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Chapter 2 Heritage values

Jorge Otero-Pailos, Jason Gaiger and Susie West

Values are embedded in society and vary between societies and across time. Key values for heritage are those concerned with history and beauty, discussed by philosophers as knowledge and aesthetics. The early incorporation of these values into heritage discourses determined the selection of and approach to categories of heritage, only recently expanded by additional values focusing on authenticity and social uses. Formal heritage frameworks have values embedded within them; initially these were implicit and following the Burra Charter they have been made explicit. The first case study in this chapter, by Jason Gaiger, a philosopher and art historian, explores the legacy of European philosophers' understanding of how aesthetic judgements are made. The second case study, by Jorge Otero-Pailos, an architect and conservation theorist, shows how justifications of conservation decisions change with time, through new contexts of politics, aesthetics and scientific possibilities.

Introduction

As we saw in Chapter 1, institutions such as museums have evolved in Europe for over 300 years and heritage legislation has been developing for over 100 years. The rate of expansion of the scope of these formal, 'official' activities to define and present aspects of heritage has been particularly rapid since 1945 (see Harrison, 2010). The politics of why UNESCO needs to keep addressing the way in which heritage is defined and represented through its programmes are broadly similar to those that demand that museums become ever more self-aware of how they select and represent knowledge to the whole spectrum of society. We might think of this as a call to be inclusive, relevant and responsive. This continues to be a big challenge, particularly for complex international institutions like UNESCO.

This chapter traces the values that guide institutions in deciding what is heritage, what they wish to conserve and represent as heritage, and how these values have evolved over time. Some of the challenges to established authorities, whether museum directors, academic archaeologists or chief archivists, have come from voluntary groups concerned that their passions and interests are not being recognised. In this way new themes get added to what Laurajane Smith terms the authorised heritage discourse (AHD); an example in the UK is the industrial heritage that has been recognised through the sustained activities of enthusiasts. Perhaps this thematic expansion has not really challenged official heritage practices; a greater challenge comes from

communities who believe their cultural identities are not being represented by official heritage. The results of the challenge of indigenous peoples and multicultural communities are beginning to be visible in museum displays and thematic programmes that trace 'hidden histories'.

The expansion of 'whose heritage' questions are becoming more visible to people with a passing interest in heritage. But what goes on behind the scenes in terms of the way in which decisions are formally documented and supported by professional processes? The 1972 World Heritage criteria are an important clue, in making public the outline guidance for the arguments that would be acceptable for defining a **World Heritage site**. They offer an insight into the 'world views' of the committee of experts charged with assessing the arguments and making the selection; in other words, the criteria themselves are an official World Heritage discourse. Other heritage frameworks operate in the same way; we use them in this chapter to explore what the 'world views' behind these statements represent as sets of values, and how they might be challenged. So we move from consideration of explicit statements to implicit and underpinning philosophies about the values that objects of heritage carry.

Defining values in conservation

> Cultural heritage should speak through the values that people give it and not the other way round ... the tangible can only be interpreted through the intangible.
>
> (Munjeri, 2004, p. 13)

When we think about heritage values we might express some commonsense opinions about the qualities that are brought to mind when experiencing, for instance, an ancient building, paving stones worn with the tread of generations of feet, or when seeing a vibrant harvest celebration. We might feel that we value the history that we think the heritage represents. By paying to see some official heritage we express an economic value – that the experience is worth the fee. However, this chapter introduces the idea of values as a set of debates first written down by ancient Greek philosophers about, ultimately, the purpose of human existence. Is the highest purpose to achieve knowledge, create beauty or live a good (moral) life? These three divisions have been discussed by philosophers as three different motivators for human action: the search for truth, beauty or goodness. They are powerful and long-standing categories for western intellectual traditions, as we will see in the way they have permeated heritage frameworks. But there are other, less typical examples of heritage that do not easily fit the three values: the difficult heritage of twentieth-century war atrocities; heritage of poverty; heritage of a culture where we cannot find our own understandings of truth,

beauty or goodness. Western discourses around these three values have also been used to rank other world cultures in a hierarchy of the more or the less civilised. This was the case, for example, as encounters occurred with the 'other' (outsiders to these core values) during the spread of colonialism (Chapter 1).

Now although truth, beauty and goodness are quite abstract, there is an equally ancient tradition in the West of applying these values to concrete objects in such a way that they seem to be **inherent** to the objects. This process has blurred the distinction between factual description and judgements. But is it really possible to separate facts from judgements? We always have to make judgements about which facts we wish to bring to others' attention even in everyday speech. As you will see in Chapter 4, museum curators are highly selective in the information they supply on object labels; the most factual labels are often the least comprehensible to the general visitor. However, if we could not select at least some facts out of the mass of all possible facts about an object, for instance, communication would become impossible. So selection usually takes place within the context of general understandings about what it is permissible to leave out. This 'shared understanding' creates a normative framework. 'Objective judgements are widely shared subjective judgements' (Mitchell, 2005, p. 366).

A good example is the way that official heritage designations such as World Heritage sites tend to look like objective judgements in their confident declarations. The Taj Mahal is outstandingly beautiful; Stonehenge is outstandingly ancient; Uluru is outstandingly mysterious. Collective enthusiasm for these monuments is a set of 'widely shared subjective judgements', arising from the sets of values to be found within the processes that bestow official designations.

In heritage terms, these values convert to an interest in history (truth) and beauty (aesthetics); goodness tends to be left unstated. In the field of western art collecting, critics, academics and curators, supported by art dealers and collectors, developed an inward-looking discourse about a particular definition of excellence that was capable of being represented outside this closed circle of commentators as the *only* definition of excellence for this category of object. For art objects, excellence was primarily about aesthetic value. Beauty, as we all know, is a highly subjective concept which shifts over time and between groups. The Welsh dress case study in Chapter 1 drew attention to the processes of imposing English elite aesthetic judgements on Welsh material culture. We will be looking at the relationship between subjective responses to beauty and formal aesthetic judgements shortly in the first case study.

Monumental buildings and works of art were among the earliest heritage categories to be officially collected. They share a common treatment, in that discourses around nationalism and national excellence got attached to them, and they were revered both for their status as historical objects and for their

aesthetic qualities, represented as universally recognisable and valuable. Thus we arrive at the earliest explicit values that have been used to justify why something from the past should be preserved for the future. Put simply, material heritage is identified as the carrier for abstract values in such a way that the values become *inherent* to the object and *universal* in their importance. Once other people began to challenge the thinking behind these processes, history and beauty could stop being used to exclude categories of heritage and the process of understanding heritage as inclusive, relevant and responsive could begin.

The challenges to older discourses about history and beauty, however, might leave us with a problem: do we want to reject the idea of beauty completely? Most of us have instinctive responses to visual and aural experiences that we categorise as beautiful or ugly, and we could probably agree that specialist knowledge leads to a greater appreciation of the experience. Do we throw out an art historian's view of the value of an artwork (indeed, even reject an art historian's claim that a particular object is a work of art)? Is a more inclusive definition of heritage going to leave us in a position where the best we can say is that one person's judgement is as good as another's? In practice, the latter relativist position is not adopted by official frameworks, as will be seen later in the chapter. But we should pause over a fuller account of the processes of aesthetic judgement in the following case study.

Case study: aesthetic judgement

The frequency with which terms such as 'aesthetics', 'aesthetic value' and 'aesthetic judgement' appear in contemporary discussions about heritage belies a lack of clarity about their exact meaning and scope (see, for example, Laurajane Smith (2006, pp. 11, 19, 20, 21, 23, 28, 29, 32, and throughout). The aim of this case study is to introduce some of the key philosophical issues surrounding the topic of aesthetic judgement and to show how reflection on these issues can deepen our understanding of the processes of heritage creation. Aesthetic considerations undoubtedly play an important role in assessing what counts as heritage and in determining how an object or site should be presented and conserved. Nonetheless, there is a widespread suspicion that aesthetic evaluations are unduly subjective and that an appeal to the individual's own affective responses does not provide an adequate basis for collective decision making. It is therefore important to assess the status of judgements of taste and to investigate whether they are amenable to revision in light of greater knowledge and experience.

I begin with a brief account of the origin of the term 'aesthetics', which was first employed in its modern sense in the mid-eighteenth century by the German philosopher A.G. Baumgarten. Although many of Baumgarten's

concerns are remote from our own, his work provides the foundation for much of what follows. In this discussion I shall concentrate on the views of two other eighteenth-century philosophers, David Hume and Immanuel Kant, both of whom were explicitly concerned with the problem of whether it is possible to arrive at a grounded consensus of taste. In the limited space available here it is not possible to do justice to the full complexity of their ideas or to trace the deeper philosophical commitments that underlie their respective positions. Instead, I want to focus on an interrelated set of themes that are directly relevant to current problems and debates.

Kant's 'power of judgement'

The term 'aesthetics' derives from the ancient Greek word *aisthesis*, which means perception or sensation. It was coined by Baumgarten in 1735 to describe the fledgling discipline of 'philosophical poetics', that is to say, the philosophical study of artworks (Baumgarten, 1735, para. 9; Harrison, Wood and Gaiger (eds), 2000, p. 488).[1] However, Baumgarten also used the term more broadly to encompass a projected 'science of sensible knowledge'. In the first part of his unfinished Latin treatise *Aesthetica*, which was published in 1750, he characterised aesthetics as 'the theory of the liberal arts, the lower study of perception, the art of thinking in the fine style, the art of analogical reasoning' (Baumgarten, 1750, para. 1; Harrison, Wood and Gaiger (eds), 2000, p. 489). The originality of Baumgarten's approach lies in his attempt to overcome the profound distrust of sensory perception that had marked the work of rationalist philosophers since the time of Plato. Baumgarten held on to the ancient Greek distinction between things that are perceived through the senses (*aistheta*) and things that are known by the mind (*noeta*), but he rejected the view that sensory knowledge is necessarily inferior. Although logic allows us to analyse thoughts into their constituent elements and to make the relations between them conspicuous, sensory perceptions possess compensating virtues such as plenitude, vividness and complexity, virtues that are revealed in exemplary fashion in works of art. We value art, in part, for its richness and suggestiveness, and this is reflected in the open-ended and exploratory character of our responses. While the affective dimension of experience does not possess the same degree of certainty as, for example, the knowledge provided by mathematics or geometry, it is nonetheless intrinsically valuable and merits closer investigation.

