Rediscovering the Aesthetics of Architecture: From Geoffrey Scott to Mark Foster Gage

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Introduction

Whilst the history of modern aesthetics is generally accepted to have begun in the eighteenth-century, its intellectual roots can be traced back to classical Athens.[1] This does, then, make the question of aesthetics an "old matter." Not quite so ancient is the study of architectural history, whose emergence as a "discipline" can be located one hundred-years or so ago. In the opening scene of this brief history, one protagonist who played an important, but little-understood role was the British writer and sometimes "architect" Geoffrey Scott (1884-1929). In *The Architecture of Humanism*, first published in 1914, Scott argued against the "architectural fallacies" that he identified as characterizing his peers' criticism of Renaissance and Baroque architecture.[2] At the time that Scott was writing, architectural history was still a sub-category of the burgeoning discipline of art history. Thus, the ideas that Scott articulated in his book were timely, but the outbreak of the First World War curbed the reach that his writings might have otherwise had. A significantly revised edition made an impact in the early interwar years, but Scott's untimely death in 1929 meant that his contribution to architectural thought appeared to have ceased with that work.[3] Interest in Scott's writings continued to ebb and flow across the second-half of the twentieth century, resurfacing in the criticism of Reyner Banham, Bruno Zevi, and David Watkin.[4] However, by the close of the century, Scott had again been relegated to the footnotes of the architectural canon.

In recent years, pockets of research on Scott's writings have emerged, albeit in the service of other agendas: Branko Mitrovic on formalism; Mark Campbell on psychoanalysis and Bernard Berenson; John Macarthur on the picturesque; and Raúl Martínez Martínez on the intellectual history of Bruno Zevi.[5]

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1   Paul Guyer, *A History of Modern Aesthetics. Volume 1: The Eighteenth Century* (Cambridge, United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 9.

2   Geoffrey Scott, *The Architecture of Humanism: A Study in the History of Taste* (London: Constable and Company Ltd, 1914).

3   The 1924 revised edition of *The Architecture of Humanism* included amendments to the chapter "Humanist Values"; the complete deletion of the chapter "Art and Thought"; and, the addition of a "Conclusion" and "Epilogue."

4   See Reyner Banham, *Theory and Design in the First Machine Age* (London: The Architectural Press, 1970), first published 1960; and David Watkin, *The Rise of Architectural History* (London: The Architectural Press, 1983), first published 1980. The influence of Scott's architectural writings on Bruno Zevi has been discussed by Raúl Martínez Martínez in "Bruno Zevi, the continental European emissary of Geoffrey Scott's theories," *The Journal of Architecture* 24, 1 (2019), 27-50.

5   See Branko Mitrović, "Apollo's Own: Geoffrey Scott and the Lost Pleasures of Architectural History," *Journal of Architectural Education* 54:2 (2000), 95-103; Mark Campbell, "Aspects not Things: Geoffrey Scott's View of History," *AA Files* 59 (2009); and, "Geoffrey Scott and the Dream-Life of Architecture," *Grey Room* 15 (2004); John Macarthur, "Geoffrey Scott, the Baroque, and the Picturesque," in *The Baroque in Architectural Culture, 1880-1980*, eds. Andrew Leach, John Macarthur, Maarten Delbeke (Farnham, Surrey: Ashgate, 2016), 61-71; and, Martínez, "Bruno Zevi, the continental European emissary of Geoffrey

It remains regrettable, however, that the British architect Cecil Pinsent (1884-1963) – Scott's collaborator in architectural practice – has not received attention in architectural discourse; research on Pinsent has instead centered on his gardens: the symposium, "Cecil Pinsent and His Gardens in Tuscany" at Georgetown University's Villa Le Balze in 1995, articles by Giorgio Galletti and others, and a biography by Ethne Clarke.[6] Thus, an understanding of the relationship between Pinsent and Scott's jointly-completed architectural works and Scott's architectural writings on aesthetics remains a pressing project for architectural historiography. This paper, therefore, seeks to establish a connection between these two bodies of research – those on Scott and those on Pinsent – arguing for the significance of Pinsent to the development of Scott's architectural criticism, and aesthetic theory.

