DEATH

A NOTION

DEATH, A NOTION.

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Figure 1. (Cover Image) *Authors Image: Death, A Notion*
Figure 2. *Authors Image: Where Two Worlds Meet*

ABSTRACT

Contemporary Western society has all but abolished the need for a formal grieving process with death becoming an avoided, feared, and shameful topic. In a brutal revolution from the omnipresent death of the past, death is now unfamiliar and displaced. An all-consuming society rushing to beat mortality by finding new ways to extend one's lifespan, becoming increasingly secularised and refusing to permit the ugliness of death within the collective happiness of today's society. This results in places for remembrance and acceptance becoming scarce, with silence and stillness becoming confused and conflicted with the noise of cars and footsteps. Therefore the void between life and death grows larger, increasing in depth and stature as awareness fades.

This thesis raises the question of interior design and architecture as a key participant in the discussion of death in contemporary western society. The fractured relationship between death, bereavement and society is analysed in order to establish how societal attitudes and the perception of death has shifted. More precisely the research explores the specificity of an interior spatial design needed to assist the grieving process associated with the loss of a loved one, both at an individual level, and as a collective experience thereby seeking to create a plane of resonance between the land of the living and the obverse, the land of the dead.

- Start A Fire -

*You're not going through it
It's going through you
And once it's all gone
You'll become the new you
With a different perspective from the same point of view
Fully unaffected by the old truth you once knew
Connected at the roots
To the trunk
To the branches
To the leaves and the way they fly away
And wind dances
A frantic seesaw free fall in mid-air
That represents the floating folly of us all being here
We are complicated creatures*

- Stephen -

Figure 3. Authors Image: Are we there yet?

The five years past,

To my friends, you are the inspiration, thank you for keeping me sane, providing laughter and reminding me I am young.

To the boy with the cheeky smile, you are all, thank you for your never-ending patience, encouragement and love.

To my beautiful family, you are the motivation, thank you for your advice, enthusiasm, and everything big and small.

To my mum, you are the foundation, thank you for your strength, belief and unwavering love and support.

To Philippe, the voice of reason, thank you for your knowledge, continual guidance, enthusiasm and dedication.

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INTRODUCTION

Figure 4. Authors Image: Is this how you get to heaven?

INTRODUCTION

Contemporary Western Society's attitude towards death indicates avoidance and defiance on a mass scale. The modern westerner refuses to acknowledge death until an inescapable moment is reached when the acknowledgement of mortality is forced. With all life comes death. Ken Worpole states, "Death does not stand only at the end of life but is present with us every day and shapes our deepest sense of life and identity. Death is embodied within us like a fatal flaw: it is our teleology and destiny."¹ This notion has been lost, confused and buried behind the illusion that modern medicine will always provide a cure. This common cultural perception leaves death to be seen as an option, a consequence of medical failure, rather than a natural obligation in exchange for the beauty of life. In pre-modernity, one was well aware of the natural cycle of life having been exposed to the horrors of life from an early age. Death was omnipresent. Today however the act of avoidance and defiance has become normal due to rapid technological advances, the obsession with longevity, a decrease in religious practice, secularisation, and the urge to preserve and protect society's collective happiness from the ugliness of death. This has caused a disconnection and decrease in familiarity with fatality. We fear what we do not know and unfamiliarity can become shameful within the constraints of modern society. This intense fear drives society to ignore what is imminent, thus closing off a part of life. Acceptance of one's mortality is pivotal in the development of human culture and self. In understanding and accepting mortality, we recognise the fragility of life. A vital part of living is accepting that one day we will die.

As a direct consequence of this collective denial the traditional notion of a formal grieving process has nullified over time. It has been shortened and sterilised dramatically, allowing death to pass unrecognised, without acknowledgement.

Not allowing adequate time to process, deal with, and accept a loss, can result in the repression of grief. In turn this can lead to the loss of identity, purpose, and place within a relentless society. Grief traditionally was a public and collective process. The approach today contradicts that of the past. One grieves silently, alone, and in private. People are ashamed and embarrassed by the outpouring of emotion, especially in public.

The relocation of cemeteries from urban centers to rural areas has contributed in the diminishing awareness of death and resulted in places of refuge, silence, remembrance, and reflection becoming a rarity within the urban context. Worpole states, "...the landscapes of the dead rightly exert a specific and compulsive hold on the human imagination because they are reminders of the transience of human life, most particularly, of course, our own."² This results in grief being forced further into the private realm and the collective processing of grief and trauma to become non-existent. Thus a need is identified for a public place that brings grief and the acknowledgement of mortality back into the public realm. Philosopher Martin Heidegger considers, "it is the awareness of impending death which makes us truly alive, and therefore the architecture of death should be the most considered and thoughtful aspect of our cities: i.e. *memento mori*, ray of hope and existential barometer."³ Using interior architecture as a platform to heal therefore satisfying the subconscious and to restores vital connections.

This thesis therefore raises the question of interior design and architecture as a key participant in the discussion of death in contemporary western society. More precisely the research explores the specificity of an interior spatial design needed to assist the grieving process associated with the loss of a loved one, both at an individual level and as a collective experience.

SCOPE

It is important for the understanding and authenticity of this thesis to state that in the following chapters no religion or system of faith of a specific nature was used in drawing theoretical findings. This thesis focuses on Contemporary Western Society, and utilises a central London site, focusing on providing space primarily for the individual and the collective, which includes those who have a system of faith and those without.

AIMS & OBJECTIVES

The initial intention of this thesis is to establish societal needs by analysing the relationship of the contemporary with death and bereavement. Once an understanding of the evolved relationship is reached, the recognition and response to these needs in the form of an architectural intervention and the creation of a co-existence can aid in repairing the discourse currently experienced within Contemporary Western Society. This thesis will then aim to:

THESIS STRUCTURE & METHODOLOGY

The structure of this thesis can be understood in three primary sections:

PART ONE: CONTEXT

The context of this thesis represents the fundamental foundations of this research. Divided into six chapters, it will collectively establish the historic relationship between death and society, current issues and discourse, societal needs and will give location. It will address societal needs for a communicative, emotive and connective space, benefiting both the individual and the collective. In order to process grief, the acceptance and acknowledgement of death, and to formalise a co-existence between the living and the dead.

Chapter One: Death & Society

The evolved historic relationship between death & society is studied focusing on the changes in societal attitudes, from awareness and welcome to fear and avoidance, with a shift from the sacred towards the profane.

Chapter Two: Grief, Mourning & Bereavement

The grieving processes, patterns of grief and the shift from the revealed to the hidden are explored.

Chapter Three: Memory

The notion of Memory, remembering and recollection, is scrutinized in relation to grief and death seeking to gain an understanding of how memory can aid in the process of healing and acceptance in the wake of a traumatic event.

Chapter Four: Interface

The co-existence of the living and the dead is explored, including spaces of darkness, the obscure and the uncanny. Also an understanding of the historic importance of the cemetery within the metropolis is developed, in order to determine the repercussions that society faced following the relocation of cemeteries.

Chapter Five: Programmatic Response

Establishment and simplification of societal needs are developed resulting in Death Reconciliation being the key programmatic term.

Chapter Six: Site

St Dunstan in the East is introduced with historic examination and analysis at macro and micro scales. In addition to potential design opportunities are explored while remaining holistic and incorporating the rich and symbolic history of the site.

PART TWO: DESIGN DEVELOPMENT

The design development of this thesis involves the transference and integration of theoretical findings into the beginnings of an architectural intervention. These conceptual/initial ideas are then matured using a variety of different methods. The following chapters concentrate on these specific design strategies/approaches.

Chapter One: Case Studies

A niche is formed within current global projects relating to the four key theoretical chapters above. This influences and informs design decisions by considering what elements are successful.

Chapter Two: Visual Interpretation

An experimental & intuitive process, representing theoretical findings and programmatic response through hand drawing, painting, and composite imagery, created using digital manipulation. The purpose of which is to establish atmosphere, emotion, form and material of applied programmatic spaces.

Chapter Three: Creating the Obverse

A plane of mediation is established between the society of the living and the city of the dead, the site becoming a gateway to the obverse.

Chapter Four: Programmatic Application

The programmatic response (Death Reconciliation) is applied both vertically and horizontally. This application establishes location, initial atmospheric conditions, form, movement, and subject concentration.

Chapter Five: Revisualisation of Past

This method refers to the adaptation, re-establishment, and re-use of elements from St Dunstan that were lost in the Bomb Blitz.

PART THREE: REALISATION (FINAL DESIGN)

The interpretation and simplification of contextual text and the collective conceptual development from part two manifests into a final St. Dunstan design, which is interior focused with moments of architectural and landscape design. Part three concludes with a critical discussion. Addressing the design process and end result thereby determining the overall success of the final iteration.

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2. Worpole, 21.

3. Heathcote, Edwin, *Monument Builders* (Chichester: Academy Editions, 1999), 73.

Figure 6. Authors Image: Design Research Process

PART ONE

CONTEXT

DEATH & SOCIETY

PART ONE | CHAPTER ONE

Figure 7. Authors Image:

A SERIES OF VISUAL METAPHORS created to abstractly express societal expectations of death and what follows, the belief of continuity and reincarnation.

Figure 8. Authors Image:

Figure 9. Authors Image:

AVOIDANCE & DEFIANCE

Contemporary Western Society has increasingly evolved towards becoming a death avoiding society, with many lives becoming disconnected from this reality. Psychologist Jeffrey Kauffman defines the denial of death as “keeping the pain of loss or the meaning of a loss, or reality of a loss out of consciousness.”⁴ Robert Lifton states “Death and life are painfully out of joint in our time. Death has become unmanageable for our culture and for us as individuals.”⁵ It is a distanced reality of human existence, which does not go away. “We don’t talk about it; we try conceal, defy, and “bury” it.”⁶ French Medievalist and Historian, Philippe Aries, believes the first motivation for society to conceal death began late in the 19th century. With the humane desire to spare the dying, relieving them of their burden and gravity of their condition. This sentiment was quickly replaced by the more modern notion of sparing the onlooker, and therefore society at large, thereby shifting the focus from the dying person and loved ones. There was complusion

to hide the ugliness of death and the resulting insufferable emotion; an unwritten obligation and moral duty to ‘hush it up’.⁷ Death became an unwelcome presence amidst a ‘happy life’, threatening both individual and collective happiness. We now strive for happiness (or at least superficial happiness) “by showing the least sign of sadness. If one sins against happiness, threatens it, then contemporary society risks losing its *raison d’être*.”⁸ Death has been displaced within contemporary society, out of sight and out of mind. Few die in the company of their family or in the comfort of home. Many die in hospital, alone. Familiarity has drastically been reduced with the decline of multiple generations under one roof. Children were previously exposed to the full cycle of life, with growth, aging, sickness and death being elements of that cycle. They witnessed the death process of family and friends, and the cycle was essentially understood. “In refusing to face death – as individuals and as a culture – we live today closing off a part of life.”⁹

Avoidance
Defiance
Bury
Individual
Collective
Repreession
Silence
Displaced
Disconnected
Public vs Private

Figure 10. Authors Image:

A SERIES REPRESENTING THE HORROR OF VOID , the absence of non-being that is ultimately feared, the horror of death and the unknown.

ONE . TWO

ILLUSION & DENIAL

Modern medicine has created the cultural perception that death is no longer a natural occurrence but rather a consequence of medical failure.¹⁰ “As a result of medicine, in the

mind of a sick man, death has been replaced by illness...Illness has become the focus of illusion.”¹¹ Psychiatrist Dr. Elizabeth Kübler-Ross argues “Society is using mass denial...We live in the illusion that, since we have mastered so many things, we shall be able to master death too.”¹² Vast technical advancements have led to man being able to master ‘old deaths’ with the development of antibiotics, vaccines, revolutionary treatments, and procedures. Furthermore, and paradoxically, in the wake of all this, we have created threats which you “cannot see, smell, or hear.”¹³ We live in the face of inevitable death and we are ever presently aware of this fact.

