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Katherine Graham April 10, 2024

Reflective Architecture: How Sacred Architecture Facilitates Ethical Reflection

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Abstract

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This paper asks the question: How do religious and secular sacred spaces prompt ethical reflection? Implicit in this guiding question is the notion of sacred space, not as limited to religious associations but as places where ethical reflection and moral formation occur. In this thesis, ethical reflection is focused on contemplation regarding socialized roles and transtemporal empathy, the latter was coined for this thesis. Transtemporal empathy is the empathetic connection to people and places in the past, present, and future. Making this distinction, I utilize a variety of disciplines, including philosophy, religious theory, architectural theory, cognitive science, psychology, and primatology. I argue that the reflective spaces in the built environment, even when secular, may facilitate ethical reflection on socialization and transtemporal empathy. Throughout the thesis, I utilize theory, accounts from architects, and phenomenological accounts of the following spaces: William R. Cannon Chapel in Atlanta, Georgia; Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, D.C., the Irish Hunger Memorial in Manhattan, New York; and The Legacy Museum in Montgomery, Alabama.

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Table of Contents

"But when the mind opens, and reveals the laws which traverse the universe, and make things what they are, then shrinks the great world at once into a mere illustration and fable of this mind. What am I? and What is? asks the human spirit with a curiosity new-kindled, but never to be quenched. Behold these outrunning laws, which our imperfect apprehensions see tend this way and that, but not come full circle. Behold these infinite relations, so like, so unlike; many, yet one. I would study, I would know, I would admire forever. These works of thought have been the entertainments of the human spirit in all ages." [1] - Ralph Waldo Emerson, 1838 Harvard Divinity School Address

INTRODUCTION

Every time my foot finds its place on the concave shape of a worn-down stair, I think about how many people have stepped in that same spot. Over hundreds of years, the stairs must have felt the weight of thousands of feet all on their way to pursue their lives. Reflecting on the amount of time and people it takes for a stone stair to lose its shape always leaves me feeling small yet significant. I am only one of the many feet that have ever and will ever walk over the stairs, yet I am also making a contribution to the eroding shape of the built environment. I often think of the people who walked before me; if I am at school, then I think about the hundreds of students who rushed to their classes in pursuit of greater knowledge. Perhaps some of these students were merely trudging to class to complete a degree. Others, however, may be the first in their families to obtain a college degree to create a better future for their descendants, or they may be the reason that the department I am walking through exists as it does today. I feel inspired by the people who came before me; even if I cannot know them personally, I know we can relate to each other in our shared experience of walking over the worn-down stairs on our

[1] Emerson, Ralph Waldo. *Address, An*, Infomotions, Inc., 2000, pp. 1. *ProQuest Ebook Central*, https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/emory/detail.action?docID=3314427.

way to class. Then, as I continue walking and going about my day, I always feel more aware of my contribution to the future. Just as the students of the past inspire me, I, and everyone alive today, may one day be an inspiration for future students. Not because of the legacy that is associated with one's name but as one of thousands who will contribute to the social, political, and physical landscape of the future.

I have had this feeling on stage performing, while reading marginalia in rare books, and walking through historic cities. The common denominator of these experiences is an awareness of my being in comparison to the entirety of human existence. In many ways, the feeling is transtemporal in its quality of making visible both the past, present, and future. I have always thought of this experience as sacred, even though it is not predicated on an association with religion. Since studying religion and learning more about different theories of sacred time and space, however, I have encountered theories in religious studies that resonate with the described experience. This thesis will utilize those theories to explore how reflection, such as that which is described above, is facilitated by religious and secular architecture. There are many different conceptions of the separation between the sacred and profane as being an orienting force in theories of religion, philosophy, and architecture.

I explored the experience described through interaction with the built environment and research in philosophy, religion, anthropology, psychology, sociology, cognitive science, and architectural theory. Given this interdisciplinary approach, each chapter will include a short introduction, an explanation of the relevant texts and sites, and a case study of one to two architectural sites. Within each case study, I will provide background on the site, the designers or creators, and a phenomenological section. There will be a change to the first-person point of view as I recount my experience in the spaces. I acknowledge that experience is subjective, and

each individual will have a nuanced and personal experience in each space based on various influences. Thus, in the phenomenological sections, I refer only to my experience. Research done on the designers and history of each site was done after my visit.

Each chapter is focused on a different kind of architectural space. While ethical reflection can be prompted in various spaces, the three categories chosen for this thesis are those that I felt were most significant due to having the most relevant supporting evidence in existing literature. I begin with religious and multifaith spaces to ground my arguments in the context of a traditional concept of the sacred. The first chapter will introduce the reader to the religious terms and theories that will be explored in a secular context in later chapters. The last two chapters will engage with the theories in the first chapter alongside secular or religiously unaffiliated theories. Throughout this thesis, I will engage with the following theorists as their work provided the most relevant and notable contribution to the ideas presented in the subsequent chapters.

German theologian Rudolf Otto argues in his 1917 work, *The Idea of the Holy*,[2] that the sacred or holy is not merely about morality but rather about what he calls the *numinous*. The aspect of this idea that is of the most importance to this thesis is the notion of "creature-feeling,"[3] which can be described as awareness of one's being in comparison to the divine. In his work *The Sacred and the Profane*, Mircea Eliade, drawing from the work of Otto, argues that the sacred "shows itself to us."[4] Eliade argues that sacred space and time are for the religious man only, which is where my argument diverges and expands. Sacred space and time are accessible to the non-religious person in memorial spaces. Instead of religion as sacred, history, interdependence, and collective transtemporal empathy constitute the sacred. While the secular sacred is not

[2] Otto, Rudolf. *The Idea of the Holy*. Third Edition, Oxford UP, 1957.
[3] Otto, Rudolf. *The Idea of the Holy.* Third Edition, Oxford UP, 1957, p. 10.
[4] Eliade, Mircea. *The Sacred and the Profane: The Nature of Religion*. Translated by Willard R Trask, New York, United States of America, Harcourt, Brace and World, Inc, 1959, p. 11.

necessarily associated with religion, it is sacred because it marks a break from the profane. The notion of the sacred as being a break in the hegemony of the profane is where I agree with Eliade. Emile Durkheim argues that religion is social and the sacred is "the collective feeling of which it is the object," and it is contagious in its ability to spread to the profane person.[5] While this notion is interesting to a larger discussion regarding the sacred, it will not be the focus of this work, which is concerned with the built environment qua built environment, rather than the built environment in the context of collective effervescence.

Sociologist Peter Berger writes about religion as world-building and world-affirming in his work *The Sacred Canopy*. He argues that socialization occurs as a transmission between generations and that challenges to socialization can disrupt one's understanding of one's roles in society. Additionally, he writes that "the phenomenon called 'pluralism' is a social-structural correlate of the secularization of consciousness." [6] Socialization and pluralism will be explored more in Chapter I as it relates to the experience of secular world-building in multifaith spaces.

During the 1st century BCE, Vitruvius, a Roman architect and engineer, wrote that architecture is made of three elements: *firmitas, utilitas,* and *venustas*; this triad is translated as "durability, convenience, and beauty" [7] or "soundness, utility, and attractiveness."[8] The Vitruvian Triad, as it is commonly referred to in academia, is the compass in which the notion of architecture will be orientated towards throughout this thesis. Buildings must have durability and soundness (*firmitas*) to withstand the tests of time. Buildings must have convenience and utility (*utilitas*) to be used with intention. Finally, buildings must have beauty and attractiveness (*venustas*) to facilitate emotion in the viewer.

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[5] Durkheim, Émile, and Karen E. Fields. *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life.* The Free Press, 1995, pp. 416.
[6] Berger, Peter L. *The Sacred Canopy: Elements of a Sociological Theory of Religion*. Anchor, 1990, pp. 127.
[7] Vitruvius. *The Ten Books on Architecture*. Translated by Morris H Morgan, Dover Publications, 1960, pp. 17
[8] Vitruvius. "First Principles and the Layout of Cities." *Vitruvius: "Ten Books on Architecture."* Ed. Ingrid D. Rowland and Thomas Noble Howe. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999, pp. 21–32. Print.

More will be said on these ideas and their relationship to the built environment in subsequent chapters. Together, this collection of different perspectives, ranging from religious studies to cognitive science, will construct the notion of the sacred throughout the following chapters. My own idea of the sacred is an orientation to something greater than oneself, which is prompted by *transtemporal empathy*; the greater presence may be the divine or the interdependence of all humanity throughout time. I will return to this definition throughout the subsequent chapters to explain how sacred space is created both in religious and secular environments. In doing this, I will also explain how sacredness facilitates ethical reflection on transtemporal empathy.

TRANSTEMPORAL EMPATHY

The phrase *transtemporal empathy* is my own; however, it draws from many different theories of empathy from the fields of philosophy, sociology, primatology, cognitive science, religion, and secular ethics. In the following pages, I will outline how many different theories on empathy work together to form the notion of transtemporal empathy. I will then continue to outline how it is important to religious and memorial spaces. Transtemporal empathy relies heavily on what His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama believes to be the pillars of secular ethics: shared humanity and interdependence.[9] Transtemporal empathy recognizes the shared humanity and interdependence of all beings and environments which have existed before the present moment and which will exist after the present moment.

The theory of empathy that most closely resembles transtemporal empathy comes from futurist and founder of Longpath Labs, Ari Wallach. He developed a similar notion, which he calls “transgenerational empathy,” which emphasizes having empathy for the people in the past

[9] Lama, Dalai. *Beyond Religion: Ethics for a Whole World*. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2011, pp. 19.

and future. He defines transgenerational empathy as having "an understanding and constant activation that you are part of the great chain of being. You are part of what came before you, you are present in the moment and aligned with what is happening, and you are part of what is going to happen in the future." [10] While transgenerational empathy is very similar, transtemporal empathy does not merely focus on humans and intergenerational *emotional* connection but also on the built environment. Urban planner Kevin Lynch and architect Tom Vooren capture this in their respective works. In the context of historic preservation, descriptions of futurist thinking are offered by Kevin Lynch in his book *What Time is this Place?* and architectural design presented by Tom Vooren in his dissertation titled "Temporal Empathy." Lynch describes one's relationship to time in a similar manner to Wallach; both believe that one can contribute to the creation of a better future. Vooren's work focuses on architectural experience as factual and atmospheric; the factual is the existing material and the atmospheric is an individual's response to a space. References to Lynch and Vooren will be made in later chapters, while Wallach's theory will not, as it does not relate to the built environment specifically.

Other secular notions of empathy come from philosopher Robert Vischer and primatologist Frans de Waal. *Einfühlung* has been widely cited as the origin of the word "empathy." The German word *einfühlung* is often translated as "in-feeling" or "feeling into" in regards to physical space. Vischer's *einfühlung* is thus helpful when discussing one's relationship to emotion and the built environment. Primatologist Frans de Waal has found that morality is not predicated on religion in his studies on bonobos. De Waal believes that the two pillars of morality, which humans cannot live without, are reciprocity and fairness.[11] In his many studies,

[10] Admin. "Forging the Future: Ari Wallach on the Longpath Mindset, Telos and Transgenerational Empathy." *Rich Roll*, 23 Jan. 2024, www.richroll.com/podcast/ari-wallach-698.
[11] De Waal, Frans. "Moral Behavior in Animals." *TED Talks*, www.ted.com/talks/frans_de_waal_moral_behavior_in_animals?language=en.

de Waal has found that empathy exists in animals and is thus not necessarily associated with religious ethics. He coined the term *cognitive empathy*, which describes "when emotional contagion [becomes] paired with appraisal of the other's situation and attempts to understand the cause of the other's emotions."[12]

Narrative empathy is important in this context, particularly in the theories of Suzanne Keen and Maja Djikic, Keith Oatly, and Mihnea C. Moldoveanu. Keen is the former President of Scripps College and a scholar who has produced many works on literary theory and its relationship to empathy. In her essay "A Theory of Narrative Empathy," [13] she identifies three types of empathy felt by authors. *Bounded strategic empathy* and *ambassadorial strategic empathy* refer to an author's goal of engaging with in-group empathy. The third kind of strategic empathy, *broadcast strategic empathy*, "calls upon every reader to feel with members of a group by emphasizing our common vulnerabilities and hopes." [14] Broadcast strategic empathy relates to theories of collective or interdependent empathy, such as the theory of shared humanity and interdependence presented by His Holiness the Dalai Lama.

Maja Djikic, Keith Oatly, and Mihnea C. Moldoveanu's forthcoming work on narrative empathy identifies that there is not a significant difference between the empathy felt by the readers of literary fiction and literary non-fiction.[15] The important element to note here is the nature of literary nonfiction as being truthful and possibly associated with having a "multiplicity of perspectives" [16] as opposed to other forms of nonfiction, which may not have as many

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[12] *The Primate Mind : Built to Connect with Other Minds*, edited by Waal, Frans B. M. de, and Pier Francesco Ferrari, Harvard University Press, 2012, pp. 125. *ProQuest Ebook Central*, https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/emory/detail.action?docID=3301059.
[13] Keen, Suzanne. "A Theory of Narrative Empathy." *Narrative*, vol. 14, no. 3, 2006, pp. 207–36. *JSTOR*, http://www.jstor.org/stable/20107388. Accessed 6 Mar. 2024.
[14] Keen, Suzanne. "A Theory of Narrative Empathy." *Narrative*, vol. 14, no. 3, 2006, pp. 207–36. *JSTOR*, http://www.jstor.org/stable/20107388. Accessed 6 Mar. 2024.
[15] Djikic, Maja, et al. "Reading Other Minds." *The Scientific Study of Literature*, forthcoming.
[16] Djikic, Maja, et al. "Reading Other Minds." *The Scientific Study of Literature*, forthcoming, pp. 21.

perspectives or narrative qualities. The ability to empathize with non-fiction as well as fiction will be important in chapter three as it relates to the truthful narrative regarding the history of racism in America presented at the Legacy Museum.

Viewing historical artifacts in the museum can prompt one to imagine the lives of those who used these artifacts, and how the things one uses today will one day be considered ancient. Picking up a book in the library full of marginalia can make one think about who underlined specific phrases and why. These are just a few examples of how reflection on the past occurs. I will argue that this is empathy for the past and future, or *transtemporal empathy*, as I will refer to it in my writing, is prompted in religious spaces, memorials, and museums.