First, by turning to the writings of American architect and theorist Mark Foster Gage, this paper will identify the renewed interest in architectural aesthetics in recent years, arguing that Gage's writings are suffused with the same aesthetic concerns expressed in Scott's critique of the architectural fallacies and, also, in his formal and empathy-based aesthetic theory. This recognition makes the reappraisal of Scott's writings and his legacy, and the import of Scott and Pinsent's architectural partnership a timely endeavor. By establishing a dialogue between these architectural thinkers separated in time by a century, this paper will seek to elucidate the currency of aesthetic understanding to architecture across time.

Revisiting Aesthetics and the "Postcritical Moment"

Aesthetic theory has been placed "out of reach … from those who would most benefit from its study."[7] With this observation, Mark Foster Gage prefaces his edited volume *Aesthetic Theory: Essential Texts for Architecture and Design*, 2011. An Associate Professor at Yale School of Architecture and a practicing architect, Gage is an outspoken proponent for the reprioritization of aesthetics in architecture.[8] He developed his aesthetic theory in the context of the "postcritical moment" – that is amidst the emergence of various attitudes shifting away from "the critical project" that dominated architectural thinking from the 1960s to the late-1990s.[9] "From Marxism and semiotics to psychoanalysis and rhizomatics," this was a period, according to K. Michael Hays, in which "theory displaced architectural criticism."[10] As Gage explains, the "reliance on abstract concepts to justify form … wholly eclipsed an alternative strain, that of aesthetic theory."[11]

Scott's theories," 27-50; and, "Geoffrey Scott and Modern Architectural Thought: The Creation of a Legacy Throughout the Twentieth Century," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 80, 4 (2019), 597-619.

6 See Marcello Fantoni, Heidi Flores, and John Pfordresher (eds.), *Cecil Pinsent and His Gardens in Tuscany* (Florence: Edizioni Firenze, 1996); Giorgio Galletti, "Cecil Pinsent architetto dell'Umanesimo," in *Il giardino europeo del Novecento, 1900–1940,* Atti del III Colloquio Internazionale, (Firenze, 1993) 183–205; and, "Il ritorno al modello classico: giardini anglofiorentini d'inizio secolo," in *Il giardino storico all'Italiana*, eds. F. Nuvolari (Milan, 1992), 77-85; Vincent Shacklock, D. Mason, "Villa Le Balze, Fiesole, Florence: a broad assessment of a modern garden in the Italian style," *Journal of Garden History: An International Quarterly* 15, 3 (July–September, 1995), 179–187; E. Neubauer, "The Garden Architecture of Cecil Pinsent, 1884–1964," *Journal of Garden History* 3 (1983), 35-38; and, Ethne Clarke, *An Infinity of Graces: Cecil Ross Pinsent, An English Architect in The Italian Landscape* (New York and London: W. W. Norton & Company, 2013).

7 Mark Foster Gage (ed.), *Aesthetic Theory: Essential Texts for Architecture and Design* (New York & London: W. W. Norton & Company, 2011), 7.

8 I have discussed Gage's work and writings previously in a review of his monograph. See Jason A. Dibbs, "Anomalies, Speculations, and Object Orientations," *Architectural Theory Review* 23, 2, (2019), 315-317.

9 Gage, *Aesthetic Theory,* 16.

10 K. Michael Hays, *Architecture Theory Since 1968* (Cambridge, Massachusetts; London, England: The MIT Press, 1998), x-xi.