Denial is a natural response to the fear of the unknown. Fueled by major medical advances and consumerism, which often results in the ultimate defiance. We fear “the catastrophic, destructive force that comes upon us and which we cannot alter.”¹⁴ Aries comments on the sociological evolution of death “The old attitude in which death was both familiar and near, evoking no great awe, offers too marked

a contrast to ours where death is so frightful that we dare not utter its name.”¹⁵

The vast majority of Contemporary Western Society has drifted from the sacred towards the secular undertaking a large and collective shift of re-sacralisation towards the individual, with a heavy focus on beauty and youth. Due to contemporary psychohistorical dislocation many individuals no longer have the support that religious faith offers. This has resulted in a significant decrease in public demonstrations, reflecting the traditions of death and mourning. “Our lack of meaningful rituals and beliefs makes dying the more desperate and fearsome and impoverishes life as well.”¹⁶ This shift from the revealed to the hidden influences the fear of one’s mortality. “When our knowledge is hard to bear, our only escape is to treat it the way we treat things that offend us: we sweep such things away, put them at a distance, hide them.”¹⁷ Essentially the fear of the unknown has driven the denial of death and the intensive refusal to acknowledge death within society.

*Illusion
Denial
Fear
Beauty
Youth
Shift*

ONE . THREE

RE-SACRALISATION TOWARD THE INDIVIDUAL

*The sun she dies so quietly
So sure of resurrection
And I am dying in the street
Crying for connection¹⁸*

The development of Contemporary Western Society has seen the de-sacralisation of religion and the undertaking of a large and collective re-sacralisation of science, technology, art, architecture and radical individualism. In response the presence of the sacred and of conventional spirituality has declined dramatically. As the foundations of Christianity have weakened, it is no longer considered a trustworthy source of moral principle and the age-old control ‘God’ had over the West has diminished, releasing opportunities of re-sacralisation. ‘God’s Death’ was seen by Friedrich Nietzsche as a necessity in order for humanity to excel: individuals could not evolve under the constraints of Christian divinity.¹⁹ According to Ramsey this endurance of Christianity hindered man’s creativity in all aspects of life because God stood as a condescending bystander to human

existence.²⁰ God’s demise and absence fueled the human development of self, a beautiful freedom, pushing past the suppression and enforced boundaries. A subsequent questioning of the sacred, being and meaning in Contemporary Western Society occurred.²¹ Being and meaning is a fundamental aspect of the human consciousness as is the sacred.²² Eliade argues that without it one’s life would be disassociated from meaning and chaos would creep in.²³ Man’s connection to the sacred is inevitable though is often subconscious. One consistently strives for being and meaning and therefore strives for the sacred.²⁴ Bauman states “There is a void to be filled; a void which in no way limits the range of contents with which it can be filled. Purpose and meaning are not ‘given’; therefore purpose can be chosen and meaning can be created ab nihilo (out of nothing).”²⁵

Self-Sacralisation

TAMED DEATH VS WILD DEATH

The traditional notion of a ‘tamed death’ appears passive and motionless. Death today is wild, unfamiliar and feared territory, with no formal process of psychological, physical or spiritual preparation. The ending of one’s life once aroused a passive emotional response. Today one is overcome by terror, fear and panic. It is essential to understand the traditional notions and perspectives of omnipresent death in order to understand the revolution that has

occurred in our contemporary death avoiding society. Tame Death and Wild or Forbidden Death are representative of the changes in how death is experienced and understood. “Man’s awareness of self, of his degree of existence or his individuality.” A tame death is a familiar death, the knowledge of being aware of an imminent death. “This does not mean that it was once wild and later domesticated. On the contrary, it means that it has become wild today, when it used to be tame. The tame death is the oldest death there is.”²⁶

The attitude towards death, familiarity of death and notion of destiny has undergone a subtle change. During the period of Romanticism death was once “admirable in its beauty.”²⁷ Socialisation was traditionally a rapid process. Confrontation of society’s ugly realities happened very early in a child’s life. Rapid socialisation ensured an individual’s connection to nature remained intact. Acceptance of nature’s order requires a degree of familiarity with death. No attempts were made to escape or glorify the process. The threshold was accepted with solemnity and the void crossed.²⁸ Individuals of the late mid-19th century were ever presently aware, carrying the weight of death within themselves aware that they “had merely been granted a stay of execution”²⁹, intrinsically creating an appreciation for life and the beauty in death. One made no attempt to elude death. When death was near one steadied oneself and prepared. Rituals and ceremonies were performed. The dying person was calm. “Individuals prepared themselves quietly and in good time... and they departed easily, as if they were moving into a new house.”³⁰ With our increased longevity and medical advancements this notion has become estranged. “The certainty of death and the fragility of life are foreign to our existential pessimism.”³¹ Death in modern society will always be ‘untimely’. It will tear us and those whom we love brutality from the physical world leaving an amalgamation of incomplete tasks.

“Mortality, Immortality and Other Life Strategies” by sociologist Zygmunt Bauman, is an analysis of the continual human awareness of death and its undeniable trajectory into culture and society’s social organisations. Knowledge of

mortality is crucial to cultural development. Death is a catalyst when it comes to cultural creativity “there would probably be no culture were humans unaware of their mortality.”³² Bauman identifies two specific ‘life strategies’ that categorise reactions to imminent death: i) ‘the modern strategy’ transposes the impenetrable dilemma of mortality and death into more manageable obstacles and theoretically resolvable issues of health and disease making the defiance of death a real possibility to the human psyche. ii) ‘the post-modern strategy’, immortality is dissected and eternal life becomes a continual rehearsal of ‘reversible death’. This essentially substitutes the permanent expiry of physical existence into ‘temporary disappearance’.³³

The constant awareness of death, both our own and the death of others, is frightful enough to stop us in our tracks. “We all have to die, and we know it...The horror of death is the horror of void, of the ultimate absence, of non-being.”³⁴ This fear of the unknown fuels the fight against death, increasing our expected longevity through technology and cultural rituals. Both culture and self-consciousness are ‘human-only’ qualities. Culture feeds off the human awareness of death. It seeks a permanence and durability that life in its own right cannot achieve. Therefore awareness of mortality “is the ultimate condition of cultural creativity. It makes permanence into a task, an urgent and paramount task...it makes culture, that huge and never stopping factory of permanence.”³⁵ Bauman proposes that transcendence and going beyond the creative imagination are the foundations of culture, “expanding temporal and spatial boundaries of being.”³⁶ We search for tasks that will outlive our biological capacity. The incompleteness excites us and gives life meaning. The limitations of a biological life are transcended allowing the capability to live a full and joyful life. “Despite our awareness of the limitations, the endemic brevity and ultimate futility of life’s efforts.”³⁷ Bauman continues to expand on human self-consciousness stating, “Unlike other animals, we not only know; we know that we know. We are aware of being aware, conscious of ‘having’ consciousness, of being conscious.”³⁸ In order to continue to evolve and ‘expand boundaries’ the awareness of death is pivotal.

Terror
Panic
Nature
Horror
Void
Transcendence
Boundary
Expansion
Calm

ONE . FIVE

THE NOTION OF INFINITY

There is “tension between the inevitability of death and the belief in spiritual immortality.”³⁹ Theorists believe that the belief in immortality is a partial reflection of universal denial which accompanies the universal fear of death. This system of denial and fear results in an equivocal connection between the living and dead.⁴⁰ The majority of people are not satisfied with the finality of biological death, and therefore believe otherwise through the notion of immortality and religious symbolism. Many within contemporary western society do not believe in immortality or an ‘afterlife’ until either their own death is approaching or the death of a loved one has occurred. French philosopher Blaise Pascal suggested the idea that “since there is everything to be gained by believing, and nothing to lose, one should make the wager and decide to believe in the afterlife.”⁴¹ The sense of Symbolic Immortality can be understood as a reflection of “man’s relatedness, to all that comes before him and all that follows him.”⁴² The capacity to feel

at home in the world relies on this continual connection to fundamentals that are bigger than oneself. This expanding attachment connects one to the time continuum, cultural dynamic and human flow, consisting of one’s biology and history. This sense of immortality allows the continuation of an active and vital life.⁴³ Robert Jay Lifton and Eric Olson present five modes of expression for symbolic immortality outlined below:

1) *Biological Immortality* represents a person living on through their children, grandchildren and so forth, becoming an infinite continuous chain of generational continuity. This mode can transcend biological boundaries, expanding to include ones, “tribe, organisation, people, nation or species.”⁴⁴ The Biological continuity therefore expands to interweave with cultural continuity.

2) *Creative Mode* represents human ‘works’, and instils a sense of immortality through acts that have an indelible influence on others eg. teaching, writing, creating art and constructing. These influences enter the human flow and transcend beyond the self. Failure of one’s contribution to maintain a lasting difference can result in questioning the value and meaning of one’s life and work, often leading to despair. This “reveals a deep human need to have an enduring effect – to leave a trace.”⁴⁵

3) *Theological Mode*, has historically expressed symbols of immortality through religious beliefs and institutions where the desire to conquer death and live forever has been expressed.⁴⁶ A common problem for all religious traditions is the meaning of life in the face of death, with immortality being assured differently across different religions. Religion brings eternal significance to human life, transcending individual death through a process of revelation and moral attainment.⁴⁷

4) *Continuity through Nature* establishes a sense of immortality based on the premise that, as we are part of nature – the seas, rivers, mountains and trees – we will continue in nature, even after our death: “from dust you come and to dust you shall return.”⁴⁸ Due to this we return to Nature regularly, it’s enduring rhythms and undiminished significance offer

spiritual revitalisation and refreshment, it is conceived as the ideal spiritual home.⁴⁹

5) *Experiential Transcendence* differs from other modes due to its sole reliance on the psychological state. It “concerns altered states of consciousness such as ecstasy, enlightenment, drug-induced highs, and collective effervescence.”⁵⁰ Transcendence refers to ‘going beyond’ the restrictions that accompany an ordinary life. ‘Ecstasy’ is a condition that derives from transcendence meaning ‘to standing out-side of’, to be outside of oneself.⁵¹ It can occur alongside any of the above modes. Experiential transcendence is a moment where one goes beyond the mundane, reaching a point of ecstasy and timelessness. One feels a “psychological unity, intensified sensual awareness, and inexpressible illumination and insight,”⁵² essentially ‘going beyond death’.

If infinite being was to be obtained, then the worth of life comes into question. Bauman states, “pushing back the moment of death, extending the life-span, increasing life expectation and thus life’s content-absorbing capacity; making death a matter of concern, a significant event – lifting the event of death above the level of the mundane, the ordinary, the natural, making the job of death somewhat more difficult.”⁵³ One could argue that is our awareness of death has nourished our pursuit, broadening both the quantity and quality of life. On the other hand it can be argued that death is the most creative, and sinister paradox that man faces ultimately damning all survival endeavors to failure, the inevitability forcing negativity into society, translating into fear and avoidance. Bauman continues stating, “It is because we know that we must die that we are so busy making life. It is because we are aware of mortality that we preserve the past and create the future. Mortality is ours without asking – but immortality is not a mere absence of death; it is the defiance and denial of death.”⁵⁴

“Technically, we admit that we might die;
we take out insurance on our lives to protect
our families. But really, at heart we feel we
are non-mortals”⁵⁵

Infinity
Continuation
Immortality

Figure 11. Authors Image

THE WALKING WOUNDED
Expression of the loss of
identity and purpose in the
wake of a traumatic event.

Figure 12. Authors Image: Programmatic Development

Figure 13. Authors Image

**ALL
ENCAPSULATING
FEAR**

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44. Lifton and Olson, 77.

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46. Lifton and Olson, 79.

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48. Old Testament, Lifton, 81.

49. Lifton and Olson, 81.

50. Robben, 3.

51. Lifton and Olson, 82.

52. Lifton and Olson, 83.

53. Bauman, 5.

54. Bauman, 7.

55. Aries, *Western Attitudes toward Death*, 106.

GRIEF, MOURNING & BEREAVEMENT

PART ONE | CHAPTER TWO

Figure 14. Authors Image:

A SINGLE PERSON is missing for you,
And the whole world is empty.
But one no longer has the right to say so aloud.”
- Philippe Aries, *Western Attitude Towards Death*.