In summary, then, Baumgarten not only coined the term 'aesthetics', he also demarcated its two principal fields of application: the study of artworks and

[1] For the non-English eighteenth-century philosophical texts, references to the paragraph number of the original edition and the page number of the translation are given. This is standard practice, since there are so many different translations available and the reader needs to be able to locate the original passage.

the study of sensory perception as opposed to logical or intellectual cognition. While these two fields are not co-extensive, they do partially overlap. Later thinkers expanded the scope of aesthetics to include, for example, the appreciation of natural beauty, but the identifying feature of an aesthetic judgement remains its reliance on the individual's sensory and affective responses. This recognition forms the starting point for Kant's principal work on aesthetics, the *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, which he published in 1790. He begins the main body of the text with the declaration that

> The judgment of taste is therefore not a cognitive judgment, hence not a logical one, but is rather aesthetic, by which is understood one whose determining ground *cannot* be *other than subjective*.
>
> (Kant, 1790, para. 1; Kant, 2000, p. 89)

When we make an aesthetic judgement we consider how we are affected by the object, that is to say we relate it to the feelings of pleasure or displeasure that it arouses in us. Although an aesthetic judgement raises a claim about the object, its 'determining ground' is to be found in the subject. Despite Kant's technical vocabulary, the basic argument here is quite straightforward and can be elucidated by means of an example.

Consider, first, the cognitive judgement 'This roof is hexagonal'. In order to determine whether or not this is correct, we need to count the number of sides, make sure that they are six in number, of an even length, and that there are no irregular additions and so forth. The judgement 'This roof is hexagonal' is amenable to proof and can be objectively verified. By contrast, the correctness of an aesthetic judgement, such as 'This roof is graceful' cannot be determined through accurate measurement or by identifying a set of distinguishing properties, for there is no single or complete set of determinate properties that all graceful roofs must possess. A low-lying roof may be just as graceful as one that soars upwards, and a composite gable construction can be graceful in a way that differs from that of a simple curved design. The only means to determine whether or not a particular roof is graceful is through reference to the feeling that it produces in the viewer. There is thus an ineliminable element of subjectivity in all aesthetic judgement. As we shall see, however, this does not suffice to provide a complete account of aesthetic judgement, for what Kant terms a judgement of taste possesses a second distinctive feature that is in apparent conflict with the first.

In order to bring out the 'peculiarity' of the judgement of taste, Kant draws attention to a distinction that is operative in our everyday use of language. When we declare our liking for something, such as 'I like the colour violet' or 'I like sweet desert wine', we readily accept that the judgement is based on our own subjective preferences. As Kant observes, 'for one person, the colour violet is gentle and lovely, for another dead and lifeless' (Kant, 1790, para. 7; Kant, 2000, p. 97). It would be absurd to insist that others should respond in

the same way, for what is agreeable to me may be disagreeable to someone else. However, when we make a judgement of taste, which takes the characteristic form 'This object is beautiful' or 'This object is graceful', we go beyond our subjective predilections and purport to say something about the object itself. In doing so, we make a judgement that should also hold true for others, that is to say we raise a claim to *intersubjective* validity. This can be seen by reflecting on the fact that whereas we are willing to concede that other people have their own likes and dislikes that do not necessarily coincide with our own, we are frequently prepared to argue over judgements of taste. Kant puts this in the strongest possible terms by observing that a judgement of taste makes a 'demand' on the responses of others: if someone declares that something is beautiful, 'he expects the same satisfaction of others; he judges not merely for himself, but for everyone, and speaks of beauty as if it were a property of things' (Kant, 1790, para. 7; Kant, 2000, p. 98).[2]

Although Kant correlates the judgement of liking with the claim that something is 'agreeable' and the judgement of taste with the claim that something is 'beautiful', his real concern is to mark the difference between expressing a personal preference and making a normative claim that the speaker is prepared to defend against the judgements of other people. In giving precedence to the concept of beauty Kant conforms to the conventions of the eighteenth century. However, if we look at the actual structure of his argument, we can see that beauty functions as a placeholder for any aesthetic quality that is held to inhere in the object or site and thus to be universally accessible. This recognition allows us to apply his ideas more widely. Consider, for example, the statement on the UNESCO World Heritage website that the Historic Ensemble of the Potala Palace, Lhasa, is characterised by its 'harmonious integration into a striking landscape' (UNESCO, 2009a). This counts as a judgement of taste, since it raises a claim that should hold true for everyone, irrespective of their personal likes and dislikes (Figure 2.1). Nonetheless, if we ask after the grounds on which this judgement is made, it is clear that its ultimate basis is the feeling of harmony or disharmony that the buildings *in situ* produce in the viewer. Whereas the age of the palace, its geographical location, the lay-out of the buildings and so forth can be objectively verified, the question of its integration within the landscape can only be decided by referring to the feeling it arouses.

Kant characterises the strange, dual character of the judgement of taste by observing that it possesses the status of 'subjective universality' (Kant, 1790, para. 6; Kant, 2000, p. 97). Far from providing a solution to the problem of taste, this paradoxical concept serves to identify the core question that needs

[2] For Kant's claim that the judgement of taste makes a 'demand' on the responses of others, see Kant (1790, para. 19; Kant, 2000, p. 121: 'The judgment of taste ascribes assent to everyone, and whoever declares something to be beautiful wishes that everyone *should* approve of the object in question and similarly declare it to be beautiful.'

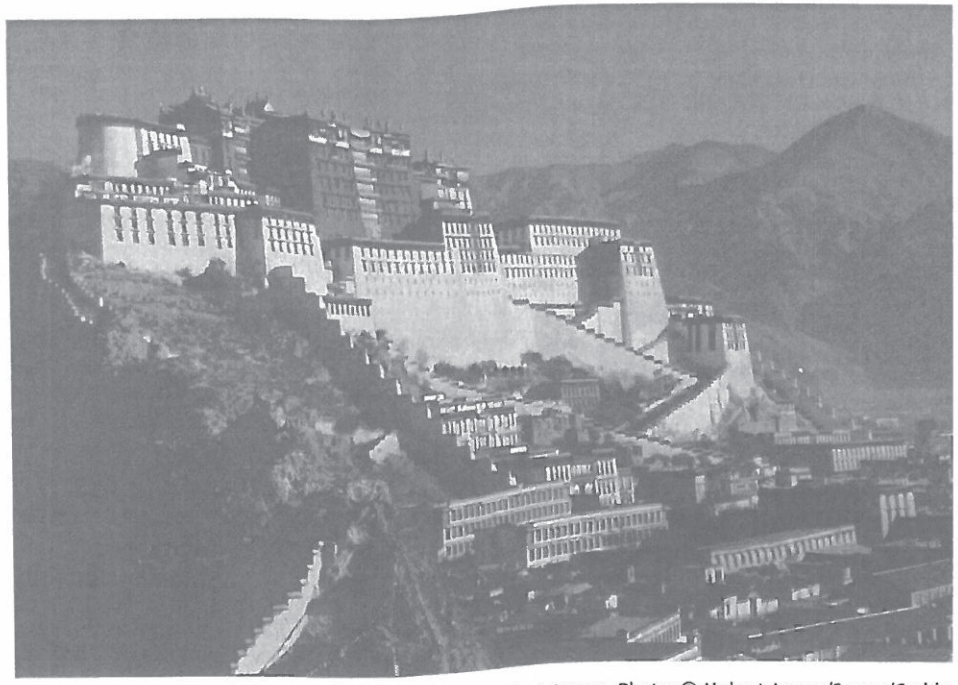


Figure 2.1 Potala Palace, Lhasa, 1985. Photographed by Hubert Ayasse. Photo: © Hubert Ayasse/Sygma/Corbis.

to be answered: what, if anything, entitles us to raise a claim to universal validity on the basis of a *feeling*, something that we normally consider irreducibly subjective? Kant's answer to this question rests on showing that the same mental faculties that are required for ordinary cognition – the faculties of imagination and understanding – are also operative in a judgement of taste and that aesthetic judgement cannot therefore be characterised as a merely physiological response to the object.[3] However, his focus on so-called 'pure aesthetic judgments' leads him to overlook or downplay the processes of deliberation and reflection that characterise our actual disputes about taste. For this reason, I now turn to the work of the Scottish philosopher David Hume and his celebrated essay 'Of the standard of taste', first published in 1757 (Hume, 1985a). In particular, I want to consider Hume's arguments concerning the role of expert knowledge and the potential to revise aesthetic judgement in response to greater knowledge and experience.

[3] Kant's 'transcendental deduction' of the validity of pure aesthetic judgements is to be found at Kant, 1790, para. 38; 2000, p. 170. For discussion of Kant's position, see Allison (2001) and Guyer (1997).

Hume's 'standard of taste'

Hume begins his essay by acknowledging what he terms the 'variety of taste': the sentiments of men vary enormously and what pleases one person may be repellent to another. The age-old maxim *de gustibus non est disputandum* or 'there is no disputing about taste' therefore appears to hold true. However, when it comes to specific judgements of taste we rarely sustain this ecumenical frame of mind. If someone were to assert that the minor eighteenth-century versifier John Ogilby was as great a poet as Milton, we would reject the claim as 'absurd and ridiculous'. Here the principle of the natural equality of taste is 'totally forgot' (Hume, 1985a, p. 231). For Hume, the 'paradox of taste' arises from our commitment to two apparently incompatible positions. On the one hand, we believe that judgements based on sentiment or feeling are necessarily subjective. But, on the other, when it comes to disagreements about taste, we are prepared to argue vigorously for our views. The key to Hume's resolution of the paradox is to be found in his recognition that processes of reasoning and deliberation can operate alongside, and in interaction with, the voice of sentiment or feeling. This idea is elegantly expressed in a passage from his *An Enquiry Concerning the Principles of Morals*, published some six years earlier in 1751.

> Some species of beauty, especially the natural kinds, on their first appearance, command our affection and approbation ... But in many orders of beauty, particularly those of the finer arts, it is requisite to employ much reasoning, in order to feel the proper sentiment; and a false relish may frequently be corrected by argument and reflection.
>
> (Hume, 1985b, p. 173)

Hume develops this argument in 'Of the standard of taste' by identifying five attributes or capacities that are required in order to make a sound judgement. These are, in the order in which he presents them: delicacy of feeling, practice in a particular art, the drawing of comparisons, freedom from prejudice, and good sense or reason. The important thing to note here is that whereas the first item on this list might be described as a natural gift or ability, the others can only be acquired through appropriate experience. Thus, for example, Hume argues that familiarity with a sufficiently broad range of artworks is necessary if we are to learn to discriminate subtle differences: it is by making comparisons that we 'fix the epithets of praise or blame, and learn how to assign the due degree of each' (Hume, 1985a, p. 238). The ability to judge art correctly requires the same 'address and dexterity' as that which enters into its execution. The critic must not only learn to overcome the distorting effects of partisanship, allowing 'nothing to enter into his consideration but the very object which is submitted to his examination' (Hume, 1985a, 239), but he must also use his powers of reason to grasp

both the specific end or purpose for which an artwork has been made and the internal complexity of its individual parts.

