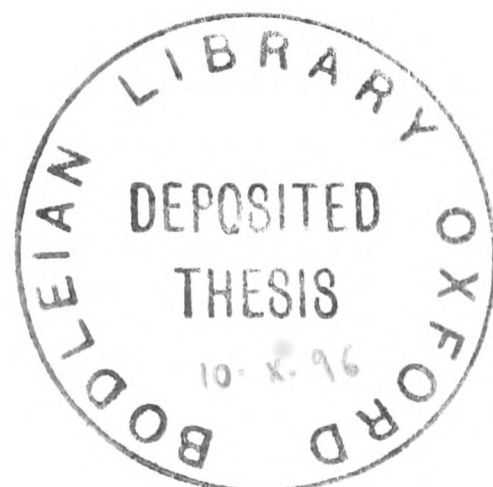


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**THE POSTMODERN CITY:
ARCHITECTURE AND LITERATURE.**

**D. PHIL. THESIS
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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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ABSTRACT

THE POSTMODERN CITY: ARCHITECTURE AND LITERATURE

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This thesis explores Postmodern architecture and narrative representations of the city as an emblem for the presence of the past in a contemporary environment. The architectural theory of Aldo Rossi is a model for this perception of the city as a locus of memory. Berlin, London and Paris are the places I will consider.

Part I presents examples of architectural practice of the 1980s. A project for a museum of German history in Berlin, the Sainsbury Wing of the National Gallery in London and the Place de Stalingrad in Paris re-work urban historical traces. Chapter 4 outlines the theories behind each project and how they develop notions of memory within the city.

Part II pursues this thread by focusing on examples of narrative representations of cities. In relation to Germany and Berlin, Wim Wenders' film Der Himmel über Berlin, Walter Abish's novel How German Is It, Christa Wolf's Kindheitsmuster and Hugo Hamilton's Surrogate City are my main sources. I discuss London through Peter Ackroyd's novel Hawksmoor and Paris through examples of Patrick Modiano's writing. A fourth and more theoretical chapter outlines how Postmodern narrative represents history and problematises memory. Two images direct this discussion: the detective and the palimpsest. My sources rely on the model of urban inquests and portray the city as a space shaped by a lamination of traces from superimposed eras.

Part III connects architecture and narrative through examples of recent developments in Postmodern museology, mainly the Holocaust Museum. They construe historical narratives by endowing building and contents with a communicative function.

As a conclusion, I establish that Postmodern concerns with history focus on the importance of bearing witness to the past, however problematic its representation has become. As the city houses memory, it is a privileged location for historical traces which define contemporary identity.

INTRODUCTION

The theme of cities presents endless variations throughout the history of fiction and film. This thesis will focus on one strand among this diversity. Contemporary cultural practice, including architecture, narrative and museology, frequently refers to the city. I will discuss its perception and representation in relation to these three fields of cultural production in a Postmodern context, or in the period since 1945¹.

Architecture and narrative representation meet in museums as these rely on the combination of buildings and story or content. I have therefore restricted my title to the two initial categories, to emphasise that a vital part of my hypothesis involves their juxtaposition. Through the city, I intend to establish an outline for Postmodern representations of history. The city has become a way of focusing on the past, and most of all on the past's place in the present, and its residual or manifest role in shaping contemporary form. The city is also a means of discussing Postmodernism, through the perspective of its use of the past and reference to history in generating new artefacts. This aspect has been given abundant attention by Linda Hutcheon, Charles Jencks and Brian McHale, among many other Postmodern theorists.

The term "Postmodern" is used as a means of gathering under one label creative and representational concerns which share certain formal and thematic features. These are international in scope, as the examples chosen to support this thesis demonstrate². I

¹ I have chosen to capitalise the term "Postmodernism" and other terms related to it, as well as present it as one word. Plentiful variations exist, such as Charles Jencks' Post-Modernism, Linda Hutcheon's postmodernism and Ihab Hassan's POSTmodernISM. My version stems from an understanding of this elastic concept as a movement, therefore requiring capitalisation of its label. Postmodernism is not only defined by coming after the Modern, as the hyphen between the two terms suggests. It also possesses a dynamic of its own, despite its inherent links with a tradition of Modernity. "Postmodernism" emphasises this independence while also suggesting an inherent connection between these two concepts.

² An interdisciplinary perspective emphasises cross-cultural threads within Postmodernism and outlines the presence of shared concerns. I will quote my sources in their original language, whenever possible, with a footnoted translation in brackets, which is mine unless otherwise specified.

will argue that the frequent equation of Postmodernism with depthlessness, with a sense of the world being experienced second-hand, represented by recycled material, and bearing a connotation of farce is inadequate. My material is indeed representative of the trend towards intertextuality and the re-use of images from previous artefacts, but the sources out of which I construct my argument also reveal other problems and questions. These include a preoccupation with history and identity, as well as the relation of the self to the city as a means of attempting to understand how memory functions. They thus exclude the superficiality and heedless play commonly seen as typical of Postmodernism, following patterns set by Frederic Jameson and David Harvey.

I have organised my thesis in three parts according to the three perspectives I choose to follow to establish a pattern in the Postmodernist representation of cities. First, I will outline my theoretical position through a presentation of architecture. In this respect, Part One is where I will establish a substructure in relation to narrative representations of the city, by first considering buildings as tangible constructions within urban space. In relation to specific aspects of Postmodern architecture, and Postmodernism in general, three building projects are chosen as examples: Aldo Rossi's Museum of German History in Berlin, Robert Venturi, Denise Scott-Brown and Associates' Sainsbury Wing of the National Gallery in London and Bernard Huet's Place de Stalingrad in Paris. They introduce the issues that this thesis seeks to develop in relation to the narrative representation of history through cities. They are Postmodern in their use of allusion to historical styles as well as in their way of reconfiguring traces of the past in contemporary form in the late 1980s. The first two examples are museums, which allows me to draw an outline to Part Three and introduce a link between architecture and narrative as contemporary museology juxtaposes these fields. Huet's developments of a square and its surroundings, on the other hand, introduces notions of circulation, both of traffic and time which are traditionally associated with Paris. Part One will underline how Postmodern architecture participates in a rethinking of the city

which differs in its relation to history from the seemingly a-historical and anti-traditionalist perspective of the Moderns, such as Le Corbusier, Mies van der Rohe and the heirs to the Bauhaus school. These established an urban and architectural topography gradually discredited in the writing of architectural critics and historians such as Lewis Mumford and Jane Jacobs and more recently by Spiro Kostof and Leonardo Benevolo who stress the importance of historical texture in the city. Some Postmoderns follow their direction and seek to redefine this topography by returning to historical allusion and variety in their architectural vocabulary. Riccardo Bofill, Michael Graves and Charles Moore are examples. However, they share a mood or tone that differs from the architects discussed in more detail within this thesis, mainly through a contrasted attitude underlying their re-use of historical imagery. I will therefore focus mainly on the Italian architect Aldo Rossi's urban theory. His work is contemporary to Robert Venturi's. The latter is also an important influence for developments in historical awareness and allusion in contemporary architectural production as well as a broadening of contemporary architectural diversity and complexity.

In a study entitled L'Architettura della città³, Rossi establishes a way of perceiving urban space which equates it to a locus of memory. A city is where the traces of different periods of its history are inscribed and made visible or readable. Rossi's understanding of the city is as a space which finds cohesion in its historical density, a cohesion that is the result of incremental growth and runs against the common tide of urban dissolution and entropy, as well as traditional equations between the city and corruption or decay. Thus urban vitality resides in a historical self-awareness. Rossi's

³ Aldo Rossi: L'Architettura della città (Milano: Culp, 1987). This title was first published in 1966, establishing Rossi as a fountainhead for a contemporary perception and understanding of cities. His study is frequently used as a reference in architectural publications and has also influenced the formative years of the generation which followed him and worked in a similar historical vein, most of all the Italian Tendenza. The time gap between the sixties and the decade on which I will mostly concentrate in this thesis, the eighties, consolidated his influence and possibly allowed for ideas from this seminal work in architectural theory to be absorbed by other fields concerned with urban space.

notion that "la memoria ... diventa il filo conduttore dell'intera e complessa struttura [della città]"⁴ and that "la città è di per se stessa depositaria di storia"⁵, offers a grid, model or pattern that gives direction to my inquiry into a specific use of the image of the city.

In Part Two, I will carry the theoretical threads established through architecture into the field of narrative representation. Three aspects of urban space will organise this discussion into separate chapters, which will be discussed comparatively in a fourth section. I consider some German, English and French examples of Postmodern narratives of the city in the novel and cinema. My perspective thus remains European although similar questions are tackled in other locations. I will only allude to other urban examples through their connection with traces of memories of the Second World War, Hiroshima being an obvious example. My approach stems from Rossi's outline of historical depth and texture in urban space as time layers are juxtaposed and settled there, where history is part of the flow of present-day life. The examples of narrative representations of cities I have selected share this layered aspect although each group raises different questions inherent to the cultures of Germany, London and Paris. I will outline how these are represented, drawing conclusions in relation to how a Postmodern urban narrative functions in relation to ubiquitous threads such as the use of the detective genre and the image of the palimpsest. My urban examples were also prime sites of Modernist representation and discussed by Alfred Döblin, Virginia Woolf and T. S. Eliot, Marcel Proust and Walter Benjamin amongst others. Although I will not focus at length on the contrasted aesthetics and perceptions of these cities between Moderns and Postmoderns, this previous attention is a tradition which will be recast or revisited. I will also discuss an interdependence of fact and fiction in Postmodern modes, as my examples explore the boundary between these categories and problematize fact's relation

⁴ L'Architettura della città, p. 192, [Memory is the directing thread within the whole complex structure of the city].

⁵ L'Architettura della città, p. 187, [The city is a locus of historical sedimentation].

to fiction in the context of history. Linda Hutcheon has labelled a vein within Postmodern narrative "historiographic metafiction", and thus offers a useful premise to considering narrative's relation to the representation of historical reality. Hayden White also underlines a connection between literature and history, thus problematizing the recording of history. My sources widen this debate by drawing on historical reference, using the city as a focus for an attempt to read the solidity of the past's tangible traces rather than its inherent fluidity. The past is represented as a vital part of the present, mediated through memory, in a manner which echoes Henri Bergson's study Matière et mémoire⁶ where he identifies memory as a shaping factor within perception.

Part Three closes this thesis by centering on museology or current theory on the function and structure of the museum. Here, architecture and narrative representation meet, and a connection between urban space and memory is constructed in so far as the museum functions as the memory of a community. Museology is a study of the meaning and function of museums in contemporary culture, undertaken by a vast group of critics, most of all Peter Vergo, Douglas Crimp, Donald Horne, Robert Lumley and Kevin Walsh, as well as Josep Maria Montaner and Heinrich Klotz in the field of architecture. I present one main example of a contemporary museum, opened in the early 1990s: the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington D.C.. It combines architecture and a rigidly construed narrative to represent history and raise questions of fact's relation to storytelling, thus developing and shedding new light on threads previously discussed in Parts One and Two. Museological and other narratives can bear witness to history, being a testimony to its occurrence, as James E. Young's work on Holocaust memorials reveals. The museum in Washington seeks to fill this function. Another example of a museum dedicated to the passage of time is Pointe-à-Callière, Montréal's museum of archaeology and history. As it is located outside my geographical restrictions to a European frame, a discussion of this building appears as an annexe. The Holocaust

⁶ Henri Bergson, Matière et mémoire (1896. Paris, Presses Universitaires de France, 1990).

Museum stretches this frame to the extent that it is located within American ideology and myth making. However, this museum is rooted in European history and in this respect gathers threads that have appeared in earlier chapters concerned with European memories of the Second World War. In this respect, I believe it is appropriate to include it in my discussion of architecture, narrative and history. Museums bring together concerns about urban space because the cities in which they are built participate in their identity, and vice-versa. Other examples include the Guggenheim, the Pompidou Center and traditional institutions such as the British Museum and the Hermitage, each one functioning within its own cultural and political context. Cities are often seen as museum spaces in themselves and I will focus on this interconnection to close Part III⁷.

Memory and its inscription within space will be my main focus, as well as how this memory can be read, refound, or not. Aldo Rossi's writings are similar to other work on the subject of recollection, for instance Frances Yates'. Her study entitled The Art of Memory traces the origins of memory's link with topography to Cicero and Quintilian's treatise on rhetoric⁸, among other sources. Urban space and architecture are traditionally used as mnemonic devices, establishing a propitious ground on which to erect an understanding of cities which equates the latter with inscriptions of traces of history. Memory is an instrument of cohesion and thus runs counter to amnesia as well as discontinuity with or denial of history. As I will try to show, memory in a Postmodern context becomes an instrument of healing, a process of integration, even though it is fragmented into a plurality of memories. Rather than providing a stabilising historical context through a single processing of the past, it is the underlying current of a need to remember that is important. An anchorage for the latter resides in urban space.

⁷ The plates which appear as a second annexe at the end of this thesis may be seen as an excursion into a visual field. Relying on architecture as source material requires presenting the buildings I discuss. Through my choice of illustrations I wish to establish a visual frame, one which is a necessary counterpart to the descriptions of architectural examples.

⁸ Frances Yates, The Art of Memory (1966; London: Pimlico, 1992) chapter one. See also Janet Coleman's Ancient and Medieval Memories (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1992).

My work on this thesis reached completion as V-E and V-J Day celebrations were in full motion, following a commemorative tide that encompassed events which dominated this second half of the twentieth century. Fifty years after the liberation of Auschwitz, the bombing of Dresden, Nazi surrender and Hiroshima, questions of how to remember and what to remember are central to international cultural concerns⁹. The Second World War is the layer of history around which my thesis is mainly built¹⁰. Post-war cities are the ones we know and live in or with now, with their scars and repairs and new developments, as well as their preserved old centres or rebuilt ones. Inheritance of traces of the Second World War and their inscription within urban space is another motivation that defined the geographical focus of this thesis on Europe. Here, the War represents the overwhelming forces which underlie the shape of cities, and define their relation to memory and the past two generations later, as well as the way in which the shock of history has been assimilated or remained suppressed. I am not interested in *la petite histoire* but in the tenuous or tangible aspect of records and memories of large scale shocks. It is the representation of History and not of histories I am exploring, acknowledging that a deep problem lies in a notion of plural perspectives on history within Postmodernism. As far as I am concerned, a plurality of views and representational strategies does not imply an etherialisation of the object of representation itself. The powerful and enduring repercussions of the Second World War prove that it is an event which took place, however problematic its representation. Buildings, cities and narratives bear witness to history in a way that filters its presence but does not erase its passage.

⁹ An international conference held on the 15, 16 and 17th of September 1995 at the School of European Studies at Cardiff focused on this issue of "European Memories of World War Two", to cite its title. The papers discussed German, French and Italian perspectives, closing on a notion of the War as a shared heritage within a European Union, giving its future a mnemonic thread.

¹⁰ With the exception of chapter 2 of Part II. Indeed, Peter Ackroyd's novel Hawksmoor focuses on traces of the eighteenth century and earlier quasi-mythical layers and repercussions of these in a late twentieth century London. This novel however shares with my other sources a sense of an overwhelming subterranean layer of history that is generative of shapes and events in present urban space.

My involvement with cities began with an interest in connections between building and writing, ones developed by Victor Hugo in Notre Dame de Paris. He writes that "le genre humain a deux livres, deux registres, deux testaments, la maçonnerie et l'imprimerie, la bible de pierre et la bible de papier"¹¹. Both record traces of history and cultural identity. In trying to define a continuation of this idea in contemporary artefacts and their understanding of cities, I came to consider Postmodern architecture as a locus of debate in relation to links between construction and narrative, buildings being the loci of stories, ones that may recall other stories in an intertextual manner, or earlier stories in a palimpsestic manner. Architecture is often discussed in literary and linguistic terms and writing relies on architectural notions to define the construction, structure and edification of the text. Within this complementarity lies my initial juxtaposition of both traditions¹² in relation to the way they come to grips with the city as a space in which traces of time are layered.

Thus palimpsests or metaphors of layering function as a guiding thread throughout my research. Relying on an object or concept drawn from the field of writing as an image to represent the city is not an innocent choice. Indeed, as a parchment or manuscript which is inscribed with traces of many different and superimposed stories, partially erased and partially still present under a fresh surface, a palimpsest brings to mind notions of tracing, inscribing and deleting as well as a central idea of cohabitation of the past and the present. The simultaneous presence of many stories defines a palimpsestic space, one that is connective rather than leading to dissolution and loss¹³. Comparing a city to a palimpsest establishes an echo between building and writing, between urban space as a settlement of cumulative cultural traces and the inscription of

¹¹ Victor Hugo, Notre Dame de Paris (Paris: Gallimard, 1988) book five, chapter II: "Ceci tuera Cela", p. 252, [Humankind has two books, two registers, two testimonies, two Bibles: one in stone and one printed on paper].

¹² Philippe Hamon's writings emphasise this link.

¹³ This notion leaves out value judgements surrounding the question of which past endures and emphasises the infinite aspect of underlying layers.

these in language or texts. This image presents many threads into the reading of urban space that I propose here. It is the persistence of the past as well as its representation I wish to outline, in their relation to the city. A subterranean presence of elements from the past survives in the present as urban growth is marked by accretions and deletions, being a compound of traces settled through time. Within a city, an interplay of suppression and manifestation expresses the shaping function of residual traces of history. Similarly, Postmodern narrative overtly draws on precedent literary traditions and cultural memory as a generative pattern. It is therefore in relation to intertextuality and meta-narrative – as circumscribed by Hutcheon and McHale – that I will refer to a connection between literature and architecture, rather than outline connections between architectural and literary space, considering the city as a text. My concern is with representations of the city which do not involve a reduction of the latter to a mere set of signs and signifiers.

To write about cities is to add another layer to an extensive and ongoing discussion on this topic. As I attempted to worry my way through abundant material, I often temporarily turned away from printed documents and studies to enter real cities and visit the buildings and museums which fuelled this thesis. My work benefited from travels to German cities such as Berlin and Dresden. Visiting Paris helped me to rediscover a familiarity with this city and thus experience in its fabric itself aspects that will appear in my chapter on Patrick Modiano. Living in London in my last year of research and writing made Hawksmoor's churches as well as a big city's pace accessible. This piece is thus a combination of reading and walking, and following this Modernist theme into the present emphasised differences in moods and practice between each successive epoch. The city is too vast a topic to be dealt with exhaustively and the thread I chose to follow required a frame of information gathered from a contact with its fabric. Hence my emphasis on architecture as it is where paper cities of talk, plans and drawings as well as print meet their manifestation in solid material. Cities and their

representations have entered into an interdependent and mutually nourishing relationship. Literature and the arts can provide tools for understanding a city and fixing the latter in the memory of a visitor. Paris brings Hugo, Baudelaire and the Impressionists to mind; Eliot and Dickens provide a frame of images through which London can be perceived; Döblin and Dix did the same for Berlin. At this point, one wonders which contemporary representations fit into this mutual echoing between experience and representation. I speculate that Berlin is now filled with Wenders' images, certain readings of London have been reinfused with historical mystery by Ackroyd and Paris houses traces of resonant personal histories through Modiano's excursions into its maze of architecture and street patterns. Texts preserve and even create cities and cities nourish texts through a generative interconnection between architecture and literature.

As the city is a solid referent, it establishes a primacy of context over text, despite their mutual connection. Architecture is important in this respect as it is a discipline which is about foundations and support, form as well as shelter. Architects inscribe traces within cities, mapping tangible points of reference. Cities are perennially visited and lived in, defined by this recurrence, permanence and return as much as by their identity as homes for fleetingness and transition. They collect mnemonic traces of history out of which the present is shaped or understood, or both, when a cultural legacy is accepted. If not all Postmodernisms have the same relation to the past, the strand I am concerned with seeks to reconfigure this legacy in a critical manner.

I therefore propose a reading of urban space as a home for memories and the past, and as a propitious place to grasp the ways in which these can be reconfigured in Postmodern cultural production.

PART I ARCHITECTURE

1: ALDO ROSSI'S PROJECT FOR A MUSEUM OF GERMAN HISTORY IN BERLIN

The Italian architect Aldo Rossi's architectural practice presents an extensive and international network of projects. Among these, his design for a Museum of German History in Berlin links his own architectural concerns with questions of history, memory and their location in the city of Berlin. The Federal government's initiative to establish this museum in this particular city of the Federal Republic was finalised by a competition in 1987 as part of events commemorating the 750th anniversary of Berlin's founding in 1237. This museum was planned as a counterpart to the Museum of German History in East Berlin, established in 1954 in a neo-classical former Prussian arsenal located at number 2, Unter den Linden. The FRG and the GDR had different museological agendas, as they did not share an interpretation of their past¹.

Berlin's history is one of rapid growth and brutal alterations inflicted on the city's fabric. The city's identity up to the present resides in this dramatic succession of events inscribed within its fabric. Briefly, these involve the city's growth by accretions since its foundation in the thirteenth century. Key moments in the history of this protean city located on the sandy territory around the Spree in the Brandenburg plains are its development into a major trading and intellectual centre and its function as capital first to Prussia in 1701 and then to the New German Reich from 1871, after a period of Napoleonic occupation earlier in the century. After the Weimar years, the

¹ Kenneth Hudson discusses the museological discourse of the East Berlin museum and notes that there is no equivalent "philosophy of history" in the West. See Museums for the 1980s: A Survey of World Trends (London: Macmillan; Paris: UNESCO, 1977) p. 5.

city's identity was determined by its appropriation as capital to Adolf Hitler's Third Reich and its ensuing devastation during the Second World War. German capitulation was signed there on May 8, 1945, setting in motion Berlin's deep link with the tensions and enduring scars of the post-war era, one that is presently set in a new light after the 50th anniversary of the end of the Second world War and the city's role within the project of a unified Europe.

In the late 1980s, Berlin was still a focus for international political division, symbolised first by its four sectors of occupation and later by the Wall erected from August 1961 onwards. Each side of the Berlin divide played an important role as a showcase for the contrasting political ideologies of the Federal and Democratic Republics of a divided Germany. In the East, a Museum of History exhibited a regime-legitimising narrative of German History from a socialist perspective² and a parallel institution in the West was lacking, despite the use of a variety of exhibition spaces devoted to the city's history, such as the Reichstag and a small building near Checkpoint Charlie, with other museums throughout Berlin. Outside them, public space was saturated with an awareness of the city's historical identity and density. West Berlin in the 1980s was therefore a deeply self-conscious and self-reflexive half of a city, islanded in its own tensions.

An international competition was opened to establish a purpose-built space where a more complex and seemingly complete narrative of history could be presented. The site designated for this project was one endowed with a sense of historical concentration, only amplified by the overriding historical density and tension within the city as a whole. Indeed, the location was "the esplanade, bordered by the curve of the river Spree, where the old Reichstag rose", according to Josep Maria Montaner³. The

² Entitled "The GDR, a Socialistic Fatherland".

³ In New Museums (London: Architecture and design Technology Press, 1990) p. 157.

dimensions of the site were "colossal"⁴, four hectares of open ground having been selected to house the new museum. Stephanie Williams describes this location as "prime civic space just off the Western end of the Platz der Republik, a mere 700 m from the Reichstag and the Berlin Wall"⁵, a nerve in Berlin's historical anatomy. This magnitude was echoed in the budget voted to back the project: 380 million Marks, the "biggest investment of the West German government in any museum since 1945"⁶. These aspects combine into a statement which invests the project with a civic role and symbolic function unparalleled by any other new museum project in West Germany⁷.

From the beginning, the competition to select a project stirred a mixed response, one which amplified the controversial aspects of the idea of this museum itself. Indeed, a museum to German history, located in Berlin is not an innocent notion. The concept of history does not only bring to mind comfortable layers of the past. Presenting this past would necessarily involve delving into its complexity, raising questions about Germany and German identity in an era of political division. That Rossi's project was selected from over 200 entries also triggered a bitter debate around the ability of a foreigner to work within the frame of German culture. However, Rossi's reputation on an international level amplifies the European orientation that the committee was inclined to promote.

⁴ As established by Stephanie Williams in her article on the premises of the competition entitled "Reconciliation with History: The Future German History Museum in Berlin", in *Apollo*, vol 128, no. 322, December 1988, 413-416, p. 413.

⁵ Stephanie Williams, "Rossi in Berlin", *The Architects Journal*, vol 187, August 1988, 24-27, p. 25.

⁶ Williams, "Reconciliation with History", p. 413.

⁷ Heinrich Klotz and Waldraud Krase's study of *New Museum Buildings in the Federal Republic of Germany* (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1985) draws an outline of the 1980s as the "zenith of museum construction" in Germany, p. 7. Among these, Rossi's project in Berlin can be compared to another example of a museum to German history, Dieter Oesterlen's in Hannover. It is however on more of a local scale than the Federal Government's vision for Berlin. Klotz and Krase establish that the FDR "kept its culture decentralised" (p. 7). Rossi's Berlin project thus initiates a new scale.

Berlin was not a new site for Rossi. His two apartment houses on the Friedrichstrasse and Rauchstrasse, completed respectively in 1981 and 1983 mark his interventions in the city. These were part of the IBA or Internationale Bauausstellung Berlin initiated in the late 1970s. The exhibition's program "sponsored numerous international competitions for designs addressing many different sites and problems in Berlin. They were first planned for completion in 1984 but were subsequently held until 1987, conveniently tying them to the celebration of the 750th birthday of the city", according to Alan Balfour⁸. West Berlin's scarred fabric became a stage for projects by international architectural celebrities such as Rossi, James Stirling and Peter Eisenman. Their work was a succession to the projects which established the Kultur Forum at the edge of the Western side, adjacent to the site of what used to be the busy Postdamer Platz and was still a devastated empty patch or wounded site in the 1980s⁹. Hans Scharoun's Philharmonie and library as well as Mies van der Rohe's National Gallery are the buildings which define this site. Built during the 1960s, they were an attempt to recreate a cultural core or focus in the West, as all major public and historic buildings – except the unused Reichstag – were on the other side of the Wall, most of them clustered on the Museumsinsel and Unter den Linden. Balfour establishes that, "the West responded by attempting to construct a 'forum' for the divided culture at the very border of its existence"¹⁰. He understands the project as one inscribed "between ruin and renewal"¹¹. Within the frame of this Kultur Forum and the accretions to the city's cultural and housing profile established through IBA, Rossi's project appears as an element in a network of changes brought to Berlin. These function within the boundaries of the walled city, and define its identity within historically determined

⁸ Alan Balfour, Berlin, the Politics of Order (New York: Rizzoli, 1990) p. 230.

⁹ I will return to this section of the city in relation to Wim Wender's use of its emptiness juxtaposed to the Kultur Forum's cityscape in his film Der Himmel über Berlin.

¹⁰ Balfour, Berlin, the Politics of Order, p. 213.

¹¹ Balfour, Berlin, the Politics of Order, p. 230.

constraints. Among these projects, Rossi's museum is problematic in its overt connection with this history.

The Deutsches Historisches Museum was designed as a complex of 5 different albeit connected parts which cover most of the triangular site (see plates 1 and 2). The whole is a compound of allusions to German architectural history, a variety of styles being recalled to give shape to the multiple sections of the ensemble, articulated around a cylindrical entrance. It appears as an anthology of Berlin's architecture, a form of history book in itself which signals its inscription within German architectural heritage through overt allusions to this context. First of all, the ensemble was designed to stand as "an urban monument"¹²,

oriented in two directions simultaneously. A series of gabled sheds ..., which resemble the storage hangars of an active dock line the river's edge. ... Facing the city is a group of more formal urban elements, bracketed by a portico that alludes to an earlier Berlin museum builder, Karl-Friedrich Schinkel. The elements include a massive cylinder (the museum entrance) rendered in the typical Berlin blend of brick rectangles -containing meeting rooms, a library, and a theatre- with two-story windows pointing downtown to, in Rossi's words, 'bring the light of Berlin into the museum's interior and, to a certain extent, brighten the shadows of history with the city's youthfulness'"¹³.

The different parts that give form to the whole as an orchestration of connected areas allude to what Montaner calls "the great models of tradition and to German architecture"¹⁴. These German models or antecedents are the works of architects such as Tessenow, Behrens, Gropius, Mies van der Rohe as well as Schinkel.

The materials proposed for the museum are brick surfaces which evoke an older Berlin. Rossi's IBA project on the Friedrichstrasse is another example of a contemporary usage of this distinctively Berliner¹⁵ vernacular material, making his

¹² Montaner, New Museums, p. 157.

¹³ In Aldo Rossi, Architecture 1981-1991 (Ed. Morris Adjmi. New York: Studio di Architettura, 1991) p. 117.

¹⁴ Montaner, New Museums, p. 157.

¹⁵ The blocks built in the nineteenth century make abundant use of this material and IBA constructions as well as other recent architectural developments refer to this typology through a re-use of this material.

museum the beneficiary of this internal reference within his own architectural language. Other materials are used to emphasise context and historical awareness, among them the white stone of the exterior colonnades. Its presence is a reference to Schinkel's classicism and more specifically to the key reference for Berliner or German museums, his Altes Museum. Schinkel's work is an important antecedent to Rossi's as the vocabulary of his classicism found diversity through the re-use and compounding of earlier forms. Another example of Rossi's play with texture and construction materials is his use of glass. Combined with its obvious functional aspect lies its association with the architecture of the Bauhaus and of Mies van der Rohe and the international vocabulary – or even tradition – of curtain-wall tower-blocks and glass cubes these instigated as a language of transparency and reflections. Within the context of Berlin's museological heritage and density, glass refers to Mies's National Gallery on the Kultur Forum¹⁶ or his earlier plan for a skyscraper on the Friedrichstrasse in the 1920s. Finally, the corrugated iron roofs that cover the ensemble refer to urban industrial architecture, an essential albeit vernacular and less publicised part of German cityscapes which is given a place among other styles and movements. Similarly to its orchestrated forms attached to explicit references, the materials are also invested with a storytelling role and display aspects of the history of German and Berliner architecture. The museum thus becomes a place where memory and innovation meet.

The composite dimension of the project is close to a collage of styles and a juxtaposition of eclectic references to history, selected from its multiple layers¹⁷. Rossi's museum, however, is more an ensemble of connected parts than the term collage would suggest, the museum being a multi-functional space relying on a plurality of

¹⁶ Another German museum which refers to the formal configuration of Schinkel's Altes Museum.

¹⁷ This notion of collage derives from Colin Rowe and Fred Koetter's study *Collage City* (1978. Cambridge, Mass. and London: MIT Press, 1992). They develop an understanding of the city as a space defined by "composite presence" (p. 139). Their theory runs parallel to Rossi's and I will develop this aspect in chapter 4 of Part I.

spaces to fulfil its global project. The diversity made present here also finds a unifying tone in the presiding language of the architect. Rossi's architectural research and production are indeed defined by a prevailing consistency of form and style. This aspect is apparent in Rossi's Berlin projects which echo each other. As Rossi's trademarks are present in his museum, it is necessary to attempt an outline of his architectural direction. As a practitioner and theoretician, as well as a painter, his work is of international scope, but mainly concentrated in Europe. As I will be returning to his main theoretical piece, L'Architettura della città and its ensuing premises in relation to the city as a locus of memory and architecture as an exploration of its archetypal content, I will focus on a brief synoptic discussion of his practice.

Rossi has been a "case" within the complex urbanistic and architectural debates in Italy since the early 1960s, to use the architecture critic Manfredo Tafuri's term¹⁸. Tafuri writes that Rossi's rigorism is "a search that led to a liberation from fixed contexts and movement toward a horizon where private and collected pasts merged"¹⁹. The "complexity and exceptional coherence of his work"²⁰ revolves around his quest for archetypal forms which tell the story of architecture and reveal a memory of original, essential forms. Tafuri perceives Rossi's projects as located on "the evaporation of the image in search of the pressure points where one can draw from memory a real epiphany of signs" and are composed of "obsessive, stripped figures"²¹, ones which Morris Adjmi has described as being of an "archaic simplicity"²². Rossi's projects as well as his

¹⁸ Manfredo Tafuri, "The 'case' of Aldo Rossi", in History of Italian Architecture, 1944-85 (1982; Trans. Jessical Levine, Cambridge, Mass. and London: MIT Press, 1989) chapter 9, pp. 135-139.

¹⁹ Tafuri, "The 'case' of Aldo Rossi", p. 135.

²⁰ Tafuri, "The 'case' of Aldo Rossi", p. 135.

²¹ Tafuri, "The 'case' of Aldo Rossi", p. 136.

²² In Aldo Rossi, Architecture 1981-1991, Ed. Morris Adjmi (New York: Studio di Architettura, 1991) p. 14.

Rossi's stripping brings to mind the work of the *Arte Povera* and most of all the painter and sculptor Mario Merz. His Igloos are an inquest into an essence of building and dwelling, a root to the notion of *domus*. Elaborated out of combinations of mostly organic pre-industrial materials juxtaposed to glass, steel frames and metal tubes, Germano Celant writes that Merz's

paintings and drawings bring to mind the oneiric cityscapes of Giorgio de Chirico and their mysterious theatricality.

Three projects are key examples of his typological research and reveal Rossi's distillation of form to reach an essential architecture, one that is inscribed within an awareness of its historical density. First of all, his Cemetery of San Cataldo in Modena (1971) can be read as an emblem of the stillness of time (see plate 3) and an architecture of "nostalgia, stillness and silence"²³ which epitomises Rossi's declaration that "the double meaning of the Italian word *tempo*, which signifies both atmosphere and chronology, is a principle that presides over every construction"²⁴. The mood of this ensemble of simple forms aspiring to endure in multiple readings is present in his other works, such as his housing block (see plate 4) in the Gallarate district in Milan (1972)²⁵. As Karen Stein notes, Rossi is "constantly reworking the same shapes into a new order" and has "created an identifiable, even idiosyncratic style that has connections to historical traces, but escapes simple classifications"²⁶. There are repetitions and echoes between his projects, because his research attempts to extract a formal essence which contains a sense of historical density. A final example develops this thread. Rossi's Teatro del Mondo (1979) built for the Venice Biennale of that year is a small and

primitivism is an inquest into "an essential organicity in ... architecture and social structures", in Mario Merz (New York: Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum; Milan: Eclacta, 1989, p. 16). His idea that "se la forma scompare, la sua radice é eterna", [If the form vanishes, its roots are eternal], see Mario Merz, p. 269 for a photograph of Rossi's neon installation of this sentence in 1982) finds expression in his nomadic structures and recalls Rossi's exploration of archetypes in architecture (see plate 6).

²³ Sheila O'Donnell, Aldo Rossi, Selected Writings and Drawings (London: Architecture Design; Dublin: Gandon Editions, 1983) Introduction, p. 10.

²⁴ Aldo Rossi, A Scientific Autobiography (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press; London: Opposition Books, 1981) p. 1.

²⁵ This project is often cited as an example of echoes between Rossi's language and Fascist architecture, in his use of a monumental scale and classical references. I believe these parallels are noticeable but are defied by Rossi's distance from ideological orientation and emphasis on atemporal memory traces. See Vincent Scully's postscript to Rossi's Scientific Autobiography, p.114.

²⁶ Karen Stein, "Il Celeste della Madonna, Invisible Distances", in Aldo Rossi, Architecture 1981-1991 (pp. 269-271) p. 269.

temporary wooden theatre on a floating barge which moved around the canals of Venice and was moored next to the Dogana del Mare (see plate 5). Its shape alludes to the vocabulary of Venetian architecture and to an essence of the theatre as a space that is devoted to display and spectacle as well as being an important part of this city's identity as home to its carnival and La Fenice, as well as its prevailing stage-set aspect. Rossi thus construed a sign of the essence of the city, by refinding shapes and forms which are simple and yet contain allusions to historical antecedents. Vincent Scully summarises this aspect of Rossi's work by establishing that it is infused with memory and that "his forms are few precisely because they are not made up but remembered"²⁷. His architecture is thus invested with a ghost-like presence of the past, as the multiple allusions to previous forms which shape his later project for the Berlin museum reveal.

This project for the Deutsches Historisches Museum explores the purpose and function of a museum in general and of a museum built for a very problematic history in particular. Its building contains an awareness of its museological dimensions, and of an understanding of Berlin as a city with a relationship to museums which echoes Venice's analogy to the theatre. Rossi's project also explores the function of a museum in a contemporary perspective. Montaner writes that it "refers to the typology of the great national museums of the 19th century"²⁸ and updates it. This museum's aim was not only to establish a display-case for history but to make it present in the configuration of a new form.

An overt function in a museum of history is to make a cultural heritage available and readable. According to Stephanie Williams, the underlying aim of Rossi's project was to "help the population of [Germany] realise who they are as Germans and as Europeans"²⁹. It does so by construing a story of German history, a narrative of identity

²⁷ Vincent Scully, "Ideology in Form", postscript to Aldo Rossi's Scientific Autobiography (pp. 111-116) p. 111.

²⁸ Montaner, New Museums, p. 30.

²⁹ Stephanie Williams, "Reconciliation with History", p. 416.

that is politically determined. With the backing of chancellor Kohl, this project presented an altered perspective on the momentum museum building had taken since the Second World War. Most projects were local and this regional scale of cultural production and investments was a dominant trend in Western Germany. With the project for a museum of German history in the ex-capital of an imperial nation, this scale is shifted to a federal one. It brings to mind ideas of a shared history, housed in a single place which Rainer Höynck labels "ein guter Bau für eine schlechte Sache"³⁰.

The exhibits were to be gathered from other museums and private sources around the nation and organised into a seemingly comprehensive coverage of the German past. As it was never installed, it is difficult to outline its presumed form and any discussion of an interior to the German Historical Museum remains vague and speculative. At this stage it is however important to outline that an intention to present a narrative of history existed. As will be apparent in Part III of this thesis, establishing such a display entails choices and is necessarily selective and politically determined, like all memorials to the past. Underlying the slippery notion of truthfulness is a need to tell, to channel the past into a story and it is this aspect of this project's concern with history that makes it a relevant example in the context of a discussion of cities, museology and history. Rossi's project would house a narrative of a problematic history and the root of the problem is obviously the 1933-1945 period and how to remember this wound and source of German division from an institutionalised German perspective³¹. That German contemporary history is a sensitive, at times taboo and often dangerous subject since the end of the Third Reich will be developed at length in the first chapter of Part II. The

³⁰ Title of his article published in *Bauwelt*, 79, p. 1212-1218. [A good building for a bad or unworthy cause].

³¹ This same slice of history will be presented in the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum opened in 1993, from the perspective of its victims and away from the site of occurrence of the events in focus. On the complexity attempt to "master" the German past through museums and memorials when the shared German element is 1933, see Charles S. Maier's *The Unmasterable Past: History, Holocaust and German National Identity* (Cambridge, Mass. and London: Harvard UP, 1988).

Federal Republic's relationship with its past makes the idea of a museum to the past shockingly simple, and yet positively urgent. It is maybe this explicit, direct approach of what Williams calls a "dangerous subject"³² that is puzzling.

Indeed, one wonders how much of that layer of history has become part of contemporary German culture, in a critical consideration of its occurrence as well as in a subterranean persistence of its traces and momentum. Rossi's museum's shape recalls German architectural history, but does it include references to Albert Speer's contributions to this story, as Hitler's architect and urban planner? If the cumulative course of history can be compared to a palimpsest, has part of the whole been deleted? There are indeed no apparent references to Speer and Fascist architecture in this museum³³. This past is not one to be comfortably retrieved, nor can it be made manifest after a complex process of suppression and erasure. However plural Rossi's historical references are, they are not complete, as the nature of this project itself defies exhaustive telling.

Rossi's project, however, ties together many threads of German history and juxtaposes them in the space of a museum. The building itself, however, never happened. As a controversial and expensive enterprise, its delicate momentum was stalled by the political events that altered the course of German history itself, rendering any museum project obsolete and suspending its construction. In November 1989, Berlin again became a focus for international attention of a more euphoric nature this time, during and after the surprising dismantling of the Eastern regime from May onwards. With the removal of the city's hard edge or boundary, its potential as a capital city for a unified Germany was re explored. Thus the debate surrounding the perpetually altered identity of the city is reopened.

³² Williams, "Rossi in Berlin", p. 25.

³³ But the Holocaust Museum in Washington uses direct references, critically allusive in an explicit narrative about German history. I discuss these in chapter 2 of part III.

The Deutsches Historisches Museum's story is therefore one of paper or unbuilt architecture³⁴. It remains present in books and treatise on Rossi's work as a fiction, one which however participates in the overall story of his architecture that is still in progress. His Berlin museum crystallises concerns in relation to architecture and memory, as embodied in the idea of a museum devoted to history. Rossi's work centres on a research into the nature of architecture itself, and its relation to its own past. This awareness of archetypes and traces of history and a quest to make these a vital part of contemporary culture and vocabulary are a strand of work and thought within Postmodern theory and practice which offer a premise to a reading of other artefacts within this vein. Rossi's museum remains suspended at the level of a pure idea and therefore reveals theoretical concerns which have not been altered through their realisation. Indeed, the transposition of an architectural idea from plans to its built form involves a frequent re-appraisal of the direction established and often its re-working into a new form with an emphasis on different elements³⁵. Paper architecture like Rossi's museum is thus the crystallisation of a concept, one where urban memory prevails.

The story of Rossi's frustrated project ends with a twist. Indeed, in today's unified Berlin, a Deutsches Historisches Museum exists and functions as a display of a shared past. Its location is number 2, Unter den Linden, in the building of the museum of the same name and devoted to the same purpose under the Democratic government. It has

³⁴ Rossi's contribution to architecture was never solely focused on the realisation of projects. His theoretical writings and poetic introspections are complemented by an abundant production of drawings and paintings. The best example of the interconnection between these media in a widening of the architect's tools of reflection and productivity is his Scientific Autobiography. Another example of an architect whose vision was expressed in diverse media is Le Corbusier.

³⁵ Rossi's Bonnefanten Museum in Maastricht is an example of a museum project completed in 1990. In his Scientific Autobiography, Rossi writes that "what surprises me most in architecture, as in other techniques, is that a project has one life in its built state but another in its written or drawn state", p. 55.

however been slightly refurbished to house one German history and not two³⁶.

Unification altered the discourse of German history. This museum is also part of an extensive network of constructs in Berlin which give substance to memory of the past within the city, a shared past. These recent accretions and alterations characterise the city in the nineties, and separate it from its earlier identity and representations. A controversial example among these developments is the latest shape given to the Neue Wache, near the Historisches Museum, and also located Unter den Linden. It is now dedicated to all victims of oppression, in one sweep of memorial enthusiasm where unified Germany officially acknowledges its role as oppressor during the Second World War³⁷. Representation as well as containment of history are a new direction given to the most recent alterations and accretions to Berlin. I will return to this situation in chapter 1 of part II. Rossi's project for a museum of German history in Berlin epitomises the city's identity as a space shaped by history. This project is also an example of how a Postmodern architectural language emerges out of a self-reflexive concern with the historical density of architecture itself. The latter is intensified when

³⁶ Robert Darnton writes about the closing down of this museum's Socialist era in his Berlin Journal (New York and London: WW Norton & co., 1991), in a chapter entitled "The Revolution in the Museum", pp. 326-335. This study underlines that Germany's first move towards legitimising its unified status was a "confession of guilt", when the new regime "assumed responsibility for the entire burden of German history, including the horrors of Nazism" (Introduction, p. 14).

³⁷ The Neue Wache's history is a complex succession of alterations marking political changes in Germany as new meanings have been grafted onto this specific space. They are outlined in a book entitled Die Neue Wache Unter den Linden, ein Deutsches Denkmal im Wandel der Geschichte (Berlin: Koehler & Amelang, 1993), edited by Christoph Stöltz, the potential director of the Deutsches Historisches Museum and one of the people in charge of Rossi's project. Schinkel's original neo-classical building built from 1816 to 1818 now contains an enlarged replica of a Pietà by Käthe Kollwitz and a dedication plaque outside the memorial chamber widens as well as perpetuates the function of this place traditionally devoted to specific and politically determined memorial purposes. The text on this plaque is quoted as Annexe 1. This new face separates it from its most recent avatar as the GDR's *Mahnmal für die Opfer des Faschismus und Militarismus*. Kollwitz's work focuses on death and the pain of loss associated to war. She is cited in Thomas Pynchon's Gravity's Rainbow as a visionary who has seen something "in the hard tessitura of those days and city streets" (London: Picador, 1975), p. 578. She thus speaks from the ambiguous position of a German victim, less perpetrator of horror than sufferer. The large, over-scaled Pietà is a controversial presence.

it is developed within a dense urban past, as the building and the city echo each other's mnemonic strata. Rossi's museum belongs to the late 1980s and expresses an understanding of this history which differs from more recent concerns in Berlin.

However, this period of division and suspension is also present in other testimonies to a torn city, such as Wim Wenders' film Der Himmel über Berlin.

2: ROBERT VENTURI AND DENISE SCOTT-BROWN: THE SAINSBURY WING OF THE NATIONAL GALLERY IN LONDON.

The extension to the National Gallery of Art on Trafalgar Square is a building where many issues in relation to Postmodernism and history, architecture's link with an urban context and contemporary museology meet. The presence of the Sainsbury Wing is the result of a complex controversy and extensive dispute within London's architectural circles in the early 1980s, and its shape stems from theoretical debates which attempt to define a new direction for architecture, one that differs from the seemingly rigid frame of Modernism by developing a complex and hybrid language.

The initial stages of a project for an extension to the National Gallery involved a competition opened in 1981. The winning project by Ahrends Burton & Koralek was labelled a "monstrous carbuncle" by Prince Charles, in his notorious invective against an architectural event which he considered damaging to the face of a "much loved friend", William Wilkins's original building¹. His intervention in the development of the National Gallery extension project, in conjunction with other discontented parties² resulted in a cancellation of the outcome of the initial competition and a fresh start, however loaded with pressures and antecedents.

The history of the National Gallery begun with a first proposal for a public exhibition space voiced in 1777 which gradually led to the purchase of a private collection of paintings³ and the lease of number 100, Pall Mall by the Government in 1824. This house was the first National Gallery, rapidly perceived as too narrow to fill its purpose. A project for a purpose-built gallery was initiated shortly after John

¹ See Charles Jencks, The Prince, the Architects and the New Wave Monarchy (London: Academy Editions, 1988), where he discusses this debate around questions of taste.

² See Colin Amery, A Celebration of Art and Architecture: The National Gallery Sainsbury Wing (London: National Gallery Publications, 1991) Foreword, p. 14.

³ Originally owned by John Julius Angerstein.

Nash's development proposals for Charing Cross were published. These led to the removal of a Royal Mews, clearing the site where the gallery was to be built as well as the opening of a square and traffic route, now Trafalgar Square.

William Wilkins's design for a new National Gallery was completed and opened to the public in 1838. Its monumental neo-classical form was determined by a desire to compete with other institutions, most of all Schinkel's Altes Museum in Berlin. Wilkins's building was planned as a means of establishing a balance with the cultural institutions of other European cities. As well as expressing a concern with this wider context of an international cultural network which was still in an early phase of development, the new National Gallery presents an involvement with pre-existing elements of the site. Most obvious among these is a harmony of height with its adjacent church: Saint Martin in the Fields. The gallery's front portico also echoes the one on the church, creating an extended colonnade and a resonance between old and new. Wilkins's design aimed towards the establishment of an institutional tradition for London museums and inscribes this concern in its classicism.

In response to the bad press it received as well as a need to expand its capacity, the building was under public scrutiny as early as 1866. A competition brought forward suggestions for new forms, but settled for an extension to the existing building, the first of many. Opened in 1876, the Barry Rooms designed by Edward Middleton Barry comprise eight galleries and represent a shift in the original building's meaning. Indeed, from a fixed purpose-built institution, it grew to accommodate change, an aspect of the gallery which is central to a contemporary view of its space. The building's history is indeed marked by a constant struggle against constriction, leading to another extension of 3 rooms in 1887, 5 in 1911 and the addition of the Sir Hugh Lane Collection to the Gallery in 1927. The most recent accretion is the Sainsbury Wing, the result of a debate which was set in motion in the 1950s.

The site on which it is located is on the north-western corner of Trafalgar Square and was known as the Hampton site, acquired by the Government in 1958 as the location for an extension to the National Gallery. The Hampton Furniture Store which used to fill this space was bombed in 1940 and the ensuing cleared space, however narrow, offered a potential expansion for the National Gallery. The original intention was to establish a modern building in the vein of post-war concrete brutalism, which would be contrasted to the existing context of Trafalgar Square, as an imperial precinct defined by monumental constructs. The Square now appears as a home for colonial memories, recorded in locations re-used by the independent countries they represented. It is thus a location where many levels of pomp and ceremony meet, as it is "a hinge on the route between the City of London and Westminster"⁴ and the start of the processional route of the Mall towards Buckingham Palace. It is thus located between the spaces linked to the different aspects and powers associated with London as a capital city of a lost empire, a contemporary European capital and a stopping point on an international cities and culture tourist route.

A first idea-gathering initiative⁵ for the new wing was suspended due to a lack of sufficient funds to carry through the realisation of a project. The ensuing long design stage led to the 1981 competition of notorious outcome. In a second phase of these complicated preliminaries, another competition was opened as a way out of the existing deadlock. The initial funding project involved developers and the gallery would have been juxtaposed to commercial space. As the first competition for site projects was stalled, the Sainsbury brothers – the supermarket magnates – became the benefactors of the National Gallery, as Government subsidies for public museum space were harder to

⁴ Amery, A Celebration of Art and Architecture, p. 20.

⁵ Instigated by the *Sunday Times*, it led to an extensive production of ideas on paper.

obtain. By financing the entirety of the project's realisation, the Sainsbury Wing becomes another example of privately funded purpose-built public cultural space⁶.

The committee then established a short-list of architects invited to submit proposals for the site, with a revised brief⁷. The American architect Robert Venturi's project -from the firm Venturi, Scott-Brown and Associates- was selected and construction started in 1988. Venturi is a leading figure in the American architectural world and his theoretical contributions to his field have opened it onto a language where diversity and ornament as well as contextual concerns propose an alternative to the rules and codes of High Modernism. I propose an initial reading of this building as a means of introducing Venturi's practice through a specific urban example.

Josep Maria Montaner writes that "planning extensions ... [involves] three types of problem which have to be solved: strictly functional problems, urban problems and symbolic-formal problems"⁸. Venturi and Scott-Brown's building displays a concern with these. The Sainsbury Wing is tied into the pre-existing complexities of dense surroundings. Trafalgar Square is located between different parts of London and is a connective route as well as a central location. Colin Amery writes that "Londoners really care about" this place⁹, contrary to which Rowan Moore emphasises that it is only frequented by tourists¹⁰. In relation to its location, the new wing has attracted extensive attention and has become a landmark at an urban cross-roads.

⁶ The Clore extension of the Tate Gallery designed by James Stirling is a parallel to the Sainsbury Wing in this respect. The Sainsbury Center for Visual Arts at the University of East Anglia, designed by Sir Norman Foster is an earlier example of their commitment to associate themselves with the arts.

⁷ The short list included: Henry Nichols Cobb of I.M. Pei Partnership; Colquhoun and Miller; Jeremy Dixon/BDP; Piers Gough of Campbell, Zogolovitch, Wilkinson and Gough; James Stirling, Michael Wilford and Associates; Venturi, Rauch and Scott-Brown.

⁸ Josep Maria Montaner, New Museums (London: Architecture and Design Technology Press, 1990) p. 12.

⁹ Amery, A Celebration of Art and Architecture, p. 19.

¹⁰ Rowan Moore, in Progressive Architecture (August 1991, vol. 72) 86-87.

This museum extension has stimulated both praise and criticism. Montaner believes it is a "pessimistic" example among the numerous new extensions to established museums which have been built in the last twenty years and he writes that "with his customary irony, Robert Venturi has presented a scheme whose façade is an imitation and echo of the existing building. What we have here is a sophisticated, urbane, decorated warehouse. The interior is functional. Its exterior is an imitation of its surroundings, making of it a mere reflection"¹¹. If the building can be read in this way, it can also be understood as an example of a Postmodern use of historical reference which involves a creative rethinking of the participation of the past in the shaping of a new architectural language. I choose to follow this thread.

From the outside, the Sainsbury Wing's façade alludes to the one of the existing building as it continues its ornamental cornices and colonnade, gradually diffusing the latter into the new form (see plate 8). It is also connected visually to the old building through a re-use of the same material, Portland stone, and by respecting the existing height of the National Gallery. The brief established guidelines for the project and stated that the relationship between the two buildings was to be "sympathetic"¹². The references to Wilkins's neo-classicism are however interrupted by other styles and enter into an exchange with them. The capitals of stucco columns shift into incongruous Egyptian references and the Portland stone screen across the front of the building's frame facing Trafalgar Square is interrupted by a Miesian glass sheet on a metal frame. The new façade is blended into the old one rather than being a pastiche of its form or a sharp contrast, as other projects proposed¹³.

The street-level entrance to the Sainsbury Wing is located behind three sharp interruptions cut into the stone façade. They are outlined by black metal gratings which

¹¹ Montaner, New Museums, p. 14.

¹² Amery, A Celebration of Art and Architecture, p. 58.

¹³ See most of all Richard Rogers's scheme for the new extension. A photograph of a scale model is published in Colin Amery's A Celebration of Art and Architecture, p. 45.

stand between the street and a glass wall where the doors are located. The initial impression on entry is one of darkness and heaviness. Indeed, the main hall emphasises these elements through a low ceiling and solid columns. They suggest that they are supporting something above the hall, that this hall is therefore under the main section and alludes to a crypt-like atmosphere. Light is provided through the glass wall on the eastern side of the building. As visitors notice this contrast of brightness, the glass serves a directive purpose by indicating or highlighting the monumental staircase which ascends towards the main gallery.

The staircase (see plate 9) acts as a buffer or transit between the Sainsbury Wing and Trafalgar Square. Through the glass curtain wall the city is visible and Nelson's column – as well as the traffic and movement outside – participate in the access route from street to gallery. The opposite and inside wall is stone, interrupted by windows into the rooms of the galleries, as glimpses or previews of what one is reaching, sustaining an exploration of boundaries between inside and outside, museum and street, galleries and access routes. This staircase is also a reference to other buildings where architectural monumentality creates a stage for ceremony, such as the Scala Regia in the Vatican, or the Brera in Milan. Venturi is thus alluding to architectural antecedents, inscribing his design within a network of pre-existing buildings. The neo-classical columns and cornices on the façade are another example of his exploration of a language which involves an awareness of heritage and tradition. Glimpses into the past are scattered throughout the building, the Miesian glass wall being a reference to a more recent layer of architectural history. The metal arches which line the ceiling of the staircase, creating a sense of vaulting, are drawn from industrial frames and their presence in nineteenth century constructions such as arcades¹⁴. The design of the Sainsbury Wing is thus an orchestration of eclectic

¹⁴ The ones in London, Burlington Arcade for instance, echo their Parisian counterparts that Walter Benjamin read as emblems of nineteenth century urban modernity. See Paris, capitale du XIXe siècle, le livre des passages (transl. Jean Lacoste. Paris: Editions du Cerf, 1989),

combinations adapted from different periods of architectural history. They are also an attempt to explore, through a plurality of references, a balance between pastiche and innovation.

A wide spectrum of complexities is thus apparent in the surroundings of the main gallery. Within this decorated density, two references are central and directive in relation to the collection of Renaissance paintings the wing is built to house. Firstly, the entrance is crypt-like, thus setting in motion a series of connotations which allude to the atmosphere of a church. Secondly, the staircase is reminiscent of Renaissance *palazzi*. These two registers combine to establish a mood in which the collection can be perceived to its advantage. It recalls original spaces of exhibition and display and indicates that the paintings belong to an era where this space was not a museum. These allusions to church and palace, to Bernini and Brunelleschi are suggestions rather than copies, critical reconfigurations of old styles and types rather than their replication. Venturi's design is playful in relation to the past it revisits, expressing a sense of comfort within traditions rather than intimidation.

The building is an ensemble of parts, articulated around these circulation and access routes, including a shop, an exhibition space in the basement used for temporary shows, a lecture theatre, a microgallery, and a restaurant. The Sainsbury Wing is thus an example of a museum which emphasises diversity and flexibility in its use and is not only devoted to the art it houses¹⁵. Recreational and educational purposes meet and the space is devoted to contemplation as well as to research and information. These spaces are located in a manner which makes them appear secondary to the building's main set of rooms, the ones which house the collection of Renaissance paintings on the top floor and

Illuminations Hannah Arendt ed. (transl. Harry Zohn. London: Fontana Press, 1992) pp. 152-196, as well as Charles Baudelaire: A Lyric Poet in the Era of High Capitalism (transl. Harry Zohn. London: Verso, 1985).

¹⁵ This aspect of recent museology will be developed in Part III in relation to other examples of recent museums.

are placed above the other facilities, literally. A hierarchy is thus emphasised in the building's spatial outlay (see plate 7).

These 16 rooms were built with the collection in mind and were organised into a gallery by a juxtaposition of closed spaces and orchestrated quasi-monumental routes or vistas. The collection holds approximately 250 paintings from the period between 1260 and 1510 whose "variations in scale, size and subject are enormous, ranging from the small Netherlandish portraits, and tiny devotional pictures, to huge altarpieces"¹⁶. The rooms which house these paintings are varied in size, seemingly adapting their form to the dimensions of the pieces they contain. They are displayed in a manner which relies on either their chronological or their geographical proximity, thus establishing unexpected juxtapositions. According to Luc de Nanteuil, this organisation emphasises influences between different Schools and sets the works in mutually nourishing encounters¹⁷. Within this carefully orchestrated ensemble, a selection of highlights is framed by architectural devices. For instance, the organisation of rooms in enfilades allow for two axes defined by a succession of porticoes. The first is visible on entering the Wing, where the shape and frame of the *Incredulity of Saint Thomas* by Cima de Conegliano is transposed to the columns and arches leading towards the painting and continuing the alignment of entrances to the galleries in the old building located on the other side of a round bridge link or transition space over Jubilee Walk. The impression is one of an interconnection between the painting and the museum, the first being generative for certain formal aspects of the latter. This axis is also another example of Venturi's attempt to locate his building within the direction of pre-existing criteria, as he did with the exterior façade. Another architectural vista cuts across the rooms at the centre

¹⁶ Amery, *A Celebration of Art and Architecture*, p. 126.