TWO . ONE

GRIEF, LOSS & MOURNING

It has been suggested that as contemporary society has moved towards the avoidance and defiance of death the process of bereavement and grief has been pushed further into the private realm shifting from a somewhat collective and public experience, which incorporated traditions and rituals, to one which is incredibly individual, private, shameful and intimate. Bereavement is the loss of a significant person in one's life and grief is the reaction to this stressful life event. "Grief is an emotional reaction to bereavement, incorporating diverse psychological and physical reactions. Mourning, denotes the social expressions or acts expressive of grief, which are shaped by the practices of a given society or culture."⁵⁶ Grief has a defining and cruel quality; essentially you will pass through it alone. It can be isolating and painful and unfortunately it is an all too common experience. It is an individual act; each grieves differently and the transformation and process that occurs are conceivable only to the individual. Many theorists and psychologists throughout history have attempted to place grief and loss into a subscribed universal process, to put it 'into a box' defining normal or common grief. This has been relatively unsuccessful due to the diversity and variations between both cultures and individuals and sporadic nature that grief entails.

There is no question that each individual (with major variances of intensity and timeframe) experiences grief differently. Harvard psychiatrist Erich Lindemann believes the majority of people require between four to six weeks with two therapy sessions a week to conquer grief while Holly Prigerson and Paul Maciejewski believe that even what is considered 'normal' grief will last

for a number of years. "Grief comes in waves, welling up and dominating your emotional life, then subsiding, only to reoccur, peaking within six months then dissipating."⁵⁷ It becomes a period of oscillation and fluctuation, a force of discordance and disruption. Geoffrey Gorer presents six stages of mourning: denial of mourning, absence of mourning, mourning before death, hiding grief, time-limited mourning and unlimited mourning.⁵⁸ With the lack of rituals and ceremonies one can be left feeling adrift and abandoned. Weeping and embracing demonstrates the attachment between the living and dead, social solidarity is strengthened and aids in rectifying the enfeeble and collective. "Some grieve openly and deeply for years, some suffer intensely but for a more proscribed period of time and others appear to get over their losses almost immediately."⁵⁹ In some circumstances the bereaved feel a sense of relief more readily than sorrow. For some the cycle can reach a resolution, where one adapts and accepts the change, reaching an evolved equilibrium but for others this equilibrium is never reached. They never adapt and can become lost and detached, losing their place and purpose in the world. Sigmund Freud suggests in Mourning and Melancholia, that when someone passes the bereaved must try to reclaim the energy they had previously invested in the relationship because 'letting go' absorbs energy and can be mentally exhausting.⁶⁰ Bereavement requires one to reassess one's dynamic relationship with the world, one's place within it and the imagery that informs this relationship. The closer the relationship with the deceased, the more difficult the loss becomes to process. Through bereavement an 'assumptive world' can be created as one is dominated by the element of restless and chaotic 'searching', searching and yearning to fill the gaps and to make sense of the loss.⁶¹ It has been found that the prevailing feeling of bereavement is "not depression, disbelief, or anger but yearning."⁶²

Grief is much more complex than simply a period of low spirits and despair: just like fear it is a reaction of stress and is accompanied by profound changes in the psyche. C. S. Lewis stated "no one ever told me that grief felt so like fear. I am not afraid, but the sensation is similar...There is

a sort of invisible blanket between the world and me."⁶³ On a physiological level, one may experience a rise in cortisol levels, disrupted sleep, palpitations, a depleted immune system, loss of appetite, and hallucinations. Some claim to have the deceased appear to them, quite often in a form of nature and some will cry and talk out loud to the deceased.⁶⁴ Lindemann, through the first 'systematic survey of grief, developed a description of 'normal' grief "marked by recurring floods of somatic distress, comprising symptoms of breathlessness, weakness and tension or mental pain...There is restlessness, inability to sit still, moving about in an aimless fashion and continually searching for something to do."⁶⁵ The bereaved also tend to become somewhat hostile and in many situations attempt to isolate themselves. 'Abnormal grief' is defined by psychiatrist John Bowlby as that which rejects the process of 'normal grief'. Normal grief, according to Bowlby, "consists of four phases: numbing (shock); yearning, searching and anger; disorganisation and despair; and reorganisation."⁶⁶

Adjustment of life without a significant person can take a number of months or a number of years. One must replace that person's presence within their day-to-day life and as stated by Elisabeth Kübler-Ross, "it is more often true that the patient has reached a stage of acceptance and the family has not."⁶⁷ It is widely believed that one must "let go" in order move forward, to relinquish ties and form new attachments though numerous studies prove that some bereaved continue their relationships with the deceased with no eminent negative effects. Kübler-Ross formulated a five stage theory to apply to the process of the dying consisting of denial and isolation, anger, bargaining, depression, and acceptance. This stage theory was quickly adapted and used as a paradigm for how people grieved, making loss seem controllable and easy. Kübler-Ross grasped the basic range of emotions that a person may go through when bereaved though, as stated above, it is a process unique to the individual, which doesn't fit into a specified checklist. Grief is an ongoing process rather than a progression through prescribed stages.⁶⁸

Isolating
Intimate
Painful
Loss
Diverse
Variance
Sporadic
Intensity
Time
Oscillation
Fluctuation
Adrift
Abandoned
Lost
Equilibrium
Place & Purpose
Illusion
Denial
Searching
Yearning
Empty
Anger

TWO . TWO

SHIFT

Traditionally mourners followed a process of bereavement which included rituals, a decrease in activities of leisure, and in some cases the wearing of particular clothing. During the 18th Century the dying man’s bedchamber was a public space to be entered

at will. Prior to the beginning of the 19th century, with the concept of hygiene coming into focus, doctors became concerned with overcrowding in the rooms of the dying which prompted reducing the presence of onlookers to relatives and friends.⁶⁹ The deathbed ceremony was a sombre and mundane event, controlled by custom and specified rituals, with the dying person having the leading role. The 19th Century saw a passionate awakening of emotion in those present whilst undertaking the customary rituals, dropping their banal character “emotion shook them, they cried, prayed and gesticulated.”⁷⁰ Described by Aries as ‘passionate sorrow’, this indicated the introduction of the survivors intolerance to separation “the very idea of death moved them.”⁷¹ Mourning in this period had two purposes, firstly to compel the family of the deceased to display sorrow for a certain period of time (that was not always felt) and secondly to protect the bereaved from the surplus of their own grief by imposing a ritualistic social routine. This contained ones sorrow and

allowed it to dissipate without exceeding the boundaries of expression set within society.

The 19th century saw these boundaries ignored, bringing forth the period of madness deemed Hysterical Mourning. Demonstrations were excessive, overwhelming and ‘spontaneous’, unfurling with an unprecedented degree of ostentation and claiming to have no accountability to societal expectations: “people cried, fainted, languished and fasted.”⁷² This melodramatic mourning suggests the greater difficulty the bereaved had when facing the death of another concluding it was no longer the death of self that was feared, but the death of another. This evolved fear continued to transcend boundaries into contemporary society and death was emptied of its dramatic impact. Grief ventured further into the taboo; one was under an unspoken rule to spare the collective (society) from the ugliness and disturbance of dying and the unbearable emotion it evoked, the hushing- up had begun.⁷³

Silence
Fear

TWO . THREE

THE CONTEMPORARY
VEIL OF HAPPINESS

“Death has been dissected, cut to bits by a series of little steps, which finally makes it impossible to know which step was the real death, the one in which consciousness was lost, or the one in which breathing stopped. All these little silent deaths have replaced and erased the great dramatic act of death, and no one any longer has the strength or patience to wait over a period of weeks for a moment which has lost a part of its meaning.”

- Philippe Aries, Western Attitude Towards Death.

From the late 20th century and continuing through the 21st century an outpouring of emotion in a public place would be considered embarrassing and shameful. Although an essential process, within a few generations death and mourning were mostly removed from the public realm. Freud concluded that mourning had become fundamentally private, individual and internalised.⁷⁴ There is now an expectation for people to ‘hold it together’ and exhibit control over their emotions at all times when they are in public. Aries states, “One does not have the right to become emotional other than in private, that is to say, secretly.”⁷⁵ The exposure of children to bereavement has become nullified; they are aware of birth and love, but not death, “it is no longer the children who are born in cabbages, but the dead who disappear among the flowers.”⁷⁶ A discreet air lingers over funeral ceremonies, dark clothes have been replaced with whatever is deemed

convenient, and the outward demonstrations of mourning have been repressed, slowly disappearing. Sorrow, if too freely expressed, does not receive sympathy but it is objected to, deemed morbid, and met with whispers of mental instability and bad manners. “One only has the right to cry if no one else can hear. Solitary and shameful mourning is the only recourse. Choking back of sorrow, the forbidding of its public manifestations, the obligation to suffer alone and secretly, has aggravated the trauma stemming from the loss of a dear one.”⁷⁷ Death today is met with discomfort, impatience, and a ‘don’t ask, don’t tell’ policy, with a divide between the bereaved and society.⁷⁸ The period for grief and mourning is no longer enforced by society. It is considered a state of morbidity that damages the collective happiness and disrupts life and it must be shortened and ideally erased through treatment.

Public vs Private
Sorrow
Secret
Private
Individual
Collective
Repression
Divide

GRIEF FOR SELF

The grief for self becomes a very similar process to the grief of the bereaved, ideally with the patient reaching a stage of acceptance. Societal expectations extend to the dying person with ‘an acceptable style of living while dying’, acceptable in the fact that it can be endured by the survivors. The reversal being ‘the embarrassingly graceless dying’ where a flood of emotion can be embarrassing for the survivors.⁷⁹ Discretion has become the modern form of dignity, and one should have

the courage to be discreet. “He should behave in such a manner that the hospital staff can forget he knows and can communicate with them as though death were not hovering above.”⁸⁰ Elisabeth Kübler Ross argued that the majority of patients knew their fate, and would appreciate the acknowledgement from others also. “The patient is in the process of losing everything and everybody he loves. If he is allowed to express his sorrow he will find a final acceptance much easier.”⁸¹

*Shameful
Letting Go
Acceptance
Internalised*

ABSENCE VS PRESENCE

Bereavement can be given, or not given, an aspect of location which extends along a spectrum of presence to absence. In Contemporary Western Society, burial and cremation after a death are the main options for treatment of the body. Burial gives elements of permanence, place and location, whilst arguably cremation gives the element of absence and space. Each option is chosen for different reasons by the bereaved and has a dynamic relationship with the grieving process. Cremation became increasingly more popular throughout the industrial era and rapid modern expansion. It is cheaper, easier, and finite, and is now the option chosen for approximately 50% of deaths. “The deeper

motivation is that cremation is the most radical means of getting rid of the body and of forgetting it, of nullifying it, of being ‘too final’.”⁸² Along with cremation comes the choice to keep or disperse the ashes; dispersal evokes an absence, whilst storing conjures a sense of presence and gives location. The option of a Memorial nestles between permanence and absence. It is not always a choice but enforced in the absence of a body. It gives a place and space where the outpouring of emotion and mourning can be received. It has been suggested that what can be referred to as a ‘second death’ occurs after many generations, once the initial death has been forgotten.

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MEMORY

PART ONE | CHAPTER THREE

Figure 20. Authors Image

**REFLECTION AND
FRAGMENTATION,** a
collaboration between the past
and present.

THE MEMORY COMPLEX

Memory expands into the infinite beyond with its capacity, limitations and functions being a constant source of discussion and uncharted territory - a function which involves “summarizing, condensing or rewriting past events, a complex but fallible system of storing information.”⁸³ Different things are remembered for different reasons and the memory experience becomes a dialogue between past and present. Memory is a precondition, interwoven with death, bereavement and grief.

“The notion that memory is neither something pre-existent and dormant in the past nor a projection from the present, but a potential for creative collaboration between present consciousness and the experience or expression of the past.”

- Jonathan Boyarin, Remapping Memory: Space Time and the Politics of Memory.

Past & Present

MEMORIES OF LOST

Memory is an important aspect of grief. It is a malleable function that can quite easily be shaped and altered by both the collective and individual. If altered with strong conviction it can transcend into what is believed as the truth.

“The past cannot accompany us. But memory can, but insofar as it leaves behind the past it must be kept in its place as servant, not master, as a reflection on experience and not experience as a whole.”⁸⁴

In many cases of personal bereavement family and friends remember the deceased ‘how they were before’, before they got sick or before tragedy occurred. This is not a blatant bypassing of what occurred but a method that allows one to accept and to cope with death. “Some, at least, of those left amongst the living will not escape the excessive accumulation of memory.”⁸⁵ Individual memory becomes a trace of a moment in time, left behind, imprinted on the minds of those who’ve experienced it. In the event of a traumatic or regrettable experience memories can be repressed and altered, becoming fragmented, making it difficult for one to present events in a coherent sequence

of past to present.⁸⁶ “Memory is the sense of loss, and loss pulls us after it.”⁸⁷ The deceased remain alive in the memories of those closest, a flickering illumination within grief’s dark, oscillating and lonely realm. Channeled into the present they become a valued intangibility, and for some bereaved are the only thing that makes the loss bearable; “we feel injured when memory falters and threatened when it is denied.”⁸⁸ Theorists suggest memory can be described as a glass, through which the past is projected, expanding to include the experiential consciousness of those affected, viewed as a prior moment ranging on the spectrum of vicious darkness to calming luminance. It has become less of a tool for preservation of the past than a function of gratification. Confrontation of repressed memory originates in neurotic retribution. Credence of the past will initiate the process of healing. Survivors whose memories become the last solution manifest a realm of memory that “remains painfully irreconcilable with subsequent experiences.”⁸⁹ Charles Maier reflects, “Memory has become a strategy for survival, not for seduction...Memory has become a strategy to come to terms with survival.”⁹⁰

Malleable
Trace
Fragments
Anxiety
Illumination
Healing
Survival

Figure 21. Authors Image

REFLECTION AND FRAGMENTATION.

THREE . THREE

MEMORIES, PLACE & THE BODY

Architecture and landscape are historic mnemonic devices recording and disseminating fundamental aspects of human culture and history.⁹¹ The externalisation of human memory is comprised fundamentally by architectural forms and material through which we settle in place and space. Pallasmaa believes architecture serves as memory mechanisms in three different ways:

“First, they materialise and preserve the course of time and make it visible; second, they concretise remembrance by containing and projecting memories; and third, they stimulate and inspire us to reminisce and imagine.”⁹²

Edward Casey states that there is a robust alliance between memory and place: “Memory haunts not only the derelict house but also

the vibrant plaza. It haunts built worlds that have fallen to natural disasters or to changes of political regime.”⁹³ Place “is well suited to contain memories – to hold and preserve them”. Memory is “a place wherein the past can revive and survive.”⁹⁴ Collective memory is generated largely by the impulses of places, loci and ‘sites of memory’ with spatiality playing a vital role in the process of remembering. Whereas individual memory can exist without the attachment to a specific place, though “the immobility of place thus provides a counterpoint to the movement of people.”⁹⁵ Recollection has fused intensely with landscape in contemporary society: “we see landscapes like stars, with a light that has long since been emitted.”⁹⁶ Many theorists argue that the design of a building can encourage the production of memories, tracing all that has gone before, both the physical remains and the ambiguous yet idle mental presence.⁹⁷ The built environment retains huge potential to store and assist in the revival of memory and to record and transmit the history of a place and its people. “Memories remain embedded in the form, remain to be unearthed, read, and decoded – however imperfectly or incorrectly,”⁹⁸ with potential to mature the complexity of meaning overtime, intersecting with stimulated accumulation and recall prompted by the built forms. The process of

the built environment develops into a trilateral give and take including the individual and society as a collective. The built environment may stimulate memories, but overtime the structure, materials, program and adaptation continuously embodies and stores memories, collecting traces, which are then passed to the next generation of inhabitants. There are both memories absorbed and memories projected, “becoming repositories into which, and from which, both deposits and withdrawals can be transacted – a memory bank for the individual and communal.”⁹⁹ Mary Warnock notes that “memory and the state of the body, and especially of the brain, are closely linked.”¹⁰⁰

Recollection has a fundamental physical basis which can involve all of the bodily senses, taste, touch, hearing, smell and sight. Often it is our body that remembers and responds before our minds, prompting the psyche to search for this moment of familiarity: “my eyes have forgotten what they once saw but my body still remembers.”¹⁰¹ A memory is compiled of individual fragments that emerge gradually, remnants from each of the bodily senses. Our experiences are internalised “as lived situational, multi-sensory images and they are fused within our body experience. Human memory is embodied, skeletal and muscular in its essence, not merely cerebral.”¹⁰²

*Infinite
Reflection
Silence*

Figure 22. Authors Image:

REFLECTION AND FRAGMENTATION.

THREE . FOUR

INDIVIDUAL &
COLLECTIVE

Collective memory is arguably not an exact history, though it is developed through the individual processing of past events and therefore shaped by comparable material, privileging history and events that are under contemporary interest. Lutz Neithammer explains: “The majority of collective memory is located on this side of the ‘floating gap’, between memory and history.”¹⁰³ Collectively shared representations of the past, a phenomenon that manifests in reaction to actions and statements of individuals, is a result of both mediated conscious manipulation and unconscious absorption.¹⁰⁴ Memory is not timeless, it is historically conditioned, moulded with the trace of the specific culture and time period, and thus collective memory tends to bias towards the present “dedicating disproportionate amounts of time, space and resources to communications about events

that happened within the lifetimes of its producers and consumers.”¹⁰⁵ History and memory oppose greatly, due to history’s reliance on confirmation of proof, though both are subject to undeniable, socially conditioned, acts of selection, interpretation and distortion, through conscious and unconscious means.¹⁰⁶ Simply put collective memory is the “integration of various different personal pasts into a single common past that all members of the community come to remember collectively.”¹⁰⁷ Memory can be collective but it is also an extremely intimate and personal function intrinsically bound to identity: “through memory, the past of the individual can be revived or made actual again, in the sense of being brought into consciousness,”¹⁰⁸ It grounds our identity of self. “We are what we remember.”¹⁰⁹ Individual memory emphasises the social nature that individual remembering and forgetting entails. The patterns of perception learnt through our exposure to various social environments have a profound influence on our capacity to store, recall and reconfigure information and experiences.¹¹⁰ Therefore although individual memory is simply explained as the personal interpretation of one’s own experiences and the term ‘individual’ coins the function as a sole experience, this is not the case. We are social, interactive beings and thus it is impossible for individual memory to be removed entirely

from the collective. “Individuals are perfectly capable of ignoring even the best told stories, of injecting their own subversive meanings – and of attending to only those ways of making sense of the past that fit their own.”¹¹¹ In society today we are not facing death in a clear way. We manufacture and shape memory to fit our societal learned experiences and perceptions. Myszal views remembering as an individual mental act, although it is developed from cultural forms, and bound by social context.¹¹² As the past is transcended into narrative, memories are interpreted simply, “prepared, planned and rehearsed socially and individually.”¹¹³

Parallel to the concept of memory is the notion of forgetting and repressing, which becomes of equal importance in both the collective and individual, allowing communities, social groups and individuals to operate and grow in the wake of devastation. Anne Whitehead explains:

“Forgetting forms the shadowy underside of memory, but shapes and defines the very contours of what is recalled and preserved; what is transmitted as remembrance to the next generation; and what is thereby handed down to us, in our turn, to cherish or discard, but above all to reflect critically upon.”¹¹⁴

Individual
Collective
Identity
Forgetting
Repression
Concealed
Revealed

Figure 23. Authors Image

REFLECTION AND FRAGMENTATION, a collaboration between
the past and present.

Figure 24. Authors Image: Programmatic Development

Figure 25. Authors Image

REFLECTION AND FRAGMENTATION.

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Memory45

COEXISTENCE

INTERFACE

PART ONE | CHAPTER FOUR

Figure 26. Authors Image

INITIAL VISUAL INVESTIGATION OF THE UNCANNY and The Obscure,
The Albermarle Hotel, Ghuznee St, Wellington.

LIVING WITH THE DEAD

Society has reached a point where the number of the dead by far outweigh the number of the living. The dead seemingly inhabit the dark shadows of obscure places and spaces, unsettling those who unknowingly venture to close. During the late 18th Century a notion was developed that society consisted of both those living and those who had passed. “The city of the dead is the obverse of the society of the living...its timeless image. The dead have gone through the moment of change and their monuments are the visible sign of the permanence of the city.”¹¹⁵ Worpole suggests that even today the dead take up the spatial equivalent below ground, to what the living require above ground.¹¹⁶ Sebald builds on this by suggesting that not only is the divide between life and death delicate, at points translucent and steadily impoverishing, but that the world itself is a single cemetery of colossal proportion.¹¹⁷ It has been suggested that only the increasing popularity of cremation from the 20th century spared many urban environments from becoming dominated by the bodies of the deceased.¹¹⁸

Prior to the 18th century cemeteries were given prominence within cities, centrally located. The allocation of space was dependent on one’s wealth, social class and religion, the forced order of modern civil life “in which everyone is alone and in the end is allotted a place only for himself and his closest relations, one which corresponds accurately to

the size of his property or the depth of his poverty.”¹¹⁹ Spaces for the dead had substantial consideration as an integral component in the evolution of urban public space during the 18th century. A new language was developed, integrating spaces of the dead and spaces of the living, providing places for retreat, escape and remembrance within large, high density, industrial cities.¹²⁰ A poetic amalgamation of loss and memory, these celebrated the juxtaposition of life and death. “The dead lay there as an invasive reminder of the threshold which we all have to cross someday.”¹²¹

Aries states that “the eighteenth-century authors of cemetery plans wanted cemeteries to serve both as parks organised for family visits and as museums for illustrations persons”¹²² hence the cemetery gained an importance, both physical and moral, within an urban context leading to the expansion of surface area that subsequently became increasingly intrusive. Concerns were raised amongst authority figures but were repelled by the public and the propagation continued.¹²³ Due to spatial inadequacies which resulted in the accumulation of dead, and concerns regarding hygiene and the burial process, the 19th century saw cemeteries pushed out of cities, forced to occupy the rural outskirts. Aries explains “the world of the living had to be kept separate from that of the dead,”¹²⁴ thus the dead could not disrupt the living by being present within the metropolis.

Obverse
Timeless
Threshold
Juxtaposition
Collective
Individual

FOUR . TWO

THE UNCANNY & CONTEMPORARY GOTHIC

At the interface of life and death resides an obscure boundary where what is known and unknown become confused and where reality and fantasy distort. Dwelling within this realm are the notions of The Uncanny and Contemporary Gothic.