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Some spaces may heighten one's awareness of the hegemony of the profane. A windowless lecture hall during an exam full of the sound of echoing pencils, a cubicle in an office building, restaurants (both too loud and too quiet), and dorm rooms, to name a few. We all have spaces that make us feel drenched in monotony and routine. At their best, profane spaces can be comforting, and at their worst, they can be depressing, anxiety-inducing places where one merely lives life by going through the motions. Profane spaces are inevitable because they are the spaces one often interacts with the most. However, profane spaces should not be the only spaces one interacts with as they do not challenge one to think beyond one's worldview or remind one of the history that contributed to one's life or the future one contributes to with every action. In other words, profane spaces do not orient one to interdependence because they do not prompt one to reflect or think broadly.

We all need spaces that take us away from our hectic lives—even momentarily. Until the decrease in religious participation, traditional religious spaces were the buildings of choice for

reflective practices and ethical formation. However, as many people have become demystified with religious doctrine and scripture,[17] as well as the institutions that house and promote these beliefs, the desire to inhabit traditional sacred spaces may have also dwindled. So, where does that leave the secular citizen or the atheist? This population also needs moments of silent reflection for themselves as well as for the well-being of society. I will explore this more in Chapter I.

DEFINING SACRED SPACE

First, a distinction must be made between the two kinds of sacred spaces I will write about. Namely, *religious sacred spaces* and *secular sacred spaces*, the latter of which may seem like a paradox to many. Few would argue that there is something distinctly sacred about the high vaulted ceilings of the Cathedral of St. John the Divine in New York City, the sheltering dome of the Temple synagogue in Atlanta, Georgia, or the carved details of the BAPS Shri Swaminarayan Mandir in Robbinsville, New Jersey. These spaces and other "traditional" religious spaces like them constitute the sacred spaces that are most familiar due to their association with religion.

Memorials, museums, and other secular buildings that have a quality of sacredness are secular sacred spaces. Sacred space is constructed through physical space and experience. Physical spaces refer to the built environment or the architectural elements integral to the sacred construction. The physical manifestation of the sacred often acts as a signifier for the experiential elements. Some examples of architectural construction include thresholds, grandeur, circulation, and programmatic or purpose-based features.

[17] Mitchell, Travis. "Eastern and Western Europeans Differ on Importance of Religion, Views of Minorities, and Key Social Issues | Pew Research Center." *Pew Research Center's Religion & Public Life Project*, 28 May 2021, www.pewresearch.org/religion/2018/10/29/eastern-and-western-europeans-differ-on-importance-of-religion-views-of-minorities-and-key-social-issues.

Architecture, as the physical manifestation of sacred space, does more than signify doctrine, scripture, or tradition. It creates a place for ethical reflection and, as I will explore further in the chapter on memorials, contextualizes history through an embodied experience. I will go into more depth on embodied experience in later chapters. Much like religious sacred spaces, which are set aside from the mundane and reserved for religious rituals, secular sacred spaces are separate from the mundane. They create a space for reflection and, ultimately, ethical formation and action. Secular sacred spaces do not derive their sacredness from religion or the divine; they are sacred because their purpose is to designate a physical and mental space for profound ethical reflection, unlike the rest of the built environment one interacts with daily.

Socially, rules shape our experience of the built environment and maintain the opposition to the profane, reverence, and transcendence characteristic of sacred architecture. Rules are one of the most critical aspects of maintaining sacred space; they keep sacred space "sacred." In religious spaces, they are created by the doctrine and rituals of the religion, while in secular spaces, they are created by social norms and civil law. Whether religious or secular rules, dogma, or doctrine can shape how one interacts with and maintains sacred space. There are three main types of rules: civil law, religious law or doctrines, and customs or norms.

Religious dogma and doctrine have the most significant influence over traditional religious spaces. Religious ritual governs how one interacts with the space; it tells us where to sit, stand, walk, and when to do these things. The doctrine also creates a hierarchy of people and symbols. Clergy is allowed in certain spaces that the congregation is not, which only enhances the sacred feeling of rites where the congregation is permitted at the altar (baptism, bat or bar mitzvahs, eucharist, etc.) To understand the impact of religious doctrine and law on architecture, consider the separation of men and women in Islamic architecture or the loss of circular rose

windows in Catholic cathedrals following the transubstantiation of the host in the Fourth Lateran Council of 1215.[18] Whether one is aware of it or not, rules influence architecture and, in turn, influence one's experience of the space.

Religious doctrine, civil law, and customs are the moral scaffolding that affects how one interacts with religious and secular sacred spaces. When an action, or even thought, feels "sacrilegious," one may prohibit oneself from engaging while in the sacred space. If staying silent in a library is religious law, then quietly typing or moving one's chair is a social norm. One does not need to type quietly or take care to be silent when moving their chair because it is a rule; one does so because it exhibits an understanding and courtesy to the customs and quiet *purpose* of the space.

Rules, when followed, cultivate reverence. This could also be interpreted as respect. One's adherence, or lack thereof, to the social norms and customs of a space may display how much reverence one has for a space and for its purpose. This is related to transcendence and ethical influence. When one shows respect to and for a place, one understands the space to be set apart from others. One understands it has a purpose and intent of use and is opposed to the profane, unlike the rest of the built environment. In other words, places one shows reverence for may be considered sacred. This is not to say that one is kicking up one's feet and resting one's dirty shoes on the non-sacred spaces. The respect one shows to sacred spaces occurs because when one crosses the threshold, new rules and customs appear rooted in something larger than ourselves. For some, this force could be the divine; for others, it could be the weight of history and time. Wherever the influence comes from, it cultivates an adherence to rules and fosters

[18] Following the transubstantiation of the host, iconography that resembled an elevated host was no longer included in Cathedral architecture. As Muriel Whitaker notes "In Reims as at Chartres the tribune galleries were omitted to provide spatial unity." (Whitaker, Muriel. "Christian Inconography in The Quest of the Holy Grail." *Mosaic: A Journal for the Interdisciplinary Study of Literature*, vol. 12, no. 2, 1979, pp. 11–19. *JSTOR*, http://www.jstor.org/stable/24777147. Accessed 17 Jan. 2024.)

reverence, which maintains the status of space as sacred, transcendent, and opposed to the profane.

To understand the importance of ethical reflection, think about a world where we never contemplated life beyond the present moment. What would life be like, and how would we act without the context of the past, future, or holy? These objectives are essential in our universal desire to create a more compassionate world. In this thesis, I intend to illustrate the capacity for thoughtful and artistic architectural design to open our minds to the universe's interconnectedness and actions. Once our minds see these connections, acting without consciousness of our impact is difficult. But for our minds and hearts to be permeated, we must engage with ourselves, the past and future, and our communities in active ethical reflection.

As I have mentioned, we need sacred spaces that prompt ethical reflection to remind us of the interdependence and vastness of the world around us. We are not merely existing in the narrow concept of the world that is immediate to us but rather as cogs in a larger network of influence. Our ancestors' actions are why we are here today; one day, we will also be ancestors. Reflecting on this orientation, we show up in the world differently. We engage with the world knowing that our actions have reparations, and we owe it to future generations to create a better world for them to inhabit. As I write about these concepts, I will give my own accounts of reflection.

STRUCTURE

I began this introduction with an excerpt from Ralph Waldo Emerson's 1838 Harvard Divinity School Address because I believe the built environment can prompt these "works of thought" with which we must engage. I would be lying if I said I understood the meaning of this passage when I first read it four years ago. However, through time studying religion and spent in

sacred spaces, museums, and memorials, I believe I have begun to understand Emerson's address.

The underlying laws of the universe are not easily seen when we direct our attention solely to what is immediately in front of us, especially in an age where our worlds increasingly exist on screens. While Emerson was not speaking about the lives we live today in his 1838 address, his words have not lost their weight. To reveal the invisible interdependent connections which transcend time, borders, and faith we must reflect and ask ourselves, "What am I? And what is?" When we reveal this, we reflect on our socialized roles and relationship to the past and future.

In the following chapters, I will analyze three categories of what I will refer to as *reflective spaces*—places in the built environment that prompt ethical reflection. Each chapter will be dedicated to one architecture category. Chapter I will focus on religious and multifaith spaces along with socialization. Chapter II discusses memorials as sacred spaces engaging with memory activism and transtemporal empathy. Chapter III will draw from the language used in the first two chapters to discuss the Legacy Museum in Montgomery, Alabama. As sites in the public realm, the spaces I will write about in this thesis are visited, experienced, and disscussed by many people whose opinions will not be the same as mine. Throughout each chapter, I will utilize religious theory, philosophy, architectural theory, sociology, psychology, and cognitive science. While analyzing each space and the kind of reflection prompted, I will also speak about the similarities architecturally, emotionally, and cognitively.

I

"Architecture is the thoughtful making of spaces. It is the creating of spaces that evoke a feeling of appropriate use."[19] - Louis Kahn

"*The mental task of architecture is to concretize our being in the world and to make us conscious of who we are."*[20] - Juhani Pallasmaa

VENUSTAS - RELIGIOUS AND MULTIFAITH SPACES

Religious buildings are designed and built with a specific experience in mind. Alongside other elements of religion, such as liturgy, myth, and ritual, transcendence can be manifested in and facilitated by the built environment. Architectural theorists and religious scholars have attributed the sacred in architecture to the numinous,[21] the strategic use of light,[22] beauty or *venustas*,[23] and location or spirit of place.[24] This chapter will draw upon the theories of Rudolf Otto, Mircea Eliade, and Vitruvius, as well as contemporary architectural theorists Juhani Pallasmaa and Christian Norberg-Schulz, to explain how sacred architecture differs from profane architecture and how sacred architecture facilitates ethical reflection. Continuing from the background on sacred architecture, this chapter will consider the role of world-building and

[19] "Artist's Work/Artist's Voice: Louis I. Kahn." *Oxford Art Online*, www.oxfordartonline.com/page/1296.
[20] PALLASMAA, JUHANI, and Randall Ott. "LIGHT, SILENCE, AND SPIRITUALITY IN ARCHITECTURE AND ART." *Transcending Architecture*, edited by JULIO BERMUDEZ, Catholic University of America Press, 2015, pp. 19–32. *JSTOR*, https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctt130h9f6.7
[21] Otto, Rudolf. *The Idea of the Holy*. Third Edition, Oxford UP, 1957.
[22] Pallasmaa, Juhani. "LIGHT, SILENCE, AND SPIRITUALITY IN ARCHITECTURE AND ART." *Catholic University of America Press eBooks*, 2017, pp. 19–32. https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctt130h9f6.7.
[23] Vitruvius. "First Principles and the Layout of Cities." *Vitruvius: "Ten Books on Architecture."* Ed. Ingrid D. Rowland and Thomas Noble Howe. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999. 21–32. Print.
[24] Norberg-Schulz, Christian. *Genius Loci: Towards a Phenomenology of Architecture*. 1979, ci.nii.ac.jp/ncid/BA00446954.

socialization presented by Peter Berger as an important feature in prompting ethical reflection in multifaith architecture. The chapter will also include a case study and phenomenological account of Paul Rudolph's Cannon Chapel as an example of a multifaith space.

AWE AND *VENUSTAS* IN RELIGIOUS ARCHITECTURE

When the evening sunlight illuminates the trees in a certain way, the mountains curve—showing softness and strength, or the vastness of the sky on a clear night makes one feel like nothing more than a grain of sand in the grand scheme of life, one may be experiencing what Lutheran theologian Rudolph Otto identified as the *numinous*. He defined the numinous as the sacred or holy that was not associated with morality and goodness.[25] The numinous is described throughout the work using the terms "creature-feeling" and "*mysterium tremendum.*" [26] Creature-feeling is described as "the emotion of a creature, submerged and overwhelmed by its own nothingness in contrast to that which is supreme above all creatures." [27] Creature-feeling orients one to the divine and makes one aware of their insignificance and nothingness in relation to God. *Mysterium tremendum*, is a mysterious, daunting, and awe-inspiring feeling.[28] For the purpose of this chapter, creature-feeling will be the main focus.

In multifaith spaces, I believe that a similar creature-feeling can occur, but not one that is associated with comparison to God. Rather, one can become oriented to one's nothingness in comparison to the vastness of humanity when one is confronted with other religions. Otto's notion of the sacred as an orientation to the vastness of being will become significant in my phenomenological account of Paul Rudolph's Cannon Chapel later in this chapter. Otto believed

[25] Otto, Rudolf. *The Idea of the Holy*. Third Edition, Oxford UP, 1957, pp. 5-7.
[26] Otto, Rudolf. *The Idea of the Holy*. Third Edition, Oxford UP, 1957.
[27] Otto, Rudolf. *The Idea of the Holy*. Third Edition, Oxford UP, 1957, pp. 10.
[28] Otto, Rudolf. *The Idea of the Holy*. Third Edition, Oxford UP, 1957, pp. 12-25.

this feeling of awe and nothingness can be overwhelming and spiritual. Long before Otto wrote on this topic, religious institutions understood the power of awe and nothingness in association with divine powers as a tool for orienting followers to the importance of spirituality, divinity, and ethical reflection. Thus, religious buildings were often made with the goal of invoking a sense of divine transcendence.

Mircea Eliade, a Romanian writer whose work *The Sacred and Profane* was published four decades after Otto's *The Idea of the Holy*, expanded upon Otto's notion of the numinous. Eliade, drawing from the work of Otto, believes that the sacred "shows itself to us" in what he calls a "hierophany" and is the opposite of the profane.[29] He argues that the sacred orients one to a fixed point in the universe. The sacred is synonymous with reality, and architecturally, it begins at the threshold of a space. He explains, "revelation of a sacred space makes it possible to obtain a fixed point and hence to acquire orientation in the chaos of homogeneity, to 'found the world' and live in a real sense." [30] Sacred space orients one to the creation of the "real" world because it is directly opposed to the homogeneity and consistency of the profane world.

Spaces that are personally sacred for the individual but not associated with religion are called *privileged spaces;* [31] these are the spaces that, like the sacred spaces, are separated from the profane and homogeneous world but are not sacred in the religious sense. Eliade argues that sacred space and time are reality while the profane is not and that this sacred reality exists only for the religious person; these two points are worthy of critical examination. Eliade's theory can be expanded upon by including secular space and time in the theories of sacred space and time. Instead of religion as sacred, history, interdependence, and collective transtemporal empathy can

[29] Eliade, Mircea. *The Sacred and the Profane: The Nature of Religion*. Translated by Willard R Trask, New York, United States of America, Harcourt, Brace and World, Inc, 1959, pp. 11.
[30] Eliade, Mircea. *The Sacred and the Profane: The Nature of Religion*. Translated by Willard R Trask, New York, United States of America, Harcourt, Brace and World, Inc, 1959, pp. 23.
[31]Eliade, Mircea. *The Sacred and the Profane: The Nature of Religion*. Translated by Willard R Trask, New York, United States of America, Harcourt, Brace and World, Inc, 1959, pp. 24.

constitute the sacred. While the secular sacred is not necessarily associated with religion, it is sacred because it marks an opposition to the profane.