The acquisition of expertise therefore plays an important role in judgements of taste. However, if a judgement is to be genuinely aesthetic, it must be based on the subject's own experience of the object, whether at first-hand or in reproduction. It is not enough simply to adduce the opinion of those who possess specialist knowledge in a particular domain, for if I am to make an aesthetic judgement I must submit the object to my own feeling of pleasure or displeasure. Moreover, as we have already seen, the applicability of aesthetic predicates such as 'graceful' and 'beautiful' cannot be determined by identifying a set of determinate properties or by adhering to a set of pre-given procedures. The non-inferential character of the judgement of taste follows directly from its affective basis: we cannot use inductive reasoning to determine whether a roof is graceful or a building is in harmony with its surroundings.

These defining characteristics place important constraints on the judgement of taste: it cannot be grounded in the testimony of others; it is not susceptible to standards of proof; and it cannot be generalised beyond the specific object to which it refers. Nonetheless, if we are to break free from the paradox of taste, we need to avoid setting up a rigid opposition between, on the one hand, the mechanical application of logical rules and principles, and, on the other, the spontaneous and inalterable verdict of sentiment or feeling (Gaiger, 2000). Once we recognise, together with Hume, that our affective responses are amenable to revision through appropriate practices of observation and reflection, the judgement of taste can be opened up to argument and reason-giving. I believe that this approach better characterises our actual dispute about taste. In order to determine whether or not a building (such as the Potala Palace) is graceful or harmonious, we do not simply oppose our subjective responses to the responses of others. Nor do we make unquestioning recourse to the authority of experts. Instead, we try to bring other people to see what it is about the building or site that makes us respond to it in the way we do: we draw attention to features they may have overlooked; we draw meaningful comparisons; and we provide a context in which the significance of these features can be appreciated at their proper value.

Philosophical arguments do not always map neatly on to real-world problems and issues, but they can help us to clarify what is at stake. By discussing the ideas of Kant and Hume I have sought to show that aesthetic judgements possess a distinctive status: they are grounded in the subject's feelings in response to the object and yet raise a claim to universal or intersubjective validity. If this claim is to be substantiated, we cannot retreat into the

immediacy of feeling, but must enter into processes of argument and debate. It is not possible to prove that a particular judgement is correct, but we can seek to bring others to see why we respond in the way we do; at the same time, we must remain open to the possibility of revising our own judgement in response to the views of others. Aesthetic considerations are only one factor in the complex decision-making processes that surround the **designation** and conservation of heritage, and they need to be weighed up against other historical, social and practical concerns. There are also larger questions concerning the role of institutions and the underlying value systems on which such decisions are based. Nonetheless, reflection on the distinctive character of aesthetic judgement enables us to see that it is possible to give due weight to the responses of those who have direct experience of an object or site without jeopardising the requirement of objectivity in disputed claims over heritage.

Reflecting on the case study

Expert opinion is sometimes viewed as part of the problem summed up by the AHD. It is the role of experts to determine official heritage values and so to define objects and places that can become incorporated as official heritage. Experts in this sense are the professionals charged by governments and other institutions with the 'heritage brief', from museum curators to inspectors of ancient monuments. Critical analysis of the role of the AHD suggests that expert opinion is primarily directed towards understanding aesthetic significance. As we saw in Chapter 1, historically this has been the dominant value used in official heritage practices. The case study gives us the critical tools to reflect more carefully on how aesthetic judgements are made and why they remain such an important area for debate. They certainly cannot be dismissed as simply subjective and personal responses; perhaps the 'judgement' element reminds us that they can be justified by using evidence, although of the type discussed within aesthetic discourses. However, an expert working within these discourses can make their specialist approach understandable by non-specialists. The language used in the summaries of World Heritage sites and their significance is one example of relatively accessible expert statements, many of which are aesthetic judgements. The problem that the AHD identifies, the dominance of aesthetic judgement, has been increasingly addressed in recent decades by adding a wider range of values, which the rest of this chapter explores. But it is hard to argue that aesthetic judgement has taken a smaller role. Perhaps it is easier to see that a wider range of aesthetic criteria are being used, including modern and contemporary cultural creations.

Authenticity in objects of heritage

The World Heritage Convention of 1972 slightly expands the historical and aesthetic categories for world excellence in cultural objects of heritage. Monuments and groups of buildings are to be recognised for their 'outstanding universal value from the point of view of history, art or science' (UNESCO, [1972] 2009b, Article 1). Furthermore, the concept of 'sites' appears, which seems to address communities who do not have a tradition of building monumental structures or permanent settlements. Sites can achieve 'outstanding universal value from the historical, aesthetic, ethnological or anthropological point of view'. Briefly, the last two categories cover the western disciplines of ethnography, the investigation of living pre-capitalist societies, and of anthropology, a comparative investigation of societies (usually living pre-capitalist). In other words, history, beauty and science are values to be found in western objects of heritage. Non-western societies, especially those without a tradition of literacy or monument building, are seen to be set apart from those values. A different set of experts needs to find the arguments for placing the material heritage of these communities into a framework that fits the 1972 World Heritage Convention. We saw further expansions of international definitions of heritage, such as cultural landscapes or 'masterpieces' of intangible culture, in Chapter 1.

There is an additional twist to western discourses about heritage, and that is the addition of the concept of authenticity. This sounds as though it might be an additional value, but in fact it is presented in heritage assessments as a quality that really is inherent to the material reality of the object of heritage. We need to ask what a conservation definition of authenticity is, and why it is deemed to be important for the significance of the object in question.

The Nara Document

The Nara Document is designed to set criteria for how the 'test of authenticity' can be applied by the World Heritage Committee to cultural sites proposed for **inscription** on the World Heritage List (ICOMOS, 1994). It is particularly concerned to step away from western definitions of authenticity to acknowledge diversity and to accord 'respect to the social and cultural values of all societies'. The Nara Document does not actually give a definition but refers back to the Venice Charter of 1964, which is concerned to set principles for the conservation of historic monuments. This includes the need for decisions about the original and subsequent states of the physical monument to be based on verifiable evidence. Conservation judgements (how to repair, what materials to use) on this basis should not detract from the monument's historic and aesthetic qualities; the monument is deemed to have its own qualities (inherent) to be preserved and revealed. It is not spelled out, but the Venice Charter is concerned that conservation actions do not compromise

the authentic nature of the monument. This assumes that the monument has survived to the present day, before modern heritage practices, through a series of cultural uses (repairs, perhaps additions, perhaps new uses) that have their own 'authentic' place in the culture that created the monument and any successor cultures. The result is that the monument itself bears the quality of authenticity in relation to its location and culture.

We can see the Venice Charter principles as tending to fossilise the monument, albeit in a state of good repair, at the point at which heritage professionals bring it in to the realm of official heritage practice. In the UK, designated monuments pre-date the Venice Charter by many decades; those defined by law as ancient monuments are protected by strict planning requirements. Consider the example of an ancient monument which comprised a Norman keep (the major building of a castle *c.*1200 CE) and later buildings that were added for prison use: the whole group then became a regional museum from 1894, the Norwich Castle Museum, Norfolk (Figure 2.2). The keep itself had been converted in the nineteenth century from its previous prison function to a vast gallery space, and the stone exterior had also been heavily repaired. Since the UK subscribes to international heritage frameworks, its heritage

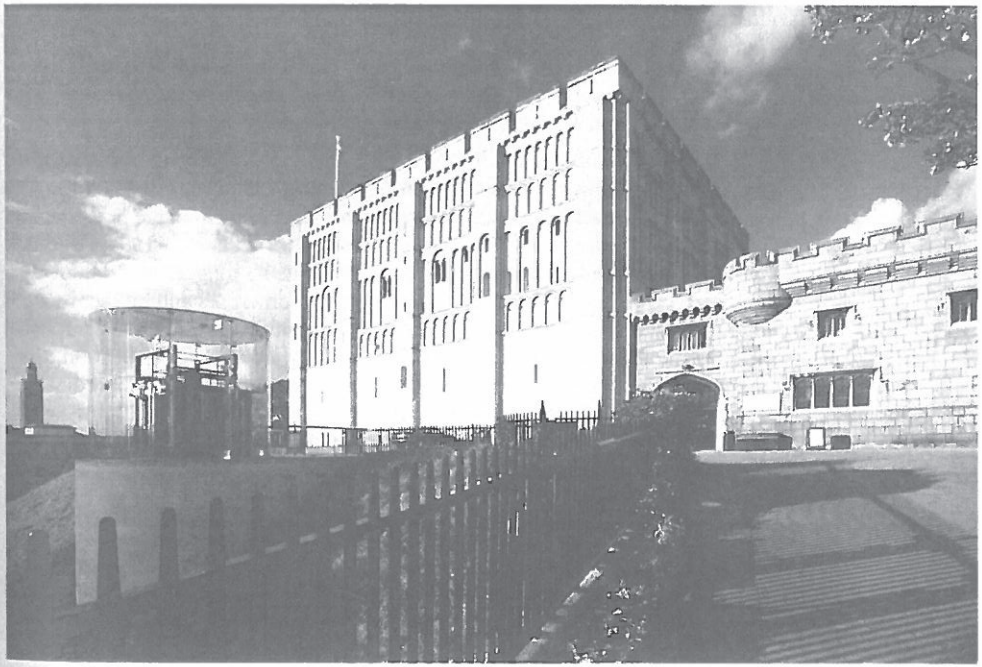


Figure 2.2 Norwich Castle and Museum. Photographed by Michael Howell. Photo: © Michael Howell/Alamy.

professionals would not now consider stripping away the later physical additions to the Norman keep; these tell their own stories and have long-standing social and **community value**. Australian tourists come to visit the medieval keep to see the later prison cells that held their convict ancestors before deportation (a practice operated from 1787 to 1868). The layers of meaning that this monument has acquired over centuries are the result of its adaptation for new uses; were its post-Norman material stripped away it would become an empty ruin. Equally, because it is a living building, it does need to be repaired and periodically upgraded to cope with its public functions; a recent £12 million refurbishment was possible because the heritage professionals agreed that the degree and nature of physical change was in keeping with its history of use. The primary values of history and aesthetics could, it was hoped, be enhanced or further revealed by the proposed works.

Nara is responding to cultural diversity where authentic community uses challenge the heritage professionals' guidelines over defining and limiting physical change. The Nara Document reminds heritage professionals (and their national governments) that heritage is not always to be defined by the dominant cultural group in a given society; nations with multiple or successor cultures must acknowledge the potential for a clash of cultural values around heritage. The language of the document is more overtly political than previous international frameworks; its authors face up to the political uses of heritage and the abuses (either through aggression or suppression) that politically dominant groups can perpetrate against minority group heritage. Even more, they recognise the tensions possible between international heritage practices and local values and meanings: Section 8 calls for local communities to be recognised as the primary carers for their heritage, and for their cultural values to take precedence if the balance between official heritage practices and local heritage values cannot otherwise be agreed (ICOMOS, 1994). The last word can rest with the local 'owners' of heritage so long as all credible evidence can be collected to assess the physical form, uses and range of values that the material heritage has for the local community, for other cultural users and for the international community. Using this process of verification, the authors of the Nara Document hope that diverse, and possibly unpredictable, values can be documented and respected. Authenticity is a quality of the material object of heritage, in Nara terms; values are expressed by humans.

The next case study follows changing western ideas about authenticity in conservation practices by exploring how a group of ancient Greek sculptures has been treated. In the early nineteenth century the sculptures were fully restored with missing elements re-carved to blend invisibly. In the 1970s the restored elements were removed and the statues re-presented in line with new research – controversially, as the nineteenth-century additions could be viewed as part of the objects' history (imagine if they were buildings). Have they lost some authenticity in being stripped back? In contrast to this very

scholarly debate, two very different buildings are used to suggest how more 'open' approaches to authenticity can challenge visitors' imagination. The ghostly appearance of the Franklin House, Philadelphia, and the surprise hidden away in a Chicago office foyer make it clear to visitors that they are seeing something different from the original appearances of these places.

Case study: the subjective element in conservation

This case study sets out two contrasting conservation theories and their historical context in western attitudes to the past. The first is exemplified by **restoration** practices in Europe from the late eighteenth century. This is the period of an aesthetic discourse about classical revival known as neo-classicism ('new' classicism). The guiding philosophy directed that classical antiquities should be restored 'back' to the ancient classical models of art, which were thought to represent the most perfect expression of human achievement; emulation by later societies was therefore a means of perfecting themselves. This gave restoration a social purpose: it was recognised as a public good. The tension between personal artistic expression and the need to remain faithful to ancient forms has remained a subject of debate up to the present day.

By contrast, conservation philosophy in the early twenty-first century has been shaped by some key projects that were executed during the 1970s. The work of the architectural firm Venturi and Rauch is representative of a wider rejection of 'total restoration' in this period, and of the search to strike a new balance between fidelity to a lost original and personal expression. Instead of trying to restore ruins by completing them, some conservation architects attempted to present them as incomplete wholes, expressing the missing parts as absences. The viewer's personal interpretation became a means not only to participate in the contingent completion of historic objects, but also a way for people to edify themselves through contact with historic objects in a critical, rather than a passive, way.

Neo-classical approaches to restoration

In 1811 two architects and archaeologists, the Bavarian Baron Carl Freiherr von Haller and the British Charles Robert Cockerell, led an archaeological expedition to the Greek island of Aegina during which they unearthed fragments of the ancient sculptures that once graced the pediment of the Doric temple of Aphaia (fifth century BCE) (Figure 2.3). Haller convinced his patron (then Prince) Ludwig of Bavaria, an avid collector of ancient Greek art, to purchase the stones. Faced with the difficulty of understanding how the numerous fragments related to one another, Prince Ludwig hired the Danish sculptor Bertel Thorvaldsen to study and restore the fragments (Plon, 1874).

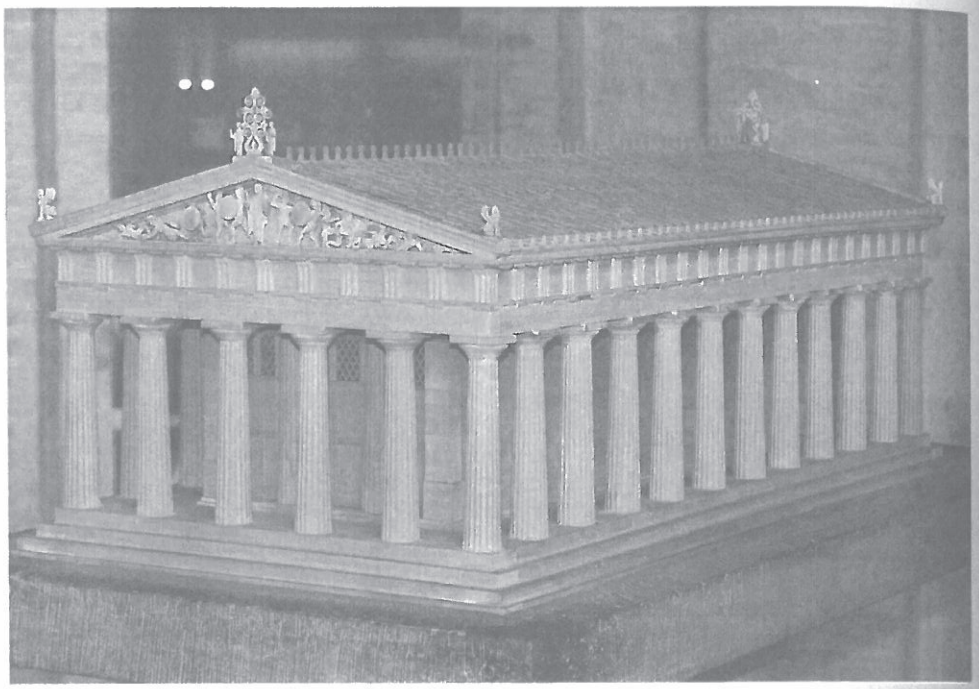


Figure 2.3 Model of the temple of Aphaia, Aegina Island. Glyptothek, Munich. Photograph by Renate Kühling. Photo: Staatliche Antikensammlungen und Glyptothek Museum.

Why did Prince Ludwig hire an artist to carry out this 'scientific' endeavour? A similar job today would be awarded to a team (not an individual) that would include archaeologists, art historians and stone conservators, among many other professionals. Archaeology was at this time a relatively new field of research. One of the forefathers of scientific archaeology is considered to be Johann Joachim Winckelmann, who, in the eighteenth century, developed the first systematic method for observing ancient artefacts, allowing him to distinguish between Greek artefacts and Roman copies. As archaeology progressed, it helped to redefine understanding of ancient art and architecture, showing it to be more regionally inflected than had previously been thought and to have undergone various historical developments. These findings began to put into question Winckelmann's Neoplatonic understanding of art and architecture as something based on a single universal ideal. Nevertheless, his notion that the ancients (especially the Greeks) had come closest to that ideal, and that the only way to achieve great art was to imitate the ancients, continued to hold sway.

Artists and architects had been recognised for their restorations of ancient objects since the Renaissance. Restorations, such as that of the Laocoön sculpture unearthed in 1506 and then restored several times thereafter, were hotly debated and could make or break the career of artists and architects. By the eighteenth century, restoration was considered habitual work for sculptors, and the question of the restorer's competency and creativity came under greater public scrutiny. The basis for judging a restorer's competency continued to follow Winkelmann's theory that the resulting artwork had to measure up to the ancients, conceived as an absolute measure of artistic perfection. Late eighteenth-century restorers therefore believed that it was their responsibility not just to patch up broken statues but to express the aesthetic perfection of the antique ideal. Pitted against the ancients, the late eighteenth-century restorers did not confine themselves to imitation but proceeded to emulate their predecessors, calling attention to and challenging comparisons with the ancients.

As David Lowenthal has noted, late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century restorers thought that the advancement of restoration knowledge rested on individual genius, not in the collaborative action of a discipline. Antoine-Chrysostôme Quatremère de Quincy, French archaeologist and editor of the *Dictionnaire d'Architecture*, distinguished between the relative perfectibility in the sciences and the fine arts. He thought that whereas in science 'generations transmit the result of these works to the following ones', in art and architecture 'Progress, or what one may call the steps made by predecessors, leaves no traces, no terms that successors could use as a starting point' (Quatremère de Quincy, 1999, 'Antique', pp. 63, 64).

The importance of the individual restorer as an agent in the advancement of artistic knowledge meant that the decision to restore an ancient work or not was subordinate to finding an artist capable of doing the work. Second, it meant that the work of restoration had an educational purpose: the restored artwork had to demonstrate the restorer's superior understanding of it, and thus improve the general public's knowledge of that artwork in particular and of ancient art in general. Once Prince Ludwig became the new owner of the Aegina sculptures he began looking for the only individual who could work like the ancients. Thorvaldsen was considered the logical choice, as one of the greatest sculptors of his time. Quatremère judged that Thorvaldsen had mastered perfectly the Aegina style:

> we will owe to the restoration of the pediments of the Temple of Aegina our better understanding of how they were, of the taste in the composition of pedimental sculpture, and of the style of this ancient school.
>
> (Quatremère de Quincy, 1818, letter 4, p. 82)

Public admiration for Thorvaldsen served in a sense to authorise the restoration.

Some of Thorvaldsen's contemporaries had different views about restoration. When the renowned sculptor Antonio Canova visited London in 1815, he was asked *who* should restore the Elgin marbles. Judging that there was no artist technically capable and sufficiently knowledgeable to match the work of Phidias, who was thought to be the original sculptor, Canova asked that the marbles not be touched (D'Este, 1864, p. 245).

The second half of the nineteenth century was characterised by intense debates in defence of both artistic restoration and minimal approaches to conservation. In England by 1849 John Ruskin had made his case in favour of conservation and against the likes of James Wyatt, discussed below. Later William Morris and his Society for the Preservation of Ancient Buildings would enter the debate on the side of conservation.

Poetic order as mediating aesthetic

Thorvaldsen was seen, along with Antonio Canova, as one of the leaders responsible for instituting a new style of art, which we now call neo-classical. Although we often think of neo-classicism as a change of style – a revisiting of ancient Greek and Roman architecture informed by the new archaeological approaches – it was underpinned by a new way of thinking about art. The terms in which the restorer's competency to restore was explained and understood began to change in the early nineteenth century. Thorvaldsen is interesting precisely because although he was very much practising within the stylistic canon of neo-classicism, the way he and his commentators thought about restoration was already proto-Romantic: they placed a great emphasis on individual genius; and they re-conceptualised restoration as the installation of a 'poetic order', or mediating aesthetic, between the material form of the artefact and its intellectual and aesthetic content, or in other words between practice and theory. Neo-classical restoration practices were a reaction to the division between 'ideal' theory and 'human' practice, motivated in part by the importance that Enlightenment thinkers placed on the power of the individual. Neo-classical restorers invented an entirely new method for relating their art to the past, which purported to be more 'exact' than the simple application of classical theories of composition, such as the rules of proportion. By acquiring a thorough knowledge of the principles of antique art a truly imaginative artist could put themselves into the shoes of the original artist and use their creative powers to 'recreate' the work, including any missing or damaged parts. Thus, theory and knowledge might be combined with creative genius to create a 'poetic order'.