The Uncanny has various descriptions and definitions but is thought to be a Freudian concept, with his essay on the subject being the most famous to date. The uncanny was born in the pages of Gothic literature. Popular in the 18th and 19th century, it has developed into a modern

phenomenon. To accurately define the Uncanny is a tricky process – it is a complex conceptual term. Freud states “there is no doubt that this belongs to the realm of the frightening, of what evokes fear and dread...but the world is not always used in a clearly definable sense, and so it commonly merges with what arouses fear in general.”¹²⁵ The term is derived from the German world, *unheimlich*, with the closest English equivalents being ‘uncanny’, ‘unhomely’ and ‘eerie’, a representation of that which isn’t at home or at ease ¹²⁶ instilling an ambiguous sense of eerie dread and horror.¹²⁷ *Unheimlich* is the antonym of *Heimlich* which translates to ‘homely, familiar’ and can be used in reference to “a place that is free of ghostly influences.”¹²⁸ The Uncanny morphs that which is once well known and familiar into a condition of the frightening. “It seems obvious that something should be frightening precisely because it is unknown and unfamiliar. But of course the converse is not true: not everything new and unfamiliar is frightening.”¹²⁹

There seems to be a constant argument regarding what exactly stimulates or causes the feeling of uncanniness with people experiencing a range of differing sensitivities. Ernst Jentsch presents *Intellectual Uncertainty* as the fundamental condition for the appearance of a sense of the Uncanny. Simply put it is the “loss of orientation,”¹³⁰ “a temporal point where that which is old/known/familiar is invaded by the new/foreign/hostile”¹³¹ while Freud presents the uncanny as something that was meant to remain secret, hidden in the shadows but has

moved to become revealed in the open.¹³² He describes the uncanny as “a very well developed phenomenon that occurs when beliefs and emotions are repressed then return.”¹³³ Freud continues to explain the concept of repression by stating that, due to the German word ‘*Heimlich*’ being able to alternate to its opposite ‘*Unheimlich*’, this indicates that the “uncanny element is actually nothing new or strange, but something that was long familiar to the psyche and was estranged from it only through being repressed.”¹³⁴ *Heimlich* represents not only the homely but also the domestic, safe, comfortable, and all that can be hidden by interiority, thus including secrets, mystery, concealment and danger. *Unheimlich* therefore concerns the opposite, tense, uneasy, and disconcerting but is exposed, in the open. These two terms have a unique relationship. Freud explains *Unheimlich* as a momentary shift from *Heimlich*. This shift essentially reveals, ‘brings into the light’, all that which is concealed, secret and dangerous. From an intellectual standpoint *Unheimlich* is the exposure of a hidden, terrifying concept, which has long been known and familiar but has undergone psychological repression.¹³⁵ The Uncanny is an experience of strangeness and alienation, producing feelings of uncertainty and the questioning of oneself, one’s own nature and the reality of one’s critical world. It is the peculiar amalgamation of the familiar and the foreign. “It can take the form of something familiar unexpectedly arising in a strange and unfamiliar context, or of something strange and unfamiliar unexpectedly arising in a familiar context.”¹³⁶

Uncanny
Fear
Ambiguous
Invasion
Conceal
Reveal
Repression
Into the Light
Silence
Seek, explore, engage
Ghosts
Transcendence

Figure 28. Authors Image: Co-existence between the Living and Dead

Figure 30. Authors Image

INITIAL VISUAL INVESTIGATION OF THE UNCANNY and The Obscure,
The Albermarle Hotel, Ghuznee St, Wellington.

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PROGRAMMATIC RESPONSE

PART ONE | CHAPTER FIVE

FIVE . ONE

PROGRAMME

The programmatic response was determined through the theoretical exploration of four fundamental conditions which consolidate to represent a significant portion of the dynamic relationship between death and Contemporary Western Society. Thereby identifying societal needs and establishing ‘Death Reconciliation’ as the primary programmatic term. The four sections (Death & Society, Grief Mourning and Bereavement, Memory, and Interface) have been condensed to create an accurate representation of each, shown in an initial programmatic matrix (Figure 31). Points of reoccurrence and overlap were identified to establish links between the key conditions whilst each still maintaining a unique identity holistic to the variety of psychological and societal factors by which they have been affected. The conditions identified across the four categories were then summarised to generate a second matrix (Figure 32) thus becoming spatially applicable to the chosen site. Case studies are introduced to inform a direction for design and establish a niche within the current built environment.

Figure 31. Authors Image: Initial Programmatic Matrix

DEATH RECONCILIATION WITHIN CONTEMPORARY WESTERN SOCIETY

Figure 32. Authors Image: Developed Programmatic Matrix

SITE

PART ONE | CHAPTER SIX

ST DUNSTAN'S HILL | CITY OF LONDON

ST DUNSTAN IN THE EAST

Wren Tower, Church Ruins & Garden

Figure 33. Authors Image: St Dunstan Location Map

HISTORY & ASSOCIATION WITH TRAUMA

Surviving the plague, the great fire of London & the bomb blitz, forming a holistic response to the tangible and intangible qualities induced by trauma.

St. Dunstan’s in the East is located on Dunstan’s Hill in London and is situated between London Bridge and the Tower of London. It was once a wealthy and prosperous Church of England Parish Church.¹³⁷ The Church was originally constructed in the early 12th Century as a dedication to St. Dunstan, an archbishop of Canterbury.¹³⁸ The church was dubbed St. Dunstan in the East to differentiate it from the Fleet St Church devoted to the same Saint.¹³⁹ In 1598 it was described by John Stow as a “fair and large church of an ancient building within a large churchyard and with a great parish of many rich merchants”.¹⁴⁰ The North churchyard comprised of 3616 square feet and the South 3706, totaling 7322 square feet.

Figure 34. Authors Image: St Dunstan's Timeline

SIX . TWO

THE PLAGUE

The Great Plague of London was an outbreak of the Bubonic Plague beginning in the spring of 1665 and ending in late 1666. Beginning in St. Giles in the Field, an overcrowded Parish for the poor, it advanced through the Parishes and streets of London, peaking throughout the warmer months and killing

thousands. The number of dead increased so rapidly that burying the deceased individually was unrealistic. Mass graves were produced.¹⁴¹ As religious services were arguably the most popular form of public interaction churches became key participants in the spread of the disease. Recorded deaths totaled 68,596, while the appropriate number was likely to be closer to 100,000 due to many deaths of the poor being overlooked. Approximately 15% of London's then population perished.¹⁴²

Due to St. Dunstan in the East being in central London its exposure to the Plague was

heightened. Repeated outbreaks rendered the recording of interments impossible to keep. St. Dunstan's alone was subject to six burials every day during the summer of 1625. In such a period where hope is dwindling and an ugly mortality is approaching the opportunity of public worship was more highly valued. During the 1625 Great Plague nearly 10,000 people were perishing weekly in London. The churchyard of St. Dunstan's was piled high with graves, the toll bell ringing out across the church five or six times a day¹⁴³ a notification of another death or burial reminding the public of their fragile mortality.

SIX . THREE

THE GREAT FIRE OF LONDON

September 2nd 1666 brought the Great Fire of London which began on Pudding Lane, slightly West of St. Dunstan's.¹⁴⁴ The church was engulfed on the first day and as a result was severely damaged. "The old church of St. Dunstan in the East had a very lofty spire, which was covered with lead, and which was seen tottering, and gradually falling, amidst the surrounding flames."¹⁴⁵ The church was consumed destroying countless monuments and tablets and memory of the dead was lost. The fire was responsible for the loss/damage of approximately 80% of London's property, "Including 13,000 houses, 89 churches, and 52 Guild Halls."¹⁴⁶ The Great Fire did have one positive repercussion - it aided in greatly diminishing the Plague (1665) by the mass

extermination of plague-carrying rodents. Following the fire, "in 1667 the inhabitants of St. Dunstan's began work on raising their church from its ruins."¹⁴⁷ The damage, though serious, was not deemed severe enough to justify the complete rebuilding of the Church. The church was repaired and 'patched up' over the next 30 years; the outside walls left by the fire were concluded to be "for the most part standing firm."¹⁴⁸ The final stage of St. Dunstan's rejuvenation was the tower and steeple added in 1695-1701 and designed by Christopher Wren. The new steeple retained the gothic style of the former to complement the main body of the church. "The windows and steeple are of a modern Gothic style, but the pillars and arches within are Tuscan. The altitude of the steeple, consisting of a stone tower and spire, and the fifth, or principal, erected on four gothic arches, is 175 feet."¹⁴⁹

In 1810 evidence of structural instability became clear. The walls had been forced seven inches out of perpendicular from the weight of the nave roof. The Parish committee decided to rebuild them. Throughout the course of the

alterations the severe decay became evident. The decision was made to demolish the entire main building, excluding the Wren tower and steeple, and to build new from the foundations. David Lang was the architect appointed and was assisted by William Tite. The first stone of the new church body was placed on 26th November 1817.¹⁵⁰ Constructed of Portland stone and a 'good specimen' of Gothic Architecture, the new St. Dunstan's was officially opened for service on the 14th of January 1821. The new church was 115 Feet long and 65 wide with the capacity to house 600-700 people.¹⁵¹

"All heads must come

To the cold tomb

Only the actions of the just

*Smell sweet, and blossom in the dust."*¹⁵²

On the 5th of September 1853 the last funeral occurred at St. Dunstan's. A new system introduced by Queen Victoria forbade burials within the city due to sanitary reasons. Interments within the church and churchyard were discontinued.

Late 18th Century

1805

1815 - 1891: Main Building was demolished & rebuilt due to structural instability. Retaining the Gothic style of the previous. Wren's Tower & Steeple remained.

1891

1910

Figure 35. A-D, Top-Bottom, Left-Right

POST FIRE - PRE BLITZ Visual timeline of St Dunstan post the fire of london, pre the Blitz.

Figure 36. Authors Image: Overall Bomb Map of the Blitz, London and surrounds

SIX . FOUR

THE BLITZ

St. Dunstan's was severely damaged during the Second World War by the German Nazi's Bomb Blitz of the United Kingdom in which London was heavily targeted. The period of strategic bombing lasted 267 days, beginning on the 7th September 1940 and ending on the 21st May 1941. London came under attack 71 times over this period. The bombing was an attempt made by Hitler to demoralise and terrorise the British population and to ultimately force them into surrendering through defeat. Hitler's methods failed. "The city's inhabitants took a perverse and particular

pleasure from being the front line of the war. 'We can take it' became the catchphrase of the Blitz."¹⁵³

The steeple and tower designed by Wren survived the relentless bombing, while the remainder of the church was gutted and consumed by impact. This left only the north and south walls of the main building standing. Over a million buildings were damaged or destroyed in London alone. Approximately 32,000 people were killed and 87,000 were injured. The landscape of London was dramatically altered; buildings in parts of the city were obliterated and lost while others, such as St Dunstan, remain as a reminder to the horrific incidents of past, a symbolic folly of war.

"London is a vast archaeological site bearing the scars of its violent wartime past."¹⁵⁴ Few ruins remain today, due to the demand and cost of property in London, with only traces, shadows and derelict space hinting at the former. Decades

of regeneration have seen the majority of affected sites and buildings demolished or replaced. On the rare occasion a mysterious gap lingers, a ghost space, with an emotional resonance, which has survived the rapidly consuming contemporary London."The whole city is a monument, a testament to the will of the people of London to survive a dark time, carry on, and to ultimately take the battle back to the enemy."¹⁵⁵

Following World War II, and the reorganisation of the Anglican Church in London, rebuilding St. Dunstan's was decided against and the church was left in ruins for 25 years. On the 4th January 1950 the site was given a Grade 1 listed building status.¹⁵⁶ In 1967 it was decided by the City of London Cooperation to create a public garden at St. Dunstan's, and incorporate the ruins of the church, forming an inner-city oasis. It was formally opened in 1971 and remains in this state today with the tower being utilised by the All Hallows House Foundation.¹⁵⁷

Figure 37. Authors Image: Rendered bomb map of the blitz showing St Dunstan and immediate surrounds

Figure 38. A-D, Top-Bottom, Left-Right

THE RUINS OF ST. DUNSTAN following the Bomb Blitz.

St. Dunstan's represents the inescapable passing of time, an ancient site that is a void within the contemporary cityscape. It is frozen in time, a beautiful representation of mortality and trauma both experienced by London's people and the site itself.

Figure 39. *St Dunstan Exterior, Southside*
Figure 40. *St Dunstan Interior*

ST DUNSTAN 2016, Greenery, Urban Proximity, Ruins, Inner-city Oasis.

Figure 41. *St Dunstan Interior, showing circle courtyard & fountain*
 Figure 42. *St Dunstan Exterior, Northside showing 19th century graves*

ST DUNSTAN 2016, Greenery, Urban Proximity, Ruins, Inner-city Oasis.

SIX . FIVE

SITE ANALYSIS

St. Dunstan in the east is nestled between a cluster of multistoried buildings in London central. Greenery pokes through the ruins of the weather worn church, breaking up the surrounding buildings. The site experience is like stepping into another world. Being

encompassed by the ruins and greenery gives a sense of intimacy and tranquility. The noise and stress of London dissolves away. “Trees lean against the arches to offer shade and vines creep through window frames. Sunlight trickles through the foliage and spills into where the nave roof would have been.”¹⁵⁸

Situated on St. Dunstan’s hill and boarded by St. Dunstan Alley, Idol Lane and Lower Thames St, the site has a west-east orientation. The building’s immediate surroundings vary between 25-35 meter high buildings. Many of the buildings are mixed use, including commercial, residential,

government, religious and educational. The site has two entrances via St. Dunstan’s Hill and Idol Lane, and is accessible from 8am till dusk. The gardens set amongst the ancient ruins provide a tranquil retreat from the fast-paced city. The generous stone walls grant some peace by deflecting and absorbing much of the city noise, and aid in keeping the gardens cool in the summer months. The All Hallows House Foundation utilises Wren’s Tower, a charity that provides health services to Londoners. The remainder of the site is no longer used regularly by the Anglican Church but open-air services are held occasionally.

Figure 43. Authors Image: Rendered elevation of St Dunstan and surrounds

BUILDING HEIGHTS ANALYSIS, St Dunstan and immediate surrounding buildings.

Figure 44. Authors Image: Movement Analysis

Figure 45. Authors Image: St Dunstan and surrounding building heights

Figure 46. Authors Image: Site qualities analysis

VIEWS OF SURROUNDS

Figure 47. Authors Image: Site qualities analysis

EXTERIOR TEXTURE

Figure 48. Authors Image: Site qualities analysis

URBAN OASIS

REFLECTION

Theoretical approach, method of simplification & site appropriateness

The theoretical approach covered four of the key conditions of death within contemporary western society, though this could be expanded. The simplification of these four chapters into a programmatic response, is based on my own interpretation. Concluding what aspects of each chapter could transfer into a programme, and thus form the foundation of an architectural intervention. The text outlines issues, whilst also seeking solutions. This approach will be implemented into the architectural response, being both a representation of the current issues and an attempt to correct the discourse. The site was selected due to its location and symbolic nature. Representing the removal of burial from the metropolis, which resulted in the decline of familiarity. The symbolic nature and trauma of the site prompts an investigation of combining the past with the present by revisualizing lost elements of St. Dunstan's. Such as the destroyed interior arches, pew seating, and the large east window.

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PART TWO

DESIGN DEVELOPMENT

CASE STUDIES

PART TWO | CHAPTER ONE

CASE STUDIES

Projects relevant to Programmatic Response

The ritual of mourning has evolved dramatically in contemporary western society as have the spaces in which we gather to mourn, remember and process grief. The following case studies create spaces that resonate with the emotions, memories and thoughts of the people who interact with them many of whom are at vulnerable moments in	their lives seeking to reengage and re-establish relationships within the movement and flow of life around them.
	Each of these studies links to a previous chapter and successfully embodies the ideas brought forward. They will be used to inform design decisions throughout development to provide viability to the project.

GUBBIO CEMETERY EXTENSION | ANDREA DRAGONI

Figure 49. A-D, Top-Bottom, Left-Right

Death & Society, the Architectural Junction

Pressed against the base of Mount Ingino in Umbria is one of Italy's most important medieval cities, Gubbio. In 2011 Andrea Dragoni Architetto was delegated the task of expanding the city's ancient Gubbio Cemetery with the intention of redefining the place the necropolis holds within the structure of the city.¹⁵⁹ The result echoes findings of studies which procure a new model for public buildings. The extension has a formal layout: the landscape and confining structures establish a plane of resonance between the living and dead. Colossal stone walls are dispersed in sequence representing the linear street patterns of ancient Gubbio and the encompassing environment creating a serene city of the dead. Four equivalent courtyards are positioned at equal intervals between the travertine clad, concrete walls providing a spatial rhythm: "Vistas, pathways and openings are controlled to influence how the necropolis

is used, accessed and understood."¹⁶⁰ Each courtyard features a large site-specific art piece and a square vista to the sky, influenced by James Turrell. The framed opening to the sky becomes a linear connection between the heavens and earth "opening the mind to the reign of the invisible, allowing sight and thought to abandon gravity and acquire a more aerial and spiritual dimension"¹⁶¹ thus evoking notions of transcendence. Dragoni describes the courtyards as "cubic squares of silence, independent from the cemetery, with open ceilings evoking windows to the sky, providing visitors with the opportunity to meet, pause, reflect and converse."¹⁶² The courtyards become hybrid spaces accommodating silence, contemplation and a social functions such as exhibitions, in turn linking the necropolis to the everyday life of the city and its people, redefining urban spaces of silence and meditation.¹⁶³

ONE . TWO

Design Implications:
 - A hybrid of spaces used for both the collective and individual, which result in the creation of a new, multi-purpose & dynamic public building.
 - Sky Vistas, promote continuity, transience and provide light.
 - Using the history of the site/location to influence design and allowing the past to meet the present.

LEÓN CITY MORGUE | BAAS

Figure 50. A-D, Top-Bottom, Left-Right

Grief

León City Morgue, Spain was completed in 2000 by BAAS architects. The building is conceived as a tomb of tombs, with the majority of the concrete construction buried below ground. The entry becomes ritualistic, granted by a gradual descent down an immense ramp, which concludes with an image of the sky. The only visible facade is the roof, softened by a thin layer of water, which reflects the sky above and illuminates the surrounding spaces, a subtle symbol of death.

Light is provided to the interior through breaks in the roof façade. Methods of abstract extrusion and simple intrusions are used to create apertures. The private rooms for the bereaved family are lit by a consoling light distributed through

cubic voids that invert through the roof to create exterior courtyards of light and water. From the private rooms the only view of the sky is provided by these geometric intrusions thus “linking the point of sorrow with an image of hope from the heavens above.”¹⁶⁴ In contrast to the symmetric intrusions of the private rooms the subterranean chapel is illuminated by five obscure concrete extrusions at contrasting angles. Jutting through the rooftop water, they siphon light through a void meeting with the chapel’s walls and ceiling. The differing angles take advantage of the sunlight throughout the day, capturing moments of various intensity, coloring and direction, conceptualised as “mysterious fingers in search of light for prayer.”¹⁶⁵

ONE . THREE

Design Implications:
 - Images of sky, infinity, continuity and transience.
 - Reflection pool.
 - Linking mourning and sorrow with hope from the heavens.
 - Hollowing out the darkness with light.

BOLOGNA SHOAH MEMORIAL | SET ARCHITECTS

Figure 51. A-E, Top-Bottom, Left-Right

Memory

The Shoah memorial in Bologna, Italy, is located in a city square near a high speed railway. Designed by SET Architects for the Bologna Jewish community, the design is minimalistic, comprising of two symmetrical 10 by 10 meter Corten steel blocks. The exposed steel will naturally oxidise and rust displaying the traces of time as corrosion takes over.¹⁶⁶ The two steel blocks are initially separated by a width of 160 centimeters. Sitting adjacent they begin to converge, narrowing drastically, concluding at a point of just 80 centimeters. This converging path and sheer size of the steel blocks immediately instils a sense of oppression in the occupants. An experience the victims of the Holocaust were subject to. Creating a space of empathy and great emotional power

that invites passers-by to remember and reflect on the tragedy.¹⁶⁷ The architects used vertical and horizontal sheets of steel to form a grid of internal voids which border the linear path.¹⁶⁸ These 'boxes' amalgamate to represent the rows of cells within the dormitories of the concentration camps.¹⁶⁹ Underfoot is ballast pavement, similar to the commonly used basalt stone chippings of railways, symbolic of the Judenrampe; the journey made by prisoners at Auschwitz between the two concentration camps.¹⁷⁰ "The empty echoes of footsteps across the stones coupled with the restriction of the passage instils a keen sense of anguish: in this way the memorial takes on life and evokes the drama of the memory."¹⁷¹

ONE . FOUR

Design Implications:
 - Using form to induce feelings established in the programmatic response and to evoke memory.
 - Trace & time.
 - Consideration of the vertical & horizontal.

BASILICA DI SIPONTO | EDOARDO TRESOLDI

Figure 52. A-D, Top-Bottom, Left-Right

Interface

On an archaeological site in the southern port town of Siponto, Italy, Edoardo Tresoldi used wire mesh as a method to construct a full-scale physical representation of his interpretation of the spaces and volumes that once stood on the site of a mid-11th century Christian Basilica. Raising from the ruins a large-scale wire mesh installation, and rebuilding the church in an array of modern material and method, creating an amalgamation of contemporary art, ancient archaeology and forgotten beauty which will permanently remain in place.

Despite the installation's light and transparent aesthetic, its features detailed Romanesque architectural elements, including domes, columns and

arched windows,¹⁷² remaining true to the sites valued architectural history. The installation stands as an illuminated hologram projecting a sense of ghostly presence on to visitors to the park, with wire figures inhabiting the interior. The installation becomes a place of resonance for the meeting of the spiritual and all that has passed, with the contemporary, and all that is yet to come. Simone Pallotta describes the work as, "a majestic architecture sculpture, which is able to speak volumes about an existing early Christian Church and at the same time able to bring it alive thereby updating the relationship between the ancient and the contemporary... summarising two complementary languages into a single, breath-taking scenery."¹⁷³

ONE . FIVE

Design Implications:

- Using modern method & material to rebuild that which once stood.
- Amalgamate contemporary art, ancient archaeology and forgotten beauty.
- Meeting & summarising of the spiritual, the past, the contemporary and the future.

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173. Mairs.

DESIGN

STRATEGIES

VISUAL INTERPRETATION

PART TWO | CHAPTER TWO

TWO . ONE

VISUAL INTERPRETATION

The experimental & intuitive process of visual interpretation represents theoretical findings and programmatic response. Digital manipulation has been applied to hand drawing, painting, and composite imagery in order to establish atmosphere, emotion, material and form. The following illustrations depict images that are representative of the programmatic response. These translate the text into visual expressions thereby taking on an atmospheric role and convey the physical relationship between death and society, grief, isolation, repression, yearning, memory, illumination, interface and life and death. Lastly these expressions will be further developed within the site in order to create emotive, expressive and atmospheric spaces.

Figure 53. Authors Image:

DEATH & SOCIETY | ALL EYES ON YOU | PUBLIC VS PRIVATE (Invidual & Collective)

Figure 54. Authors Image:

GRIEF | ADRIFT, ISOLATING, OSCILLATION

Figure 55. Authors Image:

GRIEF | REPRESSION, YEARNING, SEARCHING

Figure 56. Authors Image:

GRIEF | REPRESSION, YEARNING, SEARCHING

Figure 57. Authors Image:

GRIEF | REPRESSION, YEARNING, SEARCHING

Figure 58. Authors Image:

MEMORY | ILLUMINATION

Figure 59. Authors Image:

MEMORY | ILLUMINATION

Figure 60. Authors Image:

MEMORY | ILLUMINATION

Figure 61. Authors Image:

MEMORY | ILLUMINATION

Figure 62. Authors Image:

INTERFACE | SEEK, EXPLORE, EXCHANGE

Figure 63. Authors Image:

INTERFACE | SEEK, EXPLORE, EXCHANGE

Figure 64. Authors Image:

INTERFACE | SEEK, EXPLORE, EXCHANGE

Figure 65. Authors Image:

ALL ENCAPSULATING FEAR

CREATING

THE OBVERSE

PART TWO | CHAPTER THREE

Figure 66. Authors Image: Diagram showing the basic forms used to create Obverse levels

THREE . ONE

CREATING THE OBLVERSE

“The city of the dead is the obverse of the society of the living...its timeless image. The dead have gone through the moment of change, and their monuments are the visible sign of the permanence of the city”¹⁷⁴.... The divide between life and death is delicate, at points translucent and steadily impoverishing. The obverse levels are created through mirroring the forms of St Dunstan (prior to the Blitz). A below-ground structure is created to accommodate the programmatic response. The former church pews and interior arches have been revisualised and integrated into the design combining the past with the present and establishing a holistic design. The site

becomes a platform of mediation between the living and the dead, connecting the tangibility of the physical world to the intangibility of the unknown, formalising a coexistence. Natural light is provided through various light wells linking earth to the heavens above hollowing out the darkness with light, evoking the promise of hope, illumination in memory and notions of transcendence.

“The boundaries, which divide life and death are at best shadowy and vague. Who shall say where the one ends, and the other begins?”

*– Edgar Allan Poe, Premature Burial
Death Mourning & Burial: A Cultural Cross-Reader*

174. Aries, *Western Attitudes toward Death*, 74.

Figure 67. Authors Image: Evolution of former St Dunstan into the present design

SUB-LEVEL 1 DEVELOPMENT

The interior arches from the 1826 St. Dunstan are re-composed to create a structure in the new Sub-Level 1. It encloses the circular lightwell that travels through the obverse and becomes a central point of tranquility and peace. It encapsulates and strengthens the vertical link between the heavens and earth.

Renders of St. Dunstan 1826, showing interior arches.

St Dunstan 1826, Interior Arches perspective.

St Dunstan 1826, Interior Arches elevation (1:200).

1:200
Redevelopment of a single arch.

Single arch is duplicated and rotated to form an Octagon, bordering the lightwell that travels through Sub-level 1 into Sub-level 2 (1:200). The form is then layered to create and enclosed space, from floor to ceiling.

1:200

Creating the Obverse

SUB-LEVEL 2 DEVELOPMENT

The original pew plans of St. Dunstan were simplified to create a guide for the new Sub-Level 2. The seating arrangement is relocated to the unground level and the pews are modernised, to fit with the overall design aesthetic.

(Not to Scale)
St. Dunstan original church pew plan.

St. Dunstan Pew elevation, 12 rows.

Sub-Level 2 Pew Elevation.

TOWER

The Tower Obverse represents the darkness of the unknown, seeking, exploring and engaging. Confronting fear and revealing that which is concealed. The tower obverse has 3 viewing platforms, one on each level (ground, sub-level one and sub-level two), that allows visual connection of the levels below and the unknown beyond. It doesn't extend to mirror the full height of the tower, but mirrors the height of the 2 obverse levels.

GROUND

SUB-LEVEL ONE

SUB-LEVEL TWO

TOWER OBVERSE

Stair Access

Figure 71. Authors Image: Tower Obverse initial design

PROGRAMMATIC APPLICATION

PART TWO | CHAPTER FOUR

FOUR . ONE

PROGRAMMATIC APPLICATION

Vertical & Horizontal

The programmatic response (Death Reconciliation) is applied both vertically (figure. 72) and horizontally (figure. 75-78). This application establishes initial atmospheric conditions, form, movement and subject concentration. Each level of the site is implemented with a specific purpose and category, with the details of that category applied horizontally, evolving into dynamic and hybrid spaces. These seek to offer sympathy in silence, comfort in healing, security in continuation, and hope in acceptance within the oscillating realm of grief. Moments are created where one begins to reconnect and imprint on the surrounding physical world aiding in the process of restoring vital connections and the re-establishment of identity in the wake of a traumatic event.

WHO:
**COLLECTIVE
&
INDIVIDUAL**

This diagram is an expression of the second programmatic matrix (pg 63). This indicates a vertical application, therefore location of the different spaces, expressing conditions transferred from the second matrix eg. fear, silence etc.

Figure 72. Authors Image: Vertical application of Programmatic Response

SKY

GROUND

SUB-LEVEL ONE

SUB-LEVEL TWO

THE OBLVERSE

Figure 74. Authors Image: Depicting the creation of the Obverse, and initial design ideas

KEY

T: Transitional Space

PR: Private Rooms

E/EX: Entry/Exit

A/D: Ascend/Descend

Figure 75. Authors Image: Horizontal Programme Application (not to scale)

HORIZONTAL APPLICATION

SUB-LEVEL ONE | THE OBLVERSE, Application of Interface (Living & the dead), the uncanny and obscure. Delegated with a heaviness and weight, to be reflected in the atmosphere, materials and form.

Figure 76. Authors Image: Horizontal Programme Application (not to scale)

SUB-LEVEL TWO | THE OBVERSE, Application of Grief, Mourning & Bereavement. A dynamic space, of movement, fluctuation and moments of pause. Seeking to aid in the grieving process by offering both public and private space and through the re-establishment of identity.

Figure 77. Authors Image: Horizontal Programme Application (not to scale)

GROUND. The Earth's surface, where Death meets Society. A garden space of silence, that provides refuge and tranquility from the busy city surrounds. Concentrating on experiential conditions of meditation, transcendence and continuation, contemplative consolation, awareness and reflection. The entries/exits are marked with feelings commonly expressed within Contemporary Western Society.

Figure 78. Authors Image: Horizontal Programme Application (not to scale)

TOWER. The experiential process of climbing the tower represents acceptance and letting go, offering hope. Illumination in memory fades out the darkness of grief allowing one to survive and heal.

PROGRAMMATIC REACTION

The development of Sub-Level 1 through reaction to the programmatic application. Key elements being Trace, Repression, Illusion & Denial.

Figure 79. Authors Image: Sub - Level One programmatic plan illustrating spatial connections for development (1:500)

Figure 80. Authors Images

INITIAL EXPLORATION OF TRACE THROUGH INSTALLATION. Made with 80 rolls of Toilet Tissue, the light weight material was used to test the lingering effect of movement. A temporary trace was produced caused in reaction to bodily movement. This earlier installation instilled a sense of presence in the user and the darkness/lack of clarity evoked fear of the unknown, through illusion.

Figure 81. Authors Images

INITIAL EXPLORATION OF TRACE THROUGH INSTALLATION.

Figure 82. Authors Images

INITIAL TRACE DEVELOPMENT

Figure 84. Authors Image: Testing of concepts

Figure 85. Authors Image

FINAL PLAN FOR TRACE INSTALLATION. A combinayion of Cardinal Vs Magnetic & the Horizontal.

Figure 86. Authors Images

FINAL TRACE INSTALLATION, perspective render.

REVISUALISATION OF PAST

PART TWO | CHAPTER FIVE

FIVE . ONE

REVISUALISATION OF PAST

1826 St Dunstan

This method refers to the adaptation, re-establishment and re-use of elements from St Dunstan that were lost in the Bomb Blitz aiming not to merge but to resonate with the surrounding built environment. Elements are taken that were present in the 1826 architectural drawings and re-worked to fit within a more modern design whilst respecting the Gothic nature of the original church. This includes the interior arches, church pews, the large East window and the entire nave roof. Much of the church has been destroyed and the opportunity to rebuild is also explored.

FIVE . TWO

STAINED GLASS INSTALLATION

Programmatic Response across 3-Levels: Ground-Reflection, Sub-Level 1 - Imprint & Identity, Sub-Level 2 - Forgetting & Fragments. Built into ground floor.

Figure 87. Authors Image: Ground Floor Development Plan, showing location of Stained glass Installation and lightwells (1:500)

Figure 88. Authors Image:

EAST WINDOW | ST DUNSTAN IN THE EAST. Outline of the original East Window.

Figure 89.

EAST WINDOW | ST DUNSTAN IN THE EAST. Drawn in 1840, the top half features St Peter, St John and Jesus Christ. The bottom half depicts the Ark of the Covenant and two Old Testament figures.

Figure 90. Authors Image:

EAST WINDOW | COLOUR DEVELOPMENT. Colours are taken from the original window and developed to become brighter and more vibrant.

Figure 91. Authors Image:

STAINED GLASS LIGHTWELL INSTALLATION, 3 Concepts.

CONCEPT 2 ITERATIONS

*4 Ceiling Details in Plan, compiled
to create a variety of designs.*

CONCEPT 2 COLOUR ITERATIONS

Colours swatched from original West Window are used to fill in selected concept 2 iterations. Aiming to create a modern yet holistic stained glass installation.

Figure 93. Authors Image:

Final
STAINED GLASS INSTALLATION

Figure 94. Authors Image: Final Design

FIVE . THREE

REBUILD | RE-ESTABLISHMENT OF STRUCTURE

The opportunity is explored to restore the exterior structure of St. Dunstan in the East back to its former glory taking precedent from *Edoardo Tresoldi's 'Basilica Di Siponto'*. Raising from it's ruins the structure that was destroyed in the blitz whilst testing a variety of modern materials thereby creating an amalgamation of the contemporary, the ancient and the beauty and symbolism of a ruinous site.

1826

Figure 95. Authors Image:

1826 | ST DUNSTAN IN THE EAST, Rendered perspective of the church prior to being destroyed.

2016

Figure 96. Authors Image:

2016 | ST DUNSTAN IN THE EAST, Rendered perspective of the church structure in its current condition.

1826

Front - East

Left - South

Back - West

Right - North

2016

Front - East

Left - South

Back - West

Right - North

Figure 98. Authors Image:

FRONT FACADES (EAST), 1826 (Left) - 2016 (Right).

RESULT ONE

Concrete

RESULT TWO

Steel Mesh

RESULT THREE

Glass & Steel

Figure 99. Authors Image:

REBUILD OPTIONS, Rendered Front (east) Elevations.

Figure 100. AuthorsImage

STEEL MESH REBUILD.
Rendered perspective of full
rebuild, re-establishing the
structure of 1826 St. Dunstan.

Figure 101. A-E, Top-Bottom

**BASILICA DI SIPONTO |
EDOARDO TRESOLDI**
Details of the steel mesh installation,
precedent for the design and detail of
the explored rebuild.

REFLECTION ON REBUILD

Invoking the decision to rebuild completely, partially, or to leave the structure in its current condition.

St. Dunstan is a great symbolic site, representing religion and faith, life and death, tragedies of the past and hope in the future. The trace of time and trauma is evident on the site with the beauty of the ancient ruins reminding visitors of their own mortality and provoking thoughts of reflection. The church itself, nestled within the contemporary cityscape, creates a plane where the contemporary meets the ancient and historic. Projecting beauty and allure, it is a place where the spiritual and real can coexist surrounded by silence. The church ruins already achieve the experiential conditions and qualities needed for the other elements of the design to succeed. In rebuilding, the symbolism so strongly projected by St. Dunstan could become confused or damaged. Therefore it is decided not to bring forth the rebuild into the final realisation of this thesis.

THE ENGLISH GARDEN

Programmatic Response: Ground – Infinity, Continuation, Silence, Reflection.
Dissolving: Displacement, disconnect, avoidance, defiance, anxiety, yearning & searching.

The first rebuild of St Dunstan during the 17th Century coincided with the Tudor and Stuart Periods, a time of revived interest and consequent major developments in English gardening. Symmetry, formality, elegance and simplicity, all complementing the architectural surrounds were valued. The redevelopment of the current gardens (Figure 101) will focus on these attributes to re-establish the past and provide refuge, concentrating on experiential conditions of transience and continuation, meditation and silence, contemplative consolation, awareness and reflection. “The neatness, simplicity, and elegance of English Gardening have acquired the approbation of the present century as the happy medium betwixt the wilderness of nature and the stiffness of art.”¹⁷⁵

Gardens show the transience of life and have consistently confronted men and women with their mortality.¹⁷⁶ Fragility of life and mortality is represented through the fading and flourishing of plants, but more specifically shows death and resurrection. Death is represented in their decay, resurrection and continuation in

their growth and flourishing.¹⁷⁷ “The variety of flowers, beautiful and fragrant, opening themselves and dying one after another, must admonish him of the fading state of earthly pleasures, of the frailty of life, and of the succeeding generations to which he must give place.”¹⁷⁸ It is suggested that historically for the English “the garden was the locale where harmony with nature and with God could be achieved.”¹⁷⁹ During the Tudor period the traditions of privacy and solitude interlinked with meditation and mental relaxation, were preconditions needed to relive conditions of pensive sadness.

Ruins, both artificial and authentic were a popular garden ornament, provoking notions of transience and continuation. “Whatever building we see in decay, we naturally contrast its present to its former state, and delight to ruminate in the comparison.”¹⁸⁰ The sight of a ruin provokes thoughts of reflection. The decay and desolation reminds us of our own mortality and fragility. The ruins of St. Dunstan play a key role in the development of this authentic experience alongside the re-developed gardens.

175. H. Repton, *Sketches and Hints on Landscape Gardening* (London, 1795), 72.

176. Coffin, David, *the English Garden: Meditation and Memorial* (West Sussex: Princeton University Press, 1994) 7.

177. Coffin,7.

178. T. Norse, *Campanina Foelix* (London, 1700), 341-42.

179. Coffin, 6.

180. Coffin, 28.

Figure 102. Authors Image: *Floral Embrace*, exploration of the Garden as a Sanctuary.