Eliade argues that religious man is in the continual pursuit of a return to the sacred origin of time to become aligned with the gods and to shape his actions according to the actions of the gods. Religious man reactualizes sacred time when he "wants to ensure a fortunate reign for a new sovereign." [32] While Eliade focuses only on religious man's capacity for aligning his actions with a higher being and purpose to create a fortunate future for the next generation, his more narrow argument can be expanded to include the secular person as well. Sacred time may be constituted by a relationship between secular persons and history; this relationship is similar to how a religious person, in Eliade's view, might relate to the gods or how one experiencing Otto's creature-feeling contextualizes themselves in relation to a higher power. Instead of occurring through a religious ritual that invokes a memory or closeness with the divine, multifaith spaces, memorials, and memorial museums may make historical events and persons into secular sacred times and people.

Just as the non-religious person has what Eliade calls *privileged spaces*,[33] those which are important and set apart for individuals but perhaps not for everyone else, one can argue that there is a similar sense of privileged time. A person might return to the privileged time so as to relate to their ancestors or those whose struggles and sacrifices made the present opportunities possible and then act with the same progress-oriented mindset just as the religious man relates to and acts with the mindset of the gods. These concepts will be of more relevance and will receive more attention in the final chapters on memorial spaces. The transcendence of secular history can also

[32] Eliade, Mircea. *The Sacred and the Profane: The Nature of Religion*. Translated by Willard R Trask, New York, United States of America, Harcourt, Brace and World, Inc, 1959, pp. 81.
[33] Eliade, Mircea. *The Sacred and the Profane: The Nature of Religion*. Translated by Willard R Trask, New York, United States of America, Harcourt, Brace and World, Inc, 1959, pp. 24.

be understood with the help of Otto's creature-feeling; orienting oneself to history, especially history which has had a direct impact on their existence in the present moment may facilitate reflection on smallness in a similar way to the religious orientation of Otto's creature-feeling and Eliade's sacred space and time.

Both Otto and Eliade's theories of the sacred or numinous orient a person to the world and thus create for that person a world, a religious world. Sociologist Peter Berger also argues that religion is a world-building and world-maintaining entity. Berger argued that religion maintains socialization, which is passed down through generations.[34] As Berger argues, one creates and maintains the world or society one lives in through socialization. Thus, as challenges to socialization are presented in each generation, changes to what is considered objective reality are made. The rise of secularization is an example of how attitudes towards traditional organized religion have changed throughout time.

While for Eliade, the sacred world is reality and the profane world is not, today, the demystification of religion may have inverted the metaphysical hierarchy from sacred/profane to profane/sacred. For many, reality may be the profane, and the sacred may be an escape from all that is homogenous and real. As recent as 2023, statistics from the Pew Research Center have shown that Americans tend to affiliate with spirituality rather than religion. The research claims that "Overall, 70% of U.S. adults can be considered "spiritual" in some way, because they think of themselves as spiritual people or say spirituality is very important in their lives." [35] Similar trends have also occurred in Europe. Another report from the Pew Research Center has found

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[34] Berger, Peter L. *The Sacred Canopy: Elements of a Sociological Theory of Religion*. Anchor, 1990, pp. 15.
[35] Nadeem, Reem. "Spirituality Among Americans | Pew Research Center." *Pew Research Center's Religion & Public Life Project*, 7 Dec. 2023, www.pewresearch.org/religion/2023/12/07/spirituality-among-americans/#:~:text=Acknowledgments%20Methodology-,7%20in%2010%20U.S.%20adults%20describe%20themselves%20as%20spiritual%20in,are%20spiritual%20but%20not%20religious&text=Pew%20Research%20Center%20conducted%20this,of%20as%20spiritual%20are%20common.

that there has been an increase in unaffiliated individuals or "nones" in Western Europe, in particular.[36] The orientation to the divine may not be the most awe-inspiring orientation in a secular society. Rather, Eliade's orientation to the sacred and Otto's numinous nothingness may be more relevantly facilitated in secular spaces. In the following chapters, a deeper exploration of how "privileged spaces" create a secular experience that is nearly identical to what is described in religious terms by Eliade and Otto will be explored. This chapter, however, focuses on religious and multifaith spaces.

While architecture does not provide answers to questions that may arise as a result of creature-feeling or experiencing sacred space and time, it can give one a physical space to reflect on one's relationship to religion, morality, and existence. Religious architecture is a manifestation of the sacred, what Eliade calls a hierophany. Turning to architectural theories, architect Juhani Pallasmaa writes that "a powerful architectural experience eliminates noise and turns consciousness to ourselves, to our very being." [37] Reflection and contemplation may be a response to a hopeful longing to understand something that is beyond the limits of human experience. Often, awe is invoked through beauty that is so close to perfection that it seems powerful and divine.

This chapter will focus on Vitruvius's conception of *venustas* as it relates to aesthetic design. Vitruvius refers to shapeliness, symmetry, and correctness as elements of architectural design.[38] Correctness of function is most relevant to this chapter and to religious architecture

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[36] Mitchell, Travis. "Eastern and Western Europeans Differ on Importance of Religion, Views of Minorities, and Key Social Issues | Pew Research Center." *Pew Research Center's Religion & Public Life Project*, 28 May 2021, www.pewresearch.org/religion/2018/10/29/eastern-and-western-europeans-differ-on-importance-of-religion-views-of-minorities-and-key-social-issues.

[37] Pallasmaa, Juhani. "LIGHT, SILENCE, AND SPIRITUALITY IN ARCHITECTURE AND ART." *Catholic University of America Press eBooks*, 2017, pp. 19–32. https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctt130h9f6.7.

[38] Vitruvius. "First Principles and the Layout of Cities." *Vitruvius: "Ten Books on Architecture."* Ed. Ingrid D. Rowland and Thomas Noble Howe. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999. 21–32. Print.

because the function or purpose of a building corresponds to the appearance of the building and when the location of the building contributes to the reputation of the divine qualities of a place.

Architect Christian Norberg-Shulz believed it was the task of architecture to visualize the the *genius loci* or "spirit of a place."[39] In manifesting the genius loci of a place, architecture becomes existential in that it represents a relationship between man and his environment, and a place where one's identity belongs.[40] All places have different functions, as Vitruvius observed when he wrote about the "correctness" of a building. Sacred or religious architecture is thus manifested with the spirit of divinity and represents one's relationship to the spiritual environment. Depicting this otherworldly relationship is thus transcendent and sacred. The spirit of a multifaith space may represent the relationship between one and the larger plurality of a universal environment.

EMBODIMENT

Unlike other forms of visual art, the beauty of architecture is something one experiences physically. One experiences architecture through movement of the physical body through space. According to theories of embodied cognition in the cognitive sciences, "without the cooperation of the body, there can be no sensory inputs from the environment and no motor outputs from the agent -- hence, no sensing or acting. And without sensing and acting to ground it, thought is empty."[41] When one stands in front of a large landscape painting or life-sized portrait, one may project themselves onto the work, but one will never be able to step inside of the artwork—no matter how many childhood dreams one had of walking into paintings and photographs.

[39] Norberg-Schulz, Christian. *Genius Loci: Towards a Phenomenology of Architecture*. 1979, pp. 5. ci.nii.ac.jp/ncid/BA00446954.
[40] Norberg-Schulz, Christian. *Genius Loci: Towards a Phenomenology of Architecture*. 1979, pp. 6. ci.nii.ac.jp/ncid/BA00446954.
[41] Robbins, Philip, and Murat Aydede. "A Short Primer on Situated Cognition." *Cambridge University Press eBooks*, 2001, pp. 3–10. https://doi.org/10.1017/cbo9780511816826.001.

Architecture, however, allows one to physically enter into and participate in artistic space. When one walks through a built environment, one is physically inside a work of art. Instead of being limited to projection or imagination, the viewer has an embodied experience within a physical space. Stepping inside the artwork becomes reality, and the boundary of two-dimensional experience vanishes.

Embodiment within architecture is related to Robert Vischer's concept of *einfühlung*, from which the current word *empathy* derives. To empathize with the built environment, one must be physically in the building. Recalling Vitruvius' notion of correctness which he articulates as the correspondence between the function of a space and its appearance, one may begin to understand how a feeling of transcendence is facilitated in sacred space.[42] Buildings are designed with divine beings which transcend this world in mind, visitors physically embody the space when they inhabit them, visitors empathize with and project themselves onto the numinous and transcendent design, and finally a sense of creature-feeling or nothingness is facilitated in the visitor.

Sacred architecture, as presented by religious theories, is focused on constructing a manifestation of the sacred, numinous, and transcendent. Otto explains that the numinous consists of a nothingness created by a "creature-feeling," and Eliade explains that the sacred orients one to a fixed point. Architectural theory has highlighted the importance of beauty and embodiment, which, alongside early definitions of empathy, explain how one may feel into a space. Thus, feeling into or empathizing with sacred architecture orients one to one's smallness in relation to the divine.

[42] Vitruvius. "First Principles and the Layout of Cities." *Vitruvius: "Ten Books on Architecture."* Ed. Ingrid D. Rowland and Thomas Noble Howe. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999. 21–32. Print.

SCALE AND ORDER

Scale is important in creating a sense of awe and transcendence in sacred architecture. The high ceilings of many religious spaces, particularly in cathedrals, may encourage the viewer to look upward and contemplate the heavenly or divine. Much like the experience of gazing into a night sky on a clear evening, the upward height of a cathedral can also make one feel insignificant in comparison to the divine. Order and symmetry can call to mind divine perfection when depicted in a religious space. Vitruvius' *venustas* is "upheld when the appearance of the work is pleasing and elegant, and the proportions of its elements have properly developed principles of symmetry." [43] There is an ineffable quality to architectural order that satisfies one's desire for harmony. Divine status is given to spaces with spatial order. When one experiences order one may feel as though human hands could not have made such perfection, only God. This feeling may be understood in the religious sense as Otto's creature-feeling.[44]

The awareness of nothingness and association with divine perfection is what Otto was referring to when he defined creature-feeling as a feeling of being "submerged and overwhelmed" by the vastness of a supreme being.[45] Eliade described it as orienting oneself to a fixed point and sacred time.[46] Architectural grandeur may prompt awareness of one's insignificance as one may feel physically small in comparison to the ceilings of Gothic cathedrals that can extend hundreds of feet to the heavens.

Many theorists speak about religion as a form of epistemic and ontological world-building. Peter Berger speaks about cosmization or orientation of meaning in this world around a cosmic order. Mircea Eliade believes that reality is found in the sacred, and the

[43] Vitruvius. "First Principles and the Layout of Cities." *Vitruvius: "Ten Books on Architecture."* Ed. Ingrid D. Rowland and Thomas Noble Howe. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999. 21–32. Print.
[44] Otto, Rudolf. *The Idea of the Holy*. Third Edition, Oxford UP, 1957, pp. 10.
[45] Otto, Rudolf. *The Idea of the Holy*. Third Edition, Oxford UP, 1957, pp. 10.
[46] Eliade, Mircea. *The Sacred and the Profane: The Nature of Religion*. Translated by Willard R Trask, New York, United States of America, Harcourt, Brace and World, Inc, 1959.

religious person becomes oriented to the chaos of the profane when confronting the sacred. We have established the *what* of religion but not the *how*. To answer this, I will turn again to Peter Berger, who argues that legitimizing one's socialized role requires another person or higher power. Identification with one's role occurs "only insofar as others have identified him with it."[47] Here, Berger is speaking of a human or divine other, but I would like to add the possibility of architecture as taking on the role of an identifying other.

Every building has a program or purpose of use with which we are in conversation as users of the space. Vitruvius identified the connection between the purpose of a building and the design of a building as correctness.[48] When we enter a building, we create a relationship between ourselves and architecture. Through this relationship, the built environment thus becomes the "other" that Berger discusses. While the built environment is not a person or divine spirit, each building has a purpose communicated to users through design. We then identify ourselves with a role through identifying with and fulfilling (or failing to fulfill) the objective purpose of the building. The office is for employees, the classroom is for students, the home is where one is often most true to oneself, and the religious building is where one can contemplate one's relationship to the divine.

Another example is when a dancer sits in the house of a theater on their night off; they are an audience member. In the audience, however, the dancer is a viewer who watches the performance with an awareness of what it is like to dance on stage. This is not in their control; they have something other viewers do not have—knowledge of the experience of performing on stage and inhabiting the physical space in the theater that is reserved only for those who meet specific requirements. When they sit in the house, they occupy the role of audience member

[47] Berger, Peter L. *The Sacred Canopy: Elements of a Sociological Theory of Religion*. Anchor, 1990, pp. 37.
[48] Vitruvius. "First Principles and the Layout of Cities." *Vitruvius: "Ten Books on Architecture."* Ed. Ingrid D. Rowland and Thomas Noble Howe. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999. 21–32. Print.

because that is what sitting in the house asks of them; watching is the purpose or function of the space, not dancing. The next night, when they are in the same theater, this time on stage performing, they are a dancer again. Their ability to inhabit the stage and use it for its intended purpose legitimizes their role as a dancer.

If a layperson were to step onstage, unable to perform and therefore use the space as intended, they would come face to face with the reality that their role is not "dancer" but "civilian" or "audience member." The choreographer or artistic director does not tell them this. The house could be empty, and they would still come to this conclusion because the purpose of the space and the purpose of their role are not aligned. The purpose of the space began in the design process when an architect drew plans and separated the stage and house. Separating the stage and house designated their different functions and purposes. The stage is for the performance, and the house is for watching the performance. One might even say the stage is sacred in its separateness, and the house remains profane.

The success of socialization, according to Berger, relies on the harmony between objective and subjective realities. The external world and the internal self-identification must be symmetric. The internal conflict that arises in the conversation between architecture and individuals is what prompts reflection on one's socialized roles. As Berger argues, self-legitimation remains only when it is not challenged.[49] When the function of the building does not align with our socialized role, our identification with that role is challenged, and reflection on our socialization is prompted.

