

REPLACEMENT OF MEMORIES via RECONSTRUCTION OF HISTORICAL BUILDINGS

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ABSTRACT

Wars are the most devastating events in the world, and always end up with the destructions of the cities, deaths of several people and demolitions of the buildings. Even a war is completely over, its traumatic traces on people lives stay behind, and an intensive mourning spreads all over the towns like an infectious disease. At this point, along with two choices; replacement with new or replacement with old, architecture may have ability to rehabilitate society by compensating those destroyed in the wars. In both cases architects and city planners try to heal the mourning with canalizing the love of the loss into a new one. This study focuses on the recollective approach; the decision of replacement with old by bringing back to the copies of the demolished buildings into the future with the re-construction of their replicas.

This paper aims to discuss nostalgic attempts in architecture and it's the ability to replace loss memories with the re-constructions of by-gone architecture. In this framework, several examples are analyzed and discussed into two categories; 'immediate' and 'ambitious' reconstructions. Consequently, this study emphasizes that after destruction (death) of a building, memory leaves behind in its place. As mourning captures architecture, through nostalgic approaches the building and so its belonging memories are replaced with their copies.

Keywords: Re-construction, memory, nostalgia, replica, re-placement

1. INTRODUCTION

Throughout history, wars, natural disasters, architectural remnants, demolition by neglect or recreating familiar appearances led architects and city planners to re-erect bygone buildings. Even in its original context, the concept of re-construction of the original building form is always a controversial topic, and no single universal approach or solution has been yet determined. Therefore, the idea of re-construction has stayed as a contemporary debate on architecture while the architects, archeologists, preservationists and historians continue to discuss especially its ethical and historical aspects. But after all, replicas have continued to be built, since this persistence is ensured by the powerful bond between memory and place.

The relationship between memory (frequently focused as collective memory instead of individual memory) and place has been discussed by several scholars considering the interaction of people with the surroundings and the built environment. At this juncture, re-

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building a familiar form drives the memories of people with the original place/building in a confusion. Rather than creating new and spontaneous interaction between people and the place, the previous memories of the non-existent building are replaced into a new one. A replica becomes a new building within the 'cloth' of the original one with the injection of the old senses and the history. Hereby, the question is to interrogate this persistent desire for the replacement of memories via reconstruction of historical buildings.

Whether the destruction of a building is caused by traumatic events, political, economic or just negligence, the memories always stay behind in the belonging place. However, the tension of those memories has different effects on buildings to be re-constructed. In order to discuss further, after a brief literature review on memory and also mourning, the study continues with the inquiries of various examples within two categories: 'immediate' and 'ambitious' reconstructions. In this paper, immediate reconstructions refer rebuilding of the replicas of historical buildings right after the wars, and they are discussed with three examples; reconstructions in Warsaw city after the World War II, reconstruction of Ponte alla Carraia, Florence-Italy, and the reconstruction of The Mostar Bridge, Bosnia and Herzegovina. Ambitious reconstructions are considered as the products of unsolved, long-term mourning. They are the replicas of historical buildings which were rebuilt long time after they had been destroyed such as; Berlin Royal Palace (*Stadtschloss*), Berlin-Germany, Dresden Frauenkirche, Dresden-Germany, and The Cathedral of Christ Savior, Moscow-Russia. In this context, the 'persistence' of the relationship between memory and architecture has a chance to discuss over distinct examples.

2. BUILDINGS AS THE PRODUCTS OF MEMORY AND MOURNING

"The life of the dead is placed in the memory of the living."

Marcus Tullius Cicero

Memory itself is life as historian Pierre Nora (1997) declares, and defines memory as an "external present". While time passes in moments, memory is the only one has left, thus memorialization is a way of keeping on living after the death (Nora, 1997). In other words, memory is timeless, and has ability to be existent even after death. In this context, this paper emphasizes the immortal existence of memories, and their embodiment after all.