11 Gage, *Aesthetic Theory*, 17.

By drawing on influences from contemporary philosophy,[12] Gage proposes an aesthetics that seeks to recognize architecture's inherent capacity to construct reality and to calibrate how "reality is perceived."[13] Implicit in Gage's writings is the claim that in aesthetics lies the possibility for the value of architecture to be understood in terms of architecture itself. Amongst Gage's influences, the most noticeable incursion into architecture has come from the philosopher Graham Harman and Object-Oriented Ontology or OOO. Interest in Harman's work in architectural discourse has been substantiated by the "Architecture on Harman, Harman on Architecture" seminar series with the Architecture Exchange and Swedenborg Society in London, 2013,[14] and by the respected New York-based architecture journal *Log*, in a 2015 issue that was largely dedicated to discussions of the influence of Harman's writings on architecture.[15]

Harman's OOO framework is derived, in-part, from a radical re-reading of the German philosopher Martin Heidegger's tool analysis, through which the existence of autonomous objects is posited as "independent of human perception and intellection."[16] Through this conception of autonomy, with resonances in aesthetic formalism,[17] Gage reasserts the importance of a non-relational, nonconceptual understanding of architecture. He writes that today, architects' interest in philosophies like OOO is a response to architecture that "is increasingly justified solely by its relations and not by its own particular and autonomous qualities."[18]

Briefly contextualizing Harman's OOO in relation to Gage's writings will also allow us to introduce parallels in Scott's aesthetics. For Harman, the consequence of "replacing an object with an account of its components or its effects" is variously defined as "undermining," "overmining," or "duomining." Undermining is to define any object "in terms of its smaller constituents."[19] In Gage's critique of the article "Make It Right Turns an Abandoned School into Affordable LEED Platinum Housing,"[20] he argues that the "architectural object" is undermined "by invoking LEED certification before the object, housing, is even named." For Gage, the "architectural qualities of the building-as-object … are disregarded in favor of its sustainable parts."[21] As will be explained in more detail later below, reading this critique through the lens of Scott's fallacies, we might state that the aesthetic – that is to say, the formal

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12 Gage cites these influences as Jacques Rancière (1940-), French philosopher, former Professor of Philosophy at the University of Paris VIII; Graham Harman (1968-), American philosopher, Distinguished Professor of Philosophy at the Southern California Institute of Architecture; Timothy Morton (1968-), English-born academic, Rita Shea Duffey Professor in English at Rice University; and Elaine Scarry (1946-), American writer and Walter M. Cabot Professor of Aesthetics and the General Theory of Value at Harvard University's Centre for Ethics.

13 Gage, *Mark Foster Gage*, 13.

14 See http://thearchitectureexchange.com/series-1/, accessed 26 April 2018.

15 See *Log* 33 (Winter 2015); featuring articles by Kelly Chan, Mark Foster Gage, Bryan E. Norwood, and the transcript of a conversation between Todd Gannon, Graham Harman, David Ruy, and Tom Wiscombe.

16 See Dibbs, "Anomalies, Speculations, and Object Orientations," 316; for an extensive description of the influence of Heidegger on OOO, see Graham Harman, *Tool Being: Heidegger and the Metaphysics of Objects* (Chicago and La Salle: Open Court, 2002); finally, Heidegger's tool analysis is given its most detailed exposition in Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, translated by John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson (New York: Harper and Row, 2008). Originally published in German as *Sein und Zeit,* 1927.

17 Branko Mitrović has also linked Harman's OOO to aesthetic formalism in his review of Harman's most recent publication. See Branko Mitrović, "OOO, Aesthetic Formalism and the Autonomy of Architecture. Graham Harman: *Art+Objects,* Cambridge: Polity, 2020." [Book review, forthcoming in *British Journal of Aesthetics*].

18 Mark Foster Gage, "Killing Simplicity: Object-oriented philosophy in architecture," *Log* 33, (Winter 2015), 95.

19 Graham Harman, *Immaterialism: Objects and Social Theory* (2016), 8.

20 Alison Zingaro, "Make It Right Turns an Abandoned School into Affordable LEED Platinum Housing," *Architectural Record* (20 December 2013): https://www.architecturalrecord.com/articles/3044-make-it-right-turns-an-abandoned-school-into-affordable-leed-platinum-housing, last accessed 14 June 2020.