As I mentioned earlier in this chapter, with the rise of secularization, the sacred that Eliade equated with reality is no longer accepted by the majority. While purely secular spaces with no affiliation with religion will be the topic of the next two chapters, multifaith spaces will

[49] Berger, Peter L. *The Sacred Canopy: Elements of a Sociological Theory of Religion*. Anchor, 1990, pp. 31.

ease the reader into an understanding of how secular orientation manifests. Architectural theorist Terry Biddington refers to multifaith space as a "manifestation of a 'post-secular' ethic that is working to integrate the religious and the non-religious worldviews in a creative mutuality." [50]

Some multifaith spaces are, thus, manifestations of the plurality of religious beliefs and practices that exist. Not all are created equal, however, as multifaith spaces are often small rooms that are void of sacred manifestations so that they can easily transform into worship spaces for multiple faiths. As a multifaith space, Cannon Chapel *is* a hierophany[51], or manifestation of the sacred, for many faiths. Often, multifaith spaces, mainly those tiny white rooms frequently found in airports, hospitals, and malls, are void of spirituality or transcendence because they lack the scale, order, correctness, and *genius loci* that may create meaning and divine orientation. They are lacking the aesthetic qualities that prompt ethical reflection. Instead, they are a blank canvas, a blank canvas where different religions come and go but can never feel at home.

WILLIAM R. CANNON CHAPEL - MULTIFAITH SPACE CASE STUDY

Paul Rudolph's William R. Cannon Chapel, unlike traditional or monotheistic religious buildings, currently houses multiple faiths and secular communities on Emory University's campus. It is not a place for the complete harmony between objective and subjective worlds. At least not for someone seeking to find socialization in one particular religion. Instead of socializing Christian students to the church or Jewish students to the synagogue, Cannon Chapel socializes students of all or no faith traditions to a different kind of vastness— a microcosm of religious diversity. The space shows them how the rest of the world engages with religion. Thus,

[50] Biddington, Terry. *Multifaith Spaces: History, Development, Design and Practice*. Jessica Kingsley Publishers, 2020, pp. 24.
[51] Eliade, Mircea. *The Sacred and the Profane: The Nature of Religion*. Translated by Willard R Trask, New York, United States of America, Harcourt, Brace and World, Inc, 1959, pp. 11.

in addition to careful use of light, tall ceilings, and order, Cannon Chapel creates a feeling of awe and smallness, similar to the aforementioned creature-feeling of Otto and orientation to sacred time and space of Eliade, through orientation to interdependence and diversity of belief.

In 1975, Emory University's Candler School of Theology purchased enough books to fill Durham Chapel. Built in 1915, Durham Chapel, now Convocation Hall, was one of the original buildings on Emory's Atlanta, Georgia campus. The new campus was an expansion of the small Methodist school in Oxford, Georgia, which still acts as a residential college for Emory students today. Emory's main campus in the Atlanta neighborhood of Druid Hills needed a chapel for their Methodist services, and thus, Durham Chapel was consecrated. Shortly after, in 1920, the Glenn Memorial United Methodist Church was founded and still stands near the Haygood-Hopkins Memorial Gateway, welcoming students and visitors to Emory.

The changes in 1975 were the beginning of a new kind of university worship center that still influences how Emory students interact with religion today. A new chapel was needed after renowned architect and former dean of the architecture school at Yale University, Paul Rudolph, was hired to complete the renovation that transformed Durham Chapel into the Pitts Theological Library in 1975. Rudolph was asked to design the new religious space, a significant commission for him as the son of one of the first graduates of the Candler School of Theology, Keener L. Rudolph.

Responding to surveys and observations about how Durham Chapel was used during its sixty-year tenure, the Cannon Chapel was constructed to be a multifaith space that could accommodate the Episcopal, Catholic, and Methodist services the majority of Emory students attended. Since it was built, the space has been transformed into a lively multifaith space. Today,

there is a meditation room, prayer room, and sanctuary, which continues to host a variety of Christian, Buddhist, and Muslim services.

Cannon Chapel stands out on the Emory academic quadrangle while remaining tucked away in the surrounding landscape. It sits between Convocation Hall, formerly Durham Chapel and Pitts Theology Library, and the Lula Walker and Ely Reeves Callaway Sr Memorial Center. Henry Hornbostel designed both buildings as part of the original campus, although due to an expansion of the Callaway Center, only the quadrangle-facing facade is original. When Michael Graves finished a 1985 addition to the original Hornbostel Law School building (now Carlos Hall), the Michael C. Carlos Museum was erected directly across from Cannon Chapel; a conversation about art and religion between giants in architecture thus commenced.

The wood-cast concrete and warm arches of Cannon Chapel set it apart from the rest of the pink and white Georgian marble buildings on the quadrangle. It is clear that the purpose of the building is different from the rest of the academic buildings before one even steps inside. It is aesthetically separated from the rest of the campus; it is sacred even before it is experienced. While there is one classroom in the chapel, and the sanctuary is often used for theological teaching services, the lack of academic programming distinguishes it from most surrounding structures. When students enter the chapel, they are thus utilizing one of the sacred spaces or the Brooks Commons study lounge.

From the beginning, Cannon Chapel was a space for student's spiritual and religious needs. The construction of a Brutalist multifaith space in the heart of campus enhanced the artistic aesthetic of the quadrangle while also commenting on Emory's commitment to religious diversity. In other words, Cannon Chapel's transformation into a multifaith space to reflect the needs of students transformed it into a space that was correct in the Vitruvian sense, a

manifestation of an interdependent sacred in Eliadian terms, numinous in its creature-feeling capabilities, and aligned with the objective realities of university life to use Berger's language. While the use of sacred and numinous are secular in the context of Cannon Chapel, the terms are nonetheless the most apt to describe the experience of the chapel.

As Paul Goldberger noted, architecture must have an artistic quality to engage with ethics. In Cannon Chapel, the aesthetics denote sacredness through differences. In all the beauty and awkward relationship to the classical surrounding buildings, a break in homogeneity is formed, and orientation to the world is created. When you enter the building, you are already aware that it is separate from the profane, and thus, it has a different purpose—namely, contemplation and reflection.

PHENOMENOLOGICAL ACCOUNT

One November evening during my first year at Emory, I desperately needed a moment away from the stress of everyday life. I decided to wander into the sanctuary of Paul Rudolph's Cannon Chapel, which sits directly across from Michael Graves' Michael C. Carlos Museum on the Emory University academic quadrangle. The two architectural giants of the Emory University campus are in conversation, both physically and, as we will learn throughout this thesis, in purpose, use, and function. I walked into the building via the academic quadrangle to ascend the long ramp. As my art history professor noted earlier in the semester, the ramp is an intentional feature that brings the participant closer to the divine. She explained to our class that no matter how quickly one walked or ran up the ramp, they were forced to slow down due to the incline and experience walking away from the quadrangle into the sacred space. I was intrigued by this idea of experiencing the sacred through the built environment. Once inside, I entered the

sanctuary and began ascending the stairs that circulated the four sides of the rectangular room until I found myself at the highest point possible. I was tucked in a pew big enough for one person and an overflowing backpack. It must have been around 5:30 pm. I remember the evening sun leaking into the sanctuary through a window behind me, saturating the dark wood surrounding the organ, and finding its place in the ripples of the textured concrete. I took a deep breath.

I sat there quietly. When another student entered the space and began to play *Pachelbel's Canon in D Major*, I recorded a video for my dad because it reminded me of the car rides after ballet filled with classical music. I was conscious of how sacrilegious it felt to have my phone out in the space despite there not being a religious service in session. The music did not feel sacred, but the way I felt hidden did—like a child in a pillow fort. I was comforted by how it felt to be tucked away out of sight in the space—how mentally liberating it was to feel momentarily separated from the chaotic repetition of the world yet still protected by the connection I felt to the architecture and to the history of the building. It was as though I could finally find a moment to think without the interruptions that come with communal living, dimly lit study carrels, and a constant stream of achievements to conquer running through my mind.

I entered the space again during my second year at Emory, this time with the intention of finding a religious sacred. I attended the Candler School of Theology's Episcopal and Anglican Studies Eucharist several times, hoping to find the same transcendence I found while alone in the space. Having just read Durkheim's *Elementary Forms of Religious Life* [52] in class, I thought the more people in the space, the more sacred and removed from the profane it would feel. While I was immediately welcomed with open arms, I did not feel the sacred separation when surrounded by people, songs, and prayer. During that visit, however, I realized the importance of

[52] Durkheim, Émile, and Karen E. Fields. *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life.* The Free Press, 1995.

community in religion. I wondered where non-religious people were turning when they needed community and reflection.

When overwhelmed by everyday stress and chaos, I often return to the empty sanctuary. Each time I sit in the highest pew, I feel I am not genuinely there in the space. It is as if I am a fly on the wall or even a part of the architecture itself—perhaps this is a form of transcendence. My desire to be in the empty space has very little to do with religion, despite the copper cross, which denotes the holiness of the space and calls to mind Christianity. When I walk to the chapel, I need to feel invisible to the mundane world and visible to a separate world where reflection without interruption is possible. In other words, I am searching for a feeling of smallness, or rather, an awareness of the grandeur and vastness of the universe.

Continuing to find my way through the spiraling staircases throughout the building, I wandered into the empty meditation room and immediately felt as though I was not supposed to be there. The chapel's religious spaces are often used for organized meetings and services. Weekly Buddhist meditations in the meditation room through the university's Buddhist Club are populated with dozens of students seeking a moment of reflection or new religious experience.

The Brooks Commons of Cannon Chapel is the most utilized space by university students. On any day of the week, the quiet room will have students working or eating quietly and in whispered groups. While it resides under the umbrella of Cannon Chapel's religious sacred spaces, the commons are not exclusively sacred. As a study space, the profane is brought into the chapel through Brooks Commons as the hymns of different denominations filter from the sanctuary into the quiet study space. Perhaps the sacred separation from the more traditional classrooms and library study spaces is why students flock to the commons to write papers and read materials for classes.

I often return to Cannon Chapel to sit in the sanctuary, study in Brooks Commons, or simply to wander through the space. The chapel is one of the only spaces on campus that I feel can reset my awareness of the variety of knowledge, experiences, religious practices, and people that are present at Emory and in the world.

II

"We learn now, which is to say we modify ourselves to act more effectively in the future. An environment that facilitates recalling and learning is a way of linking the living moment to a wide span of time." [53] - Kevin Lynch

FIRMITAS - MEMORIALS

In Chapter I, I discussed how religious theories of the sacred are relevant to multifaith architecture as a means to present an idea of the sacred that is not tied to one particular religion. In this chapter, I will expand on the notion of secular manifestations of the sacred through the lens of public memorial spaces. Similar to religious buildings, memorials are designed with the specific intent of facilitating memory in mind. While the nature of memorial spaces naturally leads to contemplation on death and finitude, a feeling of *memento mori* or awareness of one's death is not the focus of this chapter. Rather, I will explore how reflection in memorial spaces may facilitate similar feelings of orientation and smallness as religious spaces; the feeling Rudolph Otto calls the numinous [54] and Mircea Eliade calls the sacred.[55] However, instead of being oriented to sacred or divine space, time, and presence, the memorial, I argue, may prompt awareness of interdependence. This awareness occurs as a result of transtemporal empathy, or association with the past and future. Whereas religion typically has associations with the divine, transtemporal empathy is awareness of humanity in the past, present, and future.

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[53] Lynch, Kevin. *What Time Is This Place?* MIT Press, 1972, pp. 89.
[54] Otto, Rudolf. *The Idea of the Holy*. Third Edition, Oxford UP, 1957.
[55] Eliade, Mircea. *The Sacred and the Profane: The Nature of Religion*. Translated by Willard R Trask, New York, United States of America, Harcourt, Brace and World, Inc, 1959.

Much like the religious buildings mentioned in Chapter I, memorials engage with the Vitruvian triad, which includes *firmitas, utilitas,* and *venustas*. According to the Roman architect and engineer Vitruvius, buildings must have strength (*firmitas*), utility (*utilitas*), and beauty (*venustas*).[56] In memorial spaces, there is often a change in topography, a specificity of materials, and a prescribed movement or circulation through the space that, along with the Vitruvian triad, facilitates ethical reflection. While these elements, like the religious elements, are not always seen in memorial spaces, they are frequently repeated and they can be effective at promoting ethical reflection on transtemporal empathy, as I will explore in the following pages. In this chapter, I will discuss how ethical reflection is facilitated by these architectural paradigms and give personal accounts of my experience in the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, D.C., and the Irish Hunger Memorial in New York.

Throughout this chapter, I will examine transtemporal empathy and definitions of empathy in relation to the work of Robert Vischer in aesthetic philosophy, Kevin Lynch in urban planning and architecture, Tom Vooren in architecture, His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama in religion and secular ethics, and Frans de Waal in primatology. Empathy is at play in many different ways in memorial spaces. One relates to the built environment through feeling into a space. Another form of empathy is transtemporal empathy; the orienting nature of which acts as a secular creature feeling or numinous presence. Lastly, there is the resultant motivation that can arise from experiencing empathy, which will be analyzed in the conclusion.

Embodiment within architecture is related to Robert Vischer's concept of *Einfühlung*, from which the current word *empathy* derives. Vischer, a German aesthetic philosopher, coined the term, which is often translated to "in-feeling" or "feeling into" after reading about bodily

[56] Vitruvius. *The Ten Books on Architecture*. Translated by Morris H Morgan, Dover Publications, 1960, pp. 17.

projection in dreams.[57] In order to empathize or feel into a physical space, one must be physically in the space. By feeling into or projecting oneself onto architecture, one's cognition becomes influenced by the built environment. Einfühlung is intertwined with notions of cognition derived from embodiment and the body's capacity to mediate between space and cognition. Theories of situated cognition, specifically of embodiment, argue that sensory input is predicated on the body.

> "Without the cooperation of the body, there can be no sensory inputs from the environment and no motor outputs from the agent -- hence, no sensing or action. And without sensing and acting to ground it, thought is empty." [58]

Vischer's notion of empathy as a projection of the self or feeling into space pairs nicely with embodied cognition in the context of ethical reflection in memorial space. The two ideas offer support for the argument that the built environment can facilitate ethical reflection. In memorial spaces, feeling into the space and engaging contemplatively with the environment may mean situating oneself in the context of history. In the memorials discussed in this chapter, the artists intended to use topographic changes, material, and circulation through the spaces to point the viewer's cognition and empathy in the direction of history and loss. I will touch on this further in the background of each memorial.