Quatremère offered some of the most insightful writings on the neo-classical understanding of poetic order in his *Dictionnaire*, as well as in his famous letters to Canova regarding the Elgin marbles. For Quatremère, the question of how to restore was intimately bound up in the problem of progress in the arts,

that is, how to remain faithful to the ancient works while allowing for the evolution of contemporary practice. He thought there were two ways of restoring ancient works, and of designing in general:

> The first, improperly called imitation, consists in reproducing only the appearance through copies. The second consists, on the part of the imitator, in appropriating the principles of the antique and consequently its genius or its causes, along with its consequences.
>
> (Quatremère de Quincy, 1999, 'Antique', p. 69)

He strongly favoured the second. The act of restoration was, for Quatremère, at once an act of documenting particulars, of assimilating and learning the universal principles latent within those particulars, and finally, of translating those invariable principles into contemporary particulars by creating something new. Significantly, the act of restoration had to be done by one individual, preferably a genius with great intuition:

> Indeed, it is important, in order to succeed at such *restitutions*, that the same man be at once the translator and the artist. When the double operation of translating and drawing combines within the activity of one intelligence, then, the translation and the drawing exchange reciprocal influences.
>
> (Quatremère de Quincy, 1999, 'Restitution', p. 219)

The choice of the word 'restitution' is important. Quatremère chose it to distinguish his thinking from the old way of understanding 'restoration' as simply copying the old. 'Cold plagiarists' copied, whereas geniuses practised restitution. What the genius restorer was supposed to reinstate to the ancient work was its poetic order, not just its missing parts.

Quatremère proposed that it was in principle possible to free restoration from servile copying. This opened the floodgates of creative personal expression in restoration, something Quatremère was worried about. The notion of poetic order was a way to establish limits on expression. Neo-classical restorers had to find the ordering logic of their aesthetic in the process of making itself. The restorer had to install a poetic order on the work, his chisel had to remake the work so that it showed both the material conditions of its making and the intellectual principles on which it was based. Poetic order was the demonstration of a new synthesis of (variable) practice and (invariable) theory.

Restoration introduced the restorer's creative intentions into the new look of the restored work. Conceptually, the process of restoration was not unlike that of creating an entirely new work of art. Every work of art was seen as evidence of a process, the realisation of intention in material form, the result of a series of lived artistic moments, or self-contained time-frames. With this understanding, neo-classical restoration aimed to *restore the lost time-frame*

that belonged to the artwork. In 1866 French architect Eugène-Emmanuel Viollet-le-Duc expressed his understanding of restoration as 'to reinstate it [the building] in a condition of completeness which could never have existed at any given time' (Viollet-le-Duc, [1866] 1875, p. 9).

In order to be able to look at all the Aegina fragments together, evaluate the relationship of the parts to the whole, and recompose the pediment, Thorvaldsen rented a large studio in Rome. He also purchased marble blocks carefully selected to match the exact colour and grain of the original Parian marble. He wanted the new and the old to be indistinguishable. When visitors to his studio asked him to identify the restored parts he would retort 'I cannot say, I neglected to mark them, and I no longer remember. Find them out for yourself, if you can' (Plon, 1874, p. 58).

As material searches for poetic order, neo-classical restoration practices were inseparable from the specificity of techniques used to work on the material itself. Their scientific authority came from the mastery of ancient techniques by the restorer. It seemed inevitable that the best marble sculptures of the ancient world should be restored by the best marble sculptor of the present.

In like fashion, only the best neo-classical architects appeared to be suited to restore old buildings. Take for instance the British architect James Wyatt, who was noted for his work in the neo-classical style (a little earlier than the now more famous Robert Adam). Wyatt's prestigious appointment, in 1776, as surveyor to the fabric of Westminster Abbey brought him commissions to restore some of Britain's best ancient buildings, medieval Gothic cathedrals such as Lichfield, Hereford, Salisbury and Durham. We need to distinguish neo-classical *restoration* practices from the neo-classical *style* in art and architecture. When Wyatt 'restored' Gothic cathedrals all the new elements he introduced were in the Gothic style, albeit an unabashedly personal interpretation of Gothic. This is how it is possible for us to distinguish easily today between medieval Gothic details and Wyatt's designs: they are not simply copies of existing historic work. I emphasise this only to press the point that restoration did not require exact imitation, but the faithful pursuit of a poetic order which was meant to restore the material and aesthetic integrity of the ancient building. Thus the great creative licence Wyatt took when restoring cathedrals would have appeared to him as a necessity. At Salisbury, for instance, he moved funerary monuments to places between the piers so that they would appear more orderly. Wyatt's 'tidying up' of cathedral surroundings separated them from their urban surroundings, and his landscaped closes made their siting approximate that of Georgian houses on lawns.

Wyatt's neo-classical notion of restoring the poetic order of ancient buildings also anticipated the writings of Viollet-le-Duc, who claimed to be able to 'adopt' the 'means of execution' of ancient master builders on the basis of his knowledge of construction techniques. The 'science' and facts of architectural

restoration were only verifiable by the practical architect who, like him, 'has seen stonework hewn and built by the hand of man, who knows how it is worked, and how it is laid in place' (Viollet-le-Duc, [1877] 1987, pp. 126, 214).

Restorers positioned themselves as returning life to the past. But life can only be here and now. For an architect, to give life to the past meant creating in the manner of the ancients. Neo-classical restoration practices cleared the way for the Romantic identification of art and life. For neo-classical restorers, the life of the ancients was the guide to contemporary life.

Ethics

The task of restoration poetics to bring contemporary life to the past was thought to be meaningless unless there was an objective need guiding the process. Since ancient Greece towered above all other periods, the decision to restore ancient works according to an eighteenth-century model of ancient aesthetics was guided and directed towards the goal of social utility. Restoration aesthetics was for the first time justified on ethical grounds: all citizens would become better people by exposure to the very finest art.

Prince Ludwig claimed the ethical ground of social utility when he commissioned Thorvaldsen to restore the Aegina marbles. The marbles were part of a larger plan by Prince Ludwig to build symbols of Bavarian national identity. He asked architect Leo Ritter von Klenze to design Munich's Königsplatz in the spirit of ancient Greece, a great civic space whose north side was filled by the new museum for classical sculptures, the Glyptothek (Figure 2.4). The buildings were also to be the perfect architectural setting for political rallies. Ludwig, crowned king in 1825, used the Königsplatz to celebrate his dynastic 'incorporation' of Greece through his son Otto, who was crowned first king of Greece in 1832. Klenze's design marked a departure in the history of museums. It was the first building to be devoted entirely to the display of antique sculpture. Thorvaldsen's Aegina marbles became the centrepieces of the display. Klenze wanted to create the perfect architectural setting for neo-classical restorations: the building was supposed to enhance Thorvaldsen's intention to hinder the viewer's ability to tell the old fragments from the new. Klenze decorated the room in the manner of ancient Greek architecture to distract the viewer,

> to make him oblivious of the dreary condition in which they [the ancient sculptures] have come down to us, often after centuries of barbarism and destruction; this is better achieved by providing the walls, against which these antique sculptures are exhibited, with a certain degree of splendour, and even emphasizing it.
>
> (Klenze and Schorn, 1830, p. 1)

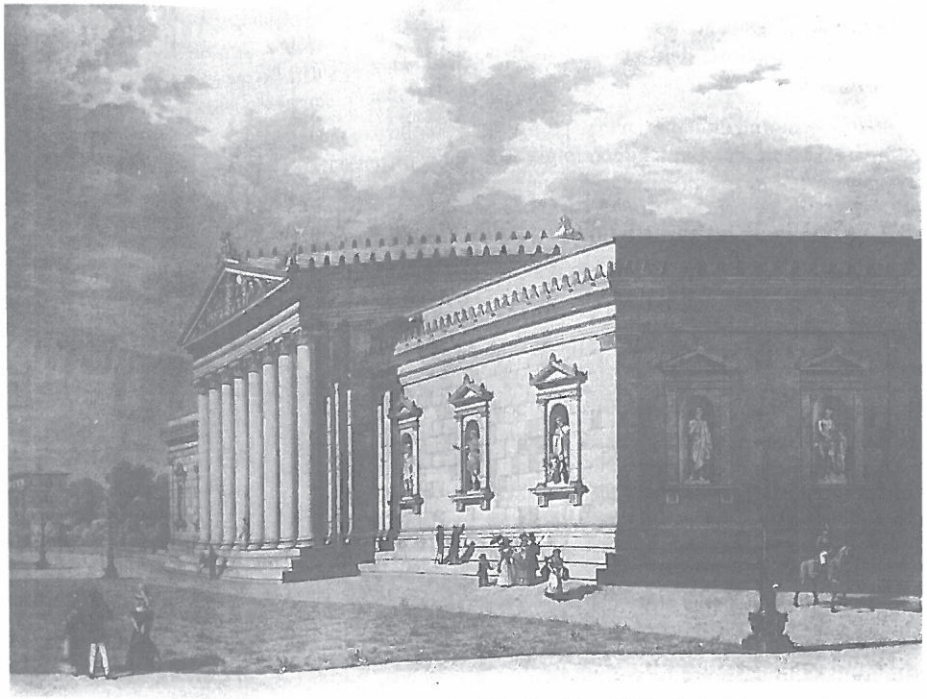


Figure 2.4 Unknown engraver, *Glyptothek auf dem Königsplatz*, Munich, *c.*1850, steel plate engraving. Photo: © akg-images.

The history of conservation attests to the fact that modern western society has always invested itself unevenly in the past. That is to say, for every generation one period of the past has seemed to tower above all others as an emblem of wholesomeness and perfection. Sociologist Pierre Bourdieu called this investment the *illusio* or belief that holds fields of cultural production together:

> The smooth running of all social mechanisms, whether in the literary field or in the field of power, depends on the existence of the *illusio*, the interest, the investment, in both economic and psychological sense (this investment is called *Besetzung* in German and 'cathexis' in English).
>
> (Bourdieu, 1993, p. 159)

The *illusio* of conservation consists primarily in the investment in an aesthetic ideal derived from the past, and in the Romantic belief that its poetics can reconnect contemporary life with a more wholesome former way of life. It is this social investment that has guaranteed the proper functioning of

conservation and determined its changing aesthetics over the past two centuries.