A sudden recall of old, forgotten memories is possible, but memory itself does not randomly occur. Maurice Halbwachs inquires memory in a systematic way. He (1992) states that memory cannot be spontaneous, when the time disappears three groups of memory will be kept: "collective, plural and individual". Our physical surroundings evoke our remembrances, and spatial images help us to retrieve the past into present, since our habitual images of the external world are inseparable from our self (Halbwachs, 1992). "The stones of the city", buildings, roads and green zones are always in a transformation process of history through the course of time (Halbwachs, 1992). Hereby, buildings, roads, green areas change and even the whole area can be disrupted. Despite instability of stones, the link, created between people and them, cannot be broken easily (Halbwachs, 1992). Briefly, the connection between place and people so the memory itself is much more powerful and long-lasting than the physical entities. Memories do not randomly emerge, yet they are not attached to the chronological order of time. Christine Boyer (1994) puts up an idea which underlies the anachronistic sense of collective memory in architecture with pointing out "super-imposed" historical layers in the city. On this association, the city through its history and memory grows out of the experiences of both life and death. While a city is experienced, the memories from different times may be sensed in every corner. A city is full of buildings, roads, green areas... in other words, full of

“stones”, and so the untimely traces hover above it. Here, this study focuses on the times that the “stones” of the city are destructed as the memories are remained very much alive.

The destructive disasters like war, earthquakes and fires, obviously leaves their memories behind and cause serious mourning and traumas. In *Mourning and Melancholia*, Sigmund Freud (1914-1916) defines mourning as a “harmful” and “useless” response to the loss, and a person in deep mourning tries to get better with the replacement as canalizing the love of the loss into new substitute. When the mourning cannot be defused, it creates its “substitute” to be cured. Likewise, Dominic LaCapra (1999) states that past always leaves a trail in the form of a revenant, and never completely lost, however the loss may be confused with absence. In this manner, trauma calls revenants into existence and desires a recovery with the alternative of the lost object (LaCapra, 1999). At this point, replicas become the alternatives of lost buildings. As cited by Tammy Clewell (2004), Sigmund Freud argues that in the mourning stage after the death, memory fills the physical loss through “imaginary presence”, thus heals the destruction of the death and helps us to survive. If the memories are underestimated or ignored, the feeling of absence may cause uncontrollable mourning. And architecture may become a tool for the rehabilitation of the society by bringing back to the images of the past in the form of replicas.

Surely, replicas are not the definite choices architects and planners must take. Through replacement via new, architecture has also ability to rehabilitate society. For instance, about the debates on the re-construction of Twin Towers in New York/USA, architect Sunil Bald (2001) states that “rebuilding enacts a form of amnesia onto the city.” According to him re-construction is the erasing of the “scar” of the event; in fact, it is an attempt to hide the trauma, whereas “memorial” is the place for the facing with the trauma and a way to overcome it (Bald, 2001). This particular example points out that replacement with new or replacement with old is a conscious choice.

The replicas could never be the exact copy of original structures, and there cannot be such a claim. Nevertheless, with the same function and the same appearance they manipulate the history of the original buildings, and collect new memories in addition to the old ones. In short, they are new buildings with old remembrances. Likewise, Nerdinger (2013) claims that a reconstructed building is a “new building” related with memory and culture as a production of “living history”. The new construction preserves the previous building’s effects on cultural memory, and follows the traces left from the demolished one.

There is always more controversy debate to tell on the insight of the ideas behind re-construction. The essential reason here is the power of the memory on place making in architecture. The study continues through the several examples. The first category points out the intensify of mourning and the effort of society to cure. The second section on the other hand, illustrates timelessness and anachronologic re-appearance of powerful memories.

2.1. Immediate Re-constructions

The examples in this section demonstrates the buildings as ‘auxiliaries’ to recover devastating memories of war. The temptation behind the rebuilding of these buildings is to rehabilitate the society by erasing the harmful images of disasters as soon as possible. Thus, architecture became an urgent tool for curing the suffering society by covering the sorrowful traces.

During the Second World War European cities were seriously damaged, so the numerous monumental and significant buildings were demolished. Warsaw was the most damaged city in the Second World War, as its entire city center was torn down the ground by the bombings (Fig. 01). Nine hundred fifty-seven historic building existed before the War, then seven

hundred eighty-two of them entirely demolished, and a hundred forty-one buildings partly damaged (Jankowski, S. M., 1990).



Figure 01. Old Town of Warsaw up to bottom; during the War, and after the re-constructions (Source: <http://collections.yadvashem.org/photosarchive>, accessed June 3, 2014)

Likewise, several re-constructions were made also in Frankfurt, Luxemburg and Nurnberg in Germany. Besides, in the scope of the recovery process after the Second World War, in addition to the buildings with historical and artistic significance, utilitarian structures were also a part of the campaign of creating replicas. For example, Ponte alla Corraia in Florence/Italy was firstly constructed in 1274, throughout the history the bridge was restored and partly re-constructed. During the Second World War it was seriously damaged and collapsed, yet it was rebuilt immediately in 1948 (Fig. 02). Surely, it can be claimed that these reconstructions have positive impact on the recovering society. Nevertheless, they are critical for the new generations, since an amnesia spread out just as in the statement of Bald (2001), and eased at least the visible harm.



Figure 02. The demolished bridge Ponte alla Corraia in 1944 (A), The re-constructed bridge in 1948 (B)(Sources:<http://www.florence-on-line.com/monuments-bridges/ponte-alla-carraia.html>, <http://www.anpioltrarno.it/archivio-storico/foto/truppe-alleanze-entrano-in-oltrarno-liberata-dai-partigiani/img040.jpg/view>, accessed June 3, 2016)

The re-constructions in order to heal the traumas are not exclusive to Second World War. The traumatic events in the consecutive wars continued leave their memories behind, thus the traumas continued to be recovered through re-constructions. The Mostar Bridge, designed by Architect Hayreddin (one the student of Mimar Sinan) and originally constructed in 1566 and was seriously damaged by the 1990s civil war. The bridge that also named the city was rebuilt in 2004 (Fig. 03).

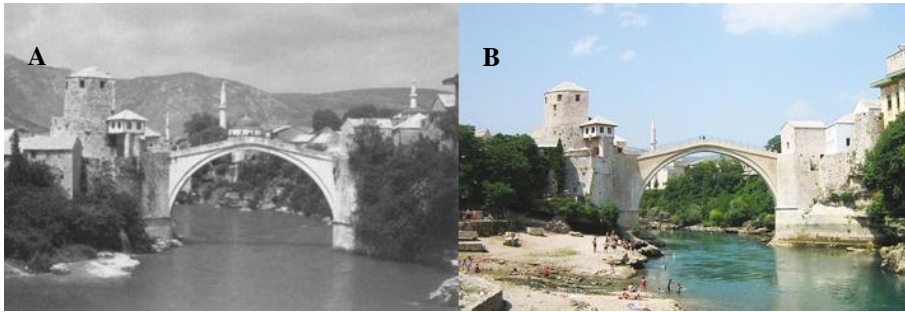


Figure 03. The original Mostar Bridge in 1974 (A), The re-constructed Bridge in 2006 (B)
(Sources: www.alangellerphotography.com, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Puente_de_Mostar.JPG, accessed February 3, 2017)

At this point, all of the re-constructions above were aimed to rehabilitate the society as fast as it's possible. Although they are still open to debate, considering with the experienced trauma in the conditions of the time and the purpose of the protection of the cultural heritage, these replicas may be seemed understandable and appropriate. On the other hand, the "ambitious" re-constructions at below refer more radical decisions, and consist of variety of reasons behind their reappearances.

2.2 Ambitious Re-constructions

Rather than immediate and solution-oriented actions in the aforementioned examples above, these re-constructions are the results of unending discussions through the years. Even new constructions or organizations in the remained sites, could not prevent the memories of the traumatic demolitions rise by ending up with the re-construction of the replicas. Especially reminding Halbwbachs (1992) claim above, these examples proves that timeless, anachronic and imperishable memories leaves their traces on people's apart from physical entities. Therefore, the replicas in this category underline the vividness of memories after several years. As a first example the re-construction of Berlin Royal Palace *Stadtschloß* demonstrates the persistency of the underestimated memories after its destruction, and the inadequacy of new buildings to erase them. So, the uncontrollable mourning concludes with the re-construction of the replica after many decades.

This project is undoubtedly the most controversial and highly political project in Germany today. Sixty-three years after its demolition, decision of rebuilding was made by German Bundestag in 2002. The first construction of Berlin Royal Palace *Stadtschloß* was founded in 1443 in the historic heart of the Berlin presently named as Museum Island. The construction of the palace was as old as the establishment of Berlin City. "The Schloss did not lie in Berlin-Berlin was the Schloss" as Wolf Siedler states.



Figure 1. Stadtschloss in the 1900s (A), Ongoing Humboldt Forum Project (B)
(Sources: <http://aboutberlin.wordpress.com/tag/berliner-stadtschloss/>, <http://berliner-schloss.de/webcam> accessed February 20, 2017)

Schloss was seriously damaged during the Second World War, yet it might have been restored after the Nazi's surrendered. At that time, the cost of the restoration was about 32 million East German Marks while the demolition cost eight million, in other words one quarter thereof could have been used for long term restoration of the building (Url 01) However, one year after the split of Germany into two in 1949, the ruins of the Palace was completely demolished on the order of SED Chairman Walter Ulbricht. An architect Manfred Klinkott (2013) defines the demolition of the building as an "arbitrary act", and he claims that in accordance to the ideological and political aims of the German Democratic Republic (GDR), Prussian history tried to be eradicated, thus Berlin Royal Palace was destroyed just like Potsdamer Platz. Moreover, he points out that the decision of demolition was protested, yet the GDR government did not consider the counter arguments (Klinkott, 2013).

Despite all opposing views, the Palace was destroyed, and its plot was used for the demonstrations of GDR. Then, in between 1973-1976 Palace of Republic was constructed in the place of the Schloss. Kuhrmann (2013) declares that the Palace of Republic in Berlin is one of the crucial constructions of the GDR and was not only the Palace it was the house of East German Parliament and a house of culture at that time as well. However, the Palace of Republic was incompatible with the area in sense of its modernist design where Berlin's historical center was its location (Khurmann, 2013).

Later on, in 1990 Palace of the Republic was closed because of high degree of asbestos content of the materials used in its construction. And just six weeks after the close of the Palace of the Republic, East and West Germany were reunited. The unification of Germany brought the problem of "how to treat" the heritage of GDR especially the Palace of Republic (Buttlar, 2007). In 1997, Palace of the Republic was stripped down to its structure, thus it lost its symbolic appearance. According to Buttlar (2007) the ruined appearance of the Palace of the Republic increased the debates of the reconstruction of the old Palace *Stadtschloß*, since Palace of the Republic had already lost its identity. In other words, after the Palace of the Republic lost its original look, the memories of the old palace were strengthened along with the political changes. Then, the demolition of the Palace of the Republic was completed, and the re-construction of the *Stadtschloß* was designated by the federal government. Humboldt Forum architectural design competition was held for the new construction of the Palace, but participants were obligated to preserve the design of the façades. The first prize awarded to an Italian architect Franco Stella, and decided to be built in 2008.

The construction of Humboldt Forum was started in June 12, 2013, yet the project has financial problems so the donation campaigns still continues. The cost of the re-construction is

approximately 590 million euros (\$787 million), and the building is scheduled for completion in 2018 (Url 02).

Certainly, the Berlin Palace is not the only re-constructed building in the united Germany. Dresden Frauenkirche is one of the crucial example in this category along with the issue of re-constructions of sacred buildings after political changes (Fig. 04). The building originally built in 1743, then demolished during the Second World War, and its site was turned out to be the grounds for demonstrations. Before the Second World War Dresden was a spectacular city with several baroque churches, palaces and squares: Brühl's Terrace, Sächsisches, Kunstakademie, Residenzschloß, Hofkirche, Zwinger Palace, Semperoper (Opera House by G Gottfried Semper), and Dresden Frauenkirche (Harmann, 2006). However, the glorious silhouette of the city was destructed in the Second World War as an outcome of the bombings and consequent fire storms in 1945. The church endured the bombardment, yet it collapsed as a result of fire. After the war the rebuilding of the Dresden began straight away, yet the re-construction of Frauenkirche would wait many years because of economic reasons (Jaeger, W, 2003). Although not rebuilt in several years to come, the ruins of the church were protected, and the area was used for the memorial place of Dresden.

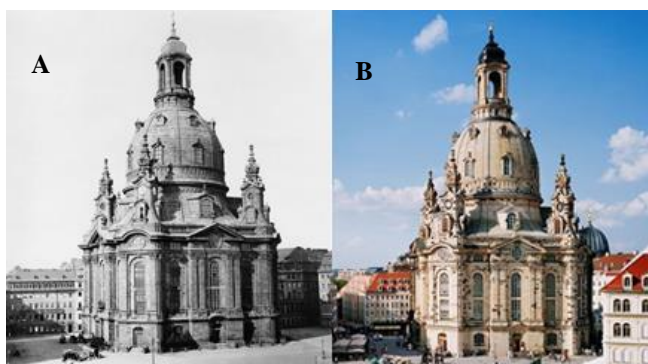


Figure-04. Dresden Frauenkirche in 1890 (A), The reconstructed Dresden Frauenkirche in 2012 (B)
(Sources: <http://www.exordio.com/blog/otros-temas/la-catedral-de-dresden-ha-sido-una-inspiracin-para-millones.html#axzz2t25Q064S>, http://travel.nationalgeographic.com/travel/best-trips-2012/dresden-germany-photos/#/01-gallery-dresden-church_41269_600x450.jpg, accessed February 24, 2017)

Harmann (2003) highlights that the Church was the last missing building in the silhouette of Dresden, but its re-construction was always controversial because of political debates. He adds that GDR (German Democratic Republic) government did not support the rebuilding of the Church as it's ideological and atheist political attitude. In 1994, the re-construction of the original building was started with archeological works. After 10 years of building process the replica of the church was completed in 2005. The remains of the building were noticeably used, and the inner design of the church was preserved. Thus, after noticeable amount of time, untimely memories reached through the embodiment in this way.

In Germany, through the unification of East and West Germany, the political changes evoked the ghost of past. Similar to Germany, after the collapse of the Soviet Union historical buildings of Russia were resurrected with the help of new political purposes. Alexandar Etkind (2009) claims that while history was about to be obsession in European countries, in Russia historical "amnesia" was dominant although the memories of the terror of Soviet Union are still alive. That's why, in Russia, cathedrals started to be reconstructed especially the ones in

sacred sites that were demolished by Soviet Government. In 2000, The Cathedral of Christ Savior which was originally built in 1837-1883 and destroyed in 1931 was re-constructed, and re-consecrated (Fig. 05).

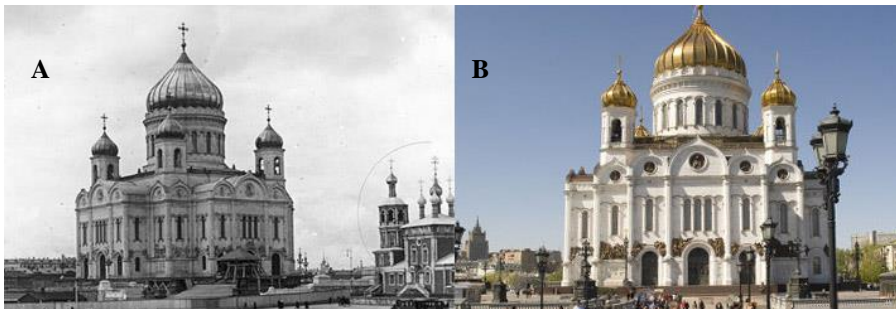


Figure 05. The original Cathedral of Christ Savior (A), the reconstructed building (B)
(Sources: <http://www.opendemocracy.net/od-russia/clementine-cecil/mayor-luzhkov-and-reconstruction-of-moscow>, <http://www.minube.net/place/the-christ-the-saviour-cathedral--a158191>, accessed February 21, 2017)

The reason of the demolition of the building was not only about the destruction of the sacred buildings by Soviets. Josef Stalin ordered the construction of Palace of the Soviets in the site of the cathedral. In 1931, three architectural competitions were held for the design of new symbol of the city (Ziada, H. 2011). Several architects including Le Corbusier participated this competition. After three phases of the competition, the group of the architects Boris Iofan, Vladimir Schuko and Vladimir Gelfreikh won the competition in 1936. Ekaterina V. Haskins (2009) claims that the Palace of Soviets was designed as an equal symbol to Cathedral of Christ Savior, and Stalin aimed to change the identity of Russia in line with the Western Modernity rather than the history of Russia. However, the Palace of the Soviets was never built. The foundations of the building were completed in 1939, and when the building started to arise it was demolished in the Second World War. The area was preserved, yet the construction never had chance to begin. After the death of Stalin the remains of the foundation was cleared, and in 1958 the area housed a heated outdoor swimming pool. Later in 1990, the Soviet Union collapsed, and the old Cathedral was decided to be built once more. According to Haskins through the replacing the monuments Russia it is aimed to regain Russian national identity back (Haskins, E. V., 2009). Many buildings were reconstructed in Russia in the same years of re-construction of Christ Savior Cathedral. Cathedral of Our Lady, Moscow-Russia Kazan was demolished 1932, re-constructed 1992, The Monastery of Kiev, Kiev-Ukraine was demolished 1930, re-constructed 1999, Iberian Gate Moscow-Russia was demolished 1931, re-constructed 1996.

Both in the examples in Germany and Russia the memories of the history were desired to be suppressed. New policies and changed ideas were tried to inject via new buildings after the conscious demolitions for the sake of new orders. On the contrary, memories still survived after the 'death' of the buildings, stayed in the mourning so many years and when the time came trauma called the revenants into existence with the alternative of the lost object.

3. CONCLUSION

There is always more building to discuss, but the crucial point is that the memory remains against time and the changing surroundings. The gathered examples in the study demonstrate the strength of the bond between memory and place. This bond should not be ignored or underestimated. If so, memory turns into unsolved mourning, and even the past years may not help to relieve the grief. In the end, a replica may occur as a solution for the sorrow.

A replica indicates a 'nostalgic' approach in architecture which prefers resurrection of non-existing buildings instead of creating new designs for the altered spirit of the place. In case of rebuilding, cultural memories are reawakened, the history, thoughts and imaginations materialize into the new one. Thus, a replica becomes a new building, caused by the ineradicable traces etched into the consciousness of the society.

In conclusion, replicas as replacement with old are the attempts of architecture to rehabilitate society with the embodiment of the loss ones over again. However, it is not certain that replicas succeeded in this matter or failed. Besides, cannot be such a claim that rebuilding is an unconscious or a compulsory choice. Rather than the creation of unique designs, reconstruction of a replica of a building is a questionable issue in architecture, and it will continue to do so. But the one may be sure that memory and place are inseparably related to each other, and memory continues its existence behind apparent physical environment.

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