Architecturally, Tom Vooren's work titled "Temporal Empathy"[59] acknowledges the importance of experience in architecture by differentiating between factual and atmospheric experience. For example, it is *factual* that a building has a certain height, and it is *atmospheric* that the 143-foot tall interior of Cologne Cathedral feels transcendent. It is *factual* that at the

[57] Vischer, Robert. *Empathy, Form, and Space: Problems in German Aesthetics, 1873-1893*. Getty Research Institute, 1994, pp. 92.
[58] Robbins, Philip, and Murat Aydede. "A Short Primer on Situated Cognition." *Cambridge University Press eBooks*, 2001, pp. 3–10. https://doi.org/10.1017/cbo9780511816826.001.
[59] Vooren, Tom. *Temporal Empathy: A case study in the old coal storage*. Delft University of Technology, 2021, pp. 8.

apex of Maya Lin's Vietnam Veterans Memorial the 10-foot wall is above all visitor's heads, and it is *atmospheric* that being below the ground may make one feel a sense of being buried. The atmospheric may be associated with embodiment and feeling into the space.

Memorial spaces are examples of how one can empathize with something greater than oneself, even if it is not affiliated with religion. Primatologist Frans de Waal has argued that morality is not predicated on religion based on his studies on bonobos. De Waal argued that reciprocity and empathy are essential to human morality.[60] He found that some animals experience emotional contagion, which, when combined with an effort to understand another's emotion, is called *cognitive empathy*.[61] Because cognitive empathy was observed in primates, in addition to humans, it is not necessarily associated with religion or religious teachings. Empathetic emotion can, therefore, be facilitated in secular contexts.

While the basic components of empathy may be common among mammals, recognizing interdependence can help to grow the circle of empathy. His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama has expressed the importance of awareness of shared humanity and interdependence in developing "a genuine concern for others' welfare." [62] Even if the continuation of a family line is impossible or not desired, interdependence reveals to the individual that all of humanity is connected and, therefore, present actions will impact future generations of humans even without a direct relationship. Having empathy for the future may be understood as the desire to relieve the suffering of people whom one has never and may never meet because one recognizes the human desire to be happy as transcending age, race, gender, and time.

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[60] De Waal, Frans. "Moral Behavior in Animals." *TED Talks*, www.ted.com/talks/frans_de_waal_moral_behavior_in_animals?language=en.
[61] *The Primate Mind : Built to Connect with Other Minds*, edited by Waal, Frans B. M. de, and Pier Francesco Ferrari, Harvard University Press, 2012, pp. 125. *ProQuest Ebook Central*, https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/emory/detail.action?docID=3301059.
[62] Lama, Dalai. *Beyond Religion: Ethics for a Whole World*. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2011, pp. 19.

VIETNAM VETERANS MEMORIAL - Washington, D.C.

> *"It is a dialogue with not only our peers but with people in times both before and beyond our time. We have the ability to make that time extend far beyond our physical existence. We are part of a collective consciousness connected to one another through time by our works, images, thoughts and writings. We communicate to future generations what we are, what we have been, hopefully influencing for the better what we will become."* [63] - Maya Lin

Artist and architect Maya Lin's commentary on her own work illustrates what she believes is the intention of the memorial. Her designs show that she wants to reckon with the past and future. While she does not name it directly, this quote describes precisely what I am calling "transtemporal empathy." Lin notes the importance of caring for the future by extending one's impact beyond the finite time one is alive. In the following section, I will write about the history and design of Maya Lin's Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, D.C. I will also recount my own experience of the space, which closely aligns with Lin's intent for the viewer's experience of the memorial. All research on the memorial was done after my visit. I will write about the design's success in facilitating transtemporal empathy and ethical reflection; the design features that prompt this reflection are topographic changes, intentional use of material, and prescribed circulation through the space. I will go into more depth about these features in this section.

Maya Lin was just 21 years old when she submitted her winning design to a competition for the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, DC. For her senior year studio project as an

[63] "Maya Lin: A Strong Clear Vision." , directed by Lee M. Freida. , produced by Terry Sanders, et al. , American Film Foundation, 1994. Alexander Street, https://video.alexanderstreet.com/watch/maya-lin-a-strong-clear-vision.

undergraduate in Yale School of Architecture's Bachelor of Architecture program, she and a group of friends decided to focus on funerary architecture. After one member of the course saw a poster for a design competition for the Vietnam Veterans Memorial on a board in the school, Lin decided that would be her final project prompt. When she submitted her design, she was not expecting to be chosen because she knew her design was not political.[64] After all, she was up against 1,400 of the world's leading architects, many of whom submitted designs that were a clear comment on war and politics. Lin's design, however, stood out because it was not about politics; it was about memory and loss.

The memorial is somewhere between sculpture and architecture. While it does not have four walls and a roof like most buildings, it still achieves the features of the Vitruvian triad: strength, utility, and beauty. The memorial has strength, but not the same strength necessary for a skyscraper to stand. In Chapter I, I focused on the importance of *venustas*, or beauty. In this chapter, I will incorporate strength into the conversation. Vitruvius writes that *firmitas* is created when "the foundations have been laid firmly."[65] A building should be made well so it may stand tall for many years and serve many generations. When architects build with strength in mind, they make the task of preservation easier. As urban planner Kevin Lynch wrote, "for preservation is not simply the saving of old things but the maintaining of a response to those things. This response can be transmitted, lost, or modified."[66] Memorial spaces, insofar as they are physical manifestations of pasts humanity does not wish to repeat in the future, should not be lost. When one constructs a memorial place with the physical strength to prevail for many years to come, one is constructing a future where the legacy of a memory continues to exist.

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[64] "Maya Lin: A Strong Clear Vision." , directed by Lee M. Freida. , produced by Terry Sanders, et al. , American Film Foundation, 1994. Alexander Street, https://video.alexanderstreet.com/watch/maya-lin-a-strong-clear-vision.
[65] Vitruvius. "First Principles and the Layout of Cities." *Vitruvius: "Ten Books on Architecture."* Ed. Ingrid D. Rowland and Thomas Noble Howe. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999. 21–32. Print.
[66] Lynch, Kevin. *What Time Is This Place?* MIT Press, 1972, pp. 53.

Memorials remember the past, so they must be able to endure far into the future. The memorial is beautiful because of its simplicity and attention to detail, as well as the way it interacts with the surrounding history. Recounting her design process, Lin reflected on her desire to cut open the earth and place two slabs of granite open at an angle. One end would point to the Lincoln Memorial and the other to the Washington Monument so as to tie the memorial into the context of United States history.[67] She intended for the memorial to be a place for viewers to reckon with and reflect on death and finitude in the context of war.

Certain objectors of the memorial wanted to change the black granite to white stone, place the wall above ground, and add an American flag to the apex of the walls. Others took issue with the simplicity and even the chronological order of the names by date of death. Lin did not want the work to be overtly political. She wanted it to be a cathartic place of reckoning, reflection, and contemplation. In an interview regarding the proposed changes, particularly the issue of the names being placed in chronological order by date of death, Lin said:

> "...my only argument was that if you really love someone you're going to spend the extra three minutes [finding their name] and that those three minutes of looking up that name, and walking to and finding it is going to become so much a part of the preciousness of knowing that person."[68]

The memorial is thus a space that is reserved for remembrance and for holding a moment for those we have lost to war. For many, the memorial may fall into the category of what Mircea Eliade calls a "privileged space," or a space that is sacred not because of religious affiliations but because of one's personal connection to the space.[69] While many visitors make the pilgrimage to

[67] "VIETNAM VETERANS MEMORIAL — MAYA LIN STUDIO." *MAYA LIN STUDIO*, www.mayalinstudio.com/memory-works/vietnam-veterans-memorial.
[68] "Maya Lin: A Strong Clear Vision." , directed by Lee M. Freida. , produced by Terry Sanders, et al. , American Film Foundation, 1994. Alexander Street, https://video.alexanderstreet.com/watch/maya-lin-a-strong-clear-vision.
[69] Eliade, Mircea. *The Sacred and the Profane: The Nature of Religion*. Translated by Willard R Trask, New York, United States of America, Harcourt, Brace and World, Inc, 1959, pp. 24.

the memorial to pay homage to a loved one, others visit despite not knowing any of the names listed on the walls. Recalling psychologist C. Daniel Baston's work on empathy, he found that we are typically more inclined to experience feelings of altruistic empathy towards those who share similarities.[70] In Lin's design for the memorial, one does not need to have a personal connection to any of the names to experience the collective loss of the war. The memorial, she recalls, was about the "cost of war" [71] and about our own reckoning with death as a "personal and private matter."[72] The space is a place for reckoning both personally and as a nation.

Descending into the earth is the main objective of the memorial. Cutting into the earth allows the sorrow, sacrifice, and death of the war to be "contained within the earth itself," [73] according to the artist's statement Lin wrote for her final presentation of her design. Throughout the design process, it was important that the granite be thin so that it was not placed on top of the earth but rather embedded within the earth as if the ground was merely cut open and polished. The black granite, when polished, reflects the viewer and the world behind them as a dark and somber otherworld.[74] The mirror-like finish on the granite simplifies Robert Visher's notion of *einfühlung* or projection into a space.[75] One literally sees their reflection in the sea of names and immense loss, and in light of their existence as a viewer, reckons with the death of the veterans, just as Lin intended.

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[70] Baston, C. Daniel, Bruce D. Duncan, Paula Ackerman, Terese Buckley, and Kimberly Birch. 1981. "Is Empathic Emotion a Source of Altruistic Motivation?" Journal of Personality and Social Psychology Vol. 40 (No. 2). https://greatergood.berkeley.edu/images/uploads/Baston-EmpathySourceAltruism.pdf.
[71] "Maya Lin: A Strong Clear Vision." , directed by Lee M. Freida. , produced by Terry Sanders, et al. , American Film Foundation, 1994. Alexander Street, https://video.alexanderstreet.com/watch/maya-lin-a-strong-clear-vision.
[72] "Maya Lin: A Strong Clear Vision." , directed by Lee M. Freida. , produced by Terry Sanders, et al. , American Film Foundation, 1994. Alexander Street, https://video.alexanderstreet.com/watch/maya-lin-a-strong-clear-vision.
[73] "VIETNAM VETERANS MEMORIAL — MAYA LIN STUDIO." *MAYA LIN STUDIO*, www.mayalinstudio.com/memory-works/vietnam-veterans-memorial.
[74] The 92nd Street Y, New York. "Maya Lin on the Challenges and Triumphs of Designing the Vietnam Veterans Memorial." *YouTube*, 12 Nov. 2018, www.youtube.com/watch?v=ImYdfEe5xhk.
[75] Vischer, Robert. *Empathy, Form, and Space: Problems in German Aesthetics, 1873-1893*. Getty Research Institute, 1994, pp. 92.

PHENOMENOLOGICAL ACCOUNT

While standing at the apex of Maya Lin's Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, DC, I felt a heaviness in my chest. At five feet and ten inches, I am taller than most visitors, and still, the granite wall extended approximately four feet over my head; this was enough to make me feel like I was contained underground. For a brief moment, I felt the anxiety of being under the earth and thought of death. Then, I began to walk out of the other side of the memorial. The two walls are situated at an angle, mirroring each other. The circulation through the space is prescribed so that one enters on the southwest entrance, descends into the ground, and then turns slightly to ascend an identical ramp towards the southeast exit. As the wall receded back into the earth, I felt the relief of being back above ground.

I was then met with another weight in my chest: the realization that the over 58,000 names on the surface behind me did not experience the same relief. The carved names of the veterans on the polished black stone sacrificed their lives for their country, and they did not walk out the other side of the war. As part of an interdependent and shared humanity, I am here today because of the lives lost, even if I do not know any of the names personally. In prompting this realization, the memorial's built form, specifically the use of topographic changes, polished stone, and a singular circulation through the space, acted as a catalyst for ethical reflection.

When I looked at the names on the stone, I was not looking for any name in particular but rather at the immense loss as a whole. Because Lin insisted that the stone be black granite polished like a geode,[76] I could see the names, and as if existing behind them, I could see my own reflection. Seeing myself staring at the names, I thought, "I am here while their life is contained in the war." Just then, a family approached me and asked if I could spare some paper

[76] "VIETNAM VETERANS MEMORIAL — MAYA LIN STUDIO." *MAYA LIN STUDIO*, www.mayalinstudio.com/memory-works/vietnam-veterans-memorial.

from my notepad. After I gave them the paper, they held it over a name and lightly traced it. For that family, their lives are directly impacted by the war. The children never met the grandparents they have come to visit, and because of this war, they will never get to know someone who contributed to their lives. Yet, they are the future. While the life of their loved one is contained in the past and in the war, they have their life and family lineage ahead of them. This experience, the interaction coupled with the architectural and materialistic choices, evoked transtemporal empathy.

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Maya Lin's Vietnam Veterans Memorial is a space for remembrance. It is a difficult feat for a designer to create a sculpture or space that facilitates the emotions and reflection that they intended. Maya Lin has done this for many visitors, including myself. While there were many objections to the original design, many visitors have expressed to Lin their gratitude for the space. One veteran, in particular, who was featured in a documentary about Lin said "The design is such that I can go in and I can remember. And that's the only thing that has to be done." [77] As I have discussed using Maya Lin's commentary and my own account of the space, the Vietnam Veterans Memorial facilitates reflection through topographic changes, materiality, and prescribed circulation.

IRISH HUNGER MEMORIAL - New York, New York

"Every gun that is made, every warship launched, every rocket fired signifies, in the final sense, a theft from those who hunger and are not fed, those who are cold and are not clothed. This

[77] "Maya Lin: A Strong Clear Vision." , directed by Lee M. Freida. , produced by Terry Sanders, et al. , American Film Foundation, 1994. Alexander Street, https://video.alexanderstreet.com/watch/maya-lin-a-strong-clear-vision.

*world in arms is not spending money alon*e." [78] - Dwight D. Eisenhower; "The Chance for Peace" Address, April 1953

The Irish Hunger Memorial in New York City was created by artist Brian Tolle, architects Juergen Riehm and David Piscuskas, and landscape architect Gail Wittwer-Laird to remember the Irish Hunger that occurred in Ireland from 1845 to 1852.[79] In addition to commemorating the famine in Ireland, the memorial is adorned with statistics, quotes, and passages related to famine all over the world, both in the past and present. While the focus of the memorial is the Irish Hunger, the purpose of the memorial is also to draw attention to current and historical famines all over the world. The memorial's success as a facilitator of ethical reflection on transtemporal empathy stems from the same combination of the Vitruvian triad (strength, utility, and beauty) and the aforementioned triad of memorial architectural features regarding topographic changes, materiality, and prescribed circulation.

