippocampal-neocortical framework identifying the subnetworks and structures supporting the memory system. The grey arrows represent the connections between the hippocampus and the specialised neocortical regions which allow for the reconstruction of memory and the formation of traces and event-specific details. Source: Author’s diagram, adapted from Moscovitch et al, 2005, p. 59.

⁴⁷ Tulving, ‘Episodic Memory’, 19.

⁴⁸ Susan Keller, ‘The Standard Model of Memory Consolidation Versus the Multiple Trace Theory Two Divergent Views of the Same Process - Remote Memory’, ALPF Medical Research, 13 March 2021, <https://www.alpfmedical.info/remote-memory/the-standard-model-of-memory-consolidation-versus-the-multiple-trace-theory-two-divergent-views-of-the-same-process.html>.

The traditional view of memory storage is challenged by what scientists refer to as *memory reconsolidation*. When memories are stored, they are not fixed, but rather dynamic and constantly able to be retrieved. The retrieval process makes the memory susceptible to change, so that in the future, when this memory is retrieved and reactivated, it can adapt and change further, undergoing further reconsolidation, strengthening, maintaining or forgetting parts of the original *memory trace*.⁴⁹

The standard consolidation model was challenged and elaborated further by Lynn Nadel and Morris Moscovitch in their landmark paper 'Memory Consolidation, Retrograde Amnesia and the Hippocampal Complex' in 1997.⁵⁰ Nadel and Moscovitch explained that the standard model should be expanded from four points, to include an additional five points. These additional five points identify that the specific qualities of episodic memories depend on the hippocampal spatial context which is encoded in the *memory trace* at the time of the trace's conception, and that at each moment when the *memory trace* is retrieved (reactivated) an alteration and expansion of the original *memory trace* would occur – leading to reconsolidation and multiple traces.⁵¹ Nadel and Moscovitch coined this theory *multiple trace theory*.

Multiple trace theory holds that different cues and contextual elements can and are likely to be present at the time of retrieval or reactivation of a *memory trace*, leading to the creation of multiple, different, and new *memory traces* which are encoded by the *hippocampus*, and stored in the neo-cortex. These new *memory traces*, whilst different, often overlap with the initial *memory trace*, strengthening the trace's contents and associated neural activation.⁵² The overlapping and strengthening of the *memory trace(s)* may explain why socially connected memories, sometimes referred to as collective and national memories, are often stronger. They are continually strengthened by the various cues and sensory information established by among others, the built and natural environments, literature, photographs, and art. This leads to additional *memory traces* which can be retrieved or reactivated to facilitate mental construction of the past, present or future.

Multiple trace theory could explain how humans can interrelate their personal *episodic memories* with knowledge of both new and old spaces (*semantic memories*), where architectural cues help to facilitate the creation, consolidation and retrieval of *memory traces*. In this way, the neurocognitive processes involved in the encoding, storage and retrieval of *memory traces* interact with the psychological processes of imagination to facilitate *mental time travel*. This expands the possibilities through which the perception of architectural witnessing and memory can be understood. Including the ability for architecture (or other items) to act as a physical cue for memory. By interacting with the item, humans can draw upon their *episodic* and *semantic memories* which have been encoded, stored, retrieved and reconsolidated multiple times, to understand the importance of not only the memory but of the place or item itself.

⁴⁹ Cristina M. Alberini and Joseph E. LeDoux, 'Memory Reconsolidation', *Current Biology* 23, no. 17 (2013): R746; Josue Haubrich and Karim Nader, 'Memory Reconsolidation', in *Behavioral Neuroscience of Learning and Memory*, vol. 37, ed. Robert E. Clark and Stephen J. Martin, Current Topics in Behavioral Neurosciences (Springer International Publishing, 2016), 152–54, 161.

⁵⁰ Lynn Nadel and Morris Moscovitch, 'Memory Consolidation, Retrograde Amnesia and the Hippocampal Complex', *Current Opinion in Neurobiology* 7 (1997): 223.

⁵¹ Sutherland et al., 'Has Multiple Trace Theory Been Refuted?', 842.

⁵² De Brigard, 'The Nature of Memory Traces', 410; Sutherland et al., 'Has Multiple Trace Theory Been Refuted?', 842; Moscovitch et al., 'Functional Neuroanatomy of Remote Episodic, Semantic and Spatial Memory', 42, 52–53.

MENTAL TIME TRAVEL

Psychology and neuroscience have developed new and increasingly complex understandings of the intangible aspects of the brain and psyche. Highlighting the importance of consciousness and imagination, neuroscientist Anna Abraham explains that “imagination is what makes our sensory experiences meaningful, enabling us to interpret and make sense of it [the world]...”⁵³ Bridging the gap between the physical reality of the present, and the perception of past events and time, neuroscientists and psychologists like Abraham have found that through the process of imagination, humans are able to produce mental imagery – *phantasms* – which help us to “think outside the confines of our present perceptual reality, to consider memories of the past and possibilities for the future, and weigh alternatives against one another.”⁵⁴

This sensory experience is fundamental to making sense of the layers of memory, the fragments present within the cues (buildings and structures), and the perception of their ability to witness. With architecture acting as a cue for memory, it emphasises a psychological and nostalgia paradox where society craves a “past that we *cannot rejoin*. We cannot rejoin it precisely because we cannot re-experience it *in propria persona*, even if it has left tantalising marks in the present.”⁵⁵ It is this sensation which helps to seed the impetus to conserve the past, so that through the architectural cues, we can try to rejoin the past through imagination and memory, as we cannot in person.

In *De Memoria* and *De Anima* Aristotle implied an understanding of the power of human imagination versus animalistic imagination – where “the power of imagination belongs to animals, understanding, τὸ νοεῖν, belongs only to rational beings.”⁵⁶ Furthermore, Aristotle’s writing alluded to the idea that through our minds, memory can span temporal zones as we are able to sense the present while also remembering the past.⁵⁷ The concept of mentally traversing temporal zones was developed further by Boncompagno da Signa in the Middle Ages, who explained that “memory is a glorious and admirable gift of nature by which we recall past things, we embrace present things, and we contemplate future things through their likeness to past things.”⁵⁸

⁵³ Abraham and Bubic, ‘Semantic Memory as the Root of Imagination’, 1.

⁵⁴ Abraham, ‘The Imaginative Mind’, 4199.

⁵⁵ Edward S. Casey, ‘The World of Nostalgia’, *Man and World* 20, no. 4 (1987): 365, author’s italics.

⁵⁶ Caleb Cohoe, ‘When and Why Understanding Needs Phantasmatia: A Moderate Interpretation of Aristotle’s *De Memoria* and *De Anima* on the Role of Images in Intellectual Activities’, *Phronesis* 61, no. 3 (2016): 343, as discussed in Aristotle’s *De Anima* (DA 2.5-3.3).

⁵⁷ Bloch, *Aristotle on Memory and Recollection*, 58.

⁵⁸ Yates, *The Art of Memory*, 58.

In the 1970s and 1980s, Tulving built upon Aristotle's and Boncompagno's theories in his ground breaking research on memory, explaining that the evolution of humankind and civilisation, in comparison to animals, is dependent on the evolutionary emergence of *autonoetic consciousness* and the ability for humans to look backwards and forwards in time.⁵⁹ Tulving highlights that through the perspective shifting qualities of *autonoetic consciousness* and the recreative qualities of imagination, humans can mentally travel through time, placing themselves in the past, in the future, or in counterfactual situations, and thus have the ability to examine their own thoughts while crossing the spatiotemporal divide.⁶⁰

Autonoetic consciousness is key to Tulving's theory of *mental time travel*, which he coined in 1985.⁶¹ *Mental time travel* conceptualises the idea that the human mind has the ability to travel through time, moving across temporal, spatial and memory zones where as geographer and historian David Lowenthal explains, the "consciousness that blesses humans with knowledge of a past also curses us with awareness of time's awesome duration beyond our own evanescence."⁶² Whilst utilising the human capacity to imagine a future, *mental time travel* also relies heavily on the human capacity to remember the past through *episodic memory* and *semantic memory*. When Tulving first proposed the theory of *mental time travel* he drew a distinction between *episodic* and *semantic memory*, but emphasised that normal cognition depends on the interaction between the two. In 2019, a paper by neuroscientist Louis Renoult, updated Tulving's original theories and understanding of the memory system. Renoult's paper reviews and analyses scientific evidence which shows that the anatomical and/or functional boundaries between *episodic* and *semantic memory* are not as distinct as Tulving believed, but rather show that *episodic* and *semantic memory* are intertwined, and their neural processes overlap.⁶³ Both *episodic* and *semantic memory* draw heavily on a core brain system which allows a perspective shift from the present (immediate environment) to an alternative and imagined perspective (a past or future environment) that is based largely on the ability for imagination to weave together experienced and acquired knowledge of the past.⁶⁴ This perspective shift and navigation of different spatiotemporal zones provides the ideal conditions for *mental time travel* to occur. Tulving extolls however that *mental time travel* requires a traveller,⁶⁵ as without human interaction a cue (like a building, landscape, painting, photograph etcetera) cannot facilitate the ability to time travel in our minds. Working together with *mental time travel*, nostalgia can be both retrospective and prospective. This occurs when a person's nostalgic desires activate their imagination to mentally travel through time, analysing and determining the needs of the present, to inform how nostalgic memories can be future-focused and impact our ability to imagine future scenarios.⁶⁶

⁵⁹ Tulving, 'Origin of Autonoesis in Episodic Memory', 29.

⁶⁰ David Davies, 'Chapter 34: Imagination in the Philosophy of Art' in Abraham, *The Cambridge Handbook of the Imagination*, 469.

⁶¹ Tulving, 'Episodic Memory', 5.

⁶² Lowenthal, *The Past Is a Foreign Country*, 23.

⁶³ Renoult et al., 'From Knowing to Remembering', 1051–52.

⁶⁴ Daniel L. Schacter et al., 'Remembering the Past to Imagine the Future: The Prospective Brain', *Nature Reviews Neuroscience* 8, no. 9 (2007): 660.

⁶⁵ 'Mental time travel requires a traveller. No traveller, no travelling.' in Tulving, 'Episodic Memory', 2.

⁶⁶ Boym, *The Future of Nostalgia*, xvi.

The interaction between a human (the time traveller) with physical reality (the cue – the historic building) opens up the possibility where the imagined world (of the mind) intersects with the material world (of the urban environment) through a process where the “perception of an imaginary object in our mind and the material form that exists or is produced in the world are experienced together. [Becoming an] ...imaginative praxis, an enactment of possibilities.”⁶⁷ The imagined reality however is dependent on the physical reality, which helps to anchor memory and perception in both realms. It is a reciprocal relationship, as without a human, an object, landscape or building cannot act as a cue or witness to the past. Without the physical reality or fabric (cue) humans cannot undergo *mental time travel* and draw upon their *episodic* and *semantic memory* and imagination, to anthropomorphise the building as witness, and understand the importance of the memory, and the place.

Through this interaction and reciprocal relationship, the difference between the witness and cue becomes apparent. As a cue (building) is what cultural and collective memory theorist Jan Assman would classify as ‘stored’ potential, only becoming ‘actual’ through its engagement with a person who is able to interpret the stored witnessing, giving it new meaning to the historical context.⁶⁸ Assman’s ideas draws upon German historian Reinhart Koselleck, who suggested two categories based on Immanuel Kant’s theories regarding the anthropological dimensions of human interaction with space. These categories were termed as ‘space of experience’ and ‘horizon of expectation’ which he explains thus:

The space of experience allows one to account for the assimilation of the past into the present. ‘Experience is past, whose events have been incorporated and could be remembered.’ Horizon of expectation reveals the way of thinking about the future. Expectation ‘is the future made present; it directs itself to the not-yet to the non-experienced, to that which is to be revealed.’⁶⁹

Assman, Koselleck and Kant’s theories align with Tulving’s description of the process of *mental time travel*. Whilst each person, society, and era will engage in variations of *mental time travel* and perceive the witnessing and memories preserved in architecture differently according to their own frames of reference, “on the cultural level...memory provides these tools in many ways, among them official historical narratives, monuments and commemorative practices, which serve as a kind of ‘memory carrier.’”⁷⁰ Through interaction with collective and historic narratives, we are able to interrogate how by remembering the past and imagining the future, we can engage with and unravel the dynamics of collective memory. Architecture can act as both a ‘memory of places’ but also a ‘place of memory’. This is key to how *mental time travel* can be used to reframe the concepts of witnessing and memory in architecture. As the ability to travel through the spatiotemporal contexts of reality and the imagination, helps to establish how architecture can be both a cue (memory place) but also a witness (place of memory); and how society connects to and anthropomorphises architecture as a symbol of

⁶⁷ Maria Danae Koukouti and Lambros Malafouris, ‘Chapter 3: Material Imagination: An Anthropological Perspective’ in Abraham, *The Cambridge Handbook of the Imagination*, 43.

⁶⁸ [Theorist Jan] Assman distinguished between modes of potentiality and modes of actuality. The document sitting in the basement of a national archive may have the potential to shape a nation’s collective memory, but it does not have a mode of actuality until it is found, brought to the attention of the community, and incorporated into the national archive’ in Merck et al., ‘Collective Mental Time Travel’, 286; Wulf Kansteiner, ‘Finding Meaning in Memory: A Methodological Critique of Collective Memory Studies’, *History and Theory* 41, no. 2 (2002): 182.

⁶⁹ Reinhart Koselleck as quoted in Boym, *The Future of Nostalgia*, 9–10.

⁷⁰ Malgorzata Kalinowska, ‘Monuments of Memory: Defensive Mechanisms of the Collective Psyche and Their Manifestation in the Memorialization Process: Monuments of Memory’, *Journal of Analytical Psychology* 57, no. 4 (2012): 426.

THESE WALLS HAVE EYES AND EARS

collective and personal memory. This relationship is important to understand how in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries two 'phases of crisis' around memory and conservation developed. As architecture became symbolic of the nation, the buildings become intertwined with both collective and personal memories, becoming immortalised in literature and stone, and even through destruction, is hard to alter (see **Part Two and Part Three** of thesis).⁷¹

⁷¹ 'while stones can be carried away, it is much harder to alter the relationship established between those stones and human beings.' in G r me Truc, 'Memory of Places and Places of Memory: For a Halbwachsian Socio-Ethnography of Collective Memory: A Halbwachsian Socio-Ethnography of Collective Memory', *International Social Science Journal* 62, nos 203–204 (2011): 149.

PART II
RE-IMAGINING NINETEENTH CENTURY
CONSERVATION THEORY

CHAPTER 2
MEMORY, HISTORY AND NATION

History, like a clever sculptor, gives life and youth back to monuments by reviving the memories decorating them: it reveals their lost memory, renders them clear and precious to the towns of which they are witness of the past, and provokes public revenge and indignation against the vandals who would plan their ruin.

-- Ludovic Vitet, 1833

INTRODUCTION

With the rise of the nation-state in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the relationship between national identity or belonging, and shared memory became more culturally prominent, and the subject of a series of scholarly debates. The development of Romanticism and the emergence of a Conservation Movement became the principal vehicles for promoting claims about the civic and national salience for shared memory. Responding to the sociopolitical upheavals and the perceived degradation of the natural and built environments caused by industrialisation, many artists, particularly writers, developed a keen interest in the past. This built upon the emerging practices of culture keeping and conservation of places which developed with the advent of historical studies in antiquities and archaeology, and the establishment of museums and societies to disseminate this knowledge. Ludovic Vitet's quote as the epigraph of this chapter captures the importance of history during the nineteenth century and, highlights the growing role of buildings and art acting as witnesses to the past, spurring a burgeoning Conservation Movement. During this period, impassioned writers and artists used their artistic talents to highlight not only the history of these places, but the devastation of preceding generations, and bring this to the forefront of the minds of the public. Capturing society's imagination about their past, novelists endeavoured to engage with the history of the nation and their audience's senses (as per Aristotle's treatise identified in **Chapter 1**)¹ to develop a new genre – the historical novel.

Chapter 2 explores how the historical novel was used by two key writers in the Romantic period – Sir Walter Scott and Victor Hugo, as a medium through which to present and re-present history. The chapter focuses on how these authors engaged the reader with their natural and built surroundings, fostering the perspective that these elements are important vessels of history, collective memory and identity, and encouraging the reader to connect and re-connect with these aspects. Analysing the literary and narrative techniques used by Scott and Hugo to harness the nostalgia and collective memory of the reader, architecture's role as both witness to the past and cue for remembering is highlighted. Both authors used the novel to represent place (natural and built landscapes), with their writings becoming a political tool which catalysed social change, conserving environments which they posited as critical to the national identity of Scotland and France respectively.

Whilst these texts were all written in a period before the development of key contemporary concepts in the psychology and neuroscience of memory, this chapter nevertheless uses the concepts of memory, imagination, and nostalgia, introduced in **Chapter 1**, to understand the kind of memory work that the buildings and landscapes in Scott and Hugo's writings are suggested to perform by the authors. By examining how Scott and Hugo's literature augmented and engaged the reader's memory and imagination of the past, **Chapter 2** explains how both authors romanticised the idea that the building (and the environment) are witnesses to history. Ultimately it is argued that Scott and Hugo positioned the buildings and landscapes of France and Scotland, not only as the centrepieces of their own fiction, but as beacons of memory for their respective countries; where the buildings and landscapes came to represent the city, and indeed the nation as a whole.

The first section of the chapter entitled '**Memory, History and Nation**' provides a historical and social context for the development of the Romantic Movement in both Scotland and France, and its influence on the work of Scott and Hugo. This section examines how Romanticism in the arts tended to foster expressions of nostalgia and promoted the growth of antiquarianism. The rise of printed

¹ Aristotle - 'Memory belongs to the sensing faculty' in Bloch, *Aristotle on Memory and Recollection*, 120.

media and the scientific incorporation of drawings in printed materials underpinned the growth of antiquarianism, and the growing interest in history and conservation of places and objects created in the past. Images would become a cue and a memory tool to help identify the spirit of the place, but also document the artefact for posterity. The intersection of artistic, scientific and historic realms in the pursuit of the antiquarian would greatly influence Romantic literature, particularly historical novelists like Scott and Hugo who used literature to teach and help people engage with their culture and past, underlining the importance of cultural artefacts for memory and national identity.

The subsequent section **'Reading, Restoring, Resuscitating: Literature, Place and the Collective Memory'** is organised in two parts, each part focusing on a separate author, and establishes a comparative analysis of the key works of both Scott and Hugo, and their influence on the development of conservation and cultural nationalism in the nineteenth century, particularly during the first 'phase of crisis' c.1810-1850s. The first part – 'Sir Walter Scott and the Waverly Novels' focuses on how Scott used literary devices to evoke and encourage an interest in national identity and memory of Scotland. Drawing upon the reader's *reflective nostalgia*, Scott engages the reader's capacity for *mental time travel* and encourages the reader to partake in *scene construction*, identifying themselves and interacting with the past in the scene, in what he believed were the foundations of Scottish identity. The second part of this section – 'Victor Hugo and Notre-Dame de Paris' focuses on Hugo's literature, particularly his well-known novel *Notre Dame de Paris* (known as *The Hunchback of Notre-Dame*). Hugo establishes the city and its buildings, as guardians and witnesses to France's history and past glory. Positioning Notre-Dame de Paris' as a beacon of memory and cultural identity, Hugo proposes that both civic and national memory are embedded in the historical life of the building. Using key contemporary concepts in the psychology and neuroscience of memory, such as *mental time travel* and the *imagined observer hypothesis*, this section seeks to understand how Hugo engages the imagination and nostalgic tendencies of the reader, to travel between spatiotemporal contexts across the novel's setting and the present, facilitating the reader's ability to be an active participant and interact with their past to understand how this influences their identity in the present. This section of the chapter highlights how literature has been used during the nineteenth century to develop a new medium through which we can illuminate why there is a societal tendency to expect buildings to remember and do memory work.

The last section of **Chapter 2 'Ceci Tuera Cela: Loss of Memory and the Conservation Movement'**, is likewise organised in two parts, each part analysing Scott's and Hugo's literature as a political and communication tool to discuss the destruction of natural and built environments in Scotland and France, and the subsequent loss of memory and identity precipitated by this destruction. The first part focuses on Scott's novels which also became tools to promote the conservation of the culture and fabric of Scotland. The section analyses how the use of illustrations in Scott's novels helped to engage the reader and create a *memory trace*, which helped to popularise these locations as part of their living heritage. The second part of this section focuses on Hugo and the four literary pieces he published in the period between 1823 and 1832 – 'La Bande Noir' (The Black Band), 'Note sur la Destruction des Monuments en France' (Note on the Destruction of Monuments in France), 'Guerre aux Démolisseurs!' (War on the Demolishers!) and *Notre-Dame de Paris*.² Through an analysis of these four texts, this section analyses Hugo's convictions about the role of buildings, the establishment of the memory of the city and the nation, and how these in turn underpinned his arguments for conservation.

² Hugo's literature will henceforth be referred to by its original French title.

MEMORY, HISTORY AND NATION

The sociopolitical upheavals witnessed across many European countries during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries saw a change in how society thought and interacted with history, their national identity, and memory. This period also saw a re-framing of the role that the built and natural environments played in these national histories and memories. Concurrently, whilst wars and rebellions were changing the social, cultural, and political milieu, there were also substantial developments in science, design and manufacturing which initiated further social upheaval.

The industrialisation and modernisation of society in Europe at this time had an immense social impact, where many people were no longer anchored to a village, town, or region, but instead were migrating for work and other opportunities. This process caused the loss of shared cultural practices and collective memory.³ Not only was the industrialisation of towns and cities causing the destruction of buildings, and loss of collective memory embodied in the fabric and environment, but the mass migration also meant that people were no longer connected to the places to which they belonged to historically. It is unsurprising therefore, that during this intense period of change and fragmentation in both their physical and psychological worlds, that society longed for a connection to the past. As Svetlana Boym explained,

...nostalgia, [is] an affective yearning for a community with a collective memory, a longing for continuity in a fragmented world. Nostalgia inevitably reappears as a defence mechanism in a time of accelerated rhythms of life and historical upheavals.⁴

In this way, nostalgia became a way for society to offset these upheavals. There was a burgeoning desire to preserve architecture and the environment. At this same time, writers and artists were more insistent in evoking architecture and indeed landscapes as witnesses to, and repositories of memory for both individuals and society collectively. Artists like those discussed in this chapter believed that the conservation of buildings and landscapes had the power to help form the memory and identity of the nation.

In Scotland, the early-mid eighteenth century featured substantial political and cultural unrest which developed due to the rise of Jacobitism. The Jacobites rebelled against the ruling English monarch, believing that he was illegitimate after the deposition of King James II in the Glorious Revolution of 1688. As the last Catholic King of England, the predominantly Catholic Scottish and Irish, with French financial backing, sought to reinstate the rightful monarch and his heirs from the House of Stuart to sovereignty. Consequently, there were a series of uprisings in 1715, 1719 and finally in 1745 which ended in the bloody Battle of Culloden. Following the withdrawal of French support in 1748, Jacobitism became a dying political movement. The sixty years of conflict and upheaval, however, saw the dissolution of cherished markers of Scottish culture and identity, and the ruin of many of its historic buildings and landscapes.

In France, the story was similar to Scotland, where, as French historian Pierre Nora describes, the “eternal conflict between victors and vanquished” was an idea that “became firmly rooted in the subsoil of the national imagination.”⁵ By the late eighteenth century, a mere forty years after France

³ Minott-Ahl, ‘The Construction of a Cause’, 65.

⁴ Boym, *The Future of Nostalgia*, xiv.

⁵ Nora and Kritzman, *Realms of Memory: Volume 1*, 22.

was supporting the Jacobite cause for the restoration of a Catholic King, the French people revolted against their own sovereign and the Catholic Church. The French Revolution saw the ousting of the *Ancien Regime*, and all properties owned by the Church, or monuments which represented the country's former monarchs, were seen as symbols of the nation's past oppression, many becoming prime targets for destruction.⁶ However, in parallel with this destruction was the emergence of a historical consciousness, which placed value on these targeted structures as witnesses to the past achievements and people that formed the French nation. As Nora highlights in his 1996 book *The Realms of Memory*:

...the French Revolution and the traditions associated with it functioned as the determining element in the construction of national identity through references to narratives of the past. The social order of the modern nation-state, rooted in the secularised traditions of the Republic, could be legitimised in a collective identity whose consciousness was based on a teleological view of the nation as pedagogical authority in the representation of its values.⁷

The French Revolution caused immense political and cultural upheaval accompanied by extensive physical destruction. Additionally, across the nineteenth century the Industrial Revolution compounded the effects of political revolution, exacerbating the Parisian and French estrangement from their past. Mass migration, destruction of buildings, construction of factories, reclamation of land for street widening and eventually the Haussmannisation⁸ of Paris all caused rapid changes which began to alienate the people from familiar places and the memories associated with them. It is unsurprising therefore, that the catastrophic state of the political and cultural life of France in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries became a catalyst for the re-appreciation and push for conservation of the built and natural environments. These elements formed the national and collective memory, and tugged at the nostalgic heartstrings of the people. As a result, the Revolution became a bridge on which people could mentally travel between the past, present and future. Consequently, the Revolution became one of the key forces which led to the Romantic period. This included a development of historic and scientific examinations, like those found in the studies of Antiquaries, Archaeologists and historians, in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.

One of the characteristics of Romanticism and perhaps a consequence of the increasing prevalence of nostalgia culturally was the development of the field of antiquarianism. As the stewards of places and artefacts, Antiquaries were the key link for learned societies between the past and present, as they were responsible for the management and care of artefacts from the past. As the first step in the protection of artefacts, Antiquaries became repositories of knowledge and memory. As conservation historian and theorist Jukka Jokilehto has argued, no matter how insignificant the artefact was, it was to be protected if it "contributed to the memory of a historic event, person, place or family of the country, and especially of kings and other nobles."⁹ The professional development of the Antiquary in this period is significant, as they were able to provide knowledge and experiences to a wider

⁶ Jokilehto, *A History of Architectural Conservation*, Repr, 18.

⁷ Nora and Kritzman, *Realms of Memory: Volume 1*, xiii.

⁸ Under a programme commissioned by Emperor Napoleon III, Georges-Eugène Haussmann undertook to renovate Paris through the demolition of medieval neighbourhoods, creating wide avenues, parks and squares, as well as new sanitation and health incentives like sewers, fountains and aqueducts. He 'disembowelled' sections of Paris and 'disencumbering' monuments to isolate them to be viewed as objects rather than part of historic cities. - see Michele Lamprakos, 'The Idea of the Historic City', *Change Over Time* 4, no. 1 (2014): 8–38.

⁹ Jokilehto, *A History of Architectural Conservation*, Repr, 44.

audience, helping to shape memories by providing material and architectural points of focus for shared cultural identities.¹⁰

Antiquaries such as William Stuckeley and Johann Joachim Winckelmann contributed to the field through their critical examination of ancient works, producing fieldwork drawings which offered both a record of the artefact but also a reflection of the antiquarian process and experience. Winckelmann also made significant scientific and practical contributions to the record and methods of verification for objects, which informed later conservation processes related to reconstruction and authenticity. To help engage readers, Antiquaries often included scientific drawings and engravings with their writings as a visual record of their historic finds. This practice further perpetuated society's interest in the past and the formation of what would later be called national memory. As historian Rosemary Sweet explains, in England the use of engravings "greatly enhanced recognition of the value of monuments and artifacts [sic] as potential 'texts' integral to the history of the country...[to document] every monument and building of antiquarian interest."¹¹ Through their writings and engravings, the pursuits of Antiquaries assisted in the development and enhancement of national identities across many countries and helped to develop an appreciation of national heritage and its conservation.

The rising interest in the past and history of nations emphasised Cicero's idea (as discussed in **Chapter 1**) that history is *Magistra vitae* [life's teacher],¹² and as a result other professions developed alongside the Antiquary, including those related to archaeology, conservation, history, and historical literature. Of these professions, the Historical Novelist was able to reach the widest audience, helping to create a memory infrastructure which dealt in the currency of nostalgia in society, emphasising the importance of the cultural artefact to the national identity through printed media. The rise of printed media during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries saw the development of a national consciousness which was heavily influenced by what political scientist Benedict Anderson termed as 'print-capitalism'. 'Print-capitalism' was able to bring "a new fixity to language, which in the long run helped to build that image of antiquity so central to the subjective idea of the nation...the printed book kept a permanent form, capable of virtually infinite reproduction, temporally and spatially."¹³

Cultural artefacts can act as mnemonic devices, often evoking nostalgia, and act as a cue for the collective memory of a society. Whilst the most common of these cultural artefacts is architecture, in many ways the printed book itself, as a result of 'print capitalism' is a cultural artefact which was able to traverse time and space, drawing upon the imagination, nostalgia and ability of the reader to *mentally time travel*, in order to connect with their culture and past. It became a new memory cue, which was able to perpetuate the influence the authors could have over the reader's understanding of their environment, memory and identity, protecting it, should the physical forms come to destruction.

As an emotion which predominantly deals with the past, nostalgia came into the fore during the Romantic period and was coeval with the birth of mass culture and destruction of historic (particularly Gothic) architecture.¹⁴ A century later, philosopher Walter Benjamin deployed the figure of the 'Angel of History' to personify nostalgia and to closely associate industrial and political progress with the destruction of architecture and the environment. Benjamin's 'Angel of History' would prove to be an influential metaphor for all who sought to understand the impacts of the political and social upheavals of the nineteenth century on society. In his essay 'Theses on the Philosophy of History', Benjamin

¹⁰ Tim Murray, 'Rethinking Antiquarianism', *Bulletin of the History of Archaeology* 17, no. 2 (2007): 20.

¹¹ Sweet, 'Antiquaries and Antiquities in Eighteenth-Century England', 194.

¹² As discussed in Cicero's *De Oratore* - in Galli, 'Nostalgia, Architecture, Ruins, and Their Preservation', 14.

¹³ Benedict R. O'G Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, Rev. and extended ed (Verso, 1991), 44.

¹⁴ Boym, *The Future of Nostalgia*, 16.

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explains that Paul Klee's painting 'Angelus Novus' is how society should picture the Angel. He described the Angel in the following way:

His face is turned towards the past. Where we perceive a chain of events, he sees one single catastrophe which keeps piling wreckage upon wreckage and hurls it in front of his feet. The angel would like to stay, awaken the dead, and make whole what has been smashed. But a storm is blowing from Paradise; it has got caught in his wings with such violence that the angel can no longer close them. This storm irresistibly propels him into the future to which his back is turned, while the pile of debris before him grows skyward. This storm is what we call progress.¹⁵

With the explosion of the 'New World', and the cataclysmic political events whose impacts were having domino effects on cultural artefacts, writers like Scott and Hugo used this sociopolitical development to intersect the artistic, scientific, and historical realms in their novels. Emphasising the importance of place and collective memory, the historical novels identified these elements as integral to the reader's understanding of their past, present, and future. Doing so, the historical novelists harnessed the nostalgia and imagination of the reader to help them mentally travel through time. Transporting the mind of the audience to the time, place and scene of the novel, the authors sought to use the novel as a cue, and thereby make the reader a witness to the past. Thus, the authors intended that by understanding and reconnecting to their past, the reader would be compelled to join the conservation cause and help to restore and resuscitate the built and natural environments; and thereby, restore and resuscitate their collective memories and national identities as well.

¹⁵ Walter Benjamin et al., *Illuminations* (Schocken Books, 1986), 257–58.

READING, RESTORING, RESUSCITATING: LITERATURE, PLACE AND THE COLLECTIVE MEMORY

SIR WALTER SCOTT AND THE WAVERLEY NOVELS

Born in 1771, twenty-five years after the Battle of Culloden and the demise of Jacobitism, Scott was raised in the aftermath of a century-long upheaval which changed the face of Scotland.¹⁶ While the sixty years of Jacobite conflict proved a militant force for the English to reckon with, it also saw the ruin of many of Scotland's historic buildings and landscapes. The struggle to quash Scottish independence, in favour of falling in line with English rule, also saw the dissolution of much of the Scottish culture and identity.

Raised in an affluent Scottish family, Scott attended classes at Edinburgh University, where he studied Law. It was during this period that Scott was introduced to the Ossian cycle of poems translated from Gaelic by James Macpherson.¹⁷ The Ossian poems are a series of epic poems which piqued Scott's interest in historic Gaelic and Scots culture. During the 1790s, Scott began his first foray into literature, beginning with poetry. His first publication was the two-volume *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border* published in 1802. In preparation for this publication, Scott spent the preceding decade touring Scotland, searching for ballad manuscripts and singers. During his search, Scott engaged with the landscapes, architecture, history, and people of Scotland. The *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border* would contain 72 ballads, of which 38 had not appeared in print before.¹⁸ Scott found fame in the 1805 publication of the verse romance *The Lay of the Last Minstrel*, which was followed by several other publications including his most commercially successful poem *The Lady of the Lake*.¹⁹

It was not until 1814 that Scott published his first novel, *Waverley* which would be the beginning of his career as a novelist and a major literary innovation as one of the first historical novels. Indeed, a young Victor Hugo would later credit Scott as the father of the historical novel.²⁰

Greatly influenced by the Scottish Enlightenment and the works of the conjectural historians, Scott harnessed the increased historical consciousness in the nineteenth century to demonstrate, through narrative, an understanding of the nation and its genealogy. The destruction of Scottish culture and disbanding of clan society in the wake of Culloden provided prime conditions for the development of the historical novel genre, through which Scott could dissect and reignite interest in the past and its impacts on the present and future. Acutely aware of the change in society, culture and the environment, Scott immortalises his thoughts about the issues of the time in a postscript to the 1814 publication of *Waverley*:

There is no European nation which, within the course of half a century, or little more, has undergone so complete a change as this kingdom of Scotland. The effects of the insurrection of 1745...commenced this innovation...But the change, though steadily and rapidly

¹⁶ The first Jacobite revolt occurred in 1688 known as the Glorious Revolution. The series of uprisings between 1715-1745 would see the end of the Jacobitism.

¹⁷ The authenticity of the provenance of the original Gaelic manuscripts is debated.

¹⁸ Scott, *Waverley*, 389.

¹⁹ Scott, *Waverley*, 389.

²⁰ 'Le roman historique est un très bon genre, puisque Walter Scott en a fait...: The historical novel is a very good genre, since Walter Scott made it...', French as quoted in Elizabeth Carter, 'Taming the Gypsy - How French Romantics Recaptured a Past' (PhD Dissertation, University of Harvard, 2014), 59 (Author's translation).

progressive, has, nevertheless, been gradual; and, like those who drift down the stream of a deep and smooth river, we are not aware of the progress we have made until we fix our eye on the now-distant point from which we set out.²¹

The postscript sets the scene for the subtext of the *Waverley* novel and indeed the series of novels which would follow. The subtitle to *Waverley* – ‘sixty years since’ locates the narrative between the conjectural history of the present and future, at the intersection between living memory and history. *Waverley* began a series of novels where Scott wrote about the Scottish landscape as an inhabitable space in the past which had a comparable space in the present, and one which the literature could facilitate imagination of the future. When Scott’s third novel, *The Antiquary* was published in 1816, the preface claimed that the novel completed a:

series of fictitious narratives, intended to illustrate the manners of Scotland at three different periods. *Waverley* embraced the age of our fathers, *Guy Mannering* that of our own youth, and *The Antiquary* refers to the last ten years of the eighteenth century.²²

This preface leads the reader to understand that Scott’s novels intended to cross the spatiotemporal divide to speak to the reader’s *episodic* (living) *memory* and *semantic memory* (acquired knowledge) to interrogate and reignite the Scottish interest in their history, culture, and the natural and built landscape of Scotland. In doing so, Scott intended to engage the reader’s nostalgic tendencies, piquing their desire and capacity to remember the past, and foster an environment in which the reader can use their imagination to mentally travel into the past, and imagine the future. In this way, Scott’s novels create an apparatus in which there is a cultural continuity for the reader, helping to catalyse an interest in conserving their history and culture.

Scott uses *reflective nostalgia* and nostalgic memory to evoke the national identity of the readers in his historic novels, which blends his own nostalgic memory and personal memories of events. As Boym explains, “*reflective nostalgia* does not follow a single plot but explores ways of inhabiting many places at once and imagining different time zones...”²³ *Reflective nostalgia* allowed Scott to evoke national pasts and futures at the same time through the narrative, by recouping a single moment in history, to help reveal something of this past era, its physical imprints on architecture, landscape and culture to produce a collective and national memory for Scotland.

Integral to Scott’s literature was this notion that the author’s role was to recapture the past through the narrative, achieved using locations and details which allow the reader to not only relate to the story, but also understand the history, the place, and the mentality of the characters of the past. Scott was able to develop these narratives and create an intimate connection to the past through his decades of exploration and research in the Scottish Borders and Highlands as part of the compilation of the *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border*. As comparative literature professor Nicola Minott-Ahl explains, by including Scots language, and embracing all aspects of Scottish society in his *Waverley* novels, Scott wrote an image of the past, which created a historical record of eighteenth-century Scotland. In this way Scott intended that the reader could form a detailed view and connection to the place, people and culture, and understand that Scotland as a nation had its own past and unique character.²⁴

²¹ Scott, *Waverley*, 1.

²² Stuart Kelly, *Scott-Land: The Man Who Invented a Nation* (Birlinn Limited, 2010), loc. 1903 (ebook).

²³ Boym, *The Future of Nostalgia*, xviii (Author’s italics).

²⁴ Minott-Ahl, ‘The Construction of a Cause’, 105.

The power of Scott's literature lay in his use of narrative and description, particularly his ability to root the descriptions in specific time and place, allowing the reader to use their imagination to cross spatiotemporal contexts. Indeed, as the first historical novelist, Scott can also be seen as what memory theory and neuroscientists might call an imaginative observer through his prose. Writing as an outsider, who was observing historic Scotland, Scott imagines and depicts the national identity as a product of the past, which embodied all the social forces which had slowly shaped it.

Quintessential to the national identity of Scotland was the fabric of the past which lay in the historic and picturesque landscapes of the Highlands and Lowlands, and included the architecture of villages and ruins. Scott specifically chose to set his novels away from the cities, choosing countryside landscapes and village scenes. He did this as a subtle revolt against the industrialisation and change which was occurring in England and Scotland, which saw the historic and picturesque landscapes and buildings suffering destruction or neglect. Through this, Scott emphasises that 'Scottishness' is found in these places and not the cities, and that historic architecture represented stability and order in comparison to the tumultuous changes during and post-Jacobitism.

Drawing upon his education and ideas of the Scottish Enlightenment, Scott's literary imagination was a product of this influence, and emphasised the importance of the interactions that society had with their built and natural world. Understanding this interrelationship between humans and architecture, and how each informs the memory and identity of the other, is pivotal to understanding Scott's narrative and the role that architectural ruins and gothic architecture played in the construction of his historical novels. Whilst the descriptions of ruins helped to mark a defined distance between the past and the present, they also allowed for the present, past and future to mingle, which Scott's narratives helped to augment. Engaging the reader's capacity for *mental time travel*, Scott encourages the reader to place themselves within the depicted scene and interact with the past. Doing this, the reader can engage with what Scott believed were the foundations of Scottish identity.

Scott achieves this through several literary techniques and themes which run through his novels. The first technique is descriptive *ekphrasis*²⁵ where Scott's narration creates a frozen moment in the story. Scott puts the reader in a reverie, where they forget they are reading, but rather conceiving each moment in the narrative as passing in front of them, as if they were an eye-witness.²⁶ This parallels what memory scientists describe in terms of the *imagined observer hypothesis*. Scott's writing can achieve this by tapping into the human brain's ability to mentally project themselves into the scene and draw upon the reader's *episodic* and *semantic memories* of the Scottish landscape and villages.

The use of *ekphrasis* allowed Scott to employ imagery, particularly in relation to architectural descriptions, which helped to bring the narrative vividly to life in a bid to bolster the Scottish national identity. Scott's first trope was to memorialise monuments and landscapes as sites of memory, representative of common Scottish landscapes and collective identity.

In Chapter 8 of *Waverley*, Scott writes in descriptive detail about the village Tully-Veolan in Perthshire and the Scottish Manor namesake 'Tully-Veolan'.²⁷ The chapter opens with the English Captain

²⁵ *Ekphrasis* v. (Greek Literature): A literary and rhetorical trope where one medium of art tries to relate to another medium by defining and describing its essence and form, and consequently, relate more directly to the audience, through its visual vividness or illuminative liveliness.

²⁶ Ian Duncan, *Scott's Shadow: The Novel in Romantic Edinburgh*, Literature in History (Princeton University Press, 2007), 131.

²⁷ To distinguish between the village and the manor house name, the manor house will be referred to in inverted commas.

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Waverley entering the Scottish village. As an outsider to Scotland, Captain Waverley is akin to the reader, who is encountering 'the real Scotland' for the first time:

It was about noon when Captain Waverley entered the straggling village, or rather hamlet, of Tully-Veolan, close to which was situated the mansion of the proprietor. The house seemed miserable in the extreme, especially to an eye accustomed to the smiling neatness of English cottages. They stood, without any respect for regularity, on each side of a straggling kind of unpaved street, where children, almost in a primitive state of nakedness, lay sprawling, as if to be crushed by the hoofs of the first passing horse...

...The village was more than a half a mile long, the cottages being irregularly divided from each other by gardens, or yards, as the inhabitants called them...

...Dry stone walls which fenced, or seemed to fence, (for they were sorely breached) these hanging gardens of Tully-Veolan, were intersected by narrow lanes leading to the common field, where the joint labour of the villagers cultivated alternate ridges and patches of rye, oats, barley, and pease [sic], each of such minute extent, that at a little distance the unprofitable variety of the surface resembled a tailor's book of patterns.²⁸

In the first volume of *Waverley*, Scott uses the narrative to track the hero's physical and emotional/psychological journey north from England to his uncle's estate deep in Scottish Perthshire, at 'Tully-Veolan' and its surrounding township. The description of the settings in the quote, and throughout the novel, helped to articulate to the reader a sequence of anthropological and historical stages, which increasingly becomes remote from the reader's modern life. In this way, Scott sought to re-engage the reader with the natural and built landscapes of Scotland and their various characters to broaden their collective and national memory. He takes a moment to specifically describe to the reader elements of cultural tradition as seen in a common Scottish countryside village:

In the centre of the exterior barrier was the upper gate of the avenue, opening under an archway, battled on the top, and ornamented with two large weather-beaten mutilated masses of upright stone, which, if the tradition of the hamlet could be trusted, had once represented, at least had been once designed to represent, two rampant bears, the supporters of the family of Bradwardine.²⁹

Scott's description of the village was intended to create an image of a common village with various topographical guidelines that reference actual locations in Scotland, which the reader could relate to places through their own various *episodic memories*. Scott explains in the novel that his description of the 'Tully-Veolan' manor house (see Figure 6) is an amalgam of various semi-fortified houses and manors from around Scotland.³⁰ Doing so, Scott intends that the multiple influences in architectural style and details would add to the overall picturesque aspect and notion that the building was representative of all of Scotland, of the Scottish identity, and therefore harnesses the semantic and schematic memories of the readers. Schematic memory utilises elements from both *episodic and semantic memories* of similar experiences to produce a framework of the scene, helping to fill the gaps in memory and construct an overall picture from stereotypical and representative elements. In this

²⁸ Scott, *Waverley*, 34–36.

²⁹ Scott, *Waverley*, 37.

³⁰ Scott, *Waverley*, 380.

case, Scott has used common architectural styles and influence for the villages and houses in Scotland to create a schematic idea of a typical Scottish village and manor house.



6 Tully Veolan. Etching from the c.1823-1840 publication of *Waverley*. Etching by Charles Heath after Peter De Wint.
Source: Charles Heath, 1993, *The Heath Family Engravers: Vol 1*, as sourced from the British Museum (museum number 1864, 1210.27).

Alongside Scott's description of Scottish villages and the manor houses in *Waverley*, he also uses verbal imagery³¹ to depict the Scottish landscape, of picturesque countryside scenes, which were intended to engage the audience with their surroundings. Scott also uses verbal imagery in his novel *The Antiquary* to paint the scene for the reader, piquing their nostalgic tendencies and desire to remember the past, and thereby develop an attachment to the ruins and landscape of Scotland. Scott highlights in his description that the ruin is something which is part of the everyday fabric of Scotland but is itself a monument to Scottish history and memory:

They were not of great extent; but the singular beauty, as well as the wild and sequestered character of the spot on which they were situated, gave them an interest and importance superior to that which attaches itself to architectural remains of greater consequence, but placed near to ordinary houses, and possessing less romantic accompaniments.³²

Picturesque depictions of landscapes, ruins, and buildings such as those described above would in fact be more successful than Scott had hoped, leading to the development of heritage tourism and the

³¹ *Verbal imagery* (or descriptive language) is a subset of imagery. Specifically referring to the use of written words to evoke mental images and a vivid sensory experience in the reader's mind.

³² Scott, *The Antiquary*, loc. 3353 (ebook).

subsequent conservation of the places described within the novels, as will be discussed later in the chapter.

Another of Scott's literary tropes, and one of his literary innovations, was the cognitive dissociation of the hero from the history playing out within the narrative.³³ The nineteenth century readers who are the real descendant of people like the narrative's hero Waverley, are forced through Scott's use of descriptive imagery and narration to mentally travel between the past and present and re-examine through a new lens, the impacts that the revolution and naturalisation into British rule has had on the Scottish culture, their architecture and landscape. By describing the architecture and landscape in minute detail, Scott prompts the reader to act as observers and inhabitants in his narrative interpretation, and engage with what is now known as the *imagined observer hypothesis*. In doing so, Scott's literature persuades the reader to gain a new understanding of the place, and a reflection of their world and self.

Scott's preoccupation with the Scottish national identity and memory becomes further evident in the literary juxtapositions between Volume 1 and Volume 2 of *Waverley*. Whilst Volume 1 discusses architecture and landscape as a means of capturing the reader's imagination and *reflective nostalgia* for their surroundings, in Volume 2, Scott uses the narrative to directly discuss national identity and memory. In Chapter 5, Scott quotes the first stanza from the famous Robert Burns' poem/song 'My Heart's in the Highlands' which was first published in 1790, connecting the reader to national pride, identity and memory of the highlands:

My heart's in the Highlands, my heart is not here,
My heart's in the Highlands a-chasing the deer;
A-chasing the wild-deer, and following the roe,
My heart's in the Highlands wherever I go.³⁴

Through the care in which he describes and recreates the spirit of any given place in Scotland in his novels and poems, Scott brought about a new era of ethnic and historical awareness in the public, particularly at a time when political sovereignty, cultural identity and national unity were in crisis.³⁵ By engaging the reader with his depiction of Scotland, Scott creates an ownership in the public for their history and culture, an awareness and interest in their identity.

Carving a niche for Scottish culture and history within the context of Great Britain, Scott's poems, and particularly his novels, created an image of Scotland which has continued to be shared and encouraged ad infinitum despite Scott's relative decline from popularity in recent years. Analysing Scott's novels through scientific theories such as the *imagined observer hypothesis* and *scene construction theory*, Scott's vivid descriptions and the reader's acquired *semantic memories* and knowledge are able to facilitate an understanding of the architecture or town, helping the reader to imagine and reconstruct the historic landscape, and reflect on the past, their present, and future. In doing so, Scott's novels provide a unique insight into the question of architectural memory and witnessing, and how his writings influenced and popularised concepts of national identity, particularly Scottish identity.

On the back of Scott's popularity and success in re-igniting interest and connection with the Scottish culture, others have harnessed and continued to proliferate the Scots culture and identity, including modern interpretations like the Academy Award winning movie *Braveheart* (1995) and the *Outlander*

³³ Scott, *Waverley*, 1.

³⁴ Original poem by Robert Burns, published in *SMM*, Vol 3 (1790) as quoted in Scott, *Waverley*, 146.

³⁵ Minott-Ahl, *The Architectural Novel*, lines 150–152.

novels and tv series by Diana Gabaldon. Scott's novels helped to foster a kinship with the reader and their surroundings, and in doing so promoted tourism to the locations described, and a reimagination of their importance to Scottish culture and identity. Popularising these locations and the Scots culture, Scott's writing assisted in catalysing the conservation of these places and history for the future.

Indeed, Scott's impact on Scottish identity and nation-building was so profound that he has been dubbed the 'Wizard of the North' and the creator of 'Scott-Land'.³⁶ His impact was not limited to the local Scottish realm however, he also influenced other nineteenth century Romantic novelists, like William Ainsworth in Britain and Victor Hugo and Alexandre Dumas, in France to use the historical novel genre as a medium through which their political, cultural, nation-building agenda could be transmitted to the masses.

VICTOR HUGO AND NOTRE-DAME DE PARIS

Situated on the Île de la Cité, an island on the River Seine in Paris, the Cathedral of Notre-Dame de Paris, is located on the site of the fourth century AD Roman fortress which was constructed as a stronghold on the island after the conquest of Parisii.³⁷ In 486AD, 30 years after leading the Roman Empire's defence against Attila the Hun, Saint Genevieve negotiated the surrender of Paris to King Clovis I. As the first King of the Franks, Clovis I chose Paris as his capital, and the Île de la Cité as the location for his palace. The first cathedral of Paris, Saint Etienne, was constructed in 540-545 AD as part of the palace structures and was sited in a similar location to the Notre-Dame de Paris today.

The Île de la Cité flourished under Frankian rule, particularly under the Capetian dynasty, which was founded by Frank ruler, Hugh Capet (c.941-996). Quoting twelfth century writer Guy de Bazoches, historian Kevin D. Murphy describes the Capetian legacy at the Île de la Cité as the "the head, the heart, the very marrow of the whole city..."³⁸ Developing upon the legacy of his forefathers, King Louis IX of France further refined the Île de la Cité, to become the jewel of the Seine, by financing the construction of the palace chapel Sainte-Chapelle (1242-1248) and the construction of the now landmark Notre-Dame de Paris.

Paralleling the building of the Cathedral with the building of the nation,³⁹ Hugo saw, much like Guy de Bazoches centuries before him, that "the island with Notre-Dame as its most prominent landmark was the epicentre of Paris, and some would argue, of the nation..."⁴⁰ Hugo also recognises that not only was Notre-Dame significant architecturally, but other Gothic buildings from the Medieval period also embodied the French identity and culture, and were repositories of memory, palimpsest of the collective labour and events of the French past. Indeed, in his famed novel *Notre-Dame de Paris*, Hugo

³⁶ John Henry Raleigh, 'What Scott Meant to the Victorians', *Victorian Studies* 7, no. 1 (1963): 9; Ann Rigney, *The Afterlives of Walter Scott: Memory on the Move* (Oxford University Press, 2012), 134. 'Scott-Land' being a play on words for Scotland.

³⁷ Parisii were a Gallic tribe who lived along the banks of the Seine and whose name is derived for the city of Paris.

³⁸ Kevin D. Murphy, *The Cathedral of Notre-Dame of Paris: A Quick Immersion*, Quick Immersions 11 (Tibidabo Publishing, 2020), 39.

³⁹ Julie Lawrence Cochran, 'The Gothic Revival in France, 1830–1845: Victor Hugo's Notre-Dame de Paris, Popular Imagery, and a National Patrimony Discovered', in *Memory & Oblivion*, ed. Wessel Reinink and Jeroen Stumpel (Springer Netherlands, 1999), 394.

⁴⁰ Murphy, *The Cathedral of Notre-Dame of Paris*, 39.

reiterates his established position on the importance of Gothic architecture to the national memory and identity:

...les plus grands produits de l'architecture sont moins des oeuvres individuelles que des oeuvres sociales; plutot l' enfantement des peuples en travail que le jet des hommes de genie; le depot que laisse une nation; les entassements que font les siecles; le residu des evaporations successives de la societe humaine L'homme, l'artiste, l'individu s'effacent sur ces grandes masses sans nom d'auteur; l'intelligence humaine s'y resume et s'y totalise. Le temps est l'architecte, le peuple est le macon.

...the greatest products of architecture are less individual works than social works; rather the birth of peoples in labour than of men of genius; the deposit left by a nation; the heaps left by centuries; the residue of the successive evaporations of human society The man, the artist, the individual fade away on these great masses without author's name; human intelligence is summed up and totalized there. Time is the architect, the people are the mason.⁴¹

Later in 1832, in his treatise 'Guerre aux Demolisseurs!', Hugo reiterated the role architecture plays as a witness to the nation's history and a repository of memory, when he exclaimed that the:

...admirable monument of the Middle Ages, upon which the historic glory of our nation is imprinted and to which are bound both the memory of our kings and the traditions of our people.⁴²

Further to this, to Hugo, Notre-Dame de Paris, defined and was synonymous with the landscape of Paris, France's capital, and its most important city. As the beacon of all medieval monuments, the Cathedral did not represent just a moment, an imprint or a fleeting style in time, but rather it was an architectural composite which spanned time and space. Considered a conglomeration of styles which existed in one edifice in tension between juxtaposition and harmony, Hugo describes the Cathedral as follows:

Notre-Dame de Paris is, in particular, a curious specimen of this variety. Each face, each stone of the venerable monument, is a page not only of the history of the country, but of the history of science and art as well...This central mother church is, among the ancient churches of Paris, a sort of chimera; it has the head of one, the limbs of another, the haunches of another, something of all.⁴³

Described as a chimera because of the layers of change embedded in its fabric, this comingling of styles also reflected the transitions seen in society politically, academically and technologically. In this way, the building is analogous with the development of society and culture in France, becoming a repository of the change.

Born not long after the French Revolution, Hugo was raised in the aftermath of the sociopolitical upheaval which would fundamentally change France and indeed European politics. During the Revolution and in the decades that followed, France lost many important works of art and historic buildings whose association with the *Ancien Regime* meant that their materials were plundered and

⁴¹ French as written in Victor Hugo, *Notre-Dame de Paris*, 1831, 132-133 (Author's translation) as quoted in Cochran, 'The Gothic Revival in France, 1830-1845', 394.

⁴² Hugo and Smith, 'War on the Demolishers!', 228.

⁴³ Hugo, *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*, 137.

sold, reused, or destroyed. It is thought that in Paris alone, over a dozen medieval churches and buildings were either demolished or converted for other purposes.⁴⁴ Notre-Dame de Paris, the heart of France, was not spared this fate – becoming Napoleon’s ‘Temple of Reason’.

The French Revolution and related destruction and dilapidation of the estate of both church and state in France, particularly Paris, was an important catalyst for Hugo. The monstrosity of the Revolutionary violence helped Hugo to transcend the Revolution and political upheaval that surrounded him, seeking to negate the destruction through a higher pursuit derived from history. This would be achieved through Hugo’s literary ambition. As the literary scholar Victor Brombert notes, Hugo intimated that:

...writers had a mission, that they were to be the educators and leaders of the recently awakened *peuple* [sic] that they were to regenerate society, prepare the future, and write, as it were, on paper and in life, the immanent epic of humanity’s progress.⁴⁵

Consequently, writers like Hugo took advantage of an awakened bourgeoisie, using their novels and writings as a catalyst for societal change. By making people aware of their surroundings and the destruction of architecture, Hugo intended to reinvigorate society’s interest in their national memory.

Writing in the wake of Napoleon’s defeat and surrender in 1814 and the consequential 1830 July Revolution, Hugo was further disquieted by the changes surrounding him. This context becomes increasingly meaningful in the larger setting and symbolism of his novel, *Notre-Dame de Paris*. It is especially important to note as Hugo viewed Paris not only as the capital of France, and capital of society in the nineteenth century, but as the preeminent civilisation and centre of the educated and cultural world. Hugo believed that Paris was a city of ideas and ideals whose memory lived in the forest of the city’s buildings. These buildings were the living roots, foundations and witnesses of society.

The choice therefore to set the *Notre-Dame de Paris* in 1482 is highly significant in the light of the sociopolitical milieu surrounding Hugo’s writing. By narrating the book in 1482, during the Cathedral’s hey-day before what he viewed as its decline into disrepair and desecration, Hugo juxtaposes his historical representation of the Cathedral and the city against the fresh memories and reality of post-Revolutionary France. By utilising and playing upon the social and collective memories of the reader, Hugo uses his writing to engage the reader’s imagination and transport them across spatiotemporal contexts, whilst also underlining his alternate agenda – calling for the restoration of the French cultural identity through the conservation of its architectural monuments (like Notre-Dame de Paris). Setting the novel in 1482 and juxtaposing it with the reader’s context (the 1830s), Hugo provides two temporal coordinates through which to navigate Paris and the story. As such, Hugo intends for the reader to engage with the characters and buildings within the narrative, whilst highlighting that the city and its buildings are significant witnesses to the passage of time, and the events which have led to the reader’s present. By describing and placing the novel’s main character, the Cathedral, in the late-Medieval period, in a time when France was emerging and establishing itself as a centre of European culture under the descendants of the Capetian dynasty; Hugo emphasises the importance of this period, and its physical manifestations – architecture and cities, as part of the *genius loci* of what makes France, France. In doing so, Hugo attempts to remind the reader that what is inherently part of their culture, is in fact what they were trying to destroy.

⁴⁴ Jokilehto, *A History of Architectural Conservation*, Repr, 70.

⁴⁵ Victor H. Brombert, *Victor Hugo and the Visionary Novel* (Harvard University Press, 1984), 12.

During the Romantic period, the notion of 'architecture as text' or narrative became increasingly prominent in architectural and historical discourse. Whilst the idea is said to have originated with Quatremère de Quincy in his obscure treatise *De l'Architecture Egyptienne* in the early nineteenth century, Hugo reiterates the discussion in *Notre-Dame de Paris* in the chapter 'Ceci tuera cela' ('This Will Kill That'), which describes Gothic architecture as:

...the great handwriting of the human race. And this is so true, that not only every religious symbol, but every human thought, has its page and its monument in that immense book.⁴⁶

In this way, both architecture and novels could be considered a form of 'writing', narrative and communicative devices which are able to communicate history and memory, both collectively for a nation and individually for a person. Employing our ability for *scene construction* and to engage with memories through the *imagined observer hypothesis*, both the architecture and the novel can facilitate a retrieval and reconsolidation of *memory traces*. Through this process the scene can be reconstructed, and the person or community can become an active participant within the scene, fostering a one-on-one relationship with the building. No longer a bystander, the reader is encouraged to actively engage with the history and memory which are perceived to be encompassed within the stone or pages of the book.

Considering Hugo's sentiments about the role of architecture and literature, being mutually supportive and resting on communication and narrative, it is not surprising that *Notre-Dame de Paris* was written in a genre which is considered a subset of the historical novel, known as the 'Gothic' or 'Architectural' novel. According to Minott-Ahl, the Gothic novel is one of the first literary genres which placed the medieval building at the centre of the narrative in an imaginative context.⁴⁷ *Notre-Dame de Paris* is therefore the main character at the heart of the novel. Hugo goes to great lengths to describe the building in minute detail in Book III, Chapter I entitled 'Notre Dame', explaining in the opening paragraph the condition of the building:

The Church of Notre-Dame de Paris is still no doubt, a majestic and sublime edifice. But, beautiful as it has been preserved in growing old, it is difficult not to sigh, not to wax indignant, before the numberless degradations and mutilations which time and men have both caused the venerable monument to suffer.⁴⁸

As its main character, the building performs an important function as an interpretive mirror within the text. Not only do the surrounding characters of the story interpret themselves and the world around them through their interactions with the Cathedral, but so too does the reader. By positioning the Cathedral as the main character and the centre of Paris, Hugo emphasises the building as one of the principal achievements of the Parisians. In this way, Hugo treats the building metonymically. The Cathedral is Paris, Paris and the Cathedral are the nation. Thus, Hugo makes the reader and the French people generally, the building's guardians, and thereby sought to change the dynamic, from destroyers to protectors.

To achieve this dynamic shift, Hugo employs the reader's nostalgia, imagination, and capacity for *mental time travel via auto-noetic consciousness* to transport oneself through time and space. This process allows the reader to undergo a self and societal reflection, in particular reflecting on the impacts that destructive change has had on their city and surroundings. It also allows an ability to

⁴⁶ Hugo, *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*, 218.

⁴⁷ Minott-Ahl, 'The Construction of a Cause', 62.

⁴⁸ Hugo, *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*, 131.

appreciate or reflect on the viewpoint of the building, further anthropomorphising the building and implying an ability to speak of events. Through this reflection, the reader could mentally travel between the past and present to imagine the compounding impacts and consequences of the events in these periods. In doing so, they could begin to comprehend how this might impact the future of Notre-Dame de Paris and the other buildings which Hugo carefully crafted in the narrative as key to their French identity. Relying on the human capacity for *mental time travel*, Hugo employs several literary techniques to prompt this reflection on self and society.

The first technique employed is *mis-en-abyme*. The technique, common in many western art traditions, is frequently referred to as a picture within a picture. In a literary context such as *Notre-Dame de Paris*, it refers to a story within a story. It is through *mis-en-abyme* that the reader's intended self-reflection is achieved, as the stories playing out within the novel act as a mirror to one another, in a form of a rhetorical device like *ekphrasis*. Throughout the novel Hugo uses the characters and imagery to highlight the larger stakes – the destruction and dilapidation of France's architecture and memory. He imbeds this political message and calls for conservation within the romance story, as in the below quote:

Very little to-day remains, thanks to this catastrophe, —thanks, above all, to the successive restorations which have completed what is spared, — very little remains of that first dwelling of the kings of France.⁴⁹

Throughout the *mis-en-abyme* Hugo also uses imagery and allegory, which Brombert explains is used to create archetypal figures which create the drama and psychological power in the novel.⁵⁰ As such, many of the characters in the book can be seen to reflect aspects of the society which Hugo was trying to engage.

The name Quasimodo is derived from 'Quasimodo Sunday', the first Sunday after Easter. The Roman Catholic entrance antiphon adapts the liturgy from the First Epistle of Peter, who addressed the community 'as newborn babes' (Lat. *Quasi modo genti infantes*) in search of the 'living stone – rejected by humans but chosen by God' (Lat. *lapidem vivum, ab hominibus quidem reprobatum, a Deo autem electum*). Quasimodo, the newborn babe who was rejected due to his deformities, was left at the Cathedral (house of God) and became part of the living stones (literally and figuratively) which society was seeking.⁵¹ The metaphor of Quasimodo's name can be extended further if the reader considers the association of the newborn and rebirth with Hugo's call for restoration and rebirth of the Cathedral. Furthermore, Quasimodo's grotesque, architecturally disfigured, body is an allegory for the disfiguration of France's monuments (and Notre-Dame) due to what Hugo sees as the misguided actions of the Revolutionaries, who sought to damage and hide the physical reminders of France's past, just as Archdeacon Dom Claude Frollo attempted to damage and hide Quasimodo.

Relying on the reader's mental capacity to become a third person observer empowered through a combination of *episodic* and *semantic memories* of their own, and inherited experiences of Paris and the Cathedral, Hugo employs Quasimodo as the underdog of the story, priming the character to engage with the reader on a sympathetic level. Doing so, Hugo evokes the reader's imagination to

⁴⁹ Hugo, *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*, 9.

⁵⁰ Brombert, *Victor Hugo and the Visionary Novel*, 1.

⁵¹ 1 Peter 2:2-5 (NIV): ² Like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation, ³ now that you have tasted the Lord is good. ⁴ As you come to him, the living Stone – rejected by humans but chosen by God and precious to him – ⁵ you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

form an empathetic relationship with Quasimodo's character, and thereby an empathy for the plight of the Cathedral. Through Hugo's use of a third person observer perspective in his writing, we can apply an *imagined observer hypothesis* to the story, where through interaction with Quasimodo's character, the reader's imagination is activated and can facilitate scene construction. Through what psychologists call a 'field perspective', the reader uses Quasimodo's eyes atop the belltower to 'look in' and witness the Cathedral and Paris from above. The Disney interpretation of the novel in the movie *The Hunchback of Notre-Dame* encapsulates this idea of Quasimodo as an observer, one with the Cathedral, personifying the building as a witness. The movie's analogy shows that as a disfigured 'gargoyle' like being, Quasimodo was an outsider, who lived up with the architectural gargoyles and chimeras who in turn became animated, 'alive' in his presence. In this way, Quasimodo, much like the Cathedral, became a witness to society, and from his lofty bell tower could absorb the city and become a repository of memory for it.

Dom Claude Frollo represents the 'demolishers' of the Revolution. As the villain in the story, the analogy of Frollo is through the inherent destruction of Quasimodo (the Cathedral) and Esmerelda (representative of French people and culture). Hugo uses Quasimodo's love (or infatuation) for Esmerelda to reflect the reciprocal relationship he saw between French architecture (particularly the Gothic) and the French people, culture, and the collective memory of the nation. By seeking to destroy both characters, Hugo uses Frollo to represent the negative parts of society, in a bid to change their relationship with the Revolutionaries and their ideals, to save Quasimodo (architecture) and Esmerelda (the people and culture).

Using analogy throughout the novel to interweave his message about conservation, Hugo also employs *authorial intervention* to engage directly with the reader. According to French literature scholar, Suzanne Nash, Hugo uses his authorial voice to intervene in three major sections of the novel – the 'Introduction' (sometimes styled as Preface), 'Notre-Dame' and 'Paris a vol d'oiseau' ('A Birds Eye View of Paris') (Book III), and lastly in 'Ceci tuera cela' ('This Will Kill That') (Book V).⁵² Hugo uses this literary tool to insert his opinion, commentary and judgement within the narrative to make the reader become an active participant in the issues relating to architectural conservation, national identity and memory. This could be viewed as instantiating a field perspective (as per the *imagined observer hypothesis*), where Hugo establishes a relationship between himself (as author) and the reader. In doing so, Hugo tries to make the reader the main subject of his attention, where the reader is encouraged to actively immerse and observe themselves within the depicted scene. In this way the reader is no longer an innocent bystander to the destruction of French architecture and French national identity, but actively implicated.

In the 'Introduction', Hugo immediately begins this one-on-one relationship with the reader by grounding them in the present (as opposed to the historical 1482 setting of the book) when he writes the following:

A few years ago, while visiting or, rather, rummaging about Notre-Dame, the author of this book found, in an obscure nook of one of the towers, the following word, engraved by hand upon the wall: ἌΝΑΓΚΗ.⁵³

He continues later to conclude the 'Introduction' as follows:

⁵² Suzanne Nash, 'Writing a Building: Hugo's Notre-Dame De Paris', *French Forum* 8, no. 2 (1983): 123.

⁵³ Hugo, *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*, 1.

Afterwards, the wall was whitewashed or scraped down, I know not which, and the inscription disappeared. For it is thus that people have been in the habit of proceeding with the marvellous churches of the Middle Ages for the last two hundred years. Mutilations come to them from every quarter, from within as well as from without. The priest whitewashes them the Archdeacon scrapes them down; then the populace arrives and demolishes them.

Thus, with the exception of the fragile memory which the author of this book here consecrates to it, there remains to-day nothing whatever of the mysterious word engraved within the gloomy tower of Notre-Dame, – nothing of the destiny which it so sadly summed up. The man who wrote that word upon the wall disappeared from the midst of the generations of man many centuries ago; the word, in its turn, has been effaced from the wall of the church; the church will, perhaps, itself soon disappear from the face of the earth.

It is upon this word that this book is founded.⁵⁴

It is clear through Hugo's *authorial intervention* in the 'Introduction' that his ultimate intention for the book was to draw the reader's attention to the impacts on, and degradation of the Cathedral. Using the ploy of the inscription 'ANÁFKH' which is later dealt with as part of the Dom Claude Frollo's spiral into despair, Hugo indicates his own despair at the loss of physical evidence, the palimpsest and memory embedded in the building's fabric, which speaks of the human interaction with the building. Hugo blames all levels of society, from those who were entrusted with the protection of the building – priest and Archdeacon, to the people, who first deface it, and then demolish it. Here Hugo encourages the reader to mentally project themselves forward in time through his *authorial intervention* to the destruction caused by the successive Revolutions and to envisage a potentially dire future for buildings like Notre-Dame. For if a famous landmark like Notre-Dame cannot be saved, what hope do the rest of France's Gothic buildings and repositories of memory have?

The second *authorial intervention* occurs in Book III's two chapters. The context surrounding the writing of these chapters are the events which led to the July Revolution of October 1830. Written shortly after the insurrection, the chapters are influenced by the conflict between the warring conservative and radical sects in society. Over 100 pages into the narrative Hugo asserts his authorial voice. His choice to locate the *authorial intervention* here is significant. Preceding this intervention, the reader was introduced to Esmerelda, the beautiful young gypsy, who Hugo uses as mirror and metaphor for the French people. By being naively seduced by the glimmering hopes of the handsome Phoebus (representative of the political agenda of the Revolution, and shiny new technology of the Industrial Revolution), Esmerelda (the French people) risks forsaking and forgetting her past, history, and culture. To Hugo, the French peoples' willingness to lose their virtue to the lure of progress is tantamount to a gypsy being flighty and ungrounded in their home and cultural roots. Therefore, when the reader reaches Book III, Hugo uses this moment in the story to force the reader to mentally travel back into the present to describe in minute detail both Notre-Dame and the city of Paris, and what their dance with progress has cost them: their architecture, city, and nation.

Hugo anthropomorphises the Cathedral in his descriptions in Book III, Chapter I, to engage the reader as if the building were human:

⁵⁴ Hugo, *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*, 1.

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On the face of this aged queen of our cathedrals, by the side of a wrinkle, one always finds a scar. *Tempus edax, homo edacior.*⁵⁵

The Latin used here translates loosely to 'Time is blind, man is stupid'; a fitting quote, as Hugo continues to explain the impacts of man on what he considers the Queen of Cathedrals:

...the diverse traces of destruction imprinted upon the old church, time's share would be the least, the share of men the most...⁵⁶

By anthropomorphising and personifying the building as a warm old woman, Hugo humanises the structure and laments the loss of the building's original beauty and integrity. His authorial voice is nostalgic for the old beauty of the buildings and city which formed part of what he identifies as the hey-day of Paris in the fifteenth century.

In Book III, Chapter II, Hugo continues his *authorial intervention* to discuss the beauty of historic Paris, the Paris which laid the foundation for the greatness of the city and nation which he believes is being destroyed:

But a city like Paris is perpetually growing. It is only such cities that become capitals. They are funnels, into which all the geographical, political, moral, and intellectual water-shed of a country, all the natural slopes of a people, pour; wells of civilizations, so to speak, and also sewers, where commerce, industry, intelligence, population, – all that is sap, all that is life, all that is the soul of a nation, filters and amasses unceasingly, drop by drop, century by century.⁵⁷

Here Hugo describes in intimate detail the development of the city which he loves and called home. The nostalgic authorial voice again yearns for a city that seemed to be ever changing, and increasingly did not resemble the comforts of home. Later in the chapter, Hugo calls on the reader to listen to the city's voice which once was an opera singer, but now is no more than an unaccompanied orchestra, playing a discordant melody, reflecting the dissonance in society and the city:

Assuredly, this is an opera which is worth the trouble of listening to. Ordinarily, the noise which escapes from Paris by day is the city speaking; by night, it is the city breathing; in this case, it is the city singing. Lend an ear, then, to this concert of bell towers; spread over all the murmur of half a million men...say whether you know anything in the world more rich and joyful, more golden, more dazzling, than this tumult of bells and chimes;... – than this city which is no longer anything by an orchestra, – than this symphony which produces the noise of a tempest.⁵⁸

Comparing the city and its architecture to a person, one capable of performing opera or other music, Hugo hopes to spur the reader to action. In this passage, the chiming bells of Notre-Dame feature prominently, reflecting Hugo's desire to draw the reader's attention to the building, the main character of the novel. The poetic language, full of personification and musical notes seeks to engage the reader's imagination. By using their *semantic* and *episodic memories* of the city and building, Hugo seeks to reshape these memories, providing the reader with a new set of associations and images of the city and building. He does this to help the reader to mentally envisage the scene he is painting so

⁵⁵ Hugo, *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*, 131.

⁵⁶ Hugo, *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*, 131.

⁵⁷ Hugo, *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*, 142–43.

⁵⁸ Hugo, *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*, 166.

that they would become as aware of the juxtaposing scenes of imagination and reality, as he was. By engaging with the reader, Hugo is intervening in the narrative reverie to awaken the reader to the changes, the devastation occurring around them.

The third *authorial intervention* occurs in Book V, Chapter II entitled ‘Ceci tuera cela’. The location of this intervention is again important in the scheme of the narrative arc of the characters in the book. In the preceding chapter the reader observes the scene where Dom Claude Frollo was engaged in higher thought – dabbling in science and technology, and was meditating on the product which was produced on his personal printing press. Describing Frollo as he internally struggles with religion and his quest for understanding in the sciences, Hugo uses this as a mirror to the reader and commentary on the fraught process of modernisation. It is at this point that Hugo uses his authorial voice to warn the reader against the pitfalls of technology. In his famous line “Printing will kill architecture”,⁵⁹ Hugo summarises the entire chapter and his opinion about the impacts of technology on architecture and the city. Exclaiming that from the “beginning with the discovery of printing, architecture withers away little by little, becomes lifeless and bare”,⁶⁰ Hugo hints to the reader that the reason Notre-Dame is in disrepair is a direct result of the printing press. As without the printing press, the ideology and manifestos of the Revolutionaries would not have been printed en-masse and thereby the desecration and destruction of France’s buildings may not have occurred. Hugo has a long and complex relationship with the French Revolutionaries, which influences his opinions in novels and political writings throughout his career. Whilst an early monarchist, Hugo increasingly supported the Republic and their political ambitions for France. What is important to note however, that whilst he supported their politics to transform France, Hugo was unsympathetic to the Revolutionary activities and the means through which they sought to overthrow the Monarchy and Government, which was resulting in changes to the physical manifestation of the identity of France. In this way, Hugo campaigned fiercely that the desecration of France’s monuments was not the appropriate way to enact political and social change. The consequential impact of this chapter in *Notre-Dame de Paris*, and others on the development of the conservation movement in France is significant and will be analysed in detail in the next section of this chapter.

By trying to mobilise ideas of nationhood, collective memory and identity through the novel, Hugo specifically crafts the narrative to be both a witness to the history of the cathedral and city and a memory cue for the reader. Resigned to believe that if he could not change the minds of the public reading the novel, that Notre-Dame would face ruin and destruction, Hugo ensures that the novel became a cue for remembering the historic building. Through his *authorial interventions* which describes the building in exacting detail, Hugo depicts the building as “a literary and historical narrative written in stone, wood, and glass.”⁶¹ Through his *authorial interventions*, use of *mis-en-abyme* and employment of the uniquely human ability to figuratively travel through time and space, Hugo also seeks to inspire self-reflection in the reader. By harnessing their *episodic* and *semantic memories* so that they can observe the historical impacts of the passage of time, the novel, through a reciprocal interaction between the text and the reader, becomes a witness to history. Through his literary tropes, Hugo is able to insert into the narrative ideas about identity and nationhood as they are depicted through architecture and the city. Hugo’s *Notre-Dame de Paris* highlights a clear genesis to how nineteenth century literature encouraged society to understand buildings as replete with memory, and have the ability to do memory work on behalf of humanity. Despite detesting the printing press and advancements of technology, which will be discussed in the following section, Hugo utilises it, much like the Revolutionaries, to mass produce the novel and spread his message far and

⁵⁹ Hugo, *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*, 216.

⁶⁰ Hugo, *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*, 224.

⁶¹ Minott-Ahl, ‘Nation/Building: Hugo’s “Notre-Dame de Paris”’, 251.

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wide. As a result, Hugo seeks to safeguard the building in two ways. First, he sought to change the public perception about architecture, and the perception of the past, by drawing on the human nostalgic tendencies to reconnect the reader with the central character, the building. The literary version of Notre-Dame is constructed through words and literary images, which helps the reader to envisage and understand the actual building.⁶² Using literature as his weapon of choice, Hugo advocates for the history and identity of France imbedded as memory traces in the physical stones of the building and the city. Secondly, by printing the novel, should the building succumb to the destruction of people, time, war or force majeure, the building and social history of France would be forever encapsulated in the pages of the book, and could be replicated, shared, and experienced ad infinitum, its memory forever stored.

⁶² Minott-Ahl, 'Nation/Building: Hugo's "Notre-Dame de Paris"', 251.

CECI TUERA CELA: LOSS OF MEMORY AND THE CONSERVATION MOVEMENT

SIR WALTER SCOTT

Scott's foray into the historic novel genre in the early nineteenth century was not only a change in narrative medium from his earlier poetry, but also a change in communication tool. After the Act of Union in 1707, the integration of England and Scotland into one kingdom – Great Britain - accentuated the struggle for Scottish independence, and a growing awareness of the distinct cultural identity of the Scots and the persistent threat to its survival. It is in this sociopolitical setting that Scott sought to engage the public with their Scots culture. He did this through detailed descriptions of the national landscape and architecture of Scotland in his historic novels. The increasing prevalence of mass-produced literature through the printing press, ensured that Scott could disseminate his nation-building literature widely.

Scott's *Waverley* novels were also a tool to discuss his ideas about the conservation of culture and fabric of Scotland. In *The Antiquary*, Scott uses his characters, particularly the Antiquary Mr Oldbuck, to discuss the dichotomy of the values in Scotland's cultural heritage. The dialogues in the book identify the differing memory and associations that people and communities have for the same item. These highlight that different people attribute varying degrees of importance to elements of their heritage, depending on their context and associations with personal and collective memories. It also emphasises that because of these varying associations and importance to people, that some things are remembered, while other equally significant edifices are forgotten, as seen in the below example:

“What is the reason,” at length Miss Wardour asked the Antiquary, “why tradition has preserved to us such meagre accounts of the inmates of these stately edifices, raised with such expense of labour and taste, and whose owners were in their times personages of such awful power and importance? The meanest tower of a freebooting baron or squire who lived by his lance and broadsword, is consecrated by its appropriate legend, and the shepherd will tell you with accuracy the names and feats of its inhabitants; — but ask a countryman concerning these beautiful and extensive remains — these towers, these arches, and buttresses, and shafted windows, reared at such cost, — three words fill up his answer — they were made up by the monks lang syne.”⁶³

The dichotomy in the appreciation of the historic past is further reiterated through Scott's discussion of the ruins of St Ruth in *The Antiquary*. The ruins of St Ruth in the narrative are representative of all ruins and historic architecture across Scotland, which have been left to deteriorate from war, neglect, and the natural impacts of the environment. The issue of the ruins, explained in the extract below, is poignant, as it speaks to the antiquarian question of how to conserve the fabric, contents, and memory of ruins.

Upon my word — Scotch, English, and foreign coins, of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, and some of them *rari* — *et rariores* — *etiam rarissimi!* Here is the bonnet-piece of James V.,

⁶³ Scott, *The Antiquary*, loc. 3403 (ebook).

the unicorn of James II., — ay, and the gold festoon of Queen Mary, with her head and the Dauphin's. And these were really found in the ruins of St. Ruth?⁶⁴

The narrative plots the charlatan Dousterswivel (enemy to the ruins of St Ruth and all historical artefacts) against Mr Oldbuck (antiquary and protector of all historical artefacts) to communicate to the reader the importance of conservation of Scotland's heritage and to protect against plundering and destruction which is tantamount to robbing from the collective memory of the nation.

Scott also uses the novels to discuss the historic processes of modernisation, including war and political unrest, which have caused the loss of architecture and landscapes. In *The Antiquary*, Scott through Mr. Oldbuck brings into discussion the role of authenticity and memory in the Gothic architectural style, where historical artefacts were commonly used out of context, as in the quote below:

“Lord deliver me from this Gothic generation!” exclaimed the Antiquary,— “A monument of a knight-templar on each side of a Grecian porch, and a Madonna on the top of it! — O crimini! [sic]”⁶⁵

Scott's *authorial intervention* also utilises Mr. Oldbuck's outrage at the treatment of antiquities, books, artefacts, art, and architecture alike which he believes were subject to contempt and degradation of their significance:

...But to put our ancient chronicles, our noble histories, our learned commentaries, and national muniments [sic], to such offices of contempt and subjection, has greatly degraded our nation, and showed ourselves dishonoured in the eyes of posterity to the utmost stretch of time — O negligence most unfriendly to our land!⁶⁶

Lastly, Scott discusses the destruction and loss of the built and natural environments of Scotland due to war, which had left an imprint on the memory of the landscapes and the nation:

The eras by which the vulgar compute time, have always reference to some period of fear and tribulation, and they date by a tempest, an earthquake, or burst of civil commotion. When such are the facts most alive, in the memory of the common people, we cannot wonder,” he concluded, “that the ferocious warrior is remembered, and the peaceful abbots are abandoned to forgetfulness and oblivion.”⁶⁷

This trail of *authorial interventions* throughout *The Antiquary* indicates Scott's use of the historical novel as a political and communication tool which aimed to speak to the reader's nostalgic tendencies, engaging them in a way which asks them to reflect on the past, and the actions of the present, which are impacting the important environments of their nation. Through this, Scott seeks to change the readers' perspectives so that he could re-ignite interest in their surroundings and culture to protect them into the future. Through Scott's *authorial interventions*, the reader engages in the prevalent debates of the nineteenth century, particularly of the first 'phase of crisis', which questioned, amongst many things, the modernisation of cities, and authenticity of reconstruction/restoration practices

⁶⁴ Scott, *The Antiquary*, loc. 4516 (ebook).

⁶⁵ Scott, *The Antiquary*, loc. 3146 (ebook).

⁶⁶ Scott, *The Antiquary*, loc. 3379 (ebook).

⁶⁷ Scott, *The Antiquary*, loc. 3414 (ebook).

which often significantly altered what the Romantics believed was the true memory and identity of the place.

In addition to his in-depth narrative description, much like his contemporaries the Antiquaries, Scott incorporates illustrations to help engage the discerning reader with the histories of the past, to help foster a connection to the national memories and identities he is describing. Scott's use of descriptions and illustrations of local landscapes is akin to what Aristotle and Plato termed *semeion*⁶⁸ – an impression, fragment of memory left with the reader which lingers and continues to engage their imagination and memory, as discussed in **Chapter 1**. This *semeion* is further emphasised by his novels' influence on painters, including famous Scottish and English artists like David Wilkie and JMW Turner, where, by engaging their imaginations through the novels, the artists increasingly engaged with painting local landscapes and intimate local scenes which were described in the novels.⁶⁹ Doing so, painters along with Scott's novels helped to popularise these locations and record them (see Turner's painting for Scott in Figure 7). The influence of Scott's novels on the public and other arts led to what is now termed as the 'Waverley phenomenon' and 'heritage tourism'. Consequently, the scenes depicted in the novels, illustrations and paintings became famous landmarks and landscapes, spurring a conservation movement to ensure they were maintained and protected for posterity. In this way, Scott's novels, and what he believes buildings and landscapes can do for Scottish culture and identity, is analogous to contemporary memory concepts at the personal and cultural level. The novel, much like the building, leaves a *memory trace*, and in doing so, becomes a cue through which current and future generations can interact with and engage their imaginations. Engaging the reader's third person perspective (the ability to observe the constructed scene), and their mental ability to travel in time, Scott engages the reader with the place across spatiotemporal contexts – both through imagination and through direct physical experience. The reader and viewer's involvement in the phenomenon of 'heritage tourism' catalysed by Scott's novels, has proven important to the maintenance of Scotland's historical structures as part of their living heritage.⁷⁰

⁶⁸ Greenstein, 'Icons and Memory: Aristotle on Remembrance', 11.

⁶⁹ Raleigh, 'What Scott Meant to the Victorians', 14–15.

⁷⁰ Handa, 'Sir Walter Scott and Kenilworth Castle: Ruins Restored by Historical Imagination', 41.



- 7 Etching of Crichton Castle, Scotland as part of JMW Turner's drawings for Walter Scott's *Provincial Antiquities and Picturesque Scenery of Scotland* published c.1818-19. Turner used Scott's poems and narratives to depict scenes to illustrate the books with typical Scottish landscapes, ruins and characters.

Source: Tate Gallery, London (item reference. T04485).

Whilst Scott uses his novels to describe Scotland's built and natural landscapes, the collective memory and highland identity that was described, was actually curated by Scott. Scott created through his novels (and subsequent illustrations and paintings) what Pierre Nora would later coin *lieux de mémoire* (sites of memory). These sites, however, were over-written by Scott, becoming a palimpsest of the 'real' physical remains of Scottish landscape and architecture, and the Scotland which literary critic Stuart Kelly explains that Scott wanted to depict as – Scott-Land – a “hyper-real Scotland, untethered to geography”.⁷¹ He was able to do this, as the erosion of collective memory and memory sites was occurring due to a perfect storm in the nineteenth century of political upheaval, urbanisation and community forgetting, which was destroying the sites that connected the community to their shared common past.

Despite his curation of the Scottish collective memory and identity, the success and popularity of the novels helped to spur the conservation of the landscape and architecture of Scotland, which led to increased tourism to the locations depicted in the books. Tourism, however, was something that Scott most likely did not anticipate. His use of the historical novel, if failing to catalyse change, was much like Hugo a few decades later, intended to leave a lasting record of the Scottish landscape, buildings, people, and culture should they be destroyed from lack of protection and conservation.

⁷¹ Kelly, *Scott-Land*, loc. 4970 (ebook).

On the great architect Christopher Wren's epitaph in St Paul's Cathedral, London, there is written in Latin 'Lector, si monumentum requires circumspice' which translates to: 'Reader, if you seek his monument, look around you.' This phrase could be applied to Scott as well.⁷² Scotland's national identity and the conservation of much of its landscapes, ruins and architecture can be attributed to the influence of Scott's nation-building efforts in his poems, and particularly his historical novels. Scott's monument is not the great gothic spire in Edinburgh or the many other statues which have been erected since his death, instead his legacy is the promotion, emphasis, and creative licence he took with the Scottish national identity, and the uniqueness of its landscapes, ruins, and architecture. Through his use of *authorial intervention* and detailed description in his novels, Scott engaged the reader's nostalgic tendencies and harnessed their capacity to undergo *mental time travel* and participate in *scene construction*. Through a contemporary analysis of Scott's literary techniques, overlaid with memory science, it is apparent that through his novels, Scott helped to catalyse the reader's personal engagement and re-engagement with their physical surroundings and culture, and encouraged the idea that these surroundings could perform memory work. His literature ensured that, should all else fail, his narratives would outlive the edifices and continue to speak of the Scottish memory. Scott's work in the historic novel genre, and its use as a medium to communicate to a wide audience about politics and conservation was revolutionary, and would influence future generations of authors, including Hugo in France.

VICTOR HUGO

In response to the wide-scale destruction of historic structures caused by the French Revolution and concurrent emergence of a historical consciousness in the French public, in the Spring of 1792 the Commission Conservatrice de Monuments (Monuments Conservation Commission) was established in Paris (which would later be known as the Commission des Monuments Historiques (Commission for Historic Monuments) by 1837). The Commission's role was twofold – serving both the Revolution and heritage, it was tasked with overseeing the obliteration of evidence relating to the ousted Monarchy and Catholic Church, whilst also preventing further destruction of significant works of art and architecture.⁷³

However, despite appointing Alexandre Lenoir to safeguard structures and art,⁷⁴ the Commission was largely unsuccessful. During the decades that followed, France lost many important works of art and historic buildings, many of which were either demolished or adapted to new purposes. By 1819 however, a new attempt to conserve France's built heritage was launched by the Ministry of the Interior, with the provision of an 80,000 Francs allowance for the preservation of historical monuments. Despite this allowance, France's heritage and national memories continued to fall victim to destruction and dilapidation through neglect. It is no surprise therefore, that in this context Hugo, an ardent proponent of France's historical architecture, took it upon himself to call the nation and the Ministry to action, pleading on behalf of France's monuments.

Prior to his publication of *Notre-Dame de Paris* in 1831, Hugo wrote two politically inclined pieces about the destruction of France's monuments and a call for their conservation. The first of these pieces, published in 1823 was the poem 'La Bande Noir'. The poem was followed by a pamphlet in

⁷² Kelly, *Scott-Land*, loc. 4976 (ebook).

⁷³ Murphy, *The Cathedral of Notre-Dame of Paris*, 94.

⁷⁴ Marie Alexandre Lenoir (27 December 1761 – 11 June 1839) was a self-trained archaeologist and gathered many art objects from state properties after the Revolution to safeguard them from vandals, housing them in what would be later known as the Musée des Monuments Français.

1825 entitled 'Note sur la Destruction des Monuments en France'. A later essay entitled 'Guerre aux Démolisseurs!' was published in 1832 a year after the first release of *Notre-Dame de Paris* in 1831. 'Note sur la Destruction des Monuments en France' and 'Guerre aux Démolisseurs!' have, over the years been contracted and bundled together as one essay and understood to be Hugo's first political piece about the destruction of France's monuments and conservation. However, they are in fact written seven years apart and the latter of the two essays over a decade after his first political piece on the destruction of France, 'La Bande Noir' was published. 'La Bande Noir' and 'Notes sur la Destruction des Monuments en France' have rarely been translated from their original French, which may indicate why 'Guerre aux Démolisseurs!' is the only one of the three that is referred to in English language scholarship.

In 'La Bande Noir' Hugo dedicated the poem to Charles Nodier, his friend and fellow conservation activist, lamenting that he, like Nodier, was a traveller experiencing the ruins and devastation of France's built environment.⁷⁵ In 'La Bande Noir', Hugo split the poem into two cantos. In the first canto, as extracted below, Hugo calls for the respect of France's monuments, romantically framing these monuments as witnesses to France's glory, with architectural ruins described as the repositories of memory, and the picturesque muse of a poet:

...Parvis où notre orgueil s'enflamme !
Maisons de Dieu ! manoirs des rois !
Temples que gardait l'oriflamme,
Palais que protégeait la croix !
Réduits d'amour ! arcs de victoires !
Vous qui témoignez de nos gloires,
Vous qui proclamez nos grandeurs !
Chapelles, donjons, monastères !
Murs voilés de tant de mystères,
Murs brillants de tant de splendeurs !...

..."Parvis where our pride is inflamed!
Houses of God! Mansions of kings!
Temples guarded by the banner,
Palaces protected by the cross!
Shrines of love! Arches of victory!
You who bear witness to our glories,
You who proclaim our greatness!
Chapels, dungeons, monasteries!
Walls veiled with so many mysteries,
Walls shining with so much splendour!...

... Comme cet oiseau de passage,
Le poète, dans tous les temps,
Chercha, de voyage en voyage,
Les ruines et le printemps.
Ces débris, chers à la patrie,
Lui parlent de chevalerie ;
La gloire habite leurs néants ;
Les héros peuplent ces décombres ;—
Si ce ne sont plus que des ombres,
Ce sont des ombres de géants ! ...

..."Like this bird of passage,
The poet, in all times,
From journey to journey he sought
The ruins and the spring.
These debris, dear to the country,
Speak to him of chivalry;
Glory inhabits their nothingness;
Heroes populate these ruins; -
If they are but shadows now,
They are shadows of giants!..."⁷⁶

However, in the second canto, Hugo's voice changes, and it is here that the desperation for the plight of the historical monuments are conveyed. The romantic descriptions of the first canto are juxtaposed with a dismissal of these ideas as a poet's folly:

⁷⁵ Charles Nodier and Baron Isidore Justin Séverin Taylor published *Picturesque and Romantic Voyages in Ancient France* in 1820, detailing the historic towns, built fabric and landscape of France.

⁷⁶ Hugo, 'La Bande Noire' (Author's translation).

— Tais-toi, lyre! Silence, ô lyre du poète!
 Ah! laisse en paix tomber ces débris glorieux
 Au gouffre où nul ami, dans sa douleur
 muette,
 Ne les suivra longtemps des yeux!
 Témoins que les vieux temps ont laissés dans
 notre âge,
 Gardiens d'un passé qu'on outrage,
 Ah! fuyez ce siècle ennemi!...

— Hush, lyre! Silence, O lyre of the poet!
 Ah, let these glorious debris fall in peace
 To the abyss where no friend, in his silent
 pain
 Will not long follow them with his eyes!
 Witnesses that old times have left in our
 age,
 Guardians of a past that is outraged,
 Ah! flee this enemy century!...⁷⁷

Personifying the ruin as guardian of and witnesses to the past, Hugo identifies in the above stanza that the ruins and architectural monuments of France no longer have friends within the Republic. For why should the nation care for these ruins, when instead they can achieve progress through political and industrial revolutions? Hugo explains that the virtues and honour of the old French order have been replaced by the crime and destruction of the political and technological upheaval of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century.

Hugo's second last stanza employs reverse psychology to plead with the reader for action, which is juxtaposed with the final stanza, extracted below. These stanzas highlight Hugo's *authorial intervention* inviting the reader to engage their imagination to imagine a future version of France. Contemporary psychology would identify this as calling the reader to engage the mind's ability for mental construction where they are able to imagine a future where France is bereft of its architectural monuments, a shadow of her former self:

⁷⁷ Hugo, 'La Bande Noire' (Author's translation).

...Qu'on ne nous vante plus nos crédules
ancêtres!
Ils voyaient leurs devoirs où nous voyons nos
droits.
Nous avons nos vertus. Nous égorgeons les
prêtres,
Et nous assassinons les rois. —
Hélas! il est trop vrai, l'antique honneur de
France,
La Foi, sœur de l'humble Espérance,
Ont fui notre âge infortuné;
Des anciennes vertus le crime a pris la place;
Il cache leurs sentiers, comme la ronce efface
Le seuil d'un temple abandonné.

Quand de ses souvenirs la France dépouillée,
Hélas! aura perdu sa vieille majesté,
Lui disputant encor quelque pourpre souillée,
Ils riront de sa nudité!
Nous, ne profanons point cette mère sacrée;
Consolons sa gloire éplorée,
Chantons ses astres éclipsés;
Car notre jeune muse, affrontant l'anarchie,
Ne veut pas secouer sa bannière, blanchie
De la poudre des temps passés.

...Let us no longer praise our credulous
ancestors!
They saw their duties where we see our rights.
We have our virtues. We slit the priests'
throats,
And we murder kings. -
Alas! it is too true, the ancient honour of
France,
Faith, sister of humble Hope,
Have fled our unfortunate age;
Crime has taken the place of the old virtues;
It hides their paths, as the bramble erases
The threshold of an abandoned temple.

When France is stripped of her memories,
Alas! will have lost her old majesty,
Still fighting for some soiled purple trappings,
They will laugh at her nakedness!
We, do not profane this sacred mother;
Let us comfort her mournful glory,
Let us sing her eclipsed stars;
For our young muse, facing anarchy,
Will not shake her banner, whitewashed
Of the powder of past times.⁷⁸

Hugo's poetic entreaties to protect France's monuments achieved little traction, and two years later in 1825 he was moved to pen another piece, this time in prose, but again calling for change. In 'Note sur la Destruction des Monuments en France' Hugo begins by singling out Baron Taylor and Charles Nodier for neglecting various monuments in their survey of France's historical buildings and landscapes (an example of their survey can be seen in Figure 8). Hugo criticises them for disregarding buildings and ruins which lacked romantic appeal, and ones which restorers sought to modernise. Arguing that these monuments – the everyday fabric of France – may lack romantic appeal, but have value for both their age, history, and ability to tell the story of France's past.⁷⁹ These everyday buildings, would be what Alois Riegl a century later would classify as the *unintentional monument*.⁸⁰ For Hugo, these buildings can act as both a physical witness to what has transpired, but also through human perception and imagination, act as a cue for people to *mentally time travel* and thereby develop a sense of having witnessed that past. This, he believed, was key to building a sense of collective memory of the nation.

⁷⁸ Hugo, 'La Bande Noire' (Author's translation).

⁷⁹ Hugo and Smith, 'War on the Demolishers!', 226.

⁸⁰ Alois Riegl, *The Modern Cult of Monuments - Its Character and Its Origin* (1903), trans. Kurt W. Forster, 1982, 1–4.



8 Picturesque and Romantic Journeys in Ancient France, Picardie (Vol. 2): Roze (Voyages pittoresques et romantiques dans l'ancienne France par Charles Nodier, J. Taylor, et Alphonse de Cailleux: Roze), 1824. Source: The Cleveland Museum of Art, Gift of John Bonebrake 2010.603

In 'Note sur la Destruction des Monuments en France' Hugo continues to detail several buildings and locations across France which had fallen into disrepair or destroyed due to the actions of the Revolution, but also through the incompetency and neglect of the French people and lawmakers. Reiterating the importance of France's monuments as paramount to the national memory and glory of the people, Hugo uses impassioned language, as seen in the text extracted below, to describe the fabric as imprinted with the memories and traditions of France, and therefore anthropomorphising the fabric, as key witnesses to the glory that is France.

...Le moment est venu où il n'est plus permis à qui que ce soit de garder le silence. Il faut qu'un cri universel appelle enfin la nouvelle France au secours de l'ancienne. Tous les genres de profanation, de dégradation et de ruine menacent à la fois le peu qui nous reste de ces admirables monuments du moyen âge, où s'est imprimée la vieille gloire nationale, auxquels s'attachent à la fois la mémoire des rois et la tradition du peuple...

...Il serait temps enfin de mettre un terme à ces désordres, sur lesquels nous appelons l'attention du pays. Quoique appauvrie par les dévastateurs révolutionnaires, par les spéculateurs mercantiles, et surtout par les restaurateurs classiques, la France est riche encore en monuments français. Il faut arrêter le marteau qui mutile la face du pays. Une loi suffirait ; qu'on la fasse. Quels que soient les droits de la propriété, la destruction d'un édifice historique et monumental ne doit pas être permise à ces ignobles spéculateurs que leur intérêt aveugle sur leur honneur ; misérables hommes, et si imbéciles, qu'ils ne comprennent même pas qu'ils sont des barbares ! Il y a deux choses dans un édifice, son usage et sa beauté. Son usage appartient au propriétaire, sa beauté à tout le monde ; c'est donc dépasser son droit que le détruire...

...The time has come when no one is allowed to remain silent. A universal cry must at last call the new France to the aid of the old. All kinds of profanation, degradation and ruin threaten at once the little that remains of these admirable monuments of the Middle Ages, in which the old national glory was imprinted, and to which the memory of kings and the tradition of the people are attached...

...It is finally time to put an end to these disorders, to which we call the attention of the country. Although impoverished by the revolutionary devastators, by mercantile speculators, and above all by the classical restorers, France is still rich in French monuments. The hammer that is mutilating the face of the country must be stopped. A law would suffice; let it be passed. Whatever the rights of property, the destruction of a historic and monumental building must not be allowed to these ignoble speculators whose interest blinds them to their honour; wretched men, and so imbecilic that they do not even understand that they are barbarians! There are two things in a building, its use and its beauty. Its use belongs to the owner, its beauty to everyone; it is therefore beyond his right to destroy it...⁸¹

Hugo emphasises that the buildings belong to the nation (no matter if they are public or privately owned) and are part of the French national memory. As such, these buildings should not be demolished and replaced by new buildings. Abhorring this practice, Hugo refers to it as a form of degradation and memory loss. Imploring the French public to listen to the universal cry of the remains of Medieval France, Hugo emphasises the importance of collective memory in these passages, which would be developed a century later by fellow Frenchman, Maurice Halbwachs. Comparative literature professor, Nicolas Russell explains that:

A group's identity and existence depends on this particular collective memory of its own past: when the nature of a group's collective memory changes, the group itself ceases to exist.⁸²

⁸¹ Hugo, 'Note Sur La Destruction Des Monuments En France' (Author's translation).

⁸² Russell, 'Collective Memory Before and After Halbwachs', 797.

Russell's distillation of Halbwachs' theories can help to explain why Hugo, in the nineteenth century placed great emphasis on the protection of Medieval architecture, as to him, this was an object which was directly linked to the French collective national identity. To lose the architecture, the group (French society), its memory and its identity shifts and changes. To Hugo, the loss of France's architecture, is tantamount to the loss of French identity, a loss of what makes them French.

Emboldened by the threat of the loss of French memory and identity, it is in this 1825 article that Hugo directly speaks to the Ministry calling for a law to protect the historic monuments and objects of France. It took another five years before any real action was taken towards safeguarding France's monuments and required further political change, with the establishment of the July Monarchy after the July Revolution. Under the July Monarchy, in 1830 the Minister of the Interior proposed that a position as the Inspector-General of Historic Monuments should be created. The first post was assigned to Ludovic Vitet on 25 November 1830, and later reassigned to Prosper Mérimée on 27 May 1834. The Inspector-General of Historic Monuments was charged with the classification of buildings across France, and the distribution of funds for their maintenance and restoration. In 1840, the first list of historic monuments was compiled and published by the Commission which detailed over 1,000 historical monuments, most of which were buildings.

Concurrently, with the slow development of the Commission and its protection and conservation of historic monuments, the first archaeological and antiquarian societies were also being formed, whose members sought to preserve the historical artefacts and buildings of the nation. Hugo, like many of his contemporaries in these archaeological and antiquarian societies in France and across Europe, continued to deplore the neglect of historic architecture, in particular Gothic architecture.

Disconcerted by the lack of action in the protection of French monuments, Hugo penned another political opinion piece in 1832 entitled 'Guerre aux Démolisseurs!'. In the first sentence Hugo targets his disdain at the Commission and the restoration programme they were undertaking (see below extract). Prefiguring English architecture critic John Ruskin (who will be discussed in **Chapter 3**), Hugo deplores the restoration efforts, as they negated the age and historical value of the building, seeing their efforts as removing the patina which he saw as definitive evidence that the buildings were witnesses to history:

It must be said, and loudly, that this demolition of the old France, which we decried many times as 'restoration', continues with more tenacity and barbarousness than ever.⁸³

He later describes the erasure caused by restoration and destruction as a loss of France's memories, the story of the nation. Here Hugo's words echo those found in *Notre-Dame de Paris*, Book V, Chapter II 'Ceci tuera cela' where he compares architecture to a 'book of the human race':⁸⁴

...Every day many old memories of France are lost with the stone on which they were written. Every day we destroy some page of the venerable book of tradition.⁸⁵

⁸³ Hugo and Smith, 'War on the Demolishers!', 232.

⁸⁴ '...the great handwriting of the human race. And this is so true, that not only every religious symbol, but every human thought, has its page and its monument in that immense book.' - in Hugo, *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*, 218.

⁸⁵ Hugo and Smith, 'War on the Demolishers!', 233.

Throughout the article Hugo outlines his opinions about modern development destroying the memories of France. Hugo saw the forward movement of history, changes in architectural style, political upheaval, and development of technology all as enemies of the historic monument, leading to its destruction or neglect. He called this vandalism, and the perpetrating vandals were the rising bourgeoisie.⁸⁶

Hugo ends his tirade with a plea to the French people to call the government to account, which by 1831 had only recently employed Inspector-General Vitet and had not begun to implement a procedure to document and allocate funds for the historic monuments of France. His plea for the fate of the nation's monuments is detailed as something which should be undertaken for the posterity of future generations, insisting that the protection of monuments is one of public and national interest, to stave off further loss of memory and, therefore, their sense of nationhood.⁸⁷

Building upon the ideas of destruction and conservation which he had already discussed in 'La Bande Noir' and 'Notes sur la Destruction des Monuments en France', Hugo uses his historical novel *Notre-Dame de Paris* to further reiterate to the French public the impacts of destruction on the historic fabric of Paris and France, and in turn the impacts on the French identity. In *Notre-Dame de Paris*, Hugo dedicates a whole chapter – Chapter II in Book V entitled 'Ceci tuera cela' to the discussion of the impacts of not the French Revolution per se but instead the Industrial Revolution, primarily the technological advances of the period. This chapter, along with two others were not published in the first edition of the novel in 1831. Academics have identified historic rumours which speculate that Hugo 'lost' the chapters. However, it is more likely that he did not think that the chapters would be well received, and the book would not be published. Instead, these chapters were published in 1832 after the publication of his last article 'Guerre aux Démolisseurs!' and were likely his last-ditch effort to appeal to the French people against the destruction occurring to the historic cities and landscapes of France.

In 'Ceci tuera cela', Hugo reiterates the ideas espoused by Scott in his 1823 novel *Quentin Durward*. In the narrative, Scott depicts a scene where the character Galeotti Martivalle predicts the consequences of technology like the printing press, which would allow a stream of new ideas and science to enter the public discourse. Left uninterrupted and unbounded this would change "the whole form of social life; establishing and overthrowing religions; erecting and destroying kingdoms."⁸⁸ This technology Scott compares to a "young tree, which now newly planted, but shall, in succeeding generations, bear fruit as fatal, yet as precious, as that of the Garden of Eden; the knowledge, namely, of good and evil."⁸⁹ Hugo took Scott's ideas further exclaiming that "Printing will kill architecture"⁹⁰ and thereby be the tree which bears the fatal fruit to France's architecture. As through the dissemination of new ideas through written media like pamphlets, the printing press became the 'mother' of the French Revolution⁹¹ garnering greater support, and therefore leading to the neglect and destruction of France's historic monuments.

⁸⁶ Hugo and Smith, 'War on the Demolishers!', 240.

⁸⁷ Hugo and Smith, 'War on the Demolishers!', 246–47.

⁸⁸ Scott, *Quentin Durward*, loc. 2939 (ebook).

⁸⁹ Scott, *Quentin Durward*, loc. 2943 (ebook).

⁹⁰ Hugo, *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*, 215.

⁹¹ 'The invention of printing is the greatest event in history. It is the mother of revolution.' in Hugo, *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*, 223.

In two sections of 'Ceci tuera cela', Hugo explicitly discusses the impact on architecture as a direct consequence of changes in thinking and modes of expression, the Gutenberg printing press being the next iteration. The first of these sections discusses the changing form of human thought:

It was a presentiment that human thought, in changing its form, was about to change its mode of expression; that the dominant idea of each generation would no longer be written with the same matter, and in the same manner; that the book of stone, so solid and so durable, was about to make way for the book of paper, more solid and still more durable.⁹²

Here Hugo identifies the change in expression and hinted at the use of the book as a means of future conservation, as it is a medium which is more solid and more durable. Waxing lyrical about the greatness of architecture and its relationship to human thought throughout the centuries, Hugo then identifies that in the fifteenth century there was a shift:

Human thought discovers a mode of perpetuating itself, not only more durable and more resisting than architecture, but still more simple and easy. Architecture is dethroned. Gutenberg's letters of lead are about to supersede Orpheus's letters of stone. The book is about to kill the edifice.⁹³

Dramatically, Hugo describes this shift and competition between architecture and printing as a 'survival of the fittest', where each generation develops and replaces their predecessors' form of expression through new mediums which present new ideas. Hugo's fear however, was that through these modern technological and industrial developments, humanity, and most importantly for him, the French, would forget how to interpret, understand and interact with the old mediums (architecture) which speak of their identity and history, abandoning them, and thus through neglect and destruction cause the loss of French identity and memory. An illustration by H Scott, which was included in a later 1877 edition of *Notre-Dame de Paris*, illustrates the concepts of 'Ceci tuera cela' (see Figure 9).

⁹² Hugo, *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*, 215.

⁹³ Hugo, *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*, 223.



- 9 “This Will Kill That.” Illustration by H. Scott, from Victor Hugo, *Notre-Dame de Paris*, 1877 edition. The illustration depicts the book killing the edifice, in this case Notre Dame Cathedral. Source: Hugo, *Notre-Dame de Paris*, 1877, p. 227, reproduced in Camille, *The Gargoyles of Notre Dame*, 2009, p. 83.

Resigned to believe that his multiple pleas for the conservation of France’s architectural monuments were falling on deaf ears, Hugo sought to utilise the enemy (printing) to preserve the crumbling Gothic cathedral and buildings of Paris and France in print. Thus, as Minott-Ahl aptly analyses, should the buildings succumb to destruction, they would be universally accessible through the products of the printing press.⁹⁴

Printing, of course, did not kill architecture. On the contrary, printing helped to save Notre-Dame de Paris and other buildings throughout the country, as Hugo’s written word calling for conservation countered the Revolution’s written word which called for destruction. Whilst architecture no longer continued as the principal mode of creative and national expression, and as a repository of collective memory, printing did not diminish the importance and role of architecture and historic architecture to society. By engaging the reader’s imagination, Hugo was able to evoke nostalgia in French society, and thereby made the historic novel and other written documents an important tool to spur conservation of the built fabric of France. Hugo’s appeal for restoration did not fall on deaf ears. He, along with contemporaries in literature like Scott, and those in the antiquities, helped to remedy the plight of historic landscapes, architecture, and antiquities, articulating the shifting roles and understanding of these spaces and items in historical consciousness, and the interrelationship between people, place, and the past. Hugo emphasised that the national French identity and collective memory of society is imbued in the stones of the Gothic architecture throughout France, where the fabric itself could be used as a positive re-affirmation of the French history, memory and identity. In this way, through his creative literature and political writings, Hugo perpetuated the idea that buildings were able to undertake memory work for not only the individual but for the nation. Using the human tendency for nostalgia, Hugo helped to capture society’s attention and re-engage their memories, catalysing change, which in turn helped the development of the conservation movement in France.

⁹⁴ Minott-Ahl, ‘The Construction of a Cause’, 85.

Through their writings, both Scott and Hugo drew significant inspiration from antiquarian societies and the way they dealt with the concepts of inheritance from the past. They further developed a shared understanding and respect for collective national identities which are manifested through their surroundings, particularly through architecture. In doing so, albeit through very different routes, both authors bolstered the developing Conservation Movement in the nineteenth century, which was heavily championed by their contemporary, English architecture and art critic, John Ruskin. Scott and Hugo's writings, alongside others like Ruskin have been vital to establishing concepts of architectural memory and witnessing, as well as a tradition of place protection claims. Their works have actively helped to protect national monuments and sites, ensuring that they continued to act as cues for the national collective memory for present and future generations. For this reason, Scott and Hugo's greatest monuments are not only their literature, but also the places they helped to save across Scotland and France.

CHAPTER 3
JOHN RUSKIN

Ruins arise at the boundaries of cultures and civilizations—syncretic phenomena, their very appearance depends on an act of translation between the past and the present, between those who have vanished and those who have survived.

-- Susan Steward, *The Ruins Lesson*, preface

INTRODUCTION

The emergence of the Conservation Movement in the nineteenth century reflected society's changing relationship with its past. John Ruskin (1819-1900), prominent British art and architecture historian and critic, believed, much like the epigraph to this chapter, that ruins were a way to connect the past and the present, offering a peek into the past's culture and identity. Developing on the themes of nationalism and influence of Romantic literature in **Chapter 2**, **Chapter 3** explores the pioneering contributions of Ruskin. Whilst Ruskin's ideas on art, aesthetics, and conservation have been studied in depth, his work has not been specifically analysed in relation to his theories about the memory function of architecture and how this influenced the Conservation Movement. Ruskin's approach to memory can be understood in relation to four key concepts: the role of perception and imagination, memory within the natural world, aesthetic engagement with beauty and the sublime, and a system of knowledge accumulation and education to society. These approaches are analysed throughout this chapter, delving into the different facets of Ruskin's theories as expounded in three of his major publications, *The Poetry of Architecture* (1838), *The Seven Lamps of Architecture* (1849), and *The Stones of Venice* (1851-53). Believing that buildings sat at the intersection between the past and present, Ruskin saw that buildings provided a historical continuity which provided traces that act as evidence of history for society in the present to interpret. The human imagination and perception of buildings were to Ruskin, integral to understanding the evidence of the past, and influenced his ideas about the ability for buildings to witness and remember.

Interrogated through a contemporary memory science lens, the chapter draws parallels between Ruskin's theories of memory and architecture, specifically the palimpsest, and human memory processes, such as *memory traces*. Echoing the organisational framework provided by *semantic memory* (acquired or shared memories), Ruskin's theories identify ways in which we can (re)construct the past or simulate the future, creating navigable scenes that we can engage in. Through these physical *memory traces*, the chapter outlines how Ruskin's 'sacred stones' act as a memory cue, encouraging the viewer to engage their imagination and ability to mentally time travel to understand the importance of these buildings to society at a personal level but also at a collective level.

The first section entitled '**A Philosophy of Time**' introduces Ruskin's theories about time, positioning him adjacent to several of his contemporaries. Ruskin's object-focused approach to memory and history underpinned his theories about conservation and the relationship between time, the landscape, architecture, and the imagination of the reader and viewer. He believed that buildings embodied layers of time, and through careful observation and interaction, one could uncover the historical narratives and memories embedded within the fabric. Taking a decidedly more Kantian view of aesthetics than his contemporary Romantics, Ruskin's philosophy of time relates to Kant's mathematical sublime.¹ With beauty typically being associated with harmonious aesthetics and a pleasing composition, the sublime on the other hand is associated with a powerful, awe-inspiring sensation, which is overwhelming in its vastness.² Through Ruskin's perception of time, the history of the nation can be felt through the *memory traces* embedded in the building or ruin; where time is

¹ Immanuel Kant, *The Critique of Judgement*, Second edition, revised, trans. J. H. Bernard (Macmillan, 1914), <https://oll.libertyfund.org/title/bernard-the-critique-of-judgement>.

² 'A Philosophical Inquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful: With an Introductory Discourse Concerning Taste' in Edmund Burke, *The Works of the Right Honourable Edmund Burke*, vol. 1, The Project Gutenberg eBook of The Works of the Right Honourable Edmund Burke (Project Gutenberg, 2005), https://www.gutenberg.org/files/15043/15043-h/15043-h.htm#A_PHILOSOPHICAL_INQUIRY.

infinitely complex, its connection to past lives, memory and history beyond human comprehension and does not fall within the limitations of reason.

With Ruskin's philosophy of time as a key thread throughout the chapter, the subsequent section **'Sacred Stones: Literature, Architecture and National Identity'** analyses how Ruskin used his writing to create a record and conserve architecture; emphasising the importance of these buildings and landscapes to their national memories. In this section, Ruskin's three major publications are analysed thematically. The first theme relates to Ruskin's theory that architecture was the book of humanity, able to retell history and the development of national identity. Drawing upon the works of memory science scholars like Endel Tulving, this section examines how Ruskin's theoretical writing sought to engage the reader's imagination and ability for *autonoetic consciousness*, to mentally travel between spatiotemporal realms.

The second theme explored in this section is Ruskin's theories about memory and its relationship with beauty in architecture. The Picturesque provided another avenue for Ruskin to understand the significant relationship between the building, city and nation, and the spatiotemporal continuum in which architecture sits. Here, Ruskin's philosophy of time finds a new depth, as Ruskin believed the beauty of the building was not only in its architectural detailing and features, but also within the imbued memories and its relationship with time, through its fabric. The mnemonic power of architecture is a relationship that Ruskin believes is vast and complex, beyond human comprehension, and therefore sublime. This type of sublime is truly beautiful to Ruskin, a beauty which is referred to by academics as a 'philosophical beauty'³ – finding the beauty (harmony and aesthetics) in the sublime. Through the interplay of memory, imagination, and beauty, Ruskin sought to create enduring connections between society and their built environment.

The final section of the chapter entitled **'The Romantic Luddite: Ruskin and the Conservation Movement'**, focuses on Ruskin's involvement in the Conservation Movement and his critical views on the technological advancements and restoration practices of the time, both of which he thought were a threat to the past. He believed these two aspects of nineteenth century society to be a lie, fundamentally removing the physical manifestations of history, and society's link with their identity. The section also analyses his influence on contemporaries like William Morris and the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings (SPAB). A well-versed topic in conservation literature, Ruskin, Morris and SPAB sought to challenge the status quo of architectural practice, advocating for a change in attitude towards historic buildings. Their vision for conservation was a society entrusted with the care of artefacts and antiquities for the present and future, with a deep respect for the passage of time and the conservation of authentic traces of the past.

In this way, Ruskin's theories identify how buildings, through their relationship with time and evidence within the fabric, can do memory work. His theories highlight that there is an important psychological component which can be triggered through engagement with the building, and how the combination of all, can create an impetus to conserve.

³ Richard Gilmore, 'Philosophical Beauty: The Sublime in the Beautiful in Kant's Third Critique and Aristotle's Poetics', paper presented at Twentieth World Congress of Philosophy, *Aesthetics and Philosophy of the Arts*, 15 October 1998, <https://www.bu.edu/wcp/Papers/Aest/AestGilm.htm>.

A PHILOSOPHY OF TIME

Ruskin's affiliation with Romanticism is complex and the subject of significant scholarly debate. It is contentious, as he chose to position himself adjacent to the mainstream Romantic theories of his contemporaries. Whilst there are several tenets which he shared, Ruskin diverged in many ways from mainstream Romantics. Two key divergences which influence his theories on memory and conservation are a championing of truth and avoidance of Romantic embellishment for aesthetic beauty, and a moral and social commitment to art and architecture being a communication tool for the education and ethical improvement of society. His theories of the philosophy of time served both these divergences from mainstream Romanticism as it acutely focused on the microcosm of the object, the truth of its material; whilst also focusing on the macrocosm of a grander and sublime scheme – the relationship between time, the landscape, architecture and imagination of the reader and viewer. His theories followed in the footsteps of the Antiquarian movement, using antiquity and the environment as a communication and education tool for society, strengthening his claims about the importance of time and the ability to translate between the past and the present, through the object.

Romanticism emerged in Europe during the late eighteenth century, celebrating emotion, imagination, individualism, and nature. According to literary critic Michael Sprinker, the development of Romanticism can be seen as a result of society's profound dissatisfaction with reality.⁴ This is in itself not dissimilar to how Svetlana Boym describes nostalgia (as discussed in **Chapter 1**); developing as a reaction to the modern reality of society.⁵ In this way, Romanticism, was a type of nostalgia, a return to a less fragmented and changed world. The Romantic Movement sought to respond to the sociopolitical upheavals of the French Revolution and the values of the Enlightenment, but also emphasised nature over industry, which was a reaction to the technological advancements of the Industrial Revolution; it also finds strong precedence in the Antiquarian Movement.

The Antiquarian field in Britain dates to its founding father William Camden (1551-1623) with his magnum opus *Britannia*, an extensive survey of the national antiquities and chorography of the British Isles. However, it was not until the development of a historical consciousness in the nineteenth century, and increasing prevalence for nostalgia, that the Antiquarian Movement flourished. The Age of Enlightenment was a turning point in the Antiquarian Movement and its future relationship with the Conservation Movement, where the importance of the past was its ability to serve the present, as an artefact for not only memory but education. Furthermore, the importance of place and its relationship with time became a powerful association within the Antiquarian Movement, helping to shape the sensibility of the immediate and future generations in historical enquiry and conservation.⁶ Whilst historian Rosemary Hill has argued that Camden was the first to bring an evidence-based approach to national history, replacing the myths and legends of the medieval chronicles,⁷ the Antiquaries of the nineteenth century sought to understand the past, its historic identities, architecture, and landscapes to provide the foundations to craft the histories which told the story of civilisation.

⁴ Michael Sprinker, 'Ruskin on the Imagination', *Studies in Romanticism*, Victorian Romanticism II, vol. 18, no. 1 (1979): 117.

⁵ Boym, *The Future of Nostalgia*, xv.

⁶ Hill, *Time's Witness*, 106.

⁷ Hill, *Time's Witness*, 14.

Whilst not often directly associated with antiquarianism, John Ruskin was a prolific Antiquary in his own right, seeking like many others to preserve and understand the past through artefacts and physical elements in the landscape like ruins and buildings. Ruskin approached antiquity from a scientific standpoint, interested in the object (ie. architecture) and its ability to explain the material qualities of the past. His theoretical writings often followed the scientific and practical contributions of the field, through the meticulous and diligent documentation of architecture across England and continental Europe. These drawings (see an example in Figure 10), for Ruskin, acted not only as a record but a cue for future generations, should the architecture succumb to decay or destruction.

Born in 1819 to a wealthy Scottish family, Ruskin would become one of the world's greatest and most influential art, architecture, and social critics of the Victorian era. Although raised in a strict Puritan household and educated at home until his matriculation into university, Ruskin was exposed to literature, poetry and influential writers, by his father John James Ruskin, who sought to encourage Ruskin's literary ambitions, and provided him the freedom to appreciate the romance and excitement of literature.⁸ Ruskin's emphasis on the capacity of imagination in his writings and the ability to understand architecture within a spatiotemporal continuum, suggests a great affinity with the liberal education he received and exposure to writers like Wordsworth, Coleridge, Keats and Byron.⁹

In 1837, Ruskin matriculated to Christ Church College Oxford, during which time he published his first book, *The Poetry of Architecture*. Undertaking continental European tours with his parents every year, Ruskin was exposed to a variety of architecture and picturesque landscapes, which helped to establish his interest in the antiquities and a love for picturesque romantic ruins. With a modern historical consciousness, a burgeoning philosophy of time, and architecture's role in society forming part of his travel bureau, Ruskin approached travel to the continent in later years with a new found respect for the original style (Gothic architecture). He saw the Gothic, not only representative of the achievements of the artisan, but also of the nation. It is with this mindset that Ruskin penned *The Seven Lamps of Architecture* (1849), and later developed his rigorous study of Venice in his three-volume epic, *The Stones of Venice* (1851-53).

Ruskin's position on Romanticism was complex, both celebrating and criticising the movement. Whilst believing that the movement's emphasis on emotion and imagination was important, he argued that art and architecture should reflect the values and ideals of the society which created it, becoming mnemonic. According to Sprinker, Ruskin saw imagination as key to understanding the expanse of time and the past, penetrating to the true nature and essence of place, and society's role and connection with it.¹⁰ This true nature takes on one of Ruskin's diverging tenets from Romanticism – 'truth and avoidance of embellishment'. Here his theories rely on the human capacity to retrieve and reconsolidate *memory traces*. Through his writing, Ruskin equips the reader with the written cues, and encourages the reader to search for the visual cue in the imagery or environment. Contemporary memory science identifies this process as being facilitated by the *hippocampus'* ability to construct or reconstruct scenes based on cues and traces, known as *scene construction theory*. This process allows for the development of coherent spatial contexts in the mind, which the person can navigate to understand the mnemonic nature of the original cue. This is furthered by a cognitive phenomenon known as *boundary extension*, described by neuroscientists Eleanor Maguire and Sinead Mullaly.¹¹ *Boundary extension* explains that the cue (in this case the visual cue in the environment and/or Ruskin's writings) helps to actively extrapolate the scene beyond its physical boundaries resulting in an 'extended scene' through which the viewer can further connect and understand the building's importance within the environment.

⁸ Timothy Hilton, *John Ruskin: The Early Years: 1819-1859* (Yale University Press, 1985), 23.

⁹ Sprinker, 'Ruskin on the Imagination', 118.

¹⁰ Sprinker, 'Ruskin on the Imagination', 118–20.

¹¹ Maguire and Mullaly, 'The Hippocampus: A Manifesto for Change', 1182–83.



10 A study of capitals produced for illustrations for *The Stones of Venice*, highlights Ruskin's Antiquarian and scientific tendencies for documentation (John Ruskin, 1853).
Source: Victoria and Albert Museum (accession number E.72-1921).



- 11 The Glacier des Bossons, Chamonix (John Ruskin, date unknown). One of many Ruskin drawings which try to capture the vastness, complexity and sublimity of the alps. The sublimity of the alps is akin to his philosophy of time.
Source: Ashmolean Museum (accession number: WA.RS.REF.091).

For Ruskin, a building is living, and is capable of living for centuries. To him, ruins were the centrepiece of the romantic aesthetic, as they epitomised his ideas about time. Time, and the ability to witness it is infinitely complex, much like the vast alps of France and Switzerland encountered in *The Poetry of Architecture* (as captured in Figure 11). Ruskin's philosophy of time draws parallels with Immanuel Kant's aesthetic theories. Specifically, it is reflective of Kant's theory of the mathematical sublime. The mathematical sublime relates to the perception of something being boundless in extent, a magnitude large beyond comparison.¹² To Kant, in this situation the viewer's imagination strives to comprehend the object in accordance with the limitations of reason, but fails to do so.¹³ Ruskin's philosophy of time likewise deals with concepts which are beyond the limitations of reason. Time, and a building's ability to witness throughout time, is so encompassing that it is beyond our comprehension, inspiring a sense of awe and wonder. To Ruskin, stones are the touchstones to mnemonic architecture, the physical cues to memory. As cues to memory, they are significant to the individual and to the nation, transcending time and space, they act not only for remembrance, but as an allegory of redemption, redeeming the present, and in turn where the present redeems the past.¹⁴ Literary historian and theorist Ian Baucom describes this allegory as follows:

¹² Kant, *The Critique of Judgement*.

¹³ Hannah Ginsborg, 'Kant's Aesthetics and Teleology', with Edward N. Zalta and Uri Nodelman, *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, 2022, <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2022/entries/kant-aesthetics/>.

¹⁴ Ian Baucom, 'The House of Memory: John Ruskin and the Architecture of Englishness', in *Out of Place: Englishness, Empire, and the Locations of Identity* (Princeton University Press, 1999), 54–55.

For the pleasures of the future include both the pleasures of that which is yet to come and the anticipated pleasure of looking back on the present from afar, from a distance at which the present become an absent past that may be nostalgically recuperated.¹⁵

Ruskin believed that people can travel back through time, to inform the present and the future. By championing the past, he believed that it can help to redeem the transgressions of the present and future society. Because architecture is a reflection of its society. This belief has a future-oriented component, one which contemporary memory theory would closely relate to *mental time travel*, coined *national mental time travel*. This is a collective memory experience, which contemporary theorist Daniel Schacter and his colleagues explains occurs “when mentally travelling in time, people draw ‘on elements of past experience to envisage and mentally ‘try out’ one or more version of what might happen.”¹⁶ Doing so, one could travel across spatiotemporal dimensions, and understand the past to inform the present and future. Fellow neuroscientist Felipe de Brigard discusses this ability to draw on existing *memory traces* and ‘try out’ experiences as redeploying the same neural mechanisms that would be employed had we actually experienced what happened. As such, by engaging with architecture, the brain is able to substitute the experience as if it actually happened.¹⁷ Ruskin’s philosophy of time explains the temporal dimension in which architecture sits – a person can feel and experience time, the history and meaning of a nation as if it actually happened to them, through the building. In this way, through Ruskin’s philosophy of time, it becomes apparent how one can expect buildings to do memory work, and why the building and its fabric becomes sacred to understanding memory and national identity.

SACRED STONES: LITERATURE, ARCHITECTURE AND NATIONAL IDENTITY

Ruskin makes a novel claim about the significance of fabric which is dependent on the anthropomorphisation of architecture. Across his work he imputed that building fabric has the ability to bear witness to the past and thereby establish a spatiotemporal continuum that makes the past available in the present. Ruskin’s many trips to continental Europe and his deep appreciation for Venetian architecture and culture saw him use Venice as a template and benchmark for English cities.

Ruskin treated Venice metonymically, particularly the Ducal Palace (Doge’s Palace) in the heart of Venice, in St Mark’s Square (Figure 12). Explaining in *The Stones of Venice* that each city is built on the memory and legacy of its predecessor, Ruskin identifies that the greatness of Venice as a city, rests on its buildings, and the ability for them to be constantly reused and renewed, whilst always providing a palimpsest of memories of the past.¹⁸

¹⁵ Baucom, ‘The House of Memory’, 51.

¹⁶ Daniel L. Schacter et al., ‘Episodic Simulation of Future Events: Concepts, Data, and Applications’, *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences* 1124, no. 1 (2008): 70; Meymune N. Topcu and William Hirst, ‘Remembering a Nation’s Past to Imagine Its Future: The Role of Event Specificity, Phenomenology, Valence, and Perceived Agency.’, *Journal of Experimental Psychology: Learning, Memory, and Cognition* 46, no. 3 (2020): 564.

¹⁷ De Brigard, ‘Nostalgia Reimagined’.

¹⁸ Ruskin, *The Stones of Venice*, loc. 152.

THESE WALLS HAVE EYES AND EARS

I would endeavour to trace the lines of this image before it be forever lost, and to record, as far as I may, the warning which seems to me to be uttered by everyone of the fast gaining waves, that beat, like passing bells, against the STONES OF VENICE.¹⁹

Here, Ruskin, like his Romantic contemporaries, uses the written word to capture the reader's imagination and bring attention to the architecture, vanishing ideal of the city embodied in its stones. Understanding that architecture and the city were losing a cultural battle against technology and political change, Ruskin asks the reader to interrogate the memories and palimpsest of the building or object's fabric, to record the memory and history before it is lost or destroyed. Ruskin, true to Antiquarian ideology, uses both his writing and drawings to record and preserve the memory of Venice, should it fail to exist in the future.



12 The court of the Ducal Palace (Doge's Palace) (John Ruskin, 1872).
Source: Ashmolean Museum (accession number: WA.RS.REF.064).

It is helpful to think of Ruskin's architectural writing, particularly in *The Poetry of Architecture* and *The Stones of Venice* as travel diaries. In both books, Ruskin uses description and drawings to document the buildings and landscapes he explores. While *The Poetry of Architecture* focuses more on residential architecture of cottages and villas in England, France, Italy, and Switzerland, this is contrasted to his three-volume opus on Venetian architecture in *The Stones of Venice*. The scales of the architecture and landscapes differ between the two projects, but both use key literary tropes and drawings to cast the reader's imagination to these locations. Through the textual cues, the reader is invited to imaginatively join Ruskin's journey, and by doing so, travel in both time and space. The

¹⁹ Ruskin, *The Stones of Venice*, loc. 158.

reader is invited, in other words, to engage in a form of *mental time travel*. The text also engages the reader's third person perspective, encouraging them to examine themselves and society, and spur the conservation of memory, and by doing so flag their commitment to their own towns and cities, and Great Britain as a whole. This process holds true when analysed through contemporary memory theory. As theorist James Wertsch explains, "collective remembering inevitably involves some identity project – remembering in the service of constructing what kind of people we are."²⁰ Furthermore, if this is understood as a form of *national mental time travel*, psychology theorists like Meymune Topcu and William Hirst believe that if an individual can "draw upon 'specific' or 'phenomenologically rich' details from the national past, then one might be able to imagine a 'specific' or 'phenomenologically rich' national future."²¹ In doing so, Ruskin encourages the reader and society at large, to imagine the past, the city and their place within the time scale, in order to conserve architecture and the essence of the nation, its cities and landscapes for the future.

Ruskin does this in his writing to serve multiple purposes, but as an overarching scheme, he discusses Venice as an example of conservation of architecture and memory, but also as a cautionary tale for England. Relating the architectural history of Venice to its eventual moral decline, Ruskin finds ominous parallels with Victorian Britain,²² where he believes that the increasing influence of the Industrial Revolution and political milieu would see the degradation of society, and thereby as its reflection, architecture. The British Empire, was cautioned to learn from its grand counterpart, lest it share the same fate.²³

For this reason, Ruskin sought to define a national culture and architectural style for England. He saw that Venice's hey-day and success was rooted in the rebirth of culture during the Medieval period, and that the identity of the city was closely linked to the Gothic architecture of that period. As a result, the dehumanising of society and architecture that Ruskin associated with mechanisation and industrialisation, saw him champion a return to Gothic values and style, which he saw as representative of the morality of society. Broadly opposed to classical architecture, Ruskin saw that Gothic took the best from the past, representing an ideal which maintains proportions and aesthetic beauty, but is more attuned and in harmony with nature, allowing freedom and artistic creativity, individuality, and most importantly authenticity in the fabric of the building. In this way Gothic architecture fulfills an aesthetic doctrine which art historian George L. Hersey defines as 'associationism'.²⁴ By historically associating with the past through either its architectural roots in the classics, or its historical context through nature and artisan, humans are able to 'read' or 'communicate' with the building through its fabric.²⁵ This pre-figures and parallels with contemporary psychology and neuroscience, which understands this 'communication' as a psychological process through which the mind anthropomorphises the building in order to conceptualise the *memory traces* which people imagine and engage with, based on the physical cue in front of them.

²⁰ James V. Wertsch and Henry L. Roediger, 'Collective Memory: Conceptual Foundations and Theoretical Approaches', *Memory* 16, no. 3 (2008): 320.

²¹ Topcu and Hirst, 'Remembering a Nation's Past to Imagine Its Future', 564.

²² Michael Wheeler and Nigel Whiteley, eds, *The Lamp of Memory: Ruskin, Tradition, and Architecture* (Manchester University Press ; Distributed exclusively in the USA and Canada by St. Martin's Press, 1992), 3.

²³ Travis Kennedy, 'Here the Great Flaw in the Man: A Prolegomena to Ruskin's Marginalia in Viollet-Le-Duc's Dictionnaire Raisonne de l'architecture Francaise Du Xle Au XVIe Sicle for Contemporary Historic Preservation' (Masters Thesis, Columbia University, 2018), 51–52, <https://academiccommons.columbia.edu/doi/10.7916/D8CV61JX>.

²⁴ George L. Hersey, *High Victorian Gothic: A Study in Associationism*, The Johns Hopkins Studies in Nineteenth-Century Architecture (Johns Hopkins University Press, 1972), xix.

²⁵ Hersey, *High Victorian Gothic*, 2.

The Gothic Revival therefore provided a unique ability to re-engage with these values and aesthetics, and provided an avenue for Romantic writers, critics, architects, and artisans to oppose the fundamental changes posed by the increasing mechanisation and industrialisation of society. As an architectural movement, the Gothic Revival found further parallels with the revival of the Anglo-Catholic Christian faith, particularly in its reaction to the growth of religious nonconformism and declining authority of religious institutions.²⁶

In England during this time, an increasing appreciation of classical landscapes and the picturesque ruins of national antiquities provided a perfect catalyst for Ruskin's ideology. Ruskin valued ruins as they provided a physical intersection between the past and present. Contemporary memory literature helps to explain this intersection further, identifying that objects, such as architecture or ruins, not only serve as a physical cue – but are episodically bound to the formation of scenes and landscapes in human memory, and therefore are spatially bound not only to the past but the present and future as well.²⁷ Eleanor Maguire, explains that particular objects can serve as scene-defining cues, enabling humans to reconstruct the past, but also importantly through the process of *scene construction* to imagine fictitious scenes and the future.²⁸ Therefore, in the terms of contemporary memory science, Ruskin and his contemporaries called for the protection of historic places as important memory cues, which cognitively assist in the mind's (re)construction of *memory traces*.

Dwelling on the multiplicity and uncertainty of architecture and memory, Ruskin believed that by concentrating on what historic buildings and ruins revealed about medieval people, he could build upon society's antiquarian interest and emphasise the historical exploration and art history of the revival movement.²⁹ By situating new architecture within the Gothic Revival movement, at a point where the past and future are joined, to Ruskin, society could compose itself in the recollection of the past, and forward projection into the future. In doing so, he sought to define a common space of national, cultural memory for society, one which might survive and thrive after the destruction and restlessness of the discontented industrial age. Thus, the stones became sacred, fabric and spaces of national memory and meaning.

Through his three major architectural publications written during the first 'phase of crisis' between the late 1830s and early 1850s – *The Poetry of Architecture*, *The Seven Lamps of Architecture* and *The Stones of Venice*, two central themes emerge in relation to memory. The first is the ability to read the history and memory of the nation through architecture; and the second is how memory can be found in the beauty of the picturesque and decay. Both these themes provide clues to why there has been a continued expectation for architecture to be replete with memory.

Ruskin saw the city as a place of collective memory and national identity, a space where buildings were like texts – their layers becoming enduring pages on which the nation's history and memories were written and could be read. In terms of contemporary memory theory, the stones become mnemonic cues and prompt the reader to imagine the nation as an embodiment of its past. As theorist Jan Assmann would explain a century later, the stones have the potential to shape a nation's collective memory, but it does not have a mode of actuality until it interacts with the community and is

²⁶ David Spurr, 'Figures of Ruin and Restoration: Ruskin and Viollet-Le-Duc', in *Architecture and Modern Literature* (University of Michigan Press, 2012), 154.

²⁷ Andrew Hollingworth, 'Scene and Position Specificity in Visual Memory for Objects.', *Journal of Experimental Psychology: Learning, Memory, and Cognition* 32, no. 1 (2006): 66.

²⁸ Maguire and Mullally, 'The Hippocampus: A Manifesto for Change', 1182.

²⁹ Minott-Ahl, *The Architectural Novel*, locs 767–769.

incorporated into the national narrative.³⁰ Ruskin therefore sought through his writing to engage the reader's *semantic memories* (of the collective past events) and *episodic memories* (personal memories with the city or architecture) in the name of identifying and preserving a national identity.

Seeking to encourage remembrance of the past, but allow for forward projection to the future, was to Ruskin far more than an act to stabilise archives of personal memories. Instead, as Baucom explains, Ruskin's writing and influence on architectural practice attempted to construct a national library, a memory house – a place which would collect and preserve the nation's history and cultural identity.³¹ For whilst our memories might be inventions, if they can be precisely located in a place, like a city – that place becomes real.³² These places are important to the success of *mental time travel*, which requires two key aspects. Firstly, it requires an agent (human or non-human – like a building, or a book) which either intentionally or unintentionally partakes in shaping past events for the person undergoing *mental time travel*, and secondly this agent must act consistently over time, becoming a cue to help the mental time traveller understand time, space, and memory.³³

In *The Poetry of Architecture*, Ruskin tentatively lays the foundations for ideas which would see further development and fruition in *The Seven Lamps of Architecture* and *The Stones of Venice*. Written originally as serialised essays for *The Architectural Magazine*, Ruskin discusses architectural witnessing, collective memory, and identity through an analysis of the landscapes and residential architecture of England, France, Italy, and Switzerland. Early in the book, Ruskin identifies that architecture, landscape and national identity are inextricably interconnected:

We shall consider the architecture of nations as it is influenced by their feelings and manners, as it is connected with the scenery in which it is found, and with the skies under which it was erected, we shall be led as much to the street and the cottage as to the temple and the tower; and shall be more interested in buildings raised by feeling, than in those corrected by rule.³⁴

For Ruskin, as seen in the above extract, buildings are most significant when connected to feelings (and memories) of not only those who created them, but those who used and lived in them. The fabric was important in helping to translate the boundary between the past and present, and helps the viewer grasp the 'character', the *genius loci* and true essence of the place. The fabric provides a continuity of time, and a material quality of the past as physical evidence for the present and future. This 'character' for Ruskin was key to understanding the past, temporally orienting the viewer with physical cues which help to ground them in their context. This occurs by engaging the eye of the viewer (as their primary sense), and creating a 'unity of feeling' in which the mind is allowed to perceive the past and understand the continuity and historicity of time in a visual and imaginative way.³⁵

There are evident parallels here to the account of memory provided by contemporary memory science, where through the encoding and storage of memories, humans can experience and re-experience the past in different ways when exposed to stimuli and experiences, as the mind and the

³⁰ Merck et al., 'Collective Mental Time Travel', 286.

³¹ Baucom, 'The House of Memory', 52.

³² Truc, 'Memory of Places and Places of Memory', 148.

³³ Topcu and Hirst, 'Remembering a Nation's Past to Imagine Its Future', 566.

³⁴ Ruskin, *Poetry of Architecture*, 11.

³⁵ John Dixon Hunt, *The Art of Ruskin and the Spirit of Place* (Reaktion Books, 2020), 176.

person changes over time.³⁶ In this way, the fabric of the city and landscape can help one construct and re-construct a sense of self, in relation to community and nation and in doing so help to foster the ‘actor-agent’ role in society (often high entitative groups – those who have common attributes, origin and social history). This can help articulate shared goals and motivate collective action, such as the conservation of buildings, and by extension national identity.

The Poetry of Architecture marks the beginnings of Ruskin’s Romantic tendencies, anthropomorphising and personifying buildings, humanising them with the ability to remember. Ruskin identifies that fabric, not only the building, can possess memory – having had a life and witnessed long before it started life as a building, whether it be geological stratification witnessing changes in the environment, or growth rings in timber charting the aging of the tree. This helps to support Ruskin’s philosophy of time, the sublime concepts of deep time and the impact this has on the grander scale of memory in the built and natural landscapes. Engaging the reader’s capacity for spatiotemporal travel through *autonoetic consciousness* and their imagination, through a third person perspective, Ruskin, encourages the reader to identify themselves as a small component in the vast spatiotemporal continuum. As humans are but a small component in this continuum, Ruskin identifies that the fabric, and building has the capacity to encompass and span these multiple realms – relating to the past and present in one, whilst having the potential to appeal to a future self. The building is only able to be anthropomorphised and personified through its interaction with the viewer and society at large. Its ability to promote reminiscence remains dormant until this interaction, and does not activate its mode of actuality until it is perceived as a physical cue which in turn, engages recollection via *autonoetic consciousness*. Remaining dormant until interacted with by the reader, the writing becomes the non-human agent which acts consistently across time as a literary cue to guide and shape the reader’s imagination and mental capacities for *mental time travel* as they interact with the physical cues in their immediate, past, and future contexts.

A decade later, Ruskin would publish his seminal work on architecture – *The Seven Lamps of Architecture*. Structured around ‘Lamps’, Ruskin outlines principles which he believes comprise good architecture – memory being a significant one. Memory to Ruskin was not only a collective experience but a collective responsibility, relating as architectural historian Adrian Forty suggests “not just to the past, but is an obligation that the present has towards the future...”³⁷ Contemporary memory theorist Karl Szpunar explains that future thinking is possible in what cognitive neuroscientists believe is evidenced through four modes of prospective cognition in relation to *episodic* and *semantic memory*: simulation, prediction, intention and planning.³⁸ Szpunar describes that evidence shows that “the capacity to remember past events and imagine future events is closely related, spurring the suggestion that event details can be flexibly extracted and recombined from memory in the service of simulating new events that may take place in the future.”³⁹

This contemporary theory can be used to help understand what Ruskin highlights in the ‘Lamp of Memory’ – that architecture should be designed with an eye to the future, whilst reflecting the cultural and historical traditions of its society. Thereby, through architecture we can extract important lessons from the past, to inform the future, with the buildings serving as physical cues to these endeavours.

³⁶ Daniel L. Greenberg and David C. Rubin, ‘The Neuropsychology of Autobiographical Memory’, *Cortex*, no. 39 (2003): 689.

³⁷ Adrian Forty, *Words and Buildings: A Vocabulary of Modern Architecture* (Thames & Hudson, 2000), 211, on bookshelf.

³⁸ Karl K. Szpunar et al., ‘A Taxonomy of Prospection: Introducing an Organizational Framework for Future-Oriented Cognition’, *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 111, no. 52 (2014): 18415.

³⁹ Szpunar et al., ‘A Taxonomy of Prospection’, 18415.

This process relies heavily on the human ability to draw upon their *semantic memory* and engage with the physical cue of the building to harness their collective knowledge of the past to help envisage it, but also to envisage alternate outcomes and the future. Cognitive neuropsychologist Muireann Irish explains this process through the *semantic scaffolding hypothesis*, which emphasises the pivotal role that *semantic memory* has on constructive scene simulation. *Semantic memory* provides the organisational framework which guides the (re)construction of the past and simulation of the future, and realisation of spatially contiguous atemporal scenes.⁴⁰ In this way, Ruskin articulates as early as the nineteenth century, theories of *mental time travel* and imagination which draw upon key aspects of human memory, and highlights an understanding of the subjectivity of time and space in relation to humanity and the environment. Endel Tulving captures this phenomenon clearly in a 2002 article:

...time's arrow is straight. The singular exception is provided by the human ability to remember past happenings. When one thinks today about what one did yesterday, time's arrow is bent into a loop. The rememberer [sic] has mentally travelled back into her past and thus violated the law of the irreversibility of the flow of time. She has not accomplished the feat in physical reality, of course, but rather in the reality of the mind...⁴¹

In this way, we might say that Ruskin uses *authorial intervention* to engage the reader's imagination and *autonoetic consciousness* to undergo *mental time travel*. He anthropomorphises buildings as passive cues and witnesses to the past:

...that deep sense of voicefulness, of stern watching, of a mysterious sympathy, nay even of approval or condemnation, which we feel in walls that have been washed by the passing waves of humanity.⁴²

The above quote highlights that Ruskin believes that buildings can and continue to be witnesses to moments in time, telling the story of the past, and promote a collective sense of identity and heritage to the present and future. Importantly however, Ruskin emphasises that national memory lies within the architecture, landscapes and antiquities of the city and country.

The only influence can in any wise *there* take the place of that of the woods and fields, is the power of ancient Architecture. Do not part with it for the sake of the formal square, of the fenced and plated walk, nor of the goodly street or opened quay. The pride of the city is not in these.⁴³

Emphasising that the nation should have pride in its architectural monuments and its memory, Ruskin here argues against the conventional urban improvement schemes of the nineteenth century if it means the loss of historic fabric. The loss of memory is not worth the promised improved amenities these schemes were touted to contain. The pride of the city and the essence of the nation is not in these improvements, but in the fabric of the streets and buildings of the city, the fields, and ruins of the countryside. In this way, Ruskin lay the foundations for the English tradition in conservation. Sitting within his philosophy of time, Ruskin saw architecture and indeed antiquities in general, as providing a unique junction for society between its history, its present and its future. In the context

⁴⁰ Muireann Irish, 'Chapter 27: On the Interaction Between Episodic and Semantic Representations: Constructing a Unified Account of Imagination' in Abraham, *The Cambridge Handbook of the Imagination*, 448, 451.

⁴¹ Tulving, 'Episodic Memory', 1–2.

⁴² Ruskin, *The Seven Lamps of Architecture*, 186–87.

⁴³ Ruskin, *The Seven Lamps of Architecture*, 198.

of the political and social milieu of the nineteenth century, these historic objects and places were, to Ruskin, important to the recuperation of the past, the redemption of the present and saviour of the future.

In the well-known and often appropriated quote from *The Seven Lamps of Architecture* – “We may live without her, and worship without her, but we cannot remember without her”⁴⁴ Ruskin highlights that without the silent witnessing of buildings, providing a physical cue for humanity, society cannot use it as a cue to engage *autonoetic consciousness* to remember and build upon the richness of the past. As Maurice Halbwachs explained, memory is “a reconstruction of the past using data taken from the present.”⁴⁵ Cognitively this reflects a perceptual decoupling from their immediate environment (the physical cue) to a reconstructed perspective which can be veridical and based on semantic knowledge or experiences of the past, or an imagined counterfactual past. This process is dependent upon conditions of recall, and can be susceptible to several kinds of distortions, which can alter the recollection or reconstruction to a point where they do not reflect the original occurrence.⁴⁶

Convinced that Victorian Britain was morally and artistically declining to a point where memory and national identity were being lost, a theme which he would later continue in *The Stones of Venice*, Ruskin saw the increasing industrialisation reflected in how society appreciated and dealt with the past. Cities and the nation are developed and continually renewed upon this history and memory. In his critiques of England’s embrace of technology and modernity, Ruskin sees the cities and towns losing their poetic beauty – the light, the music, which made the city and nation vibrant, its memories becoming darkened.

In *The Stones of Venice* Ruskin continues his investigation of the city and nation, and the protection of memory. A three-volume treatise on Venetian art and architecture, he provides a deep analysis of Gothic architecture, drawing parallels to Victorian Britain. Ruskin wrote *The Stones of Venice* during a time of great political unrest, with the city under Austrian military rule after the fall of the Venetian Republic. He saw this political change as the destruction of Venetian cultural inheritance and the desecration of the city and its architecture by Austrian armies.⁴⁷ To Ruskin, the Gothic architecture of Venice represented the pure, uncorrupted culture of the medieval Venetian Republic. He parallels, the societal and political changes in Victorian England to those which occurred in Venice, seeing the Industrial Revolution and architectural conservation of the period as raping the cultural monuments and inheritance of England.

As he did in *The Seven Lamps of Architecture*, Ruskin emphasises his concern in the below quote, that the city and the nation are weakening, becoming bereft of their loveliness, the memories and cultural inheritance becoming faint – posing the question whether architecture is in fact just a reflection of society or a shadow of its former grandeur and nationhood.

Her successor, like her in perfection of beauty, though less in endurance of dominion, is still left for our beholding in the final period of her decline: a ghost upon the sands of the sea, so

⁴⁴ Ruskin, *The Seven Lamps of Architecture*, 178.

⁴⁵ Halbwachs as quoted in Truc, ‘Memory of Places and Places of Memory’, 148.

⁴⁶ De Brigard, ‘Reconstructing Memory’, 1.

⁴⁷ David Barnes, ‘Historicizing the Stones: Ruskin’s *The Stones of Venice* and Italian Nationalism’, *Comparative Literature* 62, no. 3 (2010): 251.

weak – so quiet, - so bereft of all but her loveliness, that we might well doubt, as we watched her faint reflection in the mirage of the lagoon, which was the City, and which the Shadow.⁴⁸

Part of Ruskin's fear in the destruction of architecture is the lost record of memory, the lost message of society, and the relationship of both in the continuum of time and space. Ruskin uses the stones of Venice, the Doge's Palace in particular, to employ the reader's imagination in order to rewrite the message about memory and conservation. Doing so, Ruskin, uses his written critique to emphasise the historicity of the buildings, and their relationship with our ability to sense time's evanescence and memory. Using the parable of the rise and decline of the Venetian Republic, Ruskin explains the significance that losing architecture has on the ability for society to learn from their inheritance. By locating buildings within the context of architectural history, Ruskin extrapolates on the role buildings have on the evolution of society, and in turn, how the present (nineteenth century) context could influence the future of the buildings, city, and nation.⁴⁹

For Ruskin, the building's role is two-fold. Not only does it provide protection, but it retells the story of the place, city, and nation through its fabric.⁵⁰ It is important to listen and engage with the building, to conserve it. Ruskin emphasises the importance and beauty of the *semeion* – the impression, fragments of memory which remain in the fabric to engage the imagination and memories of the reader. These fragments, many of which remained in churches, identified the importance of Gothic architecture to the nation – a mainstay to identity.

As a reaction to the industrialisation and destruction of cities and landscapes, the Picturesque movement of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries developed, to counter the places which were becoming devoid of beauty and meaning. The movement reflected the growing anxiety society had at the fragmentation of their surroundings, culture and identity, with an increasing loss of connection with the past.⁵¹ Whilst the Picturesque emerged in the seventeenth century as descriptions and visual representations of European tours of the Mediterranean, it was adapted in the late eighteenth century by artists, architects, and antiquaries to discuss national antiquities and ruins, which became part of the idealised English landscape and gardens of the century, and quintessential to English country character and identity.⁵²

To Ruskin, the Picturesque provided another avenue to understand the significant relationship between the building, city and nation, and the spatiotemporal continuum in which architecture sits. As discussed earlier, aesthetically, Ruskin saw that the Picturesque had a strong association with the Kantian aesthetic theories of the Sublime – which speaks of a greatness which is beyond all possible measurement and calculation. Locating this ideal within his philosophy of time, Ruskin considers the beauty of a building or ruin lies within its imbued memories and the building's relationship with time. A relationship which is beyond our comprehension – stretching across time and space, and therefore sublime.⁵³ In this way, the picturesque landscape became a place where the past and present, and even the future could mingle and interrelate with each other, through the building.

