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"Introduction" to *Conjuring the Real: The Role of Architecture in Eighteenth- and Nineteenth-Century Fiction*

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INTRODUCTION

RUMIKO HANDA

In recent years we have seen a number of blockbuster films that use historically significant buildings as filming locations. Buildings that can fill the large screen with their concrete substance are key ingredients when it comes to bringing a former era or fictional world closer to contemporary viewers.

Chatsworth House appears in the 2005 film *Pride and Prejudice* as Pemberley, the fictional residence of Mr. Darcy in Derbyshire. The film's use of this stately residence is hardly surprising: Jane Austen (1775–1817) is thought to have drawn on it as the model for Pemberley after she visited the building in 1811, just two years before publication of the book.¹

Chatsworth – whose history began in the mid-sixteenth century when Sir William Cavendish (1508–57) and his third wife, Beth of Hardwick, purchased the property – had become one of the most important specimens of country house architecture and landscape. Among its notable designers were William Talman at the end of the seventeenth century and James Paine and Capability Brown in the mid-eighteenth century. William Cavendish (1748–1811), fifth Duke

of Devonshire, and his wife Georgiana (1757–1806) lived mainly in London, but on their occasional visits the house was filled with friends and relations, and otherwise the house was open to the public with a monthly dinner for any visitors. According to John Summerson, Chatsworth's south façade (1696) in particular marked the inauguration of baroque style in English private houses, with its rusticated bottom floor, the giant orders on the upper two stories, and the heavy entablature and balustrade with no pediment.² The film's ending scene placed this façade and the Canal Pond (1702) in a perspectival view with Keira Knightley's Elizabeth Bennet and Matthew Macfadyen's Mr. Darcy in the foreground. Such visually captivating scenes successfully engaged the contemporary audience in imagining the world of Georgian England as Austen may have seen it.

Oxford University and other historical buildings were the locations for Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry in the films based on the Harry Potter series. The filmmakers created a larger-than-life replica of the Christ Church College's great hall of the sixteenth century, whose hammerbeam roof structure radiates a sense of awe against the magical starry sky (see fig. 1). Other scenes at Hogwarts were shot at Duke Humfrey's Library, the oldest section of Bodleian Library, which dates as far back as the 1480s and vividly conveys to viewers the young wizards' daunting quest as the actors move through the dark interior finished with oak panels and shelves and full of leather-bound manuscripts and printed books.

Even when no specific building is used, some film sets refer to a particular architectural style. In these cases the designers often exaggerate certain formal attributes of the style, relying on its expressive qualities to exude certain meanings and nuances. In the *Lord of the Rings* series some interior scenes of Moria reflect the heavy masonry construction and the pointed arches of Gothic style (see fig. 2), creating the sense of aged civilization in the Dwarves' dwelling, while much of *Lothlórien* is based on the slender organic curves of the art nouveau style, conferring a lofty and serene character to the Elves' land (see fig. 3).



Fig. 1. The dining hall at Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry, *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone*, directed by Chris Columbus (2001).

In the examples just mentioned, buildings give an immediate presence to the historical or fictional world, which otherwise is unknown or unfamiliar to the audience. The portrayal of a building's concrete and specific substance makes the world come alive, although the building itself is a mere segment of the world that it represents. This book will trace the genealogy of this representational role of architecture, going back through the history of film and then further in literature, art, and theater, and identify its pedigree in the nineteenth century, where authors, artists, and stage managers used thorough depictions of buildings to effectively feed the audience's historical imagination.

In chapter 1, "All That Life Can Afford? Perspectives on the Screening of Historic Literary London," Ian Christie traces the history of literary adaptation in British films, covering the period from 1896 (*2 a.m., or the Husband's Return*) to 2005 (*Oliver Twist*). Stigmatized as "heritage cinema," films that use period costumes and settings are best known through the work of Merchant and Ivory and have been



Fig. 2. Moria, the land of the Dwarves, *The Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship of the Ring*, directed by Peter Jackson (2001).



Fig. 3. Lothlórien, the land of the Elves, *The Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship of the Ring*, directed by Peter Jackson (2001).

seen as lacking truly cinematic qualities or a sense of relevance to the time of their production, despite the films' international reputation. Christie argues that the antiliterary and antitheatrical prejudices and misunderstandings of cinema criticism have long prevented it from acknowledging the effects of spatial and architectural imagination in British films, which in fact have had an important role in creating the contemporary image of Britain and of London for the world. Christie draws attention to several production designers since the end of the 1920s. Alfred Junge and Vincent Korda brought Continental influence to British cinema in the 1920 and 1930s. During the 1940s and 1950s,

John Bryan, who had worked for Korda, and Carmen Dillon, who had trained as an architect, left lasting influences in art direction. Together with their pupil John Box, these pioneer British designers created an “English school” of design for the screen, which in turn supported the flowering of literary adaptation as British cinema’s distinctive genre.

Films are not the only medium in which buildings provide an imaginary creation with a sense of actual existence. Going back a little further in history, we also find nineteenth-century literary authors, theater producers, and painters incorporating depictions of buildings into their works in order to bring the (imaginary) past back to the present.

HISTORICAL IMAGINATION

In the Western world, the period from the mid-eighteenth to the nineteenth century widely is acknowledged for its historical consciousness. Modern historiography was born, novels set in a specific historical time period were written, revivals of Shakespearean historical plays were produced, and historical paintings were made. Buildings and architects played a part in this widespread cultural phenomenon. Historical buildings became tourist destinations and were frequented by antiquarians, literary authors, and painters, both amateur and professional. Ruinous ones were especially popular because their missing roofs and decayed stones, as well as the growing mosses and ivies on them, clearly indicated the passage of time. Medieval buildings, which had been neglected or detested by eyes trained in classicism, began to bear new national significance. Architectural draftsmen were hired by publishers to travel to these buildings and publish their reports in books and magazines. Architects designed artificial ruins or buildings in past styles.

What is interesting about the nineteenth-century historical consciousness is that serious studies of historical events and fictional representations of the past were not necessarily mutually exclusive. Instead, historical research was motivated by a romantic longing

for the past, and historical knowledge was incorporated into the imagined past.³

Writing *Ivanhoe*, a novel set in the context of the animosity between the Saxons and Normans during Richard I's reign (1189–99), Sir Walter Scott drew extensively on scholarly works as well as literary sources.⁴ He referred to several historiographical studies: Robert Henry, *The History of Great Britain*; Sharon Turner, *The History of the Anglo-Saxons from the Earliest Period to the Norman Conquest*; Joseph Strutt, *Sports and Pastimes of the People of England*; and David Hume, *The History of England*. His literary references included Geoffrey Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*; Shakespeare's *King John* and *A Merchant of Venice*; and Joseph Ritson's *Robin Hood: A Collection of All the Ancient Poems, Songs, and Ballads*.

Charles Kean (1811–68), a leading actor of the mid-Victorian era and the successful manager of the Princess's Theatre in London between 1850–59, had a carefully premeditated portrait made that depicted him as a serious historian, as Richard Schoch has pointed out in his earlier study.⁵ Richard II's portrait by the king's contemporary was only one of many historical sources Kean used in preparing for his title role in the Shakespearean production.

Paul Delaroche, an important French historical painter, made use of both primary and secondary sources. As Stephen Bann has discussed, *Princes in the Tower*, one of Delaroche's most important paintings on famous subjects from English history, drew a scene from Shakespeare's history play *Richard III*.⁶ Having traveled to London, he had a maquette constructed for the painting, reportedly had costumes and furnishings made there in the late Gothic style, and possibly met those who were working on historical paintings, including James Northcote, who had produced a painting of the same scene. Delaroche also was familiar with the antiquarian collections of Alexandre du Summerand in Paris or of antiquarians in London, which allowed him to depict several objects – the door lock, the golden medallions, and the illuminated book – with historical accuracy. For Delaroche, however, the historical painting not only allowed antiquarian investigation but also told a

narrative story, as Stephen Bann has demonstrated. It is only in relation to the latter role of the historical painting that we understand the significance of Delaroche's composition and a number of details. In *Princes in the Tower*, there is a door to the left of the tableau, and the light outside the room permeates through underneath. The shadows among the light as well as the small dog facing the door indicate the person(s) just outside the door and the impending murder of the princes. The Tudor rose carved in the bedstead, which at first glance seems anachronistic, forecasts the dynastic changes, and the golden medallions add religious implications to the scene.

In the field of architectural design, the mixture of scientific studies of historical buildings and romantic idealization of long-gone societies is evident in the work of Augustus Wilby Northmore Pugin (1812–52), who was well versed in medieval architecture. His father, Auguste Charles (1768/9–1832), worked as an architectural draftsman and contributed drawings to *Architectural Antiquities of Great Britain*, by John Britton (1807–27). The father's own publication, the two-volume *Specimens of Gothic Architecture* (1821 and 1823) provided builders and architects with measured drawings of Gothic details, taking advantage of the sharper and more distinct lines made possible by steel plate engravings. Augustus Pugin inherited his father's passion and engaged himself in sketches and observations of medieval buildings. When he published his most famous book in 1836, *Contrasts, or, A Parallel between the Noble Edifices of the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries, and Similar Buildings of the Present Day; Shewing the Present Decay of Taste: Accompanied by Appropriate Text*, his thesis was not only about physical architecture but also about spiritual life. For Pugin, criticism of contemporary secular society in comparison to the idealism of the medieval society went hand in hand with accurate measurements of buildings.

FICTIONAL PAST AND IDEOLOGY

Interest in the past was not confined to the concrete facts but included how the past activated an historical imagination guided by the author's ideology. We might say that historical imagination was a search for the

ideal state of man that was imagined as having taken place in the past. Just as Pugin's fictional past was guided by his ecclesiastical ideology, Sir Walter Scott built his fictional past around the enmity between Saxons and Normans. Scott's protagonist, Wilfrid of Ivanhoe, belongs to one of the remaining Saxon noble families but is out of his father's favor because he courts the Lady Rowena, a Norman, and because of his allegiance to King Richard I, a Plantagenet. A contemporary event had led Scott to consider the Saxon–Norman relationship of the twelfth century: in 1805, a little more than a decade earlier than Scott's writing (1819), the British Navy, led by Lord Admiral Horatio Nelson, defeated Napoleon's forces in the Battle of Trafalgar, bringing British nationalist spirit to its height.

In the second chapter, "Architecture in Historical Fiction: A Historical and Comparative Study," Michael Alexander identifies Scott as the author who established the genre of historical novels. Alexander uses a definition of the historical novel as "an imaginative story set in the past; a fiction that nevertheless offers a form of historical truth" for the purpose of locating the nineteenth-century historical novels in relation to what they are not: the historical narratives of David Hume (*History of England*) and Edward Gibbon (*Rise and Fall of Roman Empire*) whose works supplied the information about and the point of view on the past; or the Gothic fantasy of Horace Walpole (*Castle of Otranto*, 1764), which does not purport to inform the reader of the past. In order to qualify as a historical novel, the past depicted needs to be sufficiently distant from the author: Alexander applies the "sixty-year rule" from the birth of the author, drawing the specific number also from Scott, whose *Waverley*, a historical novel written in 1805, is set at the time of the Jacobite rising of 1745, and carries the subtitle, *'Tis Sixty Years Since*. To Alexander, the genre of historical novels thus defined began with Scott and lasted until about fifty years after his death, and includes works of American (James Fenimore Cooper), English (William Makepeace Thackeray), and European (Leo Tolstoy) authors, with some occasional contemporary pieces such as Charles Frazier's *Cold Mountain*. Depictions of buildings

vary in literary works, ranging from appearances merely as place names (many instances in Charles Dickens's works) to more detailed descriptions used to help visualize the setting, as we find in Scott's historical novels. Architecture sometimes sets up a certain mood or even carries a symbolic meaning relevant to the theme of the literary piece: in Scott's *Ivanhoe*, the Saxons live in wooden buildings while the Normans inhabit lofty masonry castles.

Benjamin Disraeli (1804–81) set his novel *Sybil, or the Two Nations* (1845) in the fictional Marney Abbey, which he modeled after Fountains Abbey. The ruins of the medieval architecture provide a tranquil setting for the encounter of two individuals who represent the “two nations”: the rich and the poor.⁷ Sybil, the daughter of Walter Gerald, a member of the Chartist movement, represents the terrible conditions of the working class. In contrast, Egremont, a younger brother of Lord Marney, takes advantage of the working class. The abbey appears in the story repeatedly, referring readers to the idealized past before the division of the society: the ideal for the future.⁸

EMPHASIS SHIFT: FROM OBJECT TO SUBJECT'S ENGAGEMENT IN THE OBJECT

The characteristics of the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century engagement with the past, as compared with earlier interests in the past, often are explained by the notions of the sublime and the picturesque, terms as elusive as romanticism. A quick comparison of the two different responses to the same built object from the distant past may clarify the shift in the nature of appreciation that occurred in the middle of the eighteenth century. The built object is Stonehenge, prehistoric megaliths on Salisbury Plain, the site development of which we now know goes as far back as 8,000 BC.

When, in the early seventeenth century, King James I (reigned 1603–25) summoned the court architect, Inigo Jones (1573–1652), to the nearby Wilton House, Jones's task was to explain the monument as it belonged to its original culture, that is, to identify who built it, how, and why. Jones saw Stonehenge as a Roman temple and assigned

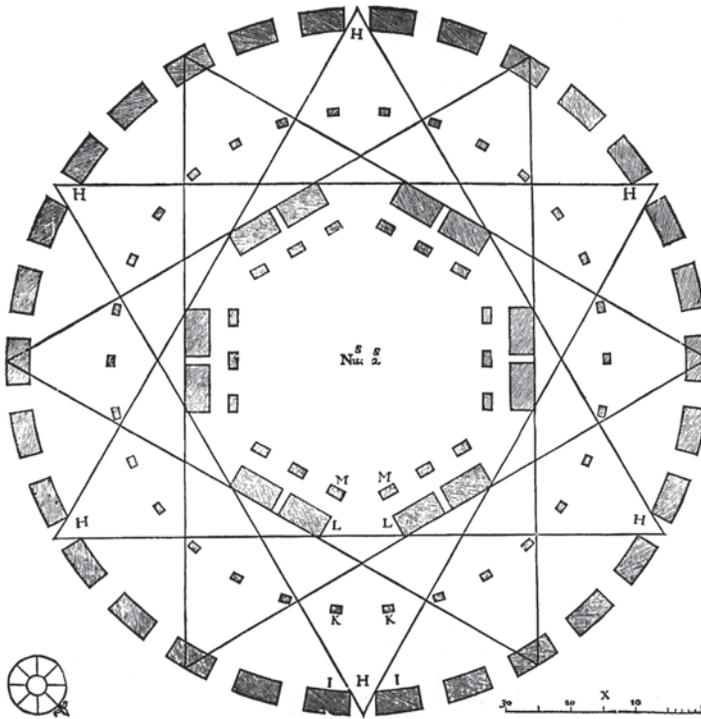


Fig. 4. Inigo Jones, Plan of Stonehenge, *The most notable antiquity of Great Britain, vulgarly called Stone-Heng on Salisbry plain restored by Inigo Jones* . . . (London, 1655).

to it the classical architectural principles of geometry and order (see fig. 4). This erroneous interpretation was a result of Jones's assumption that the monument had been a product of a great civilization, and to Jones, the Roman civilization was the greatest of all that had existed in Britain. Jones's appreciation of Stonehenge was based on his admiration of the culture that built the monument and of its original and perfect state – the complete circles, squares, and equilateral triangles that Jones “found” in the megaliths. Stonehenge was valued *despite* its ruinous state of decay and fragmentation, not *because* of it.

In comparison, for Edmund Burke (1729/30?–1797), an eighteenth-century Anglo-Irish statesman and author who attempted to define

the relationships between human emotions and the nature of objects that triggered them, it was the loss of origin that made the megaliths venerable:

The great stones, it has been supposed, were originally monuments of illustrious men, or the memorials of considerable actions; or they were landmarks for deciding the bounds of fixed property. In time, the memory of the persons or facts, which these stones were erected to perpetuate, wore away; but the reverence which custom, and probably certain periodical ceremonies, had preserved for those places, was not so soon obliterated. The monuments themselves then came to be venerated, and not the less, because the reason for venerating them was no longer known.⁹

More precisely, the newly arisen appreciation was not about the works themselves but about their effect on the viewer's experience. The central question was "Why and how does this object move me?" rather than "Who built this object and when?" The emphasis had shifted from the physical properties of the objects to the viewer's engagement with them.

Ian Ousby, a scholar of English literature, succinctly characterized this shift of interests in historical buildings by asking the question, "In the phrase 'Gothic ruin,' does emphasis fall on the adjective or the noun?: Do people want to admire a Gothic abbey as best they can, even though it survives only in a damaged state? Or do they seek to admire the ruin it has become, with all the accidental features time has added to it?"¹⁰

Earlier, the Gothic style of these buildings was puzzling and perhaps even offensive to eyes trained in the orderly proportions of classicism, and the style carried the strong connotation of Catholicism. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, people were becoming more and more aware of and interested in their emotional reactions and more accepting of ruins as they found them. For example, Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749–1832) was puzzled at first by his emotional reactions to the unfinished Cologne Cathedral and later came to accept the aesthetic qualities that defied the norms and principles

of the classicism in which he had been trained: “A significant ruin has a venerable quality, and we sense and actually see in it the conflict between a noble work of man, and time that with silent force spares nothing. Here, on the other hand, we are confronted with an edifice which is unfinished and prodigious, and precisely its incompleteness reminds us of man’s insufficiency when he attempts the colossal.”¹¹

Literary authors often were drawn to architectural ruins to contemplate the past glory of the men who once kept the building alive and the inability of humankind to control the progression of time and nature, which eventually turn the building to the ruinous state. The incompleteness of the ruins worked as synecdoche, not only reminding the viewer of the perfect and pristine state of the original building, but also, and more important, demonstrating the infinity of time and the power of nature, which inevitably governs all mortals and their creations. The ruins, then, were ultimately a clear reminder of one’s position in the universe.

The effects of the passage of time, for these authors, create not only a desire to reconstruct the past but also a sense of reverence and veneration. In Sir Walter Scott’s historical novel *Kenilworth*, the narrator examines the ruins of the castle. His imagination first goes to the merry entertainments for Queen Elizabeth I and Robert Dudley, but from there, he quickly turns to contemplate the transitory nature of human existence:

We cannot but add, that of this lordly palace, where princes feasted and heroes fought, now in the bloody earnest of storm and siege, and now in the games of chivalry, where beauty dealt the prize which valour won, all is now desolate. The bed of the lake is but a rushy swamp; and the massive ruins of the castle only serve to show what their splendour once was, and to impress on the musing visitor the transitory value of human possessions, and the happiness of those who enjoy a humble lot in virtuous contentment.¹²

The emphasis on ruins’ ability to capture the imagination of viewers also can be seen in the drawings of ruins that were produced in the

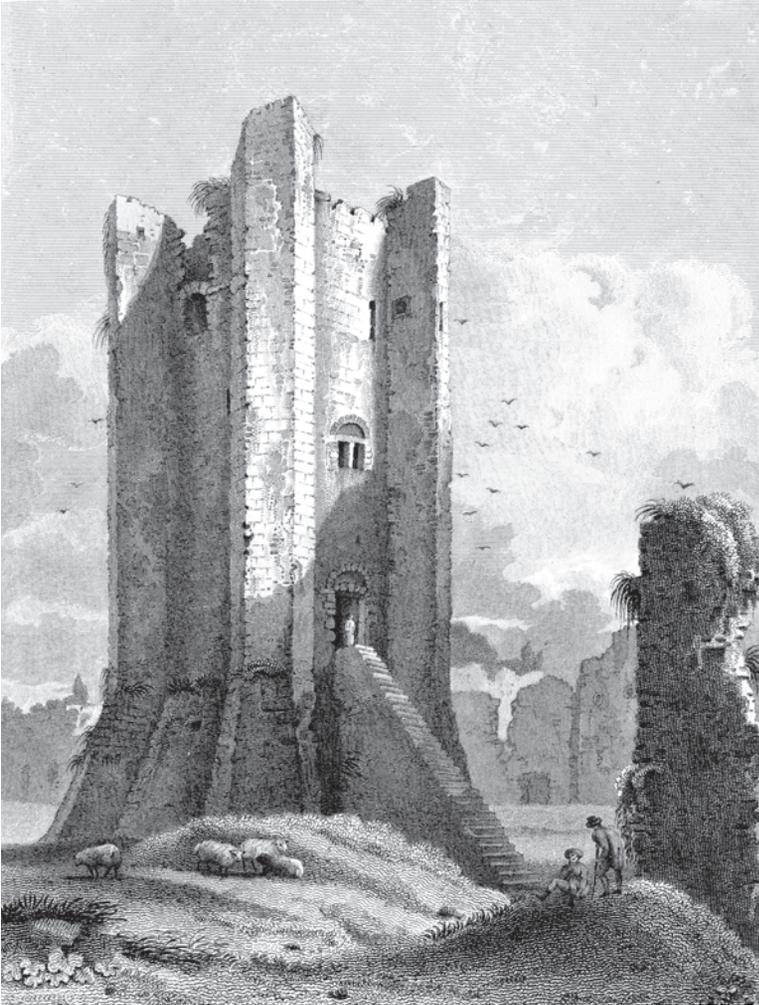


Fig. 5. John Britton, “Conisbrough Castle,” *The Architectural Antiquities of Great Britain* (London: M. A. Nattali, 1835).

same time period. Most often, as John Britton’s drawing of Conisbrough Castle (see fig. 5) shows, such pictures include contemporary visitors in the foreground, positioned some distance away from the ruins themselves. These viewers are usually leisurely observers occupying themselves in no particular activities, sitting on the ground or

standing in a reposeing position. The viewers in front of the picture are then drawn to associate themselves with the visitors within, relating themselves to the free, imaginative activities in which the latter must be engaged.

SEEING THE HISTORY

Textual and visual depictions of historical buildings helped create the sense of a particular time period. The public's newfound desire for the visualization of history is evident in many publications that depicted historical buildings and other topics. John Boydell's and Robert Bowyer's ideas to illustrate Shakespeare's oeuvre and David Hume's *History of Great Britain* materialized, respectively, as the Shakespeare Gallery and the History Gallery in London's Pall Mall during the last decades of the eighteenth century. Engravings made from the paintings were published in the beginning of the nineteenth century.

Antiquarian, architectural, or archaeological societies, whose purpose was to survey historical artifacts, were established in practically all localities. Topographical studies of buildings were made available to the public through numerous publications, and these served as the basis for the design of pseudohistorical buildings and stage sceneries. William Capon (1757–1827) learned theatrical scene-painting in London under Michael Novosielski, and after assisting Novosielski in building and designing theaters and designing small theaters on his own, went on to work for actor-manager John Kemble at Drury Lane Theatre and later at Covent Garden Theatre. He produced stage sceneries of medieval buildings, including the Old Palace of Westminster in the fifteenth century and a Tudor hall in the period of Henry VII, based on studies of historic English architecture. In 1800 John Britton, a self-taught antiquary, began topographical surveys of the country. In his fifty-year career, Britton was responsible for more than one hundred volumes, including *Architectural Antiquities of Great Britain*.

One of the most popular history books of its time was Augustin Thierry's *Histoire de la Conquête de l'Angleterre par les Normands*. Normandy was an important location because of the early history

of the contentious relationship between England and France, which resurfaced because of the Napoleonic Wars. The book's first edition, in 1825, was a simple textual publication, but a lavishly illustrated version was published soon after, and in 1839 the fifth edition was accompanied by an atlas that supplemented the textual narrative with maps and other visual features. One of the copper plate engravings included in the atlas was the facade of St. Georges de Boscherville, a Norman Abbey above the Seine near Rouen. The building was considered a particularly perfect specimen of the Anglo-Norman style. In chapter 3, "Norman Abbey as Romantic *Mise-en-Scène*: St. Georges de Boscherville in Historical Representation," Stephen Bann analyzes and compares this and other published portrayals of medieval buildings during the 1820s and 1830s, the high epoch of French romanticism. The study reveals the succession in which illustrations of architectural monuments gained great popularity as artists, antiquaries, and subsequently the public shifted their understanding of Gothic from a barbarous oddity to a style of national significance. As the readership grew wider, the lithography capable of depicting subtle effects of light was replaced by inexpensive wood-block engraving. Bann examines the process of myth, message, and coding taking place as the role of illustrations shifted from the representation of mythical historical imagination to didacticism, and then to exemplifying other buildings of the same type.

SHAKESPEARE GIVEN HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

If the printed portrayals of medieval buildings help with the visualization of the past, the theater was an even more powerful agent for allowing the mass audience to realize the past. In chapter 4, "Performing History on the Victorian Stage," Richard Schoch demonstrates how Charles Kean, actor and manager of Princess's Theatre, succeeded in presenting historically conscious productions of Shakespeare's English chronicle plays. Kean adhered to the textual and visual depictions found in historians' works, creating stage sceneries that depicted buildings and architectural remains with historical

accuracy. He enacted historical events that had not been included in Shakespeare's original plays, supplied historiographical essays in playbills, and published special, historiographically minded editions of Shakespeare commemorating his theater productions. Through a "synecdochic process," fragmentary representations on stage stood for the fully restored history, thereby making the medieval past come alive in the present. The power of antiquarian dramaturgy appealed to multiple layers of society, all of whom found their genealogical origin in the Middle Ages and "learned how to be English."

NOVELS AND THEIR PHYSICAL SETTINGS

Once the reading public was accustomed to having visual images accompany historical topics and architecture, they naturally came to expect the same in literary works, which may or may not have been meant to portray the past. Many literary publications were accompanied by illustrations that supplied visual representations of the story's characters in physical settings. George Cruikshank (1792–1878), George Cattermole (1800–1868), John Leech (1817–64), Hablot Knight Browne (1815–82), and others supplied illustrations for Charles Dickens, one of the most popular authors of the time, although not all of Dickens's works are historical. Browne, known by the pseudonym "Phiz," which he created to go along with Dickens's early pen name "Boz," was a good friend of Dickens and traveled with him in search of materials to depict in their works. He produced hundreds of drawings for ten of Dickens's major novels. Among those Browne illustrated are stories set in the past, *Barnaby Rudge* (1841) and *A Tale of Two Cities* (1859). Cruikshank and Browne also illustrated for William Harrison Ainsworth (1805–82), another popular author, whose historical novels include: *Rockwood* (1834), *Jack Sheppard* (1839), *The Tower of London* (1840), and *Old St. Paul's* (1841). *Rockwood* is a story of the legendary ride of highwayman Dick Turpin from London to York, an event that became accepted as historical fact after the novel. *Jack Sheppard* was so popular that nine different theatrical versions appeared on the London stage in the same year the novel was published. Cattermole worked

for John Britton as an architectural draughtsman, and his drawings of cathedrals and other buildings are included in *Cathedral Antiquities of England* (1821–28) and *Architectural Antiquities of Great Britain*. Cattermole became the foremost historical painter in watercolors in Britain, having exhibited his works at the Royal Academy, the British Institution, and the Society of Painters in Water Colours, the last of which he became a member of in 1833. Before his collaboration with Charles Dickens, Cattermole also supplied illustrations for numerous books of history and historical fiction, including later editions of Walter Scott's Waverley novels.

In the fifth chapter, "Shops and Subjects," Andrew Ballantyne analyzes and compares two literary pieces whose titles contain the names of shops, *The Old Curiosity Shop* (1841) by Charles Dickens and *Au Bonheur des Dames* (1883) by Emile Zola. Although not historical fiction in the strict sense, each work features the shop building to which the title of the book refers, and to which the proprietor of the shop is closely related—the grandfather of Dickens's heroine and the young attractive widower whom Zola's heroine is to marry. The physical settings and conditions of these buildings reflect the human characters and natures of these individuals, and we learn something about the quality of life for certain groups of people.

The book's sixth and last chapter, developed from a student essay in the elective course mentioned in the next section, is a discussion of Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* and how layers of society in Austen's time are reflected in the depictions of buildings in the novel as well as in the buildings selected to portray them in recent films.

ARCHITECTURE IN THE HUMANITIES

This book is the result of the lecture series "The Role of Architecture in Eighteenth- and Nineteenth-Century Historical Fiction," which was held in fall 2007 at the University of Nebraska–Lincoln.¹³ Concurrently with the lecture series, we offered an elective course in which students analyzed portrayals of architecture within a selected piece of literature and its film adaptations. Novels the students examined

in this course are Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*, Daniel Defoe's *Moll Flanders* (1722), Nathaniel Hawthorne's *The House of the Seven Gables* (1851), Charles Dickens's *Tale of Two Cities* (1859), and Gaston Leroux's *The Phantom of the Opera* (1909–10). The lecture series was part of an ongoing project titled "Architecture in the Humanities," which uses a multimedia relational database to demonstrate various ways in which architecture is incorporated into works of literature, film, theater, and art. The database (<http://aith.unl.edu>) is open-source on campus and is available free of charge to registered users who have signed a copyright agreement with the university. By offering concrete instances in which a certain piece of architecture is interpreted within creative works, and by covering a wide range of chronology and geography, the database is intended to fill certain gaps that exist in the field.

The first gap the database addresses is regarding the agent of architectural interpretation. Ever-increasing specialization has been the general tendency of modern society in general and advanced scholarship in particular, and architectural interpretation is no exception. We seldom question the notion that architectural interpretation is the realm of professional architects and critics. We read architectural criticism in newspapers and magazines that are written for and by specialists and more often than not dismiss the views of amateurs, as we have done with Prince Charles's account of contemporary architectural designs. Jürgen Habermas, a German philosopher and sociologist, expressed concerns about the distance between the experts and the realities of everyday life, one of the unintended consequences of specialization, and has called for the "re-appropriation of the experts' culture from the standpoint of the life-world."¹⁴ In our database, the ways architectural pieces are incorporated into literature, film, theater, and art are considered important instances of architectural interpretation. The authors, directors, and painters are Habermas's "everyday experts," attentive to the human condition and capable of demonstrating their observations. They have reflected on their emotional reactions to buildings and other physical environments and articulated them

in their works. Studying these works may provide us with a way to reconnect to the “life-world.”

The database is also intended to address a second gap, created by the time that passes between the building’s origin and its interpretation. Books in architectural history might refer to related works in other fields, but the selections often are based on the zeitgeist that these works share with the building. When the works discussed are centuries apart, they usually are cases of revival. By comparison, our database offers both synchronic and diachronic interpretations of architecture. After all, generations of multiple interpretations sustain architecture as “a living heritage” (to use Rudolf Wittkower’s phrase) and make architecture an integral part of the humanities.

We offer this book to members of the general public who are interested in historical films, novels, plays, paintings, and architecture. Also, the book will provide the teachers of postsecondary education with interdisciplinary materials. Those who already are incorporating our database into their classes will find exemplary discussions in our book. It is hoped that the reader will find in the chapters that follow the significance and relevance of relational thinking that goes beyond the traditional boundaries of disciplines.

NOTES

1. Austen is said to have taken the name of Mr. Darcy’s younger sister from the sixth duke’s mother and his sister, who were both Georgiana. The fifth duchess (1757–1806) was an active political hostess to the Whig party. Mr. (Fitzwilliam) Darcy’s name came from two prominent Whig party noblemen of the time, Robert D’Arcy (1718–88), fourth Earl of Holderness, and William Wentworth Fitzwilliam (1748–1833), second Earl Fitzwilliam of Great Britain and fourth Earl Fitzwilliam of Ireland. Lyme Hall in Cheshire stood in for the exterior of Pemberley in the 1995 BBC production. The building’s south facade resembles the west front of Chatsworth, with the rusticated ground story carrying the giant order on top and the three bays in the center holding the pediment. The number of bays is different: Chatsworth has nine and Lyme Hall fifteen.

2. Designed by William Talman, a pupil of Sir Christopher Wren and the comptroller of the king’s works (1689–1702).

3. Hayden White, *Metahistory: The Historical Imagination in Nineteenth-Century*

Europe (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1973), ix. See also Stephen Bann, *Romanticism and the Rise of History* (New York: Twayne, 1995).

4. The Walter Scott Digital Archive, Edinburgh University Library, "Walter Scott, *Ivanhoe*," <http://www.walterscott.lib.ed.ac.uk/works/novels/ivanhoe.html> (accessed August 4, 2008).

5. Richard Schoch, *Shakespeare's Victorian Stage: Performing History in the Theatre of Charles Kean* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 22.

6. Stephen Bann, *Paul Delaroche: History Painted* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997), 94–102.

7. Andrew Ballantyne, "Two Nations, Twice: National Identity in *The Wild Irish Girl* and *Sybil*," in *Cultural Identities and the Aesthetics of Britishness*, ed. Dana Arnold (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2004), 87–98.

8. Melvin George Wiebe, ed., *Benjamin Disraeli Letters: 1842–1847* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1982).

9. Edmund Burke, *An Essay Towards an Abridgement of the English History in Three Books* (London: Luke Hansard and Sons, 1811), book 1, chapter 2.

10. Ian Ousby, *The Englishman's England: Taste, Travel, and the Rise of Tourism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 116.

11. Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, "On Gothic Architecture (1823)," in *Essays on Art and Literature*, ed. John Gearey (New York: Suhrkamp, 1986), 10–14, quote on 12.

12. Sir Walter Scott, *Kenilworth, a Romance, by the Author of "Waverley," "Ivanhoe," etc.* (Edinburgh: Archibald Constable and Co., and John Ballantyne; London: Hurst, Robinson, 1821), chap. 25, 291.

13. The series was sponsored by the University of Nebraska–Lincoln College of Architecture, Research Council, Honors Program, Architecture Program, Convocations Committee, College of Arts and Sciences, Graduate Studies, Undergraduate Studies, College of Fine and Performing Arts, University Libraries, Department of English, Department of Modern Languages and Literatures, Department of History, and the Graham Foundation for Advanced Studies in the Fine Arts.

14. Jürgen Habermas, "Modernity – An Incomplete Project," in *The Anti-Aesthetic: Essays on Postmodern Culture*, ed. Hal Foster (Seattle: Bay Press, 1983), 3–15, quote from 9. Originally delivered as a talk at the award reception of the Theodor W. Adorno Prize in Frankfurt, September 1980.

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