Vitruvius believed that all works of architecture should have strength (*firmitas*), utility (*utilitas*), and beauty (*venustas*).[80] In memorial spaces, which often are in between art and architecture, strength and utility may reveal themselves in unexpected ways. Strength shows up in the Irish Hunger Memorial in two ways, both physically and emotionally. The structure more closely resembles a building with rooms and enclosures than the Vietnam Veterans Memorial and, thus, there is physical strength in the construction of the space. The carefully crafted walls, concrete hill, and recreation of the ruins of a cottage from Ireland are all a part of the physical

[78] *Address "the Chance for Peace" Delivered Before the American Society of Newspaper Editors. | the American Presidency Project*. www.presidency.ucsb.edu/documents/address-the-chance-for-peace-delivered-before-the-american-society-newspaper-editors.
[79] Smith, Roberta. "Critic's Notebook; a Memorial Remembers the Hungry." *The New York Times*, 16 July 2002, nytimes.com/2002/07/16/arts/critic-s-notebook-a-memorial-remembers-the-hungry.html.
[80] Vitruvius. *The Ten Books on Architecture*. Translated by Morris H Morgan, Dover Publications, 1960, pp. 17.

strength of the space. Much like the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, there is also strength and potency in the memorial's ability to facilitate ethical reflection through design. The content of this section will go deeper into the specific design features that create this strong emotional response to the space. The utility of the Irish Hunger Memorial is to facilitate reckoning with the unjust loss of life to famine both historically and as it continues to occur in the present day.[81] Beauty manifests in space through the replication of the natural world, specifically an Irish landscape. Beauty is the way in which sacred spaces reveal themselves as separate from the profane.

The designers were simply asked to make a space of contemplation that allowed visitors to engage with text and the view of the Statue of Liberty and Ellis Island.[82] Tolle's design incorporated the natural world into the built environment to achieve the space of reflection he was asked to create. The use of topographic changes is the most prominent characteristic of the design. Upon first glance, the memorial is a hill. The motif of topographic changes runs throughout the memorial, both on the hill and as one enters the ruins through the Hudson River facade. The entrance hallway has a slight incline, which can make visitors slow their gait and thus experience a gradual entrance into the space. The landscape is a quarter acre of plants native to Ireland covering a man-made, concrete hill. The slope acts both as a roof for the memorial and an interactive pathway through history.

Material in the context of the Irish Hunger Memorial includes both architectural elements and natural elements. The natural world plays an important role in creating an atmosphere that is reminiscent of Ireland. The design team was inspired by a trip to Ireland, where they saw the

[81] Smith, Roberta. "Critic's Notebook; a Memorial Remembers the Hungry." *The New York Times*, 16 July 2002, nytimes.com/2002/07/16/arts/critic-s-notebook-a-memorial-remembers-the-hungry.html.
[82] Smith, Roberta. "Critic's Notebook; a Memorial Remembers the Hungry." *The New York Times*, 16 July 2002, nytimes.com/2002/07/16/arts/critic-s-notebook-a-memorial-remembers-the-hungry.html.

hillsides covered with roofless, abandoned cottages, each with their plot of land for agriculture. From this trip, they decided to replicate the landscape, complete with the roofless cottage that represented the barrenness of the land and the thousands of people who had to flee their homes during the famine.[83] Native flowers and potatoes were planted on the quarter-acre plot. The size of the plot was intentional; a quarter acre was the same amount of land that families in Ireland during the famine were given to cultivate due to the Gregory Clause. Throughout the memorial, there are also recollections of Ireland in the form of county stones from each county in Ireland.[84] When a visitor walks through the space the artists intended for them to feel transported to Ireland through all senses; not only did the ruins of the cottage from County Mayo, Ireland bring them into the space, but also the small flowers and the music floating around the space. The words on the facades are not etched in stone but rather overlaid on semi-opaque Plexiglass and illuminated by warm light; the words can thus change with history.[85] The ability to change the words on the facades means that the memorial is both a place of remembrance and a place of present-day reckoning.

The circulation of the memorial is aided by the use of text. In English, we read left to right, so the visitor of the memorial must walk counter-clockwise around the memorial in order to engage with the text. Once the visitor reaches the Hudson River facade, they must enter the ruins by walking up a short hallway with a ramp. Around them, audio plays with more information about famine. At the end of the short hallway, the ruins begin with a roofless cottage

[83] NYC Parks. "It's My Park: Irish Hunger Memorial." *YouTube*, 15 July 2009, www.youtube.com/watch?v=J8nMDwUBEqU.
[84] Smith, Roberta. "Critic's Notebook; a Memorial Remembers the Hungry." *The New York Times*, 16 July 2002, nytimes.com/2002/07/16/arts/critic-s-notebook-a-memorial-remembers-the-hungry.html.
[85] Smith, Roberta. "Critic's Notebook; a Memorial Remembers the Hungry." *The New York Times*, 16 July 2002, nytimes.com/2002/07/16/arts/critic-s-notebook-a-memorial-remembers-the-hungry.html.

transplanted from Ireland.[86] Many of the Irish immigrants came to New York City via Ellis Island, which is visible from the top of the memorial's man-made hill.

Walking through the Irish landscape, "the viewer stands in for the heroic statue."[87] The idea of becoming a part of the memorial ties into the concept of *einfühlung* or empathy as projection onto a space that I have previously mentioned. Rather than creating a feeling of similarity with those affected by famine to incite empathy, the memorial constructs a world where the viewer experiences the landscape and atmosphere of famine. Of course, the "experience" of famine is not the same as the experience of hunger or suffering, but it is a replica meant to facilitate collective memory and make space for recognition of famine.

The practice of engaging with memory as a form of commentary on the past and present is called memory activism. In this context, I am referring specifically to "memoryscapes," which are socially and physically constructed sites "through which memory practices and communities are bounded and equipped with particular purposes and characteristics." [88] As is clear by the design criteria and artistic choices by the designers of the Irish Hunger Memorial, the purpose of the memorial was to use the built environment alongside written word to facilitate memory and contemplation on historic events related to hunger.

The interactive nature of the memorial brings the visitor into the historical context of the Irish famine while also keeping them in the present moment. Visitors may feel as though they are at once stepping into the past and remaining in the present New York City landscape. On September 11th, 2001, the United States witnessed one of the most harrowing terrorist attacks in our history. As the Twin Towers burned, lower Manhattan was covered by a thick blanket of ash.

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[86] Smith, Roberta. "Critic's Notebook; a Memorial Remembers the Hungry." *The New York Times*, 16 July 2002, nytimes.com/2002/07/16/arts/critic-s-notebook-a-memorial-remembers-the-hungry.html.
[87] Smith, Roberta. "Critic's Notebook; a Memorial Remembers the Hungry." *The New York Times*, 16 July 2002, nytimes.com/2002/07/16/arts/critic-s-notebook-a-memorial-remembers-the-hungry.html.
[88] Gutman, Yifat, and Jenny Wüstenberg. *The Routledge Handbook of Memory Activism*. Taylor and Francis, 2023, pp. 221.

Only six minutes away by foot, on Vesey Street, construction of the Irish Hunger Memorial was underway[89]. On March 15, 2001, ground broke on the memorial, and it was completed over the next year and three months. While the purpose of the site is to memorialize the Great Hunger and raise awareness about hunger worldwide, the proximity to the Twin Towers positions it in the context of the memory of the 9/11 terrorist attacks, as well. As Roberta Smith wrote in the New York Times in 2002, "the Irish Hunger Memorial is likely to be embraced by many as a symbol of the hundreds of firefighters, police officers, rescue personnel and office workers of Irish descent who died in the World Trade Center attack." [90] The memorial is in conversation with layers of history, both in the immediate surroundings, in the Irish landscape that has been created, and in the view of the Statue of Liberty and Ellis Island.

PHENOMENOLOGICAL ACCOUNT

When I approached the Irish Hunger Memorial from Vesey Street in Manhattan, it looked as though a giant had gathered a quarter-acre plot of land from the Irish countryside and dropped it in the middle of New York City. Essentially, this is what artist Brian Tolle and landscape architect Gail Wittwer-Laird did when they reconstructed the ruins of a cottage from County Mayo, Ireland.[91] The ruins of the cottage in the center of the landscape instantly make the memorial out of place and intriguing. Much like the other sacred spaces I have discussed, the disruption to the homogeneity that the memorial creates separates it from the profane. Upon first glance, the memorial looks merely like a natural hill surrounded by stones and the remnants of an old house.

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[89] *Brian Tolle Studio*. www.briantollestudio.com/index.html.
[90] Smith, Roberta. "Critic's Notebook; a Memorial Remembers the Hungry." *The New York Times*, 16 July 2002, nytimes.com/2002/07/16/arts/critic-s-notebook-a-memorial-remembers-the-hungry.html.
[91] "Irish Hunger Memorial — 1100 Architect." *1100 Architect*, www.1100architect.com/en/civic/irishhungermemorial.

When approached, however, the modern architectural details of the structure are revealed. Along the sides of the structure are historical and modern quotations referencing the history of famine and world hunger. The viewer is subtly instructed by the direction of the words to approach the memorial from the right side and walk counter-clockwise until they reach their starting point. While the overhand of the heavy concrete pulls the viewer into the shelter of the structure, the long quotes require them to step back to read. From afar, it may look like the viewer is dancing with the structure, moving in and out repeatedly as they make their way along the side walls. The hill grows above them as one does this, and the quotes feel overwhelming. When the viewer approaches the entrance on the Hudson River facade, it feels like the earth and history have swallowed them.

The strength of the Irish Hunger Memorial lies in the structure's ability to engage the viewer with the past, present, and future—transcending temporality. When the viewer stands in the middle of the transplanted stone house and looks to the sky without any modern buildings, it is like they have been transported back in time. The success of the feelings of transtemporal emotional engagement lies in the eclectic architecture and physical embodiment within the space. The merging of old and new designs with old and new quotations on world hunger reminds the viewer of the power of the past and the uncertainty of the future. They are here today because their ancestors suffered from hardship, and future generations will not prevail without help from the current generation.

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The Irish Hunger Memorial, like the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, is a space meant for reflection. The architects and artists involved in the creation of the memorial designed the space with the goal of facilitating reflection. The use of topographic changes, materiality, and

prescribed circulation through the space facilitates ethical reflection in the space. The hill, plants, country stones, and cottage ruins, along with the prescribed circulation through the space, have all been carefully chosen to facilitate ethical reflection. When one walks through the landscape and ruins, reading the accounts of current and historic occurrences of famine from all over the world, they may become more aware of their interdependence and transtemporal connections.

III

"*We know, in the case of the person, that whoever cannot tell himself the truth about his past is trapped in it, is immobilized in the prison of his undiscovered self. This is also true of nations.*" [92]

- James Baldwin

UTILITAS - MEMORIAL MUSEUMS

How is ethical reflection facilitated in museums? Following the first two chapters on religious and multifaith spaces and memorials, this chapter will examine how the built environment facilitates ethical reflection in a memorial museum. I will specifically be focusing on the Legacy Museum in Montgomery, Alabama, as a case study on effective use of the built environment to facilitate ethical reflection. In the same vein as the previous chapter, I will continue to utilize the Vitruvian Triad of *firmitas*, *utilitas*, and *venustas* to explain how the Legacy Museum functions as a work of architecture. Additionally, I will draw from the previously discussed theories of empathy. Following a background on the museum and its creator, lawyer Bryan Stevenson, I will explain how the museum relates to this thesis's overarching themes of ethical reflection, socialization, and transtemporal empathy. In this final chapter, I will bring together and further develop the ideas presented in Chapters I and II.

This chapter will connect Bryan Stevenson's accounts of the importance of narrative in the Legacy Museum to the concept of narrative empathy presented by Suzanne Keen, Maja Djikic, Keith Oatly, and Mihnea C. Moldoveanu. The concept of narrative empathy is important in the context of the Legacy Museum; Bryan Stevenson was adamant in his desire to create a truthful narrative of the history of racial injustice in the museum. Stevenson speaks frequently

[92] Baldwin, James. "The Creative Process." *Creative America*, 1958, openspaceofdemocracy.files.wordpress.com/2017/01/baldwin-creative-process.pdf.

about the importance of the location of the museum in Montgomery, Alabama as contributing to the narrative. In addition to location, this chapter also identifies the prescribed circulation throughout the museum as important to the experience of historical narrative. Where location can be associated with Keen's concept of strategic empathy or empathy created by the author, circulation aligns with the empathy experienced by the reader, or in this case, the visitor to the museum.

Continuing from the first two chapters, I will focus on architect Vitruvius' *utilitas* or utility, which is a part of his architectural triad of *firmitas, venustas,* and *utilitas*. The first two chapters focused on *venustas* and *firmitas,* respectively, and in this chapter, I will associate the architecture of memorial museums with *utilitas*. The Legacy Museum has utility, but not in the form of a kitchen, bedroom, or office. The utility comes from the strength it takes for the viewer to reckon with loss. As both mnemonic and educational spaces, the utility of memorial museums resides in their ability to facilitate reckoning and reflection.

Recalling the mention of narrative empathy in the introduction, *broadcast strategic empathy* occurs when an author "calls upon every reader to feel with members of a group by emphasizing our common vulnerabilities and hopes." [93] In the context of the built environment, the author may also be understood as the architect, designer, or creator of a memorial museum. Broadcast strategic empathy is similar to His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama's notion of shared humanity and interdependence.[94] Both concepts are predicated on an acknowledgement of a shared humanity that extends beyond one's in-group. Theories of narrative empathy are thus important to this thesis as they pertain to the empathy between reader and character, as well as to understanding the author's or architect's intentions. Extending the literature on narrative empathy,

[93] Keen, Suzanne. "A Theory of Narrative Empathy." *Narrative*, vol. 14, no. 3, 2006, pp. 207–36. *JSTOR*, http://www.jstor.org/stable/20107388. Accessed 6 Mar. 2024.
[94] Lama, Dalai. *Beyond Religion: Ethics for a Whole World*. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2011, pp. 19.

which establishes human's ability to empathize with fictional characters and those not immediately before us physically, I argue that a similar empathetic disposition is achieved in religious spaces, memorials, and memorial museums, which create a clear narrative through the built environment. Additionally, broadcast strategic empathy is important in understanding the architect or creator's intentions for the building.

Maja Djikic, Keith Oatly, and Mihnea C. Moldoveanu's forthcoming work on narrative empathy identifies that there is not a significant difference between the empathy felt by the readers of literary fiction and literary nonfiction.[95] The important element to note here is the nature of literary nonfiction as being truthful and possibly associated with having a "multiplicity of perspectives" [96] as opposed to other forms of nonfiction, which may not have as many perspectives or narrative qualities.

In his 1981 journal article titled "Is Empathic Emotion a Source of Altruistic Motivation,"[97] psychologist C. Daniel Baston hypothesized that altruistic motivation, as opposed to egoistic motivation, results from empathy for others. Altruistic empathy is motivated by a desire to relieve other's suffering, while egoistic empathy is motivated by a desire to relieve our own discomfort when witnessing someone else struggling.[98] Baston found that when participants felt similar to the actor in the study, they likely felt more empathetic concern and thus acted altruistically because they helped even when escape was easy. However, when they felt dissimilar, they likely felt more personal distress and were thus egoistically motivated to help or to escape in easy situations to relieve their discomfort. A second, nearly identical experiment was done to hone in on the first experiment's results. The results of the second experiment revealed

[95] Djikic, Maja, et al. "Reading Other Minds." *The Scientific Study of Literature*, forthcoming.
[96] Djikic, Maja, et al. "Reading Other Minds." *The Scientific Study of Literature*, forthcoming, pp. 21.
[97] Baston, C. Daniel, et al. "Is Empathic Emotion a Source of Altruistic Motivation?" *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, vol. 40, 1981, greatergood.berkeley.edu/images/uploads/Baston-EmpathySourceAltruism.pdf.
[98] Baston, C. Daniel, et al. "Is Empathic Emotion a Source of Altruistic Motivation?" *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, vol. 40, 1981, greatergood.berkeley.edu/images/uploads/Baston-EmpathySourceAltruism.pdf.

that distressed participants (assumed egoistic motivation) were less likely to help in easy-escape situations, and empathetic participants (assumed altruistic motivation) were more likely to help even in easy-escape situations.

From C. Daniel Baston's work on altruistic motivation, we know that when escape is easy, participants who are motivated egotistically are less likely to help. However, if the participants felt connected to the distressed person, they were motivated altruistically and more likely to help even if escape was easy. One way of cultivating altruistic motivation for those who are dissimilar to us is to orient oneself with the past and in the context of one's being. In other words, think of one's existence as the result of the lives and struggles of ancestors. Then, think of one's actions in the present as creating the conditions for the lives of one's future children and grandchildren. My notion of transtemporal empathy argues that orientation to one's place in history, as it relates to the actions of one's ancestors and the results of one's actions on future generations, can facilitate feelings of similarity to those one may otherwise view as dissimilar. As reflection on transtemporal empathy may prompt visualization of one's place in a larger web of interdependence, it can help one understand one's relationship to all other sentient beings. I argue that memorials can facilitate this reflection through the intentional use of the principles of the Vitruvian Triad and the memorial design triad I have presented in this thesis (i.e., topography, materiality, and circulation).

BRYAN STEVENSON AND THE EQUAL JUSTICE INITIATIVE

Bryan Stevenson, a lawyer and the Founder and Executive Director of the Equal Justice Initiative (EJI), often begins his story as a child in a segregated school in Milton, Delaware.[99] He

[99] *Bryan Stevenson's Death-Defying Acts | NYU Law Magazine*. blogs.law.nyu.edu/magazine/2007/bryan-stevenson%E2%80%99s-death-defying-acts.

recalls his early education and the legal events he witnessed as the changes made by the desegregation of schools in the 1954 Supreme Court case, *Brown v. Board of Education* moved reluctantly to his school. Despite being born in 1959, the results of the legal changes made in *Brown v. Board of Education* did not reach Stevenson until the second grade. However, the experiences shaped his narrative and led him to Harvard Law School, Harvard's John F. Kennedy School of Government, and eventually to a career built on the fight for racial justice. [100]

In 1989, following four years of legal practice, Stevenson created the Equal Justice Initiative. [101] The EJI is a "nonprofit organization that provides legal representation to people who have been illegally convicted, unfairly sentenced, or abused in state jails and prisons." [102] As an organization, the EJI not only provides legal representation but is also the mind behind films,[103] reports,[104] and the three Legacy Sites, which seek to shed light on how racism has manifested in the United States, from slavery to current issues regarding incarceration. At the heart of the work of the EJI is a commitment to providing a truthful narrative of the past and present.

The Legacy Museum in Montgomery, Alabama, was initially created in 2018 by the Equal Justice Initiative as a small museum along with the National Memorial for Peace and Justice, which is one of the three sites that make up the city's Legacy Sites.[105] The museum, memorial, and soon-to-open monument honor the EJI's "national effort to create new spaces, makers, and memorials that address the legacy of slavery, lynching, and racial segregation." [106] In

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[100] *Bryan Stevenson's Death-Defying Acts | NYU Law Magazine*. blogs.law.nyu.edu/magazine/2007/bryan-stevenson%E2%80%99s-death-defying-acts.
[101] *Bryan a. Stevenson - Biography | NYU School of Law*. its.law.nyu.edu/facultyprofiles/index.cfm?fuseaction=profile.biography&personid=20315.
[102] "About EJI." *Equal Justice Initiative*, 20 Oct. 2023, eji.org/about
[103] "True Justice." *Equal Justice Initiative*, 31 Jan. 2024, eji.org/projects/true-justice.
[104] "Annual Report." *Equal Justice Initiative*, 19 Dec. 2023, eji.org/reports/annual-report.
[105] "About EJI." *Equal Justice Initiative*, 20 Oct. 2023, eji.org/about
[106] "About EJI." *Equal Justice Initiative*, 20 Oct. 2023, eji.org/about.

2021, the museum was expanded to its current site, a 40,000-square-foot building on the same location as a cotton warehouse on Court Street with interactive exhibits created through collaboration between Stevenson and the Roto Group[107], an Ohio-based firm. Throughout history, the site and surrounding neighborhoods were contained warehouses and slave auctions where kidnapped Africans were forced into manual labor and violent attacks on the Freedom Riders in 1961.[108] The museum creates a narrative about the history of racism through an immersive exhibit.

The Legacy Museum, along with the National Memorial for Peace and Justice, utilize architecture to facilitate ethical reflection. The particular elements of the built environment that the Legacy Sites utilizes to prompt reflection are location and prescribed circulation. Drawing from Bryan Stevenson's own accounts of his desire to have the sites in Montgomery, Alabama, I will explain why the location of memorial museums is so important to facilitating ethical reflection. I will then utilize architectural theory, cognitive science of embodiment, and sociology to explain why prescribed circulation prompts reflection on socialization. I will then move into a phenomenological account of my visit to the Legacy Museum and the National Memorial for Peace and Justice.

As sociologist Peter Berger argues, socialization occurs through the psychological teaching and manifestation of these teachings in new generations. He explains that each new generation "is initiated into the meanings of the culture, learns to participate in its established tasks and to accept the roles as well as the identities that make up its social structure." [109] America, unlike Germany, for example, tends to avoid confronting the shameful history of

[107] Brownell, Blaine. "One of the Most Significant Memorials on the Planet." *Architect Magazine*, 11 Aug. 2022, www.architectmagazine.com/design/exhibits-books-etc/one-of-the-most-significant-memorials-on-the-planet_o.
[108] "Greyhound Bus Station at 210 South Court Street in Montgomery, Alabama." *The Library of Congress*, www.loc.gov/item/2010637466.
[109] Berger, Peter L. *The Sacred Canopy: Elements of a Sociological Theory of Religion*. Anchor, 1990, pp. 15.

slavery. The Legacy Museum, however, is changing these socialized narratives. Referring to the death threats and backlash he received in his fight to provide a truthful narrative of history, both his client's history and American history, Stevenson said that "the more you disrupt systems that have operated unfairly for a long time, the more you implicate bigger issues." [110] The narrative that Stevenson and the architects behind the Legacy Museum created disrupts the narrative that America has previously accepted as a national identity and structure of systemic racism.

LOCATION

Location plays an important role in prompting reflection in memorial museums. Historical sites such as the Anne Frank House and Auschwitz-Birkenau or Majdanek concentration camps are examples of how architectural preservation of historic sites can become the focus of the memorial museum. City University of New York sociology professor Amy Sodaro explains that the preservation of sites is a form of truth-telling and evidence; she writes, "should justice be sought, the evidence would be on hand to support accusations against perpetrators of the tremendous atrocities committed in the camps."[111] In the Legacy Museum, the narrative of racism in America, from slavery to mass incarceration, is supported by historical evidence throughout Montgomery, Alabama.

When the original architecture cannot be preserved, the construction of the memorial museum on the affected site of the historical event may serve a similar function for reflection as the context will orient the viewer to the spirit of the site. Situating the museum in the context of a larger historical narrative, so that the contents of the museum relate to the wider story of the

[110] CBS Sunday Morning. "Confronting History, to Heal a Nation." *YouTube*, 31 Jan. 2022, www.youtube.com/watch?v=yY-pTO3AHNc.
[111] Sodaro, Amy. "Memorial Museums: Promises and Limits." *Rutgers University Press eBooks*, 2019, pp. 162–84. https://doi.org/10.36019/9780813592176-009.

location, can assist visitors' imagination in the space. [112] Reflection on the experience of being in a particular site where historical events occurred relates to Robert Vischer's concept of empathy as projection of "in-feeling" that has been mentioned in previous chapters. [113] When one feels into or projects oneself onto a historical site, one can imagine oneself in and then empathize with the past. Thus, transtemporal empathy is facilitated as a result of location-specific memorialization and preservation of architecture.

Architect and author Christian Norberg-Schulz argues, "a place is a space which has a distinct character…Architecture means to visualize the *genius loci*, and the task of the architect is to create meaningful places." [114] By "genius loci," Norberg-Schulz means the "spirit of place" drawing from the Roman concept that all places, people, and things have a "character or essence." [115] While Norberg-Schulz does not include "history" as a characteristic that creates character, in the context of a memorial museum whose purpose is to facilitate memory, the character does include the history that has occurred on the site.

Similar to the sacredness of religious buildings, which can be imbued with sacredness through the historical, mythical, or religiously significant events that took place in that space, memorial museums that are located on the site of the history they are commemorating and educating viewers about become sacred in various senses, one of which is that they become sites of pilgrimage. Bryan Stevenson, who created the Legacy Museum, explained that he wanted the three sites, the museum, memorial, and soon-to-come monument, to be located in Montgomery,

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[112] "Museum architecture." *Museum International*, vol. Museum, XXVI, 3/4 [334], no. Museum, XXVI, 3/4 [334], 1974, pp. 126–280. *UNESCO Digital Library*, unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000013929/PDF/127357engo.pdf.multi.nameddest=13929.
[113] Vischer, Robert. *Empathy, Form, and Space: Problems in German Aesthetics, 1873-1893*. Getty Research Institute, 1994, pp. 92.
[114] Norberg-Schulz, Christian. *Genius Loci: Towards a Phenomenology of Architecture*. 1979, pp. 5. ci.nii.ac.jp/ncid/BA00446954.
[115] Norberg-Schulz, Christian. *Genius Loci: Towards a Phenomenology of Architecture*. 1979, pp. 5. ci.nii.ac.jp/ncid/BA00446954.

Alabama. He wanted visitors to travel to Montgomery because of its historical significance within the context of slavery and civil rights.[116] Historic sites are important to the experience of narrative world-building. Such sites "assist in memory and heritage-making." [117] When Stevenson decided to create the museum in Montgomery, he used the location to construct a truthful narrative of the heritage and significance of racism in America.

The location of the museum is one of the most important aspects of the museum. Local Projects, the firm involved with the creation of the museum, drew on their previous experience working on the site-specific 9/11 memorial and historical reports created by the Equal Justice Initiative to "[retain] the site's unique architecture and [recognize] its heritage as a former slave warehouse."[118] Bryan Stevenson wanted the museum to be located in Montgomery and not on the National Mall in Washington, D.C., for two reasons. He wanted there to be cultural institutions that would attract visitors to Montgomery so they would reckon with the history that has taken place in the city. He also believed that the historical context in Alabama was important to the experience of the museum and memorial. In an interview with National Public Radio, he said:

> "And I do think there's something powerful when you're standing in these spaces learning about this history, knowing that the soil you're standing on is the same soil where enslaved people sweated. It's the same soil where Black people were lynched and bled. It's the soil where, in the '50s and '60s, African Americans were humiliated and found a

[116] Npr. "Museum Tracing Legacy of Slavery in America Marks Moment for 'truth-telling.'" *NPR*, 3 Oct. 2021, www.npr.org/2021/10/03/1042883036/museum-tracing-legacy-of-slavery-in-america-marks-moment-for-truth-telling.
[117] Micieli‐Voutsinas, Jacque, and Angela Person. "Affective Architectures." *Routledge eBooks*, 2020, pp. 1–16. https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429055737-101.
[118] *Local Projects*, 5 May 2022, localprojects.com/work/museums-attractions/the-legacy-museum.

way to fight. And I think it's important that the authenticity of this space be a part of the experience." [119]

What Stevenson is speaking about when he speaks about the authenticity of the experience relates to what Amy Sodaro wrote about the preservation of history as a truth-telling mechanism. As Stevenson notes, there is power in standing in the same place where historically many have died. In an interview with the New York Times, Stevenson echoed his previous statements, explaining that "'When we thought about creating sites, I wanted them to be spaces that had as a goal truth-telling in a way that went beyond just what you learn and what you see, but that had resonance that was emotional and spiritual.'" [120]

The power of spatial authenticity that Stevenson references is the spiritual and almost haunting evocation of memory that sociologist Avery Gordon grasped when she wrote that "haunting raises specters, and it alters the experience of being in time, the way we separate the past, the present, and the future." [121] As Stevenson has presented, the Legacy Museum was meant to be in Montgomery, Alabama, because of the connection to the history of racism that occurred and continues to occur in the city. The location is a part of the narrative that facilitates reflection. The potential for physical space to facilitate transtemporal empathy is an undeveloped corner of the current literature on empathy. Highlighting the importance of location and the built environment in promoting empathy with a cohort that transcends the present moment is one of the contributions of transtemporal empathy to the existing literature.

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[119] Npr. "Museum Tracing Legacy of Slavery in America Marks Moment for 'truth-telling.'" *NPR*, 3 Oct. 2021, www.npr.org/2021/10/03/1042883036/museum-tracing-legacy-of-slavery-in-america-marks-moment-for-truth-telling.

[120] Sheets, Hilarie M. "Alabama Sculpture Park Aims to Look at Slavery Without Flinching." *The New York Times*, 11 Oct. 2023, www.nytimes.com/2023/10/11/arts/design/freedom-monument-sculpture-park-alabama.html?smid=url-share.