21 Gage, *Mark Foster Gage*, 35.

and affective properties of the architecture – been subjugated to the technical and ethical, subtly privileging these concerns as those upon which the value of architecture – in this case, housing - is considered. Gage writes that we "have trained the population to value LEED certification and to ignore the autonomous architectural qualities of buildings."[22] This should not be read as criticism against architectural sustainability, but, rather, of the unintended obfuscation of the aesthetic understanding of the architecture itself resulting from the privileging of relational or conceptual properties.

As defined by Harman, overmining relates to descriptions of an object that fail to account for the very object itself, focusing rather on its actions or manifestation in the world.[23] In architectural terms, Gage writes of those instances where "the rationalization" of architecture is entirely subjugated to the "big idea" or "concept"[24] – terms that are no doubt familiar to anyone who has recently taught in the architectural design studio. Similarly, in Scott's critique of the romantic fallacy, the aesthetic value of architecture is subjugated to conceptual understanding, whether literary or otherwise. Resonances of this aspect of Scott's critique are also found in Gage's argument against the metaphor-as-symbol, where he writes that if "diagrams are simplifications into graphics, metaphors are similarly reductionist albeit through an alternative mechanism - words."[25] He illustrates this objection citing, among others, "Santiago Calatrava's claim that his World Trade Centre Transportation Hub is a flying bird that reflects the theme of transportation."[26] For Gage, the foregrounding of metaphor-as-symbol proposes a value system in which the experience of architecture itself is relegated in significance to conceptual, and privileged, understanding.

Duomining, then, refers to the simultaneous combination of undermining and overmining. Harman offers scientific materialism as an example, where matter is simultaneously the "ultimate layer of the cosmos" and entirely mathematically quantifiable.[27] In architectural terms, Gage writes that a building can be "overmined, in that it is legitimized by its participation in a singular big idea, *and* undermined, in that the big idea refers to only one aspect of the building - for example, massing to reflect zoning regulations."[28] Gage's critique of conceptual abstraction as the basis for architectural judgement has been articulated in more precise terms than the constructive components of his aesthetic theory, in which Gage speculates about the potential for aesthetics to "become the primary discourse for a next generation of social and therefore ecological, spatial, and political engagement."[29] Central to Gage's constructive conception of aesthetics is the assertion of autonomy; of architecture itself, "complete with its aesthetic qualities and defining sensible features."[30] For Gage, only an aesthetic understanding of architecture recognizes its capacity to define "the immediate context" of experience and to shape our "understanding of it."[31]

With Gage's critique of architectural judgement in mind, we will now turn back a century or so ago, to Geoffrey Scott, and the architect Cecil Pinsent, to elucidate the aesthetic legacy of which Gage's writings form an important current contribution.

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22 Ibid., 35.

23 Harman, *Immaterialism,* 14.

24 Gage, *Mark Foster Gage,* 36. See also, Mark Foster Gage, "In Defense of Design," *Log* 16 (Spring/ Summer 2009), 39-45.

25 Gage, *Mark Foster Gage,* 36.

26 Ibid., 36.

27 Harman, *Immaterialism,* 11-12.

28 Gage, *Mark Foster Gage,* 36.

29 Mark Foster Gage, *Aesthetic Equals Politics: New Discourse Across Art, Architecture and Philosophy* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2019)*,* 6.

30 Mark Foster Gage, "Monograph on the Hill," *Mark Foster Gage: Projects and Provocations* (New York: Rizzoli, 2018), 12.

31 Ibid., 13.

Reintroducing Geoffrey Scott

"Geoffrey Scott is no longer a name familiar to the well-informed reader …"[32]

Geoffrey Scott was drawn to questions of aesthetics from an early age in his idealization of the Greeks and Romans, "whose civilizations formed the basis of his education."[33] At Oxford, he studied Greek, Latin, and philosophy,[34] under the tutelage of esteemed classicist Gilbert Murray,[35] who provided the intellectual foundation for his later architectural theorizations. This foundation was expanded when Scott, as an undergraduate, was invited by Mary Berenson, the wife of the renowned art critic Bernard Berenson, to accompany her daughters on a motoring tour of Tuscany.[36] Thus, Scott was introduced to the "Berenson Circle": expatriate aesthetes and intellectuals who made Florence their home at the turn of the twentieth century.