⁴⁸ Ruskin, *The Stones of Venice*, loc. 158.

⁴⁹ Wheeler and Whiteley, *The Lamp of Memory*, 63.

⁵⁰ Ruskin, *The Stones of Venice*, loc. 739.

⁵¹ Lamprakos, 'The Idea of the Historic City', 13.

⁵² Jokilehto, *A History of Architectural Conservation*, Repr, 16.

⁵³ Following in Kantian aesthetic theory of the mathematical sublime in Kant, *The Critique of Judgement*.

The concept of universal decay was one which Ruskin thought important to the picturesque and sublime qualities of architecture. This decay was significant as it represented the importance of age, and the passage of time.

Aphorism 30: For, indeed, the greatest glory of a building is not in its stones, nor in its gold. Its glory is in its Age...It is in [the walls'] lasting witness against men, in their quiet contrast with the transitional character of all things, in the strength which, through the lapse of seasons and times, and the decline and birth of dynasties, and the changing of the face of the earth, and of the limits of the sea, maintains its sculptured shapeliness of a time insuperable, connects forgotten and following ages with each other, and half constitutes the identity, as it concentrates the sympathy, of the nations.⁵⁴

In Aphorism 30 from 'The Lamp of Memory' in *The Seven Lamps of Architecture*, Ruskin poetically describes a building through personification, explaining that the age of the building is associated with its ability to witness, and therefore its ability to portray these memories to society. Through the building's position at the nexus of space and time, it can relate the national identity and qualities which Ruskin wants to reinstate in society. In this way, Ruskin believes that architecture is the key to faithfully remembering and reconstructing society from its moral decline. Architecture is in a unique position where it has physical longevity through space and time, able to stave away from forgetfulness. Architecture, he theorises, could curate our thoughts and memories and how we interact with the building, city, and nation overall, and in doing so, provide an apparatus which promotes cultural continuity and through human nostalgic tendencies, catalyses an urge to conserve the past.

Time itself would show that Ruskin's theories about age and its relationship to a building's beauty and significance influenced conservation discourse for generations to come. For a building is wise and knowledgeable in its Age, like "old, noble men".⁵⁵

In *The Poetry of Architecture* Ruskin introduces the idea that buildings have 'characters', and these characters are significant to the beauty and memory of the building. Another form of personification and anthropomorphising, according to researcher Gabrielle Ruddick, Ruskin indicates that a building possesses three types of characters – narration, personification and the picturesque.⁵⁶ Whilst all three characters are interrelated, each has a different impact on how we understand a building's ability to remember. The personification of the building with human qualities such as watchfulness and witnessing, provides the building with the ability to narrate and explain the memory; and as a result of these characters the building is picturesque – the age and the memory is beautiful.

Ruskin's notion of 'characters' is closely related to his philosophy of time, as he uses architecture as a cultural artefact which helps to anchor society in time, and provide a phenomenological richness to the recollection of national past events and identity – for we best form memories from visual cues in our landscapes and context. As architecture can both preserve the initial moment in time (through personification – witnessing), and accrues value and meaning (narration) through its aging, we are able to understand the significance of a building and what should be conserved. These 'characters'

⁵⁴ Ruskin, *The Seven Lamps of Architecture*, 186–87.

⁵⁵ Landow, *Ruskin*, 238; Ruskin's theories of age and beauty were influential on the development of Alois Riegl's conservation theory - where he too believed that 'old things should also look old, with all the traces of experience be they wrinkles, cracks, and wounds' in Matthew Hayes, 'On the Origins of Alois Riegl's Conservation Theory', *Journal of the American Institute for Conservation* 58, no. 3 (2019): 137.

⁵⁶ Gabrielle Ruddick, 'Character's Origin and Accretion in Ruskin's Lamp of Memory', *Change Over Time* 6, no. 1 (2016): 10.

challenge the viewer to understand time through the building and through its memory – an ability to tell and retell a story in a time continuum which outlives humanity.

It is in *The Poetry of Architecture*, that we begin to understand Ruskin's use of personification to engage the imagination of the reader to develop an emotional and personal connection with architecture, as a means to conserve it. Using memory as his linchpin, Ruskin explains how a building's memory is beautiful in its ability to straddle time and space and retell this story:

...we imagine it must be capable of the same feelings, and possess the same faculties, and, above all others, memory: it is always telling us about the past, never pointing to the future, we appeal to it, as to a thing which has seen and felt during a life similar to our own.⁵⁷

In the above quote, Ruskin uses the reader's imagination to interrogate the memory through a contrast between the physical evidence of reality (the fabric) and the *episodic* or *semantic memories* which the reader brings to the situation. To Ruskin, the ability for a building to tell us about the past was intimately related to the palimpsest of marks and stains on the surface of the building which can only occur through age. This age was beautiful through its decay – of not only the fabric, but also as a reflection of the decay of past societies – where the delight in memory could be viewed with pride in remembrance of the past.⁵⁸

In *The Seven Lamps of Architecture*, Ruskin further develops his ideas about memory's relationship with the beauty of decay through his description of the 'golden stain of time'. In 'The Lamp of Memory', Ruskin's ideas of the 'golden stain of time' and the picturesque through the 'characters' of the building, which he had foreground in *The Poetry of Architecture* are further developed:

...a time insuperable, connects forgotten and following ages with each other, and half constitutes the identity, as it concentrates the sympathy, of nations: it is in that golden stain of time, that we are to look for the real light, and colour, and preciousness of architecture, and it is not until a building has assumed this character, till it has been entrusted with the fame, and hallowed by the deeds of men, till its walls have been witnesses of suffering, and its pillars rise out of the shadows of death, that its existence, more lasting as it is than that of the natural objects of the world around it, can be gifted with even so much as these possess, of language and life.⁵⁹

Here Ruskin emphasises the importance of time in the understanding of memory and thus beauty. Personifying the building, Ruskin indicates to the reader that the building is able to take on the memory and identities of the individual (the deeds of men), but also evidences the memory and identity of the nation. This physical continuity between ages, is intended to safeguard against forgetfulness, however, it is at risk of being superseded by the structures of the new age.

Ruskin encourages the reader to interact with buildings as if they were a living entity – one you can talk and listen to. He utilises the reader's third person perspective to interrogate their context and surroundings, to understand the expression of memory and beauty in the universal decay of fabric and of the past. Ultimately, Ruskin uses his writing as a catalyst for society to conserve their buildings

⁵⁷ Ruskin, *Poetry of Architecture*, 92.

⁵⁸ Ruskin, *Poetry of Architecture*, 130.

⁵⁹ Ruskin, *The Seven Lamps of Architecture*, 187.

THESE WALLS HAVE EYES AND EARS

and cities, for he believes that they are mnemonic, evidence of their history, identity, and memories, and for this reason they are beautiful.

Whilst *The Stones of Venice* mostly discusses the architecture, society, and culture of Venice, Ruskin uses the city as an analogy and learning tool to engage British readers to interrogate their own context. As such, there are several moments within the three volumes where Ruskin continues his theories about memory and beauty.

Reiterating the importance of the palimpsest as fragments of time which are imprinted in the fabric of the building, even in a ruined state, Ruskin believes that the fragment is important to preserve, for it is a witness and testifies about earlier ages, and despite its desolation, its beauty and nobleness is a result of its traces.⁶⁰ The ruin is therefore picturesque not only as a result of its physical state in the landscape, but also as a result of its mnemonic value, its ability to retell the memories of past events and society through its fabric.

It is for this reason, that Ruskin throughout his writing reveals disdain for contemporary buildings, which are tantamount to the loss of memory and beauty in a city:

All the pleasure which the people of the nineteenth century take in art, is in pictures, sculpture, minor object of virtue, or mediaeval architecture, which we enjoy under the term picturesque, no pleasure is taken anywhere in modern buildings.⁶¹

Through an analysis of the psyche of nineteenth century society, and their interest in antiquities, Ruskin believed that this interest was squandered in the industrial age of mechanisation – which had altered the authenticity of the fabric, not only in the destruction of existing historic structures, but also in the inability to impart the hand of the creator, or the deed of man on the fabric. In essence, to Ruskin, as he elucidates in the quote, contemporary buildings would not have the ability to obtain the ‘golden stain of time’, and therefore are unable to remember, and be a physical connection to the past. Unable to sit within the spatiotemporal continuum, the contemporary building to Ruskin was incapable of witnessing, and therefore unable to provide society an opportunity to feel time and the history of the nation through the building. Thus, it was not beautiful.

⁶⁰ Ruskin, *The Stones of Venice*, loc. 8888.

⁶¹ Ruskin, *The Stones of Venice*, loc. 9794.

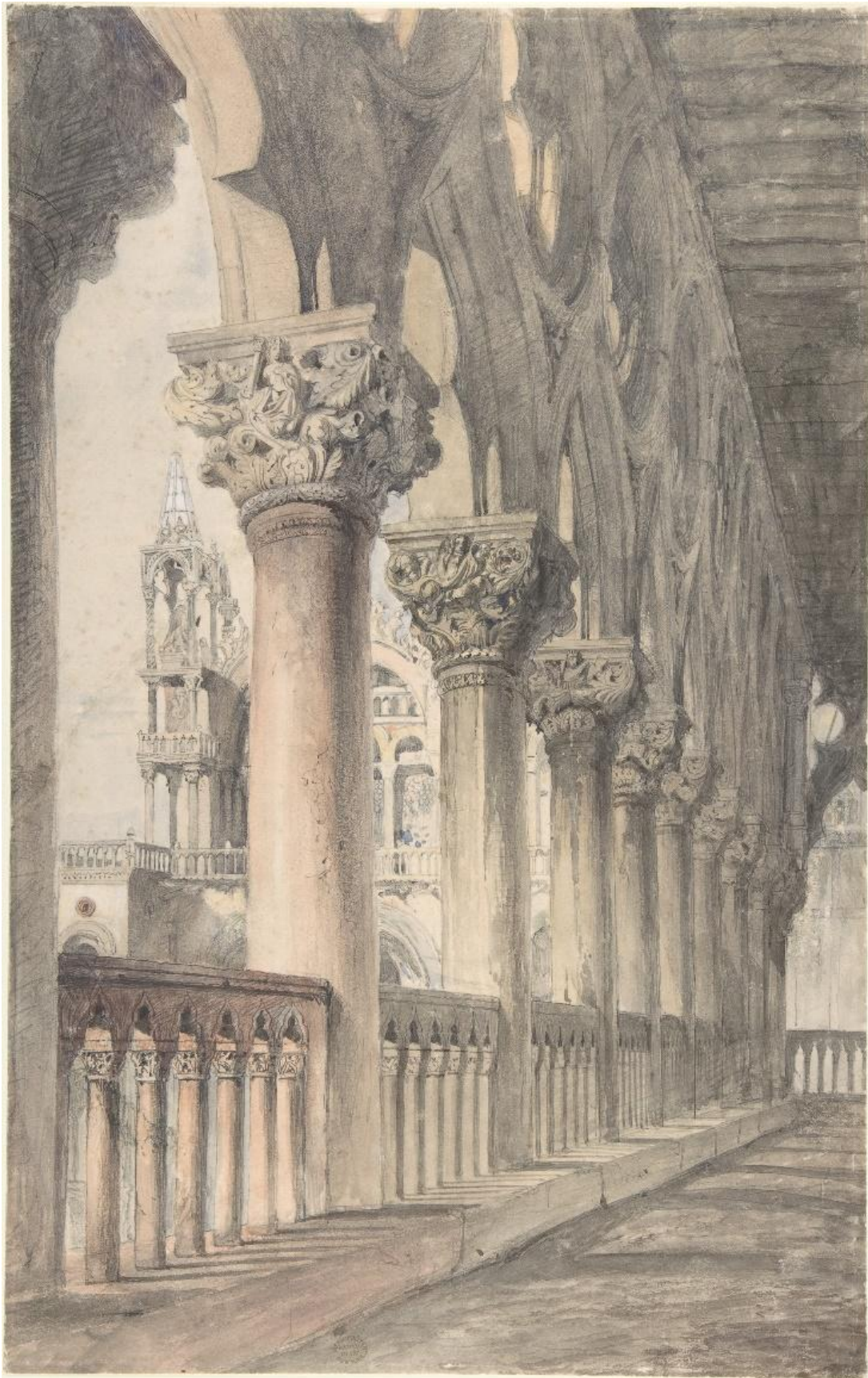
THE ROMANTIC LUDDITE: RUSKIN AND THE CONSERVATION MOVEMENT

Ruskin's derision for contemporary architecture, the development of technology and the 'restoration' efforts of the nineteenth century has painted him in history as a luddite. However, his opposition to the culture and architecture of Victorian England was rooted in his understanding of the significance of the inheritance passed down through generations in the built form, and the importance of conserving this fabric, as a means of protecting it authentically for the present and future to engage with.

Ruskin's disdain for contemporary architecture of the time came from a belief that technology was a threat to the past – the past that already exists, and the future's past. This belief is two-fold. Firstly, the rise of technology and contemporary buildings saw the destruction of existing buildings to be replaced with the new. This, Ruskin saw as removing the physical manifestation of history, and society's link with their identity and past. Secondly, and perhaps arguably the more important point for Ruskin, was that technology and mechanisation of the building would remove the craftsmanship of the artisan (builder, carver, carpenter etcetera) from the process, and in doing so, would remove the ability for the structure to act as a record of the craftsman, but also the ability for the building to weather through time and record time's passing in its fabric. The physical manifestation of history through the palimpsest parallels contemporary memory science's understanding of *multiple trace theory*, which identifies that separate memories act as layers within human cognition. These traces provide a connection to the past by storing and making available information about previous encounters.⁶² Researchers such as Felipe De Brigard argue that traces bring about a memory response, where the trace provides a causal chain and action which closes the temporal distance between the past and the present.⁶³ The palimpsest of the building parallels this, becoming the physical manifestation of the trace, which provides a cue that enacts the retrieval of the mind's *memory traces*, and allows the closure of the temporal distance through interaction between the present cue and the past (through memories and imagination). The removal of these physical layers was a conundrum which Ruskin saw as tantamount to the erasure of memory, and the ability to use structures to do memory work, engaging people's imagination and mentally travel into the past. It is for this two-fold rationale therefore, that Ruskin believed that a return to the historic Gothic forms of architecture and craftsmanship, would not only protect guilds and restore the craftsmanship and beauty associated with the middle ages (as seen in the architecture of Venice, see Figure 13), it would also help to redeem society from its moral decline (as indicated by its penchant for modernisation and technology) – as architecture is a reflection of its society and vice versa.

⁶² Robbins, 'Memory Traces', 76.

⁶³ De Brigard, 'Reconstructing Memory', 18; Robbins, 'Memory Traces', 80–81.



13 Loggia of the Ducal Palace (Doge's Palace), Venice (John Ruskin, 1849-50). Ruskin portrays the ornate detail of the craftsmanship in the shaft, capitals and ogival lacework.
Source: The Met Museum (accession number: 08.227.39).

Ruskin considered that the Industrial Revolution, particularly the construction of the railway, was destroying the English countryside and as a result its historic architecture, craftsmanship, and the identity of England. He believed that the detrimental effects of industrialisation were directly reflective of the impact of human activity, and the deterioration of the once harmonious relationship between humanity and their environment. Furthermore, he saw the construction of buildings from metal and glass, as dishonest and a problem which was not only practical in the construction of the building, but one which would be culturally harmful. According to Ruskin, the moment that iron replaces stone, he explains, buildings ceased to be true architecture.⁶⁴ True architecture being those structures which could relate on a personal level with the individual, and collectively as a nation – able to traverse time and space, and speak of English culture through their fabric and relationship with the city and landscape. Ruskin did not believe that iron had the ability to connect on a personal level with the individual and obtain a ‘golden stain of time’.

Here, Ruskin highlights the fragility of not only the building, but of memory too. If a building, or a city is changed so much, that it is no longer distinguishable, the building is unable to do the same memory works, its memory is distorted, lost. This parallels the cognitive process of ‘pattern completion’, which requires elements of the original memory (in this case the original fabric) to be intact to be reactivated, and reinforce the mnemonic content of the item. As such, the building is capable of *memory traces* through the palimpsest of its fabric. These traces are a physical reminder and representation of the past – whereby an individual event is manifested through the architectural style, fabric, technique and technology of the building, and traces of the occupant. In this way Ruskin’s sense of the building as a palimpsest allows the viewer to imagine the past through the archaeological remnants of the place. However, if these remains are lost, or too distorted, it becomes difficult for us to reproduce and imagine the past, to rework and ‘complete the pattern’ of the remains in order to perceive the past and make sense of it, and our place within it.

Ruskin raises his ideas about architectural dishonesty or deceptions in the ‘Lamp of Truth’ in *The Seven Lamps of Architecture*. In the ‘Lamp of Truth’, Ruskin identifies three categories of architectural deceit and the role of technology in each of them, these categories were: structural deceptions, surface deceptions, and operative deceptions. In this section he terms operative deceptions, as the use of cast or machine-made ornaments and elements within a building. To Ruskin, the use of metals or cast and machine-made fabric and structure was the grossest kind of dishonesty, and that it should be unconditionally rejected.⁶⁵

Linking this operative deception back to his theories of beauty, Ruskin sees beauty in architecture through the elaborate sculpture of its stone,⁶⁶ and therefore a building that is built with metal or man-made materials is not beautiful. Instead, Ruskin concedes that “metals may be used as *cement*, but not as a *support*.”⁶⁷ Insofar, that metal should only be used to help join materials (a nail, rivet, or angle), rather than be the structural or architectural element. The metal should not be visible.

Despite his resistance to new technology within architectural design and construction, Ruskin, like Hugo ‘conceded’ to the printing press, acquiesces to the use of the ‘enemy’ as a means for preserving places for posterity – if not in reality, in memory. Ruskin saw the potential for the new technologies of photography through the daguerreotype to record architecture which was threatened by destruction – either physically removed, or through restoration, which he believes was a lie equal to

⁶⁴ Ruskin, *The Seven Lamps of Architecture*, 41.

⁶⁵ Ruskin, *The Seven Lamps of Architecture*, 53.

⁶⁶ Ruskin, *The Seven Lamps of Architecture*, 54.

⁶⁷ Ruskin, *The Seven Lamps of Architecture*, 40–41.

destruction. Photography was for Ruskin the “most marvellous invention of the century; given us...just in time to save some evidence from the great public of wreckers.”⁶⁸ With the daguerreotype, Ruskin could analytically record a building in exacting detail, stone by stone, details in every capital, column, or façade – capturing the structure at a particular moment in time.⁶⁹ In this way, photography continued the great antiquarian tradition of drawing and documentation.

Ruskin’s belief that restoration was tantamount to destruction is rooted in his theories of authenticity in fabric. To Ruskin, the restoration of the nineteenth century erases a building’s uniqueness, the individuality afforded by the freedom of decoration and mark of the craftsman, as well as the palimpsest which is its physical witness to its development and events in both time and space. Every feature for Ruskin is irreplaceable in a building, as it signifies a relationship with time that is unique to each building.

Indeed, Ruskin saw that restoration was so destructive that it created new buildings:

it is *impossible*, as impossible as to raise the dead, to restore anything that has ever been great or beautiful in architecture. That which I have above insisted upon as the life of the whole, that spirit which is given only by the hand and eye of the workman, never can be recalled. Another spirit may be given by another time, and it is then a new building.⁷⁰

Here Ruskin identifies that restoration causes falsity – the fundamental purity and truth in the architecture or ruin would be lost, its history, its memory hidden or erased by the restoration and reconstruction. Restoration is to make anew. By restoring you are providing a new life, a new purpose, and completing the building in a new way which was not possible before. The spirit of the place, the *genius loci*, the mark of the workman and the inherent memory is altered. This spirit is a historicity which is embedded in buildings. Creating, like all other works of art, an effect as Ruskin explains, “on the mind and on the eye”⁷¹ as the fabric acts as a cue which the human mind can engage with and mentally travel in time to understand and learn from the past.

Ruskin’s theories about the spirit of a building, were elaborated in the twentieth century by theorist and philosopher Alois Riegl in his theories of ‘Kunstwollen’. Translating to ‘the will of art’, ‘Kunstwollen’ refers to the inherent creative drive and intentionality behind artistic production within a historical period. Riegl explains that artistic forms and styles like those found in architecture, were not arbitrary, but instead emerged as a result of the cultural and historical conditions of their time, and taught us about the past and intent of past societies. This he would term ‘historic value’ in the building.⁷² Ruskin explains in his nineteenth century context the same fundamental theory about historicity – that the spirit, or will of the building, is imbued within its fabric, the craftsmanship of its style which speaks of another time, which holds the memory of time passing. Ruskin’s studies of Venice, country England and other parts of Europe developed his keen interest in the conservation of ancient buildings, as it combined a nostalgia for the past, engaging with it in the present, so as to help the future understand the past and occupy the present authentically. Where Riegl would later create a values system which would define historic and age values,⁷³ for Ruskin both history and age were all encompassing and epitomised in historic fabric. To Ruskin, the restoration, which was being

⁶⁸ O’Gorman, *The Cambridge Companion to John Ruskin*, 174.

⁶⁹ Hunt, *The Art of Ruskin and the Spirit of Place*, 227.

⁷⁰ Ruskin, *The Seven Lamps of Architecture*, 194.

⁷¹ Ruskin as quoted in Hunt, *The Art of Ruskin and the Spirit of Place*, 175.

⁷² Henri Zerner, ‘Alois Riegl: Art, Value, and Historicism’, *Daedalus* 105, no. 1 (1976): 183, 186.

⁷³ Riegl, *The Modern Cult of Monuments - Its Character and Its Origin* (1903).

undertaken in Victorian England, ignored the historic value and changed this evidence of time passing within the fabric, altering its authenticity and its connection with the past and ability to encapsulate memories and act as a witness. This authenticity is the physical manifestation of the evanescence of the period, and its fleeting touch on the building, city, and nation.

Ruskin's ideology in relation to restoration and consequently conservation of England's architectural antiquities was a great influence on others in the burgeoning conservation and heritage field of the nineteenth century, including William Morris and the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings (SPAB). Drawing upon Ruskin's ideas, Morris intimated that "historic architecture displayed the spirit of the past"⁷⁴ and that if unchecked restoration and demolition were to continue, that society would be robbing future generations of art and architecture which was their duty to preserve. SPAB was formed to act as a watchdog and guardian for historic monuments, and attempted to catalyse a societal change to understand what historian Nikolaus Pevsner exclaims that "ancient buildings are not mere ecclesiastical toys, but sacred monuments of the nation's growth and hope."⁷⁵

Consequently, Morris and the SPAB manifesto developed upon Ruskin's theories, to explain that architecture was historical:

the untouched surface of ancient architecture bears witness to the development of man's ideas, to the continuity of history...not only telling us what were the aspirations of men passed away, but also what we may hope for in time to come.⁷⁶

For this reason, like Ruskin, Morris opposed the restoration of old buildings. SPAB's role in the nineteenth century sought to challenge the status quo of architectural practice throughout England and continental Europe, advocating for a change in attitude towards historic architecture. Morris and the members of SPAB, of which Ruskin was a key influence and member, believed that old buildings should be acknowledged as historical architecture, artefacts from past societies whose care was in trust to the present for future generations.⁷⁷ Morris explained in his 'Gothic Architecture' lecture of 1889, that society must be part of a change so deep that it rejects the contemporary architecture of the time as barren and fruitless and that true architecture is historic.⁷⁸

Despite his fervent objection to the contemporary architecture of the time, Morris would become, what Pevsner considers, a pioneer of modern architecture and a key influence on Modernism. This was rooted in his social philosophy, where he challenged social norms through art and architecture – seeking to make architecture a worthy object of the artist's and society's imagination as he believed it had been in the medieval period, rather than a soulless object. Furthermore, he thought architecture was something worth sharing, and therefore historic architecture (and art) was the best

⁷⁴ Andrea Elizabeth Donovan, *William Morris and the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings*, Literary Criticism and Cultural Theory (Routledge, 2008), 58.

⁷⁵ Nikolaus Pevsner as quoted in Robyn Christie, 'Old Fabric, New Fabric and the Problem of Authenticity', *Proceedings of Fabric: The Threads of Conservation*, no. Australia ICOMOS Conference (November 2015): 8.

⁷⁶ William Morris, 1884 as quoted in Forty, *Words and Buildings*, 74.

⁷⁷ Donovan, *William Morris*, 64.

⁷⁸ 'the style of architecture will have to be historic in the true sense...the spirit of it will be sympathy with the needs and aspirations of its own time, not simulation of needs and aspirations passed away. Thus it will remember the history of the past, make history in the present, and teach history in the future.' -- William Morris, 1889 as quoted in Forty, *Words and Buildings*, 198.

source for this – as it was an object which crossed spatiotemporal realms and could collectively speak to the nation of the past.⁷⁹

Ruskin's theories, whilst influencing the nineteenth century conservation movement greatly, differed from the mainstream ideas in several ways, particularly as they developed into the twentieth century. Whilst mainstream conservation theories, especially those of Riegl, often prioritised scientific approaches to documentation and conservation (not too dissimilar to the Antiquarian foundations), Ruskin whilst greatly engaging with the Antiquarian ideas of documentation, often emphasises the role of aesthetics and the moral responsibility of society in his conservation theories. Ruskin's philosophy of time, understanding of the complex relationship between architecture and historicity, and a deep appreciation of aesthetics, is integral to understanding his belief that people can connect with place (*genius loci*) through their imagination, engaging with it (and its memories), in order to conserve it. This complex relationship was to Ruskin, a moral responsibility for society, who have a duty to act as responsible stewards to their inheritance and environment. The shift in values which Ruskin saw developing in the move to industrialisation, highlighted the detrimental impacts on local and national memories.

The ability for a building, even a ruin, to remember the past, relate to the present and teach history in the future became a fundamental tenet in nineteenth century conservation theory. Romantics like Ruskin, Hugo, and Scott who have been analysed in **Part Two** of this thesis, saw the importance of the continuity of time and history through architecture, and therefore sought to protect and conserve it (whether physically or in posterity) through new means such as literature, painting, and photography. Doing so, they sought to change societies' relationship with the building and city, in hopes that the destruction of historic structures through demolition, neglect or misguided 'restoration' would be stopped. Through this effort, the Romantics hoped to foster strong social connections with the environment, especially national belonging.

The physical act of restoration became a contentious topic in the nineteenth century, creating a schism of scrape vs anti-scrape. Ruskin was a fervent anti-scraaper – believing restoration cancelled the documentary value of a building, removed the *memory traces*, becoming an unreliable witness to time, and incapable of conveying historical distance and time passing since its construction.⁸⁰ Whilst others like architect and conservator Eugène Viollet-le-Duc believed in the adaptation of architecture for its continued use, growing in its significance and relevance for future generations, becoming as Morris would argue "an organic continuity of community."⁸¹ However, the common thread between all Romantics, was the development of a historical consciousness, and catalyst of society to understand the significance of buildings as representations of not only personal memories, but the achievements of the nation's history and identity. In this way, the age of Romanticism, particularly during the first 'phases of crisis', became a pivotal moment in understanding memory and identity and its relationship with architecture and landscapes, and developing a new approach to the conservation of historic places.

The work of the nineteenth century in the realms of memory and identity in architecture proved fundamental to the development of conservation theories and techniques into the twentieth century. In the wake of the destruction of WWII, the writings of Ruskin and his Romantic contemporaries

⁷⁹ Nikolaus Pevsner, *Pioneers of Modern Design: From William Morris to Walter Gropius*, Rev. and expanded (Palazzo, 1936), locs 335–345.

⁸⁰ Kurt W. Forster, 'Monument-Memory and the Mortality of Architecture', *Oppositions* 25, no. Fall 1982 (1982): 9.

⁸¹ Glendinning, *The Conservation Movement*, 123.

resonated with the emerging conservation movements which sought to mitigate the adverse consequences of rapid industrialisation, destruction, and urbanisation. The historicity of architecture – its interrelationship with memory, society, and the metonymic nature of buildings, cities, and nations that emerged in the nineteenth century – became central to post-WWII efforts to rebuild cities. This shaped the moral responsibility to respect the collective memory, retell the past, and preserve a sense of temporal and spatial continuity from the present into the future.

PART III
MEMORY IN A POST-WAR CONTEXT

CHAPTER 4
AUTHENTIC FRAGMENTS

They will rebuild the ancient ruins and restore the places long devastated; they will renew the ruined cities that have been devastated for generations.

-- Isaiah 61:4 NIV

INTRODUCTION

The work of nineteenth century theorists and practitioners in memory, identity, and architectural conservation lay the intellectual foundations for the conservation theories and methodologies which developed in the wake of the widespread destruction of WWI and WWII. The emergence of the Conservation Movement during the nineteenth century reflected a shifting cultural consciousness and relationship with the past and cultural identity. In the aftermath of the World Wars, particularly in Europe, conservation assumed a new level of importance and a moral responsibility to rebuild the landscapes and memories of these cities and societies. Healing from trauma and destruction on a scale unseen before, conservation efforts extended beyond safeguarding these structures, to encompass their reconstruction and renewal. The post-war period marked a significant development in conservation theory and practice, where restoration of devastated sites was not only a historical and technical undertaking, but a conduit for the reestablishment and reaffirmation of cultural identity in response to collective trauma. Implicit in these efforts are reflected in the words of the prophet Isaiah in this chapter's epigraph – proclaiming regeneration, the restoration and renewal of the physical and spiritual fabric of societies devastated by war. Accordingly, **Chapter 4** focuses on the themes of authenticity in conservation, in relation to the reconstruction of important sites and cities after destruction. By dissecting the conservation and reconstruction of two WWII bombed sites – the *Frauenkirche* in Dresden, Germany and the *Royal Opera House* in Valletta, Malta, the chapter provides evidence of the importance of architectural cues in ruins and reconstructions, and how these fragmented structures parallel the psychological processes and memory politics connected with the post-traumatic context of war and reconstruction. Through these two sites, the second 'phase of crisis' is clearly identified. Both the *Frauenkirche* and the *Royal Opera House* highlight significant opposing forces for reconstruction and retention in current state. These opposing forces emphasise that destruction and changing political and social forces can impact how a community perceives memory, how it is reflected in their sense of collective national identity, and how we expect these destructed and reconstructed spaces to remember and do memory work for us.

Through the lens of contemporary memory science, **Chapter 4** reframes the controversies which surrounded the *Frauenkirche* and *Royal Opera House*. Through key theories in memory such as collective memory, imagination, *scene construction theory*, and *mental time travel*, the chapter analyses the relationship between the monument (ruined and/or reconstructed) with the identity of these cities. The palimpsest and cues in the fragmentation of architecture, in its destruction and ruined state, can allow for human consciousness to move across spatiotemporal contexts and use *memory traces* to construct scenes, imagine counterfactual situations and perceive a level of witnessing and latent memory in the building. Whilst both the *Frauenkirche* and the *Royal Opera House* were destroyed through enemy bombing and left as ruins for over 60 years after WWII, these structures provide evidence of the important influence that architecture, even in a fragmentary state, can have on the collective and national memories of society.

The first section of the chapter entitled '**Death and Rebirth: The Aftermath of War**' provides an important background to the post-WWII period, and the development of a new Conservation Movement, from the seven-point manifesto of the *Athens Charter 1931*, to the war efforts of the Monuments, Fine Arts, and Archives Section Unit (Monuments Men), and later to the creation of the International Committee on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) and the *Venice Charter 1964*. This section foregrounds the importance of place (*genius loci*) in the reconstruction of cities and its relationship with the identities and memories of its inhabitants and onlookers, and how the fragmentation of the architecture reflected the psychological fragmentation of society post-WWII.

The subsequent section '**Dresden: Frauenkirche**' analyses the significant history and collective memory of the *Frauenkirche*, and the debate over its reconstruction. Through the controversial reconstruction, the role of the German Democratic Republic (GDR) propaganda comes to light. The analysis questions *the Frauenkirche's* role as a modern ruin and the ideas of memory and authenticity in its destruction and reconstruction. The Allied bombing and firestorm of Dresden and destruction of the *Frauenkirche* acted as a catalyst for collective memory, becoming synonymous with Dresden and the atrocities of war. The Nazi and GDR propaganda was so effective, that to this day, the destruction of Dresden and the *Frauenkirche* has filtered through the *semantic memories* of not only Dresdeners, but the whole world. This section investigates the controversies which arose when the *Frauenkirche* was not prioritised for reconstruction, but left as a ruin – and how these ruins in turn became a significant monument to the memories of war and the identity of Dresdeners, posing a new complexity in the reconstruction of the building.

The last section of **Chapter 4, 'Valletta: Royal Opera House'**, explores the destruction of Valletta and the *Royal Opera House*, and the impacts of its ruin and reconstruction in comparison to the *Frauenkirche*, Dresden. The *Royal Opera House*, like the *Frauenkirche*, was bombed by the enemy (the German Luftwaffe), however, unlike the firebomb of Dresden, Valletta and indeed all of Malta were under siege for two years during WWII, the bombing of the city and subsequently the *Royal Opera House* were the worst days for the Maltese. This section analyses the psychological impacts of the siege and how this has influenced the community's response to the destruction and reconstruction of the *Royal Opera House*. Where Dresden had systematic propaganda sculpting the collective and *semantic memories* associated with the building, Malta did not. The ruin, unlike in Dresden, did not become a significant memorial to the atrocities of war or interwoven in the identity of the nation; instead, it became a scar in the urban landscape. The Maltese society felt the wounds caused by the destruction were not adequately healed, even after it was adaptively reused as an open-air theatre as part of Renzo Piano's redevelopment of the Valletta city gate and entry, 70 years after its destruction. Rather than a memorial to war, the *Royal Opera House* was a ruin for so long, that it became irrevocably associated with the image of the entrance to Valletta.¹

DEATH AND REBIRTH: THE AFTERMATH OF WAR

When nineteenth century conservation theorists like Victor Hugo, Walter Scott, and John Ruskin were writing, the types of warfare and casualties of war were vastly different to what would occur in WWI and especially later in WWII. As such their theories discussed the fundamentals of what it meant to conserve the fabric and identity of society, unawares of the impact and importance these theories would have for conservation efforts in the aftermath of war.

Whilst mechanised warfare began to emerge in the nineteenth century with the first machine guns, artillery fire, and primitive land and sea mines, generally military historians document that the destruction of buildings and monuments was not the primary aim, but rather acquisition and expansion of territories. The destruction of built fabric and loss of life was merely a consequence of this process. In the twentieth century, as a result of the increased technology and productivity that

¹ Guillaume Dreyfuss et al., 'The Royal Opera House in Malta - from Ruin Towards a New Reality', 2013, 8, https://www.academia.edu/3077169/The_Royal_Opera_House_in_Malta_from_Ruin_towards_a_new_Reality

resulted from the Industrial Revolution, the mechanisation of weapons and their destructive ability became a turning point in warfare, and changed the perception of both space and time.² Consequently, just as the nineteenth century theorists forewarned, the machine was able to kill architecture. Whilst in the nineteenth century they believed the printing press and technological advancements in materials and construction would cause the destruction of architecture in a philosophical sense, in the twentieth century the machine was indeed able to physically destroy architecture, memories and identities through war.

The architectural ruins which were created by bombings, artillery fire, and firestorms became a common feature of post-conflict environments, and served as harsh reminders of the physical and psychological impacts of warfare. Unfortunately, as historian Nicola Lambourne indicates, the legal provisions for the safeguarding of historic fabric, cities, and monuments had not changed since 1874, and the 1907 Hague Convention was simply a reworded version of the earlier Brussels Conference.³ Below are the key articles from the 1907 Hague Convention which discuss the protection of historic built environment during war:

Article 27: In sieges and bombardments all necessary steps must be taken to spare, as far as possible, buildings dedicated to religion, art, science, or charitable purposes, historic monuments, hospitals, and places where the sick and wounded are collected, provided they are not being used at the time for military purposes.

It is the duty of the besieged to indicate the presence of such buildings or places by distinctive and visible signs, which shall be notified to the enemy beforehand.

Article 28: The pillage of a town or place, even when taken by assault, is prohibited.⁴

What the Hague Convention did not anticipate, was aerial warfare and the indiscriminate bombing of entire cities causing the devastation of both life and buildings. Aerial warfare was regarded as an inevitable consequence of mechanised warfare; however, it became apparent that the distinction between a military and non-military target became increasingly blurred, and that Articles 27 and 28 no longer served their intended purpose.

After WWI, the League of Nations was established to promote world peace and address corresponding issues like labour conditions, the just treatment of native inhabitants, arms trade, prisoners of war, and the protection of minorities in Europe. As part of the League of Nations, the International Institute of Intellectual Cooperation (IIIC) was established in 1925, and would be the predecessor of UNESCO. Whilst the IIIC did not specifically deal with the conservation of built and landscape heritage, it was concerned with the protection of cultural heritage and facilitating cultural exchange through translation of historical texts, establishment of international conferences and publication of books and reports.⁵ Aside from the establishment of the IIIC, very little was formally undertaken on an

² Duncan, *Scott's Shadow*, 228.

³ Nicola Lambourne, *War Damage in Western Europe: The Destruction of Historic Monuments During the Second World War* (Edinburgh University Press, 2001), 38.

⁴ Convention (IV) Respecting the Laws and Customs of War on Land and Its Annex: Regulations Concerning the Laws and Customs of War on Land (1907), <https://ihl-databases.icrc.org/assets/treaties/195-IHL-19-EN.pdf>.

⁵ Jens Boel, 'The League of Nations: A Universal Dream That Has Stood the Test of Time', <https://www.unesco.org/en/articles/league-nations-universal-dream-has-stood-test-time-0>.

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international level during this inter-war period to address the impacts and damage caused by war on built heritage.

Despite this, there were still efforts locally and internationally to protect the built fabric and aesthetic values of cities prior to WWII. In 1931, acting under the aegis of the League of Nations, the First International Congress of Architects and Technicians of Historic Monuments was held, and a seven-point manifesto was adopted, becoming what is now known as the *Athens Charter 1931*. Prepared in the decade after WWI, the *Athens Charter 1931* detailed a series of principles or guidelines for the seven-point manifesto which sought to protect the memories and identities of nations through the built fabric.

What the *Athens Charter 1931* does not do however, is establish doctrines for the protection of cultural heritage before its ruination by war. Taking into consideration its preparation after the recent destruction and restoration efforts of WWI, this is a regrettable omission.

Shortly after the 1931 Athens Conference, in 1933 the Congrès Internationaux d'Architecture Moderne (CIAM) had their own conference on board a ship travelling from Marseilles to Athens. The proceedings of this conference were published over a decade later by Le Corbusier as the *Athens Charter 1933 (CIAM)* and shows that the Modernists, although predominantly interested in formalising the architectural principles of the Modernist Movement and urban planning, were remarkably sensitive to the ideas of cultural heritage, arguing that architectural assets must be protected, as described in the below passage:

The life of a city is a continuous event that is expressed through the centuries by material works – layouts and building structures – which form the city's personality, and from which its soul gradually emanates. They are precious witnesses of the past which...form a part of the human heritage, and whoever owns them, or is entrusted with their protection, has the responsibility and the obligation to do whatever he legitimately can to hand this noble heritage down intact in the centuries to come. ⁶

Understanding this human heritage, towards the end of WWII, identifying that there were no substantial protective measures for the collective heritage and memories of the war-torn nations of Europe, the Monuments, Fine Arts, and Archives Section program (MFAA) was established in 1943. The MFAA, otherwise known as the 'Monuments Men' were a group of 348 men and women from 14 nations, many of whom volunteered within the Allied forces to undertake a concerted effort to protect artworks, archives, buildings, and monuments of historical and cultural significance, which were under threat due to the destruction of the war.

It was not however until 1954 that an intergovernmental conference in The Hague outlined the full impacts and cultural damage that was incurred during WWII, resulting in the guiding document *Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict*. ⁷ This would be the first document to acknowledge the impact of mechanised warfare, and seek to protect cultural heritage, the collective memory, and identities of nations before the damage of conflict occurs.

⁶ Glendinning, *The Conservation Movement*, 202; Athens Charter (CIAM) (1933), <https://portal.uur.cz/pdf/charter-of-athens-1933.pdf>.

⁷ Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict (1954), <https://www.unesco.org/en/legal-affairs/convention-protection-cultural-property-event-armed-conflict-regulations-execution-convention>.

In 1964, at the Second International Congress of Architects and Technicians of Historic Monuments, the Congress revisited the *Athens Charter 1931* and codified the tenets of universal heritage, establishing the *Venice Charter 1964*. The *Venice Charter 1964* articulated conservation philosophy and would be the guiding principles in the post-WWII Conservation Movement. It continues to be the guiding document, with the *Nara Document on Authenticity 1994* expanding upon the *Venice Charter 1964* to elaborate on the ideas of authenticity and intangible heritage. What the *Venice Charter 1964* highlighted was the importance of place, the *genius loci*, in the reconstruction of cities and the impact this has on the national identity and memories of the inhabitants. These tenets are clearly stated in the preamble and throughout the Charter:

Imbued with a message from the past, the historic monuments of generations of people remain to the present day as living witnesses of their age-old traditions. People are becoming more and more conscious of the unity of human values and regard ancient monuments as a common heritage. The common responsibility to safeguard them for future generations is recognised. It is our duty to hand them on in the full richness of their authenticity. (Preamble)

A monument is inseparable from the history to which it bears witness and from the setting in which it occurs. The moving of all or part of a monument cannot be allowed except where the safeguarding of that monument demands it or where it is justified by national or international interest of paramount importance. (Article 7)⁸

As such, the *Venice Charter 1964* reiterates what Maurice Halbwachs established before his death in Buchenwald Concentration Camp in 1945, that architecture and cities are a form of memory, which is a “construct dependent on the social framework in which it is created.”⁹ The fabric and the *genius loci* of the city, are witnesses of history through their interconnectedness and unity with humanity, and as such are a collective memory of the framework in which they were established and live. The ruins of WWII were thus not just memories of the past, but a cradle for the future as well.

The *Venice Charter 1964* also highlighted the importance of authenticity. The *Athens Charter 1931* sought to achieve authenticity through specific techniques of conservation – primarily anastylosis, however, this was limited to the fabric. Although not often understood and taught in this way, the *Venice Charter 1964* also identifies the importance of authenticity as a form of intangible heritage – memory and identity. Whilst it is important to understand and maintain the ability for a monument to refer to specific points in time in history, it is also important to understand that the ability to appreciate the authenticity of the past depends on the observer and not the item being observed.¹⁰ This is dependent on the individual who retrieves the memory. They could engage in *mental time travel* and access *memory traces* to understand their personal memories about events in relation to the fabric or city. Significant to this process is also the role that *semantic memory* or shared knowledge (collective memories) has on the ability to understand the fabric and city. A person does not necessarily need to have their own *episodic memories* or experiences of a building or event, but having received the knowledge of what happened from others, can influence how they interact and understand what a building represents. This process is different for each person, and therefore

⁸ The Venice Charter 1964.

⁹ Stamatis Zografos, ‘Chapter 4: On Architectural Conservation’, in *Architecture and Fire A Psychoanalytic Approach to Conservation*. (UCL Press Chicago Distribution Center, 2020), 76.

¹⁰ Ciaran Benson, ‘Authenticity for the Visited or for the Visitors - Collective Memory, Collective Imagination and a View from the Future’, in *A Contemporary Provocations: Reconstruction as Tools of Future Making. Selected Papers from the ICOMOS University Forum Workshop on Authenticity and Reconstructions, Paris 13-15 March 2017*, ed. C. Holtrof (ICOMOS Paris, 2018), 8.

influences how they understand the perceived memory of the fabric and its authenticity. These memories could be shaped by external influences such as propaganda, as will be discussed later in relation to Dresden and the *Frauenkirche*.

The issue of authenticity then begs the question of reconstruction, and whether, like Ruskin a century before would expound, that the reconstruction is a lie. To understand the impacts of reconstruction and authenticity in a post-war context, is to understand the psychological fragmentation of war on society and the relationship this has with the built environment. When the brain activates a *memory trace*, it reactivates the previous reconstruction of that memory, bringing with it the potential to modify or alter the contents of the memory. This *memory trace* can be profoundly influenced by external factors like war, altering the cognitive state in which one encodes and retrieves a memory and how such *memory traces* are represented. As a physical object, buildings become a reminder and representation of the past, and of events. When a building is destroyed these memories are potentially fragmented as the representation no longer resembles the memory, altering the relationship that the person has with their surroundings, and with their identity. This can have a substantial effect on how a person remembers at the individual and collective level, as the building can be a stressor or trigger for traumatic memories, which may alter their interaction and perceptions of the building and its past, and can influence whether there is a push to restore, retain or memorialise a building and the events that surround its fragmentation.

It is this altered relationship, that is impacted by reconstruction, and brings into question authenticity, and how in this reconstructed state, buildings can be expected to continue to remember and do memory work for society. Applying Halbwachs' theories of social frameworks to the reconstruction of buildings, it can be surmised that the reconstruction does not reconstruct the past, but instead is a reconstruction in the present. As the social contexts of the present is different from that of the past when the memories and the fabric were constructed, these memories can never be constructed in the same way, and can never reconstruct the past as it was. As such, the social framework in which the fabric is associated, and in which it is reconstructed is fundamental to the process of recollection.¹¹ Cities need to reflect society's history and time to continuously reflect the meanings and values of their identity.¹²

Identity and collective memory for communities, particularly after traumatic events, has an analogical relationship with psychology – memory, perception, meaning, and values. The ability to imagine and reconstruct after trauma is an ability to think outside what is spatiotemporally possible in the past or the currently unperceived, and counterfactually think about what may have been.¹³ Undergoing this process, and through temporal distance, it is common that feelings of nationalism are enhanced, and that cities and monuments which are severely damaged are rebuilt from scratch as a way to heal the fragmentation of society's psyche rather than memorialising the events.

As such, the need for rebuilding, begins to outweigh the need for authenticity for the fragmented society which is affected. In fact, the conservation of ruins, the last vestiges, and traces of an event, can further perpetuate the trauma, preserving the absence of something which has vanished from the city forever. Such absences occurred in both Dresden and Malta. In Malta, unlike Dresden, the ruins of the *Royal Opera House* represented the perpetrating event, and significant loss of urban fabric,

¹¹ Zografos, 'On Architectural Conservation', 76.

¹² Guillaume Dreyfuss et al., 'The Architectural Practice of Regeneration', *Sustainability* 5, no. 9 (2013): 3903.

¹³ Benson, 'Authenticity for the Visited or for the Visitors', 2, 5; Abraham, 'The Imaginative Mind', 4199.

preserving the trauma of what was lost to the Maltese; whilst in Dresden the *Frauenkirche* ruin became a memorial for something more than just the loss.

Memory and time exist in a continuum. Without time, memory cannot exist. The social framework that Halbwachs discusses is related to both society and the viewer of the item, but to architecture and the city as well. Without the urban fabric or cultural landscape, there is a less tangible cue from which memory can be rediscovered. The human mind does not review the image of the ruin, but rather, anchors itself in a time, and seeks from there to recover, or reconstruct the memory. Time alone cannot do this, it requires interaction with a spatial context which is a continuous and unchanged medium (stable fabric), in order as Halbwachs explains, to retrieve yesterday's memories today.¹⁴ For a society and a fabric which is fragmented and destroyed by war, memory is contingent on both history and the collective knowledge which is garnered from our perceptions of the world and events. As such, the ruin becomes in its destruction and its potential reconstruction, the fabric through which memory and national identity can be secured, discovered, and rediscovered.

DRESDEN: FRAUENKIRCHE

DRESDEN AND THE FRAUENKIRCHE

Located in eastern Germany, Dresden was originally a Slavic village, and is associated with the eastward migration of the German people, in what is known as *ostsiedlung*. During the Early and High Medieval period, settlements of German farmers in the sparsely populated eastern lands was promoted, with large land grants gifted in areas of the territory of Saxony, a duchy of the Holy Roman Empire. Around the thirteenth century, the *ostsiedlung* moved into the region now known as Dresden.

Prominent nobility in the area, the House of Wettin, gradually grew in power within the Holy Roman Empire, and were invested with the Duchy of Saxony in 1423. The Wettin dynasty however split the vast Saxon lands into two ruling branches in 1485. The richer lands, which included Dresden, were given to the younger son, Albert, who became the Duke of Saxony. Albert chose Dresden as the seat of his Duchy. Despite being the capital of Ducal Saxony, Dresden remained a relatively small city, with most buildings constructed from wood, which were prone to destruction from fire.¹⁵

It was not until the rule of King Augustus II the Strong in 1697 that Dresden began its transformation into a celebrated city built of stone. Augustus II the Strong's reign became known as the Golden Age of Dresden, which saw him assemble the best musicians, artists, and architects to rebuild the city in a less readily combustible material – local sandstone – which became the key feature of Dresden's architecture.¹⁶

¹⁴ Halbwachs, *The Collective Memory*, 117; Zografos, 'On Architectural Conservation', 76.

¹⁵ Frederick Taylor, *Dresden: Tuesday, February 13, 1945* (HarperCollins e-books, 2005), 16, 20.

¹⁶ Jeffry M. Diefendorf, ed., *Rebuilding Europe's Bombed Cities* (Palgrave Macmillan UK, 1990), 170.

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During the Golden Age, most of the city's baroque landmarks were built, including the Lutheran church, the *Frauenkirche*. So famed was the city's landmarks and skyline that in the eighteenth century, the German philosopher Johann Gottfried Herder bestowed the term 'German Florence' – *Elbflorenz* – Florence on the Elbe (as seen in Figure 14), and this description has remained ever since.¹⁷ Dresden's significance to the Saxon and German identity steadily grew, and for over two hundred years attracted artists and lovers of culture not just from Germany, but from all over Europe, Britain and the Americas, the city becoming legendary, famed as a city of the arts, and one of the most beautiful cities in Europe.¹⁸



14 The *Frauenkirche* and city skyline c.1881 as viewed from the banks of the Elbe, epitomising *Elbflorenz*. Source: Deutsche Fotothek (df_pos-2016-a_0000298).

In 1722, during King Augustus II the Strong's reign, on the site of a demolished Gothic church, the construction on the Lutheran church, the *Frauenkirche* (Church of Our Lady) began. The *Frauenkirche* would become Dresden's Protestant cathedral, physical proof that the Lutheran faith was still dominant in Saxony, despite being ruled by a Catholic monarch.¹⁹

¹⁷ Taylor, *Dresden: Tuesday, February 13, 1945*, 30.

¹⁸ Diefendorf, *Rebuilding Europe's Bombed Cities*, 170.

¹⁹ When the Wettin Dynasty split in 1485, the elder son, Ernest and his Ernestine dynasty played an important role in the beginning of the Protestant Reformation in Germany. The descendants of the Albertine dynasty, starting with Augustus II the Strong, were Kings of Poland between 1697 and 1763, necessitating their conversion to Catholicism.

Influenced by the great domes of the time, architect George Bähr designed the *Frauenkirche* with a vaulted stone domed roof, with the aim of increasing its solidity. Bähr also designed the building in such a way that the four corner 'towers' were to absorb the horizontal forces transferred from the dome, as depicted in the photograph at Figure 15. This Bähr described as the 'pyramidal' effect, and believed that it allowed the building a much greater bearing capacity than those which were constructed 'perpendicular' (vertically).²⁰

In 1734, the year of Augustus II the Strong's death, the *Frauenkirche* was consecrated, and was said to have superb acoustics, even enticing Johann Sebastian Bach to travel from his home in Leipzig to give the first public performance on the church's organ in 1736.

²⁰ Wolfram Jäger, 'A Short Summary of the History of the Frauenkirche in Dresden', *Construction and Building Materials* 17, no. 8 (2003): 641–42.



15 Dresden's *Frauenkirche*, c. 1885.
Source: Deutsche Fotothek (df_pos-2022-b-0000007).

Although the building withstood bombardment in 1760 during the 7 Years' War without suffering substantial damage, or impact to its stability, in the first quarter of the twentieth century, the condition of the exterior surface indicated significant stress from the stone dome, the stability of which was totally dependent on a ring anchor installed by Bähr. As a result, extensive work was undertaken on the building between 1925 and 1932, with the architect Arno Kiesling preparing sets of relevant drawings based on earlier drawings and his own measurements.²¹ This process would prove fortuitous in the light of the destruction which would occur a little over a decade later.

On the third of September 1939, the United Kingdom declared war on Germany, two days after Germany's unprovoked invasion of Poland. As the war progressed, although Dresdeners believed their city to be a cultural safe zone, as a precaution against potential air raids, most of the glass within the *Frauenkirche* was bricked up from the outside, and the church's precious artwork and relics were removed into the building's cellars and crypt.

On the nights of February 13 and 14 1945, the Allied forces undertook a multi-wave air raid over Dresden, first led by the British and followed the next day by the Americans. Many Dresdeners took refuge in the catacombs adjoining the *Frauenkirche*, attracted by the sturdiness of the building during the first wave. The second wave hit the area of Neuer Markt, where the *Frauenkirche* stood, hitting harder and predominantly using incendiary bombs. These bombs set alight most of the buildings around Neuer Markt, and with perfect ground conditions, a firestorm was created, which sought out combustible prey amongst the nearby maze of streets and alleys.²²

Whilst no incendiary or high explosive bombs penetrated the *Frauenkirche's* dome, for unknown reasons, in the safeguarding of the building, a few windows on the northern side of the building, facing the river Elbe, were not bricked up. This is where the devastating firestorm was able to seek new territory. The intense heat of the fire which made its way through these windows into the building distorted and bent the crucial support structures and girders that surrounded the pulpit. It was however not the intense heat which caused the eventual destruction of the building, instead according to historian Frederick Taylor, the collapse was caused by the cooling and contraction of the fabric once the fire ran out of fuel and died:

As they started to contract once more, due to the drop in temperature after the firestorm had subsided, they [the girders] no longer properly fitted their supports. As a result, there was lateral pressure on the huge pillars that held up the cupola. One of these, to the southeastern side of the church, collapsed. The cupola momentarily settled, but then slowly began to subside to the southeast where the pillar was missing. The weight was too much for the remaining supports. The comparatively soft local sandstone fabric of the walls, meanwhile, had been severely weakened by the high temperatures – sandstone loses its integrity at around 700 degrees Celsius.²³

²¹ Ferdinand Vegas Lopez-Manzanares, 'La Reconstrucción De La Frauenkirche De Dresden', *Loggia, Arquitectura & Restauracion*, no. 8 (1999): 37–38.

²² Taylor, *Dresden: Tuesday, February 13, 1945*, 339.

²³ Taylor, *Dresden: Tuesday, February 13, 1945*, 340.

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The *Frauenkirche*, and much of the historic city centre of Dresden were reduced to rubble because of the air raids of February 1945, as seen in a comparison of historic photos from prior to, and after the firebombing (Figures 16 and 17). Many people believed that Dresden was a city which was strictly, if not exclusively, devoted to the arts and culture. As such, Dresdeners trusted that their city enjoyed 'special' status because of its cultural distinction and was protected from attack. Taylor explains, that the consensus of the German public and much of the outside world was that Dresden was considered to be an innocent city, and the bombings an outrage.²⁴ What has become clear however, throughout the decades as historians research and unseal records, that there is a contradiction between public perception and the military reality of the status of Dresden, which in turn has amplified the significance of the bombings for the collective memory of the city and the subsequent interaction with the ruins and reconstruction of the *Frauenkirche*.

²⁴ Taylor, *Dresden: Tuesday, February 13, 1945*, 225, 423–24.



16 Dresden, with the *Frauenkirche* prominently positioned in the Neuer Market, c. 1943, two years before the firebombing.
Source: Deutsche Fotothek (df_hauptkatalog_0312943).



17 Dresden, c.1947 two years after the firebombing, a city in ruins. *Frauenkirche* amongst the ruins.
Source: Deutsche Fotothek (df_hauptkatalog_0061511).

THE BUILDING, THE CITY, THE NATION

The story of the *Frauenkirche* and Dresden is a product of a deeply traumatic event which has caused substantial fragmentation in not only the architectural fabric of the building and city itself, but also a fragmentation of society, its memory, and its identity. The *Frauenkirche* was to Dresden, much like *Notre-Dame de Paris* was to Paris. The building was metonymical, representing much more than its built fabric, but also representative of Dresden and its people. The loss of one building therefore has a much greater impact, than just the loss of its fabric, as its destruction was tantamount to the attempted dissolution of the city and society. The destruction and trauma of the firebombing of Dresden has been a controversial subject since in 1945. The annihilation of the city caused a great loss of life, and was considered a late-in-the-game attack in the war, which was catastrophic to the city, and the population. The tragedy of the event made worse by the multitude of refugees who were sheltering in Dresden, fleeing from the advancing Soviet forces from the East.²⁵

The controversy of Dresden and the fragmentation of the city's fabric and its impact on society, and their memory and identity, is not solely the result of the aerial bombings per se. It is also a product and made more extreme by the trail of secrecy, deception and propaganda which developed through the Nazi ministry and later the GDR about Dresden and the response to the bombings. So effective was the smoke screen, that the truth of the events, the memory and the resultant fragmentation of fabric is still debated to this day.

Whilst most of the people of Dresden thought that their city was under cultural protection, according to historian Frederick Taylor, unbeknown to the population, on 1 January 1945, Dresden had been secretly classified as a military strongpoint, *Verteidigungsbereich* – a 'defensive area'. General Adolf Strauss was appointed by Berlin to be the 'commander in chief of the eastern fortifications' and creator of the 'Elbe line' which ran from Prague through Dresden to Hamburg.²⁶

Indeed, according to Taylor and other military historians, Dresden was a legitimate strategic target. Its many historic factories which once produced fine china and cameras, were manufacturing armaments with the help of slave labour. Dresden was a large industrial centre, and a crossroads for the movement of German troops, to the Russian front. So important was Dresden to the overall mechanisation of the German war, it is said that Hitler himself declared the city a fortress which was to be held at all costs against the advancing Soviet Red Army.²⁷

Within a couple of days of the attack on Dresden, before the *Frauenkirche* had completely fallen, the Goebbels-controlled press and propaganda machine – the German News Bureau (GNB) issued a press release which covered the Allied raids on Dresden and nearby Chemnitz. Whilst no casualties were reported, Taylor explains that Goebbels quickly set out to form the German propaganda offensive: Dresden was proclaimed as a city without war industries, a peaceful centre of culture, clinics, and hospitals, and the raid was an act of cultural desecration and wanton mass murder.²⁸ This propaganda

²⁵ Joseph Tustin, 'Why Dresden Was Bombed: A Review of the Reasons and Reactions', unpublished manuscript, Historical Division, Office of Information Service Headquarters, United States Air Forces in Europe, 11 December 1954, 1.

²⁶ Taylor, *Dresden: Tuesday, February 13, 1945*, 225.

²⁷ Tony Rennell, 'Hitler Was Evil. Our Bombs Were Not', *The Guardian*, 30 October 2004, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2004/oct/31/germany.secondworldwar>; Taylor, *Dresden: Tuesday, February 13, 1945*, 216; Tustin, 'Why Dresden Was Bombed'.

²⁸ Taylor, *Dresden: Tuesday, February 13, 1945*, 368.

built upon the preceding campaigns after other Allied bombings in places like Hamburg, all of which had a twin aim:

to label the Anglo-Americans as barbarians, but at the same time to minimise the morale effect on the German public of such increasingly frequent and severe devastation.²⁹

Following on from the GNB release on 16 February, on 4 March, Goebbels published his first official statement about the Dresden bombing in the weekly national Nazi newspaper *Das Reich*, the paper in which he made many of his most important and often ominous pronouncements. His article was entitled 'The Death of Dresden, a Beacon of Resistance' and provided a powerfully crafted political campaign labelling the Allies as barbarians, but rather than shielding the German public from the realities of the attack, chose instead to provide a frank portrayal of the enemy attacks on a German city:

The three air attacks on Dresden...have occasioned the most radical annihilation of a large, continuous urban area and, in relation to the number of inhabitants and of attacks, by far the most serious losses of human life. A city skyline of perfected harmony has been wiped from the European heavens. Tens of thousands who worked and lived beneath its towers have been buried in mass graves, without any attempt at identification being possible...³⁰

Goebbels' official statement was effective as it played on the specific parts of the Dresden identity and memory which had been fragmented by the attack: the physical fabric of the city – the skyline, and the claim that they were 'innocent', a cultural sanctuary. Doing so, Goebbels helped to perpetuate the myth. Whilst this obscured the truth of the events, Goebbels manufactured a clear national memory of the events. This national memory would have lasting implications on society's collective memory. Goebbels' manufactured memory whilst influencing perceptions of the crisis to this day, would find friction in the juxtaposition of the personal memories of the events, or learned knowledge from others who were there. In this way, the collective memory was a complex tangle of truth, propaganda and trauma, further fragmenting the delicate psyche and social fabric of society. The 'Final Report' which was the first official estimate of the death toll from the raids on Dresden, assessed the four weeks after the raids up until the morning of 10 March 1945. Under 'Injury to Persons' it stated: 18,375 fallen, 2,212 seriously injured, 350,000 homeless and long-term rehoused.³¹ These official numbers were quickly altered across the free and propaganda fuelled press, with six-figure numbers often quoted for the dead.

It is clear, that whilst the tide had turned in the war, Dresden became Goebbels last successful and lasting act of media manipulation. So successful, that the GDR, which controlled East Germany as a Warsaw Pact country, and closely aligned with the Soviet Union and its interests after WWII, continued and expounded on the myth that Goebbels started.

The politics of the GDR in relation to Dresden and the *Frauenkirche* is two-fold – the propaganda, and the concurrent lack of reconstruction of many of the city's historic buildings, including the *Frauenkirche*. The GDR position in the events surrounding the destruction of Dresden was originally focused on the USSR's position as a former ally to Britain and the United States during the war. In the first few years post-1945, there were no official commemorative gatherings, and instead, the

²⁹ Taylor, *Dresden: Tuesday, February 13, 1945*, 134.

³⁰ 'The Death of Dresden, a Beacon of Resistance' as quoted in Taylor, *Dresden: Tuesday, February 13, 1945*, 371.

³¹ The 'Final Report' as quoted in Taylor, *Dresden: Tuesday, February 13, 1945*, 351.

Communist controlled press issued statements which emphasised looking towards the future, rebuilding, rather than brooding on the catastrophic results which occurred under Hitler and the Nazi regime.³²

The GDR's tune soon changed once the Cold War was truly under way, with the *Frauenkirche* and Dresden, becoming a pawn in the propaganda. Historian Claudia Jerzak explains that during this period the GDR continued and expanded on the narratives which were churned out by the Nazis, further sustaining the image of the city and the identity of Dresdeners as innocent – accusing the Allies of targeting the “cultural possessions of the world, committing *Kulturozid*, cultural genocide.”³³ In retrospect the irony of this accusation is that the GDR proclaimed loudly about atrocities it too was culpable of.

The impacts of the Nazi, and later the GDR, propaganda campaigns fostered an inherited cultural *semantic memory* which was perpetuated from trauma and persistent propaganda. Halbwachs, explains:

memory is not possible without intergroup communications: individuals strengthen, modify, or forget memories through interaction.³⁴

Halbwachs' description of collective memory is what contemporary memory science would refer to as *personal semantic memory*. A sub-branch of *semantic memory*, *personal semantic memory* sits at the intersection of *episodic* and *semantic memories*, whereby a memory which is either collectively understood or inherited as general world knowledge, is keenly intertwined with personal experience as well as history and culture. Therefore, for Halbwachs the social construction of memories – or collective memory – is founded by a group's need for significance, poignancy. Playing on the heightened emotion and trauma of society after the devastation, by elevating the destruction of Dresden and the *Frauenkirche* from an aerial war bombing (as occurred in many other cities), to a catastrophic assault on their culture, heritage, and identity, the Nazi and GDR propaganda satisfied this need for poignancy, and provided an avenue for the ruined building to undertake memory work.

For Dresden, this significance, the poignancy they craved is the myth that they were innocent, a city of art and culture that was needlessly targeted and destroyed – causing a fragmentation of their fabric and identity. The idea of the innocent city myth is important as it reaffirms the contradictory historical evidence – that sociologists and historians Karl Siegbert Rehberg and Matthias Neutzner explain are actors which could “build on a deeply rooted local myth: the idealised self-image of a city of beauty and cultural value.”³⁵ In fact, the historical evidence suggests that Dresden was not as innocent as it believed itself to be, and the myth was in reality a highly successful propaganda campaign. This set of events resonates with what is known in psychology as *cognitive dissonance theory*, where there is a tension between our beliefs and reality. In these circumstances, people engage in various efforts to reduce the dissonance. The Nazi and GDR propaganda was one such effort to allay the dissonance between the reality of war, and what the people of Dresden were led to believe. The propaganda

³² Taylor, *Dresden: Tuesday, February 13, 1945*, 391.

³³ Claudia Jerzak, 'Memory Politics: The Bombing of Hamburg and Dresden', in *Catastrophe and Catharsis: Perspectives on Disaster and Redemption in German Culture and Beyond*, ed. Katharina Gerstenberger and Tanja Nusser (Boydell and Brewer, 2015), 55.

³⁴ Jerzak, 'Memory Politics', 55.

³⁵ Karl-Siegbert Rehberg and Matthias Neutzner, 'The Dresden Frauenkirche as a Contested Symbol: The Architecture of Remembrance after War', in *War and Cultural Heritage*, 1st edn, ed. Marie Louise Stig Sørensen and Dacia Viejo-Rose (Cambridge University Press, 2015), 100.

campaign infiltrated all elements of society and discourse, and altered the collective memories of the city, a nation, and to a certain point, the world.

Comparing Dresden to Blanche DuBois from *A Streetcar Named Desire*, American political journalist and novelist George Packer's 2010 article in *The New Yorker* explains that Dresden was indeed violated, but complicit in its own violation, and in doing so was desperate to recover its innocence through the romantic self-image of a cultural city, whilst conveniently avoiding the past that it would rather not discuss.³⁶ This analysis is supported by historical evidence prepared by the United States Air Forces Historical Division in 1954. This 1954 document identifies the events and decisions which lead to the bombardment of Dresden, including the fate which "placed Dresden in the very centre of the maelstrom – the last great railroad centre left in Germany..." where the remnants of the German Army would retreat, and was the location of the '...centre of communications of Germany's Eastern Front.'³⁷ Packer's analysis is an interesting one, as it highlights the contradictory narratives of Dresden. On the one hand Dresden and its people (the Blanche DuBois of the scenario) believe they are untouchable and better than others in the world, resting on their romantic self-image of beauty and culture. Like Blanche however, Dresden (the city) is not innocent in its own story, and whilst destruction by traumatic firebombing is something no one wishes for, its role as a strategic war hub and designated defensive area made it a legitimate target. By focusing on the propaganda rather than the contrasting documented historic facts, Dresden, like Blanche, creates an idealised identity, a veneer of cultural superiority and innocence to stem the insecurity of their situation, and avoid the truth of their past – both Nazi and Communist, which they would rather not deal with or discuss.

At the centre of this idealised identity were the Baroque landmarks which were the architectural legacy of Augustus II the Strong. One of the main Baroque landmarks, the *Frauenkirche* was regarded as a building of outstanding architectural value at the beginning of the twentieth century, and in this context, the building was charged with the national meaning as a famed unique German achievement.³⁸ Much like how Gothic architecture of France was irrevocably linked to the identity of the French in the nineteenth century, so too was the architecture of Dresden, in particular the *Frauenkirche* and its subsequent ruins. As Rehberg and Neutzner explained:

The history of the landmark Baroque building, of its collapsed remains, and of its re-creation is used as an empirical illustration of the institutionalisation of memory, of historical imaginations, and the diverse way in which historical continuities and breaks are constructed within the context of the larger Symbol of Dresden.³⁹

In this way, the *Frauenkirche* is metonymical for both its association with the culture and beauty of the city prior to the bombing, a significant part of the skyline of the 'Florence of the Elbe', but also with the post-war city and identity of Dresdeners – a ruin, a scar and memorial to the destruction of war. The ruin itself has a metaphorical power, symbol of collective memory – it can be passed down through generations, summoning loyalties and nostalgia, and producing powerful connections to identities and the lost physical fabric.

Over time, the inherited collective memories as perpetuated by the political propaganda conflicted with the personal memories of survivors. Dresdenders followed the official interpretation as far as it

³⁶ George Packer, 'Embers', *The New Yorker*, 24 January 2010, <https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2010/02/01/embers-2>.

³⁷ Tustin, 'Why Dresden Was Bombed', 4–5.

³⁸ Rehberg and Neutzner, 'The Dresden Frauenkirche as a Contested Symbol', 117.

³⁹ Rehberg and Neutzner, 'The Dresden Frauenkirche as a Contested Symbol', 112.

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could be accommodated within the reality of their own experiences.⁴⁰ However, eventually, the reality of the city became interlaced with the mythical, the historic Dresden, which no longer existed, and was unchallengeable due to its annihilation. In this way, nostalgia was used to cope with the trauma and fragmentation of their surroundings – and as such, nostalgia was a powerful catalyst to return to and reclaim what was lost. It is this nostalgia, which may have helped to catalyse the reconstruction of the *Frauenkirche* ruins, despite the ruins developing considerable importance to the community as an *unintentional monument* to the destruction of Dresden.

FRAUENKIRCHE: CONTROVERSY AND RECONSTRUCTION

After the end of WWII, now part of East Germany, Dresden's fate was left to the GDR and their *Leitbild* (Mission Statement) for urban construction, known as the Sixteen Principles. The Sixteen Principles were decreed in 1950 and were intended to be a counterproposal to CIAM's *Athens Charter 1933*.⁴¹ The first of the Sixteen Principles outlined that:

The city as a form of settlement did not arise by chance. The city is the richest economic and cultural form of community settlement, proven by centuries of experience. The city is in its structural and architectural design an expression of the political life and the national consciousness of the people.⁴²

Despite this statement however, the GDR chose to undermine Dresden's history, demolishing scores of remaining houses, nineteenth century buildings and baroque facades which had been gutted by the firebombing, but would otherwise have been conserved for eventual reconstruction and restoration.⁴³ The *Frauenkirche* was spared this fate, to suffer a different fate altogether.

The *Frauenkirche* became central to a controversial rebuilding programme – one where the GDR forced new development in the inner cities and did not delineate how far the historical character of the city should be respected or could be integrated with the planning and architecture of the new city and society. In Dresden, as historian Jeffrey Diefendorf explains, this programme would mean the disintegration of the historical city centre's street plan, removal of surviving historic monuments like the *Frauenkirche* and the destruction of the famous city skyline.⁴⁴

Architectural commentary from the time, indicates that the 1953 design competition entries for the reconstruction of Dresden were criticised for their plans in the historic area around the *Frauenkirche* and the plans for the *Frauenkirche* itself. One significant comment, by Kurt W. Leucht in the *Deutsche Architektur* captures the dissent of the time, the metonymical connection that the *Frauenkirche* had with the identity of Dresden, and the persistent ideology that the destruction of the church was a supreme loss and scar on the city, which needed to be rectified:

⁴⁰ Rehberg and Neutzner, 'The Dresden Frauenkirche as a Contested Symbol', 103.

⁴¹ Diefendorf, *Rebuilding Europe's Bombed Cities*, 193.

⁴² The Sixteen Principles of Urban Design (1950), https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=The_Sixteen_Principles_of_Urban_Design&oldid=1144544705.

⁴³ Diefendorf, *Rebuilding Europe's Bombed Cities*, 173.

⁴⁴ Diefendorf, *Rebuilding Europe's Bombed Cities*, 176.

The restoration of the architectural monument of the *Frauenkirche* is an obligation not only to Dresden but to the whole of progressive mankind.⁴⁵

Leucht's use of the word 'progressive' is telling, indicating the author's opinions regarding the GDR's policies, believing their programme not to be progressive. Unlike Leucht however, Emeritus Architecture Professor Oswin Hempel from the Technical University saw that the designs for the new Altstadt were established and unlikely to change. Rather than push against these plans, he presented studies about how to rebuild the *Frauenkirche* and adapt the GDR's planned new buildings to the sensitive area of the former historic city centre. Hempel's principles did not seek to restore individual buildings and facades which were destroyed, unless they were considered great monuments, like the *Frauenkirche*. Hempel advocated for the reintegration of such monuments into the historic urban context, to restore proportion and relationship of volume and space. The restoration of the *Frauenkirche* he believed was essential to the reinstatement of the famous Dresden city skyline.⁴⁶

Hempel's ideas were adopted by the Office of the Chief Architect of Dresden, after criticism from Berlin that they were unable to create a comprehensive reconstruction plan for the city.⁴⁷ However, one year later, this plan was abandoned, and the rebuilding of the historic area surrounding the *Frauenkirche* was postponed indefinitely. By 1959, a new controversial Seven-Year Plan was developed by the City Building Department to reconstruct the city centre, and completely disregarded all previous plans. Instead, the remaining areas of the former old town which were now repurposed for new GDR buildings, were designated as open spaces to be partially replanted, with other areas left as car parks. The restoration of the city's historic monuments, including the *Frauenkirche* were controversially no longer part of the GDR's plan for the city.

⁴⁵ Kurt W. Leucht in *Deutsche Architektur* as quoted in Diefendorf, *Rebuilding Europe's Bombed Cities*, 181 (Author's italics).

⁴⁶ Diefendorf, *Rebuilding Europe's Bombed Cities*, 181–82.

⁴⁷ Diefendorf, *Rebuilding Europe's Bombed Cities*, 182–83.



18 The *Frauenkirche* ruins c.1950.
Source: Deutsche Fotothek (df_haptkatalog_0105344).

The *Frauenkirche* was thus destined to spend the remainder of its architectural life as a ruin. All that remained of the church after the firebombing and widespread GDR clearance of the historic ruins of the city centre in the 1950s, was a large mound of rubble and the two surviving parts of the collapsed choir structure (Figure 18).⁴⁸ In 1962, by official decree, the *Frauenkirche* was designated a ruin, a memorial to the destruction of war. An official East German plaque at the ruins read:

To the tens of thousands of dead, and an inspiration to the living in their struggle against imperialist barbarism and for the peace and happiness of man.⁴⁹

In this way, the *Frauenkirche* became what Alois Riegl termed in 1903 as both an *unintentional monument* and an *intentional monument*.⁵⁰ By nature of its age and historic value, the *Frauenkirche* was an *unintentional monument*, this was further reinforced by its destruction, creating additional meaning to the events the building is perceived to have witnessed; it furthermore took on the role as a warning to the present and future generations. The ruins became an *intentional monument* the moment it was officially decreed as a memorial to the destruction of war. In doing so the *Frauenkirche* reflected the complexities and palimpsest of post-war Germany, as identified by Svetlana Boym:

⁴⁸ Rehberg and Neutzner, 'The Dresden Frauenkirche as a Contested Symbol', 115.

⁴⁹ Susanne Vees-Gulani, 'From Frankfurt's Goethehaus to Dresden's Frauenkirche: Architecture, German Identity, and Historical Memory after 1945', *The Germanic Review: Literature, Culture, Theory* 80, no. 2 (2005): 151.

⁵⁰ Riegl, *The Modern Cult of Monuments - Its Character and Its Origin* (1903).

I witnessed the moment of transition in which the unintentional memorial site that reflected multiple layers of divided and compromised German history was being transformed into an intentional monument that was to showcase a new version of old German history.⁵¹

As an *unintentional monument*, the ruins of the *Frauenkirche* were able to act as a portal for the viewer to psychologically engage with their feelings, and form an understanding of their selves within a spatiotemporally specific moment in history, examining their feelings about the past, present and future. For Riegl, such ruins represented a natural “dissolution of the complete”,⁵² and highlights that humans have a certain tolerance to inhabit fractured and fragmented worlds, and this is an authentic experience. As such, the *Frauenkirche* ruins not only represented a dissolution of the complete building structure, but mirrored the dissolution of the completeness of society – as they became increasingly fragmented after the war, and under GDR rule – separated physically, socially, and culturally from the remainder of Germany and much of the world.

For the population, in lieu of the city of Dresden, their beloved *Frauenkirche* became a symbol of their collective memories of the past – the events of the war and their present, as well as integrally linked with their identity. Firstly, as a reminder of their cultural and opulent past, but also as a visual memorial to the atrocities that they endured through the firebombing, and further perpetuated as a symbol of their innocence and outrage.

Initially after the end of the war, there were no visible signs of the meaning of the ruins, or noticeable memorials and protests. However, as the decades passed, the GDR propaganda circulated, the discontentment of the residents developed, and the ruins of the *Frauenkirche* took on further meaning. The ruins became a memorial and a place of annual vigils on February 13-14, marking the anniversary of the firebombing and dissolution of Dresden into GDR rule. These events would later serve as protests against the GDR policies and governance of the city and East Germany, as seen in Figure 20. As such, these events continued to extrapolate the ruin’s role as a mirror of the fragmentation of society, and a place in which society could reflect on their collective memory and identity (Figure 19).

⁵¹ Boym, *The Future of Nostalgia*, 78.

⁵² Hayes, ‘On the Origins of Alois Riegl’s Conservation Theory’, 137.

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19 Dresden's *Frauenkirche* a memorial to the atrocities of 13-14 February 1945, c.1977.
Source: Deutsche Fotothek (df_ps_0002822).



20 Dresden's *Frauenkirche* during memorial day march and protests c.1982 .
Source: Deutsche Fotothek (df_hpm_0029364_001).

At the beginning of the 1980s when the Cold War took on a renewed atomic arms race, this turn of events re-engaged the public on both sides of the Iron Curtain about the growing danger of military confrontation, and in doing so, symbolic places of wartime destruction like the *Frauenkirche* gained renewed attention.⁵³ It is perhaps this renewed attention that became a catalyst for the reconstruction of the *Frauenkirche*. In many postwar European towns, in particular German towns, the historic buildings were promptly reconstructed in the decade after WWII. Contrastingly, the *Frauenkirche* stood in ruins. Historian and German comparative literature professor Sussanne Vees-Gulani explained that:

Postwar Germany was thus characterised by efforts in both a psychological and physical reformation; Germans needed to reconstruct their cities, their state, and their identity.⁵⁴

This point is significant, as it highlights that the reconstruction of buildings was a means to reconstruct the German nation, society, and its identity postwar. Dresden, falling within GDR territory was significantly disadvantaged in the progress and claim for reconstruction, with the Soviet backed city prioritising other works over the reconstruction of historic buildings and therefore the repair to the fragmentation of society.

Although eventually, many of the significant buildings in the historic centre of Dresden were reconstructed, the *Frauenkirche* remained a ruin, providing a strong focal point and spatial experience of the town, as is evidenced in historical photographs (Figure 21). While the building found new meaning and memorialisation as a ruin, by leaving the building in ruins, the wound remained forever open, a physical reminder which continued to echo uneasily in the collective memories of Dresdeners and the world. The contradicting *episodic* and *semantic memories* of the events and destruction of Dresden fuelled the interaction with the ruins, whereby a new controversy would arise. Reconstruction would on the one hand help to close the circuit for the metonymy of the building and its representation of the city and identity of the nation. However, on the other hand it would also compromise the memorial as an authentic architectural fragment – a physical reminder of the event, and relic of WWII, from which future generations could interact and reflect.

⁵³ Vees-Gulani, 'From Frankfurt's Goethehaus to Dresden's Frauenkirche', 151.

⁵⁴ Vees-Gulani, 'From Frankfurt's Goethehaus to Dresden's Frauenkirche', 144.



21 The *Frauenkirche* ruins amid the rebuilding of *Neuer Market*, c.1968.
Source: Deutsche Fotothek (df_b0-pos-25_0000148).

In 1994, after the fall of the Berlin Wall, the Dresden City Council commissioned plans to reconstruct the *Frauenkirche*. Noting the significant memorial function of the ruins, as the physical manifestation of events which transpired, the overall vision for the site was to heal the wound and reverse the destruction. Consequently, the loss of the memorial appeal of the ruins was an accepted trade-off.⁵⁵ Psychological anthropologist Jason James explains that the reconstruction of the *Frauenkirche*:

embodies a wish to recover a state of wholeness projected backward to a time prior to loss, that is, 'old Dresden' and 'old Germany' before February 13, 1943 – perhaps even as far back as the Kaiserreich (the period between the founding of the Reich in 1871 and the beginning of World War I).⁵⁶

⁵⁵ Rehberg and Neutzner, 'The Dresden *Frauenkirche* as a Contested Symbol', 120.

⁵⁶ Jason James, 'Undoing Trauma: Reconstructing the Church of Our Lady in Dresden', *Ethos* 34, no. 2 (2006): 256.

In this way, the *Frauenkirche* was able to participate in what Boym refers to as *restorative nostalgia* – a longing for a previous self, reconstruction of a lost space, and ironically, ignorant of its nostalgic tendencies instead believing it a reconstruction of truth and tradition.⁵⁷ This parallels psychological findings of trauma survivors (like war survivors) who may seek to repress the traumatic event, in hopes of returning to a previous innocent state. By restoring the *Frauenkirche*, the hope would be that instead of the ruins acting as a memory cue, the reconstructed building would *be* the memory cue – of the opulent grand cultural city of Dresden of the past, not the destroyed city, the city behind the Iron Curtain. By reconstructing, they could forget.

The reconstruction however is also controversial, with some critics calling the rebuilding of ‘old Dresden’ and the *Frauenkirche* a second destruction.⁵⁸ This belief harks back to the nineteenth century conservation theories of Ruskin who believed that reconstruction was tantamount to a lie, that the authenticity of the fabric as a ruin is more significant than recapturing the memory of what once was.

The final reconstruction of the *Frauenkirche* however, attempts to achieve a balance between recapturing the past, whilst memorialising and respecting the ruin and historic fabric. This was partly achievable due to the forward thinking of conservationists in the 1950s and 1960s, who secured the *Frauenkirche* site, and carefully catalogued all the stones so that if in the future the building was reconstructed, it could be faithfully reconstructed via anastylosis, in keeping with the principles of the *Athens Charter 1931*. In doing so, the *Frauenkirche* had:

8,390 pieces of the façade, interior and roof have been recovered, representing 25% of the missing outer skin of the church. To this percentage must be added the remaining walls of the original church that were still standing, and the almost 100,000 stones recovered from the interior of the walls. 62% of these pieces underwent considerable treatment and repair, 27% received sanitation and improvement treatment, and only 11% survived the collapse and weathering unscathed.⁵⁹

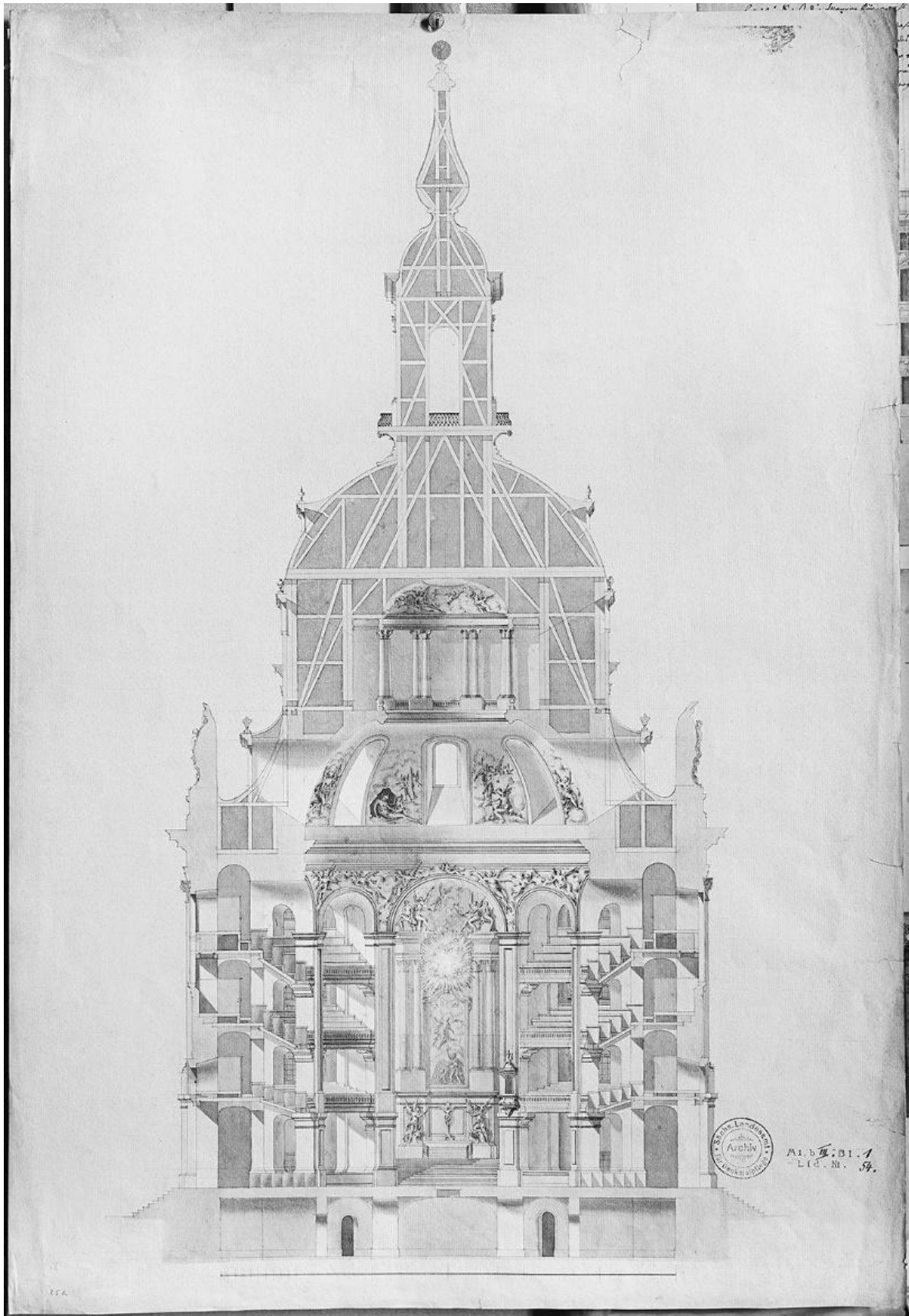
In addition to this, the survey plans of the building from the stabilisation work in the 1920s and 1930s (Figure 22) provided a thorough documentation of the building, and formed the basis of the reconstruction, to ensure authenticity to the historic structure. Through this methodology, the reconstructed building could act as a tangible, three-dimensional surrogate for the original *Frauenkirche*, its construction informed by archaeological, archival and literary evidence.⁶⁰ Crucially, by incorporating as many original stones as possible, the reconstructed building would be able to prominently feature the ruins, which were left with their charred patina from the firebombing. In this way the reconstructed building could serve as a memory cue and undertake memory work from multiple temporal dimensions – the original building, the historic events that befell the structure, and the subsequent social connection and interaction associated with the ruins.

⁵⁷ Boym, *The Future of Nostalgia*, xviii.

⁵⁸ James, ‘Undoing Trauma’, 253.

⁵⁹ Lopez-Manzanares, ‘La Reconstrucción De La Frauenkirche De Dresden’, 50 (Author’s translation).

⁶⁰ Rudy Koshar, *From Monuments to Traces: Artifacts of German Memory, 1870-1990*, Weimar and Now 24 (University of California Press, 2000), 162.



22 Section through the *Frauenkirche* drawn as part of the c.1933 survey of the building. These drawings were crucial to the reconstruction of the building in the latter half of the twentieth century. Source: Deutsche Fotothek (df_hauptkatalog_0050880).

The reconstruction of the *Frauenkirche* was therefore as Rehberg and Neutzner explain, an important example of the tension between the demands for authenticity and historical continuity in the fabric and spirit of the place, versus the recreation of a past version, clinging to traces of the past pretending to be the original building.⁶¹

In its ruined form, the building was a physical reminder of the fragmentation of the city, the people and identity of Dresdeners and Germany after WWII, and particularly as a result of the GDR in East Germany. The ruin was an explicit memory cue of the destruction of war, but also remained a contentious reminder of the ‘innocence’ of the city – and an open wound which was fuelled by the disparaging propaganda and collective memories being fed through official channels that did not necessarily align with the memories of the survivors. This however meant, that the collective memory, the shared history which was passed on to the next generation was one built on this propaganda, forever altering the interaction with the ruin – making it a place of negativity.

In its reconstruction, the *Frauenkirche* could act as both a memory cue to the distant past – the ‘old Dresden’, as well as provide evidence of the events of WWII, and honour the significance of the ruin and memory of the historic event and atrocity of the firebombing. Through its charred stones which have been integrated into the reconstructed building, the building itself becomes a palimpsest of memories. One can still engage in *scene construction*, mentally reconstructing the pre-WWII opulence as equally as the 1945 firebombing, and post-WWII ruin by interacting with the historic fabric and new fabric of the building. However, by reconstructing the *Frauenkirche*, the building negates the metaphoric power of the architectural ruin within the memory and political landscape of Germany.

Historian Rudy Koshar explains that particularly in Germany, the ruin symbolised the age of nationalist aggression and world-historic conflict, whereby the buildings and landscapes were the archetypal expressions of politics and collective memory on both sides of the German-German border.⁶² Furthermore, in the decades leading to the reunification of Germany, ruins like the *Frauenkirche*, which remained un-restored, became historical traces which represented the topography of the memory landscape. These places, particularly the *Frauenkirche*, took on new meaning, becoming a commemoration of the atrocities of war, a symbol pregnant with the memories and meanings of the local and national community. Reconstruction would therefore obscure what art historians and German preservationists would refer to as the ability for the ruin to provide a way of seeing the past.⁶³ In saying this, whilst the reconstructed building may obscure the events of the past, what it is able to do, that the ruin could not, is allow the visitor to counterfactually understand society and themselves in the future, a place beyond the trauma of WWII, beyond the desolation of the GDR, to a future where peace and prosperity may be a possibility in Dresden once more.

The *Royal Opera House* in Malta suffered a similar fate to the *Fraunkirche*, left as a ruin for over 70 years post-destruction in WWII. It, however, differs to the *Frauenkirche*, as it was never completely reconstructed. The following section of **Chapter 4**, discusses the controversies surrounding the *Royal Opera House*, its destruction and conservation as a ruin.

⁶¹ Rehberg and Neutzner, ‘The Dresden Frauenkirche as a Contested Symbol’, 126.

⁶² Koshar, *From Monuments to Traces*, 27.

⁶³ ‘Ruins are ideal: the perceiver’s attitudes count so heavily that one is tempted to say ruins are a way of seeing...’ as quoted in Koshar, *From Monuments to Traces*, 97.

MALTA: ROYAL OPERA HOUSE

FORTRESS MALTA: FROM THE NEOLITHS, TO THE KNIGHTS OF ST JOHN, AND BRITAIN

Malta, often fondly referred to as the 'Jewel of the Mediterranean', is the fifth smallest country in Europe, and the smallest country in the European Union.⁶⁴ Despite its size, Malta's location in the Mediterranean, has shaped its history and ensured that it has played an outsized role in the history of Europe.

It was thought that the island's first inhabitants arrived around 5900BC during the *Ghar Dalam Phase*. However, recent archaeological finds in the Mellieħa region indicate that humans first settled more than 1,000 years prior to this around 6900BC.⁶⁵ These first civilisations however did not survive, eventually failing due to destructive agricultural practices which, coupled with the volatile climate, made the islands uninhabitable. A substantial break in habitation occurred, until the arrival and colonisation of the islands by a group of inhabitants from Sicily (*Stentinello*) around 3800BC.⁶⁶ This second civilisation constructed megalithic temples such as the *Ġgantija* and *Haġar Qim* temples. Predating Stonehenge, these temples are considered some of the oldest forms of architecture in the world.⁶⁷

According to the Acts of the Apostles, around 60AD St Paul (Paul of Tarsus) enroute to Rome from Caesarea to stand trial before the Emperor was caught in a maelstrom and shipwrecked in Malta. He is said to have ministered and evangelised in Malta for three months, converting many locals to Christianity, and thereby seeding the strong Catholic tradition of the country.⁶⁸

Due to its prime location in the Mediterranean, Malta has been conquered by several competing nations and rulers, including the Phoenicians and Carthaginians (800-400BC), Romans and Emperor Hadrian (218BC-117AD), Byzantines (395-870AD), Arabs (870-1090AD), Normans (1091-1194AD) and Crown of Aragon (1282-1409AD).⁶⁹

⁶⁴ 'Facts and Figures, EU Demographics | European Union', https://european-union.europa.eu/principles-countries-history/key-facts-and-figures/life-eu_en An Archipelago, Malta is comprised of seven islands which include: the Main island (Malta), Gozo, Comino, Cominetto, Filfla (once used for British military target practice, now a nature reserve), St Paul's Island (the island which St Paul is said to have been shipwrecked in Malta), and Manoel Island (a former quarantine island).

⁶⁵ Mark Laurence Zammit, 'Times Talk: The First Maltese People in History, Unearthed', *Times of Malta*, 10 April 2025, <https://timesofmalta.com/article/times-talk-the-first-maltese-people-history-unearthed.1107924>; James Cummings, 'Malta Archaeological Find Hits the World's Headlines', *Times of Malta*, 17 April 2025, <https://timesofmalta.com/article/malta-archaeological-find-hits-world-headlines.1108308>.

⁶⁶ '700 Years Added to Malta's History', *Times of Malta*, 16 March 2018, <https://timesofmalta.com/article/700-years-added-to-maltas-history.673498>; Brian Blouet, *A Short History of Malta*, Praeger Short Histories (Frederick A. Praeger, 1967), 28.

⁶⁷ UNESCO World Heritage Centre, 'Megalithic Temples of Malta', UNESCO World Heritage Centre, accessed 28 April 2024, <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/132/>

Listed on the UNESCO World Heritage List in 1980 (Serial ID: 132-001; Ref: 132bis), the *Ġgantija* temples were the first of 6 temples to be listed on the UNESCO World Heritage List. The List was extended in 1992 to include the temples of *Haġar Qim*, *Mnajdra*, *Ta'Hagra*, *Skorba* and *Tarxien* (Serial IDs: 132-002, 132-003, 132-004, 132-005, 132-006; Ref: 132bis).

⁶⁸ Acts 28:1-10 NIV; Reuben Grima and Daniel Cilia, *The Making of Malta* (Midsea Books, 2008), 190.

⁶⁹ Blouet, *A Short History of Malta*, 38–42.

When in 1522, the Order of the Knights of St John were expelled from their fortresses in Rhodes, the Order travelled for 7 years across Europe, arriving in Malta in 1530, after the Holy Roman Emperor Charles V, King of Sicily, surrendered the Maltese islands to the Order.⁷⁰ With the blessing of Pope Clement VII, the Order under the Grand Master Fra' Philippe de Villiers de l'Isle Adam took possession of Malta, forming the Order of Malta.⁷¹ The islands then became a military base in the Orders' fight to curtail the Ottoman expansion westward throughout Europe. Malta, being a devoutly Catholic country, and centrally positioned in the Mediterranean was an ideal location for the Knights to fight the expansion of the Ottoman Empire and Islam.

Where Rhodes had been a highly developed military stronghold, Malta was considered severely lacking. The Knights knew that to secure Malta as a base for their naval operations, fortifications would have to completely dominate the Grand Harbour. Sciberras peninsula, with sweeping views of the Grand Harbour and Marsamxett was considered the best location. After successfully defending the islands from Ottoman occupation, in what is known as the Great Siege of Malta, on 28 March 1566, Grand Master Fra' Jean de la Vallette laid the foundation stone for the new fortified city on Sciberras peninsula – to be known as Valletta, in his honour.⁷²

Under the rule of the Order, the islands of Malta were transformed. The Knights undertook numerous urban and architectural projects during their 268-year rule. Many of the palaces, churches and gardens, and in particular the fortifications and bastions are still in existence today, and are included in the UNESCO World Heritage Listing for the City of Valletta.⁷³

However, on 9 June 1798, enroute to Egypt, Napoleon demanded to be let into the Grand Harbour. Although his demand was refused, taking advantage of the inadequately manned fortifications, pro-French factions in the Order, and dissatisfaction with the ruling Grand Master, Hompesch, the French came ashore the next day, invading the city and the island.⁷⁴

By 1800, Malta became a British Protectorate as an interim measure, to resist capitulating to the Napoleonic army, becoming a permanent colony in 1802 under the protection of His Britannic Majesty. The British, much like the Order, modified the whole economic, social, and political structure of the country. Whilst these changes were welcomed after the protracted rule of the Order, according to historian Henry Frendo, they took place in a society which was distinctive from other Mediterranean and mainland European societies, catalysing new social patterns which were uniquely Maltese.⁷⁵ Historian James Holland succinctly summarised this distinctive Maltese identity:

⁷⁰ Grima and Cilia, *The Making of Malta*, 246; Carmel Cassar, *A Concise History of Malta* (Mireva Publishing, 2000), 83–84.

⁷¹ The Knights of St John (also known as the Knights Hospitallers) were one of the more well-known Christian military orders in Western Europe during the Middle Ages as part of the Crusades. Formed in 1049 in Jerusalem as the Knights of St John of Jerusalem, the Order later took possession of Rhodes in 1310 and later in Malta and Tripoli in 1530. The territory in Tripoli was short-lived ending by 1551. The official name of the Order is the Sovereign Military Hospitaller Order of St John of Jerusalem, of Rhodes, and of Malta.

⁷² Blouet, *A Short History of Malta*, 88, 101.

⁷³ UNESCO World Heritage Centre, 'UNESCO World Heritage - Valletta City', 1980, <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/131/>.

⁷⁴ Blouet, *A Short History of Malta*, 156; Cassar, *A Concise History of Malta*, 141.

⁷⁵ Henry Frendo, 'Maltese Colonial Identity: Latin Mediterranean or British Empire?', in *The British Colonial Experience: 1800 - 1964; the Impact on Maltese Society*, ed. Victor Mallia-Milanes (Mireva Publishing, 1988), 185–86.

THESE WALLS HAVE EYES AND EARS

Catholicism gave the Maltese a local focus; everyday life revolved around the parish church and the particular traditions and customs the Maltese attached to that. But it was to Britain that the vast majority of Maltese turned for national identity; after all, she was a global and military power of whom they could be proud to be a part.⁷⁶

It is this British identity which is associated with the construction of one of the most beloved and tragic buildings in Valletta, the *Royal Opera House (Teatru Rjal)*. Sitting just within the city gates, the *Royal Opera House* was juxtaposed against the Baroque identity of the buildings and fortifications which surrounded it, which were distinct legacies of the Knights of St John. Indeed, it was documented in *The Builder* on 2 May 1863, that “the new Opera House at Malta is one of several important public works for the establishment and improvement of the Island...”⁷⁷ and included the following lithograph (Figure 23):



23 New Opera House, Malta.
The Builder, 2 May 1863.

In 1861, the commissioned design for the *Royal Opera House* in Malta was approved. Designed by Edward Middleton Barry, son of esteemed British architect Sir Charles Barry (architect of the Palace of Westminster), the *Royal Opera House* was marred from the outset by scandals, incompetence and ambiguity in the brief. This included Barry’s own errors designing a building without visiting the site, and therefore not allowing for the significant 10 foot (3.05 metre) gradient between Strada Reale (now Republic Street) and Piazza Vittoria.⁷⁸

⁷⁶ James Holland, *Fortress Malta: An Island Under Siege 1940-1943* (Orion, 2013), 49.

⁷⁷ ‘New Opera House, Malta’, *The Builder*, 2 May 1863, 314.

⁷⁸ Joseph Bonnici and Michael Cassar, *The Royal Opera House Malta* (Gutenberg Press, 1990), forward, 11.

The *Royal Opera House* was designed in the Neo-Classical style, constructed in masonry with cast iron, and comprised a grand portico with Corinthian columns, which symmetrically flanked the side elevations of the building (see Figure 24). Replacing what once was the site of the Casa della Giornata, the residence of the Knight Lanfreducci of Siena, the building measured 206 feet by 112 feet (62.8 by 34.15 metres) and was designed to seat 1,095 persons, with another 200 standing in the galley.⁷⁹



- 24 The Royal Opera House, c.1866. Note the design changes to the building from the etching presented in *The Builder*, three years prior.
Source: National Archives of Malta (PHO_01202).

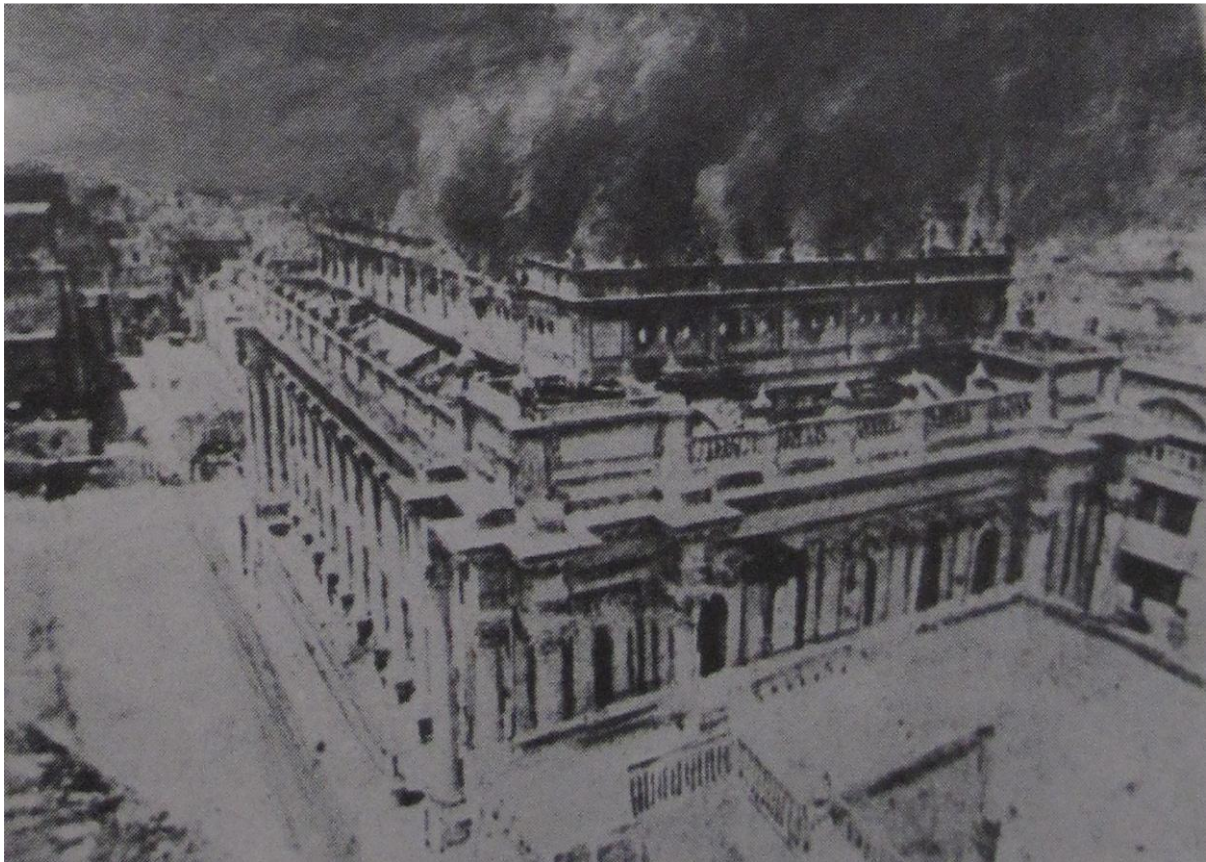
Barry advocated for the use of new materials and technology in his buildings. This was technically advanced for the Maltese architectural scene which was accustomed to traditional stone construction. Employing new technology in the structure, Barry concealed extensive cast iron within the columns and in the 63ft 9in (19.45 metres) Queen post truss behind the limestone exterior.⁸⁰ The building was inaugurated in October 1866, however due to the metal within the structure, when the building caught fire in 1873 (see Figure 25), the metal weakened causing the roof to collapse, and the stones were calcified internally.

⁷⁹ Bonnici and Cassar, *The Royal Opera House Malta*, 23.

⁸⁰ Bonnici and Cassar, *The Royal Opera House Malta*, 24.

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The *Royal Opera House* was rebuilt, replacing the cast iron with zinc, to add a fire preventive measure to the building. The building was reopened on 11 October 1877, restoring the “priceless gem...to its former value and beauty.”⁸¹



25 View of the Royal Opera House on fire as seen from St James Cavalier, May 25 1873.
Source: Bonnici & Cassar, *The Royal Opera House Malta*, p. 37.

Disaster was to strike the *Royal Opera House* a final time during WWII on April 7, 1942, in a decisive hit by the Luftwaffe bombers, in what would become one of the heaviest bombing days of a two-year period in Malta, known as the Siege of Malta.

Although the bombing and ensuing destruction was at the hands of the Germans, a part of the trauma of WWII in Malta can be attributed to the British and their mishandling of their asset and its protection in its strategic Mediterranean position. Early in the war, the Royal Air Force and British Army were convinced that Malta would be undefendable, and that no matter how thorough the preparations made to resist air attack on Malta, Italian aircrafts would still break through and bomb the naval dockyards and airfields. Based on this assessment, the British left Malta virtually undefended, leaving a meagre garrison and no aeroplanes⁸² (Figure 26).

⁸¹ Bonnici and Cassar, *The Royal Opera House Malta*, 54.

⁸² Blouet, *A Short History of Malta*, 198–99.



26 Maltese soldiers posing in front of aerial attack search light. Author's grandfather, middle back row, c. 1940s. Source: Author's family album.

Although eventually more defensive weapons and planes were provided, as a result of this earlier decision, Malta suffered some of the heaviest bombing of the war, so heavy that esteemed war correspondent and journalist Alan M. Moorehead described Malta as the most bombed place on earth.⁸³ By leaving the islands virtually undefended, the Maltese people were left feeling betrayed and abandoned by Britain, who they saw not only as their protector, but also as they increasingly sought out the Maltese-British identity, Britain was familial. Family which left its weaker family member to fend for itself against the enemy.

In the early months of 1942, the island of Malta was incessantly raided. In April 1942 alone, 6,700 tonnes of bombs were dropped on Malta. The bombardment was so persistent that Goebbels wrote in his diary that the German leadership needed to make an effort to justify these attacks to the German citizens.⁸⁴

Over the two years of the Siege, damage to the island, particularly to the dockyards and harbour towns was on a large scale – over 35,000 homes were destroyed or damaged, including several important historical monuments in Valletta and the Three Cities.⁸⁵ The *Royal Opera House* was one significant historical monument which suffered great damage. The bombing devastated the front section of the building, with the portico and auditorium left as a pile of stones, and a gaping hole in the roof with twisted girders.⁸⁶ This destruction can be seen in a comparison of historic photos from before and after the bombing (Figure 27).

⁸³ Anthony Rogers, *Siege of Malta 1940-42: Rare Photographs from Veterans' Collections* (Greenhill Books, 2020), loc. 994.

⁸⁴ Blouet, *A Short History of Malta*, 209; Allison McNearney, 'The Grand Opera House Bombed to Ruins by the Luftwaffe', *The Daily Beast*, 22 July 2018, <https://www.thedailybeast.com/the-grand-opera-house-bombed-to-ruins-by-the-luftwaffe>.

⁸⁵ Blouet, *A Short History of Malta*, 215.

⁸⁶ Bonnici and Cassar, *The Royal Opera House Malta*, 79.

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- 27 L: Strada Reale, Malta c. 1860-1889, the Royal Opera House grandly sits on the right. R: Strada Reale, Malta c.1942 after the blitz, the ruins of the Royal Opera House visible on the right and strewn across the street.
Source: L: Getty Museum, photographer Horatio Agius (84.XO.763.6.75). R: Imperial War Museums (GM604).

Although the bombing was some of the heaviest of WWII, unlike in Dresden, Maltese buildings were, and continue to be, predominantly constructed from limestone, and as such, incendiary bombs proved to be ineffective, and a firestorm and mass destruction of large sections of towns did not occur.

The aerial attacks on Malta were deliberate. Unlike in Dresden, where the single event of the firestorm occurred due to a certain degree of chance, including perfect weather conditions and accurate aiming, the two-year onslaught on Malta was designed by the Nazis and Italian Socialist Republic (lead by Mussolini) to crush the will of the Maltese people and force their surrender so that the strategic stronghold of Malta could fall into Axis territory. Not only did it cause the destruction of buildings, infrastructure and loss of lives, but it also caused the near complete starvation of the country, with nearly all convoys destroyed before they reached port. Through all this, and despite feeling abandoned by its family, the Maltese still relished being part of the British Commonwealth and thoroughly linked their identity to the Motherland.

The Maltese however did not yield, and eventually bombing of the island dissipated. On Friday 17 April 1942, King George VI awarded the George Cross, the highest civilian award for gallantry to the entire island of Malta, quoted below and seen in the original letter from King George VI (Figure 28) and a memorial plaque commemorating the award at the site of its presentation (Figure 29):

“To honour her brave people I award the George Cross to the Island fortress of Malta to bear witness to a heroism that will long be famous in history.”⁸⁷

⁸⁷ Holland, *Fortress Malta*, 339; ‘Malta’s Heroism Recognised: George Cross Awards’, *Sydney Morning Herald* (Sydney), 18 April 1942, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article17826670>; ‘Malta Awarded George Cross’, *The Argus* (Melbourne), 18 April 1942, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article8242626>.



28 The original letter from King George VI and the George Cross medal, housed at the National War Museum in St Elmo, Valletta Malta. Source: Author's photograph, 2024.



29 The letter has been memorialised in a plaque on the exterior of the Grandmasters Palace fronting St George Square, at the site where the George Cross medal was presented to the Governor and people of Malta. Source: Author's photograph, 2024.

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As the war continued, there was little opportunity for the *Royal Opera House* to be rebuilt. The unstable parts were demolished and removed. Although almost half of the building was salvageable, and could be rebuilt (as seen in Figure 30), by leaving the site in ruins, much of the remaining fabric was pilfered. Many decorative elements such as the column capitals, busts and friezes were scattered across Malta, many finding new homes in institutions such as schools or private residences, with others left in fields and disused areas.



- 30 Views of the Royal Opera House after the bombing. Much of the building remained after the initial bombing, however authorities deemed the structure unstable and called for the removal of much of the remaining structure.

Source: National Archives of Malta (PHO_01208 and PHO_01206).

While the rest of the city of Valletta was eventually cleaned and rebuilt, the *Royal Opera House* site remained in ruins. Unaltered, these ruins became an *unintentional monument* and physical cue evoking memories of the bravery of the island, the atrocities of the Siege and the raid on 7 April 1942. The fate of the *Royal Opera House* was similar to the *Frauenkirche* – a ruin which too became an *unintentional monument*. However, whilst the public embraced the *Frauenkirche's* role as a memorial and in fact some argued against its restoration, in Malta, the *Royal Opera House* was not treated the same way. Its ruined state was instead, a state of abandonment, and its lack of restoration became a silent scar that spoke of the opulence of British-Malta, its pre-war glory.

A SILENT SCAR

Like Dresden and the *Frauenkirche*, the story of the *Royal Opera House* and Malta is a product of a deeply traumatic two-year siege and final attack which has caused substantial fragmentation in not only the architectural fabric of the building and city itself, but also a fragmentation of society, its memory, and its identity. However, unlike Dresden and the *Frauenkirche*, the impact of WWII and the Siege of Malta, was not fanned by propaganda seeking to change the narrative, perpetuating a collective memory which influenced the opinions of local people and people abroad for generations.

The controversy of the *Royal Opera House* and its perpetual life as a ruin, is not solely the result of the aerial bombings per se, but as noted, a result of the betrayal of the British to adequately protect the country from attack. The irony of this is that whilst Britain preferred to retain their resources to protect their own, in other words the British in the United Kingdom, the Maltese resolutely continued to associate themselves as entirely British and were loyal to this history and identity, despite the failings of the war in Malta.

The Maltese perceived the *Royal Opera House* as a key structure representing Britain. The sophistication that they saw embodied by the Royal family and the British aristocracy, permeated their culture and the arts. Eyewitnesses of the bombings and the aftermath have been documented explaining the importance of the *Royal Opera House* to the Maltese and its association with the Britishness. One such person was Meme Cortis, a nurse who enlisted as a Voluntary Aid Detachment (VAD) for the British Army in Malta:

As they clambered up the step [from the bomb shelter], their first sight was of the *Royal Opera House* – or rather, what remained of it. This magnificent theatre, considered by many to be the finest building in Valletta, now lay in ruins. ‘It was just a heap of rubble,’ says Meme, ‘not one wall was standing – just a few arches left. I couldn’t believe it. The *Royal Opera House* was like Covent Garden to us.’ Meme had even performed there once in a special school play.⁸⁸

This cultural association and importance to the Maltese is significant, and further highlights the controversy of the building’s life as a ruin. Most people in Malta believed that the building would be reconstructed, and it was anticipated that it would be rebuilt using part or all the £31 million which was allocated to Malta from the War Damage Fund. In fact, the rebuilding of the *Royal Opera House* was estimated to cost £1.25 million, but the administration at the time believed the budgeted funds should be invested in social welfare for the country instead.⁸⁹ It would appear therefore that at the time, the reconstruction of the *Royal Opera House*, whose physical fabric epitomised the public’s association with their uniquely Maltese-British identity, was not valued to the same degree by the Maltese administration. This identity and memory would remain fragmented, and for decades the debate about what to do with the site raged, with only the grand terrace and a few columns left remaining as a physical reminder of the beloved structure. In 1952 the Royal Opera House Reconstruction Committee was established, chaired by the Prime Minister of the time, Dr George Borg Olivier (who would later seek independence from Britain in 1964 during a second term as Prime Minister). The Reconstruction Committee set out a design competition in 1953, which invited six world renowned architects to submit designs for a new theatre, with a specific design requirement

⁸⁸ Holland, *Fortress Malta*, 328. Author’s italics.

⁸⁹ Sarah Carabott, ‘When a Royal Opera House Competition Divided the Country’, *Times of Malta*, 27 February 2022, <https://timesofmalta.com/article/watch-when-a-royal-opera-house-competition-divided-the-country.937311>.

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that ensured the ruins were incorporated into their proposed schemes, as per the following competition conditions:

Clause 3: It is also desirable that in designing the facades, the architectural features of the Old Opera House be maintained as far as possible.

Clause 5: It is desirable that parts of the facades which are still standing be incorporated in whole or in part in the new schemes.⁹⁰

What the design competition failed to realise however, was the public connection with the building, the *semantic* and *episodic memories* associated with the fabric, the anthropomorphising of the building as witness to their culture and Britishness. Historians Joseph Bonnici and Michael Cassar summarise this anthropomorphism in their book on *The Royal Opera House*:

It is pleasant to imagine those mute remains at Valletta, the odd Corinthian capital here and there and the friezes in a dump near Santa Lucia, smiling inwardly at the thought of a future arts centre, if that is what the building will be. The stones will remember the years after the Great War when there were operas, operettas, plays, lectures, choirs, piano recitals, orchestral concerts, dancing, ballet, balls and cinema. Malta's Opera House was a first class provincial theatre...⁹¹

Indeed, the *Royal Opera House* was metonymically linked to British-Malta, the stones being perceived as witness to the opulence and life of not only the theatre but of Valletta, and thus Malta as well. Instead, the competition anticipated a new building, a new identity, one that looked to a new future, albeit not entirely divorced from its past, placing some value on the ruins as a memorial, but failed to understand the collective memory associated with these ruins.

The competition entries were exhibited on public display at the Royal University of Malta in May 1954, Zavellani-Rossi's modernist building with a large forecourt was the competition winner (see Figure 31). Despite the competition conditions, Zavellani-Rossi's proposal did not celebrate the ruins and incorporate them in a meaningful way, as contemporary British architect Sir Basil Spence would do with the new design for Coventry Cathedral (1962). Rather, the *Royal Opera House* ruins were designed to be hidden within the new structure. In fact, according to Bonnici and Cassar, the architects who entered the competition found that the requirement to incorporate the ruins limited their designs.⁹² This is a common viewpoint of many designers in the postwar period, who sought to create new directions in design that did not associate with the past and historic surroundings. Zavellani-Rossi's design was criticised by local architects, with one, A. Cutugno dismissing the design in Churchillian terms: "Never was so much fuss made by so many over so little."⁹³ Despite being

⁹⁰ Bonnici and Cassar, *The Royal Opera House Malta*, 81 A Schedule of Accommodation was published in the Malta Government Gazette on February 25, 1953, highlighting these clauses. The six world renowned architects who were invited to submit designs to the competition were:

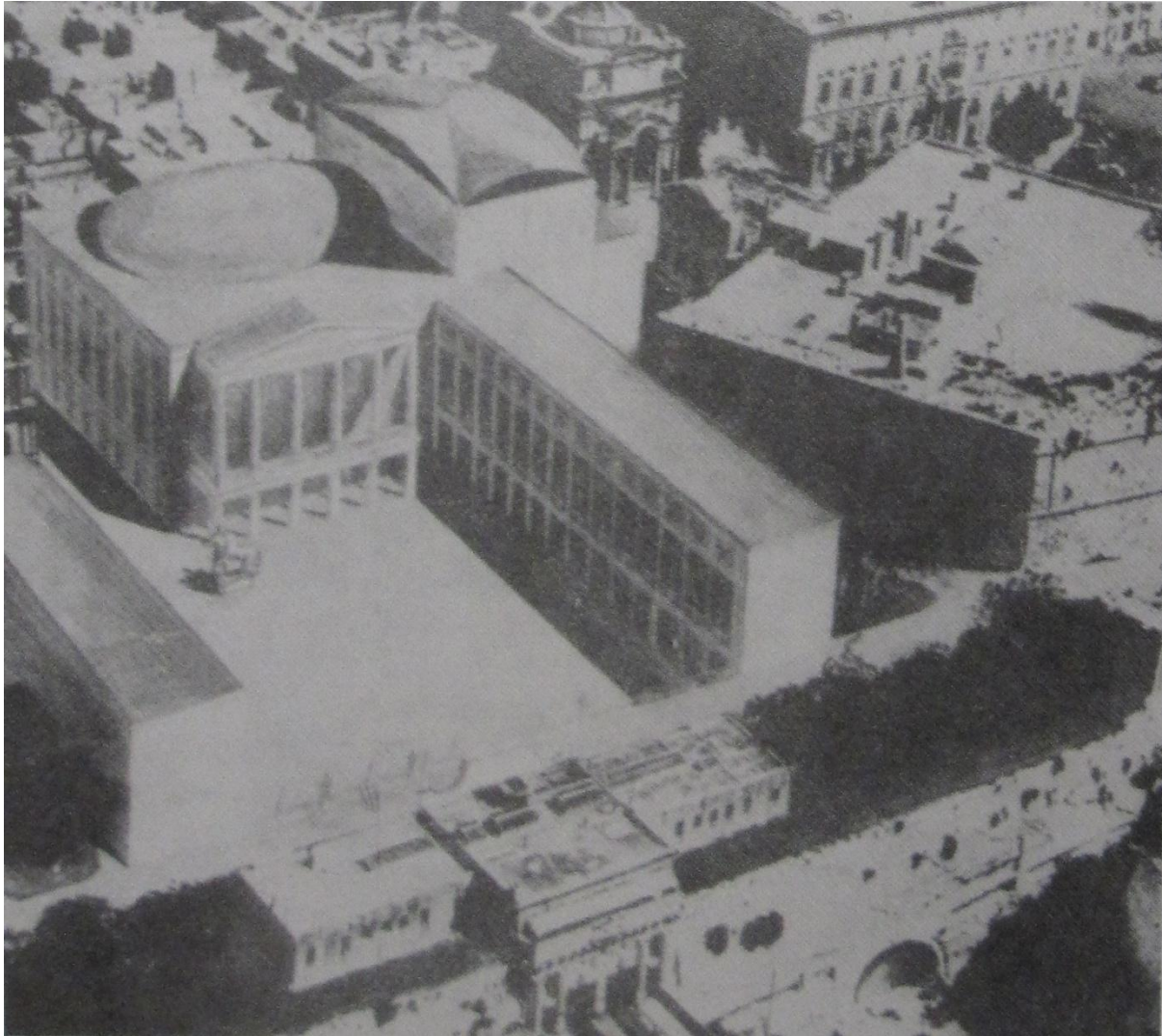
- Professor Enrich Boltenstern, Vienna;
- Mr Alastair Macdonald, London;
- Mr Richard S Nickson, London;
- Mr Auguste Perret, France;
- Professor Piacentini, Italy; and
- Dr Ing Zavellani-Rossi, Italy .

⁹¹ Bonnici and Cassar, *The Royal Opera House Malta*, 6.

⁹² Bonnici and Cassar, *The Royal Opera House Malta*, 87.

⁹³ Bonnici and Cassar, *The Royal Opera House Malta*, 91.

dismissed by local critics, and being the costliest of the design proposals, Zavellani-Rossi's design had a great local following. However, Zavellani-Rossi's proposal was never realised, and was abandoned in 1957, after numerous postponements in favour of other pressing reconstructions.⁹⁴



31 Dr Zavellani-Rossi's Project B proposal for the redesign of the Opera House, c. 1954.
Source: Bonnici & Cassar, *The Royal Opera House Malta*, p. 84.

Despite the ruins' prominence at the entrance to the city and in the immediate memory of the Maltese people, none of the design schemes from the competition or successive proposals were executed. As a result, the site progressively deteriorated, becoming a derelict and neglected left-over space, which was increasingly becoming subsumed by the surrounding urban context, serving at one point merely to mark the perimeter of a makeshift public car park which had overtaken the concreted-open and empty space.

The continued disintegration of the British-Maltese identity and memory, whilst initiated by the aerial attacks and Siege of Malta, was furthered by the sociopolitical upheaval in Malta in the two-decades post-WWII. This sociopolitical upheaval saw changes in governments which sought to be more social-democratic in nature, and in doing so sought to prioritise funding for social and housing projects. In

⁹⁴ Architectural Project, 'Royal Opera House Malta, Restoration Method Statement', 2009, 52.

this way, the sociopolitical scene in the post-war period was responsible for the abandonment of the redevelopment project and the neglect of the *Royal Opera House* ruins.

Such sociopolitical upheaval included the process of Integration with the United Kingdom, which in 1955, the prime minister of the time, Dominic Mintoff, put in motion. The process of Maltese Integration is itself unique in the history of British decolonisation, particularly after WWII.⁹⁵ In fact, calls for Integration emerged as early as 1943, after the Siege of Malta, by Mabel Strickland, editor of the *Times of Malta*, and daughter of the former Maltese Prime Minister Lord Gerald Strickland:

This war has shown that Malta is as much part of Britain as Portsmouth or Croydon. The one tolerable practical solution to Malta's constitutional and economic post-war problems then would be full political unity with Britain...Let Malta be a country of England, as an integral part of the United Kingdom represented in Parliament at Westminster, and enjoying local government, with all the advantages and responsibilities that this would entail.⁹⁶

The call for Integration was popular in Malta, as it would further cement the Maltese-British identity. It was also favourably looked upon by the British for the security it would provide with a naval base in the Mediterranean (particularly after the Suez Crisis of 1956). However, Mintoff's attempt to Integrate would eventually fail. In the process, the push for Integration heightened tensions between the Catholic Church and the Maltese government, and risked creating what historian Simon Smith describes as a 'Church vs State' controversy.⁹⁷ By 1957, Mintoff resigned, failing to agree on terms of Integration, turning the tables and creating mounting tensions when he declared that the Maltese were "no longer bound by agreements and obligations, and by those so far assumed towards their allies..." – and thereby calling for a 'Break with Britain'.⁹⁸ This motion, had profound repercussions on the relationship between Malta and Britain, and the association with the culture and memories of British-Malta. Eventually, by 1964, Malta would follow the common decolonisation path, gaining Independence from the British Empire.

Furthermore, as a member of the British Empire, the push for Integration alongside the existing economic troubles in Britain post-WWII exacerbated the poor economic prospects for the Maltese. This economic situation led to intensive marketing in all the towns and village squares, convincing the Maltese to emigrate as a solution to their problems caused by the failings of the Maltese and British administrations. This was referred to by the Maltese Government as a 'safety valve', a political strategy to release a proportion of the increasing population so that they could lower the economic strain.⁹⁹ Emigration however, caused shortages in skilled labour and knowledge, a brain drain, which exacerbated the lack of available skilled labourers who could execute the reconstruction of the *Royal Opera House*.

⁹⁵ Simon C. Smith, 'Integration and Disintegration: The Attempted Incorporation of Malta into the United Kingdom in the 1950s', *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 35, no. 1 (2007): 49.

⁹⁶ As quoted in Smith, 'Integration and Disintegration', 50.

⁹⁷ Smith, 'Integration and Disintegration', 56–59.

⁹⁸ As quoted in Smith, 'Integration and Disintegration', 64.

⁹⁹ Melissa Clement, "'The Clock Cannot Be Put Back": The Importance of Traditional Forms of Economy in Maltese Tourism', paper presented at Mo(u)vemnt CASCA/IAUES Conference, *Intangible Cultural Heritage, Design Ecologies and Creative Industry*, 2 May 2017, 1, <https://nomadit.co.uk/conference/cascaiaues2017/paper/36278>; David H. Plowman, 'A Fragment of the Maltese Exodus: Child Migration to Australia 1953 – 1965', *Journal of Maltese History* 2, no. 1 (2010): 7.

The marketing focused on leaving Malta equated in the minds of the population as Malta and Britain being the cause of their hardship, and thus emigration was associated with an exile from the Maltese (or rather the Maltese-British) way of life.¹⁰⁰ Although as subjects of the British Empire, and after their heroics in WWII, the Maltese were afforded better prospects for emigration, the Maltese were often considered to be low social strata, and suffered a number of racial prejudices in the countries which accepted their immigration.¹⁰¹

The emigration of the Maltese, exodus from their culture, and associations with their British identity, coupled with the prejudice they found in their new homes, could explain why nostalgia for British-Malta is high. Images of prosperous times and opulence like the *Royal Opera House*, would likely have been taken with emigrants as reminders of home and what Malta once was before WWII and the subsequent sociopolitical upheaval of the post-war period. As such, return migration (of which there was a large proportion), meant that many Maltese had nostalgic desire for what they left behind. Here, therefore the Maltese emigrants, and those who remained in Malta, were seeking, a form of *restorative nostalgia*, one which Boym describes as evoking a national past, and a defence mechanism against the upheavals which they underwent during the war and post-war period.¹⁰² By evoking a national past, defending against the negative memories, many Maltese longed for a previous self, a past which was left behind. The reconstruction of the *Royal Opera House* would aid significantly in the nostalgic urge to connect to the past. By reconstructing the building, the people could ostensibly reconstruct their former lives, and reconnect with their Maltese-British identity.

Pregnant with the collective national and personal histories and memories of the Maltese and life as British-Malta, the *Royal Opera House* was one of the best loved and remembered of Valletta's, if not all of Malta's buildings. Having risen from the ashes of the devastating fire in 1873, could the ruins not rise a second time from the destruction of WWII and the Siege? Alas, despite its cultural significance and its value as an architectural monument (both pre and post war), the site languished in a state of abandonment, and became what historian Gilbert Gardes referred to as a heart-breaking ruin, a silent scar.¹⁰³

Whilst the *Royal Opera House* ruins were languishing in abandonment, it is important to note the significance of the ruin as an *unintentional monument*, of not just the Siege and the blitz of April 1942, but also as a reminder of the story of Malta and its inhabitants. The *Royal Opera House* is symbolic of the historical process which saw Malta successively conquered and invaded by various rulers, a process which has happened in many countries, but has enhanced the mythos of Malta. These historical processes led to Malta becoming a British protectorate, and saw the construction of the *Royal Opera House*. The Maltese mythos of bravery against foes was emboldened by its association with the military powerhouse, Britain, an identity which helped to see the population through WWII. The ruins are imbued with the knowledge that Malta and the Maltese survived the incessant Fascist bombings, protecting Fortress Malta, earning them the Georges Cross. The ruins can act as a portal or cue for the viewer to psychologically engage with their feelings about the loss and nostalgia for what once was. They further permit one to engage in mental construction or *mental time travel*, to understand themselves within a collective history, and examine their feelings about the past, present

¹⁰⁰ E. P. Delia, 'Maltese Migration: A Critique of Two Views', *Economical and Social Studies* 2 (1985): 1.

¹⁰¹ Plowman, 'A Fragment of the Maltese Exodus: Child Migration to Australia 1953 – 1965', 5.

¹⁰² Boym, *The Future of Nostalgia*, xiv, 49.

¹⁰³ As quoted in Dreyfuss et al., 'The Royal Opera House in Malta - from Ruin Towards a New Reality', 6 - Author's translation from the original French 'L'Opera reste ruine navrante, cicatrice silencieuse'.

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and future. The ruins of the *Royal Opera House*, much like those of the *Frauenkirche* could enable the viewer to reflect on their self and society.

The Maltese however, for the most part, did not associate the ruins of the *Royal Opera House* as such. Many of the people of Dresden saw the ruins of the *Frauenkirche* as a physical reminder of the atrocities of war, and an assault on their identity. For many of the Maltese on the other hand, they could only see the ruins as a reminder of what they lost – a nostalgia for the beautiful building and its connection to the British identity which they associated with. An association which would become as important and formative as their long association with the Knights of St John. However, this nostalgia, unlike in Dresden, did not catalyse the reconstruction of the *Royal Opera House* ruins, a controversial decision which is still debated and criticised by many today.

PIAZZA TEATRU RJAL: CONTROVERSY AND ADAPTIVE REUSE OF THE ROYAL OPERA HOUSE RUINS

Having been left as ruins for over 70 years, the *Royal Opera House* became irrevocably associated with the image of the entrance into Valletta, and is the epitome of a modern-day ruin. After Valletta's inscription on the UNESCO World Heritage List in 1980, the importance of the city's entrance and the interaction of its buildings with the fortified city became more significant.

In 1986, renowned Italian architect Renzo Piano prepared a masterplan and redevelopment proposal for the Valletta entrance and city gate. This proposal however never eventuated, and like the *Royal Opera House* design proposals, it was shelved for other more pressing projects.

In 2008, over two decades later, Piano was again invited to design a complex masterplan and regeneration of the entrance to the city of Valletta. This included the restoration of the *Royal Opera House* ruins and the insertion of new fabric to rehabilitate the ruins, adapting them into a multipurpose outdoor performance space.

Piano collaborated with local architects, Architecture Project (now AP Valletta), for the prestigious work to the entrance of the city. Although the *Royal Opera House* lacked a useful or viable function in its current state, they believed that the site was too significant to be cleared and redeveloped. Instead, the ruins were to be conserved and interpreted as part of the new development. Piano's core objective for the site was to ensure that it had a viable function, rather than be an empty, neglected site which is not used. Rather, Piano and Architecture Project considered that the ruins could act as a catalyst for regeneration and healing of the fragmentation in the building, the city, and society, whilst depicting the multi-layered history and meaning of the site.¹⁰⁴

Like the *Frauenkirche*, the *Royal Opera House* restoration used orthodox scientific methods like anastylosis to restore the remains, and reintegrate some of the pilfered fabric which was scattered across the Maltese islands. Piano and Architecture Project's intention was that the insertion of a new contemporary structure within the ruins, to house lighting and screens, would enhance the comprehension of the original building's fabric and function, ensuring its continued legibility in the contemporary urban landscape, whilst also providing the infrastructure for its projected future life within the city.¹⁰⁵ Although it was controversially designed to be roofless, the architects intended that this aspect be an integral part of the design to encourage its integration with the urban fabric of the

¹⁰⁴ Interview with Guillaume Dreyfuss, 5 June 2013 as part of Author's Masters Thesis.

¹⁰⁵ Dreyfuss et al., 'The Royal Opera House in Malta - from Ruin Towards a New Reality', 10.

city (see Figures 32 to 40). It was also intended to help dispel the perception of elitism that is often associated with the opera, instead encouraging a greater level of usage and participation with the public through its transparency and integration with the city.

However, as soon as a concrete plan was put into action for the long-abandoned site, public opinion on the proposed works and the development of the ruins began to take centre stage. Even though, many of the Maltese citizens who knew the original building, and had associated *episodic* and *semantic memories* of the place before the Siege of Malta and its eventual destruction, were either dead or elderly, this did not stop the nostalgia and collective memory from fuelling public opinion every time the site was mentioned. The trauma of the war and loss of an important building which held so much importance for the people, was something which was passed on to subsequent generations, much in the same way it occurred in Dresden. In this way, the *intergenerational trauma* associated with the war, destruction and subsequent political agendas, meant that a strong collective association and nostalgia was developed around the building. Nostalgia for what was lost, is a strong driver for society to reconnect with the past. Physical fabric, like the ruins being an important element in this reconnection. Therefore, for many Maltese, the choice not to reconstruct the theatre to its original design was controversial and a further blow to the identity that they connected with in British-Malta (despite seeking independence in 1964).

As such, questions of authenticity were paramount to the adaptive reuse of the ruins, and would be key to the success of the project. Piano and Architectural Project understood this authenticity to lie in the building's use – as a theatre – this they believed to be the true authenticity of the site, and therefore, by adapting the ruins to an open-air theatre, would be retaining the historic use. Furthermore, it was not feasible to reconstruct the building to its original design, as the building could not accommodate the needed upgrades in equipment, acoustics and safety standards, nor accommodate a larger number of patrons to make the building viable as a performance space. Despite the practical reasons not to reconstruct, there was an overall misguided assumption by the architects about the Maltese connection with the site. Based on what the local Maltese architects discovered was a “profound nostalgia and latent historicism”¹⁰⁶ which resurfaced from public response to plans at the outset of the project, and ongoing public surveys and opinions,¹⁰⁷ it was surmised that authenticity to the community was in fact dependent on the overall form and appearance – a monumental building – having more value than its historical use. As such, the community's preference is to rebuild the building. The planned interventions to the historic fabric which were required to ensure compatible and sustainable uses for the structure were met with comments and criticism, highlighting that the Maltese public would not care that the building could not function properly to contemporary standards, provided it was reconstructed back to its original form.¹⁰⁸ As such, unlike in Dresden – where the ruins were a memorial to the impacts of war and the city's or society's perseverance through tragedy, for the Maltese, the ruins represented a loss rather than hope. Therefore, to retain the ruins and not rebuild the *Royal Opera House* was an insult to the history of

¹⁰⁶ Dreyfuss et al., 'The Royal Opera House in Malta - from Ruin Towards a New Reality', 11.

¹⁰⁷ '128 Artists Petition PM against Roofless Theatre', *Times of Malta*, 16 February 2010, <https://www.timesofmalta.com/article/artists-oppose-decision-to-retain-roofless-theatre.294398>; Nick Squires, 'Contentious Opera Rebuild Raises Chorus of Protest', *NZ Herald*, 8 May 2010, <https://www.nzherald.co.nz/world/contentious-opera-rebuild-raises-chorus-of-protest/VBWWGH2XOI5ORUA23IHXB4CCJ4/>; Steve Parnell, 'Renzo Piano Courts Controversy in Malta', *The Architectural Review*, 29 January 2014, <https://www.architectural-review.com/essays/renzo-piano-courts-controversy-in-malta>; Carabott, 'When a Royal Opera House Competition Divided the Country'; Claudia Calleja, '80 Years After Opera House Bombing, Public Unhappy with Open-Air Theatre', *Times of Malta*, 25 April 2022, <https://timesofmalta.com/article/80-years-after-opera-house-bombing-public-unhappy-with-open-air.950350>.

¹⁰⁸ Dreyfuss et al., 'The Royal Opera House in Malta - from Ruin Towards a New Reality', 11.

the people's perseverance in face of adversity, and re-hashing the loss of the building and the connection to the British identity over again.

In Dresden, the *Frauenkirche* ruins took on another identity and life – becoming a place of annual vigils and protests on the anniversary of its destruction – mirroring the fragmentation of the GDR society and reflecting the collective memories and identity of society. However, in Malta, no such new life and identity occurred for the *Royal Opera House* ruins. It was abandoned and neglected by locals and authorities alike. Contemporary life in the city meant that few people stopped to wonder about the derelict site – it was just a concreted-over makeshift carpark with limestone ruins, a shell of its former self, being subsumed into the urban fabric. Yet, as soon as talk of work to the site began, society was in uproar. This situation reflects Maltese society's interlaced identity with the building. By leaving it as a ruin, it reflects the destruction of war and abandonment of the ideal of British-Malta – a fragile scar slowly healing. To develop it on the other hand, is to reopen this wound. For the Maltese, if development is to occur, it must involve the reconstruction of what was lost, allowing for a reconnection with their past self, or nothing else will suffice.

Where Dresden and the *Frauenkirche* participated in *restorative nostalgia*, Malta and the *Royal Opera House* eventually participated in what Boym refers to as *reflective nostalgia* – the longing itself, wistfully, ironically, and desperately.¹⁰⁹ Ironically what the Maltese long for is *restorative nostalgia*, a transhistorical restoration of a lost piece of their identity as epitomised by the building itself. This longing is influenced by the ability for the human mind to feel nostalgia for a time which they may never have known. By engaging the capacity for imagination, humans can reimagine the past and future through their understanding of the present. By restoring and reinstating the *Royal Opera House*, the hope for the Maltese would be that the reconstructed building would be a memory cue of the opulent British society of the past. In Dresden, reconstruction meant they could forget the intermediary past of the destruction and the GDR; in Malta, reconstruction would mean they could reconnect with the past that they believed was lost and left in ruins.

The adaptive reuse of the *Royal Opera House* ruins was therefore an important example of the tension between the demands for historical continuity in the fabric and spirit of the place. Adaptive reuse of the ruins would be providing an established use in a new space, whilst reconstruction begs questions of authenticity of the fabric, where the reconstruction is merely clinging to the past, pretending to be the original building.

¹⁰⁹ Boym, *The Future of Nostalgia*, xviii.

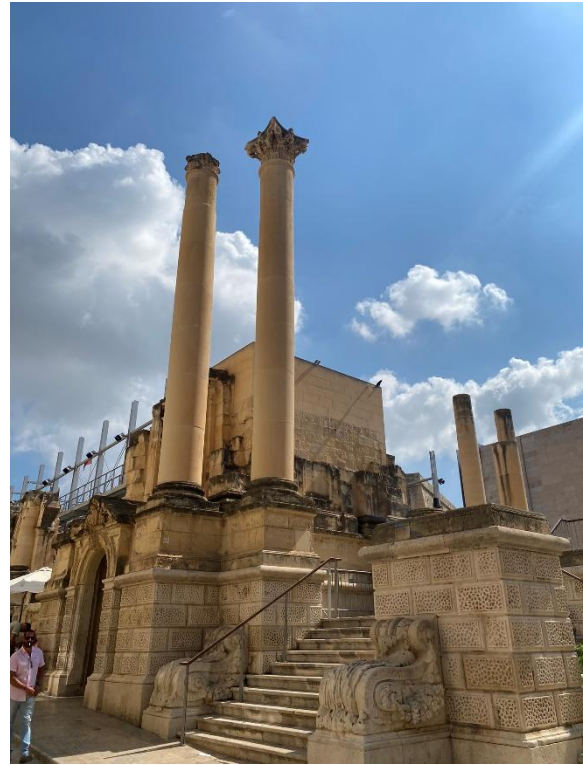


- 32 Piazza Teatru Rjal – the ruins of the Royal Opera House adapted to a multipurpose open-air entertainment venue.
Source: Author's Photographs, 2024.

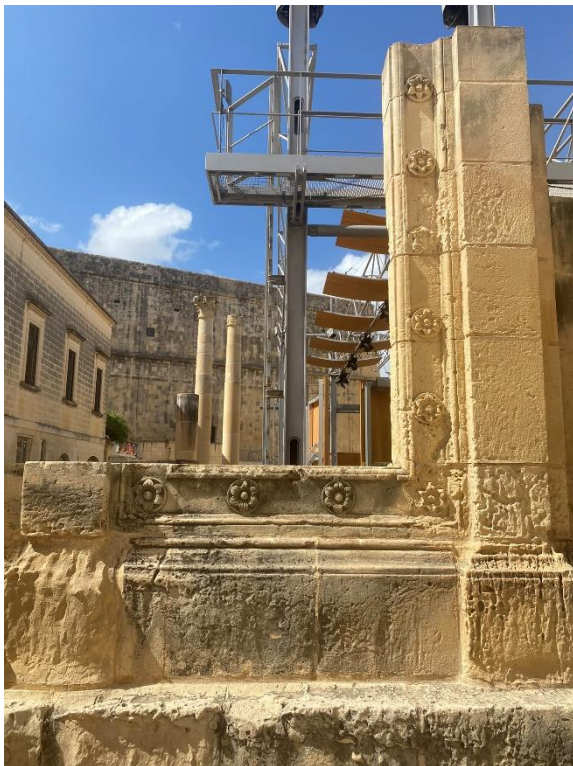
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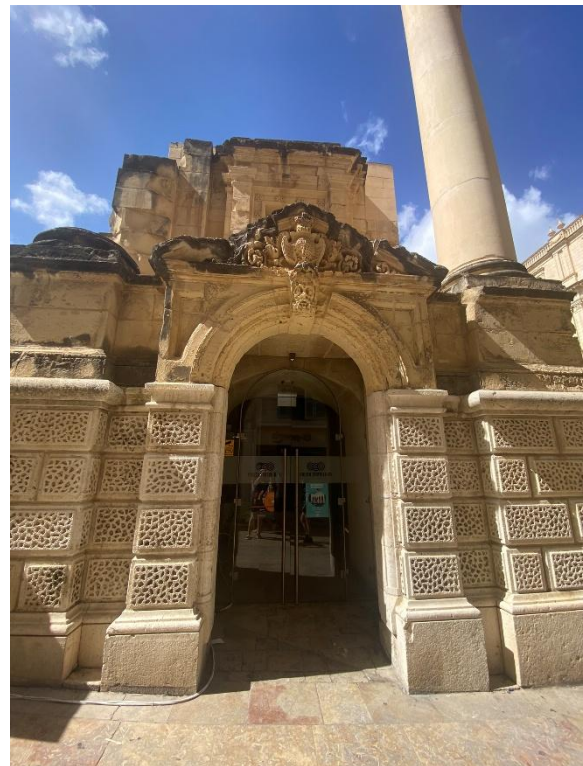
33 Strada Reale (now Republic Street), looking towards Pjazza Teatru Rjal.
Source: Author's Photograph, 2024.



34 Pjazza Teatru Rjal.
Source: Author's Photograph, 2024.



35 Pjazza Teatru Rjal.
Source: Author's Photograph, 2024.



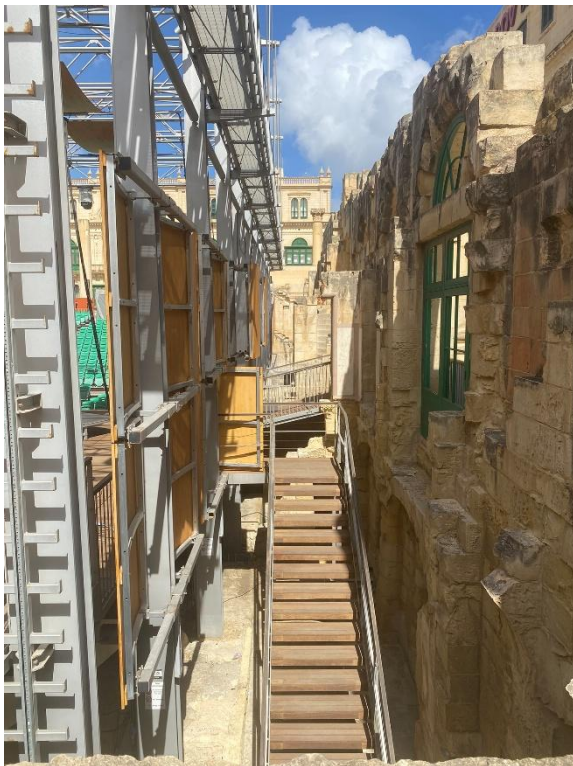
36 Pjazza Teatru Rjal.
Source: Author's Photograph, 2024.



37 Inside the former ticket area and lobby of the Royal Opera House.
Source: Author's Photograph, 2024.



38 New seating structure rests on the original building's extant vaults.
Source: Author's Photograph, 2024.



39 New elements inserted within the ruins.
Source: Author's Photograph, 2024.



40 View down the new seating within the ruin walls.
Source: Author's Photograph, 2024.

However, now just over a decade since the inauguration of the open-air theatre within the *Royal Opera House* ruins – *Pjazza Teatru Rjal* (Royal Theatre Square) is still controversial and most Maltese are not happy, with many preferring the original structure, or at the very least roofing over the ruins. A survey undertaken in 2021, found that the most popular preference was to rebuild the building to its former pre-war glory. The survey gathered the views of over 600 people over the age of 16.¹¹⁰ This is significant, as it highlights that the cultural identity and memory associated with the ruins and the original building is inherited across generations who did not know or engage with the building in its pre-war state. This is because as Maurice Halbwachs explained, place is not just a 'space', but rather foundational to collective narratives, and is inherently influenced by emotional and social constructs.¹¹¹ The way historic places are engaged remains a fluid experience, one which is influenced by emotional attachments, and can be consistently made and re-made in response to broader environmental, cultural and social influences.¹¹² In this context it is unsurprising therefore that the inherited collective memories and nostalgia of the Maltese society are influencing the opinions of younger generations who have no direct association with British-Malta. Thus, further emphasising the building's metonymic function, even in its adapted state – the *Royal Opera House* still undertakes memory work, standing in for the lost connection to Britain and an earlier vision of Malta.

Despite the controversial design and the lack of public support, what the adaptation of the *Royal Opera House* ruins does, that a reconstructed building could not, is act as a palimpsest of memories, a memory cue to more than just one part of Malta's history and its identity. One can still *mentally time travel* to the pre-WWII opulence as equally as the Siege bombing of 1942, post-WWII ruin, and new open-air theatre, by interacting with the historic fabric and new fabric of the building. The adaptation of the ruins allows the visitor to understand society and themselves in the future, a place beyond British-Malta, the trauma of WWII, beyond the abandonment of the structure, and to a future where Malta's identity can be understood in context within the complex history in which it sits. By adapting the ruins, the space is no longer a silent scar, with no purpose, but one which can contribute to the future of Malta.

Where the ruins of the *Royal Opera House* differ from the *Frauenkirche* is that the ruins in Malta were not seeding a hatred from a place of trauma which was encouraged by misleading propaganda. The building does instead reflect the sociopolitical upheavals in Malta, and the impact this has had on the Maltese community and their association with their British history and memories. Where GDR propaganda influenced and helped to doctor memories of the past, the failed attempts at Integration, migration and 'Break with Britain' campaign all helped to feed the nostalgic desire for the memory of British-Malta, of which the *Royal Opera House* was the epitomised physical reminder.

By reconstructing the *Frauenkirche*, it was an opportunity to acknowledge the events of the past, but heal an open wound and help the fragmented society move forward past the trauma of the events and post-WWII East Germany in the GDR. However, in Malta, a reconstruction of the ruins of the *Royal Opera House* would have only served to repair what was lost, an action which would most likely not help to heal society, and was not supporting a physical cue which could help society understand different futures in reference to their past and present. The powerful impulse to reconstruct what was lost, rather than interpret what is left, whilst not uniquely Maltese, is a strong indication of the community's nostalgia and connection to their past culture. It also gives insight into society's ability, and to what extent they can live with the fragmentation of their physical surroundings and memories.

¹¹⁰ Calleja, '80 Years After Opera House Bombing, Public Unhappy with Open-Air Theatre'.

¹¹¹ Halbwachs and Coser, *On Collective Memory*, 22; Madgin and Lesh, *People-Centred Methodologies for Heritage Conservation*, 3.

¹¹² Madgin and Lesh, *People-Centred Methodologies for Heritage Conservation*, 5.

To reconstruct however, is tantamount to pretending that the atrocities which led to the destruction and continued abandonment did not occur – wiping the slate clean, to return to a presumed better time.

Despite persistent public opinion calling for the reconstruction of the *Royal Opera House*, doing so would in fact cause the loss of the memorial function of the site – as the value of the memorial is not necessarily in its tangible stones, but rather the intangible qualities it represents as a ruined structure. Ruskin exclaimed in *The Seven Lamps of Architecture*, that it is “better the rudest work that tells a story or records a fact, than the richest without meaning.”¹¹³ By retaining the ruins as integral to the adaptive reuse of the site, Piano and Architectural Project have ensured that the memorial qualities of the *Royal Opera House*’s many interwoven memories and identities – British-Malta, symbol of the strength and perseverance of the Maltese people in face of a history of conquerors, and the destruction of WWII, is not only respected, but celebrated and conserved. In Ruskin’s words, as a civic building, *Pjazza Teatru Rjal* the former *Royal Opera House*, is in its “becoming memorial or monumental that a true perfection is attained.”¹¹⁴

Whilst both the *Frauenkirche* and the *Royal Opera House* represent singular monuments which were destroyed during WWII, and left in ruins for half a century or more, not all war-destruction was treated in this same way. **Chapter 5** draws to a close the analysis of the second ‘phase of crisis’ in conservation, by examining two cities – *Warsaw* and *Saint-Malo*. At a greater urban scale, these two worn-torn cities reflect many similarities to the singular monuments of Dresden and Malta, but where they differ is the approach to their reconstruction, focusing less on authenticity through the fabric, but rather achieving a new completeness through creative extrapolation from images. Where the *Frauenkirche* and the *Royal Opera House*, highlighted society’s unique connection to the individual monument and the expectations surrounding memory and identity, the cities of *Warsaw* and *Saint-Malo*, highlight the importance of image and technology, and how this can undertake part of the memory work for the building and the city.

¹¹³ Ruskin, *The Seven Lamps of Architecture*, 183.

¹¹⁴ Ruskin, *The Seven Lamps of Architecture*, 178.

CHAPTER 5
CREATIVE AND RECREATIVE MEMORY

...the city imagines its future by improvising on its past.

-- Svetlana Boym, *The Future of Nostalgia*, 2001, p. 75

INTRODUCTION

Images play a crucial role in both memory and architectural reconstruction, serving as a bridge between the past and the present. Acting not only as records of the past, but as catalysts for envisioning the future, the dual function of images – photographs, drawings, or other visual representations – mediate between memory and materiality, feeding the impulse to reconstruct what was lost. As historian David Lowenthal notes “the past as known is partly a product of the present, for we continually reshape memory, rewrite history, refashion relics...”¹ In this way through the image, as Svetlana Boym articulates in this chapter’s epigraph, the city can imagine its future by creatively reconstructing the fabric and memories of its past. The impulse to reconstruct, arises not only from a nostalgic desire to recover what was destroyed, but from a deeper need to reinstate and articulate a cultural continuity and identity, negotiating collective memories through the built environment. By re-imagining the theories of Eugène Viollet-le-Duc within the context of post-war Europe, **Chapter 5** explores how visual media – images as both documents and imaginative tools – enable cities to not only reconstruct their architecture, but the symbolic and cultural presence also. **Chapter 4** established that there was a disinclination to reconstruct in Dresden, as it was seen as an erasure of one memory, replaced with an inauthentic replication. **Chapter 5** provides a re-examination of the reconstruction of *Warsaw* and *Saint-Malo* in the immediate aftermath of the war, and the creative licence which was used to recreate these cities. The chapter distinguishes between an image (a visual medium), and the ‘image’ (the visual appearance and cultural identity of a city). The importance of the image to the creative and recreative reconstruction process in these cities, and how this was influenced by the relationship between the visual medium, the city’s ‘image’, collective memory and national or regional identity is explored. Arguing that the reconstruction of both *Warsaw* and *Saint-Malo* was shaped by this dynamic relationship between the image (and ‘image’), memory, and identity, it is this relationship which is key to understanding what compels society to reconstruct, and how images – both visual and imagined, make this reconstruction possible, and provide an avenue for buildings to do memory work.

Through the lens of contemporary memory science and key theories of imagination, *scene construction theory*, and the *imagined observer hypothesis*, this chapter outlines how the image not only acts as a memory cue, but encourages the viewer to participate as an observer of a moment in time, and engage their imagination to envisage the city as it once was. The significance of the image as a reconstruction aid in both *Warsaw* and *Saint-Malo* illustrates the important shift between architecture as witness, to the image as witness; and how the image has assumed an increasingly important role and influence on conservation in the twentieth century and beyond.

The first section entitled ‘**Re-imagining Viollet in Post-War Europe**’, revisits the nineteenth century theories of Eugène Viollet-le-Duc. Whilst Viollet is a contemporary of theorists Victor Hugo, Sir Walter Scott and John Ruskin, who were discussed in earlier chapters, he was the only practicing architect among this group, and had a distinct approach to restoration and the question of authenticity. The chapter re-examines Viollet’s restoration theories in relation to his ideas of the image and memory. Through this a clear link is drawn between Viollet’s nineteenth century theories and the theories and practices of twentieth century architects like Gustavo Giovannoni and Aldo Rossi, who were pivotal to the post-war urbanisation and restoration of European cities. This first section also examines the importance of photography and the image in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, particularly its application to documentation and restoration of buildings and cities. It analyses the psychological impact of photographs and artistic representations on the memory, perception and recollection of

¹ Lowenthal, *The Past Is a Foreign Country*, 69.

cities to visitors and inhabitants, and how this in turn can influence the cultural identity of the people, and the future restoration of buildings.

The subsequent section ‘**Warsaw**’ investigates the significant history and collective memory of the city of *Warsaw* in Poland, nicknamed the ‘Phoenix City’, for its ability to rise from the ashes on multiple occasions. Focusing on the destruction of the city during WWII and its later reconstruction based on Bernardo Bellotto’s eighteenth century paintings, this section analyses the controversies which arose around the reconstruction of the city and its authenticity. The German obliteration of *Warsaw* was an attack on Polish culture and identity through its architecture. The significance of the capital as a symbol of Polish national identity and the importance of the post-war reconstruction, which was led by the people within a new Communist state, underpins the discussion surrounding the authenticity and its impacts on the architectural memory of the city and of society. Lastly this section discusses the importance of the reconstruction as a model of exemplary post-war reconstruction as a World Heritage Listed city, and the impact this has had on conservation and reconstruction around the world.

The last section entitled ‘**Saint-Malo**’ analyses the destruction of the Breton city of *Saint-Malo*, and the impacts of the reconstruction in comparison to *Warsaw*. Unlike *Warsaw*, *Saint-Malo*’s identity was keenly interconnected with its ‘image’ – ‘The Corsair City’ which turned into an idyllic tourist destination. The association with the tourist image and photograph being so strong, that the restoration was significantly influenced by recreating this ‘image’. This section examines the issues of authenticity in relation to the reconstruction of a city based on its aesthetic significance, whilst taking creative licences with the reconstruction of the city’s structures and urban plan. *Saint-Malo* employed interwar and post-war urban theories like Giovannoni’s *diradamento* which sought to modernise and open crowded medieval cities, whilst maintaining the overall grain and character. Where *Warsaw*’s identity and society’s collective memories were linked to the *genius loci* of the city and its fabric, in *Saint-Malo* the ‘image’ of *Saint-Malo* as viewed from the water was key to its identity and memory. Where *Warsaw* sought to reconstruct their culture through the city’s buildings, *Saint-Malo* sought to reconstruct their ‘image’, chasing a phantasm of the past. These two cities highlight how through an emphasis on the image (and ‘image’ of the city), a different approach to reconstruction can be undertaken, one which emphasises the role that images play in memory and remembrance.

RE-IMAGINING VIOLET IN POST-WAR EUROPE

Some of the most significant early influences on conservation principles in the post-war period, originated from the aesthetic theories which were formulated in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries in England and France. Through literature, architecture and art, the Romantic Movement sought to enhance the historical consciousness of society and nostalgic urge to see, experience and reconstruct the past.² As historian Rosemary Hill explains, “the power of association, the spirit of the place, the effect of natural landscape marked by human experience had shaped the sensibility of a generation.”³ One way this occurred is through the concepts of the picturesque and the sublime, which were discussed in **Chapter 2**.

² Bressani, *Architecture and the Historical Imagination*, 53.

³ Hill, *Time’s Witness*, 106.

As a result of the efforts of the Romantic Movement, picturesqueness was seen as one of the qualities of historic architecture that justified its protection and conservation.⁴ Concurrently, this period also saw the advent of photography, which became a useful tool and medium to construct and perpetuate the romantic and nostalgic impressions of France and England, and other countries across continental Europe. In France, the daguerreotype was developed by Louis-Jaques-Mandé Daguerre, whilst in England William Henry Fox Talbot developed the talbotype (later calotype). In England, Talbot utilised photography's requirement for long exposures and immobile subjects to capitalise on the growing interest in tourism, publishing books of photographic prints, like *Sun Pictures of Scotland* (1845) which appealed to the culture of Romanticism and the picturesque scenes established in the tales of celebrated authors like Wordsworth and Scott.⁵ In doing so, photography helped to perpetuate heritage tourism of these places, and further interest in their conservation.

Whilst tourism became a guiding force which increased the demand for architectural photography, in France, photography was also used to document the past. The Mission Heliographiques (Mission), a group of five photographers, was established in 1851 by the Commission des Monuments Historiques (Commission). The Mission were tasked with photographing medieval era (predominantly Gothic) buildings across France. The photographs taken by the Mission became a physical representation of a nostalgic and idealised past, and a significant contribution to the cultural memory of the French.⁶ The photographs taken by the Mission, and later by architects for various restoration projects, were as Viollet would explain in his essay 'On Restoration', a unique new way to document, providing indisputable evidence, which can be forever consulted and compared to the physical traces of the ruin or building.⁷ Photographs, it was believed, would provide more accurate documentation, as artworks were often distorted through stylistic and technical devices like the *camera obscura*, embellishments, or had omissions due to artistic licence.

As such, photographs were able to provide an avenue to not only document, but reimagine the past—taking the physical world and witnessing of the building into a two-dimensional space. However, with the invention of the photograph, Hugo's warning in *Notre-Dame de Paris* about the dangers of mass media would come to pass. *Ceci tuera cela* – the photograph could have the ability to replace and 'kill' the building. As nineteenth century French essayist Joseph Joubert explained, society became "more inspired by the images of objects than by the presence of the objects themselves."⁸ By translating the three-dimensional world into a two-dimensional image, photography has a unique and enviable position to influence and recreate the perception of the environment and memories of the viewer, and in doing so, impact the conservation and reconstruction of sites in the future.

The role of photography and art in the depiction of architecture and its impact on the creation and recall of memories is one that is often debated, particularly with the increasing ability to distort or augment the documentary evidence. Indeed, it could even be used as a form of forgetting, and repurposed through propaganda to preference one memory over another. In its true form, a photograph is an imprint of the past. As Adrian Forty explains, this can be seen as a fulfilment of

⁴ Jokilehto, *A History of Architectural Conservation*, Repr, 50.

⁵ James Ackerman, 'On the Origins of Photography', in *This Is Not Architecture: Media Constructions*, ed. Kester Rattenbury (Routledge, 2002), 26.

⁶ Laura Matarese, 'Situating Iconic Architectural Photographs in the Valorisation and Conservation of Modern Houses' (Masters Thesis, University of Sydney, 2018), 23–24.

⁷ Wethered and Viollet-le-Duc, *On Restoration, By E. Viollet-Le-Duc [Tr. From an Article in His Dictionnaire Raisonne De L'Architecture Francaise] and a Notice of His Works in Connection with the Historical Monuments of France*, 68.

⁸ Michael Camille, *The Gargoyles of Notre-Dame: Medievalism and the Monsters of Modernity* (University of Chicago Press, 2009), 247.

Aristotle's theories of memory – where memory is an imprint of what was felt (the photograph is this imprint).⁹ Theorist, Roland Barthes would however say in his famed book *Camera Lucida*, that:

The Photograph does not call up the past (nothing Proustian in a photograph). The effect it produces upon me is not to restore what has been abolished (by time, by distance) but to attest that what I see has indeed existed.¹⁰

Barthes makes a clear distinction here for photography, that they are representations of the past, and that the image does not necessarily depict what is no longer there, but only what has been there. The photograph therefore is a record to be studied and what Barthes refers to as the *studium*. The distinction that Barthes makes is decisive, and is important to keep in mind when understanding the important role photography has in memory, restoration/reconstruction, and authenticity. In relation to photography, Barthes is intimating about the temporal nature of a photograph, that it is a form of documentation fixed in time. A photograph can only reveal what existed at the moment the photograph was taken, and is unable to capture or convey the complexities relating to the past, its loss or absence directly. In this way, Barthes believes the photograph negates the ability to be a medium through which one can interpret or convey a deeper meaning, other than what is being presented in the image. This is not to say that the image itself cannot engage with the viewer and elicit a deep or personal reaction (what Barthes terms *punctum*). For Barthes, the photograph – the image itself, only reproduces what it sees mechanically, and is not something which can easily be repeated.¹¹ It is a form of blank witnessing, evidenced based. This creates a sense of authenticity, in its ability to capture reality and become evidence of existence frozen in time. A painting however has a greater realm for creative licence from the artist, to manipulate or change a scene so that it is no longer an authentic portrayal of the past.

Critic, Susan Sontag in her book *On Photography* however offers an alternate view to photography's ability to represent the past. Sontag explains that whilst representative, the photograph is also inherently selective, as through framing and limited scene exposure, the photograph can only capture a fraction of a moment in time. This she believed could distort or simplify the complexities of the subject. As such, she believed a photograph was equivalent to a painting or drawing, interpreting the world and distorting or selecting the scene which to emphasise and capture.¹² The image is therefore a fabric shift from the physical three-dimensional world to the two-dimensional world.

Whilst Barthes and Sontag discussed images in this way during the twentieth century, these twentieth century theories can be re-examined and understood through the lens of memory science. As the experiences and recollections of the urban environment are often situational and spatial, it is hard for a person to look at a photograph in its two-dimensional sphere. Rather, we undertake what contemporary psychology has termed the *imagined observer hypothesis* or the *observer effect* – whereby engaging in a visual representation, we can imagine that we are observing or witnessing the building and events that are being represented.¹³ Whilst the photograph or image provides a limited scene through its aperture and framing, the viewer can inhabit the scene through the *observer effect* and further extrapolate the scene beyond the physical boundaries of the image, imagining and reconstructing the scene. This process is referred to as *boundary extension*, and has been identified by neuroscientists like Eleanor Maguire, as a hippocampally-mediated process that is central to *scene*

⁹ Forty and Küchler, *The Art of Forgetting*, 2–3.

¹⁰ Barthes, *Camera Lucida*, 82.

¹¹ Barthes, *Camera Lucida*, 4, 85.

¹² Susan Sontag, *On Photography* (Rosetta Books, 2005), 4.

¹³ Abraham, *The Cambridge Handbook of the Imagination*, 571.

construction.¹⁴ While an image can distort what is represented, the construction system of the brain can in turn augment or alter the associated scene that is evoked by the image.

Our cultural memories, national identities, architectural and natural environments are entwined and mediated through images. The photograph acts as an intervening agent between the place and a memory. It mediates the spatiotemporal divide between the present, past and even the imagined, curating the city space, our experiences and conservation of them.¹⁵ It is the job of the stimulus and memory cue, once the building, now the image, to help transport the observer through their imagination, engaging their *episodic* and *semantic memories* to experience and engage with the photographed memory or scene. In doing so, inevitably, the observer brings their own contemporary frame of reference, which impacts their interpretation of the scene, and impacts the mental (re)construction of the *memory trace*. This is why Barthes explains that the photographed memory is one which cannot be repeated – it will always be altered in some way by the person observing. The relationship between the image, memory and time becomes complicated by the viewer's role, as the image will invariably elicit a different response depending on the context and the perspectives of the individuals who interact with it. As such, the photograph, the image, always involves a creative act of recreation.

Viollet's theories on restoration and the image can be understood similarly. In Viollet's opening words from 'On Restoration' found in his *Dictionnaire raisonné de l'architecture française du XIe au XVIe siècle* (Dictionnaire) he exclaims:

The term Restoration and the thing itself are both modern. To restore a building is not to preserve it, to repair or rebuild it; it is to reinstate it in a condition of completeness which could never have existed at any given time.¹⁶

To Viollet, the act of restoration is an act of creative recreation, requiring us to undertake a creative role in the perception of the past and its memories. Art and architecture have the power to seize the imagination, and bend a viewer's perceptions of reality, and the visualisation or value of the past. Viollet uses imagination as a tool to understand the past – particularly France's Gothic architecture. His approach to the architectural past was not one of reclamation or even revival, but of imagination. Distilling and transforming the relevant memories of the past embedded in the fabric, Viollet's emphasis was less on historical accuracy, but rather on the pictorial and compositional view of the architecture, sacrificing elements which did not enhance the overall visual effect which he sought. This technique is reminiscent of classic drawing techniques such as 'memory drawing' devised by Leocoq de Boisbaudran, who was greatly admired by Viollet. The technique's theory holds that:

when an artist draws from memory, relying solely on the strength of the impression, he automatically heightens the suggestive power of the object. Memory idealises, that is to say, it selects and erases detail in support of a general effect.¹⁷

¹⁴ Maguire and Mullally, 'The Hippocampus: A Manifesto for Change', 1182–84; Maguire et al., 'Scenes, Spaces, and Memory Traces', 433.

¹⁵ Shelley Hornstein, *Losing Site: Architecture, Memory and Place*, Ashgate Studies in Architecture Series (Ashgate, 2011), 105, 112.

¹⁶ Wethered and Viollet-le-Duc, *On Restoration, By E. Viollet-Le-Duc [Tr. From an Article in His Dictionnaire Raisonne De L'Architecture Francaise] and a Notice of His Works in Connection with the Historical Monuments of France*, 9.

¹⁷ Bressani, *Architecture and the Historical Imagination*, 507.

By subjugating the fabric of the building to a sensational and sensorial effect, through his conservation theories and practice, Viollet was able to transform the reality of the building into a phantasm. Contemporary psychology theory would explain that Viollet's use of imagination was not confined to the realms of his mind, but happened within the physical world through processes of creative material engagement.¹⁸ By creatively recreating buildings, to support the general effect, but not necessarily its historical accuracy, Viollet would forge a distinctly contrasting path to his contemporaries like Ruskin and William Morris. Seeking to adapt buildings for the present, not retain them in the past, Viollet's nineteenth century theories would prove to be instrumental to post-WWI and WWII theorists and architects who were navigating how to recreate cities in new ways, whilst honouring the identity and memories embedded in the place. This design process draws parallels with the brain's capacity to consolidate and reconsolidate *episodic memories*. When an *episodic memory* is stored, it is not fixed, but rather it is dynamic, able to be retrieved and undergo active processes or reconsolidation which can alter the memory, but also determine whether it is maintained or forgotten.¹⁹ In this way, Viollet's architectural process, was much like the dynamic *memory trace* which is adapted on its retrieval (reconstruction/adaptation), navigating the needs of the new society and city in new ways, and reconsolidated in its reconstructed form, to act as a memory cue (albeit adapted) for future generations.

Gustavo Giovannoni (1873-1947) was one such architect and theorist in the twentieth century who worked to recreate cities. Giovannoni has been described by contemporary architectural historians like Steven Semes as the 'middle way' between the purist conservation views of Ruskin and Morris, and the restoration practice and theories of Viollet.²⁰ Working during the inter-war period and through WWII, Giovannoni understood the need for restoration and reconstruction, as a response to widespread destruction, but also to adapt the city for contemporary living. In his 1925 essay 'Questioni di architettura nella storia e nella vita' (Questions of Architecture in History and Life), Giovannoni provides a series of restoration approaches with varying impacts on a given site. He reiterates these restoration approaches in a post-WWII essay entitled 'Types of Restoration (1945)'. Whilst Giovannoni discusses traditional methods of restoration like *anastylosis*, he was less concerned with buildings that he considered 'national monuments' in which *anastylosis* could be applied. Instead, he preferred to focus on the more complex relationship between buildings and the urban space of the city, and the impact of building styles on the character and identity of the city.²¹ It is in his theories about restoration at the urban scale that Viollet's influence becomes particularly pronounced.

At the scale of the city quarter, Giovannoni applied the theory of *superfetazione*, which sought to remove fabric which was added after the established period of significance. Resonating with Viollet, this approach, much like the photograph or painting, sought to curate a specific view of the city and its identity.²² Giovannoni's theories of *restorations of innovation* sought to add entirely new elements to historic fabric, to complete missing elements. This type of restoration was undertaken because little documentation existed, or to reconstruct – reminiscent of Viollet – to a state which may never have existed before, in order to harmonise with the historic condition of the city, and the generalised

¹⁸ Abraham, *The Cambridge Handbook of the Imagination*, 38.

¹⁹ Haubrich and Nader, 'Memory Reconsolidation', 152–55; Alberini and LeDoux, 'Memory Reconsolidation', R746.

²⁰ Semes, 'Gustavo Giovannoni', 237.

²¹ Guido Zucconi, 'Gustavo Giovannoni: A Theory and a Practice of Urban Conservation', *Change Over Time* 4, no. 1 (2014): 88; Semes, 'Gustavo Giovannoni', 238.

²² Zucconi, 'Gustavo Giovannoni', 80; 'Types of Restoration (1945)' in Giovannoni and Semes, *New Building in Old Cities*, 260.

image of the city.²³ At the urban scale, Giovannoni also supported the practice of what he termed *diradamento*, where selective buildings were removed (or not reconstructed) in order to open up medieval cities. *Diradamento* was intended to provide better connections, improve access to amenities and hygiene through light and ventilation, all while retaining the urban grain and character of the city.²⁴ Giovannoni also understood however that individual monuments and cities derive much of their significance from their surrounding context and setting. As such, he argued for *ambientismo* – a respect for the setting, as without the setting, and through the removal of all fabric, the site (or city), loses itself, loses the physical evidence of its memory.²⁵ Giovannoni's theories all highlight the influence that Viollet, the image, and visual character or essence of the city has over restoration at the larger urban scale.

The impacts of the theories seeded by Viollet on the early twentieth century and post-WWII field of conservation, such as the practice of Giovannoni, are important to understanding the idea of the *memory trace* and architectural witnessing within the city context, and why, at the larger urban scale of the city we still expect the buildings to do memory work. For Viollet, the city does not live in the past, but learns from the past for the future. Post-war architect and theorist, Aldo Rossi elaborates on these theories in his seminal text *The Architecture of the City*:

The city is a theatre of human...it absorbs events and feelings, and every new event contains within it a memory of the past and a potential memory of the future.²⁶

To Rossi, the city was the collective memory of the inhabitants, this memory and consciousness becoming the *genius loci*, the spirit, of the city. As such, to destroy a city, as happened in many places during WWII, was to destroy the physical traces of this memory, the architectural witness. If we were to take the Aristotelian view of memory, this would mean that this *memory trace*, was lost. However, if we were to utilise a Freudian understanding:

...nothing that has once been formed can perish – that everything is somehow preserved and in suitable circumstances...can once more be brought to light.²⁷

Taking this Freudian view, the image becomes an important element in the argument. The building, the city, does not perish – because it has been preserved in the photograph or the painting. These image mediums ensure that buildings and the city are forever documented, should they succumb to destruction. Furthermore, the image in the 'suitable' circumstance, can help to reconstruct, and bring the city back to life. Such circumstances can be seen in both the reconstruction of *Warsaw*, and of *Saint-Malo*. In both *Warsaw* and *Saint-Malo*, the documentary evidence of the photograph and painting play a fundamental role in the reconstruction of these cities. It also highlights the significant influence that the 'image', the impression of the city as a collective, had on the recreation of the character and identity of these cities.

²³ Semes, 'Gustavo Giovannoni', 238.

²⁴ Semes, 'Gustavo Giovannoni', 241; Giovannoni and Semes, *New Building in Old Cities*, 264.

²⁵ Semes, 'Gustavo Giovannoni', 240.

²⁶ Aldo Rossi, *The Architecture of the City*, trans. Diane Ghirardo and Joan Ockman, Oppositions Books (MIT Press, 1984), 12.

²⁷ Forty and Küchler, *The Art of Forgetting*, 5.

WARSAW

‘THE PHOENIX CITY’

Located on the banks of the River Vistula in east-central Poland, the city of *Warsaw* traces its origins to the small fishing town in the historic region of Mazovia. While there is tangible evidence of three historic strongholds around *Warsaw* (Jazdów, Bródno and Mazovia), the rulers of the independent Dukedom of Mazovia favoured *Warsaw* as their seat, despite Płock remaining their official capital. In the thirteenth century, following the destruction caused by the Lithuanian incursion, the ducal seat of Mazovia moved from Jazdów, forming a new stronghold on the site of the Royal Castle in *Warsaw*. Thirteenth century historical sources described the city as occupying twelve hectares, with a regular street network and a rectangular market square, from which the medieval city grew including a cathedral and the Duke’s castle.²⁸

By the fifteenth century the town out-grew its accommodation, spreading past the northern wall. A new settlement, which was founded on the site of Freta Fauburg became known as the New Town, whilst the existing settlement was referred to as the Old Town, or Old *Warsaw*. Each town was governed by its own municipal charter, and it is thought that the establishment of the New Town was to help regulate the population and segregate those who were not allowed to settle in Old *Warsaw*, mainly Jewish people.²⁹

In accordance with a dynastic treaty which dealt with the survival of the Mazovian duchy, Mazovia was incorporated into the Polish Crown, after the death of the last duke, Janusz the Younger in 1526. This royal protectorate proved to be advantageous to *Warsaw*, endowed with several privileges, the city became the most important in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. Capitalising on this importance, King Sigismund III Vasa officially moved the royal court from Kraków to *Warsaw* in the early seventeenth century. Even though its Medieval layout made it difficult to meet the needs of the Royal Court, the city began to transform to meet the demands of the major magnate families, courtiers and Church dignitaries. Enclosed by the fortification walls, land was acquired throughout the Castle and Old Town, where several dozen manor houses, palaces and monasteries were built in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, changing the overall pattern and character of the city.³⁰ It is this character which Venetian artist Bernardo ‘Canallete’ Bellotto, nephew of the renowned artist Giovanni Antonio Canal,³¹ recorded in his *Warsaw* series of paintings which depict various city scenes in the late eighteenth century, a selection of which are shown in Figures 41 to 44.

²⁸ The City of *Warsaw*, ‘Management Plan for the Historic Centre of *Warsaw*’, 2013, 25; Stanislaw Dziewulski and Stanislaw Jankowski, ‘The Reconstruction of *Warsaw*’, *Annals of Public and Cooperative Economics* 30, no. 1 (1959): 62.

²⁹ The City of *Warsaw*, ‘Management Plan for the Historic Centre of *Warsaw*’, 26; Norman Davies, *God’s Playground: A History of Poland: In Two Volumes - Volume 1: The Origins to 1795*, Revised edition (Columbia University Press, 2005), 245.

³⁰ The City of *Warsaw*, ‘Management Plan for the Historic Centre of *Warsaw*’, 26–27.

³¹ Bernardo Bellotto, capitalising on his uncle’s fame would sign his paintings as Bernardo Canalleteo, or just Canalleteo, particularly in Germany and Poland. Canalleteo meaning ‘little Canal’.



41 View of Krakowskie Przedmieście Street seen from the Zygmunt III Column, c. 1767-68 – Bernardo Bellotto.
Source: The Royal Castle in Warsaw Museum (ZKW-449).



42 Krakowski Przedmieście street looking towards the Zygmunt III Column, c. 1774 – Bernardo Bellotto.
Source: The Royal Castle in Warsaw Museum (ZKW-450).

THESE WALLS HAVE EYES AND EARS



43 Miodowa Street, c. 1777 – Bernardo Bellotto.
Source: The Royal Castle in Warsaw Museum (ZKW-443).



44 Długa Street, c. 1777 – Bernardo Bellotto.
Source: The Royal Castle in Warsaw Museum (ZKW-444).

As the seat of the Polish Crown and de-facto capital of Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, *Warsaw* was subject to the destructive fate of politics and wars, including the Swedish invasion of 1655 which brought about the ruin of the Old Town. The city was destroyed by successive wars, plagues, and floods in the subsequent century up to Napoleon's invasion in 1795 and subsequent seat as the Duchy of Warsaw. As a result, many of the city's population left, and their property was seized or sold, causing further urban change. By the early nineteenth century however, the city saw a period of stability and expansion, with the construction of new buildings such as the Grand Theatre and government ministries, which sought to modernise the character of the Medieval walled city.³²

By the early twentieth century, there were efforts to make Old Warsaw more attractive, removing layers of fabric, uncovering the defensive walls from the 'Warsaw Fortress' built in the 1880s, and painting the facades of the former manor houses and palaces. There were also several urban planning schemes which were implemented, seeking to develop a more 'Functional Warsaw', moving away from its historic origins towards more contemporary architecture.³³ The development and urban change in *Warsaw* over the centuries, saw a juxtaposition of urban fabric and spaces which Polish historian and author Ewa Wampuszyc has described as:

a palimpsest on which old 'texts' are erased and replaced by new ones; yet traces of these old 'texts' remain present and can resurface or be actively revived. In this way, a city is 'palimpsestic', having layers of meaning. But a city is also 'palimpsestuous', continually reinventing itself through a complex relationality between the archaeological layering of the built environment (space) and archaeological-like, intertextual connections (spatiality).³⁴

The story of a city 'writing' and 'rewriting' itself is not a new one. However, in the case of *Warsaw* it is fundamental to its *genius loci*, the pervading spirit of the city and its people. The city has been destroyed numerous times from natural and un-natural forces; however, each time, the city and its people have been rebuilt. Like a Phoenix rising from the ashes, *Warsaw* has used its foundations, the 'old texts' to rewrite a new city, a new future; whilst further ingraining this idea of itself as having an indestructible spirit. This indestructible identity, however, would be challenged by the Nazis in WWII.

While other cities during WWII were destroyed as part of the general course of war operations during military campaigns, in *Warsaw*, the Nazis made it their policy to obliterate the physical manifestations of Polish culture. Considering the Polish people as racially inferior, Nazi ideology sought to assert German dominance and execute a total annihilation and disappearance of the city, a systematic destruction that goes far beyond what is considered typical war damage.³⁵

The German invasion following the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact, and bombing of *Warsaw* in 1939 was the first attempt to achieve this goal. It would not be until 1943 when the Nazis were able to execute further destruction to the city. In 1943, the uprising of the Nazi imposed Warsaw Ghetto, saw the death of over 350,000 Polish-Jews, and an area which was left in rubble and ashes. The following year, in 1944, the Polish underground resistance led an uprising seeking to liberate *Warsaw* from German occupation. While the insurrection ultimately failed, Polish nationalists have regarded the event as proof of the unbreakable spirit of the Polish people. The aftermath of the 1944 uprising would be the

³² The City of Warsaw, 'Management Plan for the Historic Centre of Warsaw', 28–29.

³³ The City of Warsaw, 'Management Plan for the Historic Centre of Warsaw', 29–30.

³⁴ Ewa Wampuszyc, *Mapping Warsaw: The Spatial Poetics of a Postwar City* (Northwestern University Press, 2018), 12.

³⁵ Diefendorf, *Rebuilding Europe's Bombed Cities*, 9, 77; David Crowley, 'Memory in Pieces: The Symbolism of the Ruin in Warsaw after 1944', *Journal of Modern European History* 9, no. 3 (2011): 353.

final blow for *Warsaw*, which saw German army demolition squads set fire to the city with flamethrowers and explosives. Targeting sites of cultural and historic significance to the Polish, the Nazis endeavoured to destroy anything which was left in the Polish capital.³⁶ Ultimately, the destruction was so severe, that less than one tenth of the city was left standing, with 782 historical monuments out of 957 destroyed, and 141 partially destroyed. The destruction so devastating that it was estimated that the rubble could fill 8,000 Olympic sized swimming pools.³⁷ The extent of this destruction is acutely visible in historic photographs from the period, showing little more than the remains of a few buildings, surrounded by the rubble of the city (Figures 45 to 47).

Historians like Norman Davies have documented that Hitler was elated by the fall of *Warsaw*, but wanted to exact merciless revenge for the insolent uprisings of the Polish people.³⁸ Ordering the demolition of the west-bank of *Warsaw*, and despite the increasingly critical military situation unfolding for the Nazi's in 1945, Hitler employed thousands of troops to fulfil a total razing of the ruins of the city.³⁹ This critical military situation included the war on the eastern front, in which the Soviet forces were advancing further westward. Both Hitler and Stalin were acutely aware of *Warsaw's* significance as a symbol of Polish national identity.⁴⁰ Much like what occurred in Dresden with the GDR, the propaganda of the Polska Rzeczpospolita Ludowa (PRL) (Polish People's Republic) who would later govern Poland as a communist satellite state, would play an important role in the reconstruction of *Warsaw's* city fabric and the Polish identity.



45 Old town Market Square, and ruins of tenements on Derka and Zakrzewskiego Street - Ryszard Witkowski, c. Feb 1945.
Source: Warsaw Rising Museum (MPW-IN/3120).

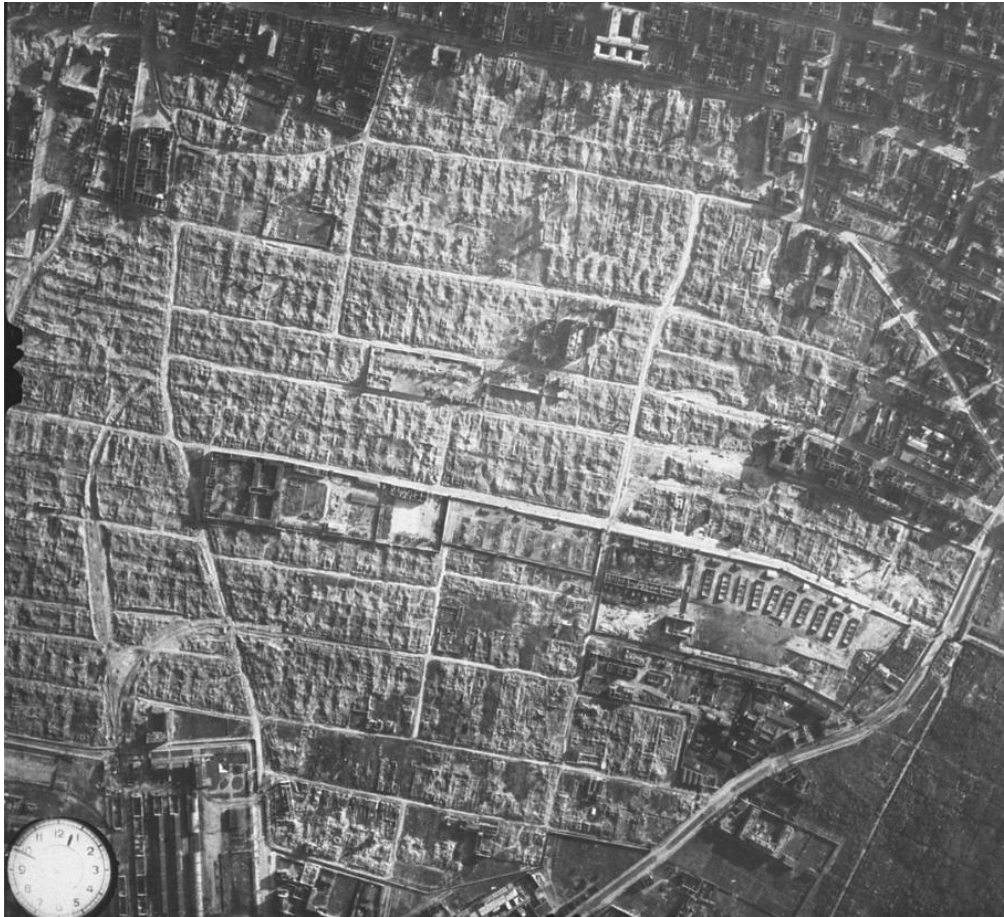
³⁶ Wampuszyc, *Mapping Warsaw*, 17; Moshenska, 'Curated Ruins and the Endurance of Conflict Heritage', 79.

³⁷ Lambourne, *War Damage in Western Europe*, 79; Wampuszyc, *Mapping Warsaw*, 18.

³⁸ Norman Davies, *Rising '44: The Battle for Warsaw*, Corr. and expanded ed (Pan Books, 2004), 474.

³⁹ Davies, *Rising '44*, 474.

⁴⁰ Wampuszyc, *Mapping Warsaw*, 18.



46 Aerial photograph of the destroyed Warsaw Ghetto, c. 1943.
Source: WikiCommons.



47 Church of Saint Augustine surrounded by rubble from the Warsaw Ghetto - Eugeniusz Haneman,
19-21 Jan 1945.
Source: Warsaw Rising Museum (MPW-IN/2900).

'THE ENTIRE NATION BUILDS ITS CAPITAL'

The story of *Warsaw* is a product of a deeply traumatic series of events where the people and city were targeted malevolently by Hitler and the Nazis for a perceived inferiority. When the city and its people would not concede, Hitler sought to annihilate all evidence of the city and its people through any means possible. The Polish, however, took every opportunity to fight back. The destruction and trauma of the 1939 invasion and subsequent destruction following the 1943 and 1944 uprisings caused a great loss of life, and virtual destruction of the city. What it did not destroy was the cultural identity and will of the people.

As the influence of Communism spread beyond Russia and the Soviet Union, the once partitioned Poland came solely under Communist control with the establishment of the PRL. The PRL, much like the GDR in East Germany, sought to manipulate media and propaganda to paint the Nazis as the enemy. However, during the final Nazi blow to the city in 1944 and 1945, the Soviet forces were encamped on the opposite bank of the Vistula, and did not intervene to stop the Nazi destruction. After the war, historians explain that the PRL exerted control over the Polish not unlike the Nazis before them, including persecuting and repressing the opposition, and censorship. The reconstruction of *Warsaw* however played an important role in legitimising their power. Understanding the immense metonymic nature of *Warsaw* as a symbol of the Polish cultural identity, Wampuszyc suggests that Stalin believed that the reconstruction of *Warsaw*, a 'resurrection', was of the utmost importance to the establishment of the Communist regime after the war, and a manifestation of the resolve and reified victory of the Soviets over the Nazis.⁴¹

The Old Town under PRL control was to become an instrument of political manipulation both within Poland and externally to the world. By reconstructing the city, the Communists aimed to highlight their high cultural aspirations, but also to show how they 'support' the national identity of the Polish people. In reality however, the PRL sought to control the memory and idea of the city and its people, seeking a historical manipulation which aimed for a collective amnesia of the past. This altered historic consciousness sought to homogenise the national heritage, and disassociate with the cultural contributions of ethnic and national minorities, like Jews and others who did not align with the cultural preferences of the Soviets.⁴²

Given the almost total destruction of the city, it would not have been surprising if *Warsaw* was abandoned, and a new city established elsewhere that reflected the urbanistic preferences and ideological underpinnings of the new Communist regime. However, *Warsaw*, was a city of national remembrance, where even in its desolate state, it undertook memory work and was a record of the past, including years of war and occupation. For this reason, despite its destruction and all reason to abandon and start anew under a new regime, it is significant that the PRL reconstructed *Warsaw*. This decision is a key indication of the metonymic function of the city to the Polish and wider global community. The state-led reconstruction thus became a key task of national significance, one which mobilised the people, who helped to physically rebuild their city (Figures 48 and 49), and became a reservoir of enthusiasm that re-ignited a sense of Polish national identity.⁴³

⁴¹ Wampuszyc, *Mapping Warsaw*, 19–20.

⁴² Adam Milobedzki, 'Monuments, Politics and Society: Polish Experiences (1945-1995)', in *Memory & Oblivion: Proceedings of the Xxixth International Congress of the History of Art, Held in Amsterdam, 1-7 September 1996*, ed. Adriaan Wessel Reinink et al., International Congress of the History of Art (Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1999), 369–70.

⁴³ Diefendorf, *Rebuilding Europe's Bombed Cities*, 80, 91.



48 Rebuilding Old Town, mason and helper, c.1946 – photographer unknown.
Source: Dom Spotkan z Historia (History Meeting House).



49 Rebuilding of the Old Town in Warsaw, architectural works Golebia Street – Zybszko Siemaszko, c.1953.
Source: Dom Spotkan z Historia (History Meeting House).

THESE WALLS HAVE EYES AND EARS

Reconstruction in East-Central Europe was heavily influenced by Soviet architectural preferences in this period, and was generally symbolic of the State's commitment to modernisation and removal of the shackles of imperial and bourgeois societies.⁴⁴ In *Warsaw* however, a different approach was taken, where the regime sought to reconnect to the past, in order to construct a *Warsaw* for the future. In doing so, the eighteenth-century paintings of Bellotto, which were hidden during the war, would become primary historical references for the reconstruction, along with inter-war photographs and detailed drawings of important buildings which were secretly prepared by planners, architects, and university students during the German occupation.⁴⁵

Bellotto's paintings were undertaken during a time in which Poland had been undergoing a Polish Enlightenment spurred by the relocation of the Royal Court, which brought about bourgeois influences and a cultural revival in the city. Invited by the King in 1764 to be the court painter, Bellotto received royal artistic patronage, and from 1768 painted numerous views of *Warsaw*, becoming the figurehead of the Polish Enlightenment for the remaining sixteen years of his life. This was an era, that the nascent PRL identified with and sought to restore in order to connect with, and augment, the Polish cultural identity.⁴⁶

The reconstruction was intended to be a 'portrait' or replica of the 'original' city, that would evoke pleasure and memory in the inhabitants and visitors. By reconstructing the city as a replica of the original city, the inhabitant or visitor can use the reconstructed space as a memory cue. Through this recreation, a sense of continuity between Poland and *Warsaw* of yesteryear, and that of the present and future is provided. In doing so, the PRL intended to show that not everything in the past was rejected, that Communism can build upon the history of the city to reshape both the fabric and its people from one of bourgeois principles to those more aligned with the proletariat. The PRL official narrative was intended to influence the Polish cultural and collective imagination, and re-establish the Polish identity and *genius loci* of *Warsaw*.⁴⁷ Instead, the reconstruction based on what was known as the 'golden age', became one which highlighted questions of authenticity – not only in the fabric, but also the inherent memory and cultural identity of the city and people.

RECREATIVE MEMORY: RECONSTRUCTION AND AUTHENTICITY

Warsaw is the epitome of what Aldo Rossi describes in *The Architecture of the City*; where the collective memory and consciousness of the inhabitants and the wider population were the *genius loci*, the spirit of the city. As such, the city can be considered metonymical, representing the people, culture, and identity of Poland. This metonymy worked two-fold through the reconstruction, particularly in relation to the 'image' of Poland and the Polish identity. Whilst the urge to 'improve' the city as a new socialist city was strong, the impetus to preserve *Warsaw's* historical legacy outweighed the socialist building projects. By recreating a *Warsaw* from its 'golden age', the PRL wanted to foster an 'image' that they were embracing the historic roots and identity of the city. On the other hand, the reconstruction was a significant step towards recreating what was lost, through the memory cues within the paintings and other image mediums.

⁴⁴ Diefendorf, *Rebuilding Europe's Bombed Cities*, 9.

⁴⁵ Wampuszyc, *Mapping Warsaw*, 17; Diefendorf, *Rebuilding Europe's Bombed Cities*, 9.

⁴⁶ Philip McCouat, 'Bernardo Bellotto and the Reconstruction of Warsaw', *Journal of Art in Society*, 2015, www.artinsociety.com; Michal Murawski, '(A)Political Buildings - Ideology, Memory and Warsaw's "Old" Town', 2009, 14.

⁴⁷ Wampuszyc, *Mapping Warsaw*, 22–25.

Reconstruction based on a creative medium like an artwork, however, raises questions about what will be remembered. In the first instance, Bellotto's paintings were not entirely accurate depictions of the historic eighteenth-century city. Using optical devices like the *camera obscura* to trace the scenes and transfer to canvas has altered some proportions when the buildings were re-constructed. Furthermore, Bellotto consciously applied creative licence to 'improve' scenes, including adding sculptural work to facades which did not originally exist. Although laboriously reconstructed, these sculptures were in fact a recreation of a folly painted by the artist.⁴⁸

The reconstruction also utilised key theories from Viollet and Giovannoni's playbook, where the overall harmony of the visual character of the city was prioritised over the surviving architectural fragments and shortcomings of the medieval city. As such, the compact old town received a vernacular and historical renewal, one which like Viollet's theories and Giovannoni's *superfetazione* and *diradamento*, meant that fabric from the succeeding periods were removed or not reconstructed. This was done to recreate and protect the visual symbols (monuments) of *Warsaw* which were captured in Bellotto's paintings. Architectural historian, Peter Martyn explained that it would be more accurate to say that *Warsaw*:

was remodelled rather than reconstructed. Contrary to the frequently cited claim of the city architect in the early 1960s that 'the Old Town now looks as it used to long ago', it is clear that 'the Old Town in its rebuilt form never existed in the past.'⁴⁹

What Martyn describes, is analogous with Viollet's theories; the city of *Warsaw* was recreated to a form of completion that may never have existed before. Paralleling human psychology, the recreation romanticises memories, viewing the past through nostalgic rose-tinted glasses. By rewriting the history and fabric of the city, it is tantamount to rewriting the urban palimpsest of the buildings and spaces. The process of remaking and resituating the buildings and fabric of the city, can completely transform its meaning – constructing a new language, a new identity. In *Warsaw*, the Old Town alluded to a time of opulence and aristocracy, which was against the fundamental ideals of Communism. As a result, the original narrative of *Warsaw* needed to be rewritten, to adjust their prewar significance, and revise their meaning to have a more Communist slant, rather than strictly Polishness.⁵⁰

The second issue relating to authenticity in reconstruction relates to the use of the documentary evidence to create propaganda and false memories. Barthes presented an ethical dilemma in *Camera Lucida* which can be applied to the complexity surrounding the reconstruction of *Warsaw* based on the image:

Not only is the Photograph never, in essence, a memory...but it actually blocks memory, quickly becomes a counter-memory.⁵¹

The photograph, and in *Warsaw's* case also the painting, can be a double-edged sword – providing documentary evidence, but also a tool for propaganda. This is because whilst the image can register far more detail than the human eye and human *memory traces*, by its very nature, it can distort the

⁴⁸ Daniel Mersom, 'Story of Cities #28: How Postwar Warsaw Was Rebuilt Using 18th Century Paintings', *The Guardian*, 25 April 2016, <https://www.theguardian.com/cities/2016/apr/22/story-cities-warsaw-rebuilt-18th-century-paintings>; McCouat, 'Bernardo Bellotto and the Reconstruction of Warsaw'.

⁴⁹ Murawski, '(A)Political Buildings - Ideology, Memory and Warsaw's "Old" Town', 14.

⁵⁰ Wampuszyc, *Mapping Warsaw*, 91.

⁵¹ Barthes, *Camera Lucida*, 90.

memory of the place – subjugating the fabric and scene for visual effect, altering the context. By making the image a witness to what has been, modern society renounces the importance of the monument, the physical fabric and palimpsest of the city. In the case of the PRL, the image was utilised to recreate memories of a desired visual character and identity, one which worked with their overall plan, rather than responding to the inherent memories which remained in the fabric, the place, and its people. By adopting the photos and paintings of ruined sites, whilst effacing them from the city fabric through a city-wide reconstruction program, the PRL sought to control the capacity of the city to function as a memory place, and manipulate the memory and ‘image’ it re-created and re-presented to the world.⁵² This was seen by the PRL as vital to creating and ensuring social cohesion in light of the new governance. As Forty explains, reconstruction could be an act of counter-iconoclasm, where by remaking the city, it is a way to forget what its absence signified, as without forgetting, there can be no memory.⁵³ Forty emphasises the Freudian concept that forgetting is a way to help the person unburden themselves of the memories which would otherwise cause them to be and feel like a victim. In this way, by erasing what the absence signifies, the reconstruction questions the relationship between memory and the urban environment, and highlights that for the PRL a certain degree of forgetting was necessary to ensure social stability.⁵⁴

The reconstruction of *Warsaw* created issues in conservation circles around authenticity, particularly in relation to the authentic reconstruction of the fabric. This however did not deal with the inauthenticity of the palimpsest or the perception of witnessing and memory in the fabric, which remains an unresolved question. To the Polish at the time, the idea was to rebuild the city to pass it down to future generations, and in essence forget the trauma and loss that its destruction created. The fact that the fabric was not necessarily authentic was not an issue to the reconstructors, as the original city was still alive in human memories and researchable through historic records.⁵⁵ This placation highlights the memory shift from three-dimensional city to the two-dimensional world of the image and supporting historical resources. By providing geographical reference points such as buildings, or signs – the image and recreated fabric can trigger not only the memory of the physical space, but the spatial context as well through *scene construction*. Doing so, the inhabitant or visitor becomes the observer, and can harness their imagination and counterfactual understanding of time and space to *mentally time travel* and look at themselves within the reconstructed town, as if it were the historic town from the eighteenth century. This psychological process provides an explanation for why we expect buildings to remember, allowing the viewer an understanding of the experience of both the current and historic urban space, and by extension, the national identity of the Polish as understood through the city fabric. Therefore, in this way, the image shifts back from the two-dimensional to the three-dimensional sphere.

With the reconstruction of *Warsaw* pre-dating the guidelines of the *Venice Charter 1964* by nearly two decades, the reconstruction followed the principles outlined in the *Athens Charter 1931* which specifically recommended the reconstruction of buildings to be based on and respect the character of the cities in which they are erected, and that the picturesque perspective should be preserved.⁵⁶ The *Athens Charter 1931* also identifies that the significance of the monuments (or city) are derived from the attachment of the people themselves.⁵⁷ As such, in this context, the reconstruction of *Warsaw*

⁵² Wampuszyc, *Mapping Warsaw*, 38, 47; Crowley, ‘Memory in Pieces’, 360.

⁵³ ‘Proust’s awareness that without forgetting there can be no memory, and that the interest of memory lies in its dialectic with forgetting...’ in Forty, *Words and Buildings*, 212.

⁵⁴ Murawski, ‘(A)Political Buildings - Ideology, Memory and Warsaw’s “Old” Town’, 17–18.

⁵⁵ McCouat, ‘Bernardo Bellotto and the Reconstruction of Warsaw’; Wampuszyc, *Mapping Warsaw*, 88.

⁵⁶ Doctrine 3 in Athens Charter 1931.

⁵⁷ Doctrine 7 in Athens Charter 1931, The Athens Charter 1931.

can be understood as following the intention of these principles in order to create an archetype of a reconstructed city within a historic site.

For the effort to reconstruct *Warsaw* and re-establish the Polish cultural identity through the city fabric, Warsaw Old Town was gazetted on the UNESCO World Heritage List in 1980, as an exemplary model of post-war reconstruction. The city was listed under Universal Value Criteria II and VI as follows:

Criterion II: To exhibit an important interchange of human values, over a span of time or within a cultural area of the world, on developments in architecture or technology, monumental arts, town-planning or landscape design.

The undertaking of comprehensive conservation efforts on the scale of an entire historical city was a unique experience in Europe and played a role in verifying conservation doctrines and practice.

Criterion VI: To be directly or tangibly associated with events or living traditions, with ideas, or with beliefs, with artistic and literary works of outstanding universal significance.

The historic centre of *Warsaw* is a unique example of the comprehensive reconstruction of a city that was deliberately and totally destroyed. The basis for material reconstruction was the inner strength and determination of the nation that made possible the reconstruction of heritage on a unique scale in the history of the world.⁵⁸

Through the listing, which was prepared by the Polish for their own nomination, the metonymy of *Warsaw*, and its strong relationship with the Polish people becomes abundantly clear. Not only is the city the physical evidence of centuries-old traditions of Polish statehood, but it is distinctively entwined with the Polish spirit – the spirit of ‘indestructibility’. The importance of the ‘image’ of the city is also a significant part of the World Heritage Listing:

...the site, along with the city panorama as seen from the Vistula (which has become a symbol of *Warsaw*), presents a cohesive picture of the oldest part of the city.⁵⁹

This ‘image’ has been ratified with an acknowledgement that to achieve this iconic image, and recreate the sense of place, that adaptations and changes were included in the city. Some of these adaptations were for improvements relating to social patterns and changes in standards, whilst others were deliberate decisions in the reconstruction to accentuate the defensive walls, and in doing so forego the reconstruction of some buildings.⁶⁰ In this way, the whole process of reconstruction resembles the brain’s capacity for *memory reconsolidation*. Reconstruction in *Warsaw* sought to reactivate the *memory traces* of some buildings, reconsolidating and maintaining these memories in the new city, whilst choosing to forget others, as these were deemed superfluous to the recreation of the ‘image’ and memory of the city.

The reconstruction of *Warsaw* has had a significant impact on the future of conservation. UNESCO now shows greater tolerance for reconstruction, listing buildings and cities based on ‘associative

⁵⁸ The City of Warsaw, ‘Management Plan for the Historic Centre of Warsaw’, 34–35; UNESCO World Heritage Centre, ‘Historic Centre of Warsaw’, 1980, <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/30/> (Author’s italics).

⁵⁹ UNESCO World Heritage Centre, ‘Historic Centre of Warsaw’ (Author’s italics).

⁶⁰ UNESCO World Heritage Centre, ‘Historic Centre of Warsaw’.

value' in relation to a specific historic event.⁶¹ However, does the precedent which *Warsaw* set still resonate in light of the advancements in conservation after the *Venice Charter 1964* and *Nara Charter 1994*?

Authenticity of the past depends on the observer and not necessarily the item or place being observed, and is wholly dependent on the individual retrieving the memory. A reconstructed city therefore has the potential to transport the individual back in time to mentally construct the past and encourage the viewer to observe the scene as if they were there. In this psychological process, one can harness personal and collective memories about the city and the events relating to its destruction and reconstruction. Despite this, it is important to understand that by interacting with memories, the *memory trace* will fragment further each time it is accessed, and is never exactly the same as the first imprint. As the city is destroyed, the reconstruction is unable to resemble the memory, and doing so alters the relationship that the person has with their surroundings. As such, to paraphrase Maurice Halbwachs – the reconstruction does not reconstruct the past, but rather it is reimagined in the present. As the social contexts of the present (at the time of reconstruction) and now in the future, are different from that of the past, of Old Warsaw, when the fabric is reconstructed, the memories cannot be reconstructed in the same way, and cannot reconstruct the past as it was.

The reconstruction of *Warsaw* is indeed an example of an extraordinary effort to rebuild a destroyed city, and by doing so rebuild a nation, however at its core, *Warsaw*, just like *Saint-Malo*, which will be discussed in the next section, is just an 'image' – a reconstruction of an ideal, of a mechanical and artistic representation of a past life. *Warsaw* and *Saint-Malo* are three-dimensional memory cues which have transformed the limited remaining physical evidence through the power of the image. Through both the documentary evidence of the image, and the reconstructed fabric of the city, these two cities have been able to creatively recreate a memory, and further control the narrative of that memory and identity of the city and its people.

⁶¹ Bryony Roberts, 'Competing Authenticities', *Future Anterior: Journal of Historic Preservation, History, Theory, and Criticism* 12, no. 2 (2015): 4.

SAINT-MALO

‘THE CORSAIR CITY’

Located on the north-west coast of France in the Brittany region, *Saint-Malo* is situated on the English Channel and on the bank of the Rance River estuary. The area in which the walled city of *Saint-Malo* is sited was originally an island made from clusters of rocks and granite, which had few inhabitants. In the late fifth century, a hermit (later known as Saint Aaron of Aleth) arrived from Ireland, and built a shelter on the island. Legends and historical records describe that in the sixth century, from his island shelter, Aaron spotted a Welsh monk named Mac Low (or sometimes Maclou). Mac Low would become a disciple of the small religious community at the nucleus of the settlement on the island. On Aaron’s death, Mac Low led the small community for over forty years in their religious devotion. In honour of Mac Low, the town was named *Saint-Malo*.⁶² The island remained substantially uninhabited for two centuries, until the eighth century when the people from the surrounding areas sought refuge on the island from the Norman invasion. In 1144, a new bishop Jean de Châtillon was elected and gave the small community of *Saint-Malo* the status of a town, where it had previously operated as a monastic enclosure. As a result, the right of asylum, which was once limited to the Cathedral, was extended to the entire township. This change attracted more refugees to the area, which included many marine labourers, traders, and craftsman turning *Saint-Malo* into a dynamic and bustling town.⁶³

The town of *Saint-Malo* began to fortify its defences during the twelfth century, due to increasing raids by Vikings travelling down the coast of France. By the fourteenth century, *Saint-Malo* became a significant port, a hub for privateers, earning it the moniker of ‘Cité Corsair’ (the ‘Corsair City’). To the people of *Saint-Malo*, it is important to distinguish the difference between a privateer and a pirate. Privateers were regular law-abiding sailors who acted in special circumstances to attack merchant vessels and enemy vessels, under the protection of ‘Letters of Marque and Reprisal’ which was granted by the royal, republican or imperial authority of the time. The distinction is important as it feeds into the Malouin identity, where they often act in defiance against rulers like the Kingdom of France, asserting their independence and resilience to the powers that be. So important is this independence and defiance to their sense of identity that for four years between 1590 and 1594 *Saint-Malo* declared itself an independent republic, acting as a city-state – and promoted the motto ‘Ni Français, Ni Breton, Malouin suis’: ‘Not French, Not Breton, but Malouin’.⁶⁴ The need for the Corsairs became increasingly required with continuous attacks from invading nations during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, including the English. As a result of the English attacks, the city’s ramparts were constructed to reinforce the city’s defences in the mid-fifteenth century.⁶⁵

During the seventeenth century, *Saint-Malo* flourished due to the important trade of the port and the actions of the privateers, which lead to the construction of many warehouses to support the port’s functions, and large country houses, known as the ‘Malouiniè’. By the late seventeenth century, the citadel and further fortifications were added, enhancing *Saint-Malo*’s military architecture and defences. New ramparts, designed by the royal engineer Siméon Garengneau were constructed between 1708 and 1742, and these were complemented by further sea defences which were constructed off the coast of *Saint-Malo*. These architectural defences were intended to augment the

⁶² Gilles Avril and Jean-Paul Gisserot, *Saint-Malo: hier ou aujourd’hui* (J.-P. Gisserot, 1992), 2–3; Édouard Maret and Hervé Ronné, *Saint-Malo*, with ID2M, Architecture et Patrimoine (Éditions ‘Ouest-France’, 2020), 5.

⁶³ Maret and Ronné, *Saint-Malo*, 7.

⁶⁴ Maret and Ronné, *Saint-Malo*, 7–11; Avril and Gisserot, *Saint-Malo*, 38–39 (Author’s translation).

⁶⁵ Avril and Gisserot, *Saint-Malo*, 14–15.

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existing natural defences which the city boasted, located in a hostile rocky environment, which during the age of sea-warfare proved to be more formidable than sea-mines.⁶⁶

By the nineteenth century, *Saint-Malo*, like many other sea-side towns, saw a boom in tourism and the development of resorts and spa facilities, with the first spa built in 1838. The Paramé resort opened in 1881, leading to the development of the Paramé beach, which extended the great beach of *Saint-Malo*. These beaches and resorts led to the construction of seafront villas and accommodation which spread beyond the historic city walls, due to the densely populated districts of the city. The resorts and villas helped to foster the heritage tourism of *Saint-Malo*'s old town and picturesque walled city as viewed from the water.⁶⁷ This picturesque view, which graced tourist postcards and holiday photos throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was the architectural identity and 'image' which *Saint-Malo* would try to recreate after WWII.

Saint-Malo was occupied by the German army early in the war, with the first troops entering the city on 20 June 1940. This would be the start of four years of occupation and enforced cohabitation of the local Malouins. Keeping true to their independent and defiant Corsair identity, countless Malouins joined the resistance, which the Germans responded to with tighter clampdowns, and in later years, executions, imprisonments, and deportations to concentration camps.

Whilst *Saint-Malo* remained a German garrison and strategic military location for most of WWII, after the D-Day landing on 6 June 1944, the advances of the Allied forces throughout France, primed *Saint-Malo* as a key town for liberation. On 31 July 1944, Allied forces, primarily the American 29th Infantry Division, launched an attack on *Saint-Malo* to liberate and capture the city, starting what is known as the Battle of Saint-Malo. However, the Germans had entrenched their troops in the fortified city, utilising the city's natural and architectural defences to mount a strong defence against any advance from the Allies. Despite British troops bombing the harbour, by 6 August 1944, the Allies had made little gains, and much of the city remained intact. *Saint-Malo*'s natural defences had once again helped to protect the city. However, these natural defences were no match for the mechanised air warfare which dominated WWII.

Entrenched in Alet's citadel in the old town, the German garrison were given these final orders from Hitler:

In warfare, there is no such thing as a historic city! You will fight until the last man and the last stone.⁶⁸

Following orders, the German troops lit incendiary bombs, launching them across the city, to drive back the advancing Allied forces. Combined with the Allied bombing and intense shelling from both the German and American forces, the wood-framed houses and buildings of *Saint-Malo* were consumed by fire, even the stone mansions were not spared destruction. The resulting devastation of the Battle of Saint-Malo, as documented in historical photographs like those in Figures 50 to 52, saw more than eighty percent of the old town destroyed, with 683 buildings out of a total of 865 annihilated, causing the loss of over 2,000 dwellings and homelessness of the Malouins. The ramparts,

⁶⁶ Maret and Ronné, *Saint-Malo*, 24.

⁶⁷ Maret and Ronné, *Saint-Malo*, 32; Avril and Gisserot, *Saint-Malo*, 58.

⁶⁸ Maret and Ronné, *Saint-Malo*, 35 (Author's translation); Avril and Gisserot, *Saint-Malo*, 60 (Author's translation).

fortifications and castle remained largely unscathed, whilst the city's cathedral suffered substantial damage, with its spire collapsed.⁶⁹

The Allied forces declared liberation of the city on 17 August 1944. In July 1948, the Minister of the Armed Forces, Pierre-Henri Teitgen, awarded *Saint-Malo* the Legion of Honour and Cross of War with bronze palm for her acts of resistance and bravery during WWII. *Saint-Malo* however did not let the trauma of WWII and idea of the 'martyr city'⁷⁰ become its identity. Rather, the dominant myths relating to its history as a 'Corsair City', and identity of the beach-side tourist city were the 'image' that *Saint-Malo* preferred to proffer as their identity, and the one they sought to recreate. The iconic tourist panoramic view of the city in particular would play an important role in the reconstruction of *Saint-Malo* and re-invigoration of the identity of the Malouins.



50 Consolidated B-24 bombers attack Saint-Malo, August 1944.
Source: US National Archives and Records Administration (NAID: 204897552, image: 54049AC).

⁶⁹ Avril and Gisserot, *Saint-Malo*, 60–62; Anne Moignet-Gaultier, 'Alignments Urbain et Reconstructions Saint Malo', in *Living with History, 1914-1964 Rebuilding Europe after the First and Second World Wars and the Role of Heritage Preservation / La Reconstruction En Europe Après La Première et La Seconde Guerre Mondiale et Le Rôle de La Conservation Des Monuments Historiques*, ed. Nicholas Bullock and Luc Verpoest (Universitaire Pers Leuven, 2021), 145–46; Hugh Clout, 'Place Annihilation and Urban Reconstruction: The Experience of Four Towns in Brittany, 1940 to 1960', *Geografiska Annaler. Series B, Human Geography* 82, no. 3 (2000): 168.

⁷⁰ Maret and Ronné, *Saint-Malo*, 4 (Author's translation).

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51 The Battle of Saint-Malo as captured from Dinard, - David Scherman, c. September 1944.
Source: TIME LIFE Magazine (TimeLife_image_116724073).



52 The destruction of the Battle of Saint-Malo – David Scherman, c. September 1944.
Source: TIME LIFE Magazine (TimeLife_image_116724039).

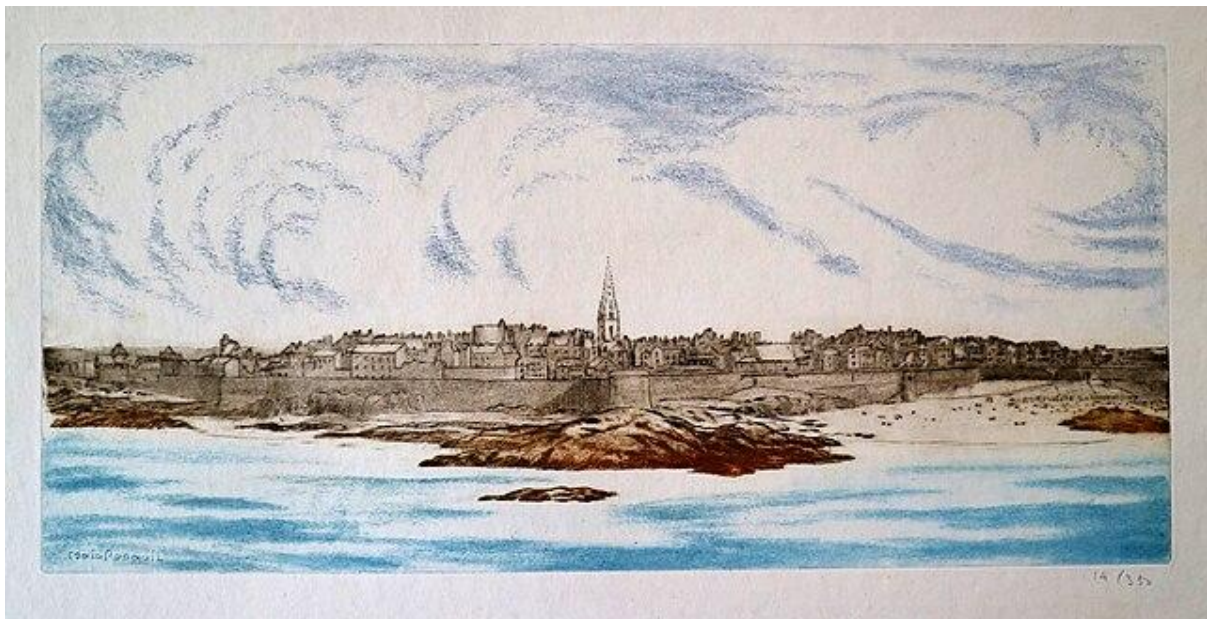
RECREATING THE POSTCARD

Like *Warsaw*, the story of *Saint-Malo* is a product of a deeply traumatic four-year occupation and a final battle which caused substantial destruction to the city. In an ironic twist, a city which did not suffer too much war damage throughout the war, suffered such catastrophic damage in the process of its liberation, that the iconic sea-side town was left in ruins. Much like *Warsaw* however, the destruction and trauma of the occupation and Battle of Saint-Malo did not destroy the will of the people. Instead, it fuelled the reconstruction of the city to its pre-war silhouette.

The iconic view of *Saint-Malo* approached or viewed from the sea has become ingrained in the identity of the city. Captured in tourist photographs, postcards and artworks, such as those in Figures 53 to 55, this vista has made the sea-side destination famous for its spectacular juxtaposition of walled city within its naturally rocky defences. Famous French novelist and playwright Gustave Flaubert described *Saint-Malo* in his 1885 work *By Fields and Strikes* as:

Built on the sea and enclosed by ramparts, seems when one arrives, a crown of stones placed on the waves of which the machinations are the jewels.⁷¹

The main characteristics of *Saint-Malo's* urban layout and famous silhouette were imposed on the city's builders by the topography of the land, leading to cramped quarters. The unique topography of the city and its varying limitations directly influenced the design and volume of the buildings. *Saint-Malo* houses and buildings were narrow in construction, with high facades that had three to four openings per floor consisting of high windows, and dormer windows at the roofs, topped with high chimneys.⁷²



53 Petit panorama de Saint-Malo eau-fort – Emile Malo-Renault c.1910.
Source: WikiCommons.

⁷¹ Mireille Guignard, 'Saint-Malo Intra Muros, an Identical Reconstruction?', *Pierre D'Angle: ANABF Magazine*, December 2018, <https://anabf.org/pierredangle/dossiers/littoral/saint-malo-intra-muros-une-reconstruction-a-lidentique> (Author's translation).

⁷² Moignet-Gaultier, 'Alignments Urbain et Reconstructions Saint Malo', 148.

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54 Iconic view of Saint-Malo, c.1922 postcard.
Source: WikiCommons.



55 Iconic view of reconstructed Saint-Malo, c. 2022.
Source: Author's family album.

The mayor of *Saint-Malo* set the tone for the reconstruction of the city, creating the Reconstruction Trade Union Association in 1948 to represent the affected residents and make their voices known to the various ministries and departments in charge of reconstructing their city. One notable resident, Doctor Edouard Descottes summarises the Malouin connection to their city and its ‘image’:

The Malouins would like not to be disoriented in their new city; they want the new city to be, as much as possible, similar to the old one. The configuration of the streets, with their angles and curves, must be preserved: it is an effective protection against the winds; above all, *Saint-Malo* must not become an autodrome.⁷³

The physical appearance of the place, as described by Descottes, helps to provide a memory cue which connects with the past, providing a continuity between pre-war old Saint-Malo, the German occupation, and the present. The *genius loci* of Saint-Malo is identified through its unique architecture composition juxtaposed with its natural setting, which lead to the urban palimpsest of the city’s spatial configuration and streets. This spatial order is in tension with the ‘image’ of the city, the ‘image’ which became synonymous with the city as the iconic view. The ancestral character as depicted through its topography and volume was fundamental to this outward ‘image’ and became an important link which united the inhabitants with outsiders. In this way, the *genius loci* became more than just the physical elements which create the essence of the place but encompassed a wider sense of place as captured through the image. Thus, in order to ensure the *genius loci* of *Saint-Malo* was preserved, as Mayor Guy La Chambre explained “No one seriously thought about not reviving to the fullest extent possible the appearance of the old *Saint-Malo*”.⁷⁴ The success of the reconstruction and recreation of the iconic ‘image’ of Saint-Malo was not lost on those involved, with city architect Louis Arretche explaining that the success “depends above all on the profile and appearance of the four coastlines, maritime and port, on the city.”⁷⁵

However, the reconstruction of Saint-Malo was not solely influenced by the need to recreate the iconic ‘image’ of the city but was also supported by key legislation in France, as a result of the devastation caused by WWI. On 17 April 1919, a law was created in France which handled reparations and reconstruction due to war damage. Article 12 of the 17 April 1919, law stipulates:

Civil or religious buildings, the compensation consists of the sums necessary for the reconstruction of a building of the same character, having the same importance, the same destination and offering the same guarantees that the building is destroyed.⁷⁶

Whilst the law discusses singular monuments or buildings, the same concepts can be applied to wider urban areas like cities, and in fact, more wide-spread destruction of cities occurred in WWII than it did in WWI. As such, Article 12 lay the foundations for the reconstruction of *Saint-Malo* – to be reconstructed in the same character, identity and destination, at the urban scale.

⁷³ Moignet-Gaultier, ‘Alignments Urbain et Reconstructions Saint Malo’, 145 (Author’s translation and italics).

⁷⁴ Moignet-Gaultier, ‘Alignments Urbain et Reconstructions Saint Malo’, 148 (Author’s translation and italics).

⁷⁵ Guignard, ‘Saint-Malo Intra Muros, an Identical Reconstruction?’ (Author’s translation).

⁷⁶ Daniele Voldman, ‘La France d’un Modele de Reconstruction’, in *Living with History, 1914-1964 Rebuilding Europe after the First and Second World Wars and the Role of Heritage Preservation / La Reconstruction En Europe Après La Première et La Seconde Guerre Mondiale et Le Rôle de La Conservation Des Monuments Historiques*, ed. Nicholas Bullock and Luc Verpoest (Universitaire Pers Leuven, 2021), 64 (Author’s translation).

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This undertaking was assisted by earlier legislation from 14 March 1919, which was again a reaction to the destruction of WWI. The law from March 1919 stipulated that official plans were to be created for towns that had experienced devastation or were undergoing rapid expansion. As a result, during the interwar years, many French towns produced draft plans of their cities, which provided the foundations for reconstruction programmes in the post-WWII period.⁷⁷

Immediately after the Battle of Saint-Malo, as the city was being cleared of debris and unstable structures were being made safe, the Service des Monuments Historiques (Historic Monuments Service) (the Service) attempted to sketch structures in the city, particularly those in danger of collapse, and for those where no plans or drawings existed. The chief architect of the Service, Raymond Cornon identified over 130 damaged buildings in Saint Malo which needed protection and documentation. The Service marked pieces of masonry in the remainders of the narrow streets to help rebuild the buildings and city. Over 500,000 cubic meters of masonry were stockpiled outside of the city walls waiting to be used in the reconstruction of the city.⁷⁸

Retaining the masonry and materials of the buildings where possible was an important part of creating the formal perception of the city as a whole and recreating the 'image' of *Saint-Malo*. This utilises Giovannoni's theories from his 1925 book *Architectural Issues in History and Life*, including the second approach, which he calls *restoration of recomposition*. This approach uses dispersed parts of structures like the stockpiled masonry to piece back the building, ideally with minimal introduction of new materials. In this way, the reconstruction of *Saint-Malo* followed principles of *anastylosis*, key to the principles of the *Athens Charter 1931*.

Much like *Warsaw*, the reconstruction of *Saint-Malo* in the post-WWII period was intended to be a replica of the 'original' city – primarily its aesthetic qualities which became ingrained in the city's identity (see Figure 56 which depicts the extent of reconstruction in the post-WWII period). By recreating the postcard picture perfect view of the city, *Saint-Malo* intended to shift the two-dimensional representation of their identity and memory, back into the three-dimensional. However, the relationship between the image, memory, time, and the city's 'image' or identity becomes complicated by the viewer. By recreating a moment in time, a selective scene of *Saint-Malo*, the image which has been transferred into the urban scale mediates the spatial divide between the past and present, curating the city and the viewer's experience of it. A photograph is unable to capture the complexities relating to the past and cannot convey a deeper meaning than what is being represented in the image. Furthermore, the viewer's experience of a photograph and or a space is never the same as the next persons, due to the overlay of personal experiences and memories. As such the reconstruction of *Saint-Malo* highlights questions of authenticity. If the reconstruction of *Saint-Malo* is based on recreating the iconic panoramic image, can this reconstruction truly recreate the spatiality and essence of pre-war *Saint-Malo*? As Barthes explained, the photographed memory is one which cannot be repeated.⁷⁹

⁷⁷ Clout, 'Place Annihilation and Urban Reconstruction', 171.

⁷⁸ Clout, 'Place Annihilation and Urban Reconstruction', 177.

⁷⁹ Barthes, *Camera Lucida*, 4, 85.

CREATIVE MEMORY: REBUILDING AN 'IMAGE' AND AUTHENTICITY

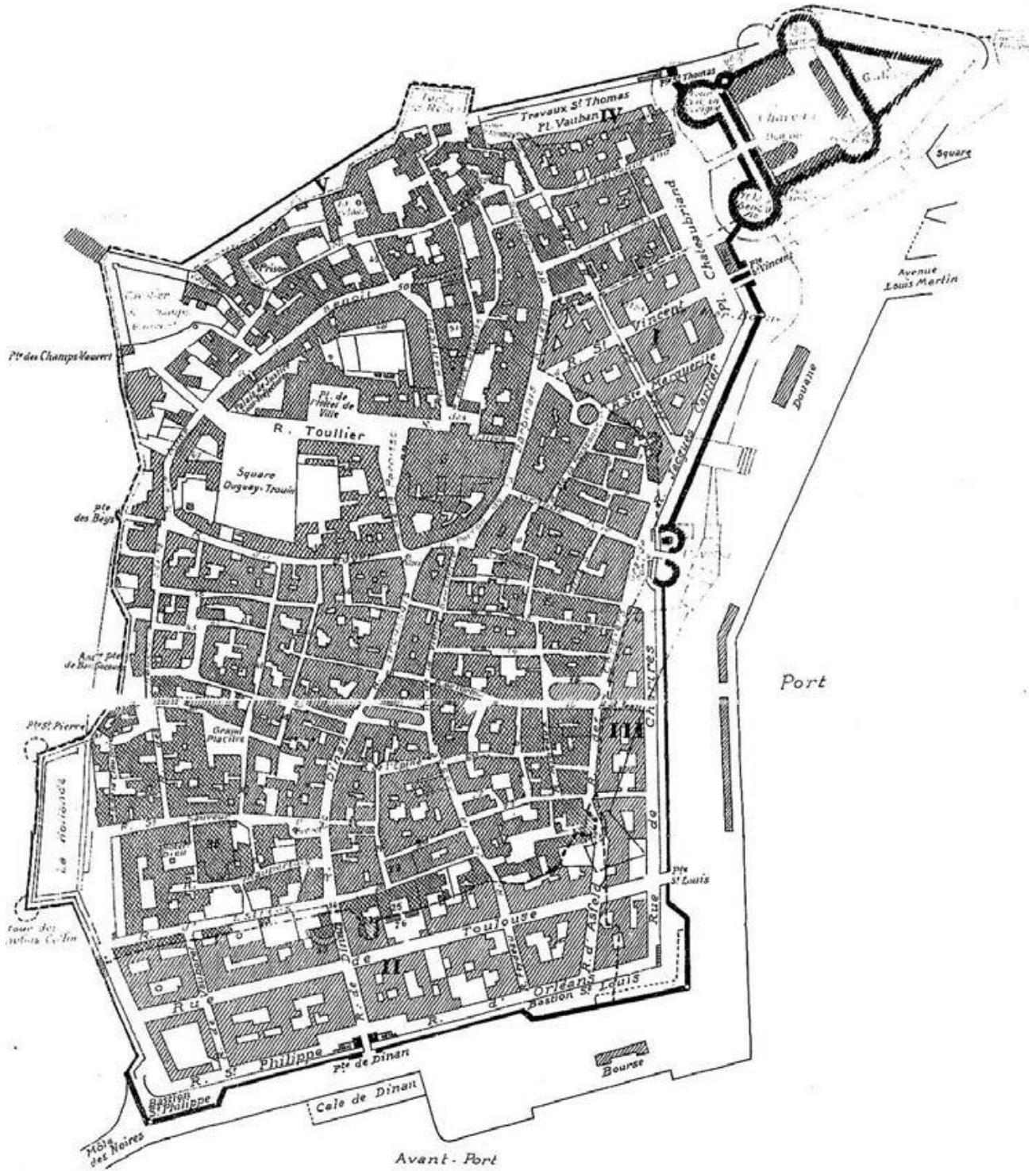
For the people of *Warsaw*, the culture and identity of the Polish people was so entwined with the old city, that through reconstruction, the city was able to reclaim what was lost and reinhabit the memories which were preserved within the paintings and other image mediums. However, in *Saint-Malo*, the metonymic function of the iconic image of the city drove the impulse to reconstruct. Whilst part of the reconstruction of the city ensured the reestablishment of curved street patterns which afforded protection from the coastal weather systems, and reuse of stockpiled material where saved, much of the reconstruction of *Saint-Malo* was concerned with recreating the evocative feelings of the 'image' of pre-war *Saint-Malo*.⁸⁰ In this way, the physical cues of the recreated city, engages the collective imagination of the population through the fabric, to help them re-position themselves within the tourist image, and within the identity and idealised 'image' of the city.

Although *Warsaw* and *Saint-Malo*'s impetus for reconstruction may differ, both cities appropriated similar key theories from Viollet and Giovannoni to recreate the fabric of the city. Overall harmony of the visual character of the city, as viewed from the water, was key to the reconstruction of *Saint-Malo* and was prioritised over the surviving architectural fragments and shortcomings of the walled city. Giovannoni's theories of *superfetazione* and *diradamento* were evidently utilised in the reconstruction of *Saint-Malo*, balancing the need to reinstate existing businesses, and rehome the inhabitants. As a result, while respecting the aesthetic characteristics and 'image' of *Saint-Malo*'s old town, the roads were widened, new and more public space were created to improve ventilation between the buildings and improve sanitation and functionality of the streets.⁸¹ This is clearly visible in a comparison of historic plans of *Saint-Malo* pre-WWII and post-WWII reconstruction (Figures 57 and 58).

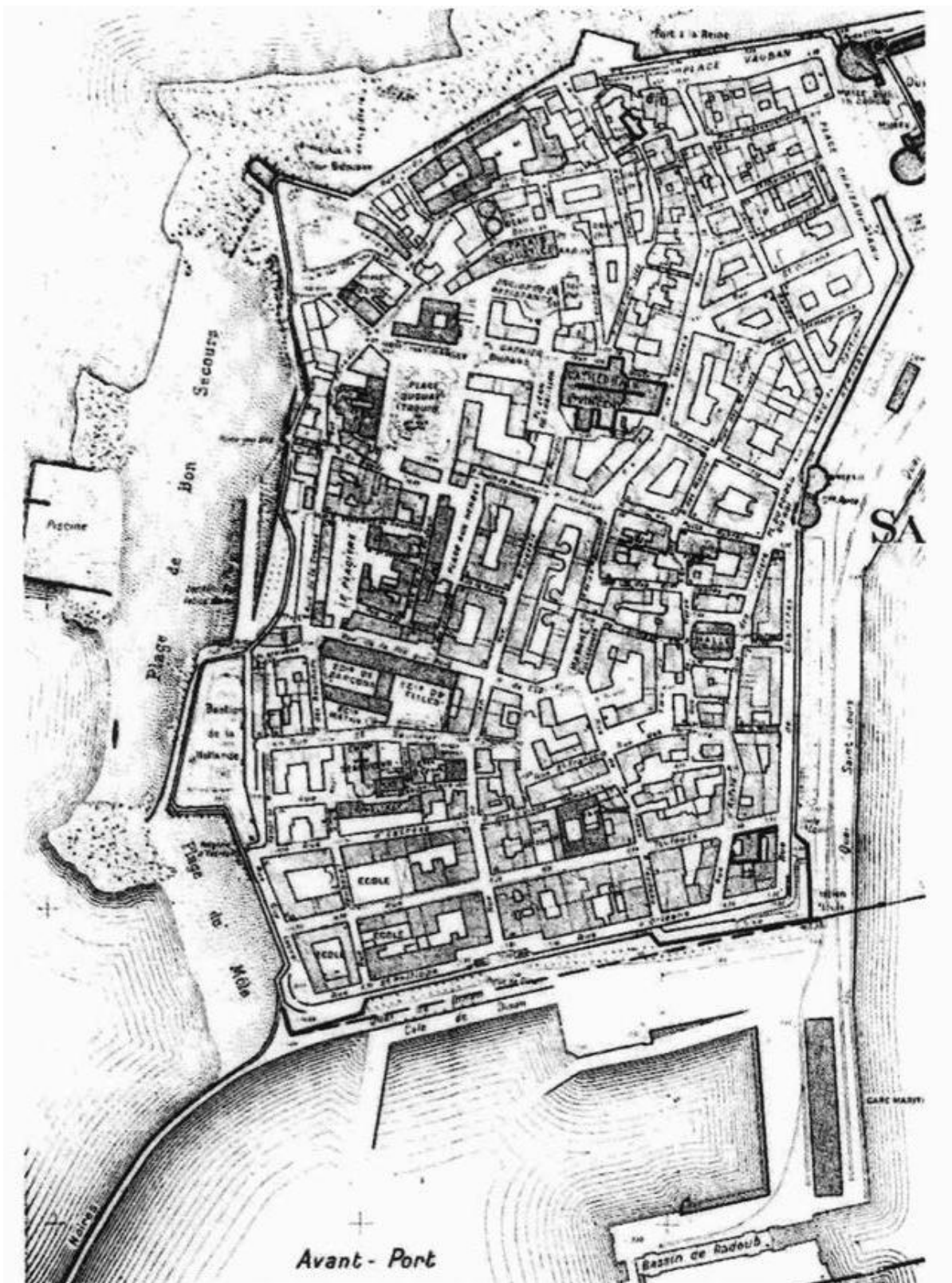
What this leads to however is a reconstructed city which looks like the *Saint-Malo* of yesteryear, but one in which the heart of the city, its original alignments and spaces are greatly modified. Its unique natural and physical limitations helped to create the city that became iconic. Centuries of adjustments, architectural and urban design which were undertaken to work within and conquer the limitations of the city, its rocky outcrop, and architectural defences, were disregarded in the reconstruction. The unique architectural 'image' and legacy of the city arose from these limitations, and the reconstructed city no longer references this struggle to build within the site.

⁸⁰ Emmanuel Doutriaux, 'La Fortune Critique de La Reconstruction', in *Living with History, 1914-1964 Rebuilding Europe after the First and Second World Wars and the Role of Heritage Preservation / La Reconstruction En Europe Après La Première et La Seconde Guerre Mondiale et Le Rôle de La Conservation Des Monuments Historiques*, ed. Nicholas Bullock and Luc Verpoest (Universitaire Pers Leuven, 2021), 337.

⁸¹ Moignet-Gaultier, 'Alignments Urbain et Reconstructions Saint Malo', 147, 177.



57 Plan of Saint-Malo historic street alignment, undated.
 Source: Saint-Malo Municipal Archives, as reproduced in Moignet-Gaultier, 'Alignments Urbain et Reconstructions Saint Malo', p. 146.



58 Plan of new street alignments in Saint-Malo, c.1946.
Source: Saint-Malo Municipal Archives, as reproduced in Moignet-Gaultier, 'Alignments Urbain et Reconstructions Saint Malo', p. 147.

Questions about *Saint-Malo's* authenticity arose early during the reconstruction programme, however the city Mayor Guy La Chambre explained during the reconstructions that the historic city was trapped within inevitable urban compromises and described the reconstruction as:

The science of the town planner was combined with the art of the builder, to design a city of the 20th century, whose architectural order reflects, without plagiarising them, the features of the past, synonymous with greatness.⁸²

To combat issues of authenticity, the architects were required to utilise local granite for the exterior walls and slate from the Monts d'Arree for the roofing to create the historic 'image' of *Saint-Malo*.⁸³ Building new buildings by drawing on the existing ruins, is to recreate a city to a form that never existed before. In a truly Viollet style of restoration, Viollet's theories from his 'On Restoration' came to fruition in *Saint-Malo*:

In restorations there is an essential condition which must always be kept in mind. It is, that every portion removed should be replaced with better materials, and in a stronger and more perfect way. As a result of the operation to which it has been subjected, the restored edifice should have a renewed lease of existence, longer than that which has already elapsed.⁸⁴

Whilst the city's facades retained their majestic appearance from afar and look identical to its pre-war image, the reconstructions also used new materials for the internal constructions and interiors of the buildings. In this way, the buildings, and the city as a whole would have a renewed lease of existence, reconstructed to replicate the original city and continue the memory work of the city's buildings and iconic 'image', but utilising materials and technology which would theoretically strengthen it from future destruction.

Although some might argue that the reconstruction of *Saint-Malo* uses Giovanni's theories of *ambientismo* – a respect for the context of the site, on the other side of the argument, other theorists believe that the reconstructed *Saint-Malo* is the antithesis of the Malouin city.⁸⁵ Its antithesis is spatial, rather than visual. The reconstructed city preserves the picturesque character and iconic 'image' of the city but alters the historic charm of the crowded topography and crooked urban alignments. In this way, Barthes' ethical dilemma from *Camera Lucida* comes to pass, as by recreating the city from the photograph, the photograph blocks memory, becoming a counter-memory to the *Saint-Malo* which is not just image-deep.⁸⁶ This process is not unlike Boisbaudran's 'memory drawing' techniques which were practiced by Viollet, whereby the memory of the city is distilled to the pictorial and compositional view of the city to achieve the visual effect of the 'image' of *Saint-Malo*. Consequently, much like in memory, the reconstruction is but a gist of what was there before.

This process also parallels the hippocampal process coined as *multiple trace theory*. This theory identifies that every time a *memory trace* is reactivated in the brain, an alteration and expansion of the originally encoded *memory trace* occurs, leading to reconsolidation and multiple traces.⁸⁷ These

⁸² Moignet-Gaultier, 'Alignments Urbain et Reconstructions Saint Malo', 152 (Author's translation).

⁸³ Clout, 'Place Annihilation and Urban Reconstruction', 177.

⁸⁴ Wethered and Viollet-le-Duc, *On Restoration, By E. Viollet-Le-Duc [Tr. From an Article in His Dictionnaire Raisonne De L'Architecture Francaise] and a Notice of His Works in Connection with the Historical Monuments of France*, 46.

⁸⁵ Guignard, 'Saint-Malo Intra Muros, an Identical Reconstruction?'

⁸⁶ Barthes, *Camera Lucida*, 90.

⁸⁷ Sutherland et al., 'Has Multiple Trace Theory Been Refuted?', 842.

traces are akin to the layers within a reconstructed city. *Multiple trace theory* also speculates that through these multiple and overlapping traces, that people edit the memories to ensure the retelling is faithful to their sense of self. In this way, *Saint-Malo* selects the *memory traces* which reflect the pictorial and compositional view of the city – the ‘image’, as this reflects the Malouin identity.

In this way, the monumentality of the city, and the Malouin identity is only partially transferred to the new city. The memory of the city becomes reliant on the memory of the inhabitants, the stories of travellers, and most importantly resting on the iconic ‘image’.⁸⁸ However, despite this, the reconstructed *Saint-Malo*, like the reconstructed *Warsaw*, provides geographical reference points which – much like the photograph, triggers memory of the physical space. Architectural historian Nicholas Bullock sums up the importance of reconstructions for memory in the following way:

We need thus these monuments of the past to raise our historical awareness that we are living in another historical time different from those of the past, in order to be able to do so in a reasonable, critical, significant way however modern or contemporary we are again and again.⁸⁹

Here Bullock has identified that the image of the reconstructed city can serve as a cue, enabling the observer to mentally locate themselves within the reconstructed space, drawing on episodic representations and semantic knowledge to raise a historical awareness of the city., and to envision its history and its Malouin identity as understood through the physical fabric and space. Relying on the image to reconstruct the ‘image’ of *Saint-Malo*, is to some degree reliant on memory veridicality – the truthfulness of the memory. Without much physical evidence to reconstruct from, the reconstruction had to rely on the truth of the image and the memories of inhabitants, to recreate the city. In this way, the two-dimensional image of the city, translates into the three-dimensional sphere, allowing an understanding of the iconic ‘image’ of *Saint-Malo* through the city fabric.

Like *Warsaw*, the reconstruction of *Saint-Malo* pre-dates the guidelines of the *Venice Charter 1964* and primarily follows the principles outlined in the *Athens Charter 1931*, including concepts of *anastylosis*, and recommendations for the reconstructions to be based on and respect the character of the city, preserving the picturesque perspective.⁹⁰ For all intents and purposes, *Saint-Malo* followed the same course as *Warsaw*. Both were destroyed during WWII; both underwent extensive reconstruction programmes in the immediate post-war period. Both cities used images as a documentary means of recreating the likeness of the fabric. The ‘image’ of *Warsaw* is a significant part of the World Heritage Listing – ensuring that the symbolic panorama of the city as seen from the Vistula was reconstructed and presenting a cohesive picture of the oldest part of the city. Likewise, *Saint-Malo* has painstakingly reconstructed the iconic panoramic image of the fortified city as viewed from the coast. This ‘image’ as has been argued, is fundamental to the Malouin identity.

Both *Warsaw* and *Saint-Malo* are examples of an extraordinary effort and acts of defiance to rebuild a destroyed city, and in doing so rebuild a community. The documentary evidence of the image has played a fundamental role in the reconstruction of these cities, however both cities are inevitably an ‘image’ – a reconstruction of an ideal, a reconstruction of a memory. Their contribution to

⁸⁸ Moignet-Gaultier, ‘Alignments Urbain et Reconstructions Saint Malo’, 150.

⁸⁹ Nicholas Bullock, ‘Introduction’, in *Living with History, 1914-1964 Rebuilding Europe after the First and Second World Wars and the Role of Heritage Preservation / La Reconstruction En Europe Après La Première et La Seconde Guerre Mondiale et Le Rôle de La Conservation Des Monuments Historiques*, ed. Nicholas Bullock and Luc Verpoest (Universitaire Pers Leuven, 2021), 10.

⁹⁰ Doctrine 3 in Athens Charter 1931.

conservation is not purely that they rebuilt historic cities for all to appreciate, but rather they illustrate an important shift between architecture as witness, to witness through the image. Transforming the ruins of war and the little remaining physical fabric, creatively recreating cities based on an image, *Warsaw* and *Saint-Malo* highlight the increasing role and influence that images have on the conservation of our environment. Unlike what occurred with both the *Frauenkirche* and the *Royal Opera House* in **Chapter 4** which focused on reconstruction of the singular monument and society's connection socially and psychologically with the fabric of the monument itself; *Warsaw* and *Saint-Malo* highlight that the image has a significant role in memory, and can in some cases, replace the building and its role as a memory cue. This shift in media and dimension from physical fabric to images, three-dimensional to two-dimensional, changes how society interacts with buildings, and in turn how we expect buildings and cities to remember and do memory work.

If the image, can stand-in for a building and the memory it is meant to possess, then it stands to question, why reconstruct at all? What is the importance of the physical memory cue? The physical memory cue, which this thesis has explored, particularly through the case studies examined in **Chapters 4 and 5** help to define the interconnected role that humans have with their physical environment. Whilst the image can capture a moment in time in memory, what it cannot do, is replicate the layers of history and stories within the fabric. The reconstructions of both *Warsaw* and *Saint-Malo* highlight, that whilst a significant tool to assist in reconstruction, the image, captures only a portion of the identity and memory of the place. What is further required, is the physical recreation in three-dimension, to understand the place spatially as well. Whilst both *Warsaw* and *Saint-Malo* have used historic images to creatively recreate the cities after destruction, they have done so in a way, which does not for the most part, detract from the essence of the memory and identity of the place. Street alignments may have changed, fabric may be different, but the cohesive overall replicates what was originally there, and in doing so, the cities can continue to represent their past-selves and continue to do memory work for the present and future generations to engage with and interpret.

CONCLUSION

Buildings cannot think, you are going to say, but in our own fantasies, at least, monuments have to be capable of cogitation, because it is not we who remember them so much as they who remember (and forget) us.

-- Michael Camille, *The Gargoyles of Notre-Dame: Medievalism and Monsters of Modernity*, 2009, p. 362

CONCLUSION

At the outset of this thesis, it was established that the desire to keep memories alive is a deeply universal and human concept. This has fed into a long cultural tradition which identifies buildings and landscapes as central to memory. The Conservation Movement in the nineteenth century transformed this tradition into a set of cultural claims that identified buildings as key to humanity's memory, witnesses to the passage of time. Perceiving architecture as a 'witness' to history, and imparting human qualities to inanimate objects, the theorists, writers and advocates of this period insisted that for this reason society must protect these buildings and places. These cultural claims have persisted to the present day, and characterise many contemporary claims for the protection of historic places. The quote from British art historian Michael Camille used as the epigraph to this conclusion brilliantly evokes the tension between our rational understanding that buildings cannot think, but our dependence nevertheless on a fantasy that they have the ability to remember. We talk about the built environment as though it were a witness to humanity, capable of telling stories of the past, long after we are gone.

It has been shown throughout the thesis that the concept of architectural witnessing is not something which is naturally inherent within the fabric of the building or environment, but one which fundamentally relies on human perception and the mind's complex abilities to remember and imagine oneself in different spatiotemporal contexts. This is the key knowledge gap in existing literature and scholarship in architectural conservation – the fundamental reason to why humans often see buildings as replete with memory and capable of human qualities. The thesis asks: **why do we expect buildings to remember and do memory work?** By asking this question, the thesis also questions how this changes the approach to the greater architectural conservation field.

Key to this knowledge gap is humanity, specifically how the human brain operates, remembers, stores memories, engages with the world around it, and imagines. This was the remit for **Part One** of the thesis. To understand how the human brain works, and how this can have applications for the history and conservation of the built environment. Key to this is the *hippocampus*, and its capacity for encoding, retrieval and reconsolidation of *memory traces* to form *episodic and semantic memories*. These are used by the mind to fuel *imagination, scene construction, the observer effect*, and most importantly the ability to shift perspectives through *autonoetic consciousness*, allowing humans to undergo *mental time travel*, placing and understanding themselves within spatiotemporally different contexts. These psychological and neurological processes in the individual's brain intersect with a yearning to connect and revisit the past. This emotional desire is the mind's way of connecting real and perceived memories and identities, and when prompted by the built environment, allows people to straddle a spatiotemporal shift – perceive the past, engage in the present, and imagine the future. The processes which support the social framework for collective memory, including nostalgic desire, are critical to understanding a society's perception of memory and the reconstruction of the past, particularly through interaction with the built environment. These processes contrast those which occur at the individual level; highlighting that both individual and collective processes are equally important to understanding the perception of place, memory and identity or nationhood.

As such, the psychology and memory science investigated in **Part One** of the thesis were used as the conceptual apparatus to interrogate and re-examine the cultural mechanisms at work in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries which posited buildings as the memory and history of cities, regions and nations, and was the genesis to why we expect buildings to do memory work.

Through this re-examination, two key historical moments of crises around memory were identified as key to shaping the claims about the role of conservation and the preservation of memory to the present day. The first 'phase of crisis' was in the early-mid nineteenth century (specifically c.1810-1850s), when a series of European writers and critics attempted to awaken their compatriots to protect memory in response to modernisation which wrought political and economic change. The second 'phase of crisis' was in the mid-late twentieth century in the wake of WWII, which saw the unprecedented destruction and decay of the built environment and cultural heritage across the world. In this period the question of architectural reconstruction was central to the project of remembering.

In **Part Two** of the thesis, the nineteenth century literary works of key proponents in the United Kingdom and France – Victor Hugo, Sir Walter Scott and John Ruskin were analysed using the conceptual apparatus to understand how their works were used as political tools to catalyse social change. They did this by romanticising the idea of buildings and landscapes as witnesses to the national story and thereby evoking national collective memory in the reader. Harnessing the human tendency for nostalgia, the writers sought to re-engage the readers memories, encouraging change. By examining their writing through a psychological and memory lens, it is increasingly apparent that the common thread between Romantics was the development of a historical consciousness. This helped society understand the significance of buildings as representations of not only personal memories, but the achievements of the nation's history and identity. By establishing the collective and national aspect of these places, the writings of these nineteenth century protagonists were vital to establishing a tradition of place protection claims, and actively helped protect national monuments and sites. Doing so, they helped to ensure that these places would be regarded as witnesses to the past, able to remember and do memory work for the individual and the collective. This subsequently ensured that the building, and indeed other media like literature and images, would act as memory cues, with the hopes that they might prompt consideration of, and a sense of obligation to, the past, in order to conserve it or restore it for future generations. Through a new understanding of their writings from a psychological and memory science lens, it becomes apparent that these theorists had immense power to influence society. It further highlights that this period was a pivotal moment in understanding memory and identity, and its relationship with architecture and landscapes, whilst developing a new approach to the conservation of historic places.

The ideas which burgeoned in the nineteenth century would become detrimental in the second 'phase of crisis', in the post-WWII societal effort to rebuild cities, which was analysed in **Part Three** of the thesis. This period saw a moral responsibility to respect and retell the memories of the past, providing a continuity of time and space to the present and future. The theories of nineteenth century architect Viollet-le-Duc were interrogated separately to his contemporaries, as he actively participated in a different form of conservation and restoration, one which sought to creatively recreate, rather than rigidly conserve the past. Viollet's grasp of the power of the image and imagination were significant contributors to his works. It helps to understand his influence on twentieth century architectural history, urban planning and conservation theories, particularly in post-war contexts; and through twentieth century architects and urban planners Gustavo Giovannoni and Aldo Rossi. Viollet, Giovannoni and Rossi's theories and practices are extrapolated against the artistic theories and significant contributions of photography and art. Through this, the importance of the image to both memory and conservation is highlighted. The image is an imprint of the past, but also signals a transition from memory in the three-dimension to the two-dimensional plane, and the important shift between architecture as witness, to witness through the image.

It is well known that the theories of the nineteenth century practitioners and advocates were the foundation for twentieth century conservation charters like *The Athens Charter 1931* and *The Venice*

Charter 1964, however what is less understood is the influence the preceding century's theorists had on the implications of memory and identity, particularly as part of the restoration and reconstruction efforts after the destruction of the world wars. To analyse this influence, four case studies were analysed in **Part Three**, examining their conservation processes, but also the significant memory concepts at play in each place. Deliberately, two case studies – the *Frauenkirche* in Dresden and *Warsaw* – were analysed and re-examined as well-known examples of conservation and reconstruction. These are compared to two lesser-known examples – the *Royal Opera House* in Valletta and *Saint-Malo*. Furthermore, two scales were analysed – the individual building or monument versus the urban/cityscape. These comparisons were designed to allow the analysis to juxtapose the crises of the known examples to those of the lesser-known, and in doing so, question to what extent the notoriety may have had on the implications and understanding of memory and identity in these places, and whether this has impacted the impulse to restore. Furthermore, by analysing different scales, the thesis was able to understand the significance of the scale change on the memory concepts and conservation at play in these case studies. Whilst the conservation of these sites ultimately undertook different routes and processes, what is apparent through all four, is the significant contribution that collective memory and societal interaction with the place has to the overall conservation and reconstruction process and outcome. Much like the psychological processes of the *memory trace*, society has proven time and again, that the physical *memory traces* of the building, mixed with nostalgic desire, and the emotional and sensorial connection to the fabric, is a powerful catalyst for restoration and conservation. These four case studies help to further explain the interconnected role of human interaction with buildings, and how the psychological aspects of memory, nostalgia, and imagination come into question when examining how we understand buildings to remember.

The thesis research is constrained in scope to focus specifically on the two identified 'phases of crisis' in Europe – the first in the nineteenth century c.1810-1850s, and the second in the twentieth century post-WWII period. Many of the more well-known theorists and reconstruction cases during these two periods were located in Europe, which narrowed the scope of the thesis to a European context. The thesis re-examines these periods and significant works, to establish a tradition within architecture and conservation which would have had an influence across the greater field internationally as well. The research is designed this way to provide a theoretical arc which seeks to illuminate patterns of claims within these periods, and evaluate how literature and case studies have influenced the expectation for buildings to be replete with memory and witness the past.

By re-examining these periods of crises through a memory lens, the interaction between the human and the physical reality of the built and natural environment highlights an intersection of the material and imagined worlds; one which we can experience and perceive together and in different time scales. Through the literary works of the nineteenth century, and conservation and reconstructive works of the twentieth century, the impact of the long-standing cultural tradition and expectation of the built environment as replete with memory has been established. This has had implications on collective memory and how society deals with the material evidence and authenticity of these periods.

Interrogation of the cultural tradition to believe buildings replete with memory and our perception of architectural witnessing, provides novel contributions to the conservation and architecture field. By understanding the human capacity for memory and imagination, and our psychological relationship with the built environment, what has been illustrated through this thesis, is that building conservation, restoration and reconstruction is analogous for the psychological apparatus of memory. The perennial question – **why do we expect buildings to remember and to do memory work?** can be understood through this analogy, and in fact it is the human capacity to remember and imagine which is

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transposed by us on to the building. It is for this reason that we imagine that walls have eyes and ears. Armed with the apparatus to understand the psychological influences on this cultural tradition, the thesis establishes clear reasons **why we expect buildings to remember**. By engaging with our built environment through the psychological framework of the human brain's capacity to remember and imagine, the thesis has shown through nineteenth century literature and twentieth century case studies that there has been a fundamental and traceable impact on collective memory and identity. This has subsequently impacted how society deals with material evidence and authenticity, particularly in relation to conservation and reconstruction, to ensure that even in the future, buildings will continue to remember and do memory work.

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