¹⁷ Luc de Nanteuil's article in *Connaissance des arts* (no. 473/474, July/August 1991, pp. 32-41) focuses on the way the collection is hung. He concludes that the method chosen is a choice which is inscribed within the logic of "la muséographie moderne", [Contemporary museology], p. 40. This statement introduces the aspects of museology I will outline in Part III as contemporary museums offer a revised agenda within new buildings.

of the Wing, from North to South and is defined by simple arches. They refer to similar enfilades in the Crypt of Sir John Soane's museum and his Dulwich Picture Gallery, and frame Raphael's *Crucified Christ*. The rooms are structured around other doors which offer smaller scale frames or on the other hand, separate different sections of the collection by interrupting successions between rooms.

A visit is thus a promenade which combines perspectives and closed spaces, following the requirements of highly differentiated paintings. It is also marked by a harmony in materials and tone throughout these main rooms. These materials are grey, using stone for the walls and columns which underline portals and arches, and oak for the floors. This serene mood allows the vivid colours of the paintings to be perceived without interference¹⁸, creating a sense of church-like stone walls.

From within, it is obvious that an important element in Venturi's design is the lighting. It is filtered from skylights. They are another reference to Sir John Soane's Dulwich Gallery as well as to his museum where a subtle play of light and colours emphasises the exhibits and the complex shapes of the inside of 13, Lincoln's Inn Fields. This light is drawn from skylights of varying shapes and sizes¹⁹. Venturi transposed them into a bigger and more homogenised form. Its glass and steel frames are visible from the exterior of the building, above the Portland stone façade. The lighting is thus a combination of filtered daylight and electric spotlights, blended to achieve a serene tone. As it is the visual presence of this functional object which attracted heavy criticism which moved on to the design as a whole²⁰, the lighting of the building is therefore a

¹⁸ Unlike the highly colored rooms adjacent to the Sainsbury Wing in the Wilkins building.

¹⁹ They can be seen from the South-East side of Trafalgar Square and Duncannon Street and make the roof appear as an unruly collection of glass forms. This view feels like a glimpse behind the scene, into the mechanics of the building.

²⁰ See specifically Martin Spring's article "Playing to the Gallery" (*Building*, 256, 7703, June 1991) p. 50 where he writes that the "powerful brigade of rooflights [are] no-nonsense worker elements [which] have formed an unruly cluster on the roof, from where they peer aggressively over the parapet and throw taunts at the stylistic parlour games in progress below".

suitable aspect through which its reception by the public and by architectural circles can be introduced.

The skylights are visible from Trafalgar Square as they are prominently placed above the exterior façade, too prominently in the opinion of those averse to the building's design. If the ensemble of parts which compose the whole of the Sainsbury Wing is shaped by a variety of architectural references and explicit allusions, as well as contextual concerns linked to the nature of the site and the museum, they can also be seen as decorative devices which mask the building's functionalist underlayer. They would thus disguise its frame rather than be integral parts of the building's essential form. I agree that the Portland stone façade is like a stage-set that only appears as a visual trick stealing attention away from the glass wall along Jubilee Walk and the brick wall on the less prominent side of the building along Whitcomb Street which is a contextual echo of the pre-existing brick of the buildings of this street. If the extreme eclecticism and variety of references throughout the building do offer a sense of stagecraft and playfulness, I do not see this as a defect in the design. It is not a pastiche Renaissance palace because it is a late twentieth century museum which combines contextual references to its site and collection with hi-tech conservation and educational equipment. It is not a straight-forward copy of Wilkins's building because the latter belonged to the concerns of another epoch²¹. Neither is it a clean glass or concrete box, because it is a product of Venturi's architectural theory and therefore grey, complex and contradictory.

The Sainsbury Wing is an example of a building where an awareness of the architectural culture and heritage leading to its conception is inscribed. It expresses historical concerns through its contextualism as well as through references to ornamentation and formal aspects drawn from the past. This allusive density is self-

²¹ And Venturi is not Quinlan Terry, whose Richmond Riverside development in London epitomises the pastiche designs out of which he has built his architectural career. His projects are soothingly historicist, like snippets of nostalgia into which one can escape. However, they convey no commentary on why these revivals are relevant in a contemporary context. In this sense Terry and Venturi differ deeply in the intent which underlies their work.

conscious and contrived, according to Martin Spring²², an academic inside joke decorating a hi-tech box. Venturi's vocabulary is mannerist as he attempts to reinfuse architecture with a communicative dimension as well as acknowledge its potential to amuse. His interest in the eclectic, often inconsistent and rich language of Mannerism²³ is determined by an interest in re-establishing vitality in architecture. Venturi explores its grey areas out of which he mines his own blended and varied vocabulary. His polemic attacks on the Moderns led him to transform the Miesian "less is more" into "less is a bore"²⁴, and to seek through theory and practice new solutions to a field he perceived as stagnant in the mid-1960s. This research led Vincent Scully to label Venturi as a Grey, contrasted to the black and white rigid dogmas of the Moderns, a shade to which the rooms in the main gallery of the Sainsbury Wing allude.

The Sainsbury Wing's allusive density is an example of an elaborate use of this form of Mannerism and greyness. It is also a sign of an interconnection between a new building and its site, an attempt to re-negotiate monumentality within a contemporary frame, in the context of a museum. Within referential density, the building is a layered object where a broad spectrum of epochs meet, selected in relation to their proximity to the museum's agenda as shelter for the Renaissance collection and a contemporary cultural space. In his preface to Complexity and Contradiction in Architecture, he establishes that "as an architect I try to be guided not by habit but by a conscious sense of the past -by precedent, thoughtfully considered"²⁵. It is in relation to this guideline that the Sainsbury Wing is an important example of the use of historical reference in architecture. It construes an effect of "shock of the old" with the "puzzled response of

²² Martin Spring, "Playing to the Gallery", p. 50

²³ Mannerism in Europe in the sixteenth century was defined by an emphasis on deliberate and exaggerated artifice within the arts, relying on models drawn from antiquity.

²⁴ Robert Venturi, Complexity and Contradiction in Architecture (1966. Northants: Butterworth Architecture, 1990) p. 17.

²⁵ Robert Venturi, Complexity and Contradiction in Architecture, Preface, p. 13.

partial recognition"²⁶ it triggers in the dense museological context of the National Gallery.

²⁶ Robert Venturi, in Venturi, Rauch and Scott-Brown: A Generation of Architecture (Urbana-Champaign: University of Illinois, 1984) p. 4.

3: BERNARD HUET'S PLACE DE STALINGRAD IN PARIS.

Initiated in 1985 and completed in 1989, Huet's Place de Stalingrad is an example of an urban project where historical concerns are central to the configuration of a new design. As a new project, its vocabulary relies on memory and an awareness of the urban context in which it participates. It is therefore another example of architectural innovation which establishes its contemporaneity by looking towards the past rather than by seeking to detach itself from historical moorings. This direction is the manifestation in architectural practice of a theoretical stand which emphasises the mnemonic fabric of the city. In this respect, Huet's project echoes concerns which are also present in Rossi's museum in Berlin and Venturi's Sainsbury Wing.

The Place de Stalingrad is an example of developments in French architecture in the 1980s, after Beaubourg and parallel to François Mitterrand's Presidential *Grands Projets* which seek to reassert Paris's cultural importance on an international level. Their completion was scheduled for the bicentennial of the French Revolution in 1989¹, inscribing into the city new landmarks for a new era. The Eiffel Tower is a hundred years old. If technological sophistication is an important part of the *Grands Projets*, they also display an awareness of the urban fabric in which they are inserted. The Place de Stalingrad emphasises this aspect of new developments in French and international architecture, balancing its presence on a continuity with historical layering on its site.

Located to the north-east of Paris' old centre, this area used to be defined by its position on the border of the city. Indeed, its central and directive feature is a customs house or *barrière* designed by Claude-Nicolas Ledoux in the 1780s², along the Mur des

¹ Similarly to Berlin's celebration of its 700th anniversary with new architectural accretions on the city.

² Ledoux (1736-1806) was Architecte du Roi before working after the Revolution as a visionary and utopian architect in a similar vein to Boulée and Lequeu. His Customs Houses in Paris were built under the first patronage, as well as his Salt Works at Arc et Senans. Here, a classical aesthetic was used for a utilitarian and industrial project. The Salt Works reflect his utopian schemes for an ideal city where architectural order would produce social reform. His

Fermiers Généraux. If it is one of many buildings of the same purpose and design which were located on the boundary between Paris and its exterior, it is however the only surviving example of their presence as they were demolished during the Revolution. The city has grown out of its initial container and pre-industrial limits represented by traces of walls surviving as peripheral boulevards, rendering the limitrophe identity of the area now called Place de Stalingrad obsolete. The development of Paris follows the pattern of historic cities where the old centre gradually acquires exterior accretions as its urban fabric spreads along transport routes. This establishes a separation between centre and periphery, one which is perpetually re-defined³. This process is often compared to the rings of trees which mark the passage of time and can be read as traces of annular expansion where new material grows out of the old. Italo Calvino, however, imagines a city which would function according to opposite laws.

Olinda, in Le Città invisibili is a city where new accretions appear in its centre, pushing the old fabric towards its edges. An urban boundary is thus defined by the city's oldest parts, which neither struggle for persistence within new urban strata, nor are reduced to museum-like preserved space. Indeed,

Olinda non è certo la sola città a crescere in cerchi concentrici, come i tronchi degli alberi che ogni anno aumentano d'un giro. Ma alle altre città resta nel mezzo la vecchia cerchia delle mura stretta stretta, da cui spuntano rinsecchiti i campanili le torri i tetti d'embrici le cupole, mentre i quartieri nuovi si spacciano intorno come da una cintura che si slaccia. A Olinda no: le vecchie mura si dilatano portandosi con sé i quartieri antichi, ingranditi mantenendo le proporzioni su un più largo orizzonte ai confini della città; essi circolando i quartieri un po' meno vecchi, pure cresciuti di perimetro e assottigliati per far posto a quelli più recenti che promono da dentro; e così via fino al cuore della città: un'Olinda tutta nuova che nelle sue dimensioni ridotte conserva i tratti e il flusso di linfa della prima Olinda e di tutte le Olinde che sono spuntate una dall'altra; e dentro a questo cerchio più interno già spuntano - ma è difficile distinguerle - l'Olinda ventura e quelle cresceranno in seguito⁴.

designs borrowed from a wide variety of sources and are reinterpretations of the French classical tradition and of antiquity. His later work revealed the strong influence of Andrea Palladio, reflected in the form of the Customs House on the site of Huet's Place de Stalingrad.

³ Jean-Luc Godard's film Deux ou trois choses que je sais d'elle portrays the tension between centre and periphery. "Elle" is both his female protagonist and "la région Parisienne", a periphery that is a construction site as well as a satellite area.

⁴ Italo Calvino, Le Città invisibili (Torino: Einaudi, 1972) pp. 136, 137, [Olinda is not the only city to grow in concentric rings, like the trunks of trees that acquire a new circle each year.

Calvino portrays a city in progress, a space subject to growth and alteration, thus registering an aspect of urban identity which echoes the fabric of real historical cities such as Paris. New layers enter the old ones, and Olinda is thus a fantasy or even a caricature of these implantations through their inversion. As a city, its identity resides in a constant redefinition of its boundaries and in this respect is also close to Parisian topography where some new developments do indeed feed off the veins and sap of older ones⁵.

Paris's historical heart is often likened to a museum. This implies that vital institutions and parts of its identity must have moved elsewhere, which is not true. These elements have however also spread or been implanted on the margins of this historic core, in areas such as La Défense and the Cités Satellites, and more recently through the initiative of President Mitterrand. Indeed, the *Grandes Réalisations d'Architecture et d'Urbanisme* include the Parisian *Grands Projets* of the Fifth Republic begun in 1981 which reflect, in their location, a wide understanding of the boundaries which define the centre of Paris. They form a recent layer added to the city's fabric, a new story which focuses on the city, its history, the function of new architecture within a historic space and the way it enters into a dialogue with the city. The *Grands Projets* contribute to a fresh understanding of Paris through the implantation of a new monumentality. These projects represent a continuation of a traditional association between architecture and political power, even if the latter is seemingly being negotiated

But in the midst of the other cities, the old and tight walls remain, from where bell towers, towers, the tiled roofs of cupolas stretch while new areas spread around it like a loosening belt. But not Olinda: the old walls dilate, dragging with them the old quarters which grow but still maintain their proportions on a wider horizon at the outskirts of the city. In this way they surround less old quarters which have also gained in perimeter but lost in width, to create space for the more recent ones which push them from the inside, and so on, right through to the heart of the city. A new Olinda preserves in its reduced dimensions the features and the lymphatic streams of the first Olinda and of all the Olindas that emerged from each other. And in this innermost circle lies -hardly visible- the next Olinda and all those to come].

⁵ Chapter 1 of Spiro Kostof's *The City Assembled* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1992) is entitled "The City Edge", pp. 11-70. It explores the relation between urban development and urban boundaries.

in terms of democratic values. In relation to these new buildings, Jean-Louis Subileau writes that "le projet culturel actuellement engagé peut difficilement se reconnaître dans cette conception traditionnelle de la monumentalité. Il veut non pas imposer des valeurs dans des réalisations de prestige, mais créer des lieux d'accueil où la société urbaine invente sa culture"⁶.

I. M. Pei's Grand Louvre focuses on a pyramid which is situated at the centre most point of the city's layered history, at the heart of its emblem of culture, and memory of its royal past. The Louvre is also the origin of an axis which links it to the city's outer limit of La Défense via a perspective following the Place de la Concorde, the Champs Elysées⁷ and the Place de l'Étoile. Otto Von Spreckelsen's Grande Arche de la Défense is thus inscribed within this line and emphasises the connection between pre-existing monuments as its shape recalls the arches on the axis. In the opposite direction, towards the East of Paris, Dominique Perrault's Bibliothèque de France is attached to developments of the Bercy district. Paul Chemetov and M. Huidobro's Ministère des Finances and Jean Nouvel's Institut du Monde Arabe participate in opening cultural and political institutions in different parts of the city. They use the river as a directive element, similarly to the Gare d'Orsay where Gae Aulenti's refurbishment and alteration project transforms quasi-industrial space into a museum. Another project concerned with the promotion of culture is the ensemble of the Parc de la Villette in north-eastern Paris. These projects all explore the relationship of architecture to key locations in the fabric of Paris. Carlos Ott's Opéra Bastille is another example, as it is situated at the Place de la Bastille, an urban emblem of the Revolution. The *Grands Projets* represent

⁶ Jean-Louis Subileau, "Réconcilier la culture et la ville", *Monuments Historiques*, 132 (April-May 1984) 51-58, p. 53. [This currently initiated cultural project can hardly identify itself in relation to a traditional concept of monumentality. It seeks to create hospitable locations where urban society invents its own culture, rather than impose the values of prestigious realisations].

⁷ Bernard Huet's refurbishment of the surface of the Champs Elysées is another of his Parisian projects, with an emphasis on geometrical alignments and pedestrian circulation.

cultural activities in a wide sense (see plate 12 for a map of their location in Paris which also reveals how they function as new landmarks).

The Parc de La Villette is an ensemble of interconnected projects by different architects orchestrated around a park designed by Bernard Tschumi on the site of Paris's old slaughterhouses⁸. Adrien Fainsilber's Musée des Sciences, des Techniques et des Industries and Christian de Porzamparc's Cité de la Musique are two central elements in the ensemble. The latter also includes a series of red pavillions and covered promenades by Tschumi which draw a grid onto this open space and allow other interventions such as Paul Chemetov's fountain and a playground orchestrated by Peter Eisenman and Jaques Derrida, echoing in its function an overall on-site deconstructed creativity. La Villette is a cultural showcase situated in a "post-Pompidou age", to use Douglas Davis's terminology⁹. Its constructions are oriented towards the future, open to change and of an ambitious scale and are also heirs to the changes in French and international museum culture epitomised by Beaubourg.

The Pompidou Centre stands as an emblem of a shift in the definition of cultural space. By being representative of the agenda of 1968, it stands in the Marais area of Paris' old centre as a deliberate jarring contrast to the city's fabric, a disruption which is now an assimilated experience. Renzo Piano and Richard Rogers' building (1971-77) is a carnivalesque inversion of rules and expectations seeking a new vitality for architectural language, one where size matters. It demonstrates a shift away from its

⁸ Les Halles is another example of the replacement of a historical function with a modern ensemble, even though the latter is also devoted to commerce. The Bercy district and its cultural ensemble which includes a concert venue, Huet's Jardin de la Mémoire, the new American Centre and the Très Grande Bibliothèque de France, would be a closer counterpart and reveals that altering spaces and rethinking their original usage is a frequent process. Patrick Bouchain's Magasin in Grenoble, Alan Colquhoun and John Miller's Whitechapel Gallery in London and Frank Ghery's Temporary Contemporary art museum in Los Angeles show that industrial space is particularly suited to being reclaimed as a cultural storehouse. Industries move out of the city centre and are replaced by information, culture and entertainment, as well as commerce, as the examples of Covent Garden in London, The Cannery in San Fransisco and Darling Harbour in Sydney reveal.

⁹ Douglas Davis, The Museum Transformed (New York: Abbeville Press Publishers, 1990) subtitled: "Design and Culture in the Post-Pompidou Age".

post-war rigorism into "gigantic, visceral exhibitionism"¹⁰ of highly coloured industrial references. The contrast between building and context is a means of infusing a new vitality into the area, establishing a dialogue rather than a disruption and allowing the existing buildings to be seen in a new way¹¹. Bernard Huet understands Beaubourg as the expression of a new monumentality¹² which produces meaning for its context by drawing attention to it. A new and futuristic building thus enters into a mutually defining relation with a pre-existing historical site, opening a path for other new and dynamic developments in the city.

The *Grands Projets* are manifestations which are representative of the climate in French architecture at the time of Huet's Place de Stalingrad project. The turmoil and ensuing changes which took place after 1968 have been assimilated. Huet's architectural practice reflects his active participation in these debates within his profession as a teacher, a polemicist and as editor of the review L'Architecture d'aujourd'hui in the 1970s. He establishes that an architect is responsible for providing orientation for a community by representing its values, a task he believes the Athens Charter¹³ and the achievements of the Moderns do not fulfill. The landscape of architectural developments of the late 1960s was dominated by functional megastructures and new brutalism was superseded by a debate focusing on context and history and an overall re-intellectualisation of architecture. In this perspective, "la ville fonde sa réalité sur la continuité et la permanence dans le temps et dans l'espace"¹⁴, and urban identity resides

¹⁰ Alexander Tzonis and Liane Lefaivre, Architecture in Europe: Memory and Invention since 1968 (London: Thames and Hudson, 1992) p. 84.

¹¹ This juxtaposition of contrasts is re-used by I.M. Pei for his pyramid at the Louvre.

¹² "Avant-Propos", Monuments Historiques 132 (April-May 1984) 2-6, pp. 3-4. Beaubourg gave a new momentum to monumentality within Paris, before it was taken on by the *Grands Projets*. Paris thus seemingly grows in superimposed layers of monumentality.

¹³ C.I.A.M publication which defined the edicts of the International Style from the 1930s onwards. See Part I chapter 4.

¹⁴ Bernard Huet, "L'Architecture contre la ville", Architecture Mouvement Continuité 14 (December 1986) 10-13, p. 11, [The city grounds its reality on its continuity and persistence within time and space].

in its ability to grow and change. Huet's city is a space where city, architecture, memory and history are inter-related.

Huet's project for the refurbishment of an urban ensemble including the Place de Stalingrad is contemporary with the *Grands Projets*, however different in its scope. It is situated in an area which regained attention through its proximity to the Parc de la Villette, as the whole city's configuration is reconsidered through the establishment of the *Grands Projets*. The Ville de Paris was the instigator of this new Place, not the central government, and the initiative stemmed from a desire to redefine and rehabilitate a space which had lost its original direction and order¹⁵. The site is dense with historical traces and Huet's project emphasises their presence. As a place which used to be defined by its location at the border between the city and its outer limits, it also participated in the complex network of waterways throughout and around Paris. It therefore carries the weight of associations with aspects of the city which are no longer central to its identity – such as canal navigation – and registers their passage and obsolescence.

The Place de Stalingrad is a project where a wide variety of elements are woven together (see Plate 11). It is most of all a public space, but one which differs from the other examples of architectural projects in the 1980s I consider in this thesis, as it is not a space focused on housing cultural events, or more explicitly, it is not a museum. This project is an open-air site which reveals architecture in a close interplay with the city. Other examples which come to mind as relevant manifestations of historical concerns inscribed in the agenda of new architecture in Paris are Gae Aulenti's Musée d'Orsay, Raymond Simounet's reworking of the Hotel de Salé into the Musée Picasso, as well as I.M. Pei's project for the Grand Louvre. These are all new works inscribed within pre-existing space, interventions on its fabric as a form of recycling or updating

¹⁵ In Paris, a division in control is established as municipalities take on minor works and the State major ones.

and not extensions of that space like the Sainsbury Wing or James Stirling and Michael Wilford's Neue Stadtsgallerie in Stuttgart. I have chosen to focus on Huet's project instead of a museum as it reworks the mobility of the city's transport routes into a historically determined shape. If Paris is an emblem of mobility and modernity, it is also a city shaped by a superimposition of layers of time. The Place de Stalingrad uses history and the way the past has inscribed the site with directive lines as the blueprint for a new configuration. In this respect, this project connects with Paris' identity as a home for Charles Baudelaire and Walter Benjamin's *flâneur*, with his pedestrian pace contrasted to the speed of the traffic and absorbed in its confusion on Haussmann's Grands Boulevards.

Historical trace and urban heritage are central directive notions within this project for a refurbishment combined to a reorchestration of a slice of public space. The Place de Stalingrad is a development project in Paris which focuses on this historical direction and finds nourishment in the city's past, drawing on this density to outline the presence of old traces in a new site and render these intelligible. More than a process of updating or restoring, Huet's work at La Villette expresses a critical reworking of the site's different historical traces into a new urban composition that is a cluster of references to the past. The latter is thus preserved through a new intervention which does not supersede the older layers but negotiates an exchange between times past, and the present.

The main axes around which this area was gradually developed from the eighteenth century onwards are two main routes into the city, one from Flanders and the other from Germany. Between these roads, the Bassin de la Villette's line was established from 1803 onwards under Napoleon, completing the main layout of the ensemble and connecting it to the Canal de l'Ourcq. Together they form a trident with branches meeting at Ledoux's rotunda, the latter being the focal point of the composition and an entry into

the intra-mural city (see plate 11). The basin is described as its spine¹⁶ and its quays were later developed as promenades and streets devoted to recreational activities along a waterway set aside from the Seine, on another scale. The basin was used as a harbour in the nineteenth century and accretions to the ensemble later in this century led to an initial confusions of these lines, most of all through the introduction of more peripheral buildings, many of which were destroyed during the *Commune* in 1871. Pressures of industrial growth altered the initial use of the space. Jules Formingé's design for an elevated railway bridge or viaduct where the *métro aérien* could run was built in 1904, following in parts the line of the old city wall – or Mur des Fermiers Généraux – and therefore located close behind the rotunda. A boulevard curving around it was drawn near this route in the 1930s. This situation remained stagnant until the 1970s when the basin was no longer used for navigational purposes and ideas of refurbishment emerged, leading gradually to the site's present configuration.

Huet's construed frame for the past conveys a sense of ceremony and occasion. It centres on a stage-like esplanade in the shape of a trapeze from which all the elements of the ensemble are visible. This area, the Place de Stalingrad itself¹⁷, is located between the rotunda and the basin. In its recent history it was used as a bus terminal and its new function relieves it of its older one. Located between the two focal points of the composition, it is an open space of beaten earth. In its texture, it recalls parade grounds and brings to mind a sense of celebration and outdoor activity with an emphasis on flexibility of usage. It is thus a reference to Revolutionary theatres and public spaces such as the Champ de Mars. The esplanade is devoted to pedestrian circulation and is a focus for the newly unified scheme. By preserving elements from each period, Huet's

¹⁶ François Grether and Chistiane Blanco, "La Villette: dopo la fine di un porto", *Rassegna* 29 (1987) p. 84: "Il piano d'acqua del bacino serve da spina dorsale alla composizione" and "è la Rotonde stessa che serve da punto di fuga alle linee convergenti delle prospettive". See also Bernard Huet, "Le Avventure di una grande composizione", p. 84.

¹⁷ The name of the Place tangentially reflects its layered identity, since Stalingrad, once Tsaritsine and then Volgograd underwent alterations and successive redefinition.

layout indicates that the composition it is reworking was established through gradual accretions. It thus tells the story of the site and of the successive periods of French history – such as the Monarchy, the Revolution, the Napoleonic era, the Commune and successive Republics – which motivated each change, registering in urban fabric a trace of their passage.

Trees indicate composition lines initially drawn by Ledoux. As well as recalling these erased patterns, they add allusions to the French garden into this overall classical perspective, enhanced by an ornamental basin and an obelisk dedicated to Ledoux. The promenades are restored to their original purpose¹⁸. The project therefore explores a boundary between park and city, natural growth and contrived implantations, following a city-beautiful idealism¹⁹. This combination of landscaping and urbanism echoes the overall problematic of the site and its blending of architectural interventions with a reading of the original or natural growth of this city. The Place de Stalingrad is circumscribed by elevated terraces "evoqu[ant] volontairement un mur d'enceinte avec ses bastions"²⁰. On the upper part of these walls, a "longue inscription dédicatoire"²¹ is carved into the stone and recalls the names of the 34 gates of the Mur des Fermiers

¹⁸ Jim Jarmush's film Night on Earth uses this location in its section on Paris. The successive stories of taxi routes focus on Los Angeles, New York, Paris, Rome and Helsinki, presenting urban portraits from the perspective of specific trajectories and itineraries which are backdrops to passenger-driver encounters. In Paris, La Villette and this basin are the end of the journey. Taxi rides appear in Patrick Modiano's novels as important means of exploring the city and seeking signs of the past by retracing itineraries through motion. The taxi is a cinematic trope often used in relation to the city, as Martin Scorsese's Taxi Driver and Pavel Lounguine's Taxi Blues reveal in relation to New York and Moscow, respectively.

¹⁹ Kenneth Frampton outlines the international theoretical debates underlying the post-industrial Garden city in Modern Architecture: A Critical History (1980. London: Thames and Hudson, 1992) chapter 2: "Territorial transformations: urban developments 1800-1909", pp. 20-28. See also Lewis Mumford: The City in History (1961, London: Penguin, 1991) pp. 586-594.

²⁰ Bernard Huet, "Permanence formelle et expression singulière", Monuments Historiques, 154 (December 1987) 34-37, p. 36, [Consciously recalling a surrounding wall and its bastions].

²¹ Bernard Huet, "Permanence formelle et expression singulière", p. 36, [A long dedicatory inscription. It can be compared to the writing on the inside wall of the monumental staircase of the Sainsbury Wing in London].

Généraux built by Ledoux which become ghost presences of places that no longer exist in stone, but do in written records.

Christiane Blancot and François Grether described the rotunda as "un vestige isolé" and the basin as "une étrange survivance d'un autre temps"²². The site of Huet's place de Stalingrad has undergone many successive alterations. Prior to the Ville de Paris' decision to initiate works here, the cohesion of the former composition was erased by the multiplicity of alterations and interventions it held²³. As well as being sympathetic to the layering of time on this space, Huet's project seeks to clear its cluster of confusion and render the historical traces readable. His intervention thus aims at restoring a lost meaning to obsolete elements of an urban ensemble and re-orchestrate them into a new pattern, reinterpreting its lines in the process. Huet does not revive a congealed past but seeks to explore a contemporary function for historical traces.

At the time of Huet's project, the area's lack of focus and direction rendered it stagnant. Huet's intervention outlines a direction for a new usage by highlighting historical density as a means of rationalising the ensemble. He establishes a sense of reconciliation between the site and the city, as well as initiating a renewal of the Villette sector²⁴. Indeed, "le processus mis en oeuvre par la Ville de Paris vise, en exploitant les acquis historiques, à requalifier les espaces publics, les édifices et les ouvrages

²² Christiane Blancot and François Grether, "Des Vestiges au devenir d'un site", Monuments Historiques 154 (December 1987) 32-34, p. 32, [An isolated relic and a strange persistence form another epoch].

²³ See Christiane Blancot and François Grether, "Des Vestiges au devenir d'un site", p. 32: "La grande composition constituée progressivement par ces éléments singuliers, par les voies qui convergent vers la place de Stalingrad et par le métro aérien, s'est lentement estompée: sa capacité à organiser le territoire, pourtant évidente lors de sa création, s'est dissoute", [The large composition progressively established by these individual elements, by roads converging towards the Place de Stalingrad and by the elevated railway, gradually faded. Its organisational function for the site, obvious at its instigation, has been erased].

²⁴ The refurbished site reveals 1980s historicism as an ambiguous solution for a revitalisation of desolate parts of the city. Building a temple does not mean that the divinity will come and inhabit it. Indeed, the municipality of Belleville and the Villette area do not dispose of enough resources to maintain the Place de Stalingrad and its success as a means of regenerating the area remains dubious.

singuliers qui leurs ont été liés"²⁵. Functional elements on the site of the esplanade such as a road and bus station were relocated to draw a new composition, replacing random use with an orchestrated one, where transport routes are read as historical lines or veins within a city.

Urban morphology is a complex and mysterious process, according to Huet²⁶. His inquiry into how cities find their shape outlines that it is rarely imposed and most often reached through a gradual blending of architecture and time. The Place de Stalingrad is a small scale example of this process, as it is a manifestation of collective urban architecture rather than of a unified scheme. In this respect, he has inherited and pursued the direction established by Aldo Rossi through his understanding of the city as a palimpsest. Large scale urban compositions adopt unpredictable directions and new interventions should thus register these shifts. Notions of permanence and continuity are explored and emphasised. Huet's references to memory are not an expression of stylistic nostalgia. History is made present as a directive or generative plan rather than a decorative surface²⁷. The architect's work thus implies a knowledge of this map or initial reading of the site which accepts its inherited complexity, and registers memory through this retrospective logic.

The Place de Stalingrad is a manifestation of a combination of "permanence formelle et expression singulière"²⁸, of persistent traces made more apparent through a

²⁵ Christiane Blancot et François Grether, "Des Vestiges au devenir d'un site", p. 33, [The process set in motion by the Ville de Paris seeks to redefine public spaces as well as the buildings and independent works linked to them, by exploiting historical attainments].

²⁶ "Permanence formelle et expression singulière", p. 34. And "Le Avventure di una grande composizione", p. 84.

²⁷ See specifically chapter VI of Bernard Huet's *Anachroniques d'architecture* (Bussels: Archives d'Architecture Moderne, 1981), "Un Avenir pour notre passé", pp. 139-159, [A future for our past]. Huet's development of a park in the Bercy district of Paris is another example of a recomposition of a clear figure out of historical traces. Indeed, his Jardin de la Mémoire emphasises the grid of the road system of the old demolished wine deposits which defined the area as a market. This location is remembered in Patrick Modiano's novel *Fleurs de ruine* (Paris: Seuil, 1991) pp. 47, 49.

²⁸ [Permanence of form and particular expression], title of his article in *Monuments Historiques*, 154 (December 1987) 34-37.

dialogue with new interventions. Huet's intervention takes place within an inherently conservative frame, as he understands the city to be a conservative space where the past is indeed maintained²⁹. The architect highlights the process leading to the existing shape of a city or of an urban composition. Indeed, "le projet [de la Place de Stalingrad], fidèle à l'histoire du lieu veut être une réponse architecturale qui achève un long processus. Sa force repose sur l'effet d'évidence presque ingénu d'un ordre 'naturel' qui ferait penser que le projet était déjà inscrit dans le site depuis très longtemps"³⁰. In this respect, architecture is not only the production of something new but a response to what already exists, to a context marked by historical traces. Huet's Place de Stalingrad is an example of architecture working within, and not over, history inscribed within a site. As a new development in urban architecture, this approach is strongly contrasted to the explosive and loud style of Beaubourg and emphasises a process rather than an object.

²⁹ Bernard Huet, "L'Architecture contre la ville", p. 11.

³⁰ Bernard Huet, "Permanence formelle et expression singulière", p. 36, [The Place de Stalingrad project is faithful to the history of its site and thus aims at being a conclusive architectural answer to a long process. Its strength resides in contributing evidence of an ingenious natural order, as if the project had been inscribed within this site for a long time].

4: POSTMODERN ARCHITECTURE AND HISTORY.

A: PRELIMINARY COMMENTS

One might possibly stipulate that architecture is a social institution related to building in much the same way that literature is to speech¹.

Theoretical premises underlie the three projects I have discussed in the previous sections. Each architectural example reveals specific aspects of the cities in which it is inscribed as well as being manifestations of an architectural debate that superseded the dogmas of Modernism. In this section, I will outline Rossi, Venturi and Huet's approach to altering architectural language and their attempt to provide solutions for problems within this field from the 1960s onwards. The descriptions of the Deutsches Historisches Museum, the Sainsbury Wing and the Place de Stalingrad I propose in chapters 1, 2 and 3 introduce the frame in which these projects were thought. As projects, they register conceptual changes and can be included in the blueprints for a Postmodern vocabulary. They share an overt agenda, one which focuses on differing from the Moderns and establishing historical density within a new architectural fabric. In attempting to understand a shift from a Modern to a Postmodern language or sensitivity, the debates epitomised by the theory and practice of these three architects provide an initial outline. However complex a shift from one set of cultural assumptions to another can be, Rossi and Venturi's theoretical writings are seminal texts and reveal an initial rethinking of rules which stems from a diagnosis of urban crisis and a dissociation between architecture and the city.

¹ Colin Rowe and Fred Koetter, Collage City (1978, Cambridge, Mass. and London: MIT Press, 1992) p. 101.

B: THE MNEMONIC CITY

Aldo Rossi's L'Architettura della città published in 1966 is a model for later readings of the city as a layering of stories and a space shaped by time². He proposes a reading of the city, considering it as an "artefact"³. His emphasis is on urban dynamics and how the city is shaped in time⁴. He focuses on the role played by "fatti urbani" – urban qualifiers – in the evolution of form of a city in transformation⁵. By "fatti urbani" he refers to architectural elements which have an enduring role within a city, independently from their original function. As examples, he cites the presence of Roman remains or of monumental constructs such as the Alhambra in Grenada. They define the city in which they are located, and do so through form rather than purpose. In this respect, they are keys to urban continuity and bear witness to the city's history. Indeed, since "la città è di per se depositaria di storia"⁶ and "le città sono il testo di questa storia"⁷, a hypothesis of urban continuity relies on the "strati profondi, dove si intravedono certi caratteri fondamentali che sono comuni a tutta la dinamica urbana"⁸. Rossi understands the city as a lamination of traces which record the history of a place.

² Manfredo Tafuri points out that this study is not his only discussion of the city at that time. His articles in the Italian architectural review Casabella as well as his practice in the 1960s nourish his arguments. See History of Italian Architecture, 1944-1985 (Torino: Einaudi, 1982) p. 136. Rossi is a *cause célèbre* of "Neo-Rationalism" or the Italian *Tendenza*, but is not their only representative. See Kenneth Frampton, Modern Architecture, a Critical History (1980, London: Thames and Hudson, 1992) p. 295.

³ Aldo Rossi, L'Architettura della città (1966. Milano: Culp, 1987), "la città come manufatto", p. 50.

⁴ Rossi, L'Architettura della città, p. 5.

⁵ Rossi, L'Architettura della città, pp. 116-122.

⁶ Rossi, L'Architettura della città, p. 187, [The city is a deposit of history].

⁷ Rossi, L'Architettura della città, p. 187, [Cities are the narratives (texts) of this history].

⁸ Rossi, L'Architettura della città, p. 188, [Deep strata where fundamental characteristics shared by a whole urban dynamic are visible]. Rossi's hypothesis refers to archeological principles as a means of access to a layered urban identity and the city's deep structure.

Urban topography is thus shaped by the persistence of generative elements within a whole⁹. Rossi's study of permanent elements is developed into a theory of a generative presence of the past in present urban form. The city is an enduring space defined by time¹⁰. Indeed, "la città è qualcosa che permane attraverso le sue trasformazioni e le funzioni, semplice o plurime, a cui essa via via assolve sono dei momenti nella realtà della sua struttura"¹¹. Furthermore, the city is perceived as "il paesaggio di pietra ... che simbolizza la continuità di una comunità"¹². Rossi thus equates urban vitality with historical density.

The past continues to be part of present experience¹³. It is inscribed within the map of the city. The latter is a recording of traces of past "fatti urbani" persisting within the present fabric, and their link with the present. This juxtaposition of traces from distinct epochs is also recorded as a lamination of successive historical periods within the whole city. Rossi refers to Rome as an example of the city as a locus of changing function. Indeed, the Imperial preceded the Papal layer and the latter was later juxtaposed to the city's function as a capital for a united Italy. Rome is an ancient city that has grown into a modern one, locating its identity on this tension between change and persistence¹⁴. The city is a palimpsest, in its changing function housed on the same

⁹ Rossi, L'Architettura della città, p. 27: "noi crediamo ... che il tutto sia più importante delle singole parti", [I believe the whole to be more important than its separate parts]. See p. 40, for references to the idea of persistence. He discusses the theories of Marcel Poète and Pierre Lavedan in this respect.

¹⁰ Rossi, L'Architettura della città, p. 27: "essendo proprio della città il suo carattere di permanenza nel tempo".

¹¹ Rossi, L'Architettura della città, p. 47, [The city is something which lasts beyond its changes and the functions, singular or plural, that it fills through time are in the reality of its structure nothing more than moments].

¹² Rossi, L'Architettura della città, p. 135, [The landscape of stone which symbolises the continuity of a community].

¹³ Rossi, L'Architettura della città, p. 50: "un passato che sperimentiamo ancora".

¹⁴ Rome is referred to in L'Architettura della città on numerous occasions. See most of all pp. 122-130, 190, 205. Rossi also cites the example of Paris as a layered space: "La configurazione attuale di una grande città, risulterà come la sovrapposizione dell'opera di certi partiti, di certe personalità, di certi sovrani; così piani diversi si sono sovrapposti, mescolati, ignorati, tanto che la Parigi attuale è come una fotografia composita, ottenuta dalle riproduzioni su uno stesso foglio della Parigi di Luigi XIV, di Luigi XV, di Napoleone I, del barone

locus, as well as in its ability to inscribe traces of successive times simultaneously. Rossi writes in this respect that "la forma della città è sempre la forma di un tempo della città; ed esistono molti tempi nella forma della città"¹⁵. This form can only be studied through its parts and thus "l'unità di queste parti è data fundamentalmente dalla storia, dalla memoria che la città ha di se stessa"¹⁶.

Urban persistence is ensured by memory and the city read in a Rossian frame is its locus. His urban theory presents history and memory as generative elements within the city¹⁷ as they allow it to grow incrementally; successive functions leave traces of their presence in urban form. The re-use of Roman amphitheaters for other purposes is an example that Rossi cites recurrently. Another encasement of traces of the past in cities takes place in language. Rossi outlines that names of places often recall precedent usage or configuration of a site. Indeed, "ogni città presenti esempi numerosi di profonde modificazioni fisiche del suolo che sono remaste nei nomi delle vie e delle contrade"¹⁸. The Marais in Paris is one of his examples, as its name refers to the swamp which used to occupy the ground. Similarly, train stations often refer to the memory of an absent element on the surface, as for instance Bastille, Crystal Palace or even Postdamer Platz until recently. Rossi concludes therefore that key generative elements keep a trace of their role as "fatti urbani" through memory. The latter is inscribed in the city as a whole, in its buildings, its locus and its language.

Hausmann", [The present configuration of a metropolis appears in this respect like the superposition of the work of certain parties, personalities, sovereigns. In Paris, different plans have been superposed, blended, or have ignored each other, making the present city comparable to a sort of composite photograph obtained from a layering of the Paris of Louis XIX, Louis XV, Napoleon and the Baron Hausmann]. The place de Stalingrad is an example of this composite urban form.

¹⁵ Rossi, L'Architettura della città, p. 55, [The shape of a city is always the shape of one epoch and many different epochs exist within the shape of a city].

¹⁶ Rossi, L'Architettura della città, p. 68, [The unity of these parts is given by history, by the memory the city has of itself].

¹⁷ Rossi, L'Architettura della città, p. 68.

¹⁸ Rossi, L'Architettura della città, p. 80, [Every city offers numerous examples of deep modifications of its ground which have left traces in the names of streets and areas].

Memory occupies a central role in Rossi's practice. His interest in the persistence of certain forms through history and their private or collective resonance is explored in his urban theory as well as through the typological research which underlies his projects. His vocabulary is built out of stripped figures such as cylinders, cones or cubes which radiate a stillness and a sense of spectral presences. By re-using purist geometrical forms he perceives as archetypal, he turns to memory as an access to architectural vitality and renovation. His San Cataldo cemetery at Modena is seen as an echo of his urban theory and a matrix of his later work. As a city for the dead, it explores monumentality in a contemporary setting¹⁹ by establishing within the ensemble a tension between innovation and archetypal forms invested with an enigmatic stillness. As a cemetery, it epitomises his meditation on time²⁰. The city is where time defies this stillness.

Rossi deplores urban situations where historical vitality is deadened. He describes Venice for instance as an empty stage, a place frozen in time, a museum²¹. For him, such places can be frightening despite their poetic potential. The problem he raises thus concerns the invention of new elements in urban space. Indeed, the "fatti urbani" around which he builds his theory are selected by an extended historical process, by a complex interplay between memory and erasure, endurance and change. Rossi seeks to establish a direction for urban development which would be "not of sterile conservation

¹⁹ I already introduced the problem of Fascist undertones to this monumentality in part I, chapter 1, footnote 25. A recent exhibition at the Hayward Gallery explored the use of monumental dimensions and forms during totalitarian regimes in cities such as Berlin, Rome and Moscow. Art and Power, Europe under the Dictators 1930-45 (26 October 1995 to 21 January 1996) presented the interconnections between art and politics. Their dissociation in Postmodern practice such as Rossi's work is at times blurred, not through a latent political agenda but visually, through a latent presence of the earlier usage of similar forms.

²⁰ His Rozzano cemetery built in 1990 re-uses many elements from Modena.

²¹ Through his discussion of the 1985 Biennale, Manfredo Tafuri raises questions about Venice's place in contemporary sensitivities. See History of Italian Architecture, 1944-1985, chapter 13.

but where architecture can open new lines of research and give new answers to the question of the progressive city"²². This progressive city is also historical.

In the mid-1960s urban theory and practice centered mainly on a futuristic vision, on new towns and housing estates. The historical moment was marked by post-war reconstruction and urban reconfiguration. Rossi's theory breaks away from this direction. His discussion of the city as a locus for memory seeks to counter the rapid obsolescence of a futuristic vocabulary by grounding architecture in an awareness of enduring and historically determined forms. "Fatti urbani" such as the Foro Romano are important lessons as they are manifestations of an interconnection between invention and history²³. Rossi's architectural practice suggests that this vitality can be construed, that lessons can be re-learned from the historical fabric of cities and can lead to the invention of an enduring architectural vocabulary. He thus points out that invention is sterile when disconnected from history. In relation to his project for the Deutsches Historisches Museum in Berlin, this agenda is at work. The building was designed as a shaping and self-reflexive new accretion to the city²⁴ as well as a meditation on time. Rossi writes indeed that "the double meaning of the Italian word *tempo*, which signifies both atmosphere and chronology, is a principle that presides over every construction"²⁵. I suspect that "fatti urbani" cannot be selected or intentionally designed. They are manifestations of a subterranean process of selection which

²² Rossi, "Architecture and City: Past and Present", first published in 1972, republished in Selected Writings and Projects (London: Architecture Design; Dublin: Gandon Editions) 49-53, p. 53.

²³ Rossi, L'Architettura della città, pp. 169-178.

²⁴ Karen Stein establishes that "Rossi is, above all, a storyteller. He tells his stories in words but mostly with drawings and paintings, as well as with buildings. His are hopeful tales of architecture as the beloved protagonist inciting positive change in a community", in "Il Celeste della Madonna; Invisible Distances", Architecture 1981-1991, by Aldo Rossi, ed. Morris Adjmi (New York: Studio di Architettura, 1991) 269-271, p. 269. Her description suggests that his ambitions defy fulfillment, but also points out his attempt to revise the role the architect plays in society. Bernard Huet will also question his profession and the architect's relation to the city.

²⁵ Rossi, A Scientific Autobiography (Cambridge, Mass. and London: MIT Press, 1981) p. 1.

contributes to the shaping of a city. However, Rossi's seminal contribution to architectural debates re-opened the question of the importance of history and memory in an urban context.

Colin Rowe and Fred Koetter's Collage City pursues this direction. Collage refers to "the problem of composite presence"²⁶ in the city. Their study of urban diversity establishes that "without memory there can be no communication"²⁷ and is a critique of Modern architecture. They attack its frame of reference which is perceived as rigid and monolithic and contrast to this their understanding of urban space as a collage. Their study of urban morphology outlines the presence of opposed and contrasted elements which ensure urban vitality, differing in this manner to unified urban ensembles. Cities are complex and an attempt to plan their space thus defies their inherent identity. Collage is a notion that replaces the one of post-war urban renewal and emphasises historic continuity. Rowe and Koetter's plural and historical city is presented as a polemic against Modernist practices. Prior to a discussion of their premises, Bernard Huet's urban theory offers a valuable juxtaposition of Rossi's urban layering and the notion of cities as communicative rather than coercive spaces, as collages of gathered traces representing different historical moments²⁸.

Huet's Place de Stalingrad is an intervention on pre-existing urban fabric. It reads the site's density of historical layering. A new urban development becomes a reworking of the past. It is generated by its traces and seeks to emphasise rather than

²⁶ Colin Rowe and Fred Koetter, Collage City, p. 139.

²⁷ Rowe and Koetter, Collage City, p. 49.

²⁸ The historian and architecture critic Spiro Kostof's two books, The City Shaped (London: Thames and Hudson, 1991) and The City Assembled (London: Thames and Hudson, 1992) present the city as an enduring artefact. He studies the evolution of urban patterns from their early origins and reads the city as a place where growth is incremental, cumulative. Thus, "the city is never complete, never at rest" (The City Shaped, p. 13) and "the shape of many cities in history represents a serial growth of planned increments grafted to an original core, and one of the most revealing aspects of the urban landscape has to do with the ways in which these additions are meshed with, of purposely discriminated from, the older fabric" (The City Shaped, p. 36). Kostof's theory relies on an understanding, or indeed shapes and understanding, of the city as a historically defined space. Urban heritage is thus a collective phenomenon.

erase them. This Place is an important example of Huet's practice to date. It is the product of his urban and architectural theories which inherit Rossi's and develop their direction. Huet's work centers its problematic on time layers in the historical city, on traces and on the generative importance of certain urban elements, equivalent to Rossi's "fatti urbani". As a result, interventions such as the Place de Stalingrad outline a deep awareness of a place, a locus and an ensuing interplay between old and new.

For Huet, heritage in the form of urban architecture is vital in relation to preserving a balanced city. Indeed, in "Un Avenir pour notre passé" he writes that "dans la mesure où il témoigne de l'histoire d'une société ... on doit assigner à ce patrimoine une fonction de mémoire collective, didactique et vivante..."²⁹. Memory is thus an important element in new developments. The title of this article outlines the direction of Huet's polemic. His concern focuses on the establishment of "a future for our past", a continuity between past and present which would anchor the future. This theory relies on a stable understanding of memory, as does Rossi's. Its role and not its function is being explored³⁰. The city's relation to its history is under scrutiny in an attempt to define a positive system of urban growth. The architect's task is therefore to distill a persistent sap out of an urban confusion that is made readable through memory rather than erased by experimentation.

Huet questions and explores the relation between architecture and context. As a theorist, he diagnosed a deflation of the civic role played by architecture in the Modern city. His practice seeks to find solutions to this problem. An architect is thus more than a designer of buildings. The profession is endowed with a philosophical direction. The form and structure of new developments are defined by the site's past rather than through the autocratic imposition of a new order. They are extracted rather than

²⁹ Bernard Huet, "Un Avenir pour notre passé", *Anachroniques d'architecture* (Brussels: Archives d'Architecture Moderne, 1981) 139-159, p. 148, [Because it is a witness to the history of a society, we must endow this heritage with the function of a didactic and vital collective memory].

³⁰ Fictional representations of the city will emphasise its function. See Part II, chapter 4.

imposed, internal rather than external. The power Huet ascribes to Modern architects such as Le Corbusier is being reconsidered. The architect's role is to highlight urban order rather than create it. This expresses an awareness that the city is "toujours inachevée: [elle]ne peut prétendre à la permanence" and that "la ville est par nature conservatrice"³¹. The architect should therefore ensure growth and continuity rather than produce rigid planning schemes.

Huet's urban theory focuses on the historical city. He writes that "les tracés urbains ne devraient plus être assimilés à de simples schémas de circulation mais devenir la structure 'ouverte' génératrice de lieux constitués, contrôlés et imposés par la puissance publique"³². Indeed, "il s'agit de trouver les termes d'une réinsertion de l'architecture contemporaine dans les tissus anciens"³³. Huet is not seeking a fertile ground for conservative nostalgia. He equates this attitude with pastiche as examples of a deficient link between architecture and the city. The role of the latter is to define a context and urban patterns that would be vital to a contemporary situation, and not only comment on pre-existing ones. New projects would thus ensure rather than threaten urban balance³⁴. Rossi and Huet's discussion of the city imply that this balance is fragile.

Huet's theory is the product of observations within the city and the direction urban development was pursuing in the 1960s. His notion that the city is progressive and defies planning is a polemic successor to the Athens Charter, one which appears to

³¹ Huet, "L'Architecture contre la ville", Architecture Mouvement Continuité 14 (December 1986) 10-13, p. 10, [The city is always unfinished, it cannot claim to be unchangeable and the city is inherently conservative].

³² Huet, Anachroniques d'architecture, p. 42, [Urban systems should no longer be merely assimilated to circulation patterns but should become the open and generative structure of established places, and be controlled and imposed by public authority].

³³ Huet, Anachroniques d'architecture, p. 157, [One must seek a means of reinserting contemporary architecture in older urban fabric].

³⁴ Huet, "L'Architecture contre la ville", p. 10: "Nous ne savons plus projeter la croissance continue de nos centres urbains. ... Tout nouveau projet est devenu une menace pour l'équilibre des villes existantes", [We no longer know how to plan the continuous growth of our urban centres... every new project has become a threat to the equilibrium of existing cities].

move backwards, away from Modern developments. Indeed, the "propositions mégastructurelles" of the 1950s³⁵ and post-war planning are the object of his critique. The Athens Charter of 1933 represents a key text in relation to these town planning policies and is the model that is blamed in Postmodern revisions of the cityscapes it produced. The Charter epitomised a new architecture which found its roots in the theory and practice of Le Corbusier.

He published Vers une architecture in 1923. His polemic treatise sought solutions to the urban disorder and confusion which prevailed in the historical fabric of cities such as Paris. For him, "une grande époque vient de commencer. Il existe un esprit nouveau"³⁶. His enthusiasm in embracing this new era is marked by a desire to establish a firm division between it and the past. It is isolated as a separate phenomenon, in a similar manner to the way his unités d'habitation are removed from the ground that carries them by his characteristic "pilotis" or supporting pillars. Indeed, "on ne mesure pas assez la rupture survenue entre notre époque et les périodes antérieures, ... notre époque se place, seule avec ces 50 dernières années, face à dix siècles écoulés"³⁷. If the present stands alone, it needs to be defined by a new aesthetic where technical progress can be reflected and used. This new aesthetic sought to distance itself brutally from the "stock étouffant"³⁸ of "detritus" or refuse from the past. Le Corbusier's vocabulary is based on a terminology of cleansing. His vision of a new spirit is of one where health, morality, virility and activity should flourish in the city³⁹. This salubrious situation would be the result of a selective process where "nous avons besoin de nous laver"⁴⁰. In

³⁵ Huet, "L'Architecture contre la ville", p. 13

³⁶ Le Corbusier, Vers une architecture (Paris: Les Editions G. Cres & cie., 1923) p. 67, [A grand era has begun. A new spirit exists].

³⁷ Le corbusier, Vers une Architecture, p. 217, [We do not adequately measure the rift between our time and preceding ones. Our time stands alone, with the last 50 years, in front of 10 bygone centuries].

³⁸ Le Corbusier, Vers une architecture, p. 230, [The stifling stock].

³⁹ Le Corbusier, Vers une architecture, p. 6.

⁴⁰ Le Corbusier, Vers une architecture, p. 6, [We need to cleanse ourselves].

his excitement in relation to this new era, transatlantic liners, cars and factories are the root of a new aesthetic that needs to encompass architecture. New materials such as reinforced concrete will allow this revolution of form and language to take place⁴¹.

Architecture needs to be in tune with this new era shaped in the aftermath of the First World War, and must reconsider its basic rules to generate and encourage social change. Vers une architecture reflects a prevalent awareness of an era without precedent, a machine-age where a rift between yesterday and today is strong. This post-war condition is embraced rather than mourned and is perceived as the premise for a new and utopian modernity.

Le Corbusier considers three aspects of architecture and the city: volume, surface and plan. He calls for a use of simple volumes, primary forms cleansed of any superfluous ornament⁴². Le Corbusier's "ville moderne" finds its coherence by acknowledging that "en architecture, les bases anciennes sont mortes"⁴³. New ones will rely on order and planning. His cities such as his project for one of 3 million people in 1922 which he developed into his Plan Voisin for Paris in 1925 (see plates 16 and 17) are regulated spaces shaped by circulation axes, green spaces and tower blocks. It is a sanitized space where "l'homme nouveau" can live. This idea of the city relies on a unified program which revises the role of cities in society, and the fabric of society itself⁴⁴. Le Corbusier believed that the latter was not represented by, for instance, historic Paris. For him, the historical city is "tubercular"⁴⁵ and needs to be recast. The straight line and a poetics of the right angle symbolise coherence, clarity and easy

⁴¹ Le Corbusier, Vers une architecture, p. 45.

⁴² Le Corbusier, Vers une architecture, p. 9: "les formes primaires sont les belles formes parce qu'elles se lisent clairement", [Primary forms are beautiful because they offer a clarity of reading].

⁴³ Le Corbusier, Vers une architecture, p. 47, [The old premises are dead].

⁴⁴ This initial quest for moral agenda did not survive the geographical shift to America. Modernists such as Mies van der Rohe recreated a school there and this new architecture became a style increasingly devoted to corporate power rather than moral purity.

⁴⁵ Le Corbusier, The Radiant City (1933, London: Faber & Faber, 1964).

circulation. His outlook calls for a revolutionary sweep which would establish the present's separateness from the past.

These urban theories and their prescriptive aspect were resonant in a post-World War Two Europe⁴⁶. The Athens Charter was a successful model as it offered a basis for large-scale, low cost and rapid reconstruction and urban expansion. It epitomised the precepts of the International Style⁴⁷. In practice, however, Le Corbusier's plans for new urban space were realised with an emphasis on low cost and speed rather than on his functionalist ideals and social utopias⁴⁸. The result was rapid decay. The lack of consideration for proportion and balance within the new schemes was diagnosed as the urban blight from the 1960s onwards by critics such as Jane Jacobs and Lewis Mumford. The discontent with the outcome of this new era targeted Le Corbusier and the purist ideals of other architects such as Mies van der Rohe rather than the misuse of their theories. Brutalist and sterile architecture are seen as the outcome of their

⁴⁶ They were not, however, the only architectural trend in the post-war years. The reconstruction of certain cities by replication of their destroyed fabric was a powerful counterpart. Dresden and Warsaw, for example are two examples of a defiant and politicised choice to recreate a lost city, using traditional building methods and copying the pre-existing outlay. They become cities marked by the memory of loss and separated from a future-oriented Modernism, in their historic cores, at least.

⁴⁷ A label attributed to Modern architecture and its increasingly international usage. An exhibition at MOMA in 1932 gathered examples of the work of the pre-war Moderns such as Gropius, Mies and Le Corbusier. Their project was to propose a universally applicable architectural and urban model. It is this aspect of Modernism that Kenneth Frampton's *Critical Regionalism* reappraises, by seeking ways to reconnect architecture with its cultural context and vernacular traditions. The latter is perceived as a viable alternative to a totalitarian trend of an international and uniform style. See *Modern Architecture*, chapter 5: "Critical Regionalism: Modern Architecture and Cultural Identity", 314-327, as well as his other titles.

⁴⁸ New towns were rarely built as an ensemble. The Athens Charter thus offered precepts for new areas and satellite additions to pre-existing cities. England's post-war development is an exception, but only a small amount of new towns were built, Milton Keynes being the most obvious example (see Anthony Sutcliffe's article: "La Reconstruction en Grande-Bretagne", in *La Ville: Art et architecture en Europe, 1870-1993*, Paris: Editions du Centre Pompidou, 1994, pp. 410-411). Outside Europe, Chandigarh and Brasilia are the main cities developed on non-urban sites. New towns at this scale have a long history and many European cities, as well as the cities of the colonised "new worlds" find their origins in planned ensembles. Karlsruhe, Palmanova, Richelieu and Canberra are examples among many. For a study of the link between power, religion and urban planning, see James S. Curl's *European Cities and Society* (London: Leonard Hill, 1970).

attempt to disencumber architecture from superfluous weight as their influence over post-war construction was profound.

Huet and Rossi, amongst others, seek to re-think the outlay of the city and the future of architecture within this Modern city. They attack the agenda of discontinuity between the new city and the old. In this respect, they set a new ground for architectural debates by asking how architecture can secure cultural permanence within the city, understanding the latter as a locus for progressive rather than enforced change. They seek to work within a pre-existing fabric rather than erase the past. Their social and economic perspective is also no longer the one of an immediate post-war crisis and they can therefore question the validity of these plans with a necessary distance.

Huet's urban theory offers "alternatives to the Charter of Athens"⁴⁹. The Charter's "discours totalitaire"⁵⁰ is perverse since it considers a "replacement of the city by an architectural megastructure invested with all the urban functions and imitating the city"⁵¹. It thus "destroys the idea of the city"⁵² rather than being part of it. For Huet, therefore, the city is a specific space which relies on its historical density. This view is parallel to Rossi's ideas. Thus, "it was necessary to come back to a sense of realities to recreate a legitimate concern with the form of the city, its materiality and complex mechanism"⁵³. The lack of flexibility within the Modern project and its distance in relation to the historical city are the main elements under scrutiny by the Postmoderns. The city is a space that reflects transformations in a community, in a similar manner to its language and it is the simultaneous presence of new and old that ensures stability and orientation, not a unified scheme.