[121] Gordon, Avery F.. *Ghostly Matters : Haunting and the Sociological Imagination*, University of Minnesota Press, 2008, pp. xvi. *ProQuest Ebook Central*, http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/emory/detail.action?docID=346045.

Architectural theorist Karsten Harries writes that "to experience architecture as sacred is to experience it as possessing an aura of transcendence."[122] In the case of the Legacy Museum, the transcendence is temporal. Throughout the museum, there were reminders of the significance of the location. The walls in one room read: "This museum sits on the site of a former cotton warehouse where the coerced labor of enslaved Black people created enormous wealth for this nation."[123] These reminders of the location continually orient the visitor to the significance of history as a narrative that still exists today. Narrative is manifested insofar as the visitor is placed within the narrative and made aware that racism still exists today; thus, one is a part of this narrative even after leaving the museum.

Author Marita Sturken argues that the Legacy Museum, alongside the other Legacy Sites, are forms of memory activism that "shift the relationship of memory to national identity." [124] While my arguments are not, like Sturken's, framed around a post-9/11 context, her identification of the Legacy Museum as using memory to construct national identity supports my notion of transtemporal empathy. She continues to argue that the museum demands a "rewriting of the national narrative to demonstrate how racism and terrorism has been integral to the national fabric."[125] The narrative of the Legacy Museum is one of the past atrocities but also, as Sturken points out, of the current narrative and national fabric. Thus, the museum uses memory, alongside the present-day systemic racism in America, to show that the national identity we often think of as in the past is actually in the present.

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[122] Harries, Karsten. "Art And the Sacred." *Seminar Notes*, season-03 2013, pp. 12. bpb-us-w2.wpmucdn.com/campuspress.yale.edu/dist/8/1250/files/2012/09/Art-and-the-Sacred-reduced-2e8r309.pdf.
[123] Brownell, Blaine. "One of the Most Significant Memorials on the Planet." *Architect Magazine*, 11 Aug. 2022, www.architectmagazine.com/design/exhibits-books-etc/one-of-the-most-significant-memorials-on-the-planet_o.
[124] Sturken, Marita. *Terrorism in American Memory: Memorials, Museums, and Architecture in the Post-9/11 Era*. NYU Press, 2022, pp. 223.
[125] Sturken, Marita. *Terrorism in American Memory: Memorials, Museums, and Architecture in the Post-9/11 Era*. NYU Press, 2022, pp. 223.

In addition to the significant location of the museum, there is also an exhibit wall with jars of dirt taken from sites of lynching in America. Each jar serves as a reminder that the innocent killing of Black people occurred on American soil and still does occur on American soil today. Standing before the floor-to-ceiling display of attested dirt, Stevenson captured the importance of confrontation in memorialization:

> "This country enslaved Black people for two and a half centuries. We tortured and terrorized Black people for a century. We segregated and subjected Black people to racial hierarchy. We continue to imprison and incarcerate and punish people of color in ways that are not proportionate. But we can be more than a country of enslavers and lynchers and segregators and executioners, but only if we acknowledge that."[126]

CIRCULATION

Circulation in architectural design refers to the "path or our movement [that] can be conceived as the perceptual thread that links the spaces of a building, or any series of interior or exterior spaces, together." [127] When circulation is prescribed, it means that visitors are moving through the space on the same path and in the same direction. Prescribed circulation occurs in two ways in the Legacy Museum. First, the beginning of the museum starts with several rooms that are dedicated to the history of the Transatlantic Slave Trade through the beginning of the Civil Rights Movement. In these rooms, everyone walks in the same direction and through the same rooms; in other words, the circulation is strictly prescribed[128] and guided by the built

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[126] CBS Sunday Morning. "Confronting History, to Heal a Nation." *YouTube*, 31 Jan. 2022, www.youtube.com/watch?v=yY-pTO3AHNc.

[127] Ching, Francis D. K.. *Architecture: Form, Space, and Order,* John Wiley & Sons, Incorporated, 2023, pp. 280. ProQuest Ebook Central, https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/emory/detail.action?docID=7219884.

[128] Perhaps the prescribed circulation in the exhibits dedicated to the Transatlantic Slave Trade were intended to illicit a feeling of being moved against one's will or marching forward toward the unknown. While I could not find any sources referencing this particular observation, I will note that the strict, conveyor belt-like, circulation ends when the Transatlantic Slave Trade exhibit ends.

environment (i.e., the walls, the direction in which one reads the words in the exhibits, and freestanding artwork that guides the visitor). Except for a few sections of information regarding slavery in different states in America, the contents of the exhibit during this section of the museum are identical on both walls of the room. The mirroring of information on both walls at the beginning of the exhibit streamlines the experience and keeps everyone moving in the same direction.

Circulation throughout the museum is always forward-moving. Unlike other museums where visitors are free to start and end their journey through the museum in any number of exhibits, and may choose not to visit certain exhibits, the Legacy Museum requires all visitors to enter and exit together. As visitors move through the museum, there is not an exhibit that one can skip or ignore. Of course, visitors could move faster through one exhibit, resulting in a different experience than another visitor, but no room can be entirely skipped. Think of the museum as a maze with one entrance and one exit.

Similar to religious spaces, order is important in the circulation of the Legacy Museum. The museum constructs a chronological narrative of the history of racial injustice through the built environment. Just as one has specific places to walk during religious rituals and ceremonies (Eucharist, for example), visitors to the Legacy Museum must walk through the entire museum in one direction.

Transtemporal empathy comes into this conversation with the reflection that the narrative created by the museum facilitates, which may prompt one to consider how a new narrative can be possible for the future. One helpful way to conceptualize transtemporal empathy in the context of architecture is in relation to Kevin Lynch's work in his book *The Image of The City*.[129] Lynch worked under famed American architect Frank Lloyd Wright prior to attending a degree

[129] Lynch, Kevin. *The Image of the City*. 1960, ci.nii.ac.jp/ncid/BA01382449.

in urban planning from Massachusetts Institute of Technology. In his book *The Image of the City,* he presents the notion of mental mapping. He argues that the images created in mental mapping are "the product both of immediate sensation and the memory of past experience, and it is used to interpret information and guide action."[130] It is helpful to think of transtemporal empathy as orientation in a similar vein to mental mapping; however, instead of orienting one to space, it orients one to the past and future. First comes orientation to time, and then comes empathy.

Just as Lynch's mental maps may help a person navigate space in the future through physical actions (i.e., a mental map of a familiar city may help a person know where to go and thus make decisions about where to walk or drive), the mental maps of time created by transtemporal empathy may help a person navigate their empathetic actions in the future. After placing oneself on a timeline and orienting to the past, one may begin to reflect on the struggle and contributions of one's ancestors, who are the reasons one is here today. Referring to the language used by His Holiness the Dalai Lama, one becomes aware of their shared humanity and interdependence.[131]

Reflection may stop there, but transtemporal empathy looks to the future as well. One of the three principles of architecture put forward by Vitruvius is *firmitas* or strength; architects build structures that are meant to last. Just as the architects of the past were taught to build for the future, and the actions of ancestors impact us today, everyone on Earth today will one day be a part of the past, and their actions will impact a further future. Thus, transtemporal empathy is applicable as it prompts one to take action to alleviate the suffering of future generations.

When the exhibit moves from the history of slavery in America to the history of segregation and systemic racism, the exhibit follows a more traditional layout. Visitors are free to

[130] Lynch, Kevin. *The Image of the City*. 1960, pp. 4. ci.nii.ac.jp/ncid/BA01382449.
[131] Lama, Dalai. *Beyond Religion: Ethics for a Whole World*. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2011, pp. 19.

roam in the large rooms which are dedicated to different topics. However, the circulation is still prescribed. To exit the museum everyone must keep moving in the same direction.

PHENOMENOLOGICAL ACCOUNT

Upon walking into the Legacy Museum, I was ushered into the ticket line and then into the security check. A small group of visitors and I were then told that our phones should be on silent and that there would be no photographs or videos. When I visit other museums, I spend a lot of my time taking photographs of the descriptions of artworks so I can go back and read them later. My use of my phone unintentionally takes me out of the present moment because I know that if there is information I cannot get to while I rush through the exhibit, I can always go back into my camera roll and look at it later.

In the Legacy Museum, the lack of photography made me more present. On the museum's website, they explain that visitors should set aside three to five hours[132] for their visit. The museum is not a place where I felt inclined to or even able to move through mindlessly. Due to the prescribed circulation and lack of phone, all the normal distractions of mundane life were temporarily removed and I could focus wholeheartedly on the information in the museum.

Upon crossing through the security line and into the first room of the exhibit, the sound of waves crashing surrounded me from every angle. Walking through the exhibit, I felt I had time to stand and read. I was surrounded by a large group of other visitors and was cognizant of how we read together, walked together, and emoted together. Early in the museum, visitors walk through a room with lifelike sculptures of Black bodies in shackles buried in the sand. The sound of the waves, along with visual effects in the room, and the feeling of the cobblestone pathway beneath my feet made me stop in my tracks. Unlike other museums that may tell visitors about

[132] Equal Justice Initiative. "Visit - the Legacy Sites." *Legacy Sites*, 22 Feb. 2024, legacysites.eji.org/visit.

the many Africans who drowned during the Transatlantic Slave Trade, the Legacy Museum *shows* visitors. Seeing the realistic bodies, staring them in the eyes as the sound of waves crashed over my head, was a different experience than merely reading about the thousands who died.

The museum continued with the immersive multimedia experience as the narrative moved from the Transatlantic Slave Trade to the conditions in America. My gait slowed in this section, along with many of those around me. As I approached the exhibit, I saw many other visitors standing eerily still in front of a row of cells. It was as if they had seen a ghost. When I finally stood where they had been standing, I understood why I had seen the shock in their eyes. In this section of the museum, holograms of actors portraying enslaved people in cells are illuminated when a sensor detects a body in front of the cell. In the last of these cells, two children cry for their mother. The words spoken by the actors are all taken from slave narratives. [133]The architecture and the holograms were strikingly realistic. Standing face-to-face with the holograms surrounded by an architectural replication of a slave auction house was unlike anything I had previously experienced.

The reflection I experienced while being immersed in the narrative that Bryan Stevenson aimed to create in the Legacy Museum was aided by the historic location and the prescribed circulation that I mentioned earlier in this chapter. Reminders of the importance of location were found throughout the museum. Each time I read about the history in Montgomery, I was reminded that the racism of the past has not been resolved. Work still needs to be done so that progress does not become complacent. The prescribed circulation in the first rooms of the museum, along with the mirroring of media on both walls, was particularly helpful to my

[133] CBS Sunday Morning. "Confronting History, to Heal a Nation." *YouTube*, 31 Jan. 2022, www.youtube.com/watch?v=yY-pTO3AHNc.

experience. Instead of wasting energy wondering where to walk next, I was able to narrow my focus to what is important—the information.

As I entered the reflection room, one of the final stops in the voyage through the history of racism in America in the Legacy Museum, I felt a cataclysmic rush of emotion. Prior to visiting the museum, I did not look for images of the exhibit, so every room was a completely new experience. I had no idea that at the end of the exhibit, when the sadness and weight of the history I had just learned were sitting in my heart and mind, I would turn a corner to the reflection room. The shift from the dark walls of the past exhibits to the light-filled room was transcendent. The large room had tall ceilings gilt with gold and illuminated with warm light that replicated the clerestory windows of cathedrals. Gospel music echoed through the windowless space as visitors sat and reflected on the museum experience. The inclusion of the reflection room was the architectural equivalent of receiving a warm hug when you need it the most. I often hear others speak about giving people the "space" to speak vulnerably when they need to heal; the reflection room provided the physical space to sit with the emotions that were stirred throughout the museum exhibits.

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The Legacy Museum in Montgomery, Alabama, utilizes the built environment as a tool to facilitate ethical reflection and create a truthful narrative of this history of racial injustice in America. Created through the collaboration of Bryan Stevenson of the Equal Justice Initiative and Roto Group, the museum seeks to immerse visitors in a thorough and truthful narrative of American history. The goal of the museum is to confront the past in order to move forward with a more productive and equitable future. The emphasis on historic location, both the specific building site and the city of Montgomery, contributes to the powerful sense of embodied

connection to the past. Situating empathy in this historical context adds to the current understanding of empathy by way of the term transtemporal empathy. The addition of an embodied and temporal notion of empathy may be useful to the expanding understanding of empathy as useful to education, architecture, and cognition.

Raindrops on the tin roof.
What do they say?
We have all
Been here before. [134]
- Wendell Berry, "Falling Asleep"

CONCLUSION

The guiding questions throughout this thesis have been: How is ethical reflection facilitated in sacred space, and what kind of reflection is facilitated? In the previous chapters, I analyzed the architecture of different kinds of sacred spaces. Namely, religious spaces, public memorials, and memorial museums. As mentioned in the introduction, the sites mentioned are public and often political spaces. I acknowledge that the ideas in this thesis are influenced by my own subjectivity, education, and worldview; not everyone will agree with what they have read.

Chapter I introduced the reader to theological notions of the sacred or numinous and provided the relevant terminology to Chapters II and III. Terms such as Rudolph Otto's creature-feeling explained one's orientation to a higher power in the context of religion. In Chapters II and III, notions similar to theological ideas of sacredness and ethical reflection were transferred to a secular context. Memorials and memorial museums were considered secular and sacred due to their ability to facilitate ethical reflection on one's orientation to something larger than oneself. In a secular context, reflection on one's interdependent relationship to the past, present, and future may facilitate similar awareness of one's being and smallness in the vastness of the universe as religious orientation to the divine. This secular orientation to all of humanity that has lived and will live can lead one to contemplate their socialized roles and prompt feelings of transtemporal empathy.

[134] Berry, Wendell. *Falling Asleep*. 1974.

I would like to leave readers with a brief addition to my previous questions regarding how and what kind of ethical reflection is prompted in sacred spaces by asking: Why is ethical reflection valuable in an increasingly secular society? The previous chapters provide one answer to this question—reckoning. Multifaith spaces such as Cannon Chapel reckon with the plurality of religious experience. Memorials such as the Vietnam Veterans Memorial reckon with death and war, while the Irish Hunger Memorial reckons with famine and inequity. The Legacy Museum reckons with the horrific past and present racial injustices in the United States.

In addition to reckoning, I will add that the reason why ethical reflection, particularly on socialization and transtemporal empathy, is important in a secular age is compassion. It is not enough to reckon with the injustice of conflict, war, hunger, and racism. In the wake of past wrongs there may be present distress and suffering, but to stop here without extending compassion to others would be a grave disservice to the future.

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