De-restoration politics

I now want to shift gears and look at changing philosophies about how we connect with the past made in the 1970s. The jump is not random. During the 1970s the neo-classical period became the object of great popular and scholarly interest. This was especially the case in Germany in the context of de-Nazification and in the USA where the date of 1776 burned in everyone's minds as preparations were underway for the country's bi-centennial celebration. During the 1970s there was also a return to the neo-classical notion of conservation as a poetic process. This was in reaction to the rise of an increasingly science-based archaeology in the 1960s (the new archaeology). Uncannily, the Aegina marbles were again at the centre of this debate.

Before we return to the marbles, we should also note the rapid formalisation of the processes for conservation after the Second World War (addressed in Chapter 1). In particular, the adoption in 1964 of the International Charter for the Conservation and Restoration of Monuments and Sites (the Venice Charter) represented a key stage in the production of the AHD introduced earlier. The Venice Charter set out general principles for intervening in historic structures and objects, and Article 12 declared:

> Replacements of missing parts must integrate harmoniously with the whole, but at the same time must be distinguishable from the original so that restoration does not falsify the artistic or historic evidence.
>
> (ICOMOS, [1964] 1996)

In other words, the western nations formally recognised the distinction between the 'archaeological' survival of original features as authentic, and the deliberate reinstatement of features as inauthentic, but acceptable if capable of being understood as such by the viewer (and fake if masquerading as original). For example, decorated pottery fragments might be reassembled and missing pieces might be represented in new clay coloured to tone but must not be made to 'disappear' into the original whole. The conservator would not add their artistic interpretation of the integrity of the original work. So how would curators respond to the many works in their collections that had earlier 'restorations' resulting from very different philosophical understandings?

In 1972, after a decade of work, Dieter Ohly, director of Munich's Glyptothek, unveiled the much anticipated 'de-restoration' of the sculptures from the temple of Aphaia at Aegina. The significance of this event would normally have been restricted to the limited world of museum conservators, but the work involved a major artist's, Thorvaldsen's, previous neo-classical

restoration. This happened to be the time when postmodern architects were rediscovering neo-classicism, and they were quick to come to the defence of neo-classical works. Giulio Carlo Argan, an art historian with a breadth and clarity of vision that earned him a wide readership among architects and conservationists, sounded the alarm and directed attention towards the Glyptothek. What was shocking was what was missing. Ohly had entirely

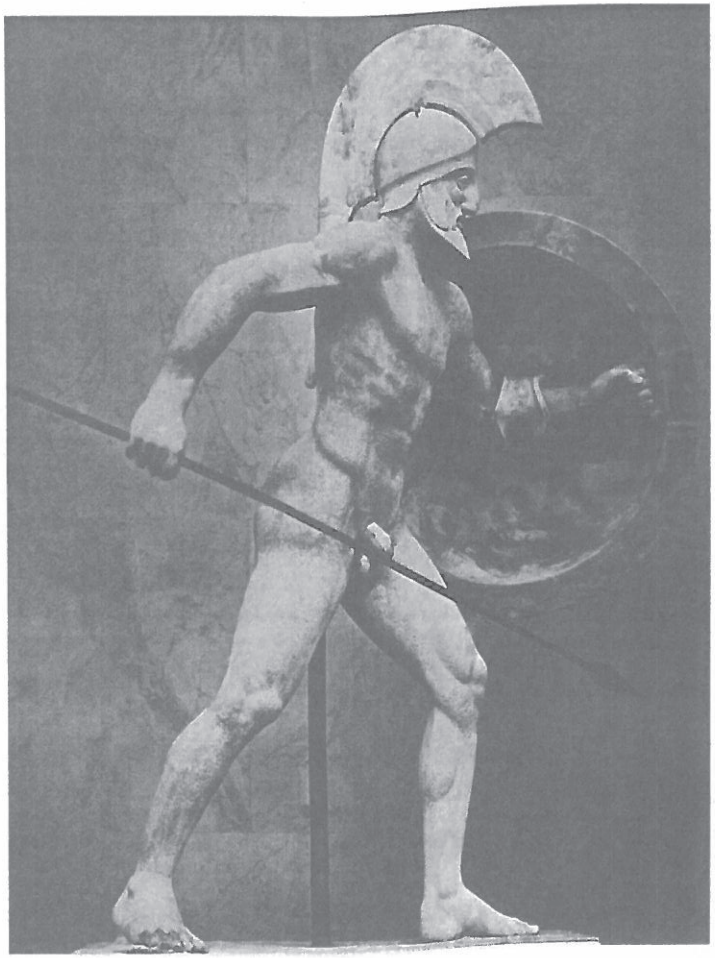


Figure 2.5 Warrior from the temple of Aphaia at Aegina, before de-restoration. Glyptothek, Munich. Unknown photographer. Photo: Staatliche Antikensammlungen und Glyptothek Museum.

destroyed the work of Thorvaldsen. Hiding behind the mask of a 'scientific' restoration method, Ohly had destroyed a great work of neo-classicism with impunity (Figures 2.5 and 2.6).



Figure 2.6 Warrior from the temple of Aphaia at Aegina, after de-restoration. Glyptothek, Munich. Unknown photographer. Photo: Staatliche Antikensammlungen und Glyptothek Museum.

Later scholarship has demonstrated what contemporary viewers could only hypothesise: that this eradication of neo-classicism was just as much ideological as scientific. It was part of a particular cultural moment when Germany was attempting to resolve the legacy of its National Socialist era (Diebold, 1995, pp. 60–6). Thorvaldsen's sculptures of ancient warriors had been hailed by Nazis like Hans W. Fisher as models for the new German athlete. As literal fusions of ancient Greek and neo-classical sculpture, they also served as symbolic anchors of the imperialist desire to make Munich what Hitler called the 'Acropolis Germaniae'. Indeed, the Königsplatz was used for Nazi mass rallies and further classical buildings were added to the ensemble.

Ohly's de-restoration seemed justified as a scientific correction. If Thorvaldsen's original restoration was an expression of scientific knowledge about the ancient sculptures combined with creative interpretation, then new scientific discoveries, with their concomitant expansion of existing knowledge, demanded that the restoration be 'improved'. Evidence from new excavations had exposed Thorvaldsen's poetic licence in restoring the sculptures. For instance, he had restored a warrior from the east pediment as lying down when he should have been standing (Figure 2.7). Since Thorvaldsen was not 'just' a conservator but also a famous sculptor, there was the question or whether his restoration should be considered scientific or artistic: was his work evidence of poetic intention or scientific rationality? The answer would determine whether or not it was permissible to 'correct' his work. Ohly viewed Thorvaldsen's restoration as scientific, and therefore flawed, outdated and in need of urgent updating. Ohly's decision was also a

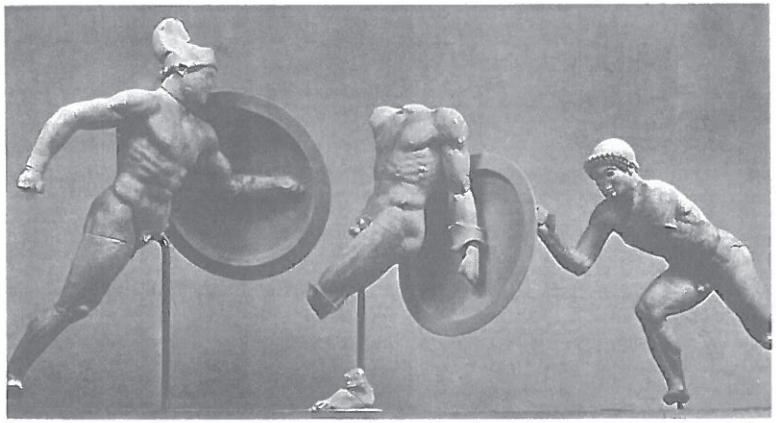


Figure 2.7 Detail of east pediment assemblage from the temple of Aphaia at Aegina. Glyptothek, Munich. Unknown photographer. Photo: Staatliche Antikensammlungen und Glyptothek Museum.

judgement that the discipline of conservation was an 'objective' science which permitted no room for poetic self-expression.

During these same years, postmodern architects entered into the discussion. Their interest in connecting modern architecture with the styles of the past led them to raise theoretical questions which, as they quickly discovered, had already been asked towards the end of the eighteenth century, including how to link tradition and invention, how to express contemporary architecture in a historic style or, as postmodernists liked to say, in the 'language' of the past. They did not wish to make copies of historic styles but to use historic traditions creatively, even playfully. For instance, Philip Johnson designed a skyscraper office block, a key symbol of modernity, with an eighteenth-century-style pediment and other references to classical architecture (the AT&T building, now the Sony Tower, New York, finished 1984). Architects who deliberately re-made historic architectural styles into new, unprecedented combinations in their buildings could be said to be making new meanings out of older traditions – perhaps something that Thorvaldsen would have understood.

Lost time

These conservation and architectural debates about what was the proper 'language' in which to express contemporary work, and about the difference between scientific and artistic approaches to practice, framed the institutionalisation of conservation as an academic discipline. James Marston Fitch, founder of the first historic **preservation** programme in the USA at Columbia University, conceived conservation (or historic preservation as it is termed in the USA) more as an art than as a science. He called it a 'four dimensional' creative practice in his book *Historic Preservation* (Fitch, [1982] 1990). Conservation engaged the first and second dimensions through documentation, which required measuring linear distances, and drawing two-dimensional plans and sections of the existing buildings. It encompassed the third dimension through interventions in the fabric of buildings. Fitch differentiated the three-dimensional work of conservation from that of architecture. Unlike architecture which dealt mostly with the addition of new materials to a site to produce a new three-dimensional building, conservation involved both additive and subtractive processes: in some cases it might require removing walls altogether to achieve the desired historical integrity. Conservation's first three dimensions were relatively straightforward geometric quantities. By contrast, the fourth dimension was less obvious. Fitch made it clear that what he called the fourth dimension was not simply time itself but rather the particular manner in which conservation presented architecture as an object created and shaped through a temporal process.

The question of defining time is as old as philosophy. Modern physics classifies time as a fundamental quantity that defines other quantities (for example, velocity, force, energy), and that therefore cannot be defined by them. Consequently, time can only be defined operationally by the process of measurement and the units chosen. This 'operational' definition of time is close to Fitch's understanding of preservation's fourth dimension as the aesthetic presentation of architecture as a temporal process.

The fourth dimension, as the aesthetic expression of this temporal poetics, was, in Fitch's words, an 'unnatural interface between the viewer and the viewed', visitor and building (Fitch, [1982] 1990, p. 325). The key word was 'unnatural'. The fourth dimension was an aesthetic realm of artificiality, emerging paradoxically from the viewer's confrontation with the genuine building. 'This', underscored Fitch, 'is a totally different relationship from that which normally exists between user and used or owner and owned' (Fitch, [1982] 1990, p. 325). The time dimension of conservation negated the 'normal' way of experiencing buildings as 'useful' three-dimensional objects of daily life. It created an 'abnormal' relationship to buildings through which they appeared as something more than use objects: they appeared as poetic creations.

The 'unnaturalness' of conservation's fourth dimension was also a function of the fact that it did not offer a sequential measure of time (like a clock), or even a narrative measure of it as a linear continuum 'full' of events. Rather, according to Fitch, the fourth dimension was really a measure of 'lost' time: an unbridgeable temporal gap that made the experience of the present object seem totally disconnected from the past. The notion of lost time was central to Fitch's understanding of modernity as the human condition of being alienated from one's own heritage. Conservation's fourth dimension, he wrote, 'responds to the need for alienated peoples to re-establish some experiential contact with the material evidence of their own past' (Fitch, [1982] 1990, p. 325). The wording here is important. The fourth dimension was a 'response', not a solution.

The theme of lost time can be found in the work of other architectural conservation theorists, and became central in North American historic preservation debates during the 1970s and 1980s. Lost time was also a central concept in the European rethinking of architectural conservation, where it was spearheaded by art historians turned conservation theorists like Paul Philippot, who directed UNESCO's International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property (ICCROM) during the critical years of 1971–7. Philippot also believed in the 'unbridgeable gap that has formed, after historicism, between us and the past' (Philippot, 1996, p. 225). The missing link of lost time could not simply and naively be filled in without falling prey to the false consciousness of confusing self-projection

with historical fact. If lost time was really 'lost', then by definition one could not know what it was.

For Fitch and Philippot, the most damning condemnation of a conservation project was to say that it was archaeological. That was to say that it had failed to bring life to the past, and instead increased our distance from the past by 'freezing' it. For Philippot, the more alienated the preservationist was from the past, the more they would 'turn to a scientific approach' to preservation and tend to transform the historic building 'into a purely archaeological museum object' (Philippot, 1996, p. 223). These were damning words for his German colleague Ohly, whose reputation never recovered. By physically removing Thorvaldsen's restoration work, Ohly had both destroyed the creative contribution of the sculptor and also fixed the original fragments in a frozen moment of time.

The 'big failure' of archaeological conservation, wrote Philippot, was that it could not 're-establish the continuity of lived history' (Philippot, 1996, p. 224). An example of a large-scale heritage project that attempts to achieve this 'lived history' experience can be seen at Colonial Williamsburg, Virginia. The former capital town of the colony until 1780, it had fallen into quiet decay until its significance as part of the foundation story of modern America attracted physical restoration and investigation projects from the 1920s until today. It claims to be the world's largest living history museum, an eighteenth-century town staffed by costumed interpreters. Fitch attacked Colonial Williamsburg, the darling project of the conservation establishment, as the worst kind of archaeological conservation. The entire town had been returned to 1776 through surgical demolitions and scientific reconstructions, then furnished and perpetually maintained in first-class condition. The archaeological operations to 'purify and telescope historic processes' presented visitors with a 'simultaneity of well-being that would seldom if ever have occurred' (Fitch, [1982] 1990, p. 99). The experience distanced life from the past instead of bringing it closer. Better would have been a more natural mix of old and new, demonstrating the passage of time which separates the eighteenth century from the present day. Fitch's attacks on Colonial Williamsburg undermined the authority of the conventional conservation aesthetic of archaeological reconstruction, which had reigned supreme in the USA since the 1920s.

Fitch proclaimed that conservation poetics had entered a new era in the late 1960s. The practice of total restoration seemed elitist to Fitch because only the person actually performing the restoration could experience conservation as a creative poetic process. The rest of society was reduced to passive spectatorship of the final aesthetic product. In addition, total restoration seemed to replicate an architectural notion of design as a process restricted to professionals. This seemed anachronistic at a time when postmodern

architects were critiquing the lonely figure of the architect-hero and experimenting with more inclusive processes of 'community design'. We would recognise this now as a critique of the AHD. It was time, thought Fitch, to democratise conservation and to engage visitors in the process – to engage them in its poetics. What Fitch meant by democratising conservation poetics was something far more subtle than simply handing over design decisions to the public. The new conservation poetic involved striving towards an aesthetic that made its own making visible.

Venturi and Rauch's 1976–8 reconstruction of Benjamin Franklin's 1780s home in Philadelphia was, for Fitch, the emblematic example of this new conservation poetic: 'a new level of maturity in American preservation' (Fitch, [1982] 1990, p. 303). The US National Park Service originally planned to reconstruct Franklin's home as a traditional house museum complex. Only the foundations of the original structures remained on the site. The street frontage buildings were in fact reconstructed in the 'typical' architectural language of the 1780s (Figure 2.8). Behind this new range of houses with ground-floor shops, they also planned to reconstruct Franklin's print shop and



Figure 2.8 Market Street, Philadelphia, 2003. Photographed by Jorge Otero-Pailos. Photo: © Jorge Otero-Pailos.

house, but historians were unable to find sufficient historical documentation to determine the exact aesthetics of the original house. Venturi and Rauch proposed to acknowledge the limits of historical knowledge by reconstructing only those facts about the house and print shop that were archaeologically and historically verifiable, letting visitors imagine the rest. They built a white steel frame that outlined the volume of the two structures as dematerialised 'ghosts'. On the ground, the diagram of the floor plan was drawn on the pavement with walls indicated in white marble against a dark field of bluestone (Figure 2.9). In the absence of the usual artefacts that would have cued visitors about whether they were standing in a kitchen or a bedroom, the three-dimensional diagram of the steel frame was labelled with inscriptions on the bluestone slabs: 'You are now in the first floor area which served as a book bindery.' Other didactic aesthetic devices also served to organise the visitor's attention towards archaeological evidence. Concrete 'periscopes' punctured through the new floor to reveal the archaeological remains of the cellar below the house. Fitch praised Venturi and Rauch for combining the 'cognitive and the sensuously perceptible' and turning the architecture itself into a 'brilliant interpretation of the morphological development of the site' that was more engaging than a simple reconstruction (Fitch, [1982] 1990, p. 304).

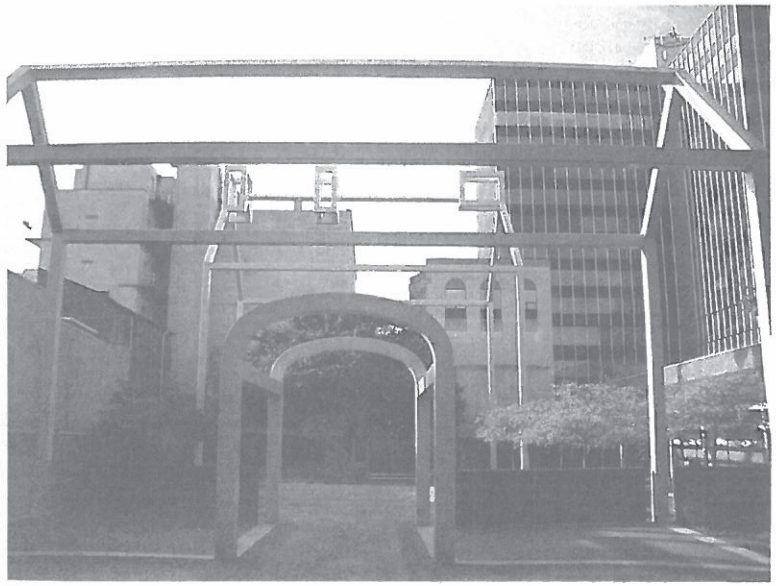


Figure 2.9 Franklin house structures, Philadelphia, 2003. Photographed by Jorge Otero-Pailos. Photo: © Jorge Otero-Pailos.

This was indeed a significant shift in conservation theory. Venturi and Rauch's acceptance that an integral object could not be produced took apart the idea of restoration as the material restitution of the ideal, in direct contrast to some of the total rebuilds that form part of Colonial Williamsburg, for example. To reconstruct the Franklin House in the manner of the 1780s would be to employ an architectural language so general that it would reduce the particularities of what was to be expressed to an idealised stylistic model. Venturi and Rauch thought that a restoration would be a falsehood. Nevertheless, their response maintained the neo-classical notion that a work of conservation (restoration, reconstruction or restitution) should achieve a poetic order, an aesthetic that is expressive of the intellectual and material struggle between the restorer and the object being restored and expressive of the passage of time. Venturi and Rauch tried to express their subjectivity within the material and intellectual limits of the site: the steel frame was at once their subjective interpretation of Franklin's house, and also an objective marker of the limitations of the evidence. They reintroduced subjectivity to conservation poetics as an aesthetic synthesis that knows itself to be inconclusive, and expressed it in forms, like the 'ghost' steel outline of Franklin's house, that are at once whole and incomplete.

This case bears witness to the 1970s moment when subjective expression again appeared legitimate within conservation practice, so long as it remained guided by, or in the service of, a purpose other than itself, namely, the truthful (objective) portrayal of material heritage.

The poetics of incompleteness

Fitch's notion of the 'fourth dimension' characterised a kind of conservation which seeks to prompt the imagination to consider what remains of the past while acknowledging what has been lost. It emphasises the limits of knowledge and the impossibility of ever 'going back' to the past, while simultaneously challenging the viewer to make intellectual sense of the evidence and to form their own creative interpretation of it. The discovery of the difference between conservation poetics and the object preserved paved the way for a more authentic relationship to the aesthetic products of conservation, as opposed to the old idea that any subjective expression in conservation is a form of falsification of the original. Recognising that artificiality is not the same thing as falsification, conservationists began openly to pursue the expression of artificiality.

Take for instance the 1989 restoration of the lobby in Burnam and Root's Rookery Building in Chicago (1884–6). When Gunny Harboe (of McClier Corporation), a student of Fitch, took charge of the restoration team he was confronted with a building that had undergone a number of previous transformations, not least of which was the total redesign of the lobby by

Frank Lloyd Wright, one of America's most celebrated twentieth-century architects. Harboe decided to restore the lobby to Wright's design. Given the poor condition of much of the marble walls, floor mosaics, and plaster ceilings, Harboe had to replace much of the original fabric. The short walk from the street through the double-height stair lobby, through the low and deep corridor of the elevator bank, is an enveloping spatial composition that delivers the visitor to a glorious, light-filled central courtyard (Figure 2.10).

Despite the inauthenticity of the materials, one has the strong impression of being in a work designed by Frank Lloyd Wright. But the immediacy of the experience is negated by one's confrontation with a small patch of authentic tesserae on the floor which reveal the rest as being part of a later restoration. More troubling still, the column sitting on the 'old' mosaic patch seems to be disintegrating, with part of its marble sheathing mysteriously missing. Emerging from the inside is a cast iron column suggesting Burnam and Root's lobby remains encased within (Figure 2.11). The endlessly receding experience of the 'original' and the inversions in our perception of what is



Figure 2.10 Lobby interior, The Rookery, Chicago, 2007. Photographed by Jorge Otero-Pailos. Photo: © Jorge Otero-Pailos.

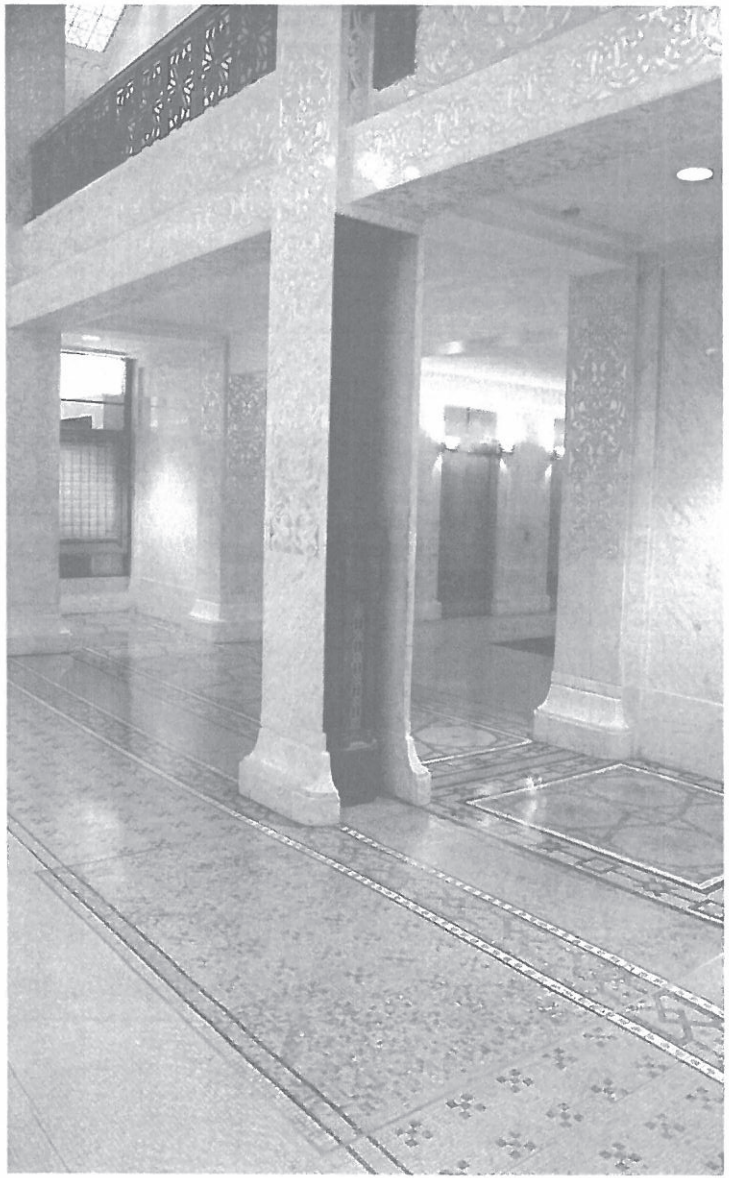


Figure 2.11 Detail of the lobby interior, The Rookery, Chicago, 2007. Photographed by Jorge Otero-Pailos. Photo: © Jorge Otero-Pailos.

authentic begin to create an aesthetic distance from the environment which makes us grasp its artificiality. It is at this precise moment that the space comes into focus as a work of conservation poetics. Artificiality here emerges as the result of an expressive technique that places one aesthetic synthesis (one period style) next to another without indicating which is subordinate, rendering both inconclusive. The result is a building that, having been touched by conservation, is unlike any other, in the sense that it does not present us with a single moment in history, or even with a sense of the continuity of time, but rather with an impossible, artificial experience of time as something simultaneously discontinuous and co-present. Conservation introduces time as an alien quality in buildings, something to wonder about, not something given as their natural content.

In conclusion, incompleteness

The type of conservation poetics of incompleteness, as I have called them in this case study, that were initiated in the 1970s have by now become the default mode of expression of most western conservationists. The taste for presenting various phases of development alongside contemporary expressions is now dominant and is often associated, rightly or wrongly, with a democratic open society capable of 'accepting' its past and moving on with the present. Witness for instance the retention of Berlin's Reichstag and its restoration into the new German Parliament by Sir Norman Foster and Partners (1992–9). Nazi-era graffiti was uncovered and exposed to the public in one part of the building, while a contemporary glass dome replaced the historic roofing system. Indeed today restorations that have emphasised one period in an object's history at the expense of all the others are seen as elitist, undemocratic and 'top–down'. This is still the objection that many conservationists raise against Ohly's de-restoration of the Aegina marbles. Both cases raise the question of whether one can make a strict correlation between a certain conservation aesthetic and a political programme (democracy, tyranny, and so on). Ohly's and Foster's work were done under the same democratic German government. In thinking about this question, I would suggest that we distinguish between the production and the reception of preservation works. As conservationists, we tend to focus on how objects are received and interpreted by non-conservationists, and we often forget to examine critically our own creative process, and the intellectual histories, the 'boxes' if you will, within which we operate.

Reflecting on the case study

The case study has shown that the values behind conservation decisions come from wider currents in society, and are subject to shifts as different priorities arise over time. This is particularly helpful in thinking about how the values

behind the major international heritage frameworks and national legislation get 'frozen' at the point at which these documents are launched. When Thorvaldsen was 'reimagining' the Aegina marbles, as we saw, he was working with an art history discourse that found truth and beauty in whole objects. The unspoken conservation practice that flowed from that discourse resulted in major interventions. Later in the nineteenth century, 'wholeness' became less desirable. Ruins became celebrated for their disintegration, the aura of damp decay in run-down Venetian palazzos was becoming appreciated for qualities that industrialised modern cities could not supply. The conservation ethic of minimal intervention, stabilising decay but not recreating lost wholeness, began to be discussed. This went on to inform how the first official monuments designated in European countries were treated. Although this conservation practice has variations, it is also apparent in the case of the Franklin House treatment. This is a more nuanced approach to sharing 'truth' between experts and visitors: neither can know exactly what the house looked like from Franklin's time. The experts suggest something that the visitor can look beyond, to see the ruins for themselves.

Beyond beauty

Aesthetic judgement is the activity that creates aesthetic values; it is a difficult one to approach. This is because it embodies a contradiction, from being both a personal response to beauty and wanting to override other people's personal responses. If we find something to be beautiful (or ugly), we usually want other people to see it our way. Most of us do not think about beauty analytically, without the discourse of aesthetics to help us. However, it is possible to explain why we find something to be beautiful if we can access appropriate descriptive terms and comparisons: something that we expect art historians, architects and other people who work with visual culture, for instance, to be able to do. This creates the evidence to substantiate or argue against an aesthetic judgement. Beauty, however we perceive it, is after all an important part of living an enjoyable life, even an experience as simple as a sunny day in a northern winter.

The dominance of aesthetic judgement in heritage decisions has deep roots and inevitably came to be written in to heritage frameworks for making those decisions. International frameworks such as the Venice Charter retain that dominance, but the heritage discourse continues to be shaped by less Eurocentric voices and by questions debated by professionals firmly within western practices, as the last case study demonstrated. The Nara Document on authenticity is one of the more recent statements that tries to make room for communities and their responses to change over time in their objects and places of heritage.

Time and aesthetics are intertwined, not just because aesthetic preferences evolve over time. Time erodes material culture and decisions need to be taken over how to repair damage (loss) or make alterations for changing functions (addition). The problem of addition is a big challenge to aesthetic value. What is more beautiful – the original form in pristine condition or a later appearance with the patina of age and many generations' use? Both conditions may have many aesthetic qualities but only the present-day state is truly authentic.

Conclusion

Values have moved from being an unspoken but fundamental underpinning to the first official heritage practices to an explicit component of how heritage decisions are made. Chapter 1 emphasised the priority given in European intellectual circles from the seventeenth century onwards to the inheritance of classical standards from ancient Greece and Rome. These standards for beauty, the value of history (particularly political history) and the uses of long-lasting monumental architecture to represent these discourses led to a very high appreciation of the intellectual and tangible inheritance from these two ancient cultures. They were used as benchmarks for judging later works and for evaluating other cultures. European cultures also put a great deal of effort into re-using classical cultures to support their own claims for national identity and, usually, superiority. History and beauty became the two dominant values assigned to heritage that measured up to the way these attributes were defined. This chapter has taken beauty, or aesthetic value, as the one that has exercised the greatest hold over heritage decisions and one that is still contentious.

We were introduced to key thinkers who developed aesthetic theory, Baumgarten, Kant and Hume. Again, their historical position as western thinkers reminds us that aesthetic judgements are grounded in cultural contexts and understandings, not globally shared. The case study on historical conservation practices, and their shifting justifications as differing examples of 'best practice' over time, is an important reminder of just how contingent (in the sense of being true only under existing conditions) these heritage practices are.

The emphasis on values is continued in the following two chapters, which explore natural heritage and then museums. Aesthetic value, as you will not now be surprised to learn, has a long-standing role in the ways people value landscapes, particularly those that appear to match other highly valued landscapes. For example, Italian landscapes represented by canonical Renaissance artists were used as visual models for finding beauty in English landscapes. In the eighteenth century the surroundings to the country houses

of the elite were often re-landscaped to match the landforms and planting believed to be the most beautiful (if the least 'natural'). Buildings in the forms of classical temples completed the illusion. These highly designed landscapes are now treated as works of art and given their own status and protection under heritage frameworks. Chapter 3 discusses the succeeding aesthetic discourse of the Picturesque, which valued wilder and awe-inspiring landscapes at a time when new colonial natural environments were becoming better known.

Chapter 4 reminds us of the expansion of values in official heritage, as seen in recent museum practices. The expansion of values from the aesthetic and the historic has been codified in the Australia ICOMOS Charter for the Conservation of Places of Cultural Significance, known as the Burra Charter (first adopted in 1979; Australia ICOMOS, 1999). The Burra Charter was discussed in Chapter 1 for its wide adoption beyond Australia as a model for evaluating significance. Aesthetic, historic, scientific and social value are now routinely considered by heritage experts. Museums have been under critical pressure for several decades to demonstrate their public uses and to show that their experts can share (and receive) knowledge. The circulation of knowledge is, after all, a critical interest to heritage studies, in assessing the question of whose knowledge is taken into account in dealing with 'our' inheritances.

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