⁴⁹ Subtitle of his article "The City as Dwelling Space", Lotus 41 (1984).

⁵⁰ Huet, Anachroniques d'architecture, p. 14, [Totalitarian discourse].

⁵¹ Huet, "The City as Dwelling Space", p. 9.

⁵² Huet, "The City as Dwelling Space", p. 9.

⁵³ Huet, "The City as Dwelling Space", p. 12.

The label Postmodern was ascribed to architecture – most of all by Charles Jencks – because of this revision of the Modern project⁵⁴. It then moved on to encompass other fields of cultural theory and production, acquiring a life and language of its own and not only relying on its role as a counter-discourse. Rossi and Huet are Postmodern architects in the sense that they read the city as a mnemonic space and explore traces of the past within contemporary culture through their practice. Postmodern architecture is not however limited to these concerns. Huet condemns the label. He ascribes it to surface solutions for urban and architectural problems which do not reconsider the role of architecture in a contemporary situation⁵⁵. Nostalgia lurks under the label "historicism" and its unfocused regressiveness lacks awareness in relation to the main object of the debate: finding viable solutions to ensure cultural coherence and historical depth to the contemporary city. The past is not to be revived, but revisited, critically, or even ironically, as Umberto Eco would say. The aim in doing so is to explore the city's inherent role as the symbol of a community which registers continuity, however complex, when the definition of a community is becoming more and more slippery and its cohesion in time and place increasingly fragmentary. Rossi's theory is however inscribed within memory and invention of the existing fabric of settlements.

⁵⁴ Peter Blake's Form Follows Fiasco: Why Modern Architecture Hasn't Worked (Boston and Toronto: Little, Brown & co., 1977) presents "the glaring fallacies advanced by the Modern Movement" (p. 7) and its "worn out" dogma (p. 163). His views outline these problems in the harsh tone of a disappointed architect educated within the Modern dogma who has not yet found a viable alternative. His study is however an in-depth inventory of collapse and decay that sheds light on the motivations behind a change in direction of architectural concerns.

⁵⁵ See his "Avant-Propos" to Anachroniques d'architecture, pp. 5-9.

C: POSTMODERN QUOTATIONS

Less is a bore⁵⁶.

Venturi's research establishes that Postmodernism is a revision of Modernism. Heinrich Klotz writes that "Venturi opposed the extreme simplification advocated by modernism as was particularly provoked by standardized forms such as used by Mies"⁵⁷. This provocation led to his theoretical treatise Complexity and Contradiction in Architecture, published the same year as Aldo Rossi's L'Architettura della città. In this study of architectural types, he explores diversity and inclusion of hybrid solutions to architectural problems, thus opening an alternative to the rigid dogmas of the Moderns. His reappraisal of the Miesian "less is more" leads him to consider an architectural language based on his idea that "blatant simplification makes bland architecture"⁵⁸. The Modern "cult of the minimum"⁵⁹ and unified ideal is contrasted to a program of diversity. The Sainsbury Wing is an *aboutissement* of Venturi's theoretical investigations and a manifestation of this diversity and the "messy vitality" described by Christopher Mead. He writes that "where Mies reduced the shed to its minimal, structurally abstract expression, Venturi has expanded it by turning the same shed into a discursive field for representational images drawn variously from high art, commercialism, and vernacular tradition"⁶⁰, replacing an aesthetic of straight lines with curves and curls.

⁵⁶ Robert Venturi, Complexity and Contradiction in Architecture (1966, Northants: Butterworth Architecture, 1990) p. 17.

⁵⁷ Heinrich Klotz, The History of Postmodern Architecture (Cambridge, Mass., and London: MIT Press, 1988) p. 256.

⁵⁸ Venturi, Complexity and Contradiction..., p. 17.

⁵⁹ Venturi, Complexity and Contradiction..., p. 40.

⁶⁰ Christopher Mead, The Architecture of Robert Venturi (Albuquerque: The University of Mexico Press, 1989) Introduction, 3-6, p. 6.

Complexity and Contradiction in Architecture outlines an architecture of inclusion. "It must embody the difficult unity of inclusion rather than the easy unity of exclusion"⁶¹. Mead establishes in this respect that Venturi is "a GREY: [he] mediates between the exclusive 'either-or' positions of black and white by exploring the hybrid possibilities of 'both-and'"⁶². Complexity and Contradiction in Architecture explores ambiguity and tension in a wide range of buildings. Venturi shows examples of distortions which reveal rule-breaking choices by architects as diverse as Lutyens, Hawksmoor, Borromini, Soane and Aalto⁶³. Venturi concludes that they "use convention unconventionally"⁶⁴. He prescribes a vocabulary of expressive richness, "richness of meaning over clarity of meaning"⁶⁵. This appeal to the grey areas of architecture and a Mannerist language in a contemporary context relies on the past as a source for this diverse vitality in an architecture of intricate and intellectualised virtuosity. It is not a regressive nostalgia for a pre-Modern era but a means of rediscovering architectural diversity through its history. Similarly to Rossi, Venturi relies on history as the source of a language contrasted to the totalizing Modern systems, even though both architects follow different directions.

Venturi prescribes an architecture which can accommodate many systems rather than be a selective and unified order. He acknowledges that architecture is complex in its usage and in its insertion into pre-existing urban fabric and uses this as a premise for his research. He is opposed to purism, to the heroism of Modernism as it cannot stand the test of change and growth. Venturi works at street level. Buildings need to survive their use, "survive the cigarette machine"⁶⁶ and reflect rather than efface this dimension. The

⁶¹ Venturi, Complexity and Contradiction..., pp. 16 and 88.

⁶² Mead, The Architecture of Robert Venturi, introduction, p. 3. His capitalisation.

⁶³ See Complexity and Contradiction..., pp. 13, 19 where Venturi labels his partiality to their achievements.

⁶⁴ Venturi, Complexity and Contradiction..., p. 42

⁶⁵ Venturi, Complexity and Contradiction..., p. 22.

⁶⁶ Venturi, Complexity and Contradiction..., p. 42.

Sainsbury Wing creates a frame for a collection of paintings. It also reveals rather than conceals its multi-purpose space and its allusive language serves a directive purpose. This is thus not an example of bland pastiche but of storytelling through juxtaposed and overlapping references, communicative architecture with a purpose made literal, or what Alan Colquhoun refers to as "a sort of metalanguage- with an architecture which speaks of itself"⁶⁷.

The Sainsbury Wing can be compared in this respect to Venturi's earlier building, Guild House in Philadelphia (see plate 10). This high-rise apartment for the elderly is "explicit" in its form and "involves ornament"⁶⁸. It continues the street line in which it is located and is an "imitation palazzo, analogous in structure and materials to the surrounding buildings". The concrete is however covered in a striated pattern which alludes to a floor structure behind the façade. The entrance is a deflated monumental portal. Other elements such as the windows are confusingly familiar and ordinary, and examples of unconventional conventions, of a familiar world slightly twisted. A large-scale T.V. antenna adorns the roof. For Venturi, "Guild House ... looks like what it is not only because of what it is but also because of what it reminds you of"⁶⁹. Indeed, the windows recall "traditional Philadelphia" ones and the antenna is "a symbol of the aged, who spend so much time looking at T.V."⁷⁰. The building plays on architectural references and takes on board their usage, rendering ornament rhetorical and juxtaposing many levels of references in the process. Palazzo, vernacular and T.V. meet, because contemporary culture includes them all. Venturi writes that "it is perhaps from the everyday landscape, vulgar and disdained, that we can draw the

⁶⁷ Alan Colquhoun, "Form and Figure", Essays in Architectural Criticism: Modern Architecture and Historical Change (1980, Cambridge, Mass. and London: 1991) 190-202, p. 199.

⁶⁸ Venturi, Learning from Las Vegas (1977, Cambridge, Mass. and London: MIT Press, 1991) pp. 90-93.

⁶⁹ Venturi, Learning from Las Vegas, p. 93.

⁷⁰ Venturi, Complexity and Contradiction..., p. 116

complex and contradictory order that is valid and vital for our architecture and urbanistic whole"⁷¹.

This "anti-heroic"⁷² perspective is explored further in his study of the Las Vegas strip, with Denise Scott Brown and Steven Izenour. If Complexity and Contradiction in Architecture maintained an international perspective, one Venturi will develop in his Sainsbury Wing project, Learning from Las Vegas returns to an American focus. Route 91 through Las Vegas is read as an answer to the question "is not Main Street almost all right?"⁷³. Rather than expressing dissatisfaction with what exists, they see suburbia and the commercial strip as potential sources for a fresh vitality in an architecture of inclusiveness⁷⁴. Indeed, "we look backward at history and tradition to go forward; we can also look downward to go upward"⁷⁵. Their descent into the reality of Las Vegas is a study of a dialogue between service stations, motels, and wedding chapels. This material emphasises in a caricatural manner the way the motor car has altered architecture. The reality is far removed from Le Corbusier's circulation patterns in his urban schemes. Buildings have become signs that are taken in from the road level, Las Vegas casino/motels being extreme examples. The real cityscape is like a cacophony. It is ordinary, not heroic⁷⁶. Architecture should accomodate this disorder with humour⁷⁷.

⁷¹ Venturi, Complexity and Contradiction..., p. 104.

⁷² Vincent Scully, Introduction, Complexity and Contradiction..., 9-11, p. 10.

⁷³ Venturi, Complexity and Contradiction..., p. 104.

⁷⁴ It seems rather jarring that Venturi condemns the Seagram Building (see plate 13) and the Villa Savoye and is effusively enthusiastic in front of a Las Vegas casino/hotel, Cessars Palace for instance. This hotel presents a pertinent contrast to Rossi's discussion of Rome. Venturi's polemic stand is at times frighteningly reductive, like for instance his description of Amiens cathedral as "a billboard with a building behind it" (Learning from Las Vegas, p. 105). He is, however, interested in a new cityscape shaped by a new economic and social reality and emphasises its vitality over its inevitability.

⁷⁵ Learning from Las Vegas, p. 3

⁷⁶ or U&O, "Ugly and Ordinary". See "Theory of Ugly and Ordinary and Related Theories", in Learning from Las Vegas, pp. 128-163. They write that "this is not a time and ours is not the environment for heroic communication via pure architecture", p. 163. Tom Wolfe attacks and ridicules this Modern heroism in From Bauhaus to Our House (1981, London: Cardinal, 1990).

⁷⁷ Colquhoun criticises this aspect of Venturi's work by asking if this is not an inside joke for architects. Indeed, "the semiological intention of these projects is clearly not to provide the client with what he wants ..., but to draw attention to the absurdity of popular taste" ("Sign

The "new spatial order relating the automobile and highway communication in an architecture which abandons pure form in favor of mixed media"⁷⁸ is one where reference to architectural heritage is central. Venturi emphasises a sense of vestigial presence of the past. If his projects are indeed not a reading of traces of the past on a site, as Huet's work reveals, but a gathering of styles, their eclecticism, historical reference and populism combine in a language of diversity which seeks distance in relation to Le Corbusier's clarity. Rossi, Huet and Venturi share an interest in the past as a source of vitality for the present and for an architectural program which recognises its own complexity and conflicts. Their architecture is therefore inscribed within the pre-existing city, and within architectural heritage. After the experience of a more aggressive architecture, they express less faith in progress and a more introspective or reflexive approach. If their program is inclusive, as opposed to the selective and exclusive language explored by the Moderns, it is however another system which contains its own limits.

Postmodern architecture has now attained widespread usage. The work of Rossi, Huet and Venturi were ground-breaking in relation to a reappraisal of the urban realities of the post-war and historical city. In a later phase, their theories are absorbed and are increasingly dominant in contemporary urban development. The latter emphasises preservation and heritage and many new developments are made in a language shaped by historicism. Contrasts between for instance Rossi's architecture and more anonymous developments which use Postmodern gimmicks are glaring. A process of banalisation has taken place and a divide is growing between pioneering works and

and Substance: Reflections of complexity, Las Vegas, and Oberlin", Essays in Architectural Criticism..., 139-151, p. 141). Venturi attracts abundant and diverse criticism, most of all in relation to the eclecticism of his allusions. Huet, for instance, writes that Venturi "se contente de commenter le contexte, de le paraphraser ou de l'illustrer", [merely comments paraphrases or illustrates a context], (L'Architecture contre la ville, p. 13). His historicism is more scenographic than Huet's deciphering of urban traces, but still offers solutions to problems of vitality within architectural language and is not only a pasteboard façade.

⁷⁸ Learning from Las Vegas, p. 75.

current practice. The main examples are housing developments and shopping malls which use traditional materials and forms such as bricks and turrets without any concern for their contextual significance. They are manifestations of a decorative use of historical vocabulary which only take into account the underlying theory that urban vitality is renewed by the past in the sense that it has become a fashionable concept which will increase appeal and therefore sales. I believe that a similar situation is arising to the one Rossi, Huet and Venturi sought to revise, despite its different appearance. One system has replaced another. If Postmodern historicism was attacking the banalisation of the Modern ideal and not the ideal itself, the fact that a banalisation of these Postmodern theories has occurred is ironic. Postmodernism however remains a diversified field of cultural production, as Charles Jencks has established. The unified and coercive element of Modernism has thus been revised indeed.

Jencks's studies of Postmodernism in art and architecture were seminal in attributing labels to a wide spectrum of cultural practices which shared a detachment from the Modern projects and a revision of its premises. Indeed, "the agenda of post-modern architects -and by extension post-modern writers, urbanists and artists- is to challenge monolithic elitism, to bridge the gaps that divide high and low cultures, elite and mass, specialist and non-professional"⁷⁹. He identifies a variety of trends in contemporary architectural practice. These include the Free-Style Classicism of a pluralist and eclectic Postmodernism, Late-Modern architecture with its "commitment to technology and abstraction"⁸⁰ and the New Moderns "who continue the Modern Movement in an elaborate and complex form"⁸¹. Jencks is particularly attentive to

⁷⁹ Charles Jencks, "The Post-Modern Agenda", The Post-Modern Reader, ed. Charles Jencks (London: Academy Editions; New York: St Martin's Press, 1992) 10-39, p. 12.

⁸⁰ Jencks, Late-Modern Architecture (London: Academy Editions, 1980) p.8. Japan is the main home for this trend, but it is hardly distinguishable from the New-Moderns.

⁸¹ Jencks, The New Moderns (New York: Rizzoli, 1990) p. 17. Architects include Eisenman, Tschumi, Libeskind, Hadid, Gehry, Koolhaas as representatives of "neo-Modernism and Deconstruction" as well as Fosters, Rogers and Pei. Jencks contrasts Free-Style Classicism to

Postmodern Classicism. It is "Free Style" rather than canonic⁸², a "mixture of classical motifs with present day elements"⁸³ that "creates a dialogue with history"⁸⁴. This dialogue between past and present and the use of a diversified vocabulary in architecture are the main tenet of a Jencksian perspective.

For Jencks, there is a neat break between Modernism and Postmodernism. He gives it a date and a place, using the dynamiting of Pruitt-Igoe (see plate 14) as a dramatic and indeed convenient emblem of the implosion of the Modern project⁸⁵. Ahistoricism has been blown away by its own inadequacy, and historicism can move in to an architectural scene screaming for change, or so it would seem. However, the utopian and purist project of the Moderns was not as rigidly anti-historical as Jencks portrays it⁸⁶, neither was the rejection of Modernism by Postmodernists total. The latter were indeed trained at their school. Rossi expresses an admiration for the early Moderns⁸⁷ and establishes that "the beautiful illusion of the Modern Movement, so reasoned and so moderate, was shattered under the violent yet definitive collapse caused by the bombings

the "silver, industrial aesthetic" of the Late-Moderns, "historical recall versus the promise of the future", in Architecture Today (London: Academy Editions, 1988) p. 15.

⁸² Jencks, Post-Modernism: The New Classicism in Art and Architecture (New York: Rizzoli, 1987) p.34.

⁸³ Jencks, Post-Modernism..., p. 40.

⁸⁴ Jencks, Post-Modernism..., p. 317. Charles Moore and Perez Associates' Piazza d'Italia in New Orleans is an example of very Free-Style Classicism (see plate 15). Similarly to the Place de Stalingrad, it is public open space within a city which seeks to renew its sense of community. Moore's historicism, however, could not be more contrasted to Huet's quiet one. Indeed, The Piazza is a "stunning classical collage" (David Lowenthal, The Past is a Foreign Country, Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1985, p. 382), a condensation of signs of Italianness in neon, marble, concrete and steel. It construes a sense of cliché history in the 'New World' rather than being the reading of on-site traces. It is populist and plays on the incongruous juxtaposition of epochs and styles. It is rather far removed from "an architecture that is constantly aware of its own history, but constantly critical of the seductions of history" that Colquhoun prescribes (Modernity and the Classical Tradition: Architectural Essays, 1980-1987, Cambridge, Mass. and London: MIT Press, 1991) p. 18.

⁸⁵ Jencks dates the event July 15 1972, at 3.32 p.m., in Saint Louis.

⁸⁶ See Colquhoun's article "Displacement of Concepts in Le Corbusier", Essays in Architectural Criticism..., 51-66.

⁸⁷ Rossi, A Scientific Autobiography, p. 72.

of the Second World War"⁸⁸. Another brutal watershed. Rossi points out that it is the post-war banalisation of Modernism that is his grievance. Jencks simplifies this situation to assert that Postmoderns reject the Modern agenda. His argument needs softening, even though he outlined characteristics of architecture after 1972 which allowed new directions to be identified, most of all a new interest for explicit as well as allusive historicism⁸⁹.

Postmodern architecture, according to the examples by Rossi, Venturi and Huet that I discuss, is an architecture of anamnesis. It refers to history without being history and expresses an awareness of this second degree or displacement. The past is seen through the present, it is not replicated. The theory and practice of Rossi, Venturi and Huet share a separation from nostalgia, emphasising the process of memory over a desire to recreate the past⁹⁰. If they use history as a source for their architectural language, they do so to make tensions between past and present apparent and emphasise the latent and shaping presence of history in the city. The past they choose to re-visit is one where complexity prevails and three architects thus stand as models for their contemporary language: Schinkel, Hawksmoor and Ledoux. Jean Galard notes that "l'architecture postmoderne exhibe des éléments traditionnels sans omettre les indices de leur anachronisme. Les colonnes et les arches, les dômes, les frontons y sont moins copiés que cités. Ils portent les guillemets que l'architecture néo-classique ou néo-vernaculaire oubliait de marquer"⁹¹. Postmodernism as an aesthetic of quotation is the

⁸⁸ Rossi, *A Scientific Autobiography*, p. 82.

⁸⁹ The Venice Biennale of 1980 is often cited as a key event in the shaping of a new historical language. The "Strada Novissima" architecture section, directed by Paolo Portoghesi and entitled "The Presence of the Past" gathered many architects and displayed their contributions as a new trend.

⁹⁰ Quinlan Terry is an example of a nostalgic revivalist.

⁹¹ Jean Galard, "De la Fonction à la fiction: Notes sur le postmoderne en architecture", *Littérature et postmodernité*, ed. Aron Kibédi Varga (Gronigen: CRIN 14, 1986, 45-70) p. 48, [Postmodern architecture exhibits traditional elements with clues of their anachonism. Columns, arches, domes and pediments are cited rather than copied. They bear the quotation marks that neo-classical or neo-vernacular architecture left out].

product of a awareness of shaping the present out of the past, but it underplays the novelty of this language and its inclusion of a commentary on contemporary culture. 'Post' is not 'neo', as Galard establishes.

Galard also writes that Postmodern architecture seeks to endow cityscapes with "résonnance". The quoted styles and forms rely on a latent memory of urban history. They are paradoxically located within a tension between a reading of memory traces in a site, as Huet and Rossi perform, and the construction of vestigial moods, manifest in Venturi and again, Rossi. They explore a new language by a critical use of the past and rely on "une dose de fiction"⁹² to create a topography of resonant form. The communicative agenda of Postmodernism relies on multiple meanings, complex stories and a variety of models. Heinrich Klotz writes that "instead of striving for untouchable perfection, it favors the disturbed and the imperfect"⁹³. One could add that it also favors the collage-like palimpsestic historical density of the city epitomised by Rossi's archetypes and Huet's traces, as well as an eclectic style manifest in Venturi's archness.

⁹² Galard, "De la Fonction à la fiction...", p. 53.

⁹³ Heinrich Klotz, The History of Postmodern Architecture (Cambridge, Mass. and London: MIT Press, 1988) p. 421.

PART II

NARRATIVE REPRESENTATION

1: GERMANY: HISTORY IN LAYERS

A: BERLIN

Berlin was the psychitecture of the Twentieth Century¹.

Wim Wenders' film Der Himmel Über Berlin released in 1987 portrays Berlin as a palimpsest of traces from various moments of its history. The city as a whole is thus an accumulation of historical residue that gives it its shape in 1986-87, the moment that Wenders captures.

Berlin in the late Eighties and as a walled city was a place where the presence of the past reached a pitch of intensity. After 1989 and the removal of the Wall, this situation changed, not through a dissolution of this presence and historical density but due to a shift in strategies of representation of the past in the city. Berlin now is being reshaped as a capital for a unified Germany in a way which preserves the memory of its scarring but also seeks to make it whole again. History is being rethought as a part of the city as key sites such as the Reichstag and the Neue Wache undergo transformations that seek to integrate them into a present that will display the past, as I noted in my chapter on Rossi's Deutsches Historisches Museum. This defines Berlin as a post-post-war city where recent history is digested and assimilated in a way that allows a new phase of its identity to be constructed and represented. I will return to examples of this process as an after-thought to considering Wim Wenders' Work in this city. In Der Himmel Über Berlin however, the city is still divided, still suspended in its post-war identity. It is a film about

¹ Steve Erickson, Arc d'X (London: Vintage, 1994) p. 227.

Berlin as much as it is the story of an angel and a trapeze artist or a Postmodernist meditation on romance². Berlin is portrayed here as a German city and a place where change is deeply connected to a sense of historical process. The city is explored by Wenders' camera and he offers a portrait of its gaps and cracks and of the areas where yesterday – or the past – are readable. Within these he locates a story of characters in quest of their own life histories and of experience that would give them a sense of being inscribed within history. Even if the characters interact with each other, what is told in this film is their encounter with the city and how personal and urban histories echo each other.

In an interview with the Berliner architect Hans Kollhoff, Wenders discusses the reasons why Berlin was the only possible setting for this film. In his view, Berlin as an urban space reveals questions of memory and identity in the late twentieth century and had become an emblem of the tensions of our time. His views therefore echo the ones of architects. For Wenders, Berlin is essentially a place of tension, "a city which constantly throws you back into the past, not just in brief glimpses but as a total sensation"³. Berlin in this respect is neither a museum-city nor a form of historical theme park where the past is laid out for us all to inspect from a comfortable distance, or at least it was not so when Wenders filmed Der Himmel Über Berlin. He perceived it as a place where history, not only German but international as well is present everyday, in the cracks and details rather than in monuments. It is a city made of an accretion of superimposed or juxtaposed stories and in this respect, it is a palimpsest. This is apparent from an early scene when the city is filmed from the air⁴. Old and new buildings are perceived in juxtaposition and new accretions fit into the old pattern.

² See Robert Philip Kolker and Peter Beiken: The Films of Wim Wenders (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1993) Preface, p. viii.

³ In an interview published in Nova Narració (April, May, June 1988) p. 72.

⁴ In a panoramic "Flugaufnahme" or shot from a plane, showing the city's TV tower and the highway entering West Berlin; see Peter Handke and Wim Wenders, Der Himmel über Berlin (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1987) p. 12-13.

Wenders views Berlin as a repository of the memory of past events, reinforcing his own statement that, for him, cinema is a medium of expression that involves memory by preserving traces of experience on a reel. However, if these traces are recorded in a successive rather than a cumulative or layered manner, there is still a similarity between city and film in the respect that they both preserve the traces of time on a given place. Wenders writes that a camera watches something and preserves it and that cinema can save the existence of things⁵. It is a tool which helps to protect against the disappearance or erasure of these things, against the loss of their trace. In this way, Berlin becomes a city of many traces. In Wenders' film, it is also a place where the particular and the general, the timely and the historical meet, and in this respect it is representative of the tensions and contradictions of the post-war era. Wenders' attempt to come to terms with the past shows his acceptance of a past that is problematic and disturbing.

Wenders' film is a cinematic ensemble where his initial research benefits from contributions of other people involved such as actors and the director of photography, Henri Alekan⁶, and where script and images rely upon each other. The script was written in collaboration with his friend the Austrian playwright and novelist Peter Handke. This is not the first time that these two authors enter into a creative collaboration. Previous events include Wenders' cinematic transcription of Handke's novel Die Angst des Tormanns beim Elfmeter, Handke's script for Falsche Bewegung as well as Wenders assisting Handke's filming of his novel Die Linkshändige Frau. Their collaborations are more than the conjunction of a writer with a director, as both authors rely on an interdependence of writing and film, image and text and explore this complementarity. Indeed, Der Himmel über Berlin opens with a close-up of a pen writing out the words of the narrator, voice

⁵ Wender, Die Logik der Bilder (Frankfurt am Main: Verlag der Autoren, 1988) p. 10: "Die Kamera ist die Waffe gegen das Elend der Dinge, nämlich gegen ihr Verschwinden".

⁶ A tribute to his presence resides in the name of the circus in the film, the "Cirque Alekan".

off, and thus hints towards the textual dimension of film⁷. Handke's writing can be likened to an initiation journey of the eye, a sensitivity to the world in its visual aspect⁸. At the time of his collaboration on the script of Der Himmel über Berlin, Handke's career was already in a mature phase.

Der Himmel über Berlin was made when Wenders returned to Germany after 7 years of working and travelling in America, and is thus a homecoming work which echoes Handke's post-American writing after Die Kurze Brief zum langen Abschied and Langsame Heimkehr. Homecoming alludes to a geographical shift back to a place of origin as well as to an altered tone, one which benefits from the experience of the journey and achieves a return to personal images. If the influence of American film prevails throughout Wenders' career, it is because, as a post-war director, he cannot escape it. After the war, Hollywood productions took over where other film industries left off⁹. Robert Phillip Kolker and Peter Beicken establish indeed that "the void created by the accretions and hypocrisies of German culture was filled with the ready-made products of American pop culture"¹⁰ and that this had become a characteristic of the FRG. Wenders' relation to this state of things and American movies is contradictory and reveals both a rejection and a dependence on them. His own understanding of the medium of film was shaped through his cinephile attachment to other films, including products from the

⁷ Wenders often relies upon a literary grid out of which his images grow. Other than his use of Handke, his references are cross-cultural. There is a strong interconnection between written and filmed fiction, as his use of Patricia Highsmith in Der Amerikanische Freund, Dashiell Hammett in Hammett as well as his filmic transcription of Nathaniel Hawthorne's The Scarlet Letter reveal. Also, the script of Paris, Texas was written in collaboration with Sam Shepard, widening the linguistic scope of his work as this film was originally made in English and not German.

⁸ Arlette Camion writes that "l'oeuvre de Handke est une éducation du regard", [Peter Handke's writing is an education of the gaze], in Image et écriture dans L'oeuvre de Peter Handke (Bern: Peter Lang, 1992) p. 11. It is an attempt to find creative freedom within "un espace saturé d'histoire et colonisé par les images des autres", [A space saturated by history and colonised by the images of others], p. 105. This study is a valuable reference for Handke's visual aesthetics and offers an overview of a shift from his early experimental works to his later introspective tone, one which is given form in the character of Homer and the internal world of Wenders' angels.

⁹ The French *Nouvelle Vague* films also display an interest in American cinema and are tributary of its influence.

¹⁰ Kolker and Beicken, The Films of Wim Wenders, p. 13.

United States; an attachment which is expressed in the allusive density of his own movies.

Wenders participated in the New German Cinema from the late sixties onwards and his work contributed to a quest for a visual vocabulary that would convey an image of post-war Germany. Amongst the aims of the New German Cinema was to recreate a German cinema perceived as non-existent since the war and to do so by presenting views of the present. The directors of the New German Cinema – Herzog, Fassbinder and Wenders being the main three, with others such as Syberberg, Kluge and Schlöndorff – have no shared aesthetic but rather share a concern with finding a representational vocabulary which offers an alternative to American cinema. A major difference between the two national cinemas resides in the fact that American movies are products of a show business industry subjected to the pressure of the market, whereas the New German Cinema is the result of a "cultural" mode of production¹¹ in which issues of identity, history and the nature of cinema itself became a priority.

Der Himmel über Berlin is a mature work and its setting in Berlin brings forth all these issues of German identity and history. In a late manifestation of a cinema of authors, a well established author in the case of Wenders, the film is both subjective and personal as well as seeking to capture impersonal traces of history's mythical dimension in the city. It represents a problematization of German history during the war. Because Berlin is loaded with so many associations and connotations, Wenders chose it as the European city that would be a tool for

¹¹ See Thomas Elsaesser, New German Cinema: A History (Basingstoke and London: Macmillan, 1989) p. 3. He develops this contrast by establishing that in relation to the American film industry, "other countries try to maintain themselves on a terrain staked out by the competition. West Germany is one example, but the implications affect all developed countries whose sense of cultural identity is based on a need to maintain markers -and markets- of difference vis-à-vis the products of the international entertainment business", pp. 6-7 and 42.

their representation. For him this city is a "symbol of the whole world"¹², "so exemplary of our century"¹³.

In Die Logik der Bilder, a collection of essays Wenders published about his own work, he writes that

Ich habe mir gewünscht und aufblitzen sehen: Einen Film IN und damit UBER Berlin.

Ein Film, in dem eine Ahnung von der Geschichte dieser Stadt seit dem Kriegsende enthalten sein möge. Ein Film, in dem vielleicht etwas auftauchen und zur Erscheinung kommen möge, was ich in so vielen Filmen, die hier spielen, vermisste, und was doch so handgreiflich vor Augen zu liegen scheint, wenn man in dieser Stadt kommt: ein Gefühl, gut, aber auch etwas in der Luft, und unter den Füßen, und in den Gesichtern: eben das, was das Leben in dieser Stadt so grundsätzlich vom Leben in anderen Städten unterscheidet.

Zur Beschreibung und zum Verständnis meines Wunsches gehört dazu: es ist der Wunsch von einem, der lange abwesend war aus Deutschland, und der, was 'Deutschsein' ausmacht, immer nur in dieser Stadt wiederkennen wollte und konnte. Dabei bin ich kein Berliner. WER ist das noch? Aber die Besuche seit zwanzig Jahren in dieser Stadt sind für mich die einzigen wahren 'Deutschlanderlebnisse', weil hier jene Geschichte physisch und emotional anwesend ist...¹⁴.

Berlin carries within its structure and substance scars of war and political division. After a history of rapid expansion since the eighteenth century, and of devastation, fragmentation and reconstruction in recent times, this city is a space of unprecedented and unrivalled tensions. In 1987, these were rooted in the

¹² Interview, Nova Narració, p. 72.

¹³ Wenders, The Logic of Images (Trans. Michael Hofmann, London: Faber and Faber, 1991) p. 74. In Die Logik der Bilder, p. 94: "Somit steht 'BERLIN' in diesem Wunsch auch stellvertretend für 'DIE WELT./ Ich kenne kein anderen Ort, in dem dies zulässiger wäre./ Berlin ist ein 'historischer Ort der Wahrheit'". The poetic note-form is Wenders'.

¹⁴ In a section entitled "Erste Beschreibung eines recht unbeschreiblichen film...", [First description of an undescribable film], in Die Logik der Bilder, 93-104, p. 94. The use of uppercase within the text is Wenders'. In The Logic of Images, p. 73-74:

"The thing I wished for and saw flashing was a film *in* and *about* Berlin. A film that might convey something of the history of the city since 1945. A film that might succeed in capturing what I miss in so many films that are set here, something that seems to be so palpably there when you arrive in Berlin: a feeling in the air and under your feet and in people's faces, that makes life in this city so different from life in other cities. To explain and clarify my wish, I should add: it's the desire of someone who's been away from Germany for a long time, and who could only ever experience 'Germanness' in this one city. I should say I'm no Berliner. Who is nowadays? But for over twenty years now, visits to this city have given me my only genuine experiences of Germany, because the (hi)story that elsewhere in the country is suppressed or denied is physically and emotionally present here".

division of its space. Wenders wrote that "the idea that it was one single city never ceases to overwhelm me"¹⁵ and the fact that today it is again one city gives the movie its awaited sequel¹⁶. Der Himmel über Berlin is a study of historical traces and their inscription within a changing space and is now dated. Filmed and set in 1987, the film offers a portrait of Berlin's shape at a given moment in time. Even if the Berlin in this film does not exist any more, it is still part of how this city's identity had been registered for a quarter of a century.

Berlin is a city that "offers strange views of the past or of what still remains from the past, witnesses of everything that has happened"¹⁷. Wenders writes that the city is "an open history book"¹⁸, where all documents tell a story of loss since gaps bear witness to deleted presence and can be read in this perspective. These documents are mostly ruins preserved so as to ensure remembrance of Berlin's ordeal during the war and its ensuing division. The fragmentation that had become associated with post-war Berlin, its different sectors, its rubble and the Wall as a material sign of separation, are all emblems of aspects of our century that exist elsewhere and everywhere but were made most visible here through their concentration.

In Der Himmel über Berlin, the city is multiple in its spatial levels as well as in terms of time levels. The present form of the city stores the memory of past ones -as Hans Scharoun's library that appears at length in the film stores culture and identity¹⁹. Also, as David Harvey notes, "we encounter two groups of actors living on different time scales. Angels live in enduring and eternal time, and

¹⁵ Interview, Nova Narració, p. 72.

¹⁶ The film indeed closes on the caption "Fortsetzung folgt", [To be continued], above a view of the city. I believe this establishes another echo between the film and the city's perpetually changing fabric. Der Himmel über Berlin, p. 170.

¹⁷ Interview, Nova Narració, p. 66.

¹⁸ Interview, Nova Narració, p. 49.

¹⁹ The library appears as a focus within cultural production specifically in relation to this function. Other examples of its use are in Umberto Eco's novel Il Nome della Rosa and Jorge Luis Borges's story "The Library of Babel" (Labyrinths, Ed. Donald A. Yates and James E. Irby, London: Penguin, 1970, 78-86). The library also echoes the museum within the context of contemporary culture in their roles as houses for cumulated cultural references.

humans live in their own time"²⁰. The angels are defined by an ontological complexity, living on the boundary between two realms; the human and the spiritual²¹. They introduce a mystical albeit unfocused dimension to this portrayal of Berlin and are construed out of an extensive network of references which bring to mind the Angel of death, the angels of the Christian tradition, as well as sculpted figures of angels which inhabit Berlin, such as the golden one on the Siegessäule monument which appears frequently in Wenders' film. Other references within this allusive density include Rainer Maria Rilke's *Duino Elegies* and Walter Benjamin's angel of history which describes the angelic figure of Paul Klee's painting *Angelus Novus* as being caught in the storm of progress with "his face ... turned toward 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"²². Wenders' angels oversee the life of the city and are attentive to its details as they read within them the weight of the past, with however a lightening of the brutal connotations endowed by Benjamin. They remember the city from its earliest days as they belong to a space beyond human time. They tell the story of the city that starts with the formation of the soil on which it grew²³ and they act as a form of vocalised memory or witness, one which cannot interfere upon its object.

²⁰ David Harvey, *The Condition of Postmodernity* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1990) p. 314. On angels, see also Brian Mc Hale's *Constructing Postmodernism* (London and New York: Routledge, 1992) pp. 200-203. He writes that angels are making a "comeback" in fiction, enjoying an odd "continued viability" after God has been "killed off". Their presence is either parodic, hollow or threatening and they are a metaphor for the "violation of ontological boundaries".

²¹ Closing a talk on "The City, the Cinema: Modern Spaces" during an event entitled "The Visual Arena of the City" in London on March 2, 1995 at Senate House, James Donald referred to the angels in Wenders' film. Through this figure, he noted a shift from a concern with *l'Etrange* or the urban uncanny in Modernist cityscapes to *l'Etre-Ange*, [the angel-being], in a Postmodern context of blurred boundaries and ontological complexity. Angels can appear as spiritual lures in a fragmented space, or on the other hand, as spiritual residue or potential.

²² Walter Benjamin, "Theses on the Philosophy of History", *Illuminations* (Ed. Hannah Arendt, London: Fontana Press).

²³ See Handke and Wenders, *Der Himmel über Berlin*, p. 82 when an image of a swamp -"ein Baum im Wasser des Wannsees", [A tree in the Wannsee waters]- is juxtaposed to Damiel's exclamation that "Die Geschichte hatte noch nicht angefangen", [History had not yet begun].

Through their presence, Wenders plays with connections between stories and history as well as links between the past and the present as both are recorded by the angels, in a similar way to Wenders' camera recording a city. Wenders writes that,

Im film findet natürlich nicht GESCHICHTE statt
sondern höchstens EINE, obwohl natürlich auch
in einer GESCHICHTE GESCHICHTE vorkommen kann,
Bilder und Spuren vor vergangener Geschichte
und Ahnungen von zukünftiger²⁴.

In this respect, Berlin in 1987 is represented as a moment in time that has a given shape as well as being one moment within a larger history; for instance, the film portrays Berlin's division by the wall as one of its main characteristics. But Wenders does not only film the Western side. His camera glimpses across the wall into the no-man's-land, the Prenzlauer Berg and the area around the Museumsinsel. These places are part of Berlin's identity and the fact that they were on the "other side" does not erase this fact. If the angels can move freely in space and cross the border at will, they are unable to influence their environment in any way or leave a trace of their presence. This presence itself, and their mobility, offer a comment on the latent union and oneness of Berlin that underlies its division. The title of the film underlines the fact that there is one sky over the two cities, as if on a wider scale than immediate history lies the notion that there exists a memory of the whole history of the city.

Wenders expresses his perception of Berlin as a history book by revealing the past beneath and within the present city. He writes that

hinter der heutigen Stadt, 'dazwischen' und 'darüber' erheben sich noch,
wie in der Zeit eingefroren, die Schutthalden, Trümmer, abgebrannten

²⁴ Wenders, The Logic of Images, p. 76:

in the film of course it's not HISTORY
but A story, though of course
a STORY may contain HISTORY,
images and traces of past history,
and intimations of what is to come (Capitalisation Wenders').

Häuserfassaden und Kamine der gestrigen Stadt, schattenhaft und mitunter nur schwach sichtbar, aber doch immer noch geisterhaft anwesend. ... überall ist dieses Gestern noch zeitlos und materiellos vorhanden, in einer 'parallelen Welt'" ²⁵ .

If memory is contained within the fabric of the city, it can be brought to light by being confronted with the knowledge of that city's past which lies in an individual. The character of Homer who appears regularly throughout the film represents "the story-teller, the muse, the potential guardian of collective memory and history"²⁶. Wenders describes the origins of this character in Die Logik der Bilder. He writes that Rembrandt's painting entitled Homer was a model as it depicts an old man telling stories, alone²⁷, cut off from his listener. Homer's name²⁸ harks back to the role of regenerative cultural landmarks and emphasises the role of memory in shaping stories and a link between stories and the telling of history. His role as a witness to the city's history is doubled by the actor Curt Bois' age. He is indeed "so alt wie das Kino"²⁹ and represents the memory of Wenders' medium and contributes to a self-reflexive dimension of his work.

Homer first appears in a scene set in Hans Scharoun's library on the Kultur Forum; conscious of his advanced age and his disconnection from his audience. As Wenders writes, Homer is "eines alten Erzengels, der in der Bibliothek lebt"³⁰ . There is a closeness between him and the angels as both are in touch with "diese latent anwesende Vergangenheit" ³¹ . Throughout the scenes where Homer appears, he is alone and silent, closed in on his mental storehouse that only the angels can

²⁵ Wenders, Die Logik der Bilder, pp. 100-101. "Behind the city of today, in its interstices or above it, as though frozen in time, are the ruins, the mounds of rubble, the burned chimneystacks and façades of the devastated city, only dimly visible sometimes, but always there in the background ... [This] yesterday is still present everywhere, as a 'parallel world'". The Logic of Images, p. 80.

²⁶ Harvey, The Condition of Postmodernity, p. 317.

²⁷ Wenders, Die Logik der Bilder, p. 137.

²⁸ Which does not appear in the film, the script thus offers more information and establishes a sense of interdependence between the pictures and the text and research which back them.

²⁹ Wenders, Die Logik der Bilder, p. 137, [He is as old as the cinema].

³⁰ Wenders, Die Logik der bilder, p. 137, [An old archangel living in the library].

³¹ Wenders, Die Logik der Bilder, p. 101. "The latent past", Logic of Images, p. 80.

share in their capacity as listeners or eavesdroppers. Homer expresses the sense of loss that Wenders associates with Berlin. He represents the spirit of a tired and burnt out city and mourns the loss of another Berlin, Weimar Berlin. A significant scene in this respect is when he is walking alone along the wall, searching for the Potsdamer Platz that once was the heart of the city and all that remains on that very spot is an empty and weed-filled no-man's-land in 1987³². He compares his memories to what he sees and is unable to accept the contrast. During this scene, fragments from archives appear which show ruins of bombed buildings and rubble-filled streets and bring to mind post-war *Trümmer* films³³. Past and present are in total opposition to each other and only connected by memory, a memory that is undergoing confusion and disorientation in relation to the brutality of the contrast between then and now. Homer appears to be rattling around in Berlin of the late eighties, lost and confused and looking inwards to his memories. His presence and his preoccupation show the importance for some of telling stories "even though [they] may in parts be ugly" ³⁴. Homer is inscribed within time and can connect its different parts, or at least diagnose their disconnection, through references to his own experience. Included in the relics of the past city, he is a voice which is problematic in the sense that his cohesive words remain silent to the population and are only accessible to the silent and uninterfering angel, Cassiel. A connection between past and present through memory exists but remains in the form of a monologue. Indeed, in Homer's words: "nenne mir, Muse, den armen, unsterblichen Sänger, der, von seinen sterblichen Zuhörern... verlassen, die Stimme verlor... wie er vom Engel der Erzählung zum unbeachteten oder verlachten Leiermann draussen an der Schwelle zum Niemandsland wurde"³⁵

³² Handke and Wenders, Der Himmel über Berlin, pp. 57-60.

³³ German films set in devastated cities which were still a sea of rubble, or *Trümmer* after the war.

³⁴ Harvey, The Condition of Postmodernity, p. 317.

³⁵ Handke and Wenders, Der Himmel über Berlin, pp. 59-60, [Name me, Muse, the poor immortal storyteller who, abandoned by the mortals, lost his voice. He who, angel of tales, was ignored and scorned on the border of a no-man's-land].

The aspect of Berlin that the Homer scenes bring to light is that the city's past is most powerfully present where it is absent. Homer has lost the monuments that were reference points in his mental cityscape and cannot replace them. Indeed, Berlin is attractive to Wenders precisely for its wilderness and for such cracks in its surface. He states that the mind can grasp hold of broken things better than it can of things whole, upon which memory slips away. It is unusual for a city to have such deserted lots and broken or scarred elements in its fabric. This waste space in the city – which is being built out now and which was possibly attractive to Wenders because it was anachronistic and ephemeral – was however full once, as Homer's memories of the Postdamer reveal. By filming cracks and gaps Wenders shows the traces of a destructive history in a way that avoids an aestheticisation of the past or its reduction to familiar clichés. In this respect, Der Himmel über Berlin contrasts two ways of representing history: firstly by showing an old Berliner on a no-man's-land (see plate 18) and by sharing his memories, and secondly, by the portrayal of the making of an American television film in Berlin (see plate 19) ³⁶.

The making of this television film shows actors at work and extras waiting on a set which is an old bunker on Goeben Strasse. Using a complex interaction between different levels of fiction as well as between different levels of time, these scenes are constructed out of a pastiche of the past where forties clothes, cars and props are being used to stage this making of a film within a film. This stands as a comment on the fact that these aspects of the war are accessible to post-war generations through filmed evidence, such as documentary footage. However, Wenders is also contrasting the recycling of these images and a mass-mediatised recreation of the past through a form of period nostalgia to Homer's memory and the city's telling of its own history through what is missing or absent. In my view, this is an attempt to find a German vocabulary which could represent its own past

³⁶ For a discussion of T.V. as a Postmodern "cultural dominant", see McHale, Constructing Postmodernism, p. 125.

in the medium of film, acknowledging the weight and influence of American cinema at the same time. Elements from previous representations are reconfigured into a new whole which is constructed on an allusive or meta-level.

The American actor Peter Falk's presence in Der Himmel über Berlin crosses the numerous boundaries within the film. He is a recognisable emblem of American pop- and TV culture as the lead actor in the Colombo detective series broadcast internationally. As a Jewish American visitor in Berlin, he represents a return to a place of trauma where his own family memories are located. Within the world of Wenders' film, he enacts a blend between fact and fiction as well as between the main ontological layers in the film, the level of the angels, of the city and of stories. As a fallen angel himself, he heralds the course that Damiel will pursue and is thus more than a passive visitor to the city. A scene that portrays the nature of his presence in Berlin is the one that shows him walking in the no-man's-land around the ruins of the Anhalter Station³⁷. There, he recalls his grand-mother's way of telling stories, and his introspective ramblings triggered by this desolate location are interrupted by a group of young men who believe they have recognised Colombo. By making his fictional character present, a level of detective inquest – or signs thereof – is introduced into this film which focuses on questions of identity epitomised in a tension between German and American icons. Homer's memories, contrasted to the American detective genre TV film, establish that there is more than one way of representing the past and juxtaposes different ways of telling. For Wenders and for the other Postmodern authors that I have chosen to consider in this thesis, a satisfactory representation of history involves more than *rétro* pastiche, one characterised by a play with surface imagery. Instead, Wenders seeks a way of showing the persistence of the past in the present, the livelihood of the stories it tells and teaches and their relevance in an attempt to define German identity for post-post-war generations, so to speak.

³⁷ Handke and Wenders, Der Himmel über Berlin, p. 121.

Wenders' cinematic research takes a direction that is inclusive of the scars of the past and seeks to accept what is already there, doing so in a genuine concern with issues of history and identity. Paying close attention to urban space, as Wenders does, brings history into the foreground, as a city is a repository of time. Wenders returned to Europe and to Berlin after the experience of America³⁸, with the need to no longer think about Germany from a distance. This return expresses his personal desire to explore notions of memory and an identity from a German perspective³⁹, however often this task has already been undertaken. Prior to working in the States, his early films attempted to grasp the influence of American imagery on Germany. After his return, he alters his focus to trace what lies at the root of "Germanness" itself, as problematic mission as this concept's inherent slipperiness suggests.

Wenders writes that Berlin appears to him as "more a SITE than a CITY"⁴⁰, as a space where identity can be thought about in relation to reconstruction and the incorporation of the past into the present. This identity will involve accepting the challenge of the past, as the inter-textual references on which Wenders draws reveal. He is indeed shaping his own picture on a premise of precedence, many frames being quotes or allusions to other films such as Der Blaue Engel and American detective fiction, as well as internal references to his own earlier work. The city appears optimistically as a construction site rather than a ruin; an opportunity rather than a space of destruction; a space in flux rather than set in a definite form. There is thus an echo between the city and the fluidity and changeability of memory.

In 1995, unified Berlin is still a site but is not as open as it was in 1987. The Western island whose solid boundaries dissolved in 1989 is in the process of becoming another Berlin, an urban space where German reunification is being

³⁸ Where his films adopted a pace similar to American road movies, epitomised in Alice in the Cities and Paris, Texas. Wenders' recorded the openness and size of American cities such as Los Angeles and Houston, as well as his cinephile affection for New York in Nick's Movie: Lightning Over Water.

³⁹ Wenders, Die Logik der Bilder, p. 94.

⁴⁰ Wenders, The Logic of Images, p. 74. Translation of "eine STATTE, eher denn STADT", Die Logik der Bilder, p. 95.

constructed and exhibited⁴¹. If this mainly involves issues of rethinking this space as a whole and reconnecting its two parts it also sets a process of erasure in motion. The Wall has been removed, with the exception of token memorabilia self-consciously deposited or maintained in various places. The city's shape is undergoing gigantic alterations, Berlin as a whole becoming a large demolition, restoration and construction site. The presence of two urban spaces is still felt although the signs and symbols of each opposite political and economic position are being toned down, removed; or rather, the ones of the West are being grafted onto the East and the latter is experiencing a form of rapid repossession and updating. Eastern Berlin and Germany have become a form of reclamation project and many of its buildings now stand as new ruins. The city now has a feel of work in progress that is strong on both ex-sides.

Open space is also being reclaimed and Berlin is experiencing an architectural acceleration. Newly liberated land from the de-mined no-man's-land along the wall as well as cleared spaces in developed parts of the city – such as the location of the Alekan Circus in the film – and the extensive projects of renovation and reorganisation of parts of Berlin offer an invitation for competitions and projects. The question I would like to open here is how new and free these projects can be when, for instance, the empty spaces to be furnished still bear the names of Friedrichstrasse, Checkpoint Charlie or Potsdamer Platz, and all the historical associations they trigger. The question of memory within the city and how it can be integrated into its present shape is confronted by some actual developments. Certain key parts of Berlin today stage historical awareness within the city and the latter is becoming a synthesis of many Berlins. An ambitious amount of grafts and developments on and in Berlin focus on the question of memory within the city and

⁴¹ The architectural review *Domus* published a Berlin dossier (no. 3, March 1995) which outlines the "recomposition" of the city and the debate between more experimental and extreme suggestions and the master plan established by Hans Stimmann, director of architecture to the Senate. The plan's goal is "the recovery of the traditional city" (pp. 113-114) and outlines specific precepts for the new projects, including height and material regulations which establish a continuum with, or recall, Berlin's nineteenth century blocks.

how it can be integrated in conjunction with building a city to represent a new political era. In Berlin today a jarring sense of disharmony between the recent past and the present prevails, leading to a need to reassess quickly one's mental or imaginary associations with the city. If previously forbidden and unthinkable actions have become accessible, such as driving through the Brandenburg Gate or wandering around and across the obsolete border, it also means that the freedom to imagine the shape the city might take in the future has been replaced by the materialisation of this future in one given form. Wenders' Berlin was paradoxically a more open city, open to an active imagination.

If Berlin is now a space of intense building activity, architectural projects are now carried out with an awareness of what constitutes Berlin: a city deeply marked by history and which cannot be dissociated from its past. Unification involves looking back to a pre-war Berlin and builders of the new city seek to recall the traces of multiple layers of history. Berlin's cityscape in 1989 was filled with significant landmarks, those that had survived the Allied bombers and the Red Army's cannons as well as those built after Berlin had been reclaimed from the rubble of 1945. Plans to build a new capital have taken this into account in a seemingly history-conscious and critical reworking of these landmarks into a new whole. I emphasise "seemingly" because even if the memory of Berlin's past is being preserved, it is also done in conjunction with its normalisation. How successful these new accretions to the city will be in combining this double purpose of storing memory as well as functioning in the present and the future remains to be seen. Clearly, the term normalisation also contains a connotation of neutralizing that might pin history into a gilt frame and hang it up for all to peruse rather than let it maintain its disturbing presence in an unprocessed form, a form which Wenders explores in Berlin's urban fabric.

An example of this process of refurbishing and redesigning areas within Berlin is the work in progress on the Postdamer Platz. Pre-November 1989 visitors to divided Berlin would most probably have stopped at this favourite Wall

viewing point. A grassy no man's land with traces of past streets and railway tracks vanishing mysteriously into vertical slabs of concrete might have evoked what used to be before the war and the Wall, as they did for Homer in Der Himmel über Berlin. For me, the Potsdamer Platz has always been empty and grassy and a border between two ideologies. I can only be told of its throbbing past as one of the main traffic, commercial and entertainment centres of pre-war Europe through traces and reminders left by others: photographs, paintings, stories and old city maps. In 1986 while visiting the city for the first time, this past intensity was hard to imagine. In 1994, walking along a space that used to be impenetrable and mined and that has now become an open patch in the present centre of Berlin, thoughts of the past are revived under the impulse of trying to imagine how this space can be used and reintegrated into the fabric of the city. The Potsdamer was not just any no-man's-land, and is even less so now that an international architecture competition has decided its future shape.

An insight into the two hundred and fifty years of history of the two squares of the Postdamer and the adjacent *Achteck* or octagon of the Leipziger Platz can be indicated through four moments or layers that determine their alterations after the Second World War: first, the *Trümmermeer* after the bombs, when most buildings were left in a skeletal shape that led to their reconstruction, or not; second, the erection of the Wall and ensuing gradual dismantling or removal of all buildings from its surroundings to create an empty buffer between two opposed ideologies⁴². A third layer occurs through the establishment of the Kultur Forum on the Western side. Finally the most recent developments after unification inscribe a new story onto this part of the city. Planners and architects today are confronted by an eclectic space to develop and also by a form of loaded emptiness as each preceding layer of time has left some kind of trace. The Postdamer is thus an emblem for Berlin, a place where

⁴² Erich Mendelsohn's Columbus Haus's destiny is a relevant example to follow. See Alan Balfour, Berlin: The Politics of Order, 1737-1989 (New York: Rizzoli, 1990) chapter 4: "Columbus Haus", 107-153.

the layers that define the city's historical density as a whole are present and identifiable.

The Potsdamer Platz is a focal point in Berlin's present *Bau Boom* as it had been a focal point in the city as its old heart. In this respect it was chosen as the location for the first staged opening in the wall on November 12, 1989, when the mayors of each Berlin exchanged a symbolic handshake⁴³. Removing the wall released a site within the city that called for development and will soon be the locus of a large architectural ensemble⁴⁴. New developments in the city, unleashed by German unification make Berlin today a locus of international interest and concern, mostly connected to the historical resonance that new work on this old and worn space with uncomfortable associations needs to tackle. A few striking aspects on how to furnish the wasteland of the Postdamer appear in all the submitted projects. Mainly, they all share an awareness of historical traces often erased almost out of sight, such as the octagonal shape of the Leipziger Platz. These projects attempt to restore their presence. The *Achteck* as well as the tree lined Postdamer Strasse are to be revived and to become part of Berlin as a re-established European capital and by being made present, these elements should contribute to reconnecting Berlin with memories of its Weimar past. In this way, a future is given shape by inscribing its new buildings within a historical continuum. The Potsdamer Platz projects reveal so far that the latest developments in urban architecture are concerned with finding an anchorage in historical roots and exploiting these as a creative potential rather than as a limitation or constraint.

The jury of the Potsdamer Platz competition selected Renzo Piano's project, although its realisation will be carried through as a collective work including the

⁴³ Balfour, *Berlin: The Politics of Order...*, p. 246.

⁴⁴ Independent submissions for the Potsdamer Platz competition are signed by the architects Hilmer & Sattler, Renzo Piano, O. M. Ungers, Arata Isozaki, Richard Rogers, Hans Kollhof, Lauber & Wöhr, to cite the published names. Photographs of scale models and copies of plans are discussed and reproduced by Thies Schröder in *Der Potsdamer Platz*, by Horst Mauter, Laslo Földéni, Ulrich Pfeiffer, Alfred Kernd'l and Thies Schröder (Berlin: Dirk Niehsen Verlag, 1993) 151-163. These names reveal that this competition – like many others in Berlin today – attracted international architectural celebrities as well as a collection of Berliner architects.

participation of Christoph Kohlbecker, Isozaki, Kollhoff, Lauber & Wöhr, J. R. Moneo and Rogers (see plate 20). The project is an ensemble of buildings that will serve a variety of functions and is fitted into past and present aspects of the site. Juxtaposed to traces of the old Potsdamer Platz and Leipziger Platz, the Kultur Forum stands out as a pre-established element in the landscape, playing a decisive role in shaping the site and the form of the new ensemble. If Scharoun's library now defines the Western corner or edge of the project, its disruptive direction is maintained and integrated⁴⁵. In this respect, the palimpsestic nature of the Potsdamer Platz will be amplified by this inclusion of references to multiple and even conflicting periods of the Platz's history.

This development project answers a question open in many minds over half of this century and epitomised by the character of Homer in Wenders' film. As the old man carries himself and his memories of the pre-war Platz around the no-man's-land of the mid-eighties, he tells himself that "ich gebe so lange nicht auf, bis ich den Potsdamer Platz gefunden habe!"⁴⁶ and later in the film that "nur noch die Römerstrassen ... führen ins Weite, nur noch die ältesten Spuren führen weiter"⁴⁷. His quest for what the city has lost is being filled by the new construction plans. As we are now in an in between time when the choices have been made but their construction not yet completed, the success of the realisation is still suspended. At present no answers have really been given in relation to Homer's puzzled exclamation "Ich kann den Potsdamer Platz nicht finden"⁴⁸. One wonders how much of the old forms someone like him would recognise in the new ones. One can only underline the integrative and historically conscious intent within the plan, one that

⁴⁵ Alan Balfour discusses a voluntary disruption of the historical patterns in the site which would have defined Mies and Scharoun's contributions to the Kultur Forum and shaping of the site. See Berlin: The Politics of Order..., pp. 55 and 168.

⁴⁶ Handke and Wenders, Der Himmel über Berlin, p. 59, [I will not give up until I have found the Potsdamer Platz].

⁴⁷ Handke and Wenders, Der Himmel über Berlin, p. 90, [Only the Roman roads lead far ahead, and the oldest traces lead further].

⁴⁸ Handke and Wenders, Der Himmel über Berlin, p. 58, [I cannot find the Potsdamer Platz].

tries to make a latent past manifest⁴⁹. However, as Alan Balfour notes, part of the essence of the Potsdamer Platz lies in its many changes⁵⁰ and maybe its new shape will guarantee a continuum with this aspect and add to its ability to record the residue of each layer as well as contribute a new one, echoing Berlin's contemporary history.

The new Berlin that is being shaped is instigating the end of something, possibly of Berlin's powerful identity as a war-scarred city. The alternative Szene that infused a distinctive life-style to the city has moved or been resorbed with the dissolution of cold war tensions and is no longer as present as it used to be. This leads to a paradoxical sense of nostalgia, one that is diffused through Hugo Hamilton's novel Surrogate City. For Wenders, there will be fewer cracks to hold on to in the new appearance given to the city. The Berlin portrayed in Der Himmel über Berlin represents a unique moment in the history of the city. Now that the two Berlins work at becoming one city again, there are fewer and fewer cracks within its fabric. They are being built over and built out. Wenders made a film about these gaps and cracks, measuring their poetic dimension and how they acted as triggers to historically oriented imagination around Berlin's past and future. Der Himmel Über Berlin captures the eloquence of absence, the absence of the city as one city and the gaps in the city's fabric, most of all in the scenes on the fallow land of the Postdamer. Now, Berlin is becoming a space where presence is being inscribed in a new urban symphony. When most historical landmarks within the city are being integrated into a redefined whole, what might be lost is the emotional

⁴⁹ The problem that is raised here in relation to making the past present in Berlin concerns which past to recall. If new projects acknowledge the palimpsestic nature of the city, do they give similar emphasis to each layer? The layer I have in mind is the Nazi one and how its denial can be as dangerous as its revival. As seen in relation to Rossi's project for the Deutsches Historisches Museum, this layer could simply not be mentioned, however complex the dynamics underlying this Abishesque omission. Finding a clear ideological position from which to represent this layer of history is probably a precondition to striking a successful balance between denial and revival, as the Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington D.C. reveals.

⁵⁰ Balfour, Berlin: The Politics of Order..., p. 46.

presence of the past within Berlin's gaps and cracks, the one which first attracted Wenders to this city⁵¹.

In Wenders' film In weiter Ferne, so Nah!⁵², the sequel to Der Himmel über Berlin that the final caption "to be continued" announced⁵³, the thread of eloquent absence in the first film is overshadowed by Berlin's newer identity, one of a city trying to function despite its persistent and subterranean boundaries. In weiter Ferne, so Nah! is dedicated to the memory of Curt Bois, the actor who incarnated the character of Homer. His absence from the new film removes the voice of the storyteller. His Postdamer Platz, in 1992-3, has become a new form of wasteland, one where the wall is scattered in fragments, awaiting removal or kept as memorabilia. A brief scene represents this space and is infused with echoes between Wenders' two Berlin films. There are indeed many cross-references and allusions to the earlier film in In weiter Ferne, so Nah!, as well as to Wenders' films in general and mainly through the re-use of characters and familiar actors⁵⁴. A problematisation of memory and the representation of history is still present through the character of Konrad and his involvement in the war. This aspect is however juxtaposed to other threads that dominate the film. These involve defining one's identity in a unified city, epitomised by an earthbound Cassiel. The representation of historical memory has been reduced to flashbacks. In weiter Ferne, so Nah! therefore does not follow the wide spectrum of Wenders' problematising of the narrative representation of history in his earlier film.

⁵¹ This potential neutralisation of elements in the city is present in Erickson's Arc d'X, when he refers to the Potsdamer Platz becoming the "new unfinished Potsdam Plaza", p. 217. It is a city of chaos, "once again... at the crosscoordinates of history's indecision", p. 216. Erickson's novel spans time from pre-Revolutionary Paris to a futuristic post-Wall Berlin, via the imagined city of Aeonopolis, in an apocalyptic American fantasy of Day X, the end of the second Millenium. A relic-piece of the Berlin Wall is one of the many elements woven through the labyrinthine stories of the novel.

⁵² In weiter Ferne, so Nah! [Faraway. So Close!], Wim Wenders, 1993.

⁵³ Wenders worked without Handke on this sequel to their 1987 creation. The film seems to follow a rather worn down thread and Handke's absence is felt.

⁵⁴ Such as Solveig Dommartin, Bruno Ganz, Otto Sander and Peter Falk, as well as Natassia Kinski whose cinematic debut was with Wenders.

There is a sense that the "emotional presence" of the past that drew Wenders to Berlin in the first place has been diffused.

Hugo Hamilton's novel Surrogate City published in 1990 located on the boundary between divided and unified Berlin and is infused with the notion of an end to a specific moment in the city's identity. Hamilton and Wenders share a mood or tone in the way they portray characters within the city and their relationship to its space. Hamilton's Berlin is a city with a long history, one that stretches back to the pre-urban sands and one that is undergoing a process of dissolution. Surrogate City conveys nostalgia for a situation that ended in 1989 and was simultaneous to the writing of the novel. The Wall and the city's divisions are endowed with a sense of normality. In relation to Berlin's situation, Norman Gelb writes that "even the most grotesque situation becomes normal if you live with it long enough... [and] the Wall no longer arouses the passions it did when it first rose in the middle of the city.... Berliners have reluctantly accepted it"⁵⁵. Hamilton portrays Berlin with this sense of apathy, with the Wall as part of a space that has shaped its identity around and with it and produced an atmosphere of intense creative and political activity located within this tension⁵⁶. Surrogate City represents Berlin as a place which houses stories that could not take place elsewhere and Hamilton establishes a resonance between these and the city's spatial identity.

Surrogate City outlines a contemporary psychology of the city. This novel is divided into seventeen sections in which different but interconnected stories run their course. They are related by a first person narrator, Alan. He is foreign, Irish, but is integrated into life in Berlin having been there for over a year⁵⁷. His life in Berlin is a blend between involvement and detachment, both finding resonance in the tone of the narrative which juxtaposes reportage-like sentences

⁵⁵ Norman Gelb, The Berlin Wall (London: Michael Joseph, 1986) p. 268.

⁵⁶ The infinite superimpositions of artwork and text on the Wall were evidence of this atmosphere.

⁵⁷ Hugo Hamilton, Surrogate City (London: Faber and Faber, 1990) p. 35.

or captions such as "in Germany, everything must be declared"⁵⁸ with the telling of a deeply intimate story. One tone feeds off the other and the seemingly cold description of Berlin is a means of conveying a sense of foreboding in a tale that constantly hovers on the edge of vulnerability as it moves towards its dramatic end, and redeems the story from mawkishness. The latter is about pregnant Helen from Dublin who has come to Berlin to find Dieter, the father of her child. This quest is successful and Helen will find Dieter, after a few side-lines have been explored. Indeed, Helen meets Alan, moves in with him and shares her pregnancy and early motherhood with him. Alan eventually is set aside and likens his distraught state to Berlin, a place where stability appears to be denied⁵⁹. His private and even intimate tragedy echoes Germany's as this country raises questions of "eras[ing] the past"⁶⁰. The novel ends in frustration with Dieter's death after he accepts his role as a father, and with Helen and Alan separated. Cohesion and connection are hinted at but ultimately denied and the past becomes their location.

Hugo Hamilton's identity as an Irish writer is blended to his personal link with Germany through his mother. He is a bi-cultural writer whose perspective on Berlin and Germany is thus both the one of an insider and an outsider. His view of Berlin is therefore conveyed in English with an awareness of "Germanness" in the

⁵⁸ Hamilton, *Surrogate City*, p. 29.

⁵⁹ Berlin has functioned as a symbol of division, either emotional or political or both. Other literary uses of this city in this respect include Cold-War spy fiction by authors such as Len Deighton or John LeCarré. Christa Wolf sets her novel *Der Geteilte Himmel* (Halle: Mitteldeutscher Verlag, 1965) in Berlin. A bibliography of fiction about Berlin is outlined in Ian Wallace's *Berlin* (Oxford: Clio Press, 1993) and in Derek Glass, Dietmar Rösler and John J. White: *Berlin, Literary Images of a City* (Berlin: Erich Schmidt Verlag, 1989). Michel Tournier's *Les Météores* (Paris: Gallimard, 1975) sets the climax of this novel of divided twins at the separation of the city as the Wall is being erected in August 1961. The twins end their world-wide pursuit of their unit in chapter XXI entitled "Les Emmurés de Berlin". Berlin is "notre chère ville martyrisée", p. 516, [Our dear martyred city], and this situation is evoked through a specific location within its map: the Bernauerstrasse, a street divided in its middle by the Wall and epitomised by a scramble to reach the other side during the sequestration of its buildings from August 13 onwards. Tournier uses the details of this topography of division as an emblem or echo of the trajectory of his twins towards physical isolation from each other. For a discussion of the Bernauerstrasse's fate, see Peter Möbius and Helmuth Trotnow, *Mauern sind nicht für Ewig gebaut* (Frankfurt and Berlin: Propyläen, 1990).

⁶⁰ Hamilton: *Surrogate City*, p. 80.

life and rituals that make the city German despite the prevailing foreign presences. For Hamilton, Berlin triggers curiosity. He writes that "when you see the peeling façade of an old building ... you want to get at it with your nails. ... everything cries out for an explanation"⁶¹. This impulsive need is contrasted to frequent occurrences of veiling and erasing. Indeed, the Wall is described in its graffiti-clad appearance and the object itself is second to its coating, and thick cream is poured over food, "Enough cream to erase the past"⁶². In the tension established between curiosity and amnesia, between wanting to know and not wanting to confront certain questions, Berlin's identity is negotiated. As a city it is located on tension lines between manifest and suppressed history, ones which are not neutral, as Rossi's museum project revealed.

Hamilton's Berlin is an island showcase where the West meets the East and the two ideologies exhibit their differences. It is the capital of the Cold War and a place which still remains deeply connected to the Second World War, despite the fact that the visibility of this layer of history seems fainter here than in Wenders' representation of the city. Hamilton portrays a generation of Berliners, surrogate or settled, who live with an asserted distance from the War. They are bored by Dieter's mother's ramblings, the old woman being here an avatar of Homer from Der Himmel über Berlin, but one that is noticed only by her exclusion⁶³.

However, "Berlin is full of them"⁶⁴, full of old people and they are presented as anachronistic curiosities. Dieter's mother is in total disconnection from the present and alienated from the new city. Her obsession with the past, with "life

⁶¹ Hamilton: Surrogate City, p. 3.

⁶² Hamilton, Surrogate City, p. 80.

⁶³ Another example of an old storyteller and eyewitness to the events of the war is Isaak Behar. He is described by Robert Darnton as "The Wandering Jew" in Berlin Journal 1989-1990 (New York and London: WW Norton & Co, 1991). His function as an old man and memory container is to go around German schools and tell his stories. He is a form of Homer, but with an audience.

⁶⁴ Hamilton, Surrogate City, pp. 37 and 82.

before the war when Berlin was still Berlin"⁶⁵ is a story that the new Berliners "ha[ve] no time for..."⁶⁶.

In Surrogate City, the exclusion of the past for a loud and gripping present is emphasised but the former still emerges and is present as an undertone. The style of Hamilton's writing allows a dark or uncomfortable side of German efficiency and economic prosperity to seep into the story. Hints towards its existence hammer their way into the plot, appearing by surprise in the midst of something else. They are like bursts of an awareness that cannot be withheld, of what lies beneath peeling surfaces. For instance, in section 7 of the novel, entitled "Polizei", Alan and Hadja – a Turkish German woman who is central to all threads in the novel – visit a block of flats.

Sulima's apartment in Steglitz is at the top of a relatively new building; post-war, that is. The block has a series of bird features cast in the plasterwork on the outside. Inside there is an elevator, but no intercom system. The landings and stairs are finished in a light blue marble in which further species of bird are cleverly represented, giving the house a slightly cold tropical dimension. There is no graffiti in the lift, which always makes me want to scratch a little *Swastika* or some other rude curse⁶⁷.

Alan remembers. Or at least the fresh surface and kitsch a-historical decorations on Berlin's new buildings trigger specific associations. The underlayer is the one of the war and its erasure or suppression is represented through imagery of architecture. This aspect will be central to Walter Abish's novel How German Is It. Similarly to Abish, Hamilton's use of urban references conveys a sense of tension between suppression and resurgence of the past, one that is inherently part of Berlin's identity. This past is in the way of the city's momentum towards a prosperous future and this erasure of the past is central to Surrogate City. The FRG is undergoing a form of glossification. "In Germany today, there is hope, enthusiasm and longing for the future. There is life in Helmut's eyes"⁶⁸, as a

⁶⁵ Hamilton, Surrogate City, p. 163.

⁶⁶ Hamilton, Surrogate City, p. 22.

⁶⁷ Hamilton, Surrogate City, p. 81.

⁶⁸ Hamilton, Surrogate City, p. 70.

reflection of the glow of prosperity. History is veiled out of sight⁶⁹ similarly to the old people who are removed from the momentum of the new city. Throughout the novel there are however constant hints at their existence, as well as to impulsive historical associations and to the notion that plaster casts of tropical birds might be a means of distraction from the main structure of the social edifice, its past, its memory.

Traces of the past still exist in Berlin, and recall their representation by Wenders through the city's fissures and scars. For Hamilton, these are portrayed as marginal in the great move towards a bright future, a strong D-Mark and better BMWs since "memory and progress were incompatible. Past and present couldn't live in the same room together"⁷⁰. Alan thus finds an echo between the city and his personal story. Helen "needed memory"⁷¹ and her pregnancy represents an ensured connection between the different layers of her life. In this respect, she stands out from the other characters. She is receptive to the cracks and traces of history in the city, to the layer that is being built away. Indeed, derelict areas are places she enjoys and visits. She "asked that the taxi driver go over Gleisdreieck, her favourite patch in Berlin. She had a sudden need for disused railway stations. Crumbling buildings and remainders of the war. Pockmarked walls, that kind of thing"⁷². Earlier in the novel, she wonders "is this the way your memory would look, ...if you could see a photograph of it?"⁷³. Her sensitivity to ruins establishes a resonance between Helen and Berlin and through her, the underlayer of History is reached, and portrayed as a parallel world to redevelopment and prosperity in the city⁷⁴, one that is represented by the numerous construction sites and scaffoldings it contains. Something is happening under the wraps and this erasure process is

⁶⁹ It is "declared over, *vorbei*, forgotten", Surrogate City, p. 29.

⁷⁰ Hamilton, Surrogate City, p. 184.

⁷¹ Hamilton, Surrogate City, p. 142.

⁷² Hamilton, Surrogate City, p. 139.

⁷³ Hamilton, Surrogate City, p. 6.

⁷⁴ A prosperity that is built by Turkish workers. The novel reminds us often that this underlayer gives an uncomfortable connotation to a sense of clean German progress.

also part of the city, part of Germany. Surrogate City is thus a portrait of Berlin at a very specific and short-lived moment of its history, one that focuses on the present and absence of traces of the past in an urban context. In relation to this past, Hamilton's story draws a tension between the need to forget and the aggressive kitsch that is a result of this process.

The new Berlin of the 1990s has given a dimension of pastness to the Berlin of the 1980s and even to prior representations of its historical tensions. Wenders and the New German Cinema sought to come to terms with the history of their country through the medium of film. They did so within a trend of questions oriented towards Germany of the Third Reich, towards a need for knowledge combined with a recalcitrant aspect of the situation under scrutiny. Berlin is a key site in relation to this history, a space where its layers are juxtaposed and superimposed as well as a city with a very present and powerful yesterday. Heinrich Böll and Christa Wolf, respectively Western and Eastern German writers, also seek to understand in their novels and stories, notions of involvement and participation of Germans in Nazi Germany, and often use urban space as a key to exploring history. They establish that beneath the surface of the two new nations' way of progressing out of the war years lie memories of the past as well as their overt suppression. This memory is often inscribed within cities and buildings, widening to Germany certain elements present in Berlin that Wenders makes present in his films. Walter Abish's novel How German Is It focuses on these issues. I will refer to Böll's novel Billard um halbzehn and his story Entfernung von der Truppe as well as Wolf's Kindheitsmuster as parallel and antecedents to Abish's prodding under urban surfaces and into their palimpsestic depths.

B: BRUMHOLDSTEIN AND OTHER EXAMPLES

Within the density of the three opening paragraphs or fragments of Abish's 1979 novel How German Is It, the questions of Germanness, Germany's past as well as its landmarks in architecture, music and painting are asked. The latter are to be enjoyed, admired or consumed by the visitor entering the country "for pleasure"⁷⁵ and by those who have "come to peer into their past ... to rediscover their German roots"⁷⁶. For them, Germany is a storehouse of archives, a country of museums and other forms of institutionalised memory. Within the novel, there is the distant past, Dürer's, Cranach's, Holbein's and the near past of the Einzieh trial within the present of the New Germany, the Federal Republic. In between these two levels, there is a middle one, one that involves a past that is uncomfortable to revive and close enough to require doing so, a past that underlies the "cleanliness" and "order" that the newly arrived visitor is bound to notice as well as "the new, striking architecture"⁷⁷. The three layers interact with the present of the narrative, set in the environment of the *Modell Deutschland* of post-war reconstruction in the late 1970s⁷⁸, at a time of year when the idyllic, splendid weather⁷⁹ lets "the sun peel away every thought of the past"⁸⁰ in "the most glorious summer of the past thirty-three [or thirty-four] years"⁸¹. These three layers of time do not blend into a whole. At the end of the third paragraph of Part I, it is established that "the past has been forgotten", the one that would have made travelling to France an object of suspicion. Now, courteous service at airports can

⁷⁵ Walter Abish, How German Is It (London: Faber and Faber, 1982) p. 1.
From now on, the novel will be referred to in the abbreviated form HGII.

⁷⁶ HGII, p. 2.

⁷⁷ HGII, pp. 2-3.

⁷⁸ The period which followed the period of "economic miracle" set by the first Chancellor of the FRG, Konrad Adenauer from 1949 onwards.

⁷⁹ HGII, pp. 16, 21, 30, 93, 165, 217.

⁸⁰ HGII, p. 237.

⁸¹ HGII, pp. 11 and 55.

be resumed, with the enjoyment of the summer. But then it is clear from the start that the novel is not about airports and sunshine and that the narrator is concealing something, as "it is safe to conclude that people discussing the weather may be doing so in order to avoid a more controversial subject, one that might irritate, annoy, or even anger someone, anyone, within earshot" ⁸² . Is this subject in any way related to the uncomfortable past that underlies the present like the remains of the Durst concentration camp underlie, literally, the new fictional town of Brumholdstein⁸³ ?

Through this question that recalls the constant interrogations which are present in the novel, my angle of approach in relation to Abish's text can be specified. How German Is It, a novel about the relationship between two Hargenau brothers – Ulrich the writer and Helmuth the architect, their past and their present – toys with the subject of architecture and the city and connects these with the past, since the past is central to its preoccupation with Germanness, a preoccupation that gravitates around the caption "*nothing can be ruled out* " that appears as early as page 7. How it will re-emerge – despite concealing – is part of the question.

Architecture is the focus chosen in the context of this thesis to consider the city's relation to its past in a Postmodern context. Within HGII, architecture and buildings are not only a key to Germany's past but also to its relation to its past, to the way it is incorporated into the present, or not. But before focusing on this aspect, preliminary notions in relation to the novel as a whole ought to be considered. HGII is a novel about what is left unsaid, about the answers to all the questions scattered throughout, answers that do not always occur within the text. The latter repeatedly points in the direction of signs that indicate the presence of what is left unsaid. This introduces an ominous tone to the glorious summer,

⁸² HGII, p. 11.

⁸³ Another example of a fictional German small town is Kreiswald in Marcie Hershman's Tales of the Master Race (London: Minerva, 1991). In these stories she explores the dark topography of a psychological involvement of the town's "Aryan" inhabitants with Nazism, in a way which recalls Christa Wolf's Kindheitsmuster.

through the enigmatic and loaded style of writing. The apparently idyllic setting and the apparently innocent activities of Abish's characters, as well as the apparently harmonious New Germany are presented in juxtaposition to this unsaid, unspecified something that prevails throughout the text and only surfaces in hints and signs that require decoding. As readers, we wait for these appearances to cave in and reveal what lies within or beneath them. In this respect, the novel is like an explosive waiting to be triggered off but never is, unlike the bombs of the Einzieh and 7th of June groups in the text. These actually do tear through the surface of the striking new architecture, although in a manner that does not lead to a revelation of the core of Germanness.

These terrorist outbursts seem to have a limited scope. Their subversiveness remains only a potential as the harmonious new democracy seems to perceive them more as an irritation than a genuine threat, and remains oblivious to their undermining of that society. Their actions are sporadic and disconnected, giving the impression of random shots like the one taken at the character of the writer, Ulrich Hargenau, rather than part of a premeditated and coherent strategy. Their result is as fragmented as their action. They remain as an undefined potential danger lurking in the republic, but are never clearly defined as one, I think because no one in the society portrayed by Abish is willing to do so. It would imply a breakdown of the glossy surface of summer life reflected in the mirror-like new architecture. The one event that has an impact, an effect that could be sought by the terrorists, happens without them. The street of Brumholdstein caves in all by itself, or should one say, is sucked in by the increased gravity of what lies underneath it. If the text as explosive is never led to its release, its evocative power of what would happen if it did is omnipresent.

The novel functions under the assumption that its core cannot be fully grasped, only intuitively understood⁸⁴. If the essential, the answers to the

⁸⁴ A resonance exists here with Wenders' perception of an emotional presence of the past in Berlin, the dark side that underlies this past being grasped intuitively. It lingers like a shadow in the form of the city and is also readable in its scars and cracks. This flimsiness

questions remain unverballed, they can still be reached through side paths. In HGII there is not one story, thread or plot, but many. The diffuseness and fragmentary aspect which emerges from this situation of rapid cutting from scene to scene ⁸⁵ leads to confusion or disorientation at first, but also to a sense that all these tracks are pointing in a similar direction. In Structuring the Void, Jerome Klinkowitz writes that "the whole question of being 'about' something has become impertinent" and that

fiction is no longer seen best in terms of subject or even content but rather as a structuring act that becomes its own reality. Thus even though all material claims yield only a void, it is a structured void, with the fiction writer's acts creating a systematic web of relationships that is sustained not by what it captures or spans but rather by its own network of constructions ⁸⁶.

In relation to HGII, I disagree with this notion of void as the novel is leading the reader to focus on a reality that is only too true and lost in the trend towards the elaboration of fictions that blur it out of reach and are instigated by denial. Still, if in this case there is a content or subject, it is present through its absence. The "network of constructions" or orchestration of fragments and multiple threads to the narrative does not only point to its existence as a structuring act. Beneath it lies that something that shapes the structure, something that can be perceived as Germany's past of the 1933 to 1945 period. But is the last date valid? The surfacing of neo-Nazi violence in today's unified Germany makes this question even more necessary. HGII is more about the past than the new Germany it sets out to portray, and not necessarily the past that is acknowledged by the German characters of the novel, the past of Dürer, of the old architecture, the past that is part of the German spirit most foreigners come to observe. The constant references to the past act as a decoy. The past is indeed what is drawn to attention, but not

of a past which is difficult to recall, both because no memory-process is straight-forward and because of the nature of the Nazi past itself, does not however imply its non-existence.

⁸⁵ In Frederik R. Karl, American Fictions 1940-1980 (New York: Harper & Row, 1983) p. 554: "These cuts occur like sequences in a Godard film, or a Butor novel, without preparation; as if all life were composed of nonsequential elements..."

⁸⁶ In Jerome Klinkowitz, Structuring the Void (Durham & London: Duke UP, 1992) pp. 1-2.

necessarily the one that is nameable, institutionalised, exhibited in museums, kept on file in library archives. It is the other one that is central, and it is made central through the fact that it is seldom named and yet always there. As Maarten Van Delden writes, "*How German Is It* is itself a novel of withheld information and intriguing omissions" ⁸⁷, an aspect present in the text itself in the form of Ulrich's writing. On being interviewed about his work, he establishes that "if someone withholds information, surely it is not merely for the sake of withholding information" ⁸⁸. Van Delden describes the novel's plot as tantalising and elliptical. Both these adjectives point towards that something, made conspicuous even if ill-defined by the very act of its concealment.

"Keeping ... under wraps" ⁸⁹, as the character of Vin keeps her life out of reach from her father, is a current process in HGII. And yet, as Christo has shown in his project of wrapping ⁹⁰ the Berlin Reichstag, veiling, concealing or masking can also function as highlighters. As an example of this reversal, the description of Egon and Gisela "as presented and documented by Rita Tropf-Ulmwehrt" ⁹¹ stands out. The photographs of the couple reveal the material components of their life, the text of the article pins down the answers they give to questions, "the outpouring of information". And yet, the terms that the narrative uses to describe this instance of disclosure and self-exposure hint at the notion that it is all another strategy of concealment. "Not that everything needs to be taken at face value", "there is no overwhelming reason to suspect or doubt their political affiliation", "behind all the

⁸⁷ "Walter Abish's *How German Is It*: Postmodernism and the Past", Salmagundi 85/86 (Winter-Spring 1990) 172-194, p. 183.

⁸⁸ HGII, p. 52.

⁸⁹ HGII, p. 105.

⁹⁰ In Postmodernism, or, the Culture of Late Capitalism (London and New York: Verso, 1991) Fredric Jameson defines wrapping in another way. He writes that "wrapping can be seen as a reaction to the disintegration of that more traditional concept Hegel called 'ground' ", p. 101. Wrapping is a "frivolous solution" and he refers to the Frank Gehry House in Santa Monica as an example. It plays on the relation between the old core and the new metal wrap as well as all Gehry's other addenda. A comparison between Christo's work on the Reichstag and Jameson's notion of wrapping as an inherently Postmodern means of combining fragments could be developed.

⁹¹ HGII, pp. 127-128.

apparent candour ...lies a deep heavy-lidded reticence, a reluctance to reveal anything that is not on display". These sentences, scattered throughout the description tear through its surface and reveal it as a partial reality, the other part of it being deeply disturbing, shaping the lives of characters such as Egon and Gisela, who are "echt Deutsch" and offer a picture of "the new democratic Germany"⁹². This picture on the cover of the popular magazine "Treue", is clearly anything but *treu* to the real Germany but what else is it then? A picture of a stereotypical veil over the truth that Abish makes present by pointing out strategies of denial.

HGII belongs to Postmodernism in a similar way to Venturi's architecture, where the past is drawn into the present, the tone is humorous and familiar elements are twisted into unfamiliar perspectives. In Abish's novel, playfulness prevails but is given an added dimension in the sense that the past that is being toyed with, or the idea of that past, is not the one expressed in the serene harmony of Greek columns and Roman piazzas. Within German history lies a mined area where truth is not sweet, as the title of the second and longest part of the novel suggests. Again, a negative approach is used, a play with hints and signs that never reach their signified, like something repressed that re-emerges in a new form that is never decoded or reconnected with its source. To return to Klinkowitz's notion of loss of content, HGII stands apart as a novel where the content is there but the detonator that would blow away the veils built over it is missing. Although humour and irony function as subversive material, the final subversion remains suspended. I think this is made necessary by the world from which the novel draws its substance since reaching a full consciousness of history and the implications of such a history as the Nazi era would mean dealing overtly with the past, an event that has not yet happened⁹³.

A pluralistic view of the world implies a pluralistic and therefore highly subjective view of history. Abish appears to question this attitude. It contains the

⁹² HGII, p. 129.

⁹³ And how this can ever happen is only becoming more and more problematic.

danger of denial of history and its reduction to a fiction ⁹⁴ , a construct, that can easily be excluded from glossy photographs of the present, and not be missed. And yet, as quoted above, "nothing can be ruled out". HGII in this respect deals with the repression of history and denial upon which the present is based, as well as the impossibility of denial. In van Delden's terms, "while postmodernists have often restricted the question of the responsibility of their writing to the responsibility of language to itself, it is clear that the subject of Abish's *How German Is It* cannot afford such a limitation, that responsibility must here also be to history and to truth" ⁹⁵ . But history and truth have been well covered up and not necessarily in Christo's manner but with the intent of losing the object behind the veil.

Architecture and the city in HGII as well as in the earlier story "The English Garden" ⁹⁶ are used as a device for representing the process of denial at work, denial being represented as a process of pouring solid material over unpleasant realities to hide them or building a wall to avoid recognising what lies behind it⁹⁷ .

The English Garden is a herald for HGII, as the narrator conveys observations about

⁹⁴ See Jameson, Postmodernism..., p. 282, where he states that "there is no such thing as 'history' "since "period concepts correspond to no reality whatsoever". In a film like Der Himmel über Berlin this is questioned since the extracts from newsreels are there as history and are there also to remind us that history does exist even if it can at times conveniently be denied into being just another subjective narrative. I disagree with Jameson's notion that in the Postmodern age we no longer experience history as such, although he is indeed pinning down a problem inherent to our late-century's self-perception in time.

⁹⁵ In Maarten Van Velden, "Walter Abish's *How German Is It...*", p. 173. Here, the infinite debate about language and ethics seems to be seeping in, with the puzzle about the loss of language's referent and the climate of denial and lightening of the burden of responsibility that ensues.

⁹⁶ Abish, In The Future Perfect (London: Faber & Faber, 1977) 1-21.

⁹⁷ This process of hiding or shielding behind a material surface can be contrasted to the use of similar surfaces as seals, deliberately installed to prevent a resurgence or recurrence of the past into the present. James E. Young's books on Holocaust memorials, both The Texture of Memory (New Haven and London: Yale UP, 1993) and The Art of Memory: Holocaust Memorials in History (Munich and New York: Prestel Verlag, 1994) point out a relevant example. Indeed, Jürgen Wenzel and Nikolaus Lange's 1984 project was selected as a memorial on the "cursed landscape" of the buried bombed remains of the Gestapo-Gelände, the administrative center of the SS state. Its design covered the site with iron plates inscribed with Nazi documents, only leaving holes for rows of trees, to "preserve memory and prevent it from springing forth" (The Texture of Memory, pp. 87-88). Confusing sealing and hiding raises the problem of striking a balance between telling and forbidding, recalling without condoning. The project for this memorial, like many others in Berlin, has not been built or installed.

the "modern ... antiseptic" town of Brumholdstein he has visited⁹⁸. It is built over the remains of a camp: Durst⁹⁹. This story is thus an earlier inquest into defining what is German, through this same construed urban example.

Durst, not only the idea of Durst but its physical presence as a derelict concentration camp on German soil, not in Poland or elsewhere but here, emerges as the trigger to the new architecture. But this is not made clear from the start. The new buildings appearing on German soil do not at first raise the question of what preceded them on that same soil. This aspect will seep through later in the novel. What is present from the start is architecture. It is more than just the setting or backdrop to the plot. It embodies, represents and is the material manifestation of the values of the new democratic Germany, of "the miraculous rebirth of Germany"¹⁰⁰, a country rising, phoenix like, from the rubble of the

⁹⁸ Abish, "The English Garden", p. 10.

⁹⁹ The German architectural review Bauwelt recently published papers about Buchenwald. In an article entitled "Wo sich die Spuren verlieren", Bauwelt 39 (20 October 1995) 2247-2252, p. 2251, Gerhard Ullmann writes that it is "eine archäologische Zone, in der man mühsam nach den Spuren des Verbrechens sucht", [An archaeological zone where one painfully seeks out the traces of crime]. After the fiftieth anniversary of their liberation, concentration camps have been a focus of attention. German unification led to an altered agenda in relation to remembrance and Buchenwald is central in this respect as it was used by the democratic government as a memorial to the camps socialist resisters, one which dramatised their self-liberation and remained silent about the other inmates. Buchenwald is presently undergoing a make-over and will come out as a wider, different, more wholly German memorial. Buchenwald is a layered space because of the persistence of the camp's initial plan and the re-use of certain buildings, and also because of the superimposition of stories on the site. Indeed, as Ullmann establishes, "Buchenwald wurde in den sechziger Jahren der herausragende Gedenkort Ostdeutschlands, er war aber zugleich auch ein Ort der gemeinsamen deutschen Geschichte, ein Ort, für den beide Teile Deutschlands Verantwortung zu tragen haben" (p.2251), [In the Sixties, Buchenwald was the dominant memorial of East Germany. It was however also the site of a shared German history, a place that both parts of Germany have to answer for]. In recognising this, a new story is being shaped, one where remembrance and responsibility in relation to the past are central. I think it is interesting in relation to Abish's use of the site of a camp as an image for denial that this process has been recognised and re-used in the opposite way. If Holocaust survivors such as Elie Wiesel and Jorge Semprun remember the Buchenwald of the war (see their discussion published as Se taire est impossible, Paris: Éditions Mille et Une Nuits/Arte Éditions, 1995), the Bauwelt articles reveal that it is also becoming a focus for architects. They look to the site, to the camp's plan and its physical remains as keys to its history. The traces on the site are therefore exhumed for a new reading, to use Abish's image. Other articles on Buchenwald in the same edition of Bauwelt are: Peter Fibich, "Zur Planungs- und Baugeschichte Buchenwalds", pp. 2252-2257; and Volkhard Knigge, "Vom Provisorischen Grabdenkmal zum Nationaldenkmal", pp. 2258-2266.

¹⁰⁰ HGII, p. 124.

Second World War to display its "*Schwarz, Rot, Gold*" ¹⁰¹. It is an architecture of reconstruction, that can be either the restoration or replication of the old as the new Jaeger Bridge shows ¹⁰² or the embodiment of the values of the time in which reconstruction takes place. Indeed, the "striking new architecture" is described, again through negatives, as being

Innovative? Hardly. Imaginative? Not really. But free of that former somber and authoritative massivity. A return to the experimentation of the Bauhaus? Regrettably no. Still, something must be said in favor of the wide expanse of glass on the buildings, the fifteen-, twenty-story buildings, the glass reflecting not only the sky but also acting as a mirror for the older historical sites, those clusters of carefully reconstructed buildings that are an attempt to replicate entire neighborhoods obliterated in the last war ¹⁰³.

If the notion of "somber and authoritative massivity" brings Albert Speer to mind¹⁰⁴, the need to specify the difference appears as part of the process of getting ahead of any connections that could be made between present and past and undermining them, denying their existence. If the architecture of Helmuth Hargenau is striking, it is also new and recalls the historically disconnected glass and steel monolith of the International Style¹⁰⁵. The architectural history of Germany to which the characters of the novel refer harks back to the pre-Nazi period, the past they are proud to perpetuate, that is part of their present identity and even embellishes the latter. Somewhere, a layer of the past has been omitted and is present now in the crusade to remove its presence and only acknowledge the earlier layers by reconstructing them, as safe presences in a set of cultural references. Helmuth's buildings thus problematize, in the realm of fiction, issues which are central to post-war architecture. Two options were available when repairing urban fabric: replication of what had been destroyed, or its erasure;

¹⁰¹ HGII, p. 129.

¹⁰² HGII, p. 7.

¹⁰³ HGII, p. 3.

¹⁰⁴ Similarly to the way Rossi's monumentality brings to mind Italy's Fascist past.

¹⁰⁵ Abish points out that through this architecture, a homogenisation of urban space is taking place, as distinct national or cultural features are erased (HGII, p. 5).

Traditionalismus or Neue Bauen¹⁰⁶. Dresden's old centre was reconstructed to recreate the setting as it was, pre-bombs, whereas other areas called for steel, glass and concrete boxes¹⁰⁷ or the Hargenau style in HGII.

The new architecture is given shape through a character, the architect Helmuth Hargenau who could stand as an imagined opposite to a real-life architect such as Aldo Rossi whose work is based on the notion of mnemonic city. "Each day a number of buildings all over Germany rose by another few meters and came closer to the completion that initially had its roots, so to speak, in his brain" ¹⁰⁸. His buildings are as much the product of his time as he is, since "...he had designed a large assembly plant for Druck Electronics, and airport in Krefeld, a library and a civic center in Heilbronn, another factory for Stupfen Plumbing and at least half a dozen apartment buildings and several office buildings, in addition to the new police station and the new post office in Württemberg" ¹⁰⁹. He represents the new Germany as much as Egon and Gisela do since he is able to summon a list of material achievements to his name. The house he has designed for them appears on the cover of *Treue*, only "they've left out [his] fucking name" ¹¹⁰.

This name indeed recalls the past, and not only the medieval one from which Württemberg is said to be "gradually emerging" ¹¹¹. Helmuth and Ulrich Hargenau or von Hargenau, the architect and the writer, the two brothers carry the name of

¹⁰⁶ To use Klaus von Beyme's terminology from Der Wiederaufbau (Munich and Zürich: 1987). A third option is to leave the ruins as statements, as gaps in an urban fabric which mark the disruptions of brutal interference. Dresden's Frauenkirche is the best example, or was as German unification has set in motion its reconstruction. West Berlin's Kaiser Wilhelm Gedächtniskirche is another deliberately preserved ruin, similar in this respect to other empty spaces within the city, such as the Potsdamer Platz.

¹⁰⁷ This situation is in no way specific to Germany and a similar dichotomy is visible in English cities such as Manchester, Southampton and Coventry. A contrasted attitude prevails however in the undertones of reconstruction. In England, there is no sense that bombing was a deserved retribution and the issue of erasure or reconstruction of the past will not be loaded with as heavy a connotation as in Germany. In relation to Postmodern architecture, a question that arises is whether it might be a blend between both these options, a way of attempting to recapture the past while revisiting the moment of its deletion from architectural form.

¹⁰⁸ HGII, p. 13.

¹⁰⁹ HGII, pp. 12-13.

¹¹⁰ HGII, p. 61.

¹¹¹ HGII, p. 18.

their father as well as its notorious connotation that they seem to perpetuate rather than redeem. "Old, old family with a castle somewhere in Westphalia. Pity they decided to drop the *von*" ¹¹². Around the name and the father floats an uncertainty that fits the atmosphere of loaded lack of definition in the novel, an uncertainty that is rooted more in not wanting to know than in any loss of connection with history and reality. If the two brothers, the present day Hargenhaus dropped the *von*, the *von* did not necessarily drop them. It is recalled throughout the novel by the other characters and more specifically by Franz ¹¹³. Its presence creates a sense of discomfort. Ulrich perceives Daphne's use of it as "hostile", "a reminder? Of what?" ¹¹⁴. More questions. Like the old architecture, the old name guarantees a connection to the past, but on the latter has been grafted a layer of events that took place during the generation of Helmuth and Ulrich's father, events that have become associated with the *von* of his name and the swastika on his buttonhole ¹¹⁵ obliterating other connections to earlier historical layers, unlike the buildings and the paintings that remain apparently unsoiled.

That Helmuth is simultaneously an emblem of the new Germany and a Hargenau offers an insight into the problematic situation of the present. It is given form in architecture with the fictional town of Brumholdstein, named after the philosopher Brumhold who, like Heidegger, bears a complex connection to Germany's past. On his death "to Ulrich's surprise the editors had not omitted mention of Brumhold's somewhat reprehensible and morally questionable role during the coming to power of the National Socialists" ¹¹⁶. Such an omission of the usual omission does appear surprising. But from the fabric of Brumholdstein, the philosopher's past has definitely been edited. The town appears as a monument to the new Germany. Still, its name captures within it, in a quasi-subconscious

¹¹² HGII, p. 38.

¹¹³ HGII, p. 85.

¹¹⁴ HGII, p. 44.

¹¹⁵ HGII, p. 212.

¹¹⁶ HGII, p. 49.

fashion, the contradictions of this society. The story "The English Garden" dwells on the layering of Brumholdstein over Durst, the construction of the new town, "admittedly ... only another display of modern architecture" ¹¹⁷ "too modern ... too antiseptic..." ¹¹⁸ on the site of a camp that "took second place to the more notorious camps such as Dachau, Auschwitz, and Treblinka" and therefore was "not worth keeping as a monument" ¹¹⁹ . The erection of the new town is part of the process where "things were being eliminated right and left – in other words, destroyed, put out of action, blown up, erased" ¹²⁰ .

As one of the "new urban centres" ¹²¹ , Brumholdstein appears rapidly as more than itself, as the discussion between Ulrich and Helmuth indicates:

Brumholdstein is, let's face it, a nice piece of real estate, despite what you may know about it...

Despite the lager?...

Yes, despite Durst, named, incidentally, after Erschwanger Durst, a coal merchant...

Erschwanger... I don't believe it.

In the 1800s it was just a railroad juncture. Naturally after the Durst lager was built, it began to acquire greater and greater significance.

I wonder if they used architects to design concentration camps?

I don't care for your innuendo, said Helmuth angrily. My work is strictly limited to the design of buildings. Moreover, morality is not an overriding issue in architecture ¹²² .

Again, a defensive attitude is adopted before any open attack is made, betraying a knowledge that lies beneath overt actions. Brumholdstein, "a small but rapidly growing new urban centre, not quite a town and not yet ready to be called a city"

¹¹⁷ Abish, "The English Garden", p. 7.

¹¹⁸ Abish, "The English Garden", p. 10.

¹¹⁹ Abish, "The English Garden", p. 9. Concentration camps sometimes became memorials or museums on their original location. James E. Young discusses these in depth. Abish's novel points towards the problem of re-use of this space, and memorials or nothing (although this choice in itself produces a form of remembrance) do indeed seem to be the only answer. I will give more attention to this question in Part III in relation to the Washington D.C. Holocaust Memorial Museum.

¹²⁰ Abish, "The English Garden", p. 9.

¹²¹ HGII, p. 3.

¹²² HGII, p. 58.

¹²³ becomes the image of such a situation as its modernism and "affluence" ¹²⁴ and the novelty of the town as an implant on the landscape are a layer piled on top of another identity, another name. "Most of the people in Daemling – with the natural exclusion of the recently arrived foreign workers – remember Brumholdstein when it was still called Durst" ¹²⁵ . More than a name change has taken place. Like plastic surgery, something new has been consciously modelled over something considered undesirable, and yet the latter remains the material of construction. Indeed,

For the world at large the first mention of Brumholdstein to appear was in a guidebook in 1959. To begin with, Brumholdstein was considered a somewhat dubious and questionable architectural undertaking. But by now... it is regarded as a tremendous success, a venture that is, one might say, gradually entering German history as well as German consciousness, and in time, this city, designed and built by Germans, will actively participate in the unique set of events that continue to shape this nation ¹²⁶ .

Beneath the neatly elaborated fabric of the town lies the past, the one that is elliptically present everywhere else. If planners and architects as well as bulldozers managed in a concerted effort to clear away a space for the new town, they cannot erase the memory of Durst. If "cracks are forming in the walls" of Gisela and Egon's house, "can you imagine, a new house, and there are cracks?" ¹²⁷, this situation seems ominously powerful in relation to the buildings of the new Germany. Helmuth's architecture appears as a mask, and attempts to be timeless and placeless therefore suffocating the past and deflecting the attention of the spectator away from the core by the use of mirrors. In this respect, it is an image of denial and suppression by cosmetic methods. With Brumholdstein, the process is achieved on a larger scale. But despite the plans, the familiar red bricks and the economic success of the undertaking, cracks appear.

¹²³ HGII, p. 79.

¹²⁴ HGII, p. 77.

¹²⁵ HGII, p. 78.

¹²⁶ HGII, pp. 77-78.

¹²⁷ HGII, p. 196.

They are at first apparent in the social rather than the urban fabric. A group or type that is different from the one of the main characters is present through a form of counter culture embodied in Daemling and its opposition to Brumholdstein. Indeed, the inhabitants "avoid Brumholdstein, unless they happen to work there" ¹²⁸ . "The smell of age is familiar in Daemling. A musty, familiar smell. No matter how much everything is scrubbed over and over again, it smells of age, whereas in Brumholdstein one can only smell the freshly waxed floors and the scent of flowers" ¹²⁹ . The difference between the inhabitants of the two adjacent towns is their attitude towards the past, and the threat represented by Brumholdstein, an "ominously alien presence" whose "modernism [is] a pernicious influence on their children", a place that "will swallow them" in its rapid growth ¹³⁰ . This sense of threat is linked to the notion that anything other than reflections of the new Germany and its buildings must go. This accentuates a process of suppression and of course raises the question why. But the attitude towards the past maintained in Daemling is also present in characters who appear early in the novel. They hover on the margin of the powerful, provide service and are submissive although they undermine the latter with the sense of unease they produce in those they serve, the officials, the Hargenaus. Max, the "Hausmeister's right hand" in Würtenburg ¹³¹ is associated with the war. "He had spent four years in a Russian prisoner of war camp". The hostility that builds up between him and Ulrich is juxtaposed with the latter's family history. Characters like Max remember the father and perpetuate the uncomfortable association. Similarly, in Brumholdstein, the librarian Jonke is a "latent fascist. But what is a latent fascist?" ¹³² . His father was in the Einsatzkommando during the war and he

¹²⁸ HGII, p. 79.

¹²⁹ HGII, p. 122.

¹³⁰ HGII, p. 77.

¹³¹ HGII, p. 33.

¹³² HGII, p. 184.

"collects photographs. The Hitler period" ¹³³ . He refuses to stock Ulrich's books, seemingly for more reasons than the one that Ulrich is Anna's new lover. Hostility seems to be a form of protection, and the expression of a knowledge that cannot be brought up in the open. If "in Bavaria as in the rest of Germany ... there still appears to be a great demand for old tunes, old marches ...military bands, anything that will keep the past, the glorious German past, from being effaced forever" ¹³⁴ , this trend appears in contrast to the way the past is suppressed by the builders of Brumholdsteins who belong to a tentatively amnesiac present, to heroic Modernism.

Franz needs to be considered in this light. Associated with the Hargenaus during the war he is a repository of their past. His life in the present as a waiter at the Pflaume restaurant-an orchestrated space of exclusive elegance and stagecraft-also comprises his private activity of building the match stick scale model of Durst. Franz, as Max and Jonke, is "immersed in the past" ¹³⁵ or what the mayor refers to in his speech as "the too familiar obsession with the 1940-45 period of our life" . If Franz has a monomaniacal or obsessive streak, he is also where the repressed resurges, re-emerges. His howls that cannot be silenced are disconcerting to his neighbours ¹³⁶ . His presence is perceived by Helmuth's daughter Gisela as "creepy" ¹³⁷ . His activity of model building triggers strong reactions in those who hear about it, like a form of Rorschach test. "I find it gruesome, said Anna. Don't you? Inexplicably gruesome and grotesque" ¹³⁸ . The model represents what preceded Brumholdstein and is disturbing in this respect. It is said to be a "replica" ¹³⁹ , of "something that stood where we are now sitting. An

¹³³ HGII, p. 186.

¹³⁴ HGII, p. 26.

¹³⁵ HGII, p. 82.

¹³⁶ HGII, p. 73.

¹³⁷ HGII, p. 114.

¹³⁸ HGII, p. 77.

¹³⁹ HGII, p. 85.

architectural replica of something we have effaced" ¹⁴⁰ . Franz later describes it as "an architectural model" in which he seeks an accuracy which the erasure of plans and documents concerning Durst from the familiar, new and modern library of Brumholdstein makes difficult. Still, the building is continued in a manner similar to the truthful post-war replications of old towns, but reduced in scale – or concentrated – and with a dark intent.

A quiet Sunday: Franz in the basement, carefully gluing another matchstick into place. He was not merely replicating a period of disaster. Or replicating what had ultimately been destroyed to make room for Brumholdstein. He was not merely replicating in every detail, and to scale, something that in its day had been as familiar to the people in Daemling as the cows and the barn. What he was doing was to evoke in the people he knew a sense of uncertainty, a sense of doubt, a sense of dismay, a sense of disgust. That was to be the ultimate achievement ¹⁴¹ .

The source of reference for his model is a sense of collective and unrecorded memory, since archival traces have been removed. Through Franz, the notion of palimpsestic history is perpetuated. His work recreates a trace of the past which survives despite the trend towards suppression by those who have the power to build real buildings. The disturbance produced by the model is proof that a repressed knowledge of the persistence of Durst, the fact that it is part of the identity of post-war Europe, let alone Germany, prevails. This suppression was, objectively speaking, probably a necessary factor in the rebuilding of a nation after the devastation of the war. It is however the success of reconstruction that appears as a rather disturbing puzzle.

As the model is being gradually constructed, in minute detail, the main street of Brumholdstein caves in, revealing not only the stench of a burst sewage pipe but also a mass grave. Previously, there had been cracks in the pavement ¹⁴², cracks which recall Egon and Gisela's house and point to the fact that there is something rotting under the surface. If the nationality of the corpses remains

¹⁴⁰ HGII, p. 86.

¹⁴¹ HGII, p. 158.

¹⁴² HGII, p. 136.

debatable, the event is perceived as "a real mess" ¹⁴³ , a disturbance in the course of the idyllic summer, a hint that everything could indeed be different rather than familiar, as the title of the coloring book suggests¹⁴⁴ . To return to the image of the palimpsest, the mass grave brings a previous layer into the open, but is also perceived as an occurrence of suppression or erasure. "From the evidence available, not all were shot ... whatever happened took place in those desperate final days of the war. Most likely before the Americans reached Durst. The grave was an attempt to sweep the evidence out of sight" ¹⁴⁵ . Following Abish's layering of hints that point in the direction of a truth through the accretion of negatives, the New Germany is built as a layering of removal rather than construction, although it is manifest in the material form of buildings and new towns. The projects which are presently altering the configuration of Berlin to allow the city to resume its role as the capital of Germany appear contrasted to Brumholdsteins in their intent. Erasure has given way to awareness, to recalling the past and making it part of a new whole. However self-conscious and rigid this enterprise appears, it still reveals a shift in how a city's identity in relation to its history is thought. The new towns epitomised in Brumholdstein on one side and Berlin today on the other represent this shift through their differences. The first part of Abish's novel is entitled "The Edge of Forgetfulness". It indicates where Brumholdstein is located. This new Germany differs from the underlying dynamics shaping unified Germany, located on the edge of change.

As a counterpart to building, the terrorist activity that has become a part of the new Germany is another occurrence of removal, erasure. A sign of the nature of the activity of the Einzieh or 7th of June Liberation Group is given on Gisela Hargenau's tray of assorted objects that include the "tiny eraser that was encased in a plastic case made to resemble a bomb" ¹⁴⁶ that Ulrich picks out as his choice.

¹⁴³ HGII, p. 139.

¹⁴⁴ HGII, p. 176.

¹⁴⁵ HGII, p. 192.

¹⁴⁶ HGII, p. 213.

"A perfect choice... Trust the Hargenaus", a choice which echoes Abish's comment that Germany is "a highly charged issue"¹⁴⁷. Ulrich's connection with terrorist activity is established from the start, although it is not of a committed kind. He has contributed to the suppression of the Group, making of himself a target. Their activity has become underground, an appropriate place to locate subversion within Abish's novel. Their aim or precise purpose remains vague, undeclared but deeply connected with the Hargenau brothers. Ulrich is involved with the women of the group that blows up Helmuth's buildings. Having been told about their construction, the police station and post office are destroyed, leading to the problem of reconstruction. By undermining the new, the terrorists attempt to break through the veil of the familiar as Anna does in her class, but have themselves become part of the predictable. The most effective and disturbing happening, the caving in of the street, takes place all by itself, without explosives. This leads to a brief digression. There are numerous occurrences of buildings exploding in Abish's stories (in "Access") as well as in the representation of the end or failure of Modernism. Charles Jencks uses Pruitt-Igoe as an example of voluntary dynamiting as well as Ronan Point¹⁴⁸ as a contrasted example of "cumulative collapse". In the story "Life Uniforms" in Minds Meet, "some weeks as many as three buildings collapse in a single day". Buildings are "caving in [at an alarming rate]". People either take photographs of these seemingly self-destructive occurrences, or watch from afar. "Mr Batch works in an office in the city. From his desk he can see an occasional cloud of dust envelop a tall building. Much time is wasted in the office by everyone standing at windows watching the tall and by now familiar-shaped columns of dust that after an hour subside, revealing a

¹⁴⁷ Walter Abish and Sylvère Lotringer, interview, "The German Issue", Semiotext(e) (4, no. 2; 1982) 160-178, p. 160.

¹⁴⁸ In Charles Jencks, What is Post-Modernism? (London: Academy Editions, 1989) p. 16. On the subject of demolition, see also Baudrillard's America (1986, Trans. Chris Turner, London and New York: Verso, 1988) p. 17, where he compares it to fireworks, emphasising the spectacle or even entertainment nature of the death of buildings and underlining a disconnection of the spectator with any other feelings than his or her passive enjoyment.

fresh vacuum" ¹⁴⁹ . But the distance of observation is about as paradoxical and quasi-humorous as it is for the characters in HGII who deny the past while living on its unpleasant remains. Indeed, Mr Batch works *in* a building that is a vertical opposite to subterranean remains such as Durst, leading to a dichotomy of manifest versus repressed. Immersion in the familiarity of repression removes any form of access to critical assessment of the danger of collapse. In HGII such a situation has seemingly been as contrived as the plans of Brumholdstein, and is desirable considering the weight of the past. Within the novel, the power of subversion lies less in the breaking of the surface that isolates the present from the past with the repeated terrorist actions that destroy bridges rather than reconnect them ¹⁵⁰ and more in the "cumulative collapse" that betrays inner decay.

The problem here is how to reach this suppressed past, how to disclose it and therefore be brought to deal with it rather than conceal its existence. About Abish's writing, Malcom Bradbury writes that "under flatness dark meanings still hide, troubling the surface"¹⁵¹. Focusing on Germany within a wider context of Postmodern concern with history renders this problem even more acute as the past stands in apparent contradiction to the present and yet remains part of it. Abish focuses on erasure by writing about buildings in order to emphasise through this paradoxical process that something is being hidden. In this respect, his novel is similar to Christo and Jeanne-Claude's project of wrapping the Reichstag. Started in 1976, this idea was suspended and then set in motion again in 1995, to be completed in June as a temporary installation on the site. Indeed, by making a package of a part of German history that is embodied in the scarred and rebuilt building considered as a historical monument and that functioned as a museum – now awaiting the completion of Norman Foster's intervention and a return to the building's original political function – Christo is veiling it but by doing so draws

¹⁴⁹ Abish, "Access", Minds Meet (London: Faber & Faber, 1975) 65-73, p. 23.

¹⁵⁰ HGII, p. 246.

¹⁵¹ Malcom Bradbury, Introduction, In The Future Perfect, ix-xiii, p. xii.

attention to its shape. A cover is placed over the stones to make them more apparent by an act of subversion of the familiar by humour and even parody. Covering up is done as a means of revealing. Sylvère Lotringer stresses the link between Christo's work and a reconsideration of history -other than the consumer approach of the tourist- and

the ritual of packaging in a society which has consumed everything, even its own symbolism. Collective symbols, shameful practices, defunct traditions are thus not only exhumed, but elevated in the open air into aesthetic experiences, turned into ambiguous objects of conviviality. It means paying back society in its own coin and confronting history with the hallucination of its own existence. It would not be such a bad thing after all if the Germans could confront the ghosts of their past under the funeral mask, displaced and parodied, of their own grandeur ¹⁵² .

If the mass grave at Brumholdstein is not necessarily an "aesthetic experience" like the wrapped Reichstag, it is still more than a symbol of the past, its resurgence countering Ulrich's "desire to efface everything" ¹⁵³ through his writing, a desire which echoes his brother's architectural practice. Helmuth might be working on a commission to build a museum "in which they would hang large paintings of naked women. Some by French, some by English, and some by German Painters" ¹⁵⁴ . But before the building is erected, he will have "someone make a model of it" ¹⁵⁵, echoing Franz's weekend cellar activity. The museum is to be a space of display ¹⁵⁶ and gradually becomes a burden to Helmuth and never even reaches the stage of the model¹⁵⁷ . It is a work in process on which he appears blocked, as if the association of memory and museum were a problem. Still it is obvious that the objects on display will be submitted to solid editing and that the museum will fulfil its function of narrative rather than of storehouse for memory, in a similar fashion to the library or to Egon and Gisela's surface strategies. This

¹⁵² Christo and Lotringer, interview, Semiotext(e), 8-26, p. 25.

¹⁵³ HGII, p. 17.

¹⁵⁴ HGII, p. 111.

¹⁵⁵ HGII, p. 111.

¹⁵⁶ HGII, p. 166.

¹⁵⁷ HGII, p. 212.

final repository of suppression remains unbuilt, and finds an echo in Rossi's unbuilt museum project. The town of Brumholdstein is compared to a display in Abish's story "The English Garden", removing the need for an institution to be built for this purpose.

The city as palimpsest is seen in a new light with Brumholdstein. The town is an occurrence of a willed tampering with the strata of history. Also, the Postmodern approach removes a sense of core or centre. The city is a space upon which fragments are projected rather than a connective device. Abish's writing is unsettling in the sense that it draws attention to this lack of centre by turning everything into material for questions. The interrogative tone, coercive and brutal at times is linked from the start to the point of view of the foreigner as explicitly stated by the narrator of "The English Garden", who is looking into another culture, like "Madame de Staël, who so unsettled Goethe and Schiller with her questions during her stay in Germany" ¹⁵⁸ . "The question remains, do the Germans still expect to be asked embarrassing questions about their past and about their present and what, if any, ideas they may have about their future?" ¹⁵⁹ . The obvious answer here, fuelled by the suppression strategies portrayed in the novel is no, and also that the past has only become more deeply embarrassing since Madame de Staël's visit. In this respect, it is not important to find answers as these are accepted as multiple and unreachable, but to formulate the appropriately disturbing and indeed "unsettling" questions that will function as detonators of what van Delden has established as "the responsibility to history and truth" ¹⁶⁰ . These can probably only be asked by an outsider or at least with a considerable amount of critical distance towards German culture and society.

Abish's American perspective allows distance from the building. He is not exactly in it, like his character Mr Batch. However, his writing about Germany is rooted in a return to issues of personal identity in relation to his Austrian Jewish

¹⁵⁸ Abish, *HGII*, p. 7.

¹⁵⁹ Abish, *HGII*, p. 7.

¹⁶⁰ Van Delden, "Walter Abish's *How German Is It...*", p. 173.

origins ¹⁶¹. Abish focuses on what lies beneath the surface and appearances and in this respect, cities are "mnemonic centres of gravity"¹⁶² which present associations with the past that persist despite strategies of erasure. He reveals the latent, subconscious level underlying the clean new one, and in doing so undermines the notion of cleanliness by reminding his reader in "The English Garden" that "the gleaming faucet and the white basin" where the narrator washes his hands are as German as the soap he uses ¹⁶³. Soap made in Germany leads to an automatic association for some. When this automatism is lost, characters such as Gisela Hargenau take over the scene. Cosmetic levelling of the past produces a dangerous situation, isolating individuals when the sense of a shared history is lost, and the wider issues of responsibility and ethics dissolve.

From within a German perspective, the work of the Gruppe 47 and later on of Joseph Beuys – albeit in a different vein¹⁶⁴ – seek to ensure a persistence of

¹⁶¹ Abish writes about his country of origin and a personal topography of memory in "The Fall of Summer", Conjunctions 7 (1985) 110-141. Austrian memories of the war and involvement with the Third Reich differ from German ones, however much they can gravitate around similar notions of guilt, nuanced by an acceptance rather than the perpetration of the regime. Peter Handke's writing explores the Austrian traditions from which he stems and a post-war language. Other more explicit representations of the haunting resonance of a Nazi past within Vienna are Liliana Cavani's film Il Portiere di notte [The Night Porter] (1973) and later, from the perspective of the following generation, Stephen Kelly's short story "It is a Ritual" in Invisible Architecture (London: Picador, 1991), 1-59.

¹⁶² Abish, "The Fall of Summer", p. 137.

¹⁶³ Abish, "The English Garden", p. 5.

¹⁶⁴ Joseph Beuys as a figurehead for a new form of expression brings to mind Mario Merz. Indeed, both explore an organic vocabulary. Beuys however, inscribes his research within the frame of Germany and uses his distinctive materials - mostly felt, wax, fat, metal and blood- with an awareness of the associations they could trigger. Robert Hughes writes that Beuys took "conventionally repellent materials and socially abhorrent memories and convert[ed] them, as by a shamanistic act, into oblique visions of history. ... enabling Germans ... to move with an easy conscience amid their inherited Romantic imagery, so fatally contaminated by Hitler", in The Shock of the New: Art and the Century of Change (London: BBC Books, 1991) p. 405. Beuys' commentaries on his own work emphasise its political dimension, one which seeks through aesthetics and form to find an emotive and historically defined underlayer within German society. See his speech "Talking about One's Own Country: Germany" delivered in Munich in 1985 and published in In Memoriam Joseph Beuys. Obituaries, Essays, Speeches (Bonn: Inter Nationes, 1986) pp. 35 and 44, where he says that the War left a "wound" which could be healed by "rehabilitating certain core feelings about German art which had been repressed after the fall of Nazism". Beuys is thus another example of a quest to search for underlying emotional tensions within the fabric of Germany.

memory and a renegotiation of means of expression after the war, and a corruption of the German language through its function as a vehicle for the perpetration of Nazi crimes. If East and West German perspectives after 1949 moved in contrasted directions in relation to their understanding and use of history, there are certain examples of echoes between these literatures. These focus on memories of involvement in the Second World War using urban space as a mnemonic grid, or a trace of the passage of war, echoed in the psychological and emotional profiles of fictional characters.

In this respect, the East German novelist Christa Wolf's Kindheitsmuster¹⁶⁵ deals with German History and personal involvement with the past as it unfolds through urban triggers. Kindheitsmuster is a novel which focuses on a journey taken by the central female protagonist and narrator. With her family, she returns to the town of her childhood, referring to this place as "L, heute G"¹⁶⁶. Indeed, the town¹⁶⁷ has changed name since the end of the war and is no longer German but Polish. She is therefore entering a foreign space, holding on to her East German perspective in the process, and using this process to explore the Germany she belongs to at the time of the trip and then of writing, trying to refind traces of the town's German underlying layer. This time is the early Seventies, more specifically the 10th and 11th of July 1971. By recounting this trip, the narrator attempts to describe the working process of memory. The history of the town, of her country and of herself are intertwined to form a portrait of the Second World War through the third-person perspective of "Nelly", a young girl from an ordinary family in a small town. This portrait is overtly linked to the Seventies and a wider political problematic is developed through juxtapositions of views of the present with

¹⁶⁵ First published in 1976. German edition: Munich: DTV, 1994. All translations are quoted from A Model Childhood (trans. Ursule Molinaro and Hedwig Rappolt, London: Virago Press, 1992).

¹⁶⁶ Wolf, Kindheitsmuster, p. 10. "L, now called G", A Model Childhood, p. 4.

¹⁶⁷ James Knowlton establishes that "Wolf's hometown Landsberg an der Warthe is now called Gorzow Wielkopolski", in his article "How have we become what we are Today? History and Utopia in the Novels of Christa Wolf", in History and Post-War Writing, Eds. Theo d'Haen and Hans Bertens (Amsterdam: Rodopi; Antwerpen: Restant, 1990) 61-88, p. 72.

recreated scenes from childhood and their chronological development; for instance, references are made to current crises and issues such as Cuba and Vietnam.

The town contains recognisable traces of the past, not any past but particularly the war years: it is this layer that is revisited. The narrator returns to her old school and weighs the evocative power of the presence of unaltered elements within its fabric. She establishes that "die Schule, die Strasse, der Spielplatz liefern Gestalten und Gesichter, die zu heute noch malen könntest"¹⁶⁸. L., now G., offers many instances of triggers to an immersion into the past. These prove more effective than traces of a more conventional kind such as photographs and newspapers. As the narrator recalls what took place in given locations, her immersion into the past is fluid. It is the continuing presence of place in a tangible form despite alterations to the town's identity that acts as a means of rediscovering lost memories. These are experienced with a time distance; one which separates L. from its earlier identity as G. By returning to this earlier layer, preserved in details of the town, the narrator rediscovers or discloses patterns of behaviour from the war years; the ones Nazism inscribed in members of the German population such as herself and her family. Kindheitsmuster explores this painful past, which is subject to suppressions and repression after the war but is under scrutiny again in the Seventies. It is a past that may not be accessible through rational means or through documented traces. History is entered as a flow. The capacity to remember is as present as forgetfulness or a deletion of memories and is linked to a retrospective awareness of this erasure.

If Christa Wolf's novel focuses on memory and history, it does so to explore why it is important to look back to events such as Kristallnacht¹⁶⁹ or the burning of the Synagogue of her town which she remembers¹⁷⁰. This polemic perspective diagnoses "[d]ieser fatale Hang der Geschichte zu Wiederholungen"¹⁷¹. The

¹⁶⁸ Wolf, Kindheitsmuster, p. 294. "The school, the street, the playground offer up bodies and faces which you could paint to this day", A Model Childhood, p. 229.

¹⁶⁹ Wolf, Kindheitsmuster, p.204.

¹⁷⁰ Wolf, Kindheitsmuster, pp. 204-205.

¹⁷¹ Wolf, Kindheitsmuster, p. 217. "History's accursed tendency to repeat itself", A Model Childhood, pp. 170.

juxtapositions of the story from the past with current events from the Seventies reveals an underlying connection between them. Kindheitsmuster is therefore about the present, but seen from the perspective of how today can be understood in relation to history. The novel is political in the sense that it seeks to reveal patterns in history, and by recognising them, give them an active function in enhancing an understanding of the present. Behind a need to remember and to, literally, go back to the time and the place of a given trauma, Kindheitsmuster emphasises the painful recurrence of situations that should never have been allowed to repeat themselves. Memory is considered as a tool to counter this repetition.

Wolf's narrator also gives a voice to a post-war generation that is removed from a direct experience of the Nazi years. Her daughter Lenka for instance reveals this gap and that "diesen Kindern kein Schuldgefühl mehr aufkommt"¹⁷², "im Zeitalter universalen Erinnerungsverlustes"¹⁷³. The horror has faded and thus threatens to recur, even though the new generation's views are intensely politicised. Memory and an attempt to give it a voice takes on an ethical function or a form of social responsibility. Wolf tells a story to keep an awareness of history as a living part of German identity. She reveals its presence by considering traces of its passage in a city, the location of her involvement in this layer of the past. Kindheitsmuster dwells on the process of memory as well as on its telling, on how to narrate such a past and the difficulty in reaching fluency on the matter and accepting the weight of this involvement. Wolf's novel explores, in the third person, the notion that "es nämlich unerträglich ist, bei dem Wort 'Auschwitz' das kleine Wort 'Ich' mitdenken zu müssen"¹⁷⁴, and that "vielleicht können wir nichts anderes tun, als den nach uns Kommenden unsere Behinderungen zu vermelden"¹⁷⁵. These difficulties include

¹⁷² Wolf, Kindheitsmuster, p. 301. "Children [who] no longer suffer from a guilt feeling", A Model Childhood, p. 236.

¹⁷³ Wolf, Kindheitsmuster, p. 197. "In the age of universal loss of memory", A Model Childhood, p. 153.

¹⁷⁴ Wolf, Kindheitsmuster, p. 295. "[I]t is unbearable to think the tiny word 'I' in connection with the word 'Auschwitz'", A Model Childhood, p. 230.

¹⁷⁵ Wolf, Kindheitsmuster, p. 296. "All we can do is point out our difficulties to those who come after us", A Model Childhood, p. 231.

being able to confront the past with the first person. Her trip to G. is a journey into her self; one which she seeks to read out of the tangible presence of the town.

Abish in HGII diagnoses suppression and denial as dangerous, a cause of social decay. Kindheitsmuster runs as a parallel to this view, however different the two novels' formal or stylistic configuration. They both use the city as an image of the tension between presence and absence of the past and, like Wenders, make the palimpsestic nature of urban continuity apparent. Another writer who refers to urban space as an emblem of social and historical tensions connected to the War is Heinrich Böll. The thread within his writing I will follow is his use of architecture and a perception of Cologne as a city with a layered past, where memory of the War and a poisoning of society by Nazism crawl back to the surface despite an attempt to live in the post-war present.

In Billiard um halbzehn, Heinrich Böll uses architecture as an emblem of this resurging memory of the War within a family. Three generations of Faehmels cohabitate within Böll's novel. Each one is connected to Saint Anthony's Abbey, a building that stands – or doesn't – across three architectural periods: pre-, during and post-war. Each phase of its existence is linked to a Faehmel generation. Indeed, the old man designed its first form. His son Robert dynamited it during the war. Joseph, also an architect, represents a new generation and discovers this fact while preparing the ruin for reconstruction and restoration. This outline is gradually revealed as the novel unfolds. It is set in the time of the Abbey's reconstruction and its earlier layers are revealed as memory is disclosed and the story of the building – an emblem of the social edifice of Germany – is being read by a member of Germany's post-war generation. In doing so, Joseph encounters the complexity of his family's past in relation to its involvement in German history. This past resurges on the occasion of the old man's 80th birthday which takes place at the end of the novel, emphasising the tension between memory and suppression or repression.

The image of billiards follows this thread. Indeed, Robert's game – a ritual performed between set times each day in a room of the Prinz Heinrich Hotel with the company of the lift boy Hugo – is deeply connected with the resurgence or attempted erasure of memories

connected to the war. Indeed, "seine Erinnerung hatte sich nie an Worte und Bilder gehalten, nur an Bewegungen"¹⁷⁶. Reduced to the scale of a billiard table, movement becomes a series of patterns¹⁷⁷. "Das was sauber, trocken und genau"¹⁷⁸, like an architectural design or plan¹⁷⁹. While playing billiards, he is indoors, removed from the outside world. Also, he is not really playing: "Er spielte schon lange nicht mehr nach Regeln, wollte nicht Serien spielen, Points sammeln"¹⁸⁰. With each strike "Spuren leuchteten auf" and stories are triggered¹⁸¹. From half past nine to eleven, Hugo and Robert become involved in recounting them. They remember and tell, even though the game for Robert is part of his attempt to keep memory as formula rather than feeling¹⁸².

In the billiards room, Robert Faehmel's involvement and war activity will be revealed, confessed and the feeling behind the formula will seep out. He confesses that

Ich war Spezialist für Sprengungen, Hugo. ... Nur habe ich nicht Felsen gesprengt, sondern Häuser, und Kirchen. Das hab ich noch nie jemandem erzählt, ausser meiner Frau, aber die ist schon lange tot, und so weiss es niemand ausser dir Du weisst, dass ich Architekt bin und eigentlich Häuser bauen sollte, aber ich hab nie welche gebaut, immer nur welche gesprengt, und auch die Kirchen, die ich davon träumte, sie zu bauen; die hab ich nie gebaut. ... Den ganzen Krieg über hatte ich nur mit Dynamit zu tun. ... Ich bekam Orden dafür und wurde befördert¹⁸³.

¹⁷⁶ Heinrich Böll, Billard um halbzehn (Cologne and Berlin: Kiepenauer & Witsch, 1959) p. 41. "His memories had never been fixed in words and pictures, only in movements", Billiards at Half Past Nine (Transl. Patrick Bowles, London: Marion Boyars, 1976) p. 34.

¹⁷⁷ Böll, Billard um halbzehn, p. 62.

¹⁷⁸ Böll, Billard um halbzehn, p. 57. "It was clean, dry and precise", Billiards at Half Past Nine, p. 47.

¹⁷⁹ References are regularly made to Doctor Faehmel's meticulousness, his ordered files, his incorruptibility and "impeccable ... handwriting". See Billiards at Half Past Nine, pp. 7, 9, 16, 17.

¹⁸⁰ Böll, Billard um halbzehn, p. 40. "He was not trying to make breaks or accumulate points", Billiards at Half Past Nine, p. 33.

¹⁸¹ Böll, Billard um halbzehn, p. 40. "Each strike lit up paths", Billiards at Half Past Nine, p. 33.

¹⁸² Böll, Billiards at Half Past Nine, p. 206. "Erinnerung wurde nicht Gefühl, blieb Formel", Billard um halbzehn, p. 245.

¹⁸³ Böll, Billard um halbzehn, pp. 71-72. "I was a Demolition Expert, Hugo... I demolished houses and churches ...no one knows but you You know I'm an architect and ought really to build houses, but I've never built any, only demolished some, and churches too, which I used to draw on flimsy drawing-paper, because I dreamed of building some; I've never built any. ... for the duration of the war I dealt in nothing but dynamite. ... they gave me medals for it and I was promoted", Billiards at Half Past Nine, p. 61.

Buildings stood in his general's "field of fire"¹⁸⁴ and called for deletion, even after the aeroplane took over as the means of attacking and bombing cities. Robert was thus aware of his anachronistic madness. Still, he "besorgte der deutschen Armee ihr Schussfeld, das sie gar nicht brauchte"¹⁸⁵. He blew up the Abbey for no strategic reason, as a form of internal self-destructive frenzy echoing the Nazi process itself. He is responsible for what happened. The question why runs through the novel and the Faehmel family. It is asked directly by "the American Officer"¹⁸⁶, and is mumbled obsessively by old women and the peasants who surrounded and depended on the Abbey¹⁸⁷. The answer will emerge gradually.

"Eng ist das Schicksal unsere Abtei mit dem Schicksal der Familie Fähmel verwachsen"¹⁸⁸, as it was "erbaut von Heinrich Fähmel im Jahre 1908, in seinem neunundzwanzigsten Lebensjahr, zerstört von Robert Fähmel, im Jahre 1945, in seinem neunundzwanzigsten Jahr' - was wirst du tun, Joseph, wenn du dreissig bist?"¹⁸⁹. This pattern is still suspended and open ended since Joseph has not yet begun rebuilding the Abbey, but his enclosure within the family's cycle is certain. His procrastination is linked to questions in relation to his father's share in the Abbey's history. Like all members of the Faehmel family on this birthday, he is exploring the past and seeking to read into the ruin, into what remains. Its destruction is resonant in relation to the family's identity and this in itself is enough to reconstruct the Abbey. Another question is opened here: is the family ready to face its past, to have it literally reconstructed before them and resume its place in the German landscape?

¹⁸⁴ Böll, Billiards at Half Past Nine, p. 62. "Schussfeld", Billard um halbzehn, p. 73.

¹⁸⁵ Böll, Billard um halbzehn, p. 74. He "provided the German Army with its field of fire, which it didn't at all need; and in front of me the walls were toppling down. ... I was not to be stopped, and I blew up the whole of Saint Anthony's Abbey, in Kissatal, three days before the end of the war", Billiards at Half Past Nine, p. 62.

¹⁸⁶ Böll, Billiards at Half Past Nine, pp. 146 to 148.

¹⁸⁷ Böll, Billiards at Half Past Nine, pp. 145, 185.

¹⁸⁸ Böll, Billard um halbzehn, p. 246, [The fate of our Abbey has developed close ties to the fate of the Faehmel family].

¹⁸⁹ Böll, Billard um halbzehn, p. 246. "Built by Heirich Faehmel in the year 1908, in his twenty -ninth year. Destroyed by Robert Faehmel, in the year 1945, in his twenty-ninth year -and what will you do, Joseph, when you're thirty?", Billiards at Half Past Nine, p.209.

By dynamiting the Abbey, Robert fulfilled his private intent, to construct "ein Denkmal aus Staub und Trümmern ... die keine kulturgeschichtlichen Denkmäler gewesen waren und die man nicht hatte schonen müssen"¹⁹⁰, a monument to the dead in his family. Joseph's persistent wound is the memory of the loss of members of his family. The war is equated to a purposeless massacre of innocents, leaving gaping voids behind that those who survived have yet to learn to live with. By destroying the Abbey, Robert establishes a memorial to them. His private architecture draws so to speak on negative skills, those that oppose construction. Rather than raising a monument, he razes a part of German Heritage and cultural identity. Robert's dynamiting the Abbey epitomises his involvement in the war. If its ruin remains as a sign of non-reconciliation with the death of members of the Faehmel family, it expresses this cost by the destruction of something of value to the society that perpetuated such deaths. In Entfernung vor der Truppe, constructing memorials to the dead also appears as a private or intimate pursuit of the narrator. He does so in language and the story is the memorial. Here, a parallel can be established between architecture and writing as they share a memory-preserving function. The brothers Ulrich and Helmuth Hargenau in HGII represent this parallel. The writer and the architect share a past and each career or occupation spirals around it, as well as around their share in German history and post-war society.

In Entfernung vor der Truppe, Heinrich Böll's narrator Wilhelm Schmölder recalls the past, his past, by means of three layers of time, September 22, 1938, the war, and "now", the 1960s. "Dieses Vor-und Zurückgreifen mag den Leser nicht nervös machen. Spätestens im siebten Schuljahr weiss ja jedes Kind, dass man das Wechsel der Erzählebene nennt"¹⁹¹. Schmölder performs these shifts so as to erect a memorial to the dead who did not "einem Friedhof Ruhe

¹⁹⁰ Böll, Billard um halbzehn, p. 172. "[H]e had wanted to create a monument of dust and rubble for those who had not been historical monuments and whom no one had been made to spare", Billiards at Half Past Nine, p. 145.

¹⁹¹ Böll, Entfernung von der Truppe, in Romane und Erzählungen 3, 1961-71 (Cologne: Kiepenheuer & Witsch, 1987) 315-376, p. 349. "I hope these flashes back and forth will not upset the reader. By grade 7, if not before, the merest child knows that this is called changing the narrational level", Absent Without Leave, and Other Stories (London: Marion Boyars Publishers, 1983) p. 50.

gefunden hat"¹⁹². It is a record, a "Gedächtniskapelle"¹⁹³ for the members of his family who are no more and whose deaths are connected with warfare and air raids. The war is therefore a point around which the whole story of memory revolves. It is also the secret or overt cause of the overall wounding with which later generations will have to live, consciously or not¹⁹⁴. The war underlies Schmölder's emotional wounding and "dass ich Neurotiker bin"¹⁹⁵. It has also altered the shape of Cologne, the city in which this novella is set, establishing a parallel between an individual and the city on the level of his psyche. The narrator was born there and witnessed its destruction and the changes that ensued in his environment, breaking the protective aspect of familiarity. "Eine zerstörte Stadt zerstören kann"¹⁹⁶, and indeed the characters described or recalled in Entfernung von der Truppe are as wounded as the space which houses them.

Cologne contains "den Humus der Historie, der uns kostenlos zur Verfügung steht, den Schutt der Geschichte, der noch billiger als kostenlos zu haben ist"¹⁹⁷. Schmölder's father and his father-in-law occupy themselves by digging up the buried past together, literally, as they spend time in "eine Schacht, den mein Vater in unserem Hof hat graben und überdachen lassen", and share a common interest: "Kölner Schichten zu ergründen"¹⁹⁸, "so alt wie der Schutt, in dem sie wühlen"¹⁹⁹. Their excavations are a form of distraction, a way of turning their attention on something else but something still related to remembering. The city's underlayer is a stratified reminder of its history, one where the Nazi past can be

¹⁹² Böll, Entfernung von der Truppe, p. 368. "[Find] a resting place". Absent..., p. 78.

¹⁹³ Böll, Entfernung von der Truppe, p. 323. "memorial chapel", Absent..., p. 14.

¹⁹⁴ Joseph Beuys explores this aspect of German society.

¹⁹⁵ Böll, Entfernung von der Truppe, p. 365. "I am a neurotic", Absent..., p. 74.

¹⁹⁶ Böll, Entfernung von der Truppe, p. 367. "A destroyed city can destroy". Absent..., p. 77.

¹⁹⁷ Böll, Entfernung von der Truppe, p. 323. "The humus of the ages, which we can have for nothing, the rubble of history, to be had for even less than nothing", Absent..., p. 15.

¹⁹⁸ Böll, Entfernung von der Truppe, p. 341. "The two of them are now completely absorbed in a new interest: exploring the layers of Cologne. They dig away in a shaft my father has sunk in our courtyard...", Absent..., p. 40.

¹⁹⁹ Böll, Entfernung von der Truppe, p. 347. "As old as the rubble they burrow in", Absent..., p. 48.

scuttled over and diluted by the presence of other trinkets and relics. And yet this past is the sinister overriding presence which motivated the narrator's memorial story and the old men's neurotic digging.

Böll's representations of the city and his use of architecture are connected to the persistence of memory and an inquiry into German heritage. The ruin-memorial of Saint Anthony's Abbey in Billard um halbzehn is transposed at the end of the novel into a scale-model birthday cake, like a preliminary to Abish's model of Durst in HGII. Emblems are shrunk, and in this case, cut up and ingested.

History, however, and specially the layer of the Second World War, has undergone a process of infiltration into German society. Rather than having been absorbed through a commemorative ritual, its presence is subterranean and undigested. Buildings are witnesses to its presence, in a post-war era when the War is still much closer than it is for Wenders or Abish. They also explore its persistent traces, but from the perspective of increased distance. Böll's writing announces their direction, one concerned with the latent aspect of history, a history which shapes identity in the present, its form being epitomised by urban configuration.

The cake in the shape of the Abbey in Billard um halbzehn brings to mind the image of *Schlagsahne Deutschland*, whipped cream Germany, that Böll's writing attacks. His place in post-war Germany was a complex one. Indeed, this new nation was building itself into a prosperous place, as I discussed in relation to Abish. For Böll, an implicit cost was the necessary suppression of the recent past and his novels, plays and essays sought to resist this aspect. As he came to represent Germany's niggling bad conscience, criticism and irritation grew in relation to his efforts to keep the wound open and not force a speeded healing. James Henderson Reid presents this conflict between a New Right and the committed fiction produced in the Federal Republic²⁰⁰. A rising conservatism in public life and the media attacked Böll's corrosive intentions as it interfered with prosperity.

²⁰⁰ See R.H. Reid, Heinrich Böll, A German for his Time (Oxford, New York and Hamburg: Berg Publishers, 1988).

The latter is called into question and seen as the root of the whipped cream image, a substance that is not always easily digestible, and not necessarily available to all²⁰¹. Schmölder's Cologne in Entfernung vor der Truppe and the Abbey in Billard um halbzehn are images for the persistence of this repressed past within post-war Germany and bring it back to the surface of public attention. In this respect, Böll's writing functions as the voice of the layers of identity which underlie the present and whose absence threatens its integrity.

German urban space is where a density of scars and reparations define its post-war configuration. The city is thus powerful as an emblem of tangible traces of the past and their interplay with experience and memory. Both combine to define a German identity in the present. The examples of representations of German cities I have presented in this section share an awareness of history expressed through urban space, or rather, a hunger for history and for answers in relation to the complex puzzle of erasure and suppression the past undergoes. Wenders, Abish, Wolf and Böll, as well as Aldo Rossi with his project for the Deutsches Historisches Museum, delve into cities to pursue a quest for the past, or rather an inquest into its role in shaping the present.

²⁰¹ See R.H. Reid, Heinrich Böll..., pp. 75-6, where he discusses the restoration of middle-class values and an ensuing normalisation of society. This marginalising of radical views is connected to their violent expression through terrorism and tensions between intellectuals and establishment.

2: PETER ACKROYD'S LONDON: HERITAGE AND CONTINUITY

I have finished six Designes of my last Church, fastned with Pinns on the Walls of my Closet so that the Images surround me and I am once more at Peece. In the first I have the Detail of the Ground Plot, which is much like a Prologue in a Story; in the second there is all the Plan in a small form, like the disposition of Figures in a Narrative; the third Draught shews the Elevation, which is like the Symbol or Theme of a Narrative, and the fourth displays the Upright of the Front, which is like to the main part of the Story; in the fifth there are designed the many and irregular Doors, Stairways and Passages like so many ambiguous Expressions, Tropes, Dialogues and Metaphoricall speeches; in the sixth there is the Upright of the Portico and the Tower which will strike the Mind with Magnificence, as the Conclusion of a Book.

There is also a Narrative which is hidden so that none may see it, ...¹

Peter Ackroyd's novels are infused with ideas of architecture. London is represented with an emphasis on its tangible and material form, one which involves looking back into an earlier shape of the same city. Through references to the city, the legacy of the past and its manifestation in the present are emphasised. In Hawksmoor, Ackroyd explores how earlier layers of London and aspects of the city's past resurface in a time which is contemporary with the novel's writing, the mid 1980s or more generally speaking, the present. A tangible trace of this legacy and its persistence in a cityscape is made apparent through Hawksmoor's London churches. Built in the early eighteenth century, they are part of the city's identity and heritage. Ackroyd structures his novel around these churches as they are a recognisable or 'real' pattern which can be altered and even distorted, without losing hold of the model. This pattern is indeed a tangible network of buildings which exist and are historical documents within the city. They offer a solid grid on which stories related to their presence can be construed.

In Hawksmoor, a picture of the eighteenth century and threads which connect the past to the present is drawn. However, Ackroyd does not attempt to work as a historian but to revisit this role. He produces a version of history, one possible history, rather than creating an illusion of truthfulness. In this process, he acknowledges history's

¹ Peter Ackroyd, Hawksmoor (London: Penguin, 1985) p. 205.

relation to textuality and traces as well as the flexibility underlying this condition. The truthfulness of the past is transmitted through a transposition into text and not directly. His novel draws on a variety of sources and combines them with descriptions of the churches, both offering traces of the past. This past is textual in the sense that it relies on written records. Hawksmoor is a reworking of these, one which is inspired by an earlier, albeit contemporary, interest in the darker side of London: Iain Sinclair's poem Lud Heat published in 1975². It portrays the city through the perspective of Hawksmoor's churches, the past thus shaping aspects of contemporary London. An impression of continuity between different generations of shapes is thus developed³. It is similar to the residual deposit of time which Victor Hugo detects in the monuments of Paris – most of all its cathedral – where each change in appearance still contains traces of an older underlayer⁴.

The novel is structured in two parts. It is not however through this duality that the two levels of time it portrays are presented. Strong resonances and echoes between

² (n.p.: Albion village Press, 1975). A section entitled "Running the Oracle", pp. 106-111 is a generative model for Hawksmoor. See also Ackroyd's acknowledgements at the end of Hawksmoor: "Any relation to real people, either living or dead, is entirely coincidental. I have employed many sources in the preparation of *Hawksmoor*, but this version of history is my own invention. I would like to express my obligation to Iain Sinclair's poem, *Lud Heat*, which first directed my attention to the stranger characteristics of the London churches".

³ This recalls Rossi's notion of enduring architectural form, despite its changing functions. Another example of extended persistence through time is Virginia Woolf's character Orlando. Indeed his/her existence crosses different centuries and makes her final identity an accumulation of layers of experience, like the rings of the Oak Tree of her poem. In Orlando, London undergoes changes, the Fire of 1666 being a pivotal moment, occurring during his stay abroad when he changes sex. On her return home, familiar references have been altered but, like in her, an essence and memory of the past remains and accumulates depth through time. See Orlando (1928; London: Grafton, 1989) p. 103.

⁴ Victor Hugo Notre-Dame de Paris (1832, Paris: Gallimard, 1988) p. 162: "Chaque flot du temps superpose son alluvion, chaque race dépose sa couche sur le monument, chaque individu apporte sa pierre", [Each wave of time superimposes its alluvion, each race deposits its layer on monuments, each individual contributes his stone]; and, in relation to the internal structure of a Christian church, p. 164: "Quelle que soit l'enveloppe sculptée et brodée d'une cathédrale, on retrouve toujours dessous, au moins à l'état de germe et de rudiment, la basilique romaine", [Under any sculpted and embroidered skin of a cathedral one can always find, at least in a seminal and rudimentary form, the Roman basilica]. Hawksmoor's churches are portrayed by Ackroyd with a similar emphasis on seminal or shaping internalised traces of the past.

these times are present and accentuated by the fact that they appear in alternating chapters, a pattern of succession which is not altered or disturbed by the novel's division into two parts⁵. In these two time levels, two stories unfold. The first is one of Nicholas Dyer narrated in his own voice – a pastiche eighteenth century English – and occupies the six unevenly numbered chapters. He is an eighteenth century figure, an architect and draughtsman⁶ involved in the erection of new churches in London. He appears however more concerned with what lies under the surface of the city's dark areas than by the creation of new forms. Indeed, he describes himself as a witness to this darkness that is manifested in moments such as the Plague and the Fire. He is shaped by this experience of the city and seeks through architecture a means of giving it a tangible and daunting shape that would continue to voice darkness when its living witnesses will be gone. During their construction his churches are the stage for deaths that seem to represent a form of baptism in blood or a mysterious rite that finds its source in Dyer's involvement with occult underworlds. Assuming that Dyer – the death tainted builder – is a fictionalised avatar of the historical figure of Nicholas Hawksmoor⁷, this novel sheds a new light, so to speak, on the forces that underlie his churches and their dark undertones.

These buildings appear as edifices to the unnameable, subversive perpetrators of mystery which are traces of the occult as well as loci of Christian worship. Under their main purpose lies another one, linked to popular practices, or unofficial culture. Indeed, occultism as a range of beliefs and practices of ancient origin holds a pejorative overtone in Western societies. As a label for divination, magic, witchcraft and alchemy, the occult

⁵ Part I begins in the eighteenth century and Part II in the twentieth. There is a shift in perspective in this respect, or rather a way of balancing out the novel's pace. Each part contains a juxtaposition of the two time levels, although the first centers on Dyer and the second on Hawksmoor. Indeed, this character only appears at the opening of the second part on page 109. The previous evenly numbered chapters set in the twentieth century allowed the mystery to take root before calling in the professional detective and subverting his skills.

⁶ Ackroyd, *Hawksmoor*, p. 52.

⁷ Ackroyd emphasises this notion through a fictional encyclopaedia entry "for DYER, Nicholas", which is adapted from Hawksmoor's. See *Hawksmoor*, p. 214.

is associated with secrecy and subversion. It is also linked to esoteric Masonic practices. In relation to the period Ackroyd explores, occultism was a form of shadow to the Enlightenment, a set of alternative and counter-practices. They survived in a subterranean manner, one which finds an echo in underground spaces in Hawksmoor, such as tombs, foundations of buildings and buried mazes⁸.

The novel's second, or rather parallel story which is juxtaposed to Dyer's is the one of Detective Hawksmoor from Scotland Yard, told in today's English. He is investigating deaths by strangulation which occur on the sites of Dyer's churches⁹, murders which disclose no trace of their perpetrator. The dead boy's names correspond to the ones who die in the eighteenth century under the eye of the architect. Among the numerous elements which link these two time and narrative levels lies an intricate system of sound and place echoes. These make Detective Hawksmoor appear as a recurrence of Dyer rather than an incongruous displacement. Through this shift in naming, the two characters are blended. The first man creates a puzzle that the second one seeks to unravel in a kind of dialectic that is complementary. The emphasis is on continuity and persistent undercurrents. For instance, both Dyer and Hawksmoor live at the same place and therefore unavoidably trace the same steps, share footfalls¹⁰. These superimpositions are part of a large web of threads pulled from the eighteenth into the twentieth century¹¹. The earlier layer of time is when elements of the present city are designed, shaped and built. It is also where an explanation or origin for the events that unfold in the twentieth century is given and a reader perceives this as both layers unfold

⁸ Ackroyd, Hawksmoor, pp. 31, 36, 39.

⁹ Ackroyd, Hawksmoor, p. 109: "they were all strangled, all in the same area, all in churches".

¹⁰ Other elements recur such as the fact that both Dyer and Hawksmoor have assistants called Walter Pyne or Payne. Most characters from the eighteenth century have a twentieth century counterpart, the links being either obvious or distorted.

¹¹ Or vice-versa, strangely enough.

together. A network of significant resonances is thus graspable through these superimpositions.

London is portrayed realistically in the novel since specific landmarks reflect the actual pattern of the city. Within this spatial precision lie distortions which twist the story of London to emphasise a certain direction. These distortions lie mainly in names and dates, as Ackroyd "plays around with the facts as they can be found in reference works"¹² as he plays with names. They allow or emphasise echoes between two centuries and a portrait of the city emerges from a compound of these two time layers. Indeed, "Ackroyd incites his reader to find an equivalent in the present for the opposition between rationalism and mystery that is the essence of his chapters in the past"¹³. Ackroyd's novel explores a layer of history which is central to the shaping of London as we know it today but does so to produce a version of the city which defies a familiar reading or understanding of urban space. To explore manifestations in the present of events that find a source in the past, and to do so through architectural form in a city implies that this city is a repository for memory of the earlier time. London contains traces of the passage of time and its shaping of urban space. Ackroyd uses and confuses this idea by establishing a network of references and extracting a sinister tale of dark events from it.

In comparison with German cities, London is not a space where post-war problems of a similarly dark kind emerged. Of course, if the portrayal of German urban situations focused on notions of radical destruction and post-war rubble represented through *Trümmerliteratur*, a parallel can be drawn with views of London during and after the Blitz¹⁴. But the bombing of London and devastation of areas within its urban fabric were not equated with a sense of inner corruption and guilt which prevails in

¹² Luc Herman, "The Relevance of History", *History and Post-War Writing*, Eds. Theo D'Haen and Hans Bertens (Amsterdam: Rodopi; Antwerpen: Restant, 1990) 114.

¹³ Luc Herman, "The Relevance of History", p. 117.

¹⁴ Peter Vansittart's *London: A Literary Companion* (London: John Murray, 1992) gives an overview of references to representations of post-War London.

German perspectives, as in Heinrich Böll's Billard um halbzehn. In England, the psychological encoding of traces of the War is different in this respect. Unlike France, there was no cohabitation with the enemy. By corruption and guilt I refer mainly to how history is revisited, or not, in a way that is shaped by an overriding sense of coming to terms with the past, coming to terms with one's involvement in a particularly hideous past. Christa Wolf's narrator in Kindheitsmuster located her perspective as the one of an eyewitness struggling to find a voice whereas Wenders construed a representational reconfiguration of history. Both use the city as its repository. Representations of German cities since the Second War are dominated by this presence of the past and later works such as Wolf's, Wenders' and Hamilton's, for instance, still focus on its shadow in the present. In comparison, British experience of the War is defined from a victorious perspective, one which endows the scarring of its cities with a meaning which differs from Germany's. The War thus altered urban configuration without causing the latter to be read as a sign of social and moral destruction. On considering a key moment in the shaping of London's identity, Ackroyd therefore moves further back in time, to a pre-modern past, and is not halted by the Second War as a quasi-obsessive focus of memory. His path into the past is therefore not held at that level and it is a different problematic in relation to the city and memory, the city and history which can be considered through Hawksmoor. Or rather, it is a very different kind of history, with deeply contrasted associations, connotations and consequences. However different, it still finds in a city a location where the recurrence of memory is explored. In this respect, my problematic in relation to Postmodern cities as palimpsestic spaces find another manifestation here, as London is a space where a succession of layered stories are inscribed.

The location of Hawksmoor is in "one of the oldest known settled parts of the city"¹⁵ and one of its characteristics resides in the density of the traces of time on this

¹⁵ Terry Farrel, Urban Design (London: Academy Editions; Berlin: Ernst & Sohn, 1993) 35. The architect and urban designer Terry Farrel seeks to make this density apparent in his London projects. His work in the city focuses on repairing an urban fabric that he perceives as having

space from the Roman period onwards. By delving into London's layers, Ackroyd moves back into the eighteenth century. Here, a darkness beneath the surface is apparent. On a historical level, the era under scrutiny immediately followed the development of a fresh layer of construction over a scene of decay and corruption, after the Plague and the Great Fire of 1666. In this respect, I believe a parallel can be drawn between the German cities discussed earlier and Ackroyd's London as they both move back to a period defined by being the reconstructive aftermath of a scarring crisis, even though these crises are of a very distinct kind. Another shared element is the fact that traces of change in the city are recorded in its architectural forms. Buildings record the passage of time or stand as clues to the occurrence of different eras or events.

A new city or a new surface attempts to take over a destroyed urban scene in a logic of continuum, and to make the city liveable again. London was being rebuilt in brick after most of its fabric was swept away. As ruined or abandoned sites still contained traces of past usage and ownership, the new city of the late seventeenth and eighteenth century was not a complete clean start. However, plans such as Wren's or Evelyn's were drawn and allowed the city of London to be thought of as potentially an orchestrated whole

been scarred by the passage of time and by industrial and post-war developments. The city is treated as an organism that has been wounded and where continuity between a variety of historical traces as well as their diversity call for a reorchestration. For instance, Farrel's project for a regeneration of the Spitalfield Market reveals these concerns. The 1991 plan involves an emphasis on reusing and adapting old buildings rather than replacing them with a unified ensemble of tower blocks. The site contains Hawksmoor's Christ Church Spitalfields and Farrel's plan ensures its visual presence (*Urban Design*, p. 101). Farrel's approach to the city reveals an "appreciation of the importance of the past:... in an age of rapid change, the continuity of history and the lessons of the past provide clues to the direction for development, and form the basis for maintaining a sense of place in the face of loss of identity" (*Urban Design*, p. 225). London itself offers these clues and "if one scratches the surface of London, the historical continuity, the origins of much that exists today can be traced back to the days of Roman settlement. Roman routes and patterns of land occupation dominate and influence so much of what exists in Western Europe. It is the richness of the layers of history that lie below the surface of modern London and the manner in which they affect the city today which makes historical continuity so important" (*Urban Design*, p. 231). An awareness of the richness of these layers infuses new urban developments with historical density in a reconfiguration of historical lines and patterns. Farrel's work thus seeks reconnection with the past in new forms and not through historicist pastiche. His perception of the city as the locus of the past is a clue to understanding the nature of the site on which Ackroyd locates his tale of the city. Architects inscribe the city before writers describe it.

for the first time¹⁶, a representative of an enlightened age. This revision of meaning to be given to the city is also one of revision and alteration of its urban fabric, theoretically emancipating it from its historical texture. Through these alterations and new accretions, a persistent past is however noticeable in a variety of forms. In Hawksmoor, reference to the plans for a new city after the Fire and their execution are made¹⁷. Through them, however, traces of a dark underlayer will persist and it is these that offer a structure to the novel. The post-Fire London was the focus of the 1711 Act for 50 new churches¹⁸. These projects are an example of choices between different options when reconstruction or the refurbishment of a given site is at stake. Indeed, when either a replication of the old church or a use of the site to stage a new building with no reference to its predecessor are both possible, a third way was followed by Hawksmoor. It involved a blend of both. The six churches he designed and built reveal a revision of the preexisting forms on their sites as well as the use of a new albeit eclectic style.

Robert Venturi refers to Hawksmoor as a key example of architectural complexity and uses his churches to illustrate Complexity and Contradiction in

¹⁶ These plans aimed at a rationalisation of urban space following a European concern with its symbolic value, one epitomised in quasi-urban constructs such as the ensemble of the palace and town of Versailles. An emphasis on axes and perspectives drew attention to important loci, ones associated with sources of political power. In the City of London, this power was commercial and economic, represented by Guilds and the Exchange, whose houses were to be set in orchestrated street patterns. The numerous projects for a restructuring of the city's insalubrious medieval fabric remained as fictions and ideas due to settled land ownership. For a detailed discussion of post-Fire London, and urban space as an image for political power, see James S. Curl's European Cities and Society (London: Leonard Hill, 1970). Napoleon III and Baron Hausmann's rethinking and brutal alteration of Paris is a later manifestation of this concern with urban vistas, and of a belief in an obsolescence of the city's organic and natural growth.

¹⁷ Ackroyd, Hawksmoor, p. 142.

¹⁸ This Act was instigated following the collapse of the roof of St Alfedge, Greenwich. It subsided in November 1710, as Kerry Downes points out in her study Hawksmoor (1969, London: Thames & Hudson, 1987) p. 85. The first church to receive attention was St Alfedge's, followed by other works in the East and City of London.

Architecture¹⁹. As an English architect of the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries²⁰ he contributed to shaping English architectural heritage although he is remembered somewhat in the shadow of Wren and Vanbrugh. His main works in London are his churches²¹. He also worked on All Souls and Queen's Colleges in Oxford as well as Blenheim Palace and Castle Howard. His style is a blend of many influences, an orchestration of many voices that produces richness through diversity and is of course appealing to Venturi. It is also appealing to Ackroyd and a fruitful basis on which to construct a novel written in a multitude of voices. Ackroyd, however, zooms in on the darker ones and develops these.

In Iain Sinclair's portrayal of dark London in Lud Heat, the underlying tensions between past and present are explored in a series of sections which oscillate between prose poem, compiled information and quotation, photographs, diagrams, drawings and verse. These tensions are of an occult nature and reside in places of density and layering such as Hawksmoor's churches. This poem draws lines between the churches and refers them to underlying currents of energy that bear resonances of Ancient Egypt and other reference points for pagan worship. Sinclair thus follows an occult thread in the city's fabric. Lud Heat opens with the idea that Hawksmoor's churches were "erected over a fen of undisclosed horrors, white stones laid upon the mud and dust"²². Nicholas Hawksmoor is portrayed as "the force behind the operation"²³ who "worked between the poles of Wren and Vanbrugh"²⁴ to "rewrite the city"²⁵. Sinclair is sensitive to the presence of

¹⁹ Robert Venturi, Complexity and Contradiction in Architecture (1966, Northants: Butterworth Architecture, 1990) pp. 28, 30, 32.

²⁰ Nicholas Hawksmoor was born in Nottinghamshire ca. 1661 and died in Millbank, Westminster, on March 25 1736.

²¹ There are six of them: St. Alfege, Greenwich (1712-1718), Christ Church Spitalfields (1714-1729), St. Anne Limehouse (1714-1729), St. George in the East (1714-1729), St. Mary Woolnoth (1716-1724), St. George, Bloomsbury (1716-1730).

²² Sinclair, Lud Heat, p. 4.

²³ Sinclair, Lud Heat, p. 4.

²⁴ Sinclair, Lud Heat, p. 5.

²⁵ Sinclair, Lud Heat, p. 4.

potentially festering spots in London such as Bunhill Fields. It is described as a "plague pit"²⁶ where Blake, Defoe and Bunyan are buried. As a cemetery, it is "a pre-Roman site"²⁷ where voices halt, where writers end, as if these areas defy any representation or understanding. The city contains such areas and these are linked into "sub-system[s]"²⁸ that contribute to specific urban patterns of energy (see plate 21). Lud Heat maps these areas, defining a geographical grid that supports occult systems.

Sinclair's poem portrays a London that holds a "web" of urban furniture, of elements that defy any rational understanding of their presence and persistence and of certain signs manifest in their forms. They form a web that "is printed on the city and disguised with multiple superimpositions"²⁹. These elements call for an unmasking and a disclosure, by digging through the surface of white stones into the "mud and dust". This leads to diagnosing the presence – or at least suggesting the presence – of occult forces that underlie London's surface and have become increasingly difficult to read.

Hawksmoor's churches are key points in this web. Thus, "each church is an enclosure of force, a trap, a sight-block, a raised place with an unacknowledged influence on events enacted within their nome-lines"³⁰ and later on, "the Hawksmoor churches have a close connection with burial sites, Roman and pre-Roman"³¹. According to Sinclair, the Romans regarded East London not as a place for the living but as a necropolis for the dead. If the present churches are "[connected] to this mood"³², Ackroyd draws on this aspect to feed his own portrayal of a dark underlayer or undercurrent in London that manifests itself in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries and recurs in the twentieth. The churches are instrumental in holding this dark web

²⁶ Sinclair, Lud Heat, p. 6.

²⁷ Sinclair, Lud Heat, p. 6.

²⁸ Sinclair, Lud Heat, p. 6.

²⁹ Sinclair, Lud Heat, p. 7.

³⁰ Sinclair, Lud Heat, p. 10.

³¹ Sinclair, Lud Heat, p. 16.

³² Sinclair, Lud Heat, p. 17.

within the city. However, Lud Heat establishes "that the systems of worship are bankrupt, the buildings stand"³³. Today, this system of worship can only be imagined and thus gives Ackroyd a wide scope to do so.

Sinclair's poem outlines themes that inquire into the mystery of Hawksmoor's churches and their connection to occult patterns of worship. Ackroyd will rework most of these, making them appear in his present day London through a series of seemingly baffling events and details. For instance, a peculiar autopsy of one of the murdered boys involves sectioning his hands and removing them from the corpse³⁴. This is not current practice and no reason to justify this procedure is given. However, on returning to Sinclair, we read that the churches contain connections to signs and rites from Ancient Egypt and that Dyer's "memory trances" and narrative contain frequent allusions to "the Aegyptians"³⁵. These are revealed most glaringly in Hawksmoor's frequent use of pyramidal shapes in his buildings. Egypt is a reference for occult London and Egyptian death rites or "autoptic rites ... set free the Soul Bird and preserve the body shell"³⁶. The odd and unexplained contemporary forensic practice thus finds a connection with Egypt, with an antecedent and reference as the god Seth is said to have had his "hands hacked off"³⁷. The meaning of this occult practice has become subterranean. Ackroyd

³³ Sinclair, Lud Heat, p. 25.

³⁴ Ackroyd, Hawksmoor, p. 112: "The mortuary assistant came forward and cut both of the boy's hands off at the wrist, taking them to a separate bench for examination". This idea recurs on page 202 in Hawksmoor's musings: "Time passes, and he looks down at his own hands and wonders if he would recognise them if they lay severed upon a table". A parallel is thus drawn between the boy as sacrificial victim and the detective.

³⁵ Ackroyd, Hawksmoor, p. 47: "now, like the Aegyptians, we are all for Stone" and p. 61 when Dyer voices comparisons between Egyptian pyramids and London churches. Other references to Egypt include a reference to London as a "necropolis" (p. 63) and most of all Dyer's confession towards the end of the novel that "I build in Hieroglyph and in Shadow, like my Ancients" and "I wish my Buildings to be filled with Secresy, and such Hieroglyphs as conceal from the Vulgar the Mysteries of Religion" (p. 180)

³⁶ Sinclair, Lud Heat, p. 43.

³⁷ Sinclair, Lud Heat, p. 18. Seth is an ancient Egyptian God. His worship centered at Ombos (a key to the *ombres* or shadows that prevail in Hawksmoor) and he was the leading partner and rival of Horus, the falcon god. Seth is represented as a composite creature (like the prose Ackroyd produces) who took on a variety of representations in various animal forms. His cult was subjected to changes and fluctuated with the popularity of other gods such as Osiris, the

draws on Sinclair to draw roots and patterns within the city, following occult lines. They reveal within Hawksmoor a sense of presence of the past in these dark events, a past which makes itself manifest through murders and incongruous details and yet defies explanation. As Sinclair establishes, "when we understand the condition, it no longer exists"³⁸.

If Sinclair's poem is given as a reference to which Ackroyd acknowledges a debt, a multitude of other sources and influences underlie the surface of the novel. Vivid resonances appear which recall other representations of London, such as William Blake's or T. S. Eliot's. This allusive style confirms Ackroyd's ventriloquism. His writing mimes, parodies and adopts other voices and he refers to this process directly through the voices of his characters. Indeed, Dyer establishes that "If I were a Writer now, I would wish to thicken the water of my Discourse so that it was no longer easy or familiar. I would chuse a huge lushious Style!"³⁹ and detective Hawksmoor is known to his assistant Walter for his "habit of parodying the remarks made by their colleagues"⁴⁰. This literary ventriloquism voiced by Ackroyd's characters is not a new device⁴¹. Within Postmodern concerns it is an example of parody, following Linda Hutcheon's outline of the concept⁴². She understands it to be part of a critical reworking of the past to construct an awareness of present cultural identity, a present built out of the past. In this respect her definition of parody differs from Fredric Jameson's, as he

god of the dead. Seth is linked to him as his bother or son, which clarifes his presence in Lud Heat and these indirect allusions in Hawksmoor. Of interest also is the fact that Seth's worship was proscribed at a given time and his image effaced from monuments. His presence thus persists in a subterranean form, resurfacing in unexpected places.

³⁸ Sinclair, Lud Heat, p. 53.

³⁹ Ackroyd, Hawksmoor, p. 176.

⁴⁰ Ackroyd, Hawksmoor, p. 109.

⁴¹ John Barth's novel The Sot-Weed Factor (1960; London: Secker and Warburg, 1961) is another example of a recreation of eighteenth century English, and of the *Bildungsroman* genre of novels from that time.

⁴² Linda Hutcheon, "The Politics of Parody", in The Politics of Postmodernism (London: Routledge, 1991) chapter 4, pp. 93-117. She writes that "parody signals how present representations come from past ones and what ideological consequences derive from both continuity and difference", p. 93.

emphasises its role in nostalgic escapism⁴³. Ackroyd's previous writings announce and follow this path into allusive density. Indeed, in The Last Testament of Oscar Wilde, he adopts the voice of Oscar Wilde and thus establishes a tension within the genre of biographical studies. He performs a similar display of virtuosity in his biographical study of Eliot entitled T. S. Eliot. The object of Ackroyd's scrutiny is a voice and this voice finds its way into his own style and language. Rather than a study of a character, Ackroyd offers up a recreation of a persona. He thus underlines a persistence of these voices and acknowledges their presence in shaping his own, blurring the lines between ownership and influence as language flows between all who use it. In this respect, Ackroyd's biographical studies set the mood of his fiction and are helpful insights into a style in progress. Wilde and Eliot's are recognisable voices and to create a continuum with them is a parodic way of construing a sense of their persistence as shaping influences⁴⁴. Ackroyd does not suffer from an anxiety of influence in a Harold Bloomian sense, but accepts influence as a creative potential in new works which are integrative of the past. However, sources are not integrated in a raw manner in Ackroyd's writing. They appear processed in a critical reconfiguration that uses both notions of anteriority and derivation. In a study entitled Palimpsestes, Gérard Genette establishes a theory of writing with reference to other texts and sources. He seeks the presence of other literary works in new ones and refers to this layering of references as

⁴³ Fredric Jameson, Postmodernism, or, the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism (London and New York: Verso, 1991) pp. 16-19. He calls pastiche "blank parody" represented in a "random cannibalisation of all the styles fo the past ... and ... the increasing primacy of the 'neo'". See also Part II, chapter 4 of this thesis.

⁴⁴ In another instance, this aspect is tackled from a different angle. In his novel Chatterton, Ackroyd creates a voice for the dead poet. In its interplay between past and present, this text is very close to Hawksmoor. However, it is not a biographical study but a fiction and sells itself as such. As fiction, it finds an anchorage in a real past, and imagines a possible past from its traces. Ackroyd thus uses his approach to biography as a fictional strategy in his later texts. Instances of a problematising of fact/fiction boundaries thus permeate all his works.

"hypertextualité"⁴⁵ or as "une littérature livresque"⁴⁶ that is fuelled by echoes and resonance between different artefacts and different levels of time. Ackroyd's pseudo-eighteenth century style in Hawksmoor – voiced by Dyer – is not a direct borrowing, but a compound of influences or rather of voices from the time, drawn from books written at that time. Rather than a "travestissement burelesque"⁴⁷, Ackroyd mimes the voice of an era, attempting to recreate the presence of one of its speakers and witnesses. The present-day sections also involve a compound of deviations of other sources, recognisable voices from our century. This implies that Ackroyd's text calls for a "lecture palimpsestueuse"⁴⁸, where a layering and juxtaposition of multiple allusions and voices need to be identified and perceived. The text echoes the city in its formation. The fact that Ackroyd's novel is set in London and reveals a sensitivity to the layering of time within its extensive and dense fabric can be a lead into this equivalence as his style of writing uses palimpsestic techniques.

With this allusive density and texture, Ackroyd's novel echoes the structure of Hawksmoor's building techniques. Indeed, the architect's style relied largely upon allusions to other buildings. For instance,

Christ Church Spitalfields, has elements taken from the work of Leon Batista Alberti and from classical porticoes and the spires of Gothic churches. And at St. George-in-the-East, with its corner towers and the rising belfries, there are elements borrowed from Sebastiano Serlio, Giacomo da Vignola and an earlier design for St. Mary-le-Bow by Wren. St George, Bloomsbury, has for its main front another great portico, this one hexastyle and based on the Pantheon. The steeple is modelled, through a reconstruction of the design by Wren, on the Mausoleum of Halicarnassus, topped here by a statue of the new king, George I⁴⁹.

In her study of the architect entitled Hawksmoor, Kerry Downes also emphasises his blending of a variety of influences, sources and references into his new plans as well as

⁴⁵ Gérard Genette, Palimpsestes (Paris: Seuil, 1982) pp. 11 and 453.

⁴⁶ Genette, Palimpsestes, p. 45, [A bookish literature].

⁴⁷ Genette, Palimpsestes, p. 28, [A burlesque disguising].

⁴⁸ Genette, Palimpsestes, p. 452, [A palimpsestic reading].

⁴⁹ "Hawksmoor", International Dictionary of Architects, vol 1, 376.

the fact that many of his projects were on previously used sites. However, the Act for new churches was not one that sought to restore damaged or decaying buildings but to establish new forms on old sites. Their allusive density was drawn from a bookish knowledge of other styles as Hawksmoor is not known to have travelled. This in itself is a useful notion as it strengthens a sense of architectural hypertextuality and emphasises echoes between both the writing and building techniques under scrutiny here. Ackroyd's use of intertextuality and meta-narrative levels echoes the construction of the churches he uses to structure his portrayal of London's dark underside. They both are construed and readable in a palimpsestic manner. The notion of a palimpsest as a superimposition of stories on a shared surface takes on a new focus with Ackroyd's Hawksmoor, as it is not only the city which is perceived and understood in this manner, echoing Rossi's theory, but it is also rendered in a representational form which explores this notion of layering and stratified density in its own way. It does so with the allusive density of a style that encompasses many preceding voices or texts and ties them into its own fabric, juxtaposing echoes from, for instance, John Dryden and Alexander Pope with Iain Sinclair and T. S. Eliot, as Dyer's voice reveals. In this respect, Hawksmoor's allusive architectural language is an appealing and useful reference for a postmodernist delving into historical landmarks in a city, or constructed evidence of history.

Despite his references to real churches in a real city, Ackroyd's story of London is a version of the past. If Hawksmoor finds an anchorage in history, the novel is not a mirror and does not attempt its truthful portrayal, or maybe it cannot. It is a fiction, and by being close to history, it explores the potential of fiction to enter the past and transmit its presence in an allusive and ominous manner⁵⁰. Fiction imagines what might have happened. It is a means of using recorded information about historical events and

⁵⁰ In T. S. Eliot (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1984) Ackroyd comments that "biography is ... a convenient fiction since no one can probe, without the risk of farcical failure, those hidden perceptions or experiences which run alongside the observable life but may not necessarily touch it", p. 239, emphasising a flexibility in relation to a domain usually considered rigidly factual.

twisting areas of uncertainty out of these, where a seemingly large scope of manoeuvre is possible. The historical figure of Nicholas Hawksmoor lends himself to this situation as he appears as a shadow or partner of other more clearly known architects. A certain flexibility in relation to the contours of his identity is thus possible. In Hawksmoor, a net of truthfulness is woven strongly enough so that it can sustain the weight of untruth in its midst. This untruth is however not in itself wrong, but rather is introduced to shed a fresh light onto obscure areas of recorded history. In this case, history is obscure indeed, in a most literal manner as the sinister nature of Ackroyd's London reveals.

If Hawksmoor's churches are portrayed in the novel, they are presented in conjunction with a seventh imaginary church, Little Saint Hugh⁵¹. It is on Black Step Lane, one that is untraceable on maps of the city and corresponds to the location of Dyer's first involvement with occult meetings at the house of Mirabilis⁵² as well as being where the novel ends. The church is of Dyer's making and follows a precise intent, and is not part of the churches commissioned⁵³. Indeed,

And across these mean Dwellings of Black Step Lane, where as a Boy I dwell'd for a while, the Shaddowes of my last Church will fall: what the Mobb has torn down I will build again in Splendour. And thus will I compleet the Figure: Spittle-Fields, Wapping and Limehouse have made the Triangle; Bloomsbury and St Mary Woolnoth have next created the major Pentacle-starre; and, with Greenwich, all these will form the Sextuple abode to Baal-Berith of the Lord of the Covenant. Then, with the church of Little Saint Hugh, the Septilateral Figure will rise about Black Step Lane and, in this Pattern, every Straight line is enrich'd with a point at Infinity and every Plane with a line at Infinity. Let him that has Understanding count the Number: the seven Churches are built in conjunction with the seven Planets in the lower Orbs of Heaven, the seven Circles of the Heavens, the seven Starres in Ursa Minor and the seven Starres in the Pleiades. Little St Hugh was flung in the Pitte with the seven Marks upon his Hands,

⁵¹ Saint Hugh of Lincoln or Little Saint Hugh (1245-1255) was a christian child known to have been tortured and crucified in a ritual murder. This saint therefore epitomises the boys that die on the sites of Hawksmoor's other churches. Saint Hugh became a popular literary subject in the Middle Ages after miracles were associated with the presence of his exhumed body. His existence is thus literary and is also marked by a shrine in Lincoln. His memory is grounded textually and architecturally. Saint Hugh's story is mentioned in Hawksmoor, p. 33, as he appears in a book about "Some English Martyrs" that Thomas, the first boy to die in the present-day chapters reads before reenacting his sacrifice.

⁵² Ackroyd, Hawksmoor, pp. 19, 22, 49, 51, 89, 103, 131, 186, 205 and 216.

⁵³ Ackroyd, Hawksmoor, p. 90: "just as it was within my Commission to raise more Churches, so it was my fixt Intention to build the sovereign Temple on Black Step Lane".

Feet, Sides and Breast which thus exhibit the seven Demons - Beydelus, Metucgayn, Adulec, Demeymes, Gadix, Uquizuz and Sol. I have built an everlasting Order, which I may run through laughing: no one can catch me now⁵⁴.

Dyer's architectural pattern of buildings is thus a clue to his allegiance to dark forces and his intent to draw these into the city's fabric. However, the key to this pattern resides in the number seven and it is this one that is fictional.

These created spaces of church and street reflect their air of verisimilitude on the real ones and also emphasise the dark streak that seemingly underlies the other churches. Dyer's "last Church"⁵⁵ contains a densification of the mysteries, of hidden narratives. These imagined elements, incorporated into a fabric of real ones, present a crossing of boundaries between real and imaginary dimensions and a blurring of any clarity in their definition. Fiction allows what underlies reality to be made apparent, gives shape to suggestions about how things might be. In relation to Hawksmoor, this notion of an underlayer to what is seen and known about a given place is essential as the novel centers around buried patterns of meaning within the city. A form of latency is thus made manifest in a way that brings to mind Abish's concern with the representation of suppressed history in present strategies of dissimulation. Hawksmoor gives a voice to the past by the means of distortions of recognisably historical allusions and sources as Ackroyd uses these in his production of new material such as the invented church and Dyer's voice.

One of Ackroyd's main sources is T. S. Eliot's The Waste Land. The section that comes to mind in relation to Hawksmoor is from the closing of "The Burial of the Dead":

Unreal City,
Under the brown fog of a winter dawn,

⁵⁴ Ackroyd, Hawksmoor, p. 186. The pattern that can be drawn between these points appears on page 166 as a clue given to Hawksmoor. He cannot read it but recognises that it originates from a tramp who identifies himself as "THE UNIVERSAL ARCHITECT". Another portentous figure is a lunatic that Wren and Dyer meet at Bedlam, who warns them that "one Hawksmoor will this day terribly shake you!", p. 100.

⁵⁵ Ackroyd, Hawksmoor, p. 205.

A crowd flowed over London Bridge, so many,
 I had not thought that death had undone so many.
 Sighs, short and infrequent, were exhaled,
 And each man fixed his eyes before his feet.
 Flowed up the hill and down King William Street,
 To where Saint Mary Woolnoth kept the hours
 With a dead sound on the final stroke of nine.
 There I saw one I knew, and stopped him crying: 'Stetson!'
 'You who were with me in the ships at Mylae!
 'The corpse you planted last year in your garden,
 'Has it begun to sprout? Will it bloom this year?'⁵⁶

Eliot's Waste Land contains the corpse and the death-bound church that will bloom in Hawksmoor. The planted corpse recalls areas in London such as Bunhill Fields, other plague pits and the bones unearthed from around Hawksmoor's churches. These appear in Hawksmoor when the detective and his assistant come across remains of "the Corse withinne the Foundations"⁵⁷ when witnessing an archaeological dig at – interesting coincidence! – St Mary Woolnoth among all the churches. The archaeologist tells them that "there's always been a church here. Always. And there's a lot to find" and that among recent finds there is "a skeleton"⁵⁸. If the plague years could be a starting point for the immersion of the city in darkness and decay, aspects that persist through time and recur in similar shapes, there is also an unexplained and more disturbing sense of darkness in the city. Dyer buries a mysterious dimension in his churches and buries or indeed "plants" corpses there. The skeleton is a perplexing clue that detective Hawksmoor cannot read, leaving Eliot's question unanswered.

By drawing on The Waste Land as a source, Ackroyd's text suggests that a new literary representation of London bows to earlier ones. It also suggests that London – the real city in this case – is known, perceived, or understood through its literary

⁵⁶ T.S. Eliot, The Waste Land (Selected Poems, London: Faber & Faber, 1988) 51-74, l. 60-72.

⁵⁷ Ackroyd, Hawksmoor, p. 105.

⁵⁸ Ackroyd, Hawksmoor, p. 161

representations⁵⁹. If Eliot's poem is about London as much as it is about anything else, London can be read for its Eliotesque undertones⁶⁰. The "Unreal City's" identity as a "heap of broken images" is textual as well as architectural. However, it is not only one or the other and as a parallel to these two means of access lie others that depend on the system of interpretation chosen. By claiming that London relies on literary representations to ensure its persistence or existence, again the boundary between fact and fiction is disturbed or re-explored. Novels such as Hawksmoor investigate the weak points in this seam and establish an osmotic blend between fact and fiction, one that underlines a mutual nourishing. This aspect is made most obvious by planting the strongest Eliotesque overtones and allusions in one of Dyer's chapters, thus blending Eliot into the pseudo-eighteenth century language in a twist of chronological references. The different layers of time nourish each other⁶¹.

As a novel about London, Hawksmoor establishes a resonance between the city and the allusive density of Ackroyd's style. If the city is textual, the text will be urbanistic. Sinclair establishes in Lud Heat that the past persists in a sap-like manner. This "sap connection"⁶² differs from "the plodding cultural transfer theory" and is located within architectural form. Sinclair and then Ackroyd's narratives portray the historical or real churches of Hawksmoor. Their names and locations are faithful to them, with the exception of Little Saint Hugh in Hawksmoor. If this fictional church establishes the

⁵⁹ Christopher Prendergast writes that "if the city produces writing, there is also an important sense in which writing produces the city. The city may live by remembering, but at what point do its memories and records start to become stories and fictions, generating the images through which we construct the city to ourselves?", in Paris in the Nineteenth Century (Cambridge, Mass. and Oxford: Blackwell, 1992) p. 28.

⁶⁰ Ackroyd's first novel The Great Fire of London (London: Penguin, 1982) evokes a persistence of Dickensian patterns and characters in contemporary London and draws on Little Dorrit. His strategies of reenactment are however facile and the novel appears as a rather bland exercise. If Hawksmoor reuses a similar approach to the past, to London's bookish identity, it does so with the complexity and richness that reside in the occult trends he detects in the city and the irresolution their representation involve.

⁶¹ Ackroyd, Hawksmoor, p. 16, with its reference to The Hollow Men and Eliotesque verse.

⁶² Iain Sinclair, Lud Heat, p. 20.

missing link in making the mystery of the others readable, its presence reveals a view of history that relies on fiction to make the past readable, or a past that seems difficult to grasp through other methods. Hawksmoor's dark side is difficult to trace with precision and yet resides as a possible version of the history of the churches. The city is thus a locus for the persistence of a dark sap that runs through layers of time and this suggested reading of the city relies on uncertain areas – or indeed shadows – to take form.

Of interest in relation to an overt use of the past to reveal aspects of the present is the notion that Hawksmoor's churches were designed and built in a time marked by a form of *querelle des Anciens et des Modernes*. After the Great Fire, an opportunity to build afresh arose⁶³ and encountered the adverse view of preservation and reconstruction. In Hawksmoor, a tension between two views is expressed through Dyer's quarrels with his colleagues, Vanbrugh and most of all, his teacher Wren. Each side represents an incompatibility between the occult and the Enlightenment, and represent a historical moment when the first survived in a subterranean manner against the dominant tide of the age. This dichotomy is most apparent in their conversations during a trip to Stonehenge, where Wren and Dyer's views clash. Wren supports a perspective of clarity and reason⁶⁴ as well as the notion that "This is our Time ... and we must lay its Foundations with our own Hands"⁶⁵. "He liked to destroy Antient things"⁶⁶ and, like "Vanbrugghe" later on in the novel, is resistant to the idea of inheritance and darkness represented by Dyer. When "Vanbrugghe" establishes that "the World was never more

⁶³ London was thus exposed to a revision of its form after a great catastrophe. Other cities that have experienced similar situations are Lisbon, Chicago, and Dresden, to give three key examples, from three different centuries. A devastated city offers itself as a space to be reworked, which becomes either an opportunity to build in new ways or the locus of a replication of the lost forms.

⁶⁴ He claims allegiance to "this Enlightened Age" and wishes to "shake off the Shaddowes", p. 145.

⁶⁵ Ackroyd, Hawksmoor, p. 55.

⁶⁶ Ackroyd, Hawksmoor, p. 55.

active or youthful than it is now, and all this Imitation of the past is but the Death's Head of Writing as it is of Architecture"⁶⁷ and that "There is nothing so pedantick as many Quotations, and your reverence for the Ancients is an excuse for meer Plagiarism"⁶⁸, Dyer retorts with "We live off the Past: it is in our Words and our Syllables"⁶⁹. Within this debate lies a counter-voice to Ackroyd's own writing, one that indeed lives off the past. Dyer however gives a voice to the view that "the best Authors, like the greatest Buildings, are the most ancient: this is but a cold Age of the World, filled with a general Imperfection"⁷⁰ to which he can "restore Terrour, Reverence and Desire like wild Lightning"⁷¹ by using references to the past and acknowledging its strength. The past fertilises the present and ensures London's identity as "the Capitol of Darknesse"⁷². Wren seeks to build out the traces of death within the city whereas Dyer wishes to ensure their persistence. His buildings need to be rooted in the past, in its sinister side, in its shadows.

This quarrel, portrayed in Hawksmoor through the tensions and discussions between Wren and Dyer, finds a contemporary equivalent or echo in Postmodern representational concerns. Dyer voices the sap-like persistence of the past. His voice however encompasses darkness and a desire to ensure its permanence in stone, to inscribe it in the city. Stone thus functions as a keeper of memory. What is lost between the eighteenth and twentieth centuries is the fact that the newer city is now oblivious to the occult energy and forces that underlie its surface and maintain a ghostlike and haunting - albeit hardly read - presence in urban fabric in the form of Hawksmoor's churches. The nature of the occult itself underpins this tension between memory and loss. Indeed, if it represents supernatural occurrences of a magical kind which challenge

⁶⁷ Ackroyd, Hawksmoor, p. 178.

⁶⁸ Ackroyd, Hawksmoor, p. 179.

⁶⁹ Ackroyd, Hawksmoor, p. 178.

⁷⁰ Ackroyd, Hawksmoor, p. 177.

⁷¹ Ackroyd, Hawksmoor, p. 176.

⁷² Ackroyd, Hawksmoor, p. 47.

a rational dimension of knowledge, it also involves keeping secret its inherent motivations. To occult is to hide from view, which is paradoxical here when Dyer seeks to give the mysteries of London a stone presence. If it is in secrecy that the power of the occult lives on, concealment is required and the churches thus contain its subterranean presence in signs and elements that remain obscure. They however ensure the persistence of memory and lead to the present-day mysteries in the city, these being represented in the form of a murder-mystery and detective inquest, a genre more familiar to us today than occult manifestations. However, one form contains the other in an unclear pattern of echoes.

Detective Hawksmoor cannot solve his murder mystery even though he approaches some form of meaning in an asymptotical manner. Herman writes that "Hawksmoor must realise in the course of his investigation that his case transcends the laws of cause and effect"⁷³. He is sucked into its dark undercurrent and reaches his own destruction in the process. He fails to produce understanding and order. The situation under scrutiny defies being regulated and the only realisation achieved is an intuitive sense of precedence or what Sinclair calls "the realisation of a doppel-gänger principle"⁷⁴ when one is "a host to motivations that cannot be understood". Hawksmoor does not know he is retracing Dyer's steps although a sense of precedence seeps through. Re-enactment is based on a loss of contact or understanding in relation to the situation that is being repeated. Hawksmoor comes close to the darkness and shadows that mine his case. For instance,

'You've got things out of perspective, Nick. You laid the foundations, and you did a good job, but now I need someone to build the case up stone by stone.'
'But the bodies are buried in the foundations,' Hawksmoor replied, 'generally speaking, that is.' ⁷⁵

⁷³ Herman, "The Relevance of History", p. 117.

⁷⁴ Sinclair, *Lud Heat*, p. 86.

⁷⁵ Ackroyd, *Hawksmoor*, p. 201.

The echoes with Dyer are obvious when both stories are juxtaposed. Their superimpositions appear in this way but remain almost closed to each story taken separately.

The detective story of a sinister *série noire* type is a model that is used as a trace of the temptation to establish meaning, and is subverted by an overall lack of meaning⁷⁶. At the closing of the novel, the past persists and the city remains the locus of a dark and unresolved undercurrent. The latter persists because it remains unresolved and a single meaning is not reached. Similarly, Hawksmoor's churches offer an insight into a complex play with meaning. Robert Venturi points out that their meaning is a shifting one. Christ Church Spitalfields for instance reveals the presence of "multiple focus"⁷⁷. As a visitor moves around the building and perceives it in conjunction with its surroundings, the architectural vocabulary it spells out alters in significance. For Thomas, the first boy to die there, Christ Church "changed its shape as he came closer to it"⁷⁸. There is not one set focus, or indeed there is no one straight-forward interpretation. Hawksmoor's buildings are enigmas in themselves. As Venturi writes, "at one moment one meaning can be perceived as dominant; at another moment a different meaning seems paramount"⁷⁹ and this aspect is characteristic of all the churches. Meaning in itself is tempting and its quest prods a reader of a text or a building onwards. And yet what defines the quest itself is the inherent evasiveness of meaning, one that adds density to the chase without any promise of completion⁸⁰.

⁷⁶ I will discuss Postmodern references to the Detective genre at more length in Part II, chapter 4 as most of my sources explore the genre and recall other examples of references to it, for instance in the fiction of Alain Robbe-Grillet, Jorge Luis Borges as well as Paul Auster. They focus on urban inquests.

⁷⁷ Venturi, *Complexity and Contradiction* ..., p. 32.

⁷⁸ Ackroyd, *Hawksmoor*, p. 28.

⁷⁹ Venturi, *Complexity and Contradiction*..., p. 32.

⁸⁰ Luc Herman contrasts *Hawksmoor* to Umberto Eco's historicist detective story *Il nome della Rosa* as in the latter the inquest reaches a solution. See "The Relevance of History", p. 117.

In his study In the Reading Gaol, Valentine Cunningham outlines this question. He writes that

traditionally fiction has been supposed to take on these forces of darkness and to enact ritual affirmations of meaning, presence, order, fulfilled desire, to affirm the success of language and story in the creation of sense and of moral and civic order, and to do this particularly in the repeated recreation of successful detective stories. Detective-type stories - they go all the way back in the Western traditions of narrative - are those in which some keen moral agent, reliable narrator, substantive hero or heroine, will resolve problems, solve crimes, apportion final praise and blame, set moral chaos to rights, restore damaged selves and lives to order - in other words, behave like God at the apocalyptic Last Day of the Christian end of the world. Twentieth-century fiction has become increasingly sceptical as to these finalising, closing, detective possibilities. The implication for most accounts of modernist or postmodernist fiction is that the turn to openness, the advent of modern and postmodern scepticism, have successfully and finally routed earlier naïve faith in the possibility of story any longer achieving all those old desires convincingly for us⁸¹.

In Hawksmoor there is no finalising of the detective story and the object of the inquest itself remains elusive. The murderers leave no trace⁸² and yet the idea that these deaths are supernatural re-enactments of occult sacrifices on the same sites is somewhat insufficient. The novel points towards irresolution and yet its detective story overtones produce the temptation to find resolution. Dyer tells 'Vanbrugghe' that "I wish my Buildings to be filled with Secresy, and such Hieroglyphs as conceal from the Vulgar the Mysteries of Religion"⁸³. These mysteries remain out of Hawksmoor's reach and yet traces of them direct him towards Dyer's pattern. Indeed, it is the location of the murders

⁸¹ Valentine Cunningham, In the Reading Gaol (Oxford & Cambridge, Mass.: Blackwell, 1994) pp. 13-14.

⁸² Ackroyd, Hawksmoor, p. 124, where the result of a forensic report reveals that " 'The only blood and tissue groups were from the victim. Nothing at all off the other one, the assailant.' "

'And did the other one leave no prints or marks?'

'As I said, nothing at all.'

'Doesn't that strike you as odd?'

'It's unusual, sir.' "

⁸³ Ackroyd, Hawksmoor, p.180.

at the churches that makes his sense that "We could make a connection there" as "Hawksmoor saw a pattern forming, but its vagueness angered him"⁸⁴.

Hawksmoor is in itself a riddle as it portrays a complex interconnection between fact and fiction, history and narrative representation. It is an imaginary rendering of two moments in London and as a densely documented text that pins down a story in its historical frames or sets itself out to work within these frames. A problematic notion emerges when the fictionalised object of representation is a tangible network of architectural form in a city. It emphasises the palimpsestic aspect of a city, one that represents London in a manner that echoes Rossi's study of urban space as a locus of historical continuum, one that functions as long as past layers are not erased or forgotten. The resurgence of the past in the form of murders in Hawksmoor reveals a tension between underlying presence and forgetfulness, the latter involving loss of meaning. As in How German Is It, the past reappears as "a vast Mound of Death and Nastiness"⁸⁵ and uses the city as its stage.

Neither text offers a solution to the question of how to work out the presence of the past. Two poles oppose each other. Indeed, either the past is made understandable or it is left to live on in undercurrents and in an unresolved manner, either repressed or forgotten. If the first pole appears bland, the second is endowed with an ominous or destructive slant. A persistent tension between them is creative. I think that what is central is the lack of solutions. Patrick Modiano's novels and the use of urban space and references within them emphasise this friction between a temptation to seek definition and its evasiveness. I will outline aspects of his writing in the following section. To conclude here, Ackroyd's urban space is one where persistence and recurrence of the past are located. This past however appears inherently textual, constructed from allusive density, which raises a basic question: is history perceived as a literary or

⁸⁴ Ackroyd, Hawksmoor, p. 166

⁸⁵ Ackroyd, Hawksmoor, p. 23.

linguistic construct with a tenuous tie to a referent? Indeed, does Hawksmoor offer an insight into a city that is perceived for its palimpsestic density, or is this city a pretext for hypertextual acrobatics disconnected from the real London? Ackroyd's narrators have palimpsestic voices. Traces of past ones are reconfigured in theirs. I believe that Ackroyd's precision in relating the city's pattern and the haunting presence of Hawksmoor's edifices are a frame onto which this linguistic palimpsest is woven. Moorings into reality or a historical object underlie Ackroyd's textual play and these are made possible by the city. The latter however is not fixed and steady as change resides in the nature of urban growth. It is in this respect that the novel's representation of the past remains bewildering, slippery. Ackroyd's London is not Eliot's although it is inclusive of it. Ackroyd's London is a space that is portrayed with representational layers which evoke persistence, inclusion and continuity. His voices are not disembodied but anchored into characters that reveal psychological and physical depth as well as establishing echoes and vivid – albeit dark – resonances between different voices. Eliot's dislocated urban scene is exhausted as if the mysterious energy lines were dried out. The past is an undercurrent to present urban layers. As it is intuitively perceived, it can only be rendered in a manner that echoes this instability, and the detective inquest cannot be tied up in a precise solution. In Hawksmoor, the past persists because of its irresolution and it is this irresolution that allows it to be made present in fiction, as an imagined possibility.

3: PATRICK MODIANO'S PARISIAN SLICES OF TIME

Di quest'onda che rifluisce dai ricordi la città s'imbeve come una spugna e si dilata. Una descrizione di Zaira quale è oggi dovrebbe contenere tutto il passato di Zaira. Ma la città non dice il suo passato, lo contiene come le linee d'una mano, scritto negli spigoli delle vie, nelle griglie delle finestre, negli scorrimano delle scale, nelle antenne dei parafulmini, nelle aste delle bandiere, ogni segmento rigato a sua volta di graffi, seghettature, intagli, svirgole¹.

La rue conduit celui qui flâne vers un temps révolu. Pour lui, chaque rue est en pente, et mène, sinon vers les Mères, du moins dans un passé qui peut être d'autant plus envoûtant qu'il n'est pas son propre passé, son passé privé. Pourtant, ce passé demeure toujours le temps d'une enfance. Mais pourquoi celui de la vie qu'il a vécue? Ses pas éveillent un écho étonnant dans l'asphalte sur lequel il marche. La lumière du gaz qui tombe sur le carrelage éclaire d'une lumière équivoque ce double sol².

Time and recalling past time are central to the concerns expressed through Modiano's characters. The past is layered into distinct strata, but remains nevertheless subject to a chronological direction. It is also pursued through its inscription in objects and on space, most of all urban space. The city of Paris is pivotal in relation to an exploration of stratified personal memories and identity in Rue des Boutiques Obscures and Quartier perdu as well as in his other novels such as the later Fleurs de ruine. The narrator in these texts, mostly a male character using the first person as a voice, seeks to find more definition to his memories and through them is often following a specific thread or quest, trying to understand a kernel of the past where meaning is buried. A

¹ Italo Calvino, Le Città invisibili (Torino: Einaudi, 1972) pp. 18-19, [Like a sponge, the city is impregnated by the ebb of the tide of memories and swells. A description of Zaira as it is now should contain all the past of Zaira. But the city does not tell its past, it possesses it like lines on an hand, written in street corners, in the gratings of windows, in stair rails, in lightning conductors, flag poles, in every segment inscribed in turn by clawing, serration, carvings, commas].

² Walter Benjamin, [Le Flâneur], Paris, capitale du XIXème siècle (Paris: Editions du Cerf, 1989, 434-472) p. 434, [The street leads the *flâneur* towards a bygone time. For him, each street is sloped and if it does not only lead to Mothers, it also leads towards a past that can be all the more spellbound if it is not one's own past, one's private past. However, that past always remains the time of childhood. But why the one of his own life? His footfalls stir a surprising echo on the pavement. The gas light which falls on the tiling sheds an equivocal light on this double ground].

dominant aspect however is a sense of latent continuum between past and present and a need to seek connections between both as a means of defining one's identity within the present. Modiano's novels point towards a palimpsestic notion of time, one that is embedded in urban space, as Paris is the container of traces which participate in retrieving the past and moving backwards through its layers. The city is a repository of keys and clues to a quest for a personal and intimate past. As in Calvino's *Zaira*, they are written in the details of urban form. The city is a space for wandering, where the specific topography of routes is a mnemonic puzzle.

The narrator figures in Modiano's novels represent a focal consciousness. Through the filter of their experience and understanding, they describe a past time and contrast it to a present, stressing differences and seeking shared threads. In Quartier Perdu³, this layering of time into various moments which are recalled unchronologically is central to the overall structure of the novel. The latter opens on a juxtaposition of two extremes on a personal and even intimate time-scale. "Monsieur", the still unnamed main character arrives in Paris after an absence of twenty years. The time of his departure and its memory have been set aside by a new life in London as Ambrose Guise, the successful author of a series of popular detective novels entitled "Jarvis". On arrival in Paris, Guise recalls being given his first passport at age 14, a French one⁴. A clash and contrast between two selves is amplified by the fact that Paris is perceived as unfamiliar. In July, it is empty and still, the only noticeable presences being Japanese, American and German tourists hearded through the city. This repossession or invasion triggers loaded associations, and contains in a small detail an allusion to a past conflict that left traces in the city and shaped the post-war years for those who were in Paris in the early 1940s. Through details and signs, the city is read

³ Patrick Modiano, Quartier perdu (1984. Paris, Gallimard, 1993).

⁴ Modiano, Quartier perdu, p. 9.

by Guise in relation to its past and more specifically, the 1960s, which in turn contain echoes of the War as his friends at the time were living in Occupied Paris.

At first and on arrival, Guise wanders through the city. He is immersed in "le sentiment d'irréalité que j'éprouvais au milieu de cette ville fantôme"⁵ and asks "Quel témoin se souvenait encore de ma vie antérieure, du jeune homme qui errait à travers les rues de Paris et s'y confondait? Qui aurait pu le reconnaître dans cet écrivain anglais en veste de toile beige: Ambrose Guise...?"⁶. This need to find a witness of his past self becomes increasingly pressing. Throughout the novel, the protagonist will explore Paris and identify the city as a space where traces of his past are inscribed, despite the fact that "[la ville] se fermait à mon approche"⁷, rendering its fabric difficult to re-read. A tension is established between his construed self and the attraction of his past, seemingly encountered by chance as his trip to Paris is motivated by a business appointment with Mr Tatsuké to sign a contract selling rights on the Jarvis series in Japan⁸. Guise's resolve at first is to perceive the city "comme n'importe quelle autre ville étrangère"⁹, and thus maintain a distance between himself and his memories.

The novel is structured as a progression towards the narrator's exploration of his past, of the presence of another self within the safe identity of Guise. This progress is however broken by excursions into this past, which is recreated in flashbacks as the protagonist encounters traces of its occurrence and writes them out or reenacts them. Time is therefore layered. Distinct moments or phases are recalled, although not chronologically. The order of recurrence and of the unveiling of information about Guise and the people who made up his circle of friends and contacts is defined by associations,

⁵ Modiano, *Quartier perdu*, p. 11, [The sensation of unreality I felt in the midst of this ghost city].

⁶ Modiano, *Quartier perdu*, p. 13, [What witness still remembered my former life as a young man wandering through the streets of Paris and blending into them? Who could have recognised him in this English writer wearing a beige jacket: Ambrose Guise ...?].

⁷ Modiano, *Quartier perdu*, p. 12, [The city was closing down under my contact].

⁸ Modiano, *Quartier perdu*, p. 15.

⁹ Modiano, *Quartier perdu*, p. 15, [Like any other foreign city].

mostly triggered by traces encountered by following certain routes within the city. Guise's English identity is broken into by the proximity of traces of his past self. Paris offers clues, signs and evidence of his earlier self and his presence there reveals his memories. Gradually he loses hold of Ambrose Guise, as his life as Jean Dekker is made present as a revived ghost. Indeed, "et si le fantôme, c'était moi?"¹⁰.

It is gradually made apparent that his life as Dekker had been suppressed to allow Guise to be construed. His adopted British identity has superseded his French origins¹¹. He acknowledges that his presence in Paris means that "j'étais revenu au point de départ"¹². An emotional response is set in motion, one that will reel him back into his past as he experiences "une sorte de vacillement, comme de rerouver des traces de moi-même après une longue amnésie"¹³. Guise is subjected to a flood-like return of Dekker, of his childhood accent from Boulogne-Billancourt and of his sense of belonging in Paris. His suppressions dissolve and reveal to him that behind the fact that "La seule raison de ma présence ici était le rendez-vous que m'avait fixé un Japonais"¹⁴ lies a deeper level. Indeed, he tells Tatsuké that "Il fallait bien que je trouve un prétexte pour revenir à Paris"¹⁵ and accepts the idea that this trip is a form of pilgrimage¹⁶, into the past, through the city.

The character of Guise/Dekker in Quartier perdu returns to the ghostlike presence of this past and attempts to render its memory more dense. He will gradually understand the motivation for his departure and his adoption of another identity in the

¹⁰ Modiano, Quartier perdu, p. 11, [What if I was that ghost?].

¹¹ Modiano, Quartier perdu, pp. 9, 11. The novel opens on his description of his British passport and then mentions that "la rive gauche", [The left bank] is where he spent his childhood.

¹² Modiano, Quartier perdu, p. 13, [I had returned to my starting point].

¹³ Modiano, Quartier perdu, p. 14, [A form of shakiness, like re-finding traces of myself after a long amnesia].

¹⁴ Modiano, Quartier perdu, p. 15, [The only reason for my presence here was an appointment set by a Japanese].

¹⁵ Modiano, Quartier perdu, p. 21, [I needed to find a pretext to return to Paris].

¹⁶ This reference or comparison is used repeatedly throughout the novel. See pp. 22, 25, 125.

comfort of the smooth surfaces of his success as a writer and his tame and controlled family life. Indeed, "depuis vingt ans, depuis que j'avais quitté Paris sans penser y revenir jamais, tout était devenu si cohérent, si solide, si lumineux dans ma vie...Plus aucune zone d'ombre, plus de sables mouvants..."¹⁷. One crack appears however, and connects these two layers of identity and time. Guise is indeed a writer of detective fiction, and it is under the *guise* of his profession that he pursues clues that lead him into the past¹⁸. His approach to information is shaped by his writing. His quest is imbued with allusions to the detective genre, a pursuit of missing persons and information about lost memories. Guise seeks to "Reprendre pied dans le Paris d'autrefois. Visiter les ruines et tenter d'y découvrir une trace de soi"¹⁹. The amateur detective is searching for his self and relying on his profession as a writer as a model, a pattern. Writing also mediates his experiences as Guise starts to write down his finds, in the form of a letter to Rocroy, his lost friend and an anchor into that past life²⁰. Guise's ghosts are a group of people with slippery identities who are involved in film making and horse racing. Their focus is Carmen and Roger Blin, as well as Georges Maillot, who directed a film called *Rendez-vous de juillet*. Another film with the same title is being made when Guise visits the city, reenacting that situation himself²¹, with Tatsuké and at the end of the novel with the "jeune fille brune" who shot Fouquet the night Dekker left Paris for London.

¹⁷ Modiano, *Quartier perdu*, p. 27.

¹⁸ Guise's name contains the idea of *disguise*. If Dekker refers to the German *decken*, to cover, both layers of his identity are ontologically opaque. I thank Colin Davis for pointing out these undertones.

¹⁹ Modiano, *Quartier perdu*, p. 29, [Find a mooring in the Paris of the past. Visit the ruins and attempt to discover a traces of oneself in them].

²⁰ Modiano, *Quartier perdu*, p. 128: "Mon cher Rocroy, ce livre est comme une lettre que je vous adresserais", [My dear Rocroy, this book is like a letter I would address to you]. Here, the referent of "livre" is ambiguous, as Modiano's novels always have a dedication and his own writing is reflected in Guise's introspective book within a book.

²¹ Modiano, *Quartier perdu*, pp. 69, 73.

Detection takes place within the confines of the city. In Paris, capitale du XIXème siècle, Walter Benjamin establishes that the *flâneur* prefigures the character of the detective, whose indolence is a façade hiding attentive observation²². The 19th century *flâneur* is caught in a city where pace and mobility have been redefined by Haussmann's *Grandes Percées*, by the new configuration of speed and space. Baudelaire's "Paris change..." conveys the depth of these urban alterations, in which an individual consciousness can measure the lastingness of "ma mélancolie", a persistence of the self²³. The Second Empire in Paris inscribed a rift between past and present of urban form. In Modiano's Paris, the city only changes sometimes. Its overall pattern remains and the detective-*flâneur* paces its streets trying to capture traces of a changing self and be recognised rather than dissolve into the crowd²⁴. This pacing is however not nonchalant in a Baudelairian manner, nor detached and touristic. Modiano's narrator is looking for something. His itineraries are motivated by his quest for foundations where his memories could be rooted, an inquest into his private past.

In the ghostlike city of Quartier perdu, the notion of "trace" becomes central. Paris is compared to a dead city, a condition amplified by the presence of foreign tourists and stuffy July heat, a city which appears hollow compared to the bustle and crowds which define Benjamin's city and the one described in Georg Simmel's The Metropolis and Mental Life²⁵. The city has become a receptive space, a space of projections where Guise feels that he is "tout seul au milieu d'un spectacle de son et lumière que l'on aurait donné

²² Walter Benjamin (Transl. Jean Lacoste, Paris: Editions du Cerf, 1989) p. 459.

²³ Charles Baudelaire, "Le Cygne", *Tableaux Parisiens: Les Fleurs du mal* LXXXIX, *Oeuvres Complètes* (Paris: Gallimard, 1961) pp. 81-83.

²⁴ See Walter Benjamin, Charles Baudelaire, a Lyric Poet in the Era of High Capitalism (Trans. Harry Zohn. London: Verso, 1985) p. 43: "The original social content of the detective story was the obliteration of the individual's traces in the big-city crowd", in relation to Edgar Allan Poe's fiction.

²⁵ Edited by Richard Sennett in Classic Essays on the Culture of Cities (Engelwood Cliffs: Prentice Hall, 1969) pp. 47-60.

dans une ville morte"²⁶ and later on notices all the "appartements abandonnés"²⁷.

Touring the city by car with Hayward, a friend from the past who runs a driver service and has been employed by Guise in an expectation of a recognition that remains unsatisfied, his now unwanted incognito has not been broken. During the tour, he notices that "tout: le Grand Palais, les hauteurs de Passy, les quais de la Seine appartenaient à une ville morte. Du moins morte pour moi"²⁸. Traces lead to possible ways of finding access to the past. They are all that is left, with the memory of how alive the city was to Dekker when he first arrived as a young man²⁹, when "la vie commençait pour moi"³⁰, in the 1960s. Twenty years later, the city has acquired a new meaning and the cause that underlies this shift is to be sought in Paris itself, in the encounter between the city and the suppressed memories of an individual.

A central thread in Modiano's representation of Paris is a tension between persistence and change which exists in the city and echoes the tension between remembrance and erasure of the past which takes place within the mind of the narrator. In architectural terms, this tension exists between modifications of the use of a site and the persistence of urban form. For instance, Huet's Place de Stalingrad explores these deep structures and gives form to urban memory. Aldo Rossi stresses the permanence of form in his urban theory when he establishes that "la memoria ... diventa il filo conduttore dell'intera e complessa struttura [della città]"³¹. His theory outlines the vital part that lasting under-structures ensure in urban space when its direction of

²⁶ Modiano, *Quartier perdu*, p. 46, [Alone in the middle of a sound and light show half in a dead city].

²⁷ Modiano, *Quartier perdu*, p. 124, [Abandoned flats].

²⁸ Modiano, *Quartier perdu*, p. 158, [Everything: the Grand Palais, the heights of Passy, the embankment of the Seine, belonged to a dead city, dead to me at least].

²⁹ "Paris, sous ce soleil de printemps, me semblait une ville neuve où je pénétrais pour la première fois", *Quartier perdu*, p. 105, [Paris, under this Spring sun, seemed to me like a new city I was entering for the first time].

³⁰ Modiano, *Quartier perdu*, p. 104, [Life was starting off for me].

³¹ Aldo Rossi, *L'Architettura della città* (1966, Milan: Culp, 1987) p. 192, [Memory becomes a thread in through the whole complex urban structure].

growth relies on urban "fatti più antichi" with "vitalità continua"³² rather than planning when it is detached from any historical ties. An example he uses is the implantation of housing on the site of an amphitheatre in the Santa Croce area in Florence. The buildings fit into pre-existing patterns by using the memory of a removed urban event as a formal matrix³³. However present this root is, it is nevertheless manifest in its changeability and possible erasure which undermines any assurance of permanence. The persistence of form thus at times offers no more than a latent reassurance. Guise/ Dekker seeks, in the city of Paris, a continuum between his two selves, a persistence of essence under the layers, echoing Rossi and Huet's understanding of urban form. He wonders "Et si le passé et le présent se mêlaient? Pourquoi n'y aurait-il pas, à travers les péripéties en apparence les plus diverses d'une vie, une unité secrète, un parfum dominant?"³⁴.

Keys to a lost or distant past are present in details, in buildings where events took place and in the lists, directories and other obsolete scraps present in most of Modiano's novels as either reliable traces of the past or outdated and misleading leads. These lists include telephone directories and it is through one of them that Guise refinds a contact with his past³⁵. He locates the address and number of his friend Rocroy whom he knows is dead. Rocroy's apartment is a reference point as his call is answered by Ghita Wattier, Rocroy's companion. Unlike Guise, she is living in the midst of traces of a past that is suspended and therefore leads him back in time. Through a folder that contains news clippings and police records, he refinds his memories of the "bande de

³² Rossi, L'Architettura della città, p. 50, [Older urban events with sustained vitality].

³³ See plan, in L'Architettura della città, p. 117. The Piazza Navona in Rome is another example of this persistence of urban form as the square's present shape adopts the one of the precedent use of the space as a hippodrome.

³⁴ Modiano, Quartier perdu, p. 87, [What if past and present were blended? Why could there not be, through the seemingly most diverse events of a life, a secret unity, an overriding fragrance?].

³⁵ Modiano, Quartier perdu, pp. 34, 85, 182.

Blin" and of the people who were part of it. The folder was left "pour Jean Dekker"³⁶ by Rocroy, the only one to have seen through his British disguise and to ensure a connection between his layered identity.

He moves into Rocroy's apartment. There, traces are plentiful and tangible albeit combined with a sense of void, of desolation and of sadness³⁷ that amplify a tone of nostalgia. The past that is missed both resists retrieval and calls for remembrance. Rocroy is dead³⁸, but his files remain. Throughout the novel, advice to not remember is repeated, coming both from Guise himself as well as from Ghita Wattier. And yet the element that dominates is Guise's need to re-find Dekker and his place in the city. Indeed, "Ma vie ne s'inscrivait plus dans ses rues, sur ses façades. Les souvenirs qui surgissaient au hasard d'un carrefour ou d'un numéro de téléphone appartenaient à la vie d'un autre. Et d'ailleurs les lieux étaient-ils encore les mêmes?"³⁹. He notes later that "dans cette ville indifférente ... il ne reste plus rien de nous"⁴⁰, and "la plupart des témoins ont disparu"⁴¹, except the city, which remains present to convey a haunting evocative power, in an environment where memory can only be reconstructed through tenuous traces. However, Modiano's topography can be misleading in relation to the real city. Names of places appear in their exact locations but are also juxtaposed to imagined or displaced ones. These fictions, however, enhance the evocative power of the city by being compounds of names and types which create an atmosphere that is real, an essence of Paris. Thus, the *Café des Sports* is a typical name that could be anywhere. On the

³⁶ Modiano, *Quartier perdu*, p. 42, [for Jean Dekker].

³⁷ Modiano, *Quartier perdu*, pp. 42, 72.

³⁸ Which represents the silencing of a witness. Indeed, p. 126: "seul Rocroy aurait pu être l'historiographe des amis de Blin...", [Only Rocroy could have been the historiographer of Blin's friends]. Guise's reconstructions will be a displaced, second-degree memorial.

³⁹ Modiano, *Quartier perdu*, p. 45, [My life was no longer inscribed in these streets, in these facades. The memories which sprang forth at the chance occurrence of a cross-road or a telephone number belonged to the life of another. And, anyhow, were those places still the same?].

⁴⁰ Modiano, *Quartier perdu*, p. 126, [In this indifferent city nothing was left of us].

⁴¹ Modiano, *Quartier perdu*, p. 149, [Most witnesses had disappeared].

other hand, references to the Vélodrome d'Hiver, the Vel d'Hiv are not innocent. This place is loaded with collaborationist war-time associations. Modiano's topography is thus evocative through a combination of specific with vaguely general elements.

Quartier perdu presents a writer of bestselling fiction writing a letter – like journal of a private inquest dedicated to a dead father – figure. Guise is becoming another form of writer, one whose output is not just a remunerative occupation⁴². It is a means of exploring personal identity, in a quasi-Proustian manner. In Paris, burrowed in Rocroy's old apartment, Guise writes something different from another *Jarvis*, the "Jarvis à Paris" he jokes about with Tatsuké⁴³. As an exploration of the self, of its roots in the past, however tenuous, his new writing is addressed to his past and is a confession⁴⁴. The object of his inquest is himself, in a twist of the conventions of the detective genre. This identity resides in deciphering the "présence du passé"⁴⁵, even if its presence is etherial. The quest itself might be enough.

Quartier perdu's Paris is a place where the city's topography slopes into the past, where Guise remembers the confusion which made him initially leave Paris twenty years earlier. But as an underside to this city as witness through the endurance of certain landmarks – like the equivocal light on the double ground of Benjamin's tiling – lies a layer of ambivalence, of vagueness. If Quartier perdu is a revision of the Proustian project to refind things past, set in a contemporary frame, this project appears to be both fulfilled and left suspended. Among all the traces Guise explores, the city is one

⁴² Guise recalls that when he left Paris for England, he took up writing because: "Qu'est-ce que j'aimais? Les livres. Eh bien, pourquoi ne pas essayer de me lancer dans la littérature? Hein? On devait se donner un but dans la vie. Sinon...", Quartier perdu, p. 154, [What did I care about? Books. so why not try and take up writing? ... One has to have an aim in life. Otherwise...]. On p. 20, Guise and Tatsuké discuss the nature of his writing and establish that "ce n'est pas de la littérature... c'est autre chose", [It is not literature, but something else].

⁴³ Modiano, Quartier perdu, p. 23.

⁴⁴ Modiano, Quartier perdu, p. 90: "Maintenant que j'en suis venu aux aveux...", [Now that the time to confess has arrived...].

⁴⁵ Modiano, Quartier perdu, p. 14, [Presence of the past].

which has a life of its own, which expands and grows, unlike other traces which wither into obsolescence⁴⁶. The detective's task is therefore to dig up a readable layer out of a palimpsestic complexity, a task which echoes the one assigned to Modiano's reader travelling through a topography of clues, at times more puzzling than enlightening. If there exists a unified deep structure to a life and a self – like a city map where changes are recorded on a directing grid – it has been darkened by a confusion of superimposed and discontinuous layers, leaving only a scent as trace⁴⁷.

Rue des Boutiques Obscures⁴⁸ is also a personal quest infused with overtones of the detective genre. It is an earlier manifestation of a portrait of Paris which is similar to the one in Quartier perdu. A central male protagonist seeks traces of his past, not to re-find a precedent layer of identity, but an identity in the present which would correspond to his past. Indeed, ten years earlier "j'avais brusquement été frappé d'amnésie et ... je tâtonnais dans le brouillard"⁴⁹. If amnesia is a liberation from memories, it is a situation the narrator tries to escape, rather than a relief. Throughout the novel he seeks to reconstruct an idea of his past by following various leads that should direct him towards who he was and to understanding what happened to make him forget as well as give a depth or a meaning to his present existence. The object of the detective's

⁴⁶ Living witnesses die, telephone directories go out of date, files are increasingly incomplete and archives are frozen in time. Indeed, p. 31: "tous ces gens qui ont été les témoins de vos débuts dans la vie vont peu à peu disparaître", [All those who witnessed your beginnings in life will gradually disappear].

⁴⁷ See Marcel Proust, Du Côté de chez Swann (1913-1927. 3 vols. Paris: Robert Lafont, 1987) vol I, p. 59: "Mais, quand d'un passé rien ne subsiste, après la mort des êtres, après la destruction des choses, seules, plus frêles mais plus vivaces, plus immatérielles, plus persistantes, plus fidèles, l'odeur et la saveur restent encore longtemps, comme des âmes, à se repeller, à attendre, à espérer, sur la ruine de tout le reste, à porter sans fléchir, sur leur gouttelette presque impalpable, l'édifice immense du souvenir", [But when of a past nothing remains, after the death of beings, after the destruction of things, only scent and taste still endure for a long time, more alive, more immaterial, more persistent and more faithful. Like souls, they remember, wait, hope, on the ruin of everything else, bearing on their almost implapable drops, without bowing down, the immense edifice of remembrance].

⁴⁸ Patrick Modiano, Rue des Boutiques Obscures (1978. Paris: Gallimard, 1993).

⁴⁹ Modiano, Rue des Boutiques Obscures, p. 15, [I was all of a sudden struck by amnesia and was fumbling in the fog].

inquest is thus himself, giving another reflexive twist to the model of the detective genre.

The protagonist has assumed the name of Guy Roland⁵⁰ although to himself he remains an enigma or a blank space having lost touch with his memory and identity. "Je ne suis rien" opens the novel⁵¹ and drives his inquest. If Guise/Dekker is caught in a process of self-exploration he cannot resist, Guy presents an active inquiring mind⁵². In Paris, he seeks to locate himself within a story, within a group of people or in other people's minds. His lack of memory is dependent on other memories and other people to recreate itself. As tools, he has access to his friend Hutte's private detective agency, with its store of indexes and directories. He also uses Bernardy, an informer who sends him lists of details concerning people Guy suspects might be part of his past, or even himself. The object of inquest is the inquirer himself and the thread is his search for information to solve an identity quiz, an "enquête privée" indeed.

By following leads, he encounters various people and their stories. They offer clues in the form of scraps and relics from the past contained in old boxes, photographs on which Guy believes he can see himself⁵³. He discovers a world which echoes the one

⁵⁰ Modiano, Rue des Boutiques Obscures, p. 15. His friend the private eye Hutte gives him an identity card and a passport with that name. See also pp. 11 and 174. Whether this identity is invented or belonged to someone else is not clarified. It is however an adopted identity, echoing Guise's in Quartier perdu, and Guy also seeks to discover an underlying and more truthful or original one. The break between past and present is also a deep rift.

⁵¹ Modiano, Rue des Boutiques Obscures, p. 11, [I am nothing].

⁵² His inquest is however also compared to an "engrenage", a toil he is caught in (p. 77), or a descent "au fond d'un puits", to the bottom of a well (p. 88), that will lead him downwards through strata of traces.

⁵³ Wenders and Hamilton refer to this notion of photographic trace and recording. Wenders believes that film can save the existence of things by preserving traces of their passage or presence on a reel. Hamilton on the other hand uses photographic recording as an image for killing the present. In Surrogate City, the narrator establishes that "the camera takes everything in the present and places it in the past" (p. 155) and that "photographs kill. What's meant to be a method of making something permanent on paper is really only a way of saying goodbye. Photographs dismantle reality. Snapshots are farewell" (p. 147). The trace does not replace its source and recording is done with an anticipation of loss and absence, giving resonance to the novel's prevailing tone of nostalgia. These two contrasted views in relation to the function fulfilled by a photograph share the notion that it is a recording, a reference point. In Modiano's novels, photographs do indeed record moments in time, but are not

disclosed in Quartier perdu, groups of friends, unclear connections and characters who possess stories they are moderately keen to revive and drag out of the dark. Among them, he seeks those who might be able to recognise him and place him. Gradually, he reaches situations which trigger a sense of recognition and finds sensory keys to his past. The story he reconstructs is the one of Pedro McEvoy. He settles on this option after following traces of Freddie Howard de Luz, and encountering the world of Russian *émigrés* in France, believing he might be one of them. Guy never manages to confirm one reality over other options, and rely on anything more tangible than a Proustian sensation of the presence of the past. Familiar smells and epiphanic moments of *déjà vu* are read as signs. They are connected to the city. It is from buildings that a sense of recollection is reached, as when he enters an apartment where he – as Pedro – supposedly stayed with Denise before they left Paris together in 1943. Outside,

une sorte de déclic s'est produit en moi. La vue qui s'offrait de cette chambre me causait un sentiment d'inquiétude, une appréhension que j'avais déjà connues. Ces façades, cette rue déserte, ces silhouettes en faction dans le crépuscule me troublaient de la même manière insidieuse qu'une chanson ou un parfum jadis familiers. Et j'étais sûr que, souvent, à la même heure, je m'étais tenu là, immobile ...⁵⁴.

The situation described here is one of Paris during the Occupation, with its emptiness and its sentinels, as well as the anxiety linked to the mood of the times. Guy is experiencing a form of body memory, one which is particularly strong when he returns to the site of past sensations⁵⁵. Later, a similar situation recurs and Guy realises that an

necessarily readable, their information value thus often lost when faces are no longer recognisable. Photographs are tempting leads in a quest for places where memory is registered, but they are tenuous traces. Michelangelo Antonioni's film Blow Up is another example of this tension between trace and erasure or evaporation, fact and fiction in photographic records, set in a London murder mystery.

⁵⁴ Modiano, Rue des Boutiques Obscures, p. 122, [A sort of trigger was released in me. The view from this room provoked a feeling of anxiety, an apprehension that I had experienced before. These façades, this deserted street, these silhouettes on stand-by in the dusk troubled me in the same insidious way as a once familiar tune or fragrance. And I was certain that, often, at this same hour, I stood here, immobile...].

⁵⁵ Jeanne Ewert points out that mysteries are often solved by returning to the scene of the crime. See "Lost in the Hermeneutic Funhouse: Patrick Modiano's Postmodern Detective", in

echo persists after the source of a gesture or an action has disappeared. He understands himself to be a collection of these "ondes", "et tous ces échos épars qui flottaient dans l'air se cristallisaient et c'était moi"⁵⁶. The novel closes on "nos vies ne sont-elles pas aussi rapides à se dissiper dans le soir que ce chagrin d'enfant?"⁵⁷. He has not come much closer to an identity, but his present is filled by his quest.

He manages to grasp numerous threads through the city. They lead him into exploring a moment of the past which revolves around his puzzling loss of memory. The time of the narrative is interrupted by the recurrence of another earlier layer, a deeper mystery to investigate. It is reconstructed as a flashback of the war years, which come back to Guy with "une précision photographique"⁵⁸. This layer of time recurs in most of Modiano's novels. It is a form of kernel revealed when other layers are peeled away and is where a protagonist's uncomfortable sensation in relation to the past occurs.

During the Occupation, a specific mood and course of events took place in Paris. It involved collaboration with the Nazi regime, disorder, arbitrariness, false identities, profiteering, murders and suicides, and a tone of carnivalesque ruthlessness that is represented in La Ronde de nuit⁵⁹ as well as in Modiano's first novel La Place de l'Etoile⁶⁰. These novels are an attempt to recreate a past in order to exorcise or understand it, a past which remains linked to Modiano's own identity as well as the one of the culture in which his life and writing is situated. Born in 1945 immediately after the end of the war, his work is infused with the presence of a world in which his parents and his origins were involved. Modiano shares his birthday with most of his central male

The Cunning Craft, Eds. Ronald G. Walker and June M. Frazer (Malcomb: Western Illinois University, 1990, 166-173) p. 169.

⁵⁶ Modiano, Rue des Boutiques Obscures, p. 124, [Waves, and all these scattered echoes floating in the air crystallised and were me].

⁵⁷ Modiano, Rue des Boutiques Obscures, p. 251, [Are our lives not as quick to dissolve in the evening as this child's sadness?].

⁵⁸ Modiano, Rue des Boutiques Obscures, p. 161, [A photographic precision]. Here, photographs are a precise reference, perceived as reliable.

⁵⁹ Patrick Modiano, La Ronde de nuit (1969. Paris: Gallimard, 1992).

⁶⁰ Patrick Modiano, La Place de l'Etoile (Paris: Gallimard, 1968).

protagonists⁶¹, as well as absent parents whose presence he seeks to conjure through his writing. This parental generation is linked to the darker side of the war, its slippery underworld and it is here where any origins or roots reside⁶². But these figures from the *années noires* are "Papillons" with ephemeral lives and "n'avaient pas plus de consistance qu'une vapeur qui ne se condensera jamais"⁶³.

In Quartier perdu, this world appears through the "Bande à Blin" and their shared and shady past. Many characters are dealers and escapists who are seizing a moment and thriving within it. It is not a world of heroic Resisters. This slice of time represents a moment in Parisian history. Rue des Boutiques Obscures also portrays this darker underlayer of history when Guy refinds enough traces of who he might have been to experience a sense of recognition. These traces lead him to a sensory and emotional recreation of Paris at this time, a city infused with darkness and emptiness, with hasty departures reflected in empty buildings and deserted streets. He is led into memories which do not fit into an acceptable view of France during the war. If certain streets in Paris commemorate *résistants*, such as Georges Mandel, this myth-making official memory is separate from the its darker underside, one that is explored by writers of the *mode rétro* such as Modiano⁶⁴. In attempting to face a darker past, their counter-myths emphasise that history is plural, complex and haunting when its presence within a

⁶¹ See for instance Quartier perdu, pp. 55, 180.

⁶² Another novel which focuses on war-time chance encounters that produce a confused sense of origin for the next generation is Hugo Hamilton's The Last Shot (London: Faber & Faber, 1991). Its two layers of history are the disintegration of the Reich in Czechoslovakia and Germany and the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1989. The end of the Cold War is thus the setting for an American researcher's quest for the location of the last shot of the Second War. Through this inquest, he retraces the flight of Bertha and Franz, gradually revealing their encounter as his origin and understanding what it is that has made him repeatedly return to Germany. Similarly to Modiano's characters, Hamilton's is seeking true memories and these are linked to the *débâcle* of the end of the War.

⁶³ Modiano, Rue des Boutiques Obscures, p. 72, [Butterflies with no more consistency than a vapor that will never condense].

⁶⁴ See Alan Morris' study of this revisionist trend in "post-Gaullist" French literature, Collaboration and Resistance Reviewed (New York and Oxford: Berg, 1992). This direction of writing is oriented towards the past and more specifically, is concerned with the historical setting of the *années noires*.

society has not been unprimed or desensitised. Modiano's characters born after the end of the War are still caught in the toils of its shadow-like presence and it is this layer of history which is directive of most of the investigative energy displayed throughout his writing. It is an exploration of missing information, a quest for a memory which is both personal and collective⁶⁵ and located after a source of breakdown reflected in discontinuous personalities.

Guy's inquest involves numerous walks in the city. By following threads in Paris he is led out of the city and into a sense that a key to his identity maybe lies elsewhere, in Megève, or even in the places where people who could recognise him satisfactorily have taken refuge: the Pacific Islands and Rue des Boutiques Obscures in Rome. Prior to leaving, the city is explored in depth, in an attempt to re-find paths and routes which would strike an echo or a resonance, as when one retraces one's earlier steps⁶⁶. Names of places and streets are related with infinite detail, forming another kind of list or directory. Within this space, Guy's itineraries lead him to compare the traces of a lifetime to footprints on sand which only remain inscribed for a few seconds⁶⁷. However ephemeral, some recording of existence has however taken place.

The city is compared to a labyrinth, "ce dédale" with an infinite amount of "façades", "fenêtres", "escaliers" and "ascenseurs"⁶⁸. Within this urban maze that

⁶⁵ Morris describes this post-war generation as one of orphans confronted to parental silence and official myths, a generation searching for a heritage based on missing information. It needs to be deciphered, or imagined. See Collaboration and Resistance Reviewed, pp. 81, 88, 109. According to Morris, this gap and disruption in self-definition experienced by Modiano and present in most of his central protagonists is filled by writing. This process would be a quest for roots, one reflected in Ambrose Guise's journal-like letter. See Collaboration and Resistance Reviewed, pp. 148-9.

⁶⁶ Modiano, Rue des Boutiques Obscures, p. 168. Guy realises he prefers to walk because he is probably following forgotten but encoded routes.

⁶⁷ Modiano, Rue des Boutiques Obscures, pp. 72-3: "au fond, nous sommes tous des 'hommes des plages' et que le sable... ne garde que quelques secondes l'empreinte de nos pas", [At the end of the day, we are all like the beach-man and the sand only preserves the imprint of our step for a few seconds].

⁶⁸ Modiano, Rue des Boutiques Obscures, p. 46, [A maze... with facades, windows, stairs and lifts].

echoes the real one at the abandoned house at Valbreuse⁶⁹ that is also a repository of scraps and clues, people's lives are likened to "[des] itinéraires qui se croisent... comme mille et mille petites boules d'un gigantesque billard électrique, qui se cognent parfois l'une à l'autre"⁷⁰. Like the numerous billiard games played at Valbreuse by characters from the past, "de cela, il ne restait rien, pas même la trainée lumineuse que fait le passage d'une luciole"⁷¹. The traces that are left are the sensory memories reached through the trigger of urban space. These allow past itineraries to be recalled and set flashbacks in motion, when the right path of inquest has been followed. Whether these excursions into the past presented as flashbacks are real or fictive, they are a story, a possible explanation which keeps an itinerant and rootless mind busy on the path towards self-discovery⁷².

Fleurs de Ruine⁷³ gathers and develops threads from these earlier novels, emphasising notions of space as a locus of recording, as a presence within a world of shifting identity. The main time layers are again the War, the 1960s and the present or in this case the early 1990s. This dating allows historical guide marks to be followed in relation to the city. The narrator follows leads into his father's identity, a figure linked to the *Gestapistes* and a person who disappeared. As the novel closes, the narrator establishes that these departures and disruptions "vous laisse perplexe au point qu'il ne vous reste plus qu'à chercher des preuves et des indices pour vous persuader à vous-même que ces gens ont vraiment existé"⁷⁴. The Occupation is the source of this

⁶⁹ Modiano: Rue des Boutiques Obscures, pp. 82, 83, 187.

⁷⁰ Modiano, Rue des Boutiques Obscures, p. 147. Modiano's billiards can be compared to Heinrich Böll's game of construed trajectories in Billard um halbzehn.

⁷¹ Modiano, Rue des Boutiques Obscures, p. 147, [Of all this nothing is left, not even the lit path left after a firefly].

⁷² Peter Handke has translated Modiano's writing into German. The notion of a quest for clarity in relation to the self which is portrayed with an emphasis on the quest rather than on its end is present in the works of both writers.

⁷³ Patrick Modiano, Fleurs de ruine (Paris: Seuil, 1991).

⁷⁴ Modiano, Fleurs de ruine, p. 139, [Leave you perplexed to the point where all that is left is to look for proofs and clues to persuade yourself that these people really existed].

disorder⁷⁵. The city's real history differs from this dissolution and offers a grid on which this search can find moorings. The city in *Fleurs de ruine* registers change, like a house with successive owners which still stays the same house although it is inhabited by different stories⁷⁶. The people who inhabit the city also house successive stories, layered identities and changing names, epitomised in the character of Pacheco/Philippe de Bellune/Lombard, who is compared to the narrator's missing father. However, the idea of a permanence of form ensuring a connective memory between the layers is tenuous. Within a city's stillness, these changes can be measured. In *Quartier perdu*, "le *Café des Sports* n'existait plus. On avait construit à son emplacement un immeuble en verre bleuté"⁷⁷. Similarly in *Fleurs de ruine*, new buildings take over old sites, such as the one of the Halles des Vins⁷⁸, and the Opera Bastille⁷⁹. As the precedent layer is still remembered, and the ability to remember it situates the visitor in time, the city becomes an alluring trope in relation to a quest for witness-like traces of the past.

Modiano's slices of time and their presence in urban traces echo Christa Wolf's representation of her town of origin in *Kindheitsmuster*. Both authors use the city as a means of representing time at work, contrasting a present to a past. A gap between both layers is inscribed in the differences that have settled between them. However, both for Modiano and Wolf, the past city, the earlier avatar of the city they revisit plays an essential part in their concern with the problem of how to retrace memories, or how to read traces. The heart of Paris is the centre of attention as a storehouse of evocative

⁷⁵ Modiano, *Fleurs de ruine*, p. 73: "La guerre et l'Occupation avaient achevé de semer le désordre et la confusion chez un jeune homme à la personnalité bien indécise", [The war and the Occupation completed the disorder and confusion experienced by a young man with an uncertain personality].

⁷⁶ A house of this sort is present in the novel as the one on L'île aux Loups, see *Fleurs de ruine*, pp. 34, 71.

⁷⁷ Modiano, *Quartier perdu*, p. 15, [The *Café des Sports* did not exist any more. In its place, a building of blueish glass had been built].

⁷⁸ Modiano, *Fleurs de ruine*, pp. 49-50. This part of Paris has been reworked into a park by Bernard Huet. His Jardins de la Mémoire use traces of the past to define a new form, giving shape to urban memory, reading it out of the place rather than imposing it from outside.

⁷⁹ Modiano, *Fleurs de ruine*, p. 28, where this new building is mentioned.

sensory triggers. Modiano's narrators investigate urban space in their quest for a heritage on which their present can rely and of a sense of continuum between different layers of their changing identities. Rather than refinding precise traces and true stories, they experience an awareness of a succession of temporal layers through quasi-epiphanic moments at sites where key events took place. If reliable witnesses and precise information have faded, what is left is not a past that can be known but a sensation of "le poids du temps"⁸⁰, a density of the past. Memory is a torn fabric, at times discontinuous, which needs to be re-stitched, echoing the nature of certain urban sites such as the Place de Stalingrad and the Potsdamer Platz which both bear references to the Second World War, as do the uprooted narrators of Modiano's heirs to the *années noires*.

⁸⁰ Modiano, Quartier perdu, p. 57, [The weight of time].

4: POSTMODERN NARRATIVE AND HISTORY

A: PRELIMINARY COMMENTS

Many of the tracks and platforms remain. Others have been plundered. An arch, perhaps the former entrance to the station, stands at a peculiar angle to the platforms, through which the grass grows in tufts. The tracks too have faded under the sand and the weeds, as though everything would eventually be reclaimed.

Is this the way your memory would look, she thought, if you could see a photograph of it?¹

Wenders, Abish, Wolf, Hamilton, Ackroyd and Modiano are negotiating representations of memory through fiction. The cities they portray are places where the past is potentially encoded, and particularly memory in relation to place, to space and to events of world history such as the Second World War. This history is dark and has often defied narrative telling, in the case of the Holocaust, or remained untold, such as the marginal gaps, desolate areas and cracks that interest Wenders and Hamilton. The past is portrayed as persistent and mysteriously recurrent in Hawksmoor and time is layered in Modiano's novels. These fictions of Berlin, London and Paris are built on the traces of a disruptive event. The Nazi past, the Great Fire, and the Occupation, respectively, are sources of confusion and blurring of memory and define these cultures in their contemporary urban form. The city is often perceived as an emblem of progress, of change, of speed directed towards the future. It is thus paradoxical that as a space it is also often used as an emblem for the recording of the past. But then, memory and place are interconnected and the city is a fertile ground for their encounter.

This aspect is informed by the relation of past to present, its role in shaping the latter and its latent persistence. Henri Bergson's Matière et mémoire describes how perception is linked to memories and how the past plays a vital role within the present.

¹ Hugo Hamilton, Surrogate City (London: Faber and Faber, 1990) pp. 5-6.

This study is particularly relevant in relation to the sources I have chosen as examples of representations of memory through cities. Bergson is not, however, the sole and most obvious model for a Postmodern theory of memory. It is difficult to identify a specific underlying thread and I believe that recent negotiations of the importance of memory rely on a wide spectrum of theories, in the same way as a wide variety of literary and cinematic models inform Postmodern fiction. I have chosen to focus on Bergson rather than, say, Freud as his theory is particularly relevant in relation to space and the city and announces recent studies such as Raphael Samuel's Theatres of Memory which I will discuss further on.

Bergson understands memory as a means of ensuring a duration, in which new and present events can be registered. Perception is superimposed on a store of memories, and "Toute perception occupe une certaine épaisseur de durée, prolonge le passé dans le présent, et participe par là de la mémoire"². Bergson's theory of memory emphasises that "La vérité est que la mémoire ne consiste pas du tout dans une régression du présent au passé, mais au contraire dans un progrès du passé au présent"³. This understanding of the past as a vital element for the present is echoed in the persistence of form within the changing functions of urban structures, and underlies Rossi's theory of the city. Seeking traces of the past is important in relation to this perception of time as a laminated duration rather than as series of discontinued instants⁴. This quest as well as this layering thus outline two threads I will follow to

² Henri Bergson, Matière et mémoire (1896, Paris: PUF, 1990) p. 274, [Each perception occupies a certain density of duration, prolonging the past into the present and thus participating in memory]. Bergson refers to the city as a test case to describe the function of memory (describing a city with eyes closed) and perception (encountering a city for the first time), pp. 99-100.

³ Bergson, Matière et mémoire, p. 269, [The truth is that memory is not a regression from present to past, but on the contrary, a progression from past to present].

⁴ In this respect, I disagree with Fredric Jameson's theory of the Postmodern. For him, "the postmodern must be characterised as a situation in which the survival, the residue, the holdover, the archaic, has finally been swept away without a trace. In the postmodern, then, the past itself has disappeared (along with the well-known 'sense of the past' or historicity and collective memory)" and contemporary culture is "collapsed into "a ... homogeneously modernized condition". The present is not built out of the layers of the past but has erased and

discuss representation of memory in Postmodern narrative, the detective and the palimpsest, prior to concluding with questions about the role of narrative in relation to history.

By narrative I infer the telling or portrayal of a series of events with implied causes or connections which produce a story. A sequence of this kind comprises written and filmed images using a variety of techniques and strategies which combine to form an unfolding of information about something. Telling establishes an order, which can differ from experience although it reflects and contains the latter. The narratives I am concerned with here tell stories about history using the city as a locus in which it is encased.

B: THE DETECTIVE

All the examples of Postmodern representations of cities discussed here are infused with undertones or explicit reworking of elements drawn from the detective genre. The familiarity of this genre, its visual impact and its set types offer a thread on which new stories can be tied. These stories involve inquests around missing persons or blurred memories. For instance, in Surrogate City, Helen and Alan "began to treat the whole thing like a British/American detective story" and "a detective's only weapon is his imagination. The purpose of the imagination is to reconstruct"⁵. Postmodern fiction uses this genre within an urban context. The self-proclaimed detectives (Alan and Helen, Modiano's narrators), the professional ones (Hawksmoor) or TV icon detectives (Colombo) pace the city⁶, exploring a confused urban density in search of something.

The detective genre is often perceived as a form of popular, pulp writing⁷. Its use as a grid on which other types of writing can be constructed is, however, frequent and exists in examples which pre-date the Postmodern ones referred to here. Edgar Allan Poe's stories are an early or even original use of detection as a means of exploring mysteries. They mostly reach a climactic resolution or untangling, however uncanny their nature. The later stories of Jorge Luis Borges, on the other hand, do not necessarily reach this end and announce an emphasis on problems rather than solutions. They are therefore unlike Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's character, Sherlock Holmes, and meander within barely decipherable labyrinths and archetypes, without "solving the riddle of the city"⁸.

The detective story implies different layers or levels of time. The enigma traditionally pre-dates an inquest. It also is deeply dependent on memory and reliable

⁵ Hamilton, Surrogate City, p. 53.

⁶ As the characters in Paul Auster's New York Trilogy reveal (1985, London: Faber and Faber, 1987).

⁷ See Stephano Tani, The Doomed Detective (Carbondale and Edwardsville: Southern Illinois UP, 1984).

⁸ Peter Jukes, A Shout in the Street (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1990) p. 48.

witnesses to reach a resolution. Memory reconstructs past events. This aspect is problematised in Modiano's novels as they are located on the boundary between what happened and what is remembered, and its blurring. The detective pattern problematises a desire to reach a fullness of memory within the construction of a story. It expresses a desire for total anamnesis, an anamnesis that is tantalising. Indeed, the past cannot be retrieved totally, only its echoes within the present are attainable.

The detective seeks a hidden pattern within urban space, seeks to read its traces out of the city's fabric. The riddles are sometimes too dark, as Ackroyd's Hawksmoor indicates. Indeed, Dyer proclaims that "I have built an everlasting Order, which I may run through laughing: no one can catch me now"⁹. The ubiquitous irresolution of Postmodern detective stories however points towards an absence of overriding pattern, or its undecipherability. The chase or inquest itself becomes more important than the fulfillment of its resolution, with an emphasis on the need to pursue an inquiry into the past. Mystery is accepted as mystery, as a key towards perception rather than understanding. History as the object of these urban inquests, remains unresolved. Its sinister charge, the one which prevails for instance in How German Is It, calls for its exploration. History is thus a riddle which can be grasped intuitively or witnessed emotionally. It is exposed through omissions and made present subversively. Thus, Franz's howls in How German Is It are more sharply telling in relation to what lies under an official surface than a decipherment of how that surface has been construed. Franz's scale model is, in this respect, more powerfully in touch with Brumholdstein's identity than Hemuth Hargenau's new buildings.

A reconsideration of boundaries between high-low, popular and highbrow is a characteristic of Postmodern production, discussed by Andreas Huyssen in After the Great Divide¹⁰. Postmodernism is thus "a movement of merging, a deliberate

⁹ Peter Ackroyd, Hawksmoor, p. 186.

¹⁰ Andreas Huyssen, After the Great Divide: Modernism, Mass Culture, Postmodernism (Basingstoke and London: Macmillan Press, 1986). For him, this "blurring of boundaries" is "an

complication of the idea of generic integrity", to quote Steven Connor¹¹. These terms themselves are redefined in the process and the field from which emblems and references can be drawn is considerably widened. Ackroyd's novel Hawksmoor combines references to detection with another domain of popular, marginal aspect: the occult. He is working popular myth into other registers. Thus, the detective, the occult and other self-contained popular genres are explored as alternative forms compounded within Postmodern narrative. For Brian McHale, similarly, science fiction is a formerly "marginalised" genre which has been included into a new "mainstream"¹². This mixing and blending is echoed in the work of architects such as Robert Venturi. His eclectic historical pluralism is a language which de-stabilises a Modern uniformity and establishes a pattern of inclusion. Many styles combine into an architecture which takes into account vernacular and popular or "main street" elements. However, Venturi's architecture never aspires to being a substitute for "main street". It is a commentary on an increasingly diversified culture and I believe the same applies to a re-working of popular genres within Postmodern fiction.

In a world where dichotomies between clear and dark, high and low, in and out are clear, disorder can be recognised, and order restored. As Valentine Cunningham has indicated, literature traditionally enacted "affirmations of meaning, ... [and] the success

opportunity, rather than a lamenting loss of quality", Introduction, p. ix. Frederic Jameson, on the other hand, considers this "erosion of key boundaries and separations... distressing", in his article "Postmodernism and Consumer Society", Postmodern Culture, ed. Hal Foster (London and Sydney: Pluto Press, 1985) 111-125, p. 112.

¹¹ Steven Connor, Postmodernist Culture (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1989) p. 109.

¹² See chapter 10 of Constructing Postmodernism : POSTcyberMODERNpunkISM (London and New York: Routledge, 1992) pp. 225-262. He refers to Ridley Scott's Blade Runner as an example. Here, science fiction and detective genres meet in an American futuristic urban dystopia. The character of Deckard (is it a coincidence that Jean Dekker in Quartier perdu echoes this name? Both detective figures confront covered identities) seeks to eliminate androids who have crossed the boundary between their prescribed world and the one of humans. If identifying their android characteristics is a key to Deckard's mission, the latter therefore focuses on redefining what is human -endowed with real rather than implanted memories- and reasserting this threatened boundary. The detective's success in separating the fake from the organic life-forms is however suspended by the character of Rachael, in both Ridley Scott's film and Philip K. Dick's novel.

of language and story in the creation of sense and of moral and civic order"¹³. If "successful detective stories" restore and consolidate this order, they do so within a specific and unified social frame. In contemporary culture, the detective is one among many narrative genres, and an image of an expected order and meaning. The model provides traditional expectations and subverts them. Postmodern detectives are emblems which infuse a narrative with the dimension of an inquiry, an inquest. They are not in themselves redeemers, healers of urban ills.

Postmodern detective stories such as Hawksmoor, Modiano's Parisian novels and Steve Erickson's Arc d'X, among many other examples, are a third stage of a reworking of this model. Indeed, the French Nouveau Roman is an antecedent. Alain Robbe-Grillet's detectives are also construed from a subversion of expectations. They are located at a second degree of separation from the traditional or conventional model. Postmodern detectives include this layer, this added complexity, but do not only re-trace its ground. Subverting a model or an expectation is no longer sufficient. Within this layered framework, Postmodern fiction re-works a purpose into detection. The latter involves an inquiry into the darker areas of historical memory.

The inquests Postmodern detectives confront are situations which defy resolution. They are fictions which explore historical disruptions or torn mnemonic or urban fabric. This tear releases something that has been closed up or withheld, like the stench of Durst in How German Is It. The problems which are explored through the detective model do not, therefore, call for a clean resolution, despite suggestions that a disruption between past and present is the root of disorder. By searching for traces of events (the past) within the scene of their occurrence (the present, the city), Postmodern detection is an inquiry into the role of memory in contemporary cultural production.

¹³ Valentine Cunningham, In the Reading Gaol (Oxford and Cambridge, Mass.: Blackwell Publishers, 1994) p. 14.

C: THE PALIMPSEST

Within a saturated cultural scene, new detective-like stories meander through narrative and urban referential density. Saturation, or a sense that nothing is new, is acknowledged as well as used. What John Barth calls exhaustion, Brian Mc Hale identifies as "the impossibility of writing with 'originality' in a tradition as long and crowded as our own"¹⁴. New artefacts record their place in a hierarchy of inheritance, in an age defined by repetitions, existing on the level of a shadow of a momentous past. A connection with historical fabric emerges in architecture and is apparent in the work of Aldo Rossi, Robert Venturi and Bernard Huet. They emphasise and include the weight of heritage and precedence. These architects seek to work new forms out of continuity rather than through a break with the past. This aspect of Postmodern concerns finds an echo in fiction and film.

The palimpsest is an image I use to describe the historical city as a layering of traces from different periods. Abish represents layers of time and their superposition. Ackroyd's London is portrayed through two time levels, as well as with reference to earlier representations of the city. For Modiano, memory is the object of concern, as a potential binding agent between stratified time levels. In Der Himmel über Berlin, a variety of representational means are laminated to portray a city's historical complexity. In these sources, layering thus prevails, conveying the density of superposed stories and time levels, as well as the fact that new narratives are produced in a framework of preceding ones. Narrative production is now located in an "endless maze of re-writing"¹⁵, to quote George Steiner. An "*ur-text*" has thus been "overwritten"¹⁶. A

¹⁴ Brian McHale, Constructing Postmodernism, p. 27.

¹⁵ George Steiner, Real Presences (London: Faber and Faber, 1989) p. 118. Steiner describes "aesthetic inventions" as "archaic", since they "carry in them the pulse of the distant source", Real Presences, p. 28.

¹⁶ Steiner, Real Presences, p. 40. Marcel describes a similar process when he is describing his grandmother's taste for "ces vieilles choses qui exercent sur l'esprit une heureuse influence en

comparison can be made to Richard Estes' super-realistic painting of cityscapes – such as Central Savings (1975) – which show superposed reflections in glass surfaces which produce an effect of infinite reflection¹⁷. The impression of density and confusion derives from the fact that the ur-level of the object itself is hidden or overwritten. Reflecting surface and reflected city are blended, creating a puzzle. This notion of an accumulation of stories within a single form and confusion between primary and secondary also describes Postmodern narrative production. Within this confusion lies a threatened loss of direction, epitomised by detection as decipherment.

Writing is thus also a reading, the recording of the traces reading inscribes. It is the product of reading in a culture of collected knowledge. Representing and acknowledging this congestion of a museum and library culture of dense references¹⁸ is a potential respite. This echoes a commonplace theory of Postmodernism as exhaustion, as a winded era of deflation or age of lost innocence, as Umberto Eco would say¹⁹. In this

lui donnant la nostalgie d'impossibles voyages dans le temps", in Du Côté de chez Swann (Paris: Robert Lafont, 1987, vol. 1) pp. 54-55, [These old things which exercise a beneficial influence on the mind by producing a nostalgia for impossible travels through time]. In the same place, he describes her quest for "plusieurs 'épaisseurs' d'art", [Multiple thicknesses or layers of art] when purchasing pictures for his room. Indeed, she seeks as much distance as possible from the "vulgarity" of photographs. Thus, "au lieu de photographies de la Cathédrale de Chartres ... elle préférerait me donner des photographies de la Cathédrale de Chartres par Corot, ... ce qui faisait un degré d'art de plus" and even, "arrivant à l'échéance de la vulgarité, ma grand'mère tachait de la reculer encore. Elle demandait à Swann si l'oeuvre n'avait pas été gravée...", [Instead of photographs of the Chartres Cathedral ... she preferred to give me photographs of the Chartres Cathedral by Corot, ... which built an added degree of art. Having distanced vulgarity, she tried to push it even further away. She asked Swann if the painting had not been engraved...]. This successive layering of reproduced reproductions of representations create a distance in relation to the real object, one which was highly desirable to Marcel's grandmother but which seems to have reached a pitch of labyrinthine confusion in contemporary culture. Could its own passion for artifice be a layered one, consciously echoing the *Décadence* of the previous *fin de siècle*?

¹⁷ Jerome Klinkowitz compares Estes with Abish as the latter attempts to read into signs present under the surface of West Germany. See "Experimental Realism", in Postmodern Fiction: A Bio-Bibliographical Guide, Ed. Larry McCaffery (New York, Westport Connecticut, and London: Greenwood Press, 1986) 63-142, pp. 72-73. Abish thus attempts to subvert a play of infinite reflection and reach behind deceitful mirrors.

¹⁸ The scenes of Der Himmel über Berlin filmed in Hans Scharoun's library in Berlin underline this aspect by making the cultural reference point and storehouse a vital space within the city, a space where memory prevails. See footnote 9, chapter 1, Part II.

¹⁹ Umberto Eco, Postille a Il Nome della rosa (Milano: Bompiani, 1984).

context, Modiano is indeed not Proust, and his references to A la Recherche du temps perdu mark his place as coming after a monumental work. Similarly, Wenders represents Berlin through his awareness of other representations of the city. His outlook is not shaped by the freshness of a novel encounter with the Grossstadt -the Big City- and new cinematic techniques, as Ruttman's film witnessed²⁰. Rather than seeking a new encounter, these authors explore this palimpsestic density. Philippe Hamon describes the image of the palimpsest as "différentes écritures qui entretiennent entre elles des rapports complexes mettant en jeu la mémoire, individuelle ou collective, ses mécanismes d'oubli et de résurgence de l'oubli". It is formed by "des lignes et formes qui conservent entre elles un rapport d'engendrement mais dont certaines s'effacent au profit des autres"²¹. It is anchored within this density and seeks to reach an original layer, a layer of experience from which layers of representation would be peeled away. With this layer located in the past, retrieval is impossible without intermediaries. An object of concern in contemporary cultural production is how memory functions, how the past is erased or retrieved, and how it participates in the present.

A self-consciousness within narrative results from this awareness of textual density. It is present in details, such as in Surrogate City where Helen and Alan pursue their quest for Dieter humming signature tunes of TV detective series to themselves²². They also stroll off into the setting sun in a city described as filmic²³. They derive a sense of amusement from their following of models and patterns, anchoring their story into narrative. They are seeking rather than evading its frame.

Der Himmel über Berlin combines detective threads with this sense of density. New images emerge through a saturation of visual signs. They are not only drawn from the realm of narrative representation but also involve a blending of fact and fiction, as

²⁰ See Berlin, die Sinfonie der Grosstadt (Fox-Europa-Film, 1927).

²¹ in Palimpsestes, "Cahiers Confrontation" 16 (Paris: Aubier, 1986) p. 5.

²² Hugo Hamilton, Surrogate City, p. 53.

²³ Hamilton, Surrogate City, pp. 15, 92.

the character of Peter Falk/Colombo epitomises. Falk is present as the actor, in his working clothes. The actor and his character have been merged, to form an identity marked by an ontological and layered complexity²⁴. This conveys an awareness that experience is filtered through representation, and that it is in this manner that a shape or and identity emerge. For Linda Hutcheon, this 'faction' is "not really a blurring of boundaries between fact and fiction, but more a hybridizing mix, where the borders are kept clear, even if they are frequently crossed"²⁵.

E. L. Doctorow's novels are examples of this blend which pre-date my sources. Fiction and history are blended to form an American imaginative counter-memory. In Ragtime, for instance, what is important is not the exact truthfulness of Doctorow's representation of characters such as Houdini, John Ford, J.P. Morgan or Freud and Jung, but a sense of truth. Through his "misrepresentations", Doctorow pursues a political agenda. As Christopher Morris indicates, "almost every piece of [his] fiction depicts some fraudulence at the heart of American life"²⁶. History is infused with an imaginary dimension to create a clash with accepted truths, and question these through their juxtaposition to apocryphal possibilities. In my examples, the aspects of history under scrutiny are apocryphal, dark, unshaped. It is also unofficial, the story of urban gaps, of Nazi collaborators, of occult practices. Artifice and imagination are however not used to subvert political readings of the past, but to draw attention to ways in which these dark pasts have been suppressed. Through a blend of fact and fiction exemplified by Dyer's

²⁴ For studies of Postmodern characters and their complex construction, see Naomi Jacobs, The Character of Truth: Historical figures in Contemporary Fiction (Carbondale and Edwardsville: Southern Illinois UP, 1990) and Aleid Fokkema, Postmodern Characters (Amsterdam and Atlanta, Ga.: Rodopi B. V., 1991). Brian Mc Hale's studies of Postmodernism identify it as "a poetics dominated by ontological issues" (Postmodernist Fiction, New York and London: Methuen, 1987, Preface, p. xi). Characters are manifestations of "trans-world identity" (Postmodernist Fiction, p. 17). Examples from within my sources abound, such as the presence of Rock stars and Mikhail Gorbachev in Wenders' cinema, Wren and Vanbrugh in Hawksmoor. Here, real figures are drawn into a fictive realm.

²⁵ Linda Hutcheon, The Politics of Postmodernism (London: Routledge, 1991) p. 37,

²⁶ Christopher Morris, Models of Misrepresentation (Jackson and London: University Press of Mississippi, 1991) p. 13.

seventh church in Hawksmoor, history is represented intuitively in a manner which seeks to affirm the truthfulness of its traces, and its existence.

An interplay between fact and fiction draws on an epistemological problem emanating from the writing of history. Hayden White outlined how a historical work is structured in narrative form. A method of inquiry which claimed scientific precision is thus mediated through a form which accomodates imaginary dimensions, undermining certainty, truth, and reliability. By drawing attention to the use of fictional devices in the shaping of historical narrative, White emphasises that history is not found but written and that its truthfulness relies on narrative construction. The telling of a story is not a neutral, transparent activity and it will leave its own mark on its content. There is therefore "an irreducible ideological component in every historical account of reality"²⁷. White's theory opened a new ground by outlining this narrative opacity. His contribution to a problematizing of representation was not isolated. He situates his view within a wider debate which includes the French historians of the *Ecole des Annales*, Dominick La Capra and theorists of narrative and deconstruction in the 1970s who emphasised similar aspects within strategies of textual production.

The "translation of knowing into telling"²⁸ involves a translation, an interpretation rather than a mirroring. It questions objectivity in historical science. Narrative is an imposed order, not a found one²⁹. Metahistory represents this awareness of an understanding of historical narrative as the result of a selective process³⁰. Rather than conveying the past, narrative ensures a truthfulness by rendering it intelligible.

²⁷ Hayden White, Metahistory: The Historical Imagination in Nineteenth Century Europe (1973, Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins UP, 1983) p. 21.

²⁸ White, "The Value of Narrativity in the Representation of Reality", Critical Inquiry (Vol, 7, 1, 1980. 5-27) p. 5.

²⁹ White, "Historical Pluralism", Critical Inquiry (vol 12, 3, 1986. 480-493) p. 488, and Tropics of Discourse (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins UP, 1978) pp. 51-70.

³⁰ White, Tropics of Discourse, pp. 95-99.

White emphasises that knowledge is dependent on narrative³¹. History is a problem of representation, and this will have an impact on representations of history. They thus test each other. As Linda Hutcheon points out, literature took on board this challenge of representation³².

White's problematizing of historical narrative focuses on how the past can be known. This question is taken on board more recently through an interest in memory. Raphael Samuel's study Theatres of Memory outlines this emphasis very clearly. He writes that memory and history have been understood as different processes, most of all by Maurice Halbwachs. Memory is instinctual and time-warped whereas narrative is self-conscious, linear and progressive. History thus prevailed as a dominant means of access to the past. Samuel's argument, however, establishes that "memory, so far from being merely a passive receptacle or storage system, an image bank of the past, is rather an active, shaping force"³³. Memory is "dialectically related to historical thought" and not a "negative other to it"³⁴. It is also subjected to alterations through time and is a reflection of historical process which differs from history itself as the latter is understood as more rigidly construed. Samuel's argument highlights the importance memory is taking in present debates about how the past is present in contemporary culture. White's study of history as a discipline has become an assimilated layer³⁵ in historical and literary circles, in an ongoing theoretical debate about representation and narrative which now encompasses memory.

A concern with memory directs representations of history away from nostalgic replications, period pieces, flashbacks, or what Fredric Jameson calls "the new spatial

³¹ White, The Content of the Form: Narrative Discourse and Historical Representation (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins UP, 1983) p. 53.

³² Linda Hutcheon, The Poetics of Postmodernism (London: Routledge, 1992) p. 143.

³³ Raphael Samuel, Theatres of Memory (London and New York: Verso, 1994) Introduction, p. x.

³⁴ Samuel, Theatres of Memory, p. x.

³⁵ Linda Hutcheon writes that "it is interesting that the work of Hayden White has arguably had more impact in literary than in historical circles", in The Poetics of Postmodernism, p. 143.

logic of the simulacrum"³⁶. 'Post' is indeed not 'Neo'. Postmodernism explores continuity and difference in relation to the past and uses a lamination of genres, of references and explores the tension between real and imaginary to do so.

For Christine Brooke-Rose, magic realism is "palimpsest history", a form of "alternative history" exemplified by Salman Rushdie or Carlos Fuentes³⁷. This re-writing takes apocryphal and imagined versions of history into account, blending fact with fantasy since "the novel's task, unlike that of history, is to stretch our intellectual, spiritual, and imaginative horizons to breaking point"³⁸. Brooke-Rose indicates that history, rather than being written, is re-written, perpetually. Contemporary narrative registers this aspect by being a compound of versions, often incompatible ones. In relation to the representation of historical characters in fiction, Naomi Jacobs establishes that "factual accuracy ... produces only a shallow realism like that of the figures in a wax museum"³⁹ and that fullness resides in the "plasticity" of these figures.

Contemporary narrative representation of history and the city cannot be innocent mimesis, or a lapse back into pre-modern or, so to speak, pre-structuralist writing⁴⁰. It happens within an age of lost innocence, where Umberto Eco points out that any new statements are quotations of earlier ones and need to be presented as such⁴¹. The city is a place where a quest for a referent, a story, a content or meaning behind a surface façade takes place. Rather than being that tangible presence, it represents a desire for presence, a quest for history. It is a form of first step into a knowable reality of experience. It is also a starting point to defining the self, accepting a complex layering of identity and a scepticism towards basic mimetic narratives. Writing has thus become a

³⁶ Fredric Jameson, Postmodernism...., p. 18.

³⁷ Christine Brooke-Rose, "Palimpsest History", Interpretation and Overinterpretation, by Umberto Eco; ed. Stephan Collini (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1992) 125-138, p. 131.

³⁸ Brooke-Rose, "Palimpsest History", p. 137.

³⁹ Naomi Jacobs, The Character of Truth: Historical Figures in Contemporary Fiction, Introduction, p. xvii.

⁴⁰ See Hutcheon, The Poetics of Postmodernism, p. 40

⁴¹ Umberto Eco, Postille a Il Nome della rosa.

self-reflexive process, as well as an attempt to represent an extra-textual or verbal world outside the narrative, through a narrative.

What Brian McHale calls a Postmodern "revisionist approach to history"⁴² finds an equivalent in Linda Hutcheon's historiographic metafiction. By these terms she means novels "which are both intensely self-reflexive and yet paradoxically also lay claim to historical events and personages"⁴³ and "re-introduce historical context into metafiction and problematize the entire question of historical knowledge"⁴⁴.

Representing history is an attempt to reconnect narrative with an extra-textual reality, remaining aware of the literary heritage in which it is inscribed and focusing on assumptions about the production of narrative. It is "self-consciously locat[ed]" on the "border between past event and present praxis"⁴⁵ and is neither only self-reflexive literature, nor a historical or non-fictional novel⁴⁶. Hutcheon's theory is a useful premise in a discussion of problems of content and reference in fiction. She establishes that

what postmodernism does is to contest the very possibility of our ever being able to know the 'ultimate objects' of the past. It teaches and enacts the recognition of the fact that the social, historical, and existential 'reality' of the past is discursive reality when it is used as the referent of art, and so the only 'genuine historicity' becomes that which would openly acknowledge its own discursive, contingent identity⁴⁷.

If this ability to know the past is problematic, it is the means of access to its 'reality' which are explored in the examples of narrative practice I have chosen. "Historiographic

⁴² McHale, Postmodernist Fiction, p. 221, and chapter 6: "Real, Compared to What?", pp. 84-96.

⁴³ Hutcheon, "Theorising the Postmodern, Towards a Poetics", in The Postmodern Reader, Ed. Charles Jencks (London: Academy Editions; New York: St Martin's Press, 1992, 76-93) p. 77. The same definition is given in The Poetics of Postmodernism, p. 5.

⁴⁴ Hutcheon, "'The Pastime of Past Time': Fiction, History, Historiographic Metafiction", Postmodern Genres, Ed. Marjorie Perloff (Normans and London: University of Oklahoma Press, 1989) 54-74., p. 54.

⁴⁵ Hutcheon, The Poetics of Postmodernism, p. 146.

⁴⁶ Hutcheon, "Theorising the Postmodern...", p. 78,

⁴⁷ Hutcheon, "Theorising the Postmodern...", p. 82.

metafiction" is a label that applies to these examples and which also explores the boundaries between fact and fiction or, rather, fiction and non-fiction. Hutcheon also emphasises that Postmodern practice involves a critical reworking of elements from the past, rather than a nostalgic return⁴⁸. This notion is crucial as it emphasises the way the past is part of the present, rather than its pastness.

These narratives of history are a polyphony of many voices, similar to a Postmodern building by Rossi, Huet or Venturi. Ventriloquist narrative strategies such as Ackroyd's allow different layers of time to interact, again giving form to continuity and outlining differences between them. Voices from the past inhabit the present, as Ackroyd explores in his other novels, such as Chatterton, English Music, and more recently, The House of Doctor Dee. Stories resurface. These resonances construe a sense of residual interconnection between them. Traces of earlier texts are made present through quotation, borrowing or reworking in critical reconfigurations, as Gérard Genette has pointed out in Palimpsestes⁴⁹. Memories of a variety of voices and sources participate in the palimpsestic fabric of intertextual writing.

Intertextuality is not born with Postmodernism. Artefacts have always been produced with reference to other, earlier ones⁵⁰. Familiar myths and models resonate through literature. Edmund Wilson used the image of the palimpsest in 1931 to describe Joyce's work in progress, Finnegans Wake. He wrote that the "style he has invented for his purpose works on the principle of a palimpsest: one meaning, one set of images is written over another" and that this dense texture obscures rather than enriches the book⁵¹. However mesmerising, the style of Finnegans Wake is a show-case for

⁴⁸ Hutcheon, The Poetics of Postmodernism, p. 4.

⁴⁹ Gérard Genette, Palimpsestes (Paris: Seuil, 1982). See Ackroyd chapter.

⁵⁰ See George Steiner's Real Presences, pp. 28, 150 and 204.

⁵¹ Edmund Wilson, Axel's Castle (New York and London: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1931) chapter VI: "James Joyce", 191-236, pp. 234-35. This reference is indicated by Douwe W. Fokkema in Literary History, Modernism and Postmodernism (Amsterdam and Philadelphia: Utrecht Publications in General and Comparative Literature, 1984) p. 46, and that since then, the term has been used in reference to intertextuality and the workings of memory. For

palimpsestic narrative as it is a lamination of re-writing, of compounded meaning where each layer leaves a trace of its generative presence. In *Ulysses*, Joyce re-wrote Homer's epic, epitomising his sense of *Ricorso*, of cyclical repetitions. In a Postmodern frame, palimpsestic narratives, both intertextual and laminated function in a different manner. They record subterranean presences, ones which shape memory.

Postmodern narrative is palimpsestic as it is shaped within a storehouse of cultural references. New stories include their traces, their presence. The emphasis in narrative production has shifted from formal innovation to communication, or the latter has been included in the former. Narrative does not only tell the story of the adventure of language. However, this stage has been incorporated into narrative, in a cumulative manner. The city is an extra-textual reality and contemporary fiction explores question of content through its representation.

Hamilton's description of how memory might look if photographed emphasises its fragility. It also outlines its similarity to an architectural configuration, a damaged cityscape with derelict areas and disused sites. This memory is reminiscent of Proust. It is an "édifice immense" carried by "l'odeur et la saveur" of the past⁵². Its form can be read out of sensory traces. Hamilton's broken areas in Berlin echo the gaps and cracks of Wenders' aesthetic which release strong emotional responses. This response triggers a recognition that history is still active and that memory participates in perception, following Bergson's theory. The city contains both stability and instability, and a tension between presence and absence, saturation and loss and befits the image of the palimpsest. Postmodern representations of cities echo this fabric through their own palimpsest of polyphonic voices.

Fokkema, however, the "device of the palimpsest" is rooted in the wordliness of "social context" and thus reflects literature solely concerned with "writ[ing] over" earlier ones. If the sources I refer to are palimpsestic in this way, they also negotiate the representation of a palimpsestic subject, the city, which exists outside textuality.

⁵² Marcel Proust, *Du Côté de chez Swann*, p. 59.

Charles Baudelaire's commentary on Thomas de Quincey's Confessions of an English Opium Eater uses the image of the palimpsest⁵³. He asks

qu'est-ce que le cerveau humain, sinon un palimpseste immense et naturel? ... Des couches innombrables d'idées, d'images, de sentiments sont tombées successivement sur votre cerveau, aussi doucement que la lumière. Il a semblé que chacun ensevelissait la précédente. Mais aucune en réalité n'a péri. ... [Devant] la mort ..., et généralement dans les excitations intenses créées par l'opium, tout l'immense et compliqué palimpseste de la mémoire se déroule d'un seul coup, avec toutes ses couches superposées de sentiments défunts, mystérieusement embaumés dans ce que nous appelons l'oubli⁵⁴.

If memory is a palimpsest, it is "indestructible"⁵⁵. It is where all experience is registered, albeit dormant. Baudelaire points out that the strongest imprints are those caused by the pain of separation and loss, these being immortal imprints which cannot be burnt away⁵⁶. This imprint could be the result of separation between childhood and adulthood or self and family as in Modiano's case; the latency of the past which is too

⁵³ Christine Buci-Glucksmann comments on Baudelaire's discussion of de Quincey in her article on "Une Esthétique du Baroque au palimpseste, Arnuld Rainer et Anselm Keifer: le moment Baudelairien de la peinture", in Palimpsestes, ed. Philippe Hamon (Paris: Aubier, 1986) pp. 13-28. She presents these contemporary painters in the light of their work on traces of the past. Baudelaire's palimpsest is a pre-Freudian model which informs Postmodern theories of memory, one which is caught between "le trop plein de souvenirs et son trop peu, le Spleen et l'Idéal. Trop, du côté du Spleen et de l'inventaire d'un passé mort, d'un monde saisi par la rigidité cadavérique, d'un monde palimpseste. ... Pas assez du côté de l'Idéal, d'une véritable rémémoration, celle de la fulgurance soudaine et lumineuse de l'image retrouvée...", pp. 15-16, [The abundance and the lack of memories, spleen and ideal. Abundance, on the side of spleen and an inventory of a dead past, a world seized by deathly rigidity, a palimpsest world. Lack, on the side of ideal, of a true remembrance, the sudden and luminous flash of a re-found image]. Buci-Glucksmann presents Baudelaire's commentary as a palimpsest of de Quincey. The unmediated presence of an "image retrouvée", a "langue maternelle" or a vivid "vie antérieure" are the ghosts he pursues in his writing. Similarly, the presence of the past in a Postmodern context is shadow-like.

⁵⁴ Charles Baudelaire, "Un Mangeur d'opium", section VIII: "Visions d'Oxford", Oeuvres Complètes (Paris: Gallimard, Bibliothèque de la Pléiade, 1961) 451-460, pp. 451-52, [What is the human brain if not an immense and natural palimpsest? Countless layers of ideas, images and feelings have fallen successively on your brain, as quietly as light. It seemed like each one was burying preceding ones. But in reality none have perished. In front of death, and mostly in the excitement created by opium, the whole and complex palimpsest of memory unfolds at once, with all its superimposed layers of dead feelings embalmed mysteriously in what we call forgetfulness].

⁵⁵ Baudelaire, "Un Mangeur d'opium", p. 452.

⁵⁶ Baudelaire, "Un Mangeur d'opium", p. 453.

remote from the present to be readable, as in Ackroyd; or the residual presence of a rift in urban and social fabric caused by war, portrayed by Wenders and Abish. The experience of loss, in different contexts, stands as an *ur*-experience, a persistent enigma buried in the dense fabric of memory's palimpsest, one which is explored in art form. Memory is its counter and the past is explored as a vital part of the present.

D: WITNESSING HISTORY

Narratives lay down traces of events, real or imagined. Imagined ones shed light on the real ones or allow a form of density to be established in the representation and understanding of real events. Stories, as Wenders establishes, "contain history"⁵⁷. Narratives thus also read traces of the past within a given culture represented through its cities. They are witnesses in the sense that they testify to history's having taken place, recording and observing its course, like the angels construed as witnesses to the city in Der Himmel über Berlin.

Following mnemonic patterns, characters retrace old roots through cities in their search for a past time which underlies their present. This search focuses on a quest for keys to identity in this present. In this respect, Modiano's narrators are similar to Homer in Wenders' film. The latter moves around the empty Potsdamer Platz, both urban border and no-man's land, seeking echoes between the cityscape and an internal topography. He is following maps and routes contained by his memory but no longer inscribed within the real city. Modiano's Paris has not suffered such devastation and the city still contains many previously trodden streets and lived-in buildings. Their traces are more tangible. Through these, Modiano's narrators attempt to consolidate an emotional blueprint of their existence within historical continuum. Memory of the self can be released through an encounter with the city, or at least the city is explored with this desire for an encounter with memories of the past, for roots in the past. Ackroyd's character Hawksmoor thus turns to the unsolved mysteries of London as a key to his murder inquest. He reaches an intuitive sense that their meaning resides in a pattern of occult lines within the city. These are residual traces of another London within the one he knows, roots for this present city and his own compound identity.

⁵⁷ Wenders, The Logic of Images, Transl. Michael Hofmann (London: Faber and Faber, 1991) p. 76.

These roots, in Modiano's world are sensory. They are triggered by perception. In this respect, Henri Bergson writes that "Nos perceptions sont sans doute imprégnés de souvenirs, et inversement, un souvenir ... ne redevient présent qu'en empruntant le corps de quelque perception où il s'insère"⁵⁸. This sensory presence of the past, when memories are re-activated and shape a new perception, is encountered through place. Modiano's characters are often described as witnesses to a lost past, disappeared people, untold stories. A distance in relation to this past is inscribed in the tools they dispose of to tell its story: obsolete archives and directories, faded photographs and other relics, or, on the other hand, their imagination. Narratives about Modiano's father's generation are infused with a fictive dimension in an attempt to retrace a reality outside the boundaries of his own experience. Thus memories are often either tenuous, or imagined. Their participation in giving form to the present is faint. Sensory memories, on the other hand, produce a resonance, a shaping sense of *déjà vu* which connects present to past. These memories are triggered by the city⁵⁹.

As a witness to the past, the city exists, however, as an interplay between persistence and loss, as Hamilton's suggestion that a photograph of memory might resemble a derelict urban patch shaped by ruins and relics on its site indicates. Presence and loss find echoes in collections and re-collection. Other narratives which are concerned with history, its telling and its preservation are the ones construed within the space of museums. An element of selection defines them and brings forward the question of which history or what aspects of history will be written down, and what

⁵⁸ Bergson, *Matière et mémoire*, p. 69, [Our perceptions are infused with memories and, vice versa, a memory is only recalled through the body of a perception in which it is inserted].

⁵⁹ Louis Malle's film *Ascenseur pour l'échafaud* is a Parisian crime story where the city plays a mnemonic role similar to Modiano's use of walks and routes. The main female protagonist wanders through the streets during one night, and is drawn to places which have specific roles in her life (her husband's office block) or associations (cafés where she meets her lover). Seemingly, the places call her rather than being the destinations of a conscious direction. Similarly, in *Rue des Boutiques Obscures*, "Guy Roland" tries to read traces of his identity in the places he visits, as if buried memories guided him there, as if a pattern of significance could be extracted from his itineraries. Places are thus endowed with a mnemonic power. In Modiano's novels, however, this aspect hovers on the brink of decipherment.

evidence supplied. The fictional narratives I have considered here are infused with an openness towards the uncanny side of history, one which is present and yet defies being related and resolved. Like museums, they collect traces of history and shape them into stories, but establish an echo between history's unresolved, unprocessed vitality and urban riddles.

Berlin, London and Paris are represented as loci of residual traces of the past. History's presence or encasement within a city is sensory as well as architectural, therefore a puzzle, a lure and an object of inquiry. The city is an ultimate witness to the passage of time and the events which determine its course. It is a witness which needs to be deciphered, transcribed into narrative. City writing is a quest for a witness to history and the city's place in contemporary cultural identity is thus being re-thought. By being an orchestration of traces from the past rather than an expression of disorder, these fictions outline a new creative vitality. The manner in which these cities are represented does not rely on deliberate stereotypes, as for instance Alain Robbe-Grillet does in Projet pour une révolution à New York and Topographie d'une cité fantôme. The historical city's depth rather than an urban veneer is the object of concern. Wenders, Modiano and Ackroyd trace their representations on the fabric of real cities. The narrative sources cited in this thesis were produced within the cultures they portray⁶⁰. Their authors inhabit the cities they explore in fiction, conveying an attachment to urban space as a locus where aspects of a historically determined identity can be negotiated⁶¹.

I have focused on a strand or type of urban and Postmodern narrative within an extensive and varied field of literary, cinematic and architectural production. Berlin, London and Paris are historically saturated world cities as well as hi-tech spaces. The

⁶⁰ Walter Abish being the only peripheral case, even through his Austrian origins create a link with German history.

⁶¹ On the other hand, among the main architectural projects I have cited, Huet's is the only one in the city where the architect is based.

past as a focus is an unsolved past, one that differs from a current proliferation of nostalgia and heritage. I think these imply a sense of by-gone pastness of history which differs from an attempt to grasp memories of the past as a shaping part of the present. In Aldo Rossi's terms, a city becomes "l'esperienza che si trasmette"⁶², which is an important image for a concern with the inscription of the past in the present, rather than with the past as past. History and memory are considered critically through fiction about the city. Fiction, as well as being self-reflexive, is also a place where the testimonies of those who witnessed history are made present.

⁶² Aldo Rossi, L'Architettura della città, p. 194, [An experience which is transmitted].

PART III MUSEUMS

1: PRELIMINARY COMMENTS

Museums show architecture in a public arena. They exist mostly in relation to the city where they are located and tell the story of a specific culture or society, both through displays and through architecture. They are a prime location for a reading of narratives concerned with identity and history. At the heart of a recent museum, James Stirling's Neue Staatsgalerie in Stuttgart (see plate 22), the presence of a drain implies that there is no story left for a museum to tell. This central drain is the focal point of the circular courtyard of the museum, a place traditionally consecrated to its main exhibit, its choice morsel. If this is a possible reading of Stirling's museum, a space that is a showpiece for what museums and museology of the 1980's have grown into, it is only one reading. This museum tells more than a single story, even if it might question the centrality and dominance of one of them in particular. If Stirling's addition to a pre-existing museum in Stuttgart¹ tells stories, these are about museums themselves. It is built as a space which conveys an awareness of museumness, so to speak, or is an inside joke of "erudite wit" for targeted readers, to use Douglas Crimp's analogy from his study On the Museum's Ruins². The gist of the joke would thus be that traditional public monumental architecture can still be produced but that its sense of content is somewhat bankrupt, in tatters and that there is little to be reverent about. At the heart of the museum's spatial strategies lie problems of drainage and parking. So

¹ As an extension it thus belongs to a similar type of building as Venturi's Sainsbury Wing and recalls Rossi's plans in Berlin as it is another case of a foreign famous architect winning a competition for a building which seeks to participate in the then West-German museum and cultural representational boom of the 1980s.

² Douglas Crimp, On the Museum's Ruins (Cambridge, Mass. and London: MIT Press, 1993) p. 282.

where are the exhibits? In there, as expected, but just not with as many exclusive rights as before. Indeed, O. K. Werkmeister writes that in Stuttgart, "the building itself becomes an installation, a museum piece of architecture, the first work of art on exhibit"³ that is itself a "daring ambivalence of pure technology and inventive form, of collage and quotation"⁴. Stirling's museum is allusive indeed, its plan echoing the first of the great museums of Germany, Karl Friedrich Schinkel's Altes Museum in Berlin, most of all in its cylindrical central area. It thus plays on an intertextual dimension as well as alluding to the origin of its type itself, densifying the layers of the inside joke. The Neue Staatsgalerie is an example of increasingly complex exhibition space in an age of self-conscious and "meta" cultural production, one which paradoxically questions the institution of the museum through the edification a new one. A museum is inscribed within a logic of construed or contained cultural memory. It is a store of references in relation to which new cultural production can be situated, and lays claim to the status of archive. The museum as a concept is a form of fountainhead for intertextuality as it makes it possible to have access to traces of antecedence in the production of works of art⁵. Most of all, it tells that the neutral box for a collection of jumbled curiosities belongs to a distant time and that museums have become central to both the edification and discussion of public space in Postmodern culture.

My concern involves a museum's relation to the cultural statements it expresses or represents, not its toying with the idea of emptiness, even though the latter reflects on the former. They tell stories, and in this respect are spatialised discourses in

³ O.K. Werkmeister, Citadel Culture (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991) p. 76.

⁴ Werkmeister, Citadel Culture, p. 78.

⁵ In Museum Without Walls, André Malraux writes that this leads to works of art that have only one function, to be a work of art (1965. Transl. Stuart Gilbert and Francis Price. London: Secker & Warburg, 1967, p. 10). This self-consciousness and awareness of an interdependence of new material with earlier ones is not exclusive to Postmodern allusive density. Douglas Crimp points out that both Flaubert and Manet used intertextual devices and reworked references into their works (On the Museum's Ruins, p. 48). Robert Rauschenberg's screens are another example, all three proceeding very differently and thus expressing a very contrasted attitude towards precedence and cultural inheritance.

themselves, combining the solidity and tangibility of a building with the tenuousness of a fiction, a narrative construct. They are inscribed within urban history as well as within Postmodern architectural and narrative concerns with the past. This past is the object of representational concerns for many museums, a past which is not flushed down a drain but told, somehow, to ensure its remembrance. I will refer to the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum as an example of a new museum. It connects threads as diverse as an awareness of the city in which it is located, a display of Postmodern architectural virtuosity and complexity, a use of multimedia experience and audience involvement as well as the telling of a historically rooted story, a portrayal of real events⁶. It documents the past as a means of producing an altered perspective on the present. The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum is a representative example of contemporary developments in museology. I will focus on these as a second section to this part.

⁶ Montréal's museum of archaeology and history, Pointe-à-Callière, is another example of a historical narrative conveyed in a museum form. I will discuss this building in Annexe 2.

2: THE UNITED STATES HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL MUSEUM

Located between Raoul Wallenberg Place and 14th Street SW in Washington D.C.'s museum and memorial core (see plate 23), this new building is only a stroll away from the main track of American memorabilia and symbols of democracy which include the Washington Monument, the Lincoln Memorial, the National Mall, the White House and Capitol as well as the Vietnam Memorial and the Smithsonian Museums. Its location is convenient and the building becomes part of the site's institutions. The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum – which I will refer to from now on as the Holocaust Museum – designed by James Ingo Freed from Pei Cobb Freed and Partners was opened in 1993, as our century was coming close to the 50th anniversary of the end of the Second World War. The Holocaust Museum is a space with a purpose, as a blurb on the pamphlet which accompanies a visit tells us:

The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum is dedicated to presenting the history of the persecution and murder of six million Jews and millions of other victims of Nazi tyranny from 1933 to 1945.

The museum's primary mission is to inform Americans about this unprecedented tragedy, to remember those who suffered, and to inspire visitors to contemplate the moral implications of their choices and responsibilities as citizens in an interdependent world.

This explicit statement makes any underlying intent plain. This is what we will get. And every element of the museum, from its overall shape to the last of its exhibits participates in this project⁷.

The entrance of the building is an introduction to its contents. The main doors are situated behind a large and monumental portal constructed as a semi-circle which refers to the architectural vocabulary of the Third Reich. Between it and the doors themselves

⁷ Jeshajahu Weinberg and Rina Elieli's book The Holocaust Museum in Washington (New York: Rizzoli, 1995) is an overview of the entire museum's content and is abundantly illustrated.

lies a gap, a void. This facade stands as a symbol of the emptiness that underlay Nazi rhetoric. The latter played a substantial part in the regime itself, its identity enforced by spectacles recorded by Leni Riefenstahl and by an abundance of discourse in visual, musical and verbal form. The Speeresque pomp which surrounded Hitler endowed his Reich with a monumental dimension, one that problematised the use of polluted monumentality and contaminated language after the war. In Washington in the early Nineties, this hollowness is seen through – literally – as its punctured surface only covers a void of hot air⁸. Emptiness is thus diagnosed or announced, an emptiness that was a trap since behind muscular Nazi rhetoric lay another story, the one the museum is set out to tell. The limestone facade is juxtaposed to brick walls which recall the texture of eradicated villages and ghettos. The entrance to the museum sets a shadow on its contents, one which confirms that Nazism happened and is still recognisable in its own language. From the start, the Holocaust Museum refers directly to telling, invests explicit meaning in its form and announces that what lies on the other side of its doors is a vast air-conditioned space where a true tale of a true slice of true albeit dark history is going to be told, or taught, or remembered, or all of these together. And chronologically as well.

The architect James Ingo Freed discusses the "battles" he held both with his client and the city of Washington. Unlike Aldo Rossi's *Deutsches Historisches Museum* project, which remained an architecture of pure concept on paper, Freed's building underwent alterations in its form which were the result of an ongoing debate during its construction. The United States Holocaust Memorial Council, his client, was torn as to the shape of the project's approach to memory. This tension between explicitness in the narrative or discretion and epuration reveals the underlying complexities of Freed's

⁸ To allude to the painfully sultry day on which I visited the museum in July 1994. Most of the information I refer to in this section was gathered then.

task. Jim Murphy cites his statement in an article to this "Memorial to Atrocity".

Indeed,

There are several groups of people involved. There are the survivors who never forget what their parents or brothers and sisters said to them as they moved into the gas chamber: "Remember us, remember us." To remember has become what they want to do. Others are not clear that they want to remember at all. ... I have to make a building that allows for horror, sadness. I don't know if you can make a building that does this, if you can make an architecture of sensibility. Because that is really what it is⁹.

Memory and its problematic representation thus took into account this division and Freed's work resulted in allusive rather than literal references to the Holocaust's topography, as a case where exhibits of a more explicit kind are contained.

The museum's building is a cluster of parts which all participate in a narrative of the Holocaust. This space both directs a visitor's steps through the different phases of the history of the Holocaust and refers directly to the places where it all happened, the camps. Thus, behind the monumental entrance rises a juxtaposition of dark forms of brick and steel which reconstruct a sense of Nazism's other buildings, not the ones that Speer drew for Berlin¹⁰. From a central courtyard or atrium called the "Hall of Witness" one looks up to the fence-like walls and to their very explicit hints towards the forms of watchtowers, cattle-wagons, bars and chambers. These tall buildings are contained by their enclosed disposition and create a space turned inwards. The Hall of Witness thus becomes a focal point and in the walls around it the core of the permanent exhibition is located. The latter occupies three floors, starting on the fourth and moving down to the second. Under this layered space are two more floors which house temporary displays as well as all the museum services focused on providing visitors with information and other facilities. These include an information desk – a kind of launching

⁹ James Ingo Freed, excerpt cited in Jim Murphy, "Memorial to Atrocity", in Progressive Architecture (No. 2, vol. 74. Feb 1994) 60-79, p. 67.

¹⁰ This brings to mind a talk between the Hargenau brothers in Walter Abish's novel How German Is It (1979, London: Faber and Faber, 1982). Indeed, Helmuth is asked about architects' involvement in planning camps in an interaction between them, p. 58: "I wonder if they used architects to design concentration camps".

pad or base for staff in maroon jackets who are available to answer questions and provide special assistance, and bring personalised complements to the museum's stories as well as the story of the building itself – and other standard facilities, like a shop which "offers books and materials about the Holocaust for all ages", and a café. The lower levels of the Holocaust Museum also contain the Wexner Learning Centre which "provides interactive computer stations that offer visitors an opportunity to pursue their interest in Holocaust issues through text, photographs, maps, film, oral testimonies, and music" and is a user-friendly version of the United States Holocaust Research Institute located on the fifth floor. The latter crowns the museum and "houses the Holocaust Library, the Holocaust Archive, the Oral History Archive, the Film and Video Archive, and the Benjamin and Vladka Meed National Registry of Jewish Holocaust Survivors".

As a side branch off this ensemble of information and displays lies an hexagonal annexe. It is linked to the museum and both are connected internally despite their separation on a formal level. This wing contains a theatre on the Concourse level and the "Hall of Remembrance" above it. If the Hall of Witness located in the rectangular main wing is a directive space which offers access to the different levels and exhibits, an open atrium symbolically framed by a death bound black wall visible as one enters and a white wall of hope and survival as one proceeds towards the exit, the Hall of Remembrance is a closed space, on a smaller scale. It is invested with strong religious associations and its shape recalls Polish wooden synagogues. It also brings to mind other loci of remembrance such as the Yad Vashem in Israel. Its separateness from the museum itself combined with its function as a quiet space for remembrance of the Holocaust emphasises that the whole is an ensemble of parts. It also opens the museum's function. It is not only a space of exhibition and education but also provides facilities for a kind of spiritual meditation, being a memorial rather than a monument. The Hall of Remembrance is bare, an enclosed space of pale stones which bear biblical inscriptions. Both Halls convey a dual direction that the ensemble seeks to follow: bearing witness to a given set of

interconnected historical events and allowing for their remembrance from the perspective of their victims and survivors. The static and relatively small space of the Hall of Remembrance is contrasted to the openness and circulatory nature of the Hall of Witness. These two directions will be juxtaposed throughout the permanent exhibition, both calling for and orchestrating an emotional participation of visitors. "You are my witnesses" (Isaiah 43:10) stands out in white letters on the black wall¹¹, readable as one enters the building. That "you" will be drawn in to an involvement of that very kind.

The permanent exhibition is structured as a one-way downward procession or journey, one that is framed by precise entry and exit points¹². The museum's pamphlet again offers a precise outline of aims and intent:

This story-telling exhibition begins with life before the Holocaust in the early 1930s and concludes with the aftermath of the Holocaust after 1945. To begin your tour, take the first-floor centre elevators to the fourth floor. The exhibition spirals downward through the main and tower spaces of the fourth, third, and second floors.

As one leaves the elevator, having been lifted to the start, two elements grab one's attention as one gets used to the dim lighting which creates a consistent mood throughout. First, an enlarged photograph from Ohdruf shows a sea of emaciated corpses. It is followed by a quote from Eisenhower dated April 15, 1945: "I made this visit deliberately in order to be in a position to give first hand evidence of these things if ever, in the future, there develops a tendency to charge these allegations merely to 'propaganda'". From the beginning, the horror will thus be presented as undeniable. It happened. The problem then is how to tell, not whether there is a story to tell. Placing

¹¹ Its darkness emphasised by the presence of a Richard Serra slab of dark metal at its base. Behind this eloquence of absence the exhibits will give a very explicit form to the history of the Holocaust.

¹² Museums often are structured on tracks, or are to be visited following a precise itinerary. To this type of museum a more open one can be contrasted, where a visitor is able to choose the order of his or her encounter with exhibits. The Holocaust Museum is coercive and a single route is mapped out, because the whole tells a single structured story. An itinerary in this case differs from the colored routes that guide one through the Vatican Museum, where each one offers an alternative speed in tracing one's way through pre-selected highlights. This is done to the detriment of the whole rather than to ensure the completeness of a visit.

Eisenhower's insight into later developments in questions around the idea of truthfulness at the opening of the museum's narrative is a side glance at this very form of disbelief¹³ and a means of emphasising the role the Americans played as liberators of the camps. The exhibition collects a wide variety of traces of the Holocaust and seeks to give the unnameable a form, to represent it in its own words, objects, images, traces that mark survival and persistence. These do not recreate a simulacrum of first hand experience, but are to be visited in the same vein as Eisenhower's visit to the camps at the end of the war.

The permanent exhibition is structured in three parts, each one corresponding to a floor or a layer and successively labelled "Nazi Assault-1933 to 1939", "Final Solution-1940 to 1944" and "Aftermath-1945 to Present". The story of the Holocaust is told chronologically, with plentiful explanations and abundant commentary -only in English, though- of the exhibits. These are presented through a combination of progression and stasis as a visit is punctuated by film booths and video recordings where one halts, sits for a while in an enclosed space. From the start, a visitor is taking in a story as it unfolds, reading it in a linear manner and as a gradual but no-return descent into darker and darker depths, prior to reaching the shore of the education centre, café and shop. It is not within the logic of the exhibition to backtrack, echoing somehow the fact that the Holocaust and final solution themselves were a process that was not halted and that its victims were exposed to a situation of no-return, in both the sense of no way out and of no return to a pre-Holocaust perception of the world. This rigid frame also contains this visit-as-experience and probably provides a necessary structure for this unsparing exposure to highly disturbing and, for some, deeply upsetting and unsettling material.

¹³ See Deborah E. Lipstadt, Denying the Holocaust. the Growing Assault on Truth and Memory (New York: The Free Press, 1993).

This exhibition is built out of a juxtaposition of a wide variety of elements on display which combine to form a composite text. These are organised into a narrative that is an educational journey – indeed, it seeks to "inform Americans about this unprecedented tragedy", as quoted earlier – through a compilation of information that includes visual, written and sound archives as well as reconstructed elements. The whole is thus a blend of real and constructed traces which combine to produce a representation of a historical event in a manner that differs from period simulacra since "the thematic museum is clearly a great deal more than just a stylish assemblage of artefacts"¹⁴. The displays in the Holocaust Museum complement and supplement each other and labels clearly specify the nature of an object on exhibit, its source and whether it is a real relic or a replication of something real located elsewhere or destroyed. The presence of names of places and people which were eradicated haunts the exhibition, for instance in elements such as the Tower of Faces where an empty space is lined with approximately 1,500 photographs of the pre-war days in Ejszyski, visual cues to the complexity of Diaspora Jewish life in a place that does not exist any more. Similarly, the room of shoes that conveys the absence of their wearers is a collection of real old shoes, time worn witnesses to death and loss through an intimate detail, a life-detail that anyone can read and feel and visitors are to be moved by the reality of these benign and battered objects surviving life itself¹⁵. On the other hand, the *Arbeit Macht Frei* gate under which one has to walk is a cast. The original, the real one, is seemingly still at Auschwitz. And yet through this copy, a strong emotional response is triggered and this, as much as the shoes, bears witness to what happened. In the Holocaust Museum, fact and fiction work

¹⁴ According to Colin Sorensen in "Theme Parks and Time Machines", an essay published in The New Museology, Ed. Peter Vergo (London: Reaktion Books, 1989, 60-73) p. 66.

¹⁵ James E. Young points out that the museum at Auschwitz is a "memory of ruins" which also relies on metonymic traces of lost lives, in The Texture of Memory (New Haven and London: Yale UP, 1993) p. 133.

together within the real story dimension of a museum to stress the reality of a given moment and give it a voice¹⁶.

This voice's volume is increased by a variety of strategies which enhance the receptivity of visitors. If they are to leave the museum with a deeper knowledge of the Holocaust, they are also expected to carry away with them a sense of awe and reverence for victims and survivors, one that is announced by the dim lights and the Hall of Remembrance. It is also amplified by an attempt to orchestrate an emotional response to the exhibits by involving visitors personally. Indeed, one picks up a story-identity-card on entrance, which offers the private and selected thread of one life to follow throughout the exhibition. One thus becomes "victim for a day" in a "reversal of the scramble for fake papers during the war"¹⁷. A strong emphasis is given to first-hand information and the impact of events on individuals, again under the prevailing thread of bearing witness, not to something that feels silent and distant but to a past that is brought to life and brought close to the present through a "visceral impact"¹⁸. The Holocaust Museum conveys an overriding ethical dimension. As its whole name announces, it is more than a museum as it also claims the status of memorial, focusing on remembrance as much as on information. Indeed, its "mission" is "to remember those who suffered, and to inspire visitors to contemplate the moral implications of their choices and responsibilities as citizens in an interdependent world", as the same pamphlet tells us. This museum is therefore not a rigid showcase but aims towards an active contribution to shaping a sensory and intellectual understanding of history which is useful to living in the present.

¹⁶ George Steiner emphasises "the archaic Greek definition of man as 'a language animal'" in Real Presences (London: Faber and Faber, 1989) p. 89. In this respect, this narrative of the Holocaust from the perspective of its victims represents a re-humanization of their history, and a counter to the Nazi attempt to re-define what was 'human' and who was not.

¹⁷ Young, The Texture of Memory, p. 344.

¹⁸ Murphy, "Memorial to Atrocity", p. 61.

The Holocaust Museum triggered a huge and immediate response, swarms of visitors flocking to experience its constructed voice of history¹⁹. The recorded present-day storytellers thus find many listeners²⁰. A large amount of screens, mostly towards the end of the permanent exhibit make present the faces and oral testimonies of survivors, captured as storytellers, sharing their grief and their memories with the visitors, or so it seems. These screens are displayed in spaces where visitors are encouraged to stop, sit and collect their thoughts. These voices set on continual play belong to today's people, in familiar dress and attire, familiar faces which are very much like the one next to us, relating their first-hand encounter with the events we -as visitors- have been told about in the museum. They give the whole more than a real-life dimension, they give it a life dimension, emphasising its reality. Also, these presences that we assume are giving truthful accounts through truthful voices, are a recording of effects of the Holocaust on the present, on the lives of ordinary people. This underlines that the museum is not only about then, but also and maybe mostly, about now and how we, in the present, should relate ethically to the past. The Holocaust Museum does preach a necessary responsibility towards history, one that has a pointed urgency in relation to a resurgent political extremism. It is also a museum about America, about the latter's role in the aftermath of the Holocaust and the establishment of the State of Israel. It is about America because the Second War and World history since then is about America. In the capital city of the United States, a museum to the horrors perpetrated in Europe during the war makes complete sense in this perspective. Its location also participates in a patriotic discourse which implicitly highlights a contrast between American democratic ideals and the political regime which perpetuated the Holocaust. The

¹⁹ These range from survivors or relatives of victims to tourists, from individual scholars to large families.

²⁰ Even Gwyn Barry goes there, The "United States Holocaust Museum" being part of his US Book tour, done quickly and publicly in between many other things. The museum is thus already registered by Martin Amis as a must among the Washington sites. See The Information (London: Flamingo, 1995) p. 313.

survivors providing recorded first-hand voiced tales from that time are now Americans, like those providing funding for the museum. The tide of inheritance – one that is inclusive of loss – has moved away from its original geographical boundaries²¹, to America and Israel.

The explicitness of the museum's presentation, of its displays and overall structure and form is a novel means of building a memorial to the Holocaust²². A visitor

²¹ The Holocaust Museum is an example of an American attempt to come to terms with a collective history, one that makes explicit statements about the role it played in its course. The museum pamphlet states that its "primary mission is to inform Americans about this unprecedented tragedy", possibly because it is part of the personal past of many Americans, or because it is rarely taught in schools. As a non-American visitor, I registered this slant with unease as it seemed to be so overtly and unabashedly patriotic. However, America as a land of refuge during and after the Holocaust, is a clean safe place necessary to store an explicit telling of its tale, as a frame for preserving a very wide scope of traces.

²² As an aside, I would like to draw a comparison and establish a contrast between the Holocaust Museum and Hiroshima's War Memorial Museum, as it appears in Alain Resnais and Marguerite Duras' film *Hiroshima mon amour*. This Memorial to the horror of August 6, 1945 and its effects on the city and its population is frequently present in this film about personal memories of the war, personal traumas or scars and their recurrent hold on the post-war "present". Set in 1957 and involving two characters, him and her, Duras' story centres around an inability to forget rather than a willed effort to remember, one embodied in the function of a museum. The shots of the Memorial show a building which is an example of the city's post-war or post-erasure reconstructions, following a 1950 planning scheme. It contains displays that are either visual documents of the event or reconstructions of moments drawn from its horrific course. Indeed, "les reconstitutions ont été faites le plus sérieusement possible. Les films ont été faits le plus sérieusement possible. L'illusion, c'est bien simple, est tellement parfaite que les touristes pleurent", in Marguerite Duras, *Hiroshima mon amour* (1960, Paris: Gallimard, 1993) p. 25, [The reconstructions were made as carefully as possible. The films were made as carefully as possible. The illusion is so perfect that tourists cry]. This museum seeks to preserve the story, ensure its remembrance and does so very soon after the event itself. Unlike the Holocaust Museum, the Hiroshima War Memorial -opened in 1955- is inscribed within a logic of immediacy. The museum's presence is juxtaposed to the one of survivors and witnesses and also marks the interconnection between the city's identity and the A-Bomb. The museum offers contained memory, institutionalised traces of the horror on its site. In Resnais's film, She, as a French visitor to the city, has been there. Indeed, "Quatre fois au musée à Hiroshima. J'ai vu les gens se promener. Les gens se promènent, pensifs, à travers les photographies, les reconstructions ...", [Four times to the museum at Hiroshima. I saw people wandering around. They wandered around, pensive, amongst the photographs, the reconstructions], in *Hiroshima mon amour*, p. 24. These images are incorporated into the filmic narrative as cues for a connection between memory and the city, in a story about remembrance. The museum is an image for the recording and registering of an event. The Holocaust Memorial is built with time as a distancing factor in relation to the event it outlines. I compare it to the Holocaust Museum because they both convey memories of two unprecedented traumatic moments in the history of humankind and of warfare. The death camps and the atomic bomb have shaped the post-war era and one strangely enough confirmed the end of the other. However, as museums, each one reveals a dissimilar representational problematic that has more to do with the changes in museology over the last half century than with the fact that

bears witness to the past by entering a constructed space which sets in motion a process of information and meditation. Its ambitious project aims at encompassing the whole story in a monumental commemoration. This was established as the fifty-years-after benchmark was approaching and this length of time plays an instrumental part in shaping this specific representation of mourning and loss. The question is no longer of how to build a memorial, but of how to remember and make these acquired rather than first-hand memories pertinent in the present. The Holocaust Museum seeks to act as a tool for memory, one that is transposed away from the actual site of any of the events of the Holocaust, unlike the Dachau or Auschwitz Memorial Museum where emotional intensity is linked to a sense of on-site gloom and horror. In Washington, the profusion of displays gathered in many places offers a wider picture but also a very explicit one. Fifty years later words flow again, literally, as the museum stores voices rather than reverent silence. There is also a sense of need for explicitness and a profusion of detail behind the black and white monolithic walls, to counter a Brumholdsteinesque process of denial that Eisenhower had detected. This much re-hashed story is thus being told anew, with an awareness of why it is being told and a solid backing of screaming evidence and testimonies that bear the weight of truth, and truth as history. Behind narrative techniques and selective story-telling strategies of organisation and unfolding, behind

each event stands on other sides of the allied/enemy boundaries defined by the Second War. In Hiroshima, the building is a box or container on pillars, its concrete walls offering a neutral space in which a collection of unsettling displays are gathered or juxtaposed in a seeming jumble of glass boxes, reconstructions of the devastated city and mannequins. In Washington, the whole is allusive to the museum's contents -building and exhibits being set in a symbiotic relationship- and participates in an orchestrated storytelling and remembering has been widened to bearing witness. In an article entitled "The Sprit of Hiroshima", Yoshitaka Kawamoto, the Director of the museum, presents this "Peace Memorial Museum" after its refurbishment and re-opening in 1991 (*Museums International*, 45.1 (1993), 14-16). With multimedia exhibits, relics from the bombed city and recorded oral testimonies, the museum has been endowed with contemporary museological devices. Kawamoto emphasises that it seeks to convey a "spirit" of the event as well as information. Echoes between this agenda and the Holocaust Museum's are thus apparent and both institutions seek peace through education. However, American and Japanese commemorations of V. J. Day in August 1995 in Hiroshima's museum and in the Smithsonian in Washington presented two dissociated politicised discourses, the American Bomb-legitimizing exhibit leaving little room for the testimonies of its victims.

the fictionalising devices used in the process such as film, replicas and other simulacra lies a rock bottom of undeniable history, the fact of the Holocaust's happening and its necessary recording.

The Holocaust Museum endows its visitor with the task of being a witness to history. The information it provides allows one to share the experience of victims and the stories of survivors of an event which sought to decimate its witnesses. The residual survival of the Holocaust's haunting presence is ingested through the museum. The visitor acquires an adopted memory, an inherited memory, by recognising the reality of an event which took place 50 years earlier. As fewer and fewer eyewitnesses remain, their voices and testimonies are being recorded with increasing frequency. Films such as Claude Lanzmann's Shoah and more recently, Maurice Hatton's Satan at His Best use documentary techniques to record memory at work, interviewing eyewitnesses and giving shape to their stories²³. Stories are being told and are themselves memorials to the experience of the camps. The Holocaust museum encompasses oral testimonies among its exhibits, making memory a central element.

The Holocaust Museum is not an isolated phenomenon. James E. Young's study entitled The Texture of Memory, Holocaust Memorials and Meaning presents how Holocaust memorials in Europe, Israel and America function within the different socio-political systems which produced them. Since "the further events of World War Two recede into time, the more prominent its memorials become"²⁴, the latter are endowed with an increasingly important mnemonic function. As they are "historically referential"²⁵, they offer access to the way memory works in relation to a nation's present identity. The Holocaust shaped its aftermath. Commemorating the 50th anniversary of its end is a way of emphasising the role memory plays in defining

²³ Is their editing as important an element in these testimonies as the voices? They speak within a frame.

²⁴ Young, The Texture of Memory, p. 1.

²⁵ Young, The Texture of Memory, p. 12

identity in the present. The Holocaust Museum is removed from what Young calls "the topography of terror"²⁶. In his introduction to the book which accompanied a travelling exhibition of photographs of Holocaust memorials²⁷, Andreas Huyssen analyses a predominance of remembering over forgetting, in a Postmodern context and "the intensity of our memorial culture"²⁸. He understands a contemporary "obsession with the past" as a product of modernity rather than its contradiction and establishes that

postmodern culture in the West is itself caught in a traumatic fixation on an event which goes to the heart of our identity and political culture. In that case, the Holocaust monument, memorial, and museum could be the tool Franz Kafka wanted literature to be when he said that the book must be the axe for the frozen sea within us. We need the book and the monument to keep the sea from freezing. In frozen memory, the past is nothing but the past. The inner temporality and the politics of Holocaust memory, however, even where they speak of the past, must be the future²⁹.

Testimony and bearing witness to history from a contemporary perspective are thus part of a need to preserve and record traces of the past and a vital aspect of Postmodern concerns. Fiction and memorials share a desire to explore memory and ensure its fluidity. The Holocaust Museum as an example of contemporary museology is representative of this trend, and reveals a new direction in the use of museums as well as in their narrative and architectural complexity.

²⁶ Young, The Texture of Memory, p. 283.

²⁷ James E. Young, ed. The Art of Memory: Holocaust Memorials in History (Munich and New York: Prestel Verlag, 1994). The exhibition was housed in the Deutsches Historisches Museum in Berlin from September 8 to November 13, 1994.

²⁸ Andreas Huyssen, "Monument and Memory in a Postmodern Age", The Art of Memory, Ed. James E. Young, 9-17, p. 11.

²⁹ Huyssen, "Monument and Memory in a Postmodern age", p. 17.

3: POSTMODERN MUSEOLOGY

In Part One I referred to two museums as examples of Postmodern concerns with history and its representation. Venturi's Sainsbury Wing in London and Rossi's project for a Museum of German History in Berlin are both part of a museum boom or phenomenon that was characteristic of the 1980s³⁰. They are examples of specific communicative narratives with a strong directive theme and are thus comparable to the Holocaust Museum. Their buildings are not neutral containers but are overtly expressive and therefore reify Douglas Crimp's notion of a "collapse of the museum's discursive system", one he sees epitomised in Stirling's Neue Staatsgalerie³¹. There are stories to tell and new ways of doing so which challenge pre-existing notions of the scope of a museum. The storybook museum which makes use of new technologies is an increasingly important aspect of museology. It is a type that runs parallel to the playful nostalgia of heritage, but unlike the latter, picks up the charge of history. As stories or discourses, these museums call for reading rather than passive contemplation. As discourses with historical reference, they resume a traditional role of the museum: a place where memory is encased. But this role is given a twist in a cultural context where remembering is both central and problematised. An inherent self-consciousness and self-referentiality within the museum thus reflects that a mimetic discourse is not a satisfactory way of representing the past as it presents the past as a separate moment or object rather than emphasising how that past has reached us and how we remember.

I am concerned with cultural memory and the way it is connected to architectural narrative and not with heritage parks and nostalgia collections. These are a growing trend or fashion. I wish to contrast this vein of historical interest with museums such as the Holocaust Memorial. Indeed, they are focused on one thread rather than being

³⁰ Josep M. Montaner's study of New Museums (London: Architecture and Design Technology Press, 1990) offers an overview of museum growth and development during the 1980s.

³¹ Crimp, On the Museum's Ruins, p. 282.

compilations of eclectic material which seeks to capitalise the past as a commodity in the entertainment industry. Past times become pastime in a leisure service which has been identified as the Heritage Industry. Conservation is linked with commercial exploitation. This heritage industry focuses on history as a spectacle, one which normalises or sanitises the past in a disneyfied manner. Rather than enhancing an awareness of a historical process, it marks the past as a revolved period with little links to present-day issues. It is used as a distraction. The Beamish Museum and Wigan Pier are examples of open-air heritage centres in Northern Britain³². The Oxford Story is another occurrence of a similar attitude in relation to the past. They reveal an unproblematic relation to representation, or what Brian McHale calls a "nostalgia for unproblematic mimesis"³³.

In a study entitled The Representation of the Past: Museums and Heritage in the Postmodern World, Kevin Walsh presents heritage as an industry which "successfully mediates all our pasts as ephemeral snapshots exploited in the present, to embellish decaying cityscapes, and to guarantee the success of capital in its attempt to develop new superfluous markets"³⁴. Similarly, David Lowenthal establishes that "the past is a foreign country whose features are shaped by today's predilections, its strangeness domesticated by our own preservation of its vestiges"³⁵. The abundant criticism this industry attracts stands in an ambivalent relation to the fact that it is booming. It involves a sense of historical amnesia and stands counter to examples of museological historical narratives such as the ones I have chosen, ones which seek to dig out depth

³² They are often cited as representative examples of the Heritage Industry. See most of all Colin Sorensen, "Theme Parks and Time Machines".

³³ Brian McHale, Postmodernist Fiction (New York and London: Methuen, 1987) p. 164.

³⁴ Kevin Walsh, The Representation of the Past: Museums and Heritage in the Postmodern World (London and New York: Routledge, 1992) 149.

³⁵ David Lowenthal, The Past is a Foreign Country (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1993) Introduction p. xvii.

rather than establish a cosmetic shallowness where the "emphasis is on style rather than knowledge or meaning"³⁶.

Nostalgia mainly focuses on a sanitised past which differs from painful memories. That so much energy is spent in nostalgic activities expresses a yearning for roots or a loss of confidence in linear progress. It also conveys a sense of disorientation in a rapidly changing environment, as if it were the product of this acceleration. Robert Hewison identifies a "climate of decline" as the environment which nurtures a sense that "the past seems a better place"³⁷. Seeking comfort in a commodified past expresses a dissatisfaction with the project of modernity reflected in urban decay, according to O. K. Werkmeister³⁸. Heritage has thus become a key concept in our *fin de siècle*, parallel to museology.

History can also be represented in a manner which stresses that its normalisation or sanitisation is dangerous. I believe that an ethical dimension or moral load is a vital element in a difference between heritage parks and representations of history in the vein of the Holocaust Museum. In the latter, reading history is done in relation to the present relevance of the past, establishing a historical framework through which to understand contemporary events. History's sap-like persistence is represented and the emphasis is on this aspect and not on its remoteness. As David Lowenthal writes, "Continuity implies a living past bound up with the present, not one exotically different or obsolete"³⁹. Museums organise our "overload of memories", to use Huyssen's expression⁴⁰, and are vital in this respect.

The scope of tools at the disposal of museums has been broadened. They have become multi-functional ensembles or cultural complexes rather than focusing solely on

³⁶ Walsh, The Representation of the Past, p. 57.

³⁷ Robert Hewison, The Heritage Industry (London: Methuen, 1987) chapter 4, pp. 83-104.

³⁸ Werkmeister, Citadel Culture, p. 73: "The aesthetics of modernism lost their credibility when large collective housing projects declined into social problem zones".

³⁹ Lowenthal, The Past is a Foreign Country, p. 62.

⁴⁰ Huyssen, "Monument and Memory in a Postmodern Age", p. 11.

exhibition space⁴¹. Museology is a term that represents this change in the agenda of museums. Their complex program reflects a widening of their traditional role. Kenneth Hudson establishes that museology, as defined by the International Congress of Museums, is a science that "stud[ies] the history of museums, their role in society, methods of research, conservation, education and organisation, relations with the physical environment and typology"⁴². This activity re-defines the role of museums in contemporary culture and underlies the shape of new spaces. Peter Vergo thus establishes that "museums, in the sense in which the word is today commonly understood, are ... a relatively recent phenomenon"⁴³.

The museums I have cited are representative examples. The Sainsbury Wing is an ensemble of parts. Rossi's Deutsches Historisches Museum was conceived as a space where the container reflected the contents, both elements participating in the construction of a discourse about history. The Holocaust Museums functions in the same way. These examples all blend multi-functional space designated for temporary exhibitions with highly specialised space devoted to a specific and permanent usage. The elements on display are also made more easily readable. The museum is no longer a static space but facilitates access to its content through informative complements, and directive narratives using audio-visual and multimedia devices⁴⁴ which allow exhibitions to be supplemented with information that is not in the museum. For instance, the oral testimonies of survivors are integrated into the Holocaust Museum through screens showing video-recordings of individuals speaking, sharing eyewitness testimony

⁴¹ The museum is no longer a transparent box but has become part of the exhibition ensemble. An example of a project for such a box, far removed from the traditional nineteenth century monumental museums is Le Corbusier's spiral museum built from modular elements, and elevated on pillars. It has a potential for unlimited extension (see plate 28).

⁴² Kenneth Hudson, Museums for the 1980s: A Survey of World Trends (London: Macmillan; Paris: Unesco, 1977) p. 15.

⁴³ Peter Vergo, The New Museology, Introduction, 1-5, p. 1.

⁴⁴ These are most apparent in the Holocaust Museum and in Pointe-à-Callière, as well as science museums. Art museums also benefit from these instruments, and the Micro Gallery of the Sainsbury Wing is an example.

and legitimising the museum's own discourse⁴⁵. They provide evidence and give the museum a voice. Other devices require audience participation and an interactive dimension can thus be developed. Through exterior inputs, the boundary between inside and outside the museum is thus tested or blurred. This mainly emphasises the museum's role as a locus of education, debate and questions. Introducing multi-media in the museum is not a one-way process. Indeed, André Malraux's museum without walls of photographic reproductions of works of art has grown to encompass a technologically defined explosion of information, where the latter no longer depends on a material realm. If the Louvre can be visited on CD Rom, the building's function and interaction with visitors needs to be reconsidered. Museology responds to these changes as public institutions establish a new relation with their audience and their role as image bank no longer solely justifies their existence.

History is represented through a construed discourse enclosed in a museum space which relies on a juxtaposition of relic and technology, fact and fiction. The museum thus becomes a place where a creative tension between the two is on display, with an awareness that "collective memory is constructed through a variety of multi-layered discourses and the media"⁴⁶. How to tell a true story thus becomes central and the Holocaust Museum demonstrates that real history can be made real through reliance on an element of fake. Fiction is used to develop an awareness of history, and is thus juxtaposed to real traces of the past which also require a large amount of input to be made accessible. This use of fiction is not an example of tampering with the status of history, but is rather a necessary tool in manufacturing a story that will contain a means of marking historical persistence. Fiction is thus not necessarily a lie and is used to reveal what underlies reality. The latter is also not a unified single truth and the

⁴⁵ This presence of witnesses is, however, problematic as the videos have been subjected to the filter of recording and editing. However selective, they are still real rather than re-enacted voices telling about the past.

⁴⁶ Huyssen, "Monument and Memory in a Postmodern Age", p. 13.

Holocaust Museum is thus a discourse that points towards an unavoidable multiplicity of truths out of which a given thread has been selected and conveyed in a narrative form. A historical consciousness, and not history itself is given form.

Museums, according to Andreas Huyssen, "can be said to function as the key paradigm in contemporary postmodern culture"⁴⁷. They inscribe this culture within a historical continuum, nourishing an interest in the past and also functioning as active spaces within its boundaries. They are keepers of traces as well as a commentary on cultural production, thus leaving their own mark on the stories they transmit. The examples of museums I have cited all convey an interconnection between container and content. O. M. Ungers' Architecture Museum in Frankfurt epitomises this link (see plate 25). It was built to house exhibits about architecture such as plans, models and photographs, and a crudely schematised story of the evolution of architecture represented by scale-model replicas encased behind glass. The main object on display, however, is an oversized allusion to a essential house, housed within the museum, a white purified form which occupies most of the interior of the building. Architecture is indeed central to this museum in a manner which emphasises reflexivity and self-awareness. The latter fills the main narrative space within the museum. This echo between building and content is an extreme representation of a trend that is identifiable in other museums that differ from neutral boxes, such as Mies van der Rohe's Neue Stadtsgalerie in Berlin.

Museums have always existed in conjunction with urban space and are locations where the city and memory are interconnected. Cities have also been regularly compared to museums. Lewis Mumford writes that

if the big city is largely responsible for the invention and public extension of the museum, there is a sense in which one of its own principal functions is to serve as a museum: in its own right, the historic city retains, by reason of its amplitude and its

⁴⁷ Huyssen, "Monument and Memory in a Postmodern Age", p. 11.

long past, a larger and more various collection of cultural specimens than can be found elsewhere⁴⁸.

He adds that "the great city is the best organ of memory man has yet created"⁴⁹. It can be explored as a sequence of elements which unfold during a visit which is structured by itineraries and directed by plaques and signs. But these elements are set in their context. They are not transposed into a museum space, although historically oriented urban developments often suggest this situation. For example, the Albert Dock in Liverpool is no longer a dock. The area has been reclaimed as shops, promenades, apartments and museums, thus removing the site's original shipping function and replacing it with a new, more ascepticised one. The Dock emphasises its origin under the new layer, and becomes an emblem of the changes taking place in the city as a whole. This part of Liverpool relies on a museum spirit in its users and visitors⁵⁰.

If cities are visited in this manner, museums are also part of urban activities. They are present within the city and open to its circulation, although they are separate spaces. Venturi plays with this notion through the glass and steel wall on the East side of the Sainsbury wing which allows the city to be visible from within. The top floor of the Musée d'Orsay in Paris⁵¹ offers a similar experience as the Louvre and embankments of central Paris are visible. The museum conveys a visual awareness of its urban location. Gae Aulenti thus transposed the original function of Victor Laloux's train station⁵² as an entrance into the city, referring to this aspect in the building's new function. Museum and city are aware of each other's presence.

⁴⁸ Lewis Mumford, *The City in History* (1961. London: Penguin, 1991) p. 640.

⁴⁹ Mumford, *The City in History*, p. 640.

⁵⁰ The Tate in Liverpool's photo exhibition "Witness" (6 May 1995- 2 January 1996) included works by Thomas Struth which capture the presence of an anonymous crowd of visitors in museums such as The National Gallery and the Galleria dell'Accademia. Their outlook is exposed in a manner which recalls photographic records of crowds in cities.

⁵¹ restructured from 1980-86.

⁵² 1898-1900. Deyan Sudjic writes that airports are now the main city gateways, and "the focus for national and civic prestige, just as railway stations once were", in *The 100 Mile City* (London: André Deutsch, 1992) p. 153.

Since the great exhibitions of the 19th century, cities have been altered and re-considered through the presence of these temporary events. They also contain exhibition and museum structures which participate in their fabric in a more permanent manner. The Venice Biennale is part of the city's cultural life as a recurrent event, infusing vitality in the city. Berlin's IBA is an example of a merge between city and exhibition as the buildings it produced are permanent accretions to its architecture. A recent exhibition of collected representations of cities and architectural and urbanistic reworking of their fabric relied on this link between city and museum. Indeed, the Centre Georges Pompidou in Paris housed La Ville, art et architecture en Europe, 1870-1993 in 1994. Beaubourg as a meditation on a regeneration of the historical texture of Paris thus displayed earlier and later examples of re-thinking of urban fabric. The place where the exhibition was held thus colored its content.

Museums are an important part of Postmodern debates on history. They are also infected by these debates. If they represent public space and monumentality in a Postmodern context, their configuration has also been tinted by an inquiry into the means of retrieving history, bearing witness to its darker and more untellable sides and the way memory is problematised in architecture, fiction and historiography. Daniel Libeskind's new extension to the Berlin Museum lays German-Jewish relations as its foundation (see plate 24). He has designed a structure of concrete elements "constituting a tube with variable inclination"⁵³ as the Jewish Department, linked underground to the

⁵³ Daniel Libeskind, "The Jewish Extension to the German Museum in Berlin", sub-titled "Between the Lines", in New Architecture: The New Moderns and the Supermoderns, ed. Andreas Papadakis (London: Academy Editions, 1990) 62-77, p. 66. This building is an example of Deconstructive architecture. Another one I have cited is Bernard Tschumi's contribution to the Parc de la Villette in Paris. Kenneth Frampton presents this group of architects and their "disjunctive spatial narrative" in Modern Architecture (1980, London: Thames and Hudson, 1992) pp. 311-313. Another valuable reference is the book published after the "Postmodernism and Beyond: Architecture and the Critical Art of Contemporary Culture" symposium held in California in 1989. Critical Architecture and Contemporary Culture, eds. William J. Lillyman, Marilyn F. Moriarty and David J. Neuman (New York and Oxford: Oxford UP, 1994) questions what architecture 'stands for' (p. 5) and outlines echoes between architectural and literary discourses. An exhibition at MOMA in 1988 entitled "Deconstructive Architecture" contributed

pre-existing Baroque house where the Berlin Museum is already located. Libeskind establishes that "the new extension is conceived as an emblem. ... An architecture where the unnamed remains"⁵⁴. By seeking a form for the latent memories of Jewish life in Berlin and their history, this museum ensemble seeks to be "always on the verge of *Becoming*- no longer suggestive of a final solution"⁵⁵. It is composed of flexible spaces which seek to trigger an active response in visitors encountering open narratives in this eccentric shape which finds no precedent museological references. The building's shape is defined by an encounter between two broken lines, which embody a need to read Holocaust narratives "between the lines". The past is thus perceived as useful to the present, not equivalent. Libeskind's museum emphasises a duty to remember rather than a confidence in the retrievability of history. His museum represents a new monumentality within the city, one which undermines itself⁵⁶ by emphasising the silent, absent voices and invisible presences rather than a fixed historical narrative. Libeskind's extension to the Berlin Museum thus epitomises a new direction for the representation of history, questioning the social function of a museum and underlining the tenuousness of stable systems through a museum. The museum thus reflects Postmodern tensions between a recognised fragility of memory and a yearning for its retrieval.

to shaping it as a movement, another instance of an interconnection between MOMA and new architecture.

⁵⁴ Libeskind, "The Jewish Extension", p. 64.

⁵⁵ Libeskind, "The Jewish Extension", p. 65.

⁵⁶ Similarly, Stirling and Wilford's museum in Stuttgart is a ludic monument that draws attention to the meaning of monumentality in a contemporary cultural context.

CONCLUSION

Cities in contemporary culture are, in many ways, interconnected. An urban culture exists on an international scale, where echoes between cities prevail¹. I have however discussed aspects of Berlin, London and Paris as independent cities. This approach emphasises the fact that they belong to their respective national traditions as well as being world cities. However, they share a concern with their own past, both in their narrative representations and in many recent architectural developments they house. The city has thus become an object of meditation on history and the way the latter is encoded in memory. Like Calvino's imaginary city of Olinda, Berlin, Paris and London contain the sap of their past and are interrogated by writers of fiction in order to explore how this past can be retrieved. The narratives of Wenders, Abish, Ackroyd and Modiano, as well as the others I have cited, focus on its overt or covert persistence within the present.

A Postmodern *fin de siècle* aesthetic and language focus on the past through an interest in the process of memory. The persistence of a sap-like historical continuum between past and present endows history with a shaping, generative quality. The form of the present city relies on its past avatars. Memory of this past, on the other hand, is increasingly tenuous as layers of distance in relation to an *ur*-experience increase. If the narratives of the city I have discussed are concerned with memory and inquire into its function through representations of urban space, the city is potentially a concrete manifestation of history. It is a reality rooted outside language where traces of the past are nevertheless inscribed. The city thus becomes its witness – a lasting one –and its representation participates in a search or desire for reliable testimonies.

¹ Deyan Sudjic's The 100 Mile City (London: André Deutsch, 1992) emphasises this aspect. Indeed, he presents urban culture in the 1980s as a network of places such as London, Paris, Tokyo, New York and Los Angeles, world cities that have more in common with each other than with their respective countries.

The manner in which the examples of urban narratives I explore in this thesis use traces from the past to form contemporary narratives is closely connected to notions of testimony and of bearing witness. Indeed, telling the past has acquired an urgency in a time when first-hand witnesses are rapidly disappearing. As Elie Wiesel and Jorge Semprun established during a televised discussion, telling their past, their experience of the Holocaust and of Buchenwald has taken a new turn in recent times. Their concern not only involves revealing its story and breaking a silence of denial and disbelief but has also and more recently swung towards questions about how to pursue this telling when a distance of time settles in between the teller and a listener or reader². The point they most emphasise is that "se taire est impossible"³. However, this affirmation is infused with a growing anxiety. Indeed, Wiesel states that

se taire est interdit, parler est impossible. J'ai toujours eu peur de perdre la mémoire. Je sais que la mémoire est vulnérable. Elle s'émiette. Est-ce qu'il y a des choses que j'ai oubliées? Est-ce qu'il y a des visages qui ne sont plus dans mon visage, dans mon regard? Est-ce qu'il y a des gestes qui ne sont plus là, des gestes qui ne sont plus à ma portée? Alors, comment faire? Comment faire pour tout dire, pour dire ce qu'il faut?⁴

His voice and concerns represent a concentrated form of a state of mind which is present in many contemporary narratives. As the century moves to its close, it is increasingly apparent that its last half is rooted in loss. A sense of responsibility towards what remains, however fragmented and tenuous infuses building as well as writing. The

² In this respect, it is of interest that Wiesel is now publishing memoirs. Tous les fleuves vont à la mer (Paris: Seuil, 1994) thus complements his initial testimony, The Night, and his novels and essays. His telling has taken on another form, in an attempt to hold tighter to his memories.

³ [It is impossible to be silent], the title of their discussion which was broadcast on Arte on the 1st of March 1995 as part of the commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of the liberation of the camps. See Elie Wiesel and Jorge Semprun, Se taire est impossible (Paris: Éditions Mille et Une Nuits/Arte Éditions, 1995). Wiesel discusses his friendship with Semprun in Tous les fleuves vont à la mer, a friendship rooted in their identity as writers and as survivors from Buchenwald, although they never met when they were there.

⁴ Wiesel and Semprun, Se taire est impossible, p. 17, [To be silent is forbidden, to speak is impossible. I have always been afraid of the loss of memory. I know that memory is vulnerable. It fritters away. Are there things that I have forgotten? Are there any faces which are no longer inscribed within the lines of my own face, in my eyes? Are there gestures which no longer exist, which are no longer within my reach? So, what to do? How can one say it all, say what needs to be said?].

narratives I have explored seek to give form to traces of the past as well as register an anxiety of dissolution, one that is epitomised in Wiesel's questions cited above. When people or first-hand witnesses fade, the truthfulness of stories which shape this century is threatened. A need to tell thus gives way to questions about how to pursue this task, as heirs to testimony rather than as witnesses of the events in question. In this respect, these works produced in a Postmodern context convey an awareness of coming after, one which shapes a sense of the present. Because they focus on the Second World War and its latent presence in contemporary identity, some writers of the post-war generations reveal patterns of resonance between themselves and the literature of survivors. Their experience, however, is one of distance and the story of the self as it is read through the city needs to be pieced together.

Witnessing by proxy and through compounded voices and incongruous elements from the past is thus an important element in contemporary experience. Patrick Modiano's recent novel Chien de printemps outlines this aspect and its expression through layered traces. Indeed, the narrator retraces the story of a friend from his past who is a photographer. This person's work includes pictures of lacerated posters. He establishes that "Il m'avait expliqué qu'il lacérait lui-même les affiches dans les rues pour qu'apparaissent celles que les plus récentes avaient recouvertes. Il décollait leur lambeaux couche par couche et les photographiait au fur et à mesure avec minutie, jusqu'aux derniers fragments de papier qui subsistaient sur la planche ou la pierre" ⁵. If this character's work expresses an obsession for retrieval, it is also an emblem for a minute rummaging through places and objects where elements of the past could be recorded. His photographic subject, however, is made present, dug out or retrieved from the city. The past does not necessarily render itself easily readable. I believe narratives

⁵ Patrick Modiano, Chien de printemps (Paris: Seuil, 1993) p. 36, [He explained that he tore the posters up himself, in the street, so that the ones hidden by the most recent would become apparent. He unstuck the shreds layer by layer and photographed them progressively and minutely, down to the last fragments of paper which remained on the boards or the stone].

focus on the city as places where the shadows of disappearing witnesses can be tracked down, as well as the shadow of their stories and the historical events they experienced.

The concerns and vocabulary shared by the examples of Postmodern architecture and narrative I have discussed are expressed through this notion of layering. These stories of buildings and buildings as stories seek to negotiate a contemporary identity. The latter is the outcome of a cumulative growth and is reflected in a vocabulary which takes on board a plurality of styles and voices in order to give form to this palimpsestic understanding of the present. The past is accessible through traces and testimonies and an emphasis is placed on reading them and finding within their fabric visual or sensorial keys to the past in an attempt to grasp its shadow rather than perform a bland reiteration of set images and official memorials. Details and fragments such as Modiano's shredded posters or Wenders' Postdamer Platz are sites within the city where this past discloses its persistence.

The aspects of history that are portrayed through the cities of Berlin, London and Paris are dark ones. These cities contain residual traces of disruptive events which find a resonance in body- or emotive memory underlying a rational or acceptable one. Shoshana Felman and Dori Laub write that "as a relation to events, testimony seems to be composed of bits and pieces of a memory that has been overwhelmed by occurrences that have not settled into understanding or remembrance, acts that cannot be constructed as knowledge nor assimilated into full cognition, events in excess of our frames of reference"⁶. History as trauma or subterranean knowledge is brought into view by these Postmodern narratives to reveal its formative persistence as well as to attempt to unprime or subvert its threatened resurgence. Guilt and involvement, the less acceptable versions of the past are thus revisited, critically. Postmodern layering can also take on board issues of cultural identity and delicate areas of historical discussion

⁶ Shoshana Felman and Dori Laub, M.D., Testimony, Crises of Witnessing in Literature, Psychoanalysis, and History (New York and London: Routledge, 1992) p. 5.

and explore uncanny aspects of the past rather than seek to exercise control over it. The past is explored for its complexity and, in this respect, the examples I have cited disclaim views of Postmodernism as solely a game played with static images where the past is used as a cosmetic veil over the present.

This view, however, informs many current theories of the Postmodern city. For instance, M. Christine Boyer's study entitled The City of Collective Memory, Its Historical Imagery and Architectural Entertainments presents a view which conflicts with mine by stating that "in the City of Collective Memory, we find that different layers of historical time superimposed on each other or different architectural strata (touching but not necessarily informing each other) no longer generate a structural form to the city but merely culminate in an experience of diversity"⁷. This is true in relation to examples of Postmodern production I have not discussed and therefore does not take into account a vast body of works where different strata do indeed inform each other. I believe that within Postmodern production lies an underside to the overt and assertive confidence of the 1980s, expressed most noticeably in architecture. It is another form of diversity which allows for many uses of images of superimposed historical time.

Building memorials is an element included in both the Postmodern fiction and architecture I have discussed in this thesis. These examples of contemporary cultural practice explore how new artefacts can embody voices from the past within the construction of a new one. Even though Postmodernism is essentially about the present, memory is a central concern in this respect since this present is built on a sense of precedence as well as on an awareness of its weight. Building is however a potent image as it involves a need to construe a shape out of this past, one that is valid in the present. This finds an echo in James Merrill's "dull need to make some kind of house/ Out of the

⁷ M. Christine Boyer, The City of Collective Memory (London and Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1994) p. 19.

life lived, out of the love spent"⁸, where the house contains traces of experience. This instinct to build finds a parallel in an instinct to tell stories, to inscribe traces of presence and experience. Merrill's house is a mnemonic emblem. It counters Hamilton's image of memory as an urban scene of ruin and decay. In a Postmodern sensitivity, memory thus becomes both a trace of the constructed house of history, its architecture, as well as a sign of its potential fragility and changeability, or its urban form.

A tension in the narratives and architecture discussed in parts I and II exists between living in old houses and building new ones. Indeed, Huet reads traces which exist on a site. Rossi's historicism on the other hand involves the construction of an archetypal language extracted from a variety of sources. Their work focuses on defining urban vitality through historical continuum rather than imagining futuristic dystopias. As an heir to the urban architectural utopias of the 1930s and their post-war reality, historicism is critical of this agenda and offers itself as an alternative. It is not a nostalgic act of reverence towards the past, or a plaster cast city⁹, nor is it limited to a portrayal of urban depravity¹⁰. Like Postmodern fiction, its voice is not visionary, but functions within an existing fabric, and teases its own shape out of the density of its own past.

Postmodern architecture and literature negotiate how to inhabit a space saturated with this past. Both outline questions about cultural identity through an urban historical reality. Both also rely on narrative as a means of exploring the city. The latter is frequently visited in Postmodern narrative because it is a *Lieu de Mémoire*, where constructed memorials and a darker, less defined sense of the past coexist.

⁸ James Merrill, "An Urban Convalescence", Water Street (New York: Atheneum, 1980) 3-6, p. 6, final lines.

⁹ To use Victor Hugo's image from Notre Dame de Paris (1832, Paris: Gallimard, 1988) p. 188: "nos pères avaient un Paris de pierre; nos fils auront un Paris de plâtre", [Our fathers had a Paris of stone, our sons will have a Paris of plaster].

¹⁰ Examples include George Orwell's Nineteen Eighty-Four, or later cinematic examples such as Jean-Luc Godard's Alphaville, Ridley Scott's Blade Runner and Terry Gilliam's Brazil, .

ANNEXES

1:THE NEUE WACHE UNTER DEN LINDEN

Text on memorial plaque.

DIE NEUE WACHE IST DER ORT DER ERINNERUNG
UND DES GEDENKENS AN DIE OPFER
VON KRIEG UND GEWALTHERRSCHAFT.

WIR GEDENKEN
DER VÖLKER, DIE DURCH KRIEG GELITTEN HABEN.
WIR GEDENKEN IHRER BÜRGER, DIE VERFOLGT WURDEN
UND IHR LEBEN VERLOREN.
WIR GEDENKEN DER GEFALLENEN DER WELTKRIEGE.
WIR GEDENKEN DER UNSCHULDIGEN,
DIE DURCH KRIEG UND FOLGEN DES KRIEGES
IN DER HEIMAT, DIE IN GEFANGENSCHAFT UND
BEI DER VERTREIBUNG UMS LEBEN GEKOMMEN SIND.

WIR GEDENKEN DER MILLIONEN ERMORDETER JUDEN.
WIR GEDENKEN DER ERMORDETEN SINTI UND ROMA.
WIR GEDENKEN ALLER, DIE UMGEBRACHT WURDEN
WEGEN IHRER ABSTAMMUNG, IHRER HOMOSEXUALITÄT
ODER WEGEN KRANKENHEIT UND SCHWÄCHE.
WIR GEDENKEN ALLER ERMORDETEN, DEREN RECHT AUF
LEBEN GELEUGNET WURDE.

WIR GEDENKEN DER MENSCHEN,
DIE STERBEN MUSSTEN UM IHRER RELIGIÖSEN ODER
POLITISCHEN ÜBERZEUGUNG WILLEN.
WIR GEDENKEN ALLER,
DIE OPFER DER GEWALTHERRSCHAFT WURDEN
UND UNSCHULDIG DEN TOD FANDEN.

WIR GEDENKEN DER FRAUEN UND MÄNNER,
DIE IM WIDERSTAND GEGEN DIE GEWALTHERRSCHAFT
IHR LEBEN OPFERTEN.
WIR EHREN ALLE, DIE EHER DEN TOD HINNAHMEN,
ALS IHR GEWISSEN ZU BEUGEN.

WIR GEDENKEN DER FRAUEN UND MÄNNER,
DIE VERFOLGT UND ERMORDET WURDEN,
WEIL SIE SICH TOTALITÄRER DIKTATUR NACH 1945
WIDERSETZT HABEN.

[THE NEUE WACHE:

The Neue Wache is a place of commemoration and memory of war and the reign of terror.

We remember the people who suffered from war. We remember the citizens who were persecuted and lost their lives. We remember the victims of the World Wars who died in combat. We remember the innocent who lost their lives through war and the aftermath of war, in their own country, through imprisonment and as refugees.

We remember the millions of murdered Jews. We remember the murdered Sinti and Roma peoples. We remember all those who had to die because of their origins, their homosexuality, or because of febleness. We remember all those whose right to live was denied.

We remember those who died for their religious or political beliefs. We remember all the victims of tyranny who met death innocently.

We remember the women and men who lost their lives by opposing tyranny. We honor those who accepted death instead of violating their conscience.

We remember the women and men who were persecuted and murdered because they resisted dictatorship after 1945.

2: POINTE-A-CALLIERE

Montréal's museum of archaeology and history.

Situated in Old Montréal, between the water's edge and the heart of the city, Pointe-à-Callière is a new museum of archaeology and history, opened in 1992. Its aims and purpose are presented or even advertised in a rather self-congratulatory publication entitled Pointe-à-Callière, Experience the Past!¹. Here, a visit is described as an adventure, a safe and pleasurable excursion into the historical layers of Montréal. The museum is built on the recognised site of the city's foundation in 1642, a slice of land where its origin as a military camp site and fort is located. Its aim is to allow visitors to gain a "new perspective on the streets and buildings of Old Montréal, and the tales they have to tell"². Behind this simple and straight-forward statement lies an intent to make the city readable, to alter a familiar perception of a given urban space by presenting it in conjunction with its own historical density. The museum's construction and organisation centers around a perception of urban history as a layering of successive times and of the relics and remains or indeed traces that these leave behind as informative residue.

This sense of layers is embodied in the museum's spatial organisation. The latter is a conjunction of two distinct buildings linked by an underground passage. This distinction between the buildings is maintained on their exterior, but together they house one exhibition that is to be encountered as a gradual and chronological unfolding of the city's history. The first building is a new one – called the Eperon (see plate26) – built in a manner which seeks to follow the traces of the past on its site and be a signpost for the museum as well as for its layered structure³. It is an example of contextual

¹ A publication of the Montréal Museum of Archaeology and History, 1992.

² Pointe-à-Callière, p. 4.

³ This section of the museum was designed by the architectural consortium of Dan S. Hanganu/Provencher Roy.

architecture in the sense that it seeks to conform to the proportions of the street and section of Old Montréal in which it fits and to match the materials already present there. It also follows the shape of a building that used to occupy the site, the Royal Insurance Company, and by doing so embodies and revives a slice of urban memory by reconfiguring its traces into a contemporary form. The second building is a restored one, the old Custom House⁴. This journey through the stages of the city's growth until the present is thus structured in three parts, the "Eperon", the "Conduit" or link passageway and the "Ancienne-Douane". These offer a display of two possibilities in relation to constructing a purpose-built space in which history is exhibited, first through a reworking of traces of the past and allusions to precedence on the site of a new building, and secondly through the restoration and recycling of a genuinely old place. Both combine to produce a new ensemble. Thus, "while the Eperon building wraps the past in its present-day architecture, the "Ancienne Douane" ... instead encloses modern facilities within its venerable walls"⁵. The link between them is subterranean, a hint towards an underlying connection as well as an interdependence between the new and the old, a connection that is central to the museum's agenda. This space is thus a compound of Postmodern architectural re-configuration and revival of the past. The Custom House has been removed from its original function and its displacement into the realm of museum-space is supposed to draw attention to this origin rather than erase it. The building has become a signpost for its own pastness, one that makes it eligible for present-day attention.

The site on which this ensemble is located participates in the meaning invested in the whole. It is indeed a locus of origin, one where the city finds its earliest roots in the form of its first cemetery and the constructions which were later built over it. Pointe-à-Callière thus seeks to put Montréal's history on display as well as being itself an

⁴ LeMoyne Lapointe Magne, architects and urban planner, were responsible for this section.

⁵ Pointe-à-Callière, p. 34.

archaeological site where elements of the city's history that lay dormant under its surface are revealed. Indeed, the architectural consortium of Dan S. Hanganu/Provencher Roy "relied on two themes [to illustrate the transformation of the very first public square in Montréal]: memory and inventory"⁶. Traces of the past on the site of their occurrence are made visible and integrated in the museum's story. In a way, this authenticates the whole process or at least emphasises that this is the real thing, history captured in its natural habitat as it was originally. It is made visible through the revealing chisels and brushes of professionals in the field of disclosing archaeological remains. The past is seemingly revealed and not written, remembered rather than construed, appropriated rather than invented, despite the inscriptive function of these tools. The line of discourse emphasises that what is there has always been there, even if this overlooks the fact that it is only now that reading these relics has become a relevant part in constructing a popular multi-media telling of the city's history. That this story starts with tangible traces is, I believe, a manner of legitimizing the whole exhibition with an aura of truthfulness. Indeed, "the objets recovered from different periods" are "valuable witnesses to the past", "fragments [which] can be pieced together into a coherent picture, giving us a better understanding of the flow of history"⁷. The tripartite museum is constructed on the traces of the city's origins as they form the lowest layer of history as well as the lowest floor in the overall layered structure of the Eperon building itself (see plate 27). They are the foundation of the edification of Pointe-à-Callière's narrative. Indeed, how can fragments from the past speak for themselves without a little coaxing, without a little narrative cement in which the fragmented traces can be set.

A visitor starts his or her visit of the museum here, or rather of the museum's displays as an introductory multi-media computerised show opens the itinerary, where

⁶ Pointe-à-Callière, p. 30.

⁷ Pointe-à-Callière, p. 13.

"for 16 minutes, scenes from the past, famous figures and the former inhabitants of the site come to life again. The history of Montréal, its life as a meeting and trading place, rolls before your eyes, from the first native inhabitants to the fledging French colony, finally ending with today's metropolis"⁸. This show happens around a stage that is constituted of remains of old buildings, turned into a theatre with tiered seating. It presents an overview of the exhibition to come, summarising its highlights on a screen. It establishes a contrast in mood or a break with the world outside, the street, encouraging visitors to pursue this museum frame of mind until re-encountering the street and the city, with a fresh and more informed outlook. The museum's purpose is indeed to enhance an awareness of the underlying forces and events that gave the city its present shape. From the movie theatre at one end to the thematic gift shop at the other – a place where all good museums and exhibitions go – visitors travel through a wide variety of exhibits which make history speak, sometimes as literally as that, through virtual recreations of historical characters who answer multiple-choice questions. All this combines to prove that the past is present and accessible. The Eperon building itself expresses this perspective as its shape is defined by its context and the traces of precedence on its site. The French word *éperon* stands for a counterfort or buttress, thus alluding to the military nature of the site at one time as well as tying in references to protection and preservation. With this notion of a wall or bastion and of defence as well as of strategic view-point, ideas of encompassing and defining boundaries also arise, with their meaning-giving connotations. The *éperon* is a pillar on which the story of the past can lean. Thus the intent of the whole ensemble finds a *mise en abyme* in the shape of the new building.

A city's history is visible as an accumulation of traces from the past. Pointe-à-Callière presents this layering, one that follows Aldo Rossi's understanding of urban space as a fabric woven with the juxtaposition of traces from different times. The site

⁸ Pointe-à-Callière, p. 11.

itself told a palimpsestic story which can be read as a descent into the past and into the concentration of its traces here. Indeed, in this sample part of the city, under remains of a park lay the ones of a parking lot, over vestiges from the Royal Insurance Company building, built on remains of other earlier constructions, followed by "wooden fragments form the first development of the shore" and finally "the layer of soil at the lowest level"⁹. The museum's internal organisation reverses this order but maintains a sense of the superimposition of layers of time¹⁰. A visit starts with a descent into archaeological foundations and then progresses through chronologically organised exhibits, which are either relics from the past encased behind glass or hi-tech simulations of moments selected from 350 years of urban history, from architectural and sociological perspectives. These combine to establish a sense of historical accretion, the present city being the space where traces of all these moments can be read. The exhibition is structured to echo this historical layering as it is an ascent from the city's archaeological depths up to the present. A visitor moves from the basement upwards, through the five floors of museum space in the Custom House. An important overriding thread is a notion of changeability. A city, and this city in particular, is shaped by alterations, by the superimposition of different stories on one site. However, the museum points towards a sense that this process can be made visible, and that it is because of the changes in the city and its modern growth that its past is of interest. The Pointe-à-Callière experience seeks to render visible and coherent what underlies the surface of the city, keeping its modern high-rise centre as a reference in this journey backwards in time.

Indeed, the *aboutissement* of a trip through the layers of history on display is the top of the Eperon building. From this outdoor panoramic tower, the whole city is visible.

⁹ Pointe-à-Callière, p. 23.

¹⁰ Each layer of the museum corresponds to a period of the city's history and development. Thus, layer 1: the Indian presence; layer 2: Montréal, a French city; layer 3: A British City; layer 4: Montréal in North America; layer 5: Montréal in Québec and on the world scene. See Pointe-à-Callière, p. 42.

One is indeed outside again, not in the street from where one came but above, able to grasp the whole scene not only with the benefit of this position but also through the filter of information gathered during one's journey through the dimly lit floors of exhibits. So from down in the depths to up into the light, one is indeed enlightened as regards the view that unfolds at the bottom of the tower. From this view-point, one's visual journey back into the city is guided by maps, labels and small cylinders through which one looks. These are pointed towards important buildings and other places of interest, real places thus being framed by a series of explanatory devices¹¹. A city thus lends itself to the status of display, establishing a parallel between museum and urban space, one that I understand as a means of enhancing an understanding of the historical processes at play in a city. If the Pointe-à-Callière ensemble aims at shedding light on the growth and development of the city, I believe it does this successfully. The museum gathers a variety of threads that tie together to form the expression of a concern with urban history, one that seeks to read the present with reference to the past. A museum is thus not a cordoned off space, but one which enters into a creative rapport or interrelationship with the city¹².

Central to the whole idea are both entertainment and education. This museum has history as its main display, ordering fragments into a tale which claims to be coherent. It also claims to be exciting, a riveting journey into unsuspected depths. Inside the museum, a visitor is invited to "hold your breath and you will hear the whisper of the past"¹³. By personalising the past, it is seemingly made intimately available for a visitor who can then easily establish a one-on-one relationship with its rustle, as if this rustle was just there. But still, it is though this sense of intimacy and closeness that

¹¹ These define a sort of tunnel-vision that is selective and highlights points of interest.

¹² Gae Aulenti's work on the Gare d'Orsay in Paris is an example of the museum as a locus of high-vistas on the city. From the top floor, one can gaze down at the Seine and the Louvre area through big glass clocks, the city thus being filtered through time and the museum. Here however it is an unfocused gaze that is on offer rather than a directed scrutiny that selects worthwhile focal points.

¹³ Pointe-à-Callière, p. 15.

one is supposed to respond to the story of Montréal, and learn about its history in this interactive manner. The museum is more than a neutral exhibit of relics, firstly because it combines these with a variety of construed objects but also because here, "conservation and exploitation go hand in hand"¹⁴. By this, the museum's explanatory booklet means that "conservation is based on the discovery and long-term preservation of the objects brought to light, while exploitation consists of presenting and explaining these relics and artefacts"¹⁵. The accessibility of history is a concern and this statement offers an insight into how much of the whispers of the past are actually construed, out of an intent to render them audible. The ensemble at times feels like a big toy, a game or show that attempts to coax an uninformed audience into being interested in Montréal's history¹⁶ as well as in the work involved in establishing the museum itself. The latter is indeed as much on display as the exhibits and the story of the city and Pointe-à-Callière appears self-proclamatory in its way of drawing attention to itself.

Pointe-à-Callière is not a museum for specialists in the subject of its displays. It is an introductory space rather than a research centre, although it claims a status of "repository of cultural, scientific and heritage information"¹⁷. Of interest in relation to the representation of urban history and its perception as a layered superimposition of successive traces is the way the ensemble is orchestrated, in its use of space and its architectural shape as well as in the juxtaposition of fact and fiction in its displays. A collection of relics is present as witnesses to history and are blended into a variety of construed exhibits. Both complement each other, even if their boundaries are clearly

¹⁴ Pointe-à-Callière, p. 21.

¹⁵ Pointe-à-Callière, p. 21.

¹⁶ The latter is obviously fascinating for a professional conservation group but for a visitor to the city it might seem otherwise. Just how enthralled can one get at the sight of the genuine foundations of a town house? Maybe the over-enthusiastic museum pamphlet is an attempt to compensate for this situation, to infuse a bit of excitement into the contemplation of broken pottery. But then this also enters the realm of a museum's relation to entertainment within the context of contemporary interactive amusement parks.

¹⁷ Pointe-à-Callière, p. 28.

defined. Indeed, a scale model which re-creates the appearance of the site in an earlier time is not to be confused with original engravings from the time or with preserved architectural samples. Together, they tell a story, and doing so in this manner reveals that archaeological remains maybe do not whisper loud enough on their own. Indeed, pieces from broken objects are more readable if they have been previously gathered and ordered, and endowed with labels or other accompanying explanatory discourse, acting as amplifiers for the "whisper of the past". Also, they are traces of previous periods of history and as fragments, they can only hint towards the lost whole. Pointe-à-Callière emphasises the presence of the remains it exhibits, rather than the silence and disappearance of other possible witnesses.

These absences are filled in with textual, photographic, filmic and many other constructs. A visitor thus encounters a compound of representational techniques and narrative strategies that are brought together to tell a true story of a real city's genuine historical roots and the anchorage of the present into these. This museum's function is to preserve and display Montréal's urban history and in doing so, be a keepsake of urban memory. It rescues the story of the city and construes a seemingly coherent albeit unavoidably selective narrative which makes the city itself readable in a historical perspective. In this respect, the ensemble as well as its displays, is a blend of fact and fiction that attempts to veil its fictional side behind its factual one. Here, an interdependence between fact and fiction is not exploited, this museum indeed being a space that is primarily devoted to making a form of memory available and not to debating its tenuousness. Pointe-à-Callière is a communicative project which reaches out to an audience and makes history appear easy.

From the top of the Eperon building's tower, a museum gaze is projected back onto the city. The museum seeks to define or refine the way urban space is perceived. It is a means of highlighting the city, of identifying its existence within the process of time. As a showcase for heritage, the Pointe-à-Callière project was initiated in 1980

with governmental support. Indeed, "the City of Montréal decided to protect and develop the site of its founding"¹⁸. The city is thus both the subject and origin of the ensemble, museum and city finding an interconnection. Pointe-à-Callière was built as a contribution to the festivities marking the 350th anniversary of the founding of Montréal in 1992 and was opened on May 17. Dedicated to the city, it displays Montréal's own heritage, celebrating its past and its present. Considering Québec's confused sense of a future, this consolidation of an identity and of a sense of continuity with tradition and urban roots finds social and political motivations. It is of interest that a museum is where this urban identity is exhibited, or even constructed. Pointe-à-Callière is an example among many of a museum to a city within that city, a space of concentration and recollection, as well as of historically determined storytelling. The Museum of London and the Musée Carnavalet in Paris are two other obvious and established examples, but every city appears to produce its share of self-dedicated museum-space. There thus seems to be a recurring interconnection between them, museums being propitious spaces in which to read cities and cities producing a museum mood or gaze which draws a visitor indoors.

¹⁸ Pointe-à-Callière, p. 26.

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