At this time, Scott was plagued by indecision regarding his vocation, and was considering – among other professions – a career in architecture.[37] Through the careful machinations of his new confidante Mary Berenson, Scott made the acquaintance of a young British architect, Cecil Pinsent at her London flat in 1907.[38] This was to prove a fateful meeting for both men. As a result, Scott matriculated at the Architectural Association School in the 1907–1908 session,[39] but soon wrote that, "The work at Tufton St. is I think good training for those who mean to be first of all architects clerks & then small practicing architects. But it has no sort of intellectual impetus in it; … & history so far as I have seen is given without much imagination."[40] From the very beginning, Scott's misgivings about the architectural profession were apparent. As Scott's biographer, Richard Dunn confirms, it wasn't long before Scott "soon tired of the closed nature and unstimulating atmosphere of his architectural schooling and cut short his studies."[41]

Despite his flagging interest in an architectural career, Scott gave voice to his theorizations in *The National Character of English Architecture*, 1908, his Chancellor's Prize-winning essay at Oxford.[42] Scott's correspondence from this time reveals that he had already begun to reject the essay's thesis whilst in the process of writing it. As Scott reflects,

> "I found the architectural subject pleasant & absorbing & it has left me more interested than before I collected my ideas on the subject (but no keener to be a professional). I was sorry though to have to treat it from the rather irrelevant point of view of national character. … Then it is so easy to Ruskinize about the expressive character of architecture, & so little of it is true."[43]

32 Richard M. Dunn, "An Architectural Partnership: Cecil Pinsent & Geoffrey Scott in Florence," in *Cecil Pinsent And His Gardens In Tuscany,* ed. Fantoni, 33; and Richard M. Dunn, *Geoffrey Scott and the Berenson Circle* (Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen, 1998), xvii.

33 Dunn, *Geoffrey Scott and the Berenson Circle,* 13-14.

34 Ibid., 18.

35 George Gilbert Murray (1866-1957), Australian-born British humanist and classicist.

36 Dunn, *Geoffrey Scott and the Berenson Circle,* 25.

37 Ibid.*,* 44-45.

38 Ibid., 45.

39 Dunn, "An Architectural Partnership," 37.

40 Letter from Geoffrey Scott to Mary Berenson (GS-MB), Thursday November 1907. Dunn (ed.), *The Letters of Geoffrey Scott* (unpublished), 57–58.

41 Dunn, "An Architectural Partnership," 38.

42 Geoffrey Scott, "National Character of English Architecture," Chancellor's Essay (Oxford: B. H. Blackwell, 1908).

43 Letter from Geoffrey Scott to Mary Berenson (GS-MB), 4 March 1908. Dunn (ed.), *The Letters of Geoffrey Scott* (unpublished), 70–71.

Scott writes in this essay that architecture "can be appraised as an art. It can set forth as a science. It can be interpreted … as the symbol of the human forces which produced it, the visible and enduring record of the environment from which it sprang."[44] Scott's relative inexperience in both the subject and practice of architecture at this time is evident in this essay; his sources are drawn from the usual suspects, "Ruskin, William Morris and … Reginald Blomfield,"[45] and his understanding of architecture has an abstract bias. As Raúl Martínez Martínez writes, Scott "praised the distinctively symbolic function of architecture above aesthetic and scientific qualities."[46] That a classicist such as Scott, with no practical experience of architecture, would argue for a theoretically abstract understanding of architecture in his first essay on the subject, thus, seems inevitable.