Figure 103. Authors Image

1826 GROUND FLOOR PLAN, Scale 1:300.

Figure 104. Authors Image

CURRENT GROUND FLOOR PLAN Scale 1:300
 Showing entry and exit points, circulation, utility and storage, seating, grass and gardens.

Figure 105. Authors Image

GROUND FLOOR DEVELOPMENT PLAN Scale 1:300

Showing key elements that require consideration throughout development. Current entry and exit points to remain the same, with 2 added from the Tower (available during opening hours). 3 lightwells indicated and the location of the Stained Glass Installation to replace the current utility storage.

Figure 106. Authors Image

GROUND FLOOR DEVELOPMENT, Scale 1:300.
 Lines made promine by the structure and dimensions of the building, that will be act as guidelines in conceptual development, to promote symmetry and formality.

Figure 108. Authors Image

GROUND FLOOR CONCEPT 2, Scale 1:300.

Figure 109. Authors Image

CHOSEN ITERATION

GROUND FLOOR CONCEPT 3, Scale 1:300.

Figure 110. Authors Image

CONCEPT 3 DEVELOPMENT, (Section A-A) Scale 1:300. Plants & trees to be a selection of Evergreens, vines, climbers and plants inspired by the Tudor & Stuart Period (figure. 112).

Figure 111. Authors Image

CONCEPT 3 DEVELOPMENT, South wall elevation (Ground) Scale 1:300.

Common Box Hedge

Lavender

Parrot Tulip

Ranunculus

Anemone

Hydrangea

Hollyhock

Anemone

Carnation

Parrot Tulip

Fox Glove

Common Box Hedge

PART THREE

FINAL DESIGN

REALISATION

PART THREE | CHAPTER ONE

ONE . ONE

FINAL DESIGN

Realisation

The interpretation and simplification of contextual text and the collective conceptual development from part two manifests into a final St. Dunstan design, which is interior focused with moments of architectural and landscape design. The design is initially presented as a whole (Section A-A and Section B-B), and then broken down to show the three key levels. Firstly Sub-Level Two, Sub-Level One and finally the Ground Level.

SECTION A-A

Ground

Sub-Level One

Sub-Level Two

Tower Obverse

Figure 113. Authors Image

SECTION B-B

Ground

Sub-Level One

Sub-Level Two

ONE . TWO

SUB-LEVEL TWO

Plan, scale 1:300.

Application of Interface (Living & the dead), the uncanny and obscure. Delegated with a heaviness and weight, reflected in the atmosphere, materials and form.

THE OBLVERSE
Its Timeless Image

View 01
Figure 116. Authors Image:

ENTERING THE OBLVERSE
Crossing the Threshold

View 02
Figure 117. Authors Image:

MAIN LIGHTWELL | CONNECTING EARTH TO THE HEAVENS
The Void

View 03
Figure 118. Authors Image:

Morning

Midday

Afternoon

MAIN LIGHTWELL | LIGHT STUDY
Scale 1:100

Figure 119. Authors Image:

DARKNESS, Conceal & Reveal

View 04

Figure 120. Authors Image:

BRASS LATTICE DETAIL

View 05

Figure 121. Authors Image:

FRONT SPACE, LIT FROM ABOVE
 Forgetting & Fragments

View 06
 Figure 122. Authors Image:

RETURN
Bring into the Light

View 07
Figure 123. Authors Image:

EXIT | ASCEND & DESCEND

View 08
Figure 124. Authors Image:

PEW & ANGLED BLUE STONE WALL

View 09

Figure 125. Authors Image:

PEW DETAIL, Scale 1:50

Figure 126. Authors Image:

SUB-LEVEL ONE

Plan, scale 1:300.

Application of Grief, Mourning & Bereavement. A dynamic space, of movement, fluctuation and moments of pause. Seeking to aid in the grieving process by offering both public and private space and through the re-establishment of identity.

ENTRANCE
Ascend & Descend

View 01
Figure 128. Authors Image:

FRONT SPACE
Transcend

View 02
Figure 129. Authors Image:

FRONT SPACE
Entry into Hallway

View 03
Figure 130. Authors Image:

FRONT HALLWAY
Fear

View 04
Figure 131. Authors Image:

LEFT HALLWAY
Trace

View 05
Figure 132. Authors Image:

RIGHT HALLWAY
Trace

View 06
Figure 133. Authors Image:

LEFT HALLWAY, TOWARDS ENTRANCE
Trace

View 07
Figure 134. Authors Image:

BACK HALLWAY
Clarity

View 08
Figure 135. Authors Image:

BACK WALL, Imprint & Identity

View 09 Figure 136. Authors Image:

Figure 137. Authors Image

View 10

PERSPECTIVE SECTION TROUGH TRACE
Illusion & Denial

CENTRE OF TRACE
Repression of Grief & Moments of Clarity

View 11
Figure 138. Authors Image:

PRIVATE ROOM I
Empty, adrift, abandoned

View 12
Figure 139. Authors Image:

PRIVATE ROOM I | LIGHT STUDY

Scale 1:100

Figure 140. Authors Image:

PRIVATE ROOM 2

Painful, Isolating, Anger

View 13

Figure 141. Authors Image:

PRIVATE ROOM 2 | LIGHT STUDY
Scale 1:100

Figure 142. Authors Image:

PRIVATE ROOM DOORS

View 14
Figure 143. Authors Image:

Figure 144. Authors Image

View 15

PRIVATE ROOMS VISTA, connection from earth to the heavens above.

STAINED GLASS INSTALLATION
 Malleability of memory & reflection

Views 16 & 17
Figure 145. Authors Image:

Marble Stand

Marble Stool

Brass Light Shade

Brass Vase

Cast Iron Candle Holder

DETAIL DESIGN
Scale 1:10

Figure 146. Authors Image:

GROUND | THE ENGLISH GARDEN

Plan, scale 1:300.

The Eaths surface, where Death meets Society. A garden space of silence, that provides refuge and tranquility from the busy city surrounds. Concentrating on experiential conditions of meditaion, transience and continuation, comtemplative consolation, awareness and reflection.

MAIN ENTRANCE | PORCH

Escaping into silence from an avoiding & defying society, where death is displaced & disconnected, yearning for hope in continuity, healing in memory, and searching for acceptance in letting go.

View 1

Figure 148. Authors Image:

SOUTH WALL PERSPECTIVE ELEVATION
 Seeking Silence & dissipating anxiety

View 2
 Figure 149. Authors Image:

NORTH WALL PERSPECTIVE ELEVATION
 Seeking Silence & dissipating anxiety

View 3

Figure 150. Authors Image:

LOOKING TOWARDS DESTROYED EAST WALL | SUMMER
Showing reflection pool, which associates grief & sorrow with hope and continuation from the heavens.

View 4
Figure 151. Authors Image:

LOOKING TOWARDS DESTROYED EAST WALL | WINTER

View 5
Figure 152. Authors Image:

LOOKING DOWN THE OBTVERSE
Yearning & searching

View 6
Figure 153. Authors Image:

LOOKING TOWARDS THE TOWER, WEST
Letting go, acceptance and healing in illumination (memory)

View 7
Figure 154. Authors Image:

REFLECTION

Death is a topic of considerable magnitude. Its study offers a multitude of interpretations and understandings, including the mediation of religious beliefs. The study of religion was removed from the research in order to focus on imagination and abstract interpretation; this research was conducted as an exploration charged with assumed common societal projections and with an attempt to remove personal beliefs. A large pool of information surrounding mortality in Contemporary Western Society, resulted in the use of three key methods to rely this information into a programmatic response and into an architectural intervention.

The first method was the simplification into four key topics of research: death & society, grief, memory and interface. This provided a base to work from. The second method evolved from the first, the gathered information was condensed and a matrix was produced based on the commonalities found by the research and different theorist's text. Being an attempt to distil the issues within Contemporary Western Society in relation to death, and establish how this discourse could be corrected. Due to the complexity of concepts the initial summarisation produced a programmatic response (Death Reconciliation) and a second summarisation enabled an adaptation for site application. Conditions of universal value were explored in order for the programme to be applied to the site. The third method occurred as an overlapping process of the development of a programmatic response and initial design concepts. Focusing intently on illustration as a method to both

interpret and gasp an understanding of the dynamic topic of death, and to apply this understanding visually to conceive the tangible and intangibles of an architectural space.

This thesis is principally based on the personal and intuitive interpretation of gathered facts. It helps to formulate an interior design based on both the theoretical conclusions and visual development. The theoretical concluded the foundation and the 'tangibles' of the design, establishing the who, what and why and the visual exploration concluded the 'intangibles', the atmosphere, the feelings and the form, both of which are equally important when amalgamated into a final design. The undertaken process combination successfully resulted in an architectural solution and the interior architecture discipline as a creative, experimental, and intuitive approach is hereby exposed.

This research was a personal journey – while we can assume that any combination of designer and project will produce different results this is more so in the particular domain of mortality, grief, memory and interface. These four topics are linked closely with an individual, their culture and beliefs, therefore the information gathered, consequent results and the design approach would shift dramatically in this particular situation. While there is a level of assurance in following traditional design processes and methodology this design lead research could have not been developed in any other way, than to follow a personal and intuitive process.

CONCLUSION

This research supports the notion that death is one of the most important and defining moments in our lives. Therefore we need spaces that reflect and communicate such moments. This thesis explored the relationship between death and Contemporary Western Society, concluding that with the rise of consumerism and religious secularism, society has become increasingly incognisant and detached from death.

Once solely the domain of Christian churches with their long history of traditions and rituals, today's spiritual and emotional care is poorly provided. This research promotes the idea that the provision of sacred or secular spaces and accessible places of remembrance may assist in filling this void. This thesis has striven to provide a response. Such a response sought not to create a traditional memorial, but to use the notion of memory and the hope in continuation as tools to design specific spaces to assist the process of grief; there are spaces that are built for the purpose of death and memorial but not always for the sole purpose of grief and mourning. Grief for others and grief for self is a fundamental process incessantly linked with both life and death. This research prompts the question of the role of interior architecture in the reintegration of grief and mortality into Contemporary Western Society. The design was developed as a hybrid, with multi-use and dynamic spaces. As grief is fundamentally a process that has an individual identity, the basic stages may be presented by each person but the intensity, duration, and order is extremely diverse. Consequently the design programme followed and 'organic' methodology, a process of action and reaction. Resulting in a series of multi-use spaces, with varying intensities over three levels. Rather the process was to focus on specific moments to be recreated and represented by the space.

The programme was developed in recognition of four key aspects, the relationship between death and Contemporary Western Society, bereavement, memory and interface (the connection between the living and the dead). The information gathered was condensed by extracting key terms that were implied to be the most influential on society. Thereby unintentionally applying the limitations of my own understanding and perspectives to the development of the programmatic response of Death Reconciliation. This was an individual response the specificity of religious beliefs was deliberately excluded from the research and design process. Instead, the focus was on the notion of the individual and the collective. Though this is not to say that intangible qualities of religion could not be brought into the space by specific individuals and groups. Contemporary Western Society is becoming increasingly secularised and overwhelming, which provided the opportunity to develop a space of silence and contemplation. The selected site in its current condition is symbolic and is described as an 'oasis within the city. The challenge of developing the site to integrate Death Reconciliation, while not disturbing the already successful elements was met.

This thesis followed a very intuitive, experimental and explorative process with a key focus on conditions of atmosphere and emotion. The research has the ability to be applied in relation to specific religion and to be further developed in the domain of memorial and funerary architecture. This thesis was undertaken with the hope being, through the incorporation of interior architecture, unprescribed method and intuitive response largely by visual interpretation, similar to the oscillation and unpredictable nature of grief that it could in some way contribute in the shifting of contemporary society's view on mortality and become Death, a Notion.

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FIGURES LIST

All figures otherwise attributed are author's own

SITE

POST FIRE – PRE BLITZ

- Figure 35.
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