

Prologue

"When I design buildings, I think of the overall composition, much as the parts of a body would fit together. On top of that, I think about how people will approach the building and experience that space," said Tadao Ando.¹

Analytical research from a top-down approach to create a generalised understanding of a site limiting. For Thessaloniki group research, the mapping approaches for the collective border and territory mapping basing on cause-and-effect study is found to be limiting for understanding the site, in the way that emotionless study could not reflect ones' experience in the city. The site is analysed from the large-scale mappings as well as from the inanimate data of the governing systems. Only the basic relationships among different organizations and the places have been constructed. The study on the urban fabric is important to understand the systems of a city, yet architecture is more about the spatial experience of the individuals for me. Looking at the city from an outsider's perspective, we have developed our collective mappings, and understood parts of the systems that operate the city. However, one could not know the atmosphere, the potential, and the experience of living inside the city due to the limitation.

My personal indulgence on Nostalgia could be a breakthrough in understanding of the site through an experience-driven perspective. *"The Greek word for "return" is nóstos. algos means "suffering." So nostalgia is the suffering caused by an unappeased yearning to return."*² Nostalgia refers to a process of recalling a relatable experience of an individual. The process contains not only the strong feeling of sadness but also pleasure, longing for return to an intimate moment or a desired place. The experience is neither limited to only a period, a space, an object, a person, or a climate condition. No matter an experience is referring to a specific event or a general practice, the emotion attachment as well as the perspective on perceiving are always personal. Therefore, this experience is more than the collective memories of a place.

The idea of Nostalgia could be examined through an archaeological study of material culture in terms of Remnants and Mementos. Through collecting relatable objects, it reveals the memories of individuals, which is an intimate experience bound to certain environments in the past. As the aim of the study is not only revealing the collective memories but also discovering the tension between perspectives in the same place. When the tension between the two is generated, it raises questions about how city could be perceived.

In order to go beyond the limits of looking at the city from an outsider's perspective, the theory paper will investigate Nostalgia from an archaeological perspective, with the hope that an approach in perceiving the nostalgic experience in a site could be defined, to derive a unique and psychogeographical perspective to examine the site, through the exploration of the questions:

What does Nostalgia mean to a site?

How could a nostalgic experience be explored and narrated?

What is the impact of Nostalgia to a place?

They could help inform social and political issues and phenomenon in a specific study area, and establish a set of guidelines on research of the area through the immersive perspectives of the individuals, and furthermore, found the base of the design.

¹ Robert Ivy. *The Spirit of Modernism*. (Architectural Record, 2002).

² Milan Kundera. *Ignorance*. (Faber & Faber, 2020).

Section 1 – Perception / Nostalgia

What does Nostalgia mean to a site?

Nostalgia is a process of recalling a personal experience of an individual. The experience is revealed through the mementos from the site. The individuality allows multiple interpretations that is psychogeographically bounded to a site as an alternative reading of the site.

My argument on Nostalgia should start from a French movie, *Amélie*. In this movie, nostalgic objects act as a medium to reveal the perception of the individual. It is shaped through experiences, not only limited to the history but also a practice, an image or an event that could be attached to a certain place, a certain period, or a certain person. Here is a quote of the narrator from the movie:

*"Amélie's favourites things: Looking back at the audience in a dark theatre. The details in films that no one else sees. Skipping stones. Dipping fingers into a sack of grain. Cracking the top layer of crème brûlée. Surprising strangers by returning something they've lost."*³

It is a story about a shy girl, Amélie Poulain changing the lives of strangers, at the same time changing her isolated life. From the quote, a series of Amélie's obsession is described that create a relationship between places and objects, so it tells the stories of what Amélie experienced. The last thing described is the main plot of the movie. By a process of discovering and understanding of the stranger with the nostalgic object, it generates a narrative among the memory, the object, and the space. The moment of the sudden encounter between the owner and the object becomes the climax of reading the person, that a complete story of a person is exposed, and further, an individual perception for examination an object is introduced, like the discarded photographs could be not only a matter of good or bad but also a ritual, an error, or a practice from maintenance. Regarding the perception of experience as a product of Nostalgia, it offers unique lens to speculate about different objects and places.

The nostalgic perception of ones is strongly related to a specific location. The experience is bounded to a variety of conditions, including the site being perceived and the one perceiving. I refer to Psychogeography as the fundamental concept to understand the perception with a site. According to Guy Debord, *"Psychogeography could set for itself the study of the precise laws and specific effects of the geographical environment, consciously organized or not, on the emotions and behavior of individuals."*⁴ The practice of psychogeographical study is mainly but not limited to Dérive. Indeed, it emphasises on the exploration of the urban setting through unexpected scenario. In this case, *Berlin's Kottbuser Tor*, as psychogeographically mapped by Larissa Fassler, is a precise demonstration as a psychogeographical investigation of a site. She documents the ethnography of the place through the practice of everyday life in the neighbourhood along with the geography of space. The map reveals the site is worked in the way not how it was architecturally designed but how locals adapt and modify the built environment. The site is no longer perceived in a top-down typical approach of how space is designed but, in an experience-driven approach of how space is used.

In my research, the study approach will be a Psychogeographical study grounded on the Perception of nostalgic experience. This approach provides an unusual direction to have a new understanding of a city not from what objects there are but from how they could be. Additionally, a third precedent, *Suite Venitienne* by Sophie Calle on joint Perception and Psychogeography is referred as a supplement to explore the potential of interpreting a city through the perception of nostalgia. The photographer started the journey with meeting a stranger at a party and decided to follow him to Venice secretly. She records what she did for following this man in terms of photographs and diary. With the intention of pursuing the man, she explores the city through the experiences of the man as well as the experience of her following. The book becomes a nostalgic object for her about her experience in Venice. A clear relation has been shown between the places she explored and the experiences (emotions, practices, events) of her and the man, though the records of different dates. Piazza San Marco is one of the important intersections that she met him, talk to him,

³ *Amélie*, directed by Jean-Pierre Jeunet (UGC Fox Distribution, 2001).

⁴ Guy Debord. *Situationist International Anthology*; Revised and Expanded Edition. (Berkeley: Bureau of Public Secrets, 2006), 8-11

separated from him, etc., which the Piazza becomes a psychogeographical place for her to connect to all the other places in Venice.⁵ Nostalgia could arise a psychogeographical interpretation of places beyond the physical objects of the place.

⁵ Sophie Calle et al., *Suite Vénitienne* (Los Angeles, Calif.: Siglio, 2015).

Section 2 – Narrative / Archaeology

How could a nostalgic experience be explored and narrated?

Archaeology is the study of material culture in terms of Remnants and Mementos. Through the lens of the collection of relatable objects, it reveals the stories of individuals, which is the intimate experience bound to a particular environment in the past. Offering the insight into the relationship between Nostalgia and a place in the previous chapter, I am exploring different Archaeological approaches to develop a narrative method for the memories bounded to a situation. Therefore, a variety of precedents about storytelling is referred. They have different focal points as well as interests on the narratives, providing a range of illustrations in digging out a story behind the spotlight.

The first reference, *Mobile Museum*, demonstrated how objects could be understood differently through the perspectives of the locals. The artist Verity-Jane Keefe made use of a former mobile library van to create a library of memories about the locals of London living in the estate on the periphery of east London. She looks at the memories from the perception of the locals, which she gathered the memorabilia from the neighbourhoods such as the building materials, posters as well as the building forms of the estates. The objects are like jargon that exclusively known by the locals, thus, reflect the identity of the neighbourhoods. By the way of the van and exhibition, she tells the stories of these estates to the outsiders. The objects in her case are not seen as objects but a representation of the experiences in the site. The archaeological approach for this example is experience-driven that she collects what the locals perceive every day, providing an intimate relationship between the perception and the site.⁶

Walid Raad, a media artist, also has a similar approach on exhibiting his photography collection, *Let's be honest, the weather helped* in 1998 on The Atlas Group. Instead of examining the objects from the perspective of the individuals, he studies the objects in an analytical way to reveal how individual objects generate a narrative collectively. In this collection, he collected bullets and shrapnel, marked where he had found them on the photographs. Through his mapping of various color coding of shells and cartridges, a narrative of seventeen countries and organizations supporting the ammunition for the fighting in Lebanon has been revealed. For Raad's mapping, the objects themselves explain nothing but the location and types, however, composing these mapping into an archaeological study of where they come from and go to, the objects narrate a story about the supplier and victims of the fights. Consequently, a perception about the objects, the site and the experience has been shaped.⁷

I look into *The Destroyed Room* by Canadian artist Jeff Wall in 1978 as my third reference on archaeological narrative to understand how unrelated objects create a pre-existing narrative. Unlike the previous examples, Wall creates the narrative for the photograph based on a set-up scenario. It has shown a wrecked woman's room that a broken mattress, women's shoes and clothing, cupboard, drawers, a dancer figure, etc. in the image scattered around in a mess. It provokes a speculation about the sequence of the destruction and the reason of the destruction, with also a hint that the set is held up by supports. The scenario is recreating the painting *The Death of Sardanapalus* by French Romantic painter Eugène Delacroix in 1827. This narrative demonstrates another possibility of using objects as a medium prompting a situation, in my research, the nostalgic experience. The objects are not exact duplications of the scenario, and the hints subtly implies it is set-up, but they work together as a recreation of a specific experience, so as to convey a certain perception.⁸

The three precedents have illustrated the possibility of narrating from different directions, namely from perception of the people, from properties of objects and from a pre-existing situation. In short, they inform insights into the relationship in storytelling between objects, places, and experiences for the Archaeology of Nostalgia, additionally advise representation methodology of perceiving Archaeology.

⁶ Verity-Jane Keefe, "The Mobile Museum", 2016, <https://www.themobilemuseum.co.uk/home>.

⁷ Walid Raad, "Let's Be Honest, the Weather Helped," The Atlas Group, 1998, <https://www.theatlasgroup1989.org/weather>.

⁸ Tate, "Jeff Wall: Room Guide, Room 1," 2012, <https://www.tate.org.uk/whats-on/tate-modern/exhibition/jeff-wall/jeff-wall-room-guide/jeff-wall-room-guide-room-1>.

Section 3 – Vision / Phenomenon

What is the impact of Nostalgia to a place?

The paper starts with Nostalgia as a Perception of space, then moves on to Nostalgia as an Archaeology method, now I explore Nostalgia as a Vision for future as the final chapter. The aim for this chapter is to explore the potential of Nostalgia to discover a phenomenon or a circumstance in aspects of social, political, cultural etc., furthermore, raise a potential Vision for a place.

In the study of Nostalgia, I recognise that the architectural space, the experiences, the objects for the same place could vary. The divergence allows multiple recognitions and crossovers of the place. In the sense, it meets the opinion of Bernard Tschumi in his book, *The Manhattan Transcripts* published in 1981. “*The dominant theme of The Transcripts is a set of disjunctions among use, form, and social values...The Transcripts aimed to offer a different reading of architecture in which space, movement and events are independent, yet stand in a new relation to one another, so that the conventional components of architecture are broken down and rebuilt along different axes.*”⁹ He explores through drawings and photographs to analyse the relationship between spaces and usage, revealing an unconventional definition of use and program and exploring unlikely confrontations. It mentions “*architecture is not simply about space and form, but also about event, action, and what happens in space.*”¹⁰ The Transcripts meets the idea of Nostalgia when the divergence among different perceptions, the space and the objects could have been discovered from the psychogeographical mapping of the Nostalgia. It provides a cornerstone for my study to evaluate the relationship between perceptions and space, so as to understand the nostalgic site condition.

Also, I take reference to the concept of *Archaeology of the Future*, proposed by Japanese architect Tsuyoshi Tane, to further understand the Vision that Nostalgia could bring up. He stated that “*we always start a project by looking back into the past as far as possible and digging into it to find memories that are embedded in the place like archaeologists. The process of searching and researching process allows deep thinking and gives us surprises and the joy of encountering things that have been forgotten, erased or vanished due to global modernization. Then the archaeology, the process of thinking from the past to the future, slowly becomes architecture. All places have memories. Architecture inherits the memories and carries them into the future. The future will come.*”¹¹ He traces back to the memories of the place and uses them as the foundation to narrate and design the place so as to connect the past and the future through present. For my research, Archaeology has an important role to identify the nostalgic perceptions and narratives for the site. Through the understanding, it allows the exploration of different issues or situations from the nostalgic experience, then is able to project and carry the topics on to a Vision for the site. The Archaeology of the Future looks at not only the past but also the present, getting into the insights that how future understand the past and the present conditions in an archaeological sense and speculate a potential future as a Vision for the present.

Regarding the Vision for the present, *STRAIT* By Neyran Turan at Salt is a conclusive illustration of this chapter to depict the possibility of nostalgia to envision the future. Inspired by the past oil tanker accident that occurred in the Bosphorus Strait, it speculates in 2025 the biggest imaginary tanker Oilella got stuck at the Strait and turning the waterway into a giant landfill as a Vision of the present. By the agency of the speculated story, it provides a lens to look into the present conditions of Istanbul, creating the conflicts among energy, large-scale infrastructures, urban development, etc. Clearly, in this project, it investigates the present issues of Istanbul and exploits the past event as a potential to speculate a new vision for the city in negotiating the issues discovered. A narrative between the city, the past and the future has been created to demonstrate the understanding as well as the potential of the site, which has defined a possible way Nostalgia could response to the site, proving the impact of Nostalgia to a place.¹²

⁹ Bernard Tschumi, *The Manhattan Transcripts* (London: Academy Editions; New York, 1981), 1-80.

¹⁰ Bernard Tschumi, *The Manhattan Transcripts*, 1-80.

¹¹ Tsuyoshi Tane, *Archaeology of the Future* (Tokyo: Toto Publishing, 2018), 6.

¹² Neyran Turan, “*Strait*,” Nemestudio, 2015, <http://nemestudio.com/projects/strait>.

Epilogue

*"Architecture perpetuates memories of a place, and architecture becomes archaeology of the future."*¹³

Nostalgia is a process. In a sense, it refers to the recalling of memories in bringing up the relation among places, objects, emotions, etc. In another sense, it also refers to a research process in structuring and directing my research for a unique and psychogeographical perspective to examine my site, Thessaloniki. Eventually, it defines an approach to interpret the city from an experience-driven perception through the memories of different individuals. The potential of Nostalgia has been explored by the means of the three research questions. By answering, I have identified the perception between nostalgic memories and the site, the archaeological approach in constructing a narrative between objects and memories, and the vision derived from the examination of memories and different situation in the three chapters respectively.

The study of Nostalgia as well as the lens of Nostalgia are less about looking for collective memories of the city, but more about understanding the situations that have held power to the individuals of the city, no matter they are the locals or transients. Thus, identities are relatively insignificant in my interpretation of the city. However, the perceptions derived from a variety of individuals with different backgrounds intersecting with existing situations would provoke a peculiar interpretation of the city that is able to arise an unusual perspective to bring different phenomenon into discussion, further, allow atypical architectural intervention in the design. Therefore, the Nostalgia will be a means to introduce the perceptions and propose the visions of the city. Meanwhile, archaeology as a method to bridge the past and the future in present for my project. Conclusively, I am going into Thessaloniki as an atypical potential city built upon the ruins of the Nostalgia.

¹³ Tane, *Archaeology of the Future*, 12-13.

Bibliography

Calle, Sophie, Dany Barash, Danny Hatfield, and Charles Penwarden. *Suite Vénitienne*. Los Angeles, Calif.: Siglio, 2015.

Debord, G. *Situationist International Anthology; Revised and Expanded Edition*. Edited by Ken Knabb. Berkeley: Bureau of Public Secrets, 2006, 8-11.

Ivy, Robert. *The Spirit of Modernism*. Architectural Record, 2002.

Jeunet, Jean-Pierre, director. *Amélie*. UGC Fox Distribution, 2001. 2hr, 2min.

Keefe, Verity-Jane. *The Mobile Museum*. 2016. <https://www.themobilemuseum.co.uk/home>.

Kundera, Milan. *Ignorance*. Translated by Linda Asher. Faber & Faber, 2020.

Raad, Walid. "Let's Be Honest, the Weather Helped". The Atlas Group, 1998.
<https://www.theatlasgroup1989.org/weather>.

Tate. "Jeff Wall: Room Guide, Room 1". 2012. <https://www.tate.org.uk/whats-on/tate-modern/exhibition/jeff-wall/jeff-wall-room-guide/jeff-wall-room-guide-room-1>.

Tschumi, Bernard. *The Manhattan Transcripts*. London: Academy Editions; New York, 1981.

Tsuyoshi Tane. *Archaeology of the Future*. Tokyo: Toto Publishing, 2018.

Turan, Neyran. "Strait." Nemestudio, 2015. <http://nemestudio.com/projects/strait>.