Edwardian Architectural Education and the Influence of the Berenson Circle

It is little coincidence, then, that when Scott expressed to Mary Berenson his interest in an architectural career, Cecil Pinsent immediately came to her mind. The Berensons had become acquainted with Pinsent through their neighbors, Edmund and Mary Houghton, and it was them who encouraged Pinsent to consider architectural practice in Florence. According to Pinsent's biographer Ethne Clarke, they knew many "influential and wealthy expatriates" who would have found it "far easier to deal with an English-trained and English-speaking architect than with the native [Italian] craftsmen and workers." [47]

Pinsent's own training had also begun at the Architectural Association School. He matriculated at the spring session of 1901 and was articled to the London architect William Wallace.[48] Following this, he joined the Royal Academy School of Architecture and gained experience in the office of E.T. Hall.[49] Pinsent's studies at the Royal Academy put him into contact with the ideas of Reginald Blomfield, and also Sir Thomas Graham Jackson. Clarke writes that it "is likely … that Pinsent would have been familiar with the text" of Jackson's "Reason in Architecture," and that he "took to heart the lesson in Jackson's introduction,"[50] an excerpt from which is as follows: "the mere blind following of ancient example in which most modern schools have thought to find safety will lead us no whither; … Archaeology is not Architecture; … it is the spirit rather than the letter of the great styles of the past that will be of use to us."[51]

Jackson's distinction between archaeology and architecture provides an analogy by which we can better understand the development of Scott's own aesthetic theory, his increasing exposure to architectural practice corresponding with a greater emphasis on formal, experiential aesthetics in his writing. The last line of this excerpt is also instructive; with the "spirit rather than the letter,"[52] Jackson accounts for the inevitable responsiveness of architecture to "external and … social" conditions, but, importantly, also points to an

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44 Scott, "National Character of English Architecture," 3.

45 Campbell, "Aspects not Things," 46.

46 Martínez, "Geoffrey Scott and Modern Architectural Thought," 597.

47 Clarke, *An Infinity of Graces,* 47-49.

48 Ethne Clarke, "A Biography of Cecil Ross Pinsent, 1884-1963," *Garden History* 26, 2 (Winter, 1998), 177.

49 Clarke continues, "Hall is best known for designing the half-timbered façade of Liberty's, … he was also the architect for Sloane Mansions and a number of other fashionable townhouses in Cadogan Square and Mount Street." Ibid., 177.

50 Clarke, "A Biography of Cecil Ross Pinsent, 1884–1963," 177-179.

51 Thomas G. Jackson, *Reason in Architecture: Lectures Delivered at the Royal Academy of Arts in the Year 1906* (London: John Murray, 1906), viii.

52 One is left to conjecture if this line of Jackson's is indeed intended to be a reference to Edith Wharton, who in 1903 had written, "There is much to be learned from the old Italian gardens, and the first lesson is that, if they are to be a real inspiration they must be copied, not in the letter but in the spirit." This is discussed again in a later section of this paper.

understanding of architecture's enduring qualities; those not beholden to "styles." This sentiment is also found in Scott's dismantling of the romantic and biological fallacies, where he sets his target, like Jackson, on the "blind following of ancient example."

Pinsent's architectural career in Florence commenced after the Berensons dismissed the Italian architect they had previously contracted to oversee renovations to the Villa I Tatti.[53] Until that time, I Tatti, which included fifty acres of farmland, the main villa, and several smaller outbuildings and dwellings, had only the most rudimentary plumbing and amenities.[54] According to Pinsent's notes, the initial alterations requested by the Berensons included a formal garden, a gardener's house and a new library.[55] Scott soon joined Pinsent at I Tatti on Mary Berenson's suggestion. Thus began an architectural partnership that would continue intermittently until just after the end of the First World War. Despite Scott's inexperience in the practice of architecture, there were mutual benefits to be gained from this arrangement. As Pinsent himself expressed, theirs' "was a partnership of opposites, complementary gifts … Scott is intellectual, literary and brilliant, with the gift of words, and I practical, inventive, with aptitude for things visible to the eye, but dumb."[56] Scott's practical contribution to their architectural practice, however, remains somewhat unclear. Dunn concedes that it's "not always easy to isolate Scott's contribution to the Firm (or The Infirm, as Mary used to call them because of Scott's bad health), but we do know that it was he who chose the furniture for the rooms and decided where it should be placed."[57] At that time, Scott also pursued his writing career, and was briefly employed by the American designer Ogden Codman Jr. to assist with the compilation of a catalogue of French châteaux.[58] Scott's involvement on this project lasted only a few months, but it gave him practical scholarly insight, in an ostensibly ambitious and methodical assessment of French architecture of the eighteenth-century. This installed a renewed sense of focus for Scott, both in terms of his writing and architecture.[59]

One project from this period of architectural collaboration, for which the details of Scott's practical contribution are better documented, is the Villa Le Balze for American philosopher Charles Augustus Strong.[60] Strong had been a contemporary of Bernard Berenson's at Harvard and was introduced to Pinsent and Scott through him.[61] Although Strong ultimately expressed some ambivalence towards the building that "The Infirm" designed for him, Scott considered Le Balze to be their best work. He describes it as the ideal environment for scholarship and contemplation: "a sort of monastic, ascetic place, full of light and space, with very exquisite vaulting & stone-work everywhere, & a general sense of tranquillity & ease."[62]

There can be little doubt of both Berenson's and Strong's influence on Pinsent and Scott at this time, "with their sophisticated taste and knowledge of the Renaissance."[63] Another influence was the American writer Edith Wharton. Vincent Shacklock has helpfully described the influx of "first-class publications on Italian gardens" during the 1900s, "including work

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53 Dunn, *Geoffrey Scott and the Berenson Circle*, 70.

54 Ibid., 81.

55 Cecil Pinsent, "Chronological Record of The Works by Cecil Pinsent Typewritten by Himself," in the appendix to Galletti, "A Record of the Works of Cecil Pinsent in Tuscany" in *Cecil Pinsent And His Gardens in Tuscany, ed.* Fantoni,60.

56 Clarke, *An Infinity of Graces*, 65.

57 Dunn, *Geoffrey Scott and the Berenson Circle*, 83.

58 Ibid., 71-73.

59 Ibid., 77-78.

60 Charles Augustus Strong (1862-1940), American philosopher and psychologist, married to Elizabeth "Bessie" Rockefeller Strong (1866-1906), daughter of American business magnate, John D. Rockefeller.

61 It was also through this Harvard connection that Scott and Pinsent were introduced to the American-Spanish philosopher and essayist George Santayana.

62 Letter from Geoffrey Scott to John Scott (GS-JS), 20 September [1913]. Dunn (ed.), *The Letters of Geoffrey Scott* (unpublished), 173-174.

63 Dunn, "An Architectural Partnership," 36.

by Edith Wharton" which "Pinsent would certainly have been familiar with."[64] It was also the case that Scott made Wharton's acquaintance at I Tatti around this time; the two would remain friends until his death in 1929.[65] Indeed, in *Italian Villas and Their Gardens*, 1905, foreshadowing the aforementioned lecture by Jackson, Wharton writes that if "old Italian gardens … are to be a real inspiration, they must be copied, *not in the letter but in the spirit.*"[66]

Development of the *Architecture of Humanism* and the Four Fallacies

Thus, one way of framing Pinsent's contribution to the development of Scott's aesthetic theory, then, is in terms of his influence on Scott in architectural practice. Pinsent's career had by that stage spanned more than a decade, in contrast to Scott, whose experience had been limited to the academic or touristic, excepting the few months of instruction he'd received at the Architectural Association. This provides another explanation for the shift in the formulation of Scott's architectural theory from 1908 to 1914, turning away from the symbolic, and his valorization of the formal and experiential qualities in architecture itself. So it was, whilst working on Le Balze, assisting Pinsent with other projects, that Scott, "stimulated by his travels in Italy" and "his conversations with Berenson, Vernon Lee and other Florentine scholars,"[67] commenced work in earnest on the *Architecture of Humanism*. By the end of 1912, Scott was content with the first, critical part – those chapters dealing with the fallacies – but had not yet commenced work on the second, "constructive" part of the book.[68] Towards the end of 1913, Scott continued to amend and edit various sections of the text – "At last I have got my Man-Space-Line chapter more or less to my liking" – whilst the chapter on "Humanist Values" continued to frustrate him.[69]

When the *Architecture of Humanism* appeared in June of 1914, Wharton described it as "a brilliant and discriminating book."[70] Pertinently, she identified the influence of architectural practice on the development of Scott's aesthetic theory. She writes that he "brings two qualities not often combined – that of being a practicing architect and that of having a mind unwilling to rest in accepted formulas."[71] This goes some way to affirming the importance of Scott's practical experience of building with Pinsent during this time. Despite the many influences on Scott, the significance of his architectural partnership with Pinsent remains the least understood. As Shacklock writes, "Scott clearly benefitted from his colleague's support and instruction … despite the many eminent mentors in the rarefied, intellectual atmosphere of Tuscany."[72] Indeed, Scott affirms this himself, with the dedication in the frontmatter of *The Architecture of Humanism*, which is made simply, "To Cecil Pinsent."[73]

In his preface to *The Architecture of Humanism*, Scott offers a thinly veiled critique of his own earlier work, and of Blomfield and Ruskin.

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64 Vincent Shacklock, "A Philosopher's Garden: Pinsent's Work for Charles Augustus Strong at Villa Le Balze, Fiesole" in *Cecil Pinsent And His Gardens in Tuscany*, ed. Fantoni, 75.

65 Dunn, *Geoffrey Scott and the Berenson Circle*, 96.

66 Edith Wharton, *Italian Villas and Their Gardens* (New York: The Century Co., 1905), 12. [italics added]

67 Dunn, *Geoffrey Scott and the Berenson Circle*, 109-110.

68 Ibid., 110.

69 Letter from Geoffrey Scott to Mary Berenson (GS-MB), 6 October 1913. Dunn (ed.), *The Letters of Geoffrey Scott* (unpublished), 176.

70 Edith Wharton, "The Architecture of Humanism" (review), *The Times Literary Supplement* (25 June 1914), 305.

71 Ibid., 305.

72 Vincent Shacklock, "A Philosopher's Garden" in *Cecil Pinsent And His Gardens in Tuscany*, ed. Fantoni, 75.

73 Scott, *The Architecture of Humanism*, iv.

"Architecture, it is said, must be 'expressive of purpose' or 'expressive of its true construction' or 'expressive of the national life' … or, on the contrary, 'academic' and studiously indifferent to these factors. It must … be symmetrical, or it must be picturesque … it must be 'traditional' and 'scholarly,' … resembling what has already been done … or it must be at pains to avoid this resemblance; or it must strike some happy compromise between these opposites; and so forth indefinitely."[74]

It is not the case, however, that the axioms he lists are necessarily untrue; for Scott, it is the fact that they are accepted without being "fully reasoned"; each fails to account, in some regard, for the value of architecture itself. Under such criteria, "there is no building so bad that it cannot with a little ingenuity be justified, or so good that it cannot plausibly be condemned."[75] In place of these axioms Scott posits his own aesthetic criteria. He does so by drawing on the example of Renaissance architects, for whom, as Wharton helpfully explains, "utilitarian, religious, and mechanical conditions were constantly subordinated … to a conscious aesthetic ideal."[76]

The Architecture of Humanism can be thought of as consisting of two parts: the first, critical, in the dismantling of the architectural fallacies; and, the second, constructive, in the outline provided of formalist and empathy-based aesthetics. This paper will concentrate on the critical part of this work since it pertains to our discussion of Gage's writings, and it will only provide a brief description of the constructive part, of which Branko Mitrović and John Macarthur have made important contributions.[77]

In the critical part of his book, Scott dissects four fallacies which he argues characterise the criteria by which architecture is valued: the romantic, the mechanical, the ethical, and the biological. Scott argues that in the romantic fallacy, architecture is regarded as "*symbolic.*"[78] He explains that a "new historical perspective, a new literary fashion may at any time alter the feeling we entertain," whilst the "concrete arts which these different periods produced remain always the same, still capable of addressing the same appeal to the physical senses."[79] Scott's intentions for a non-relational, autonomous aesthetics are made evident in this passage. According to Mitrović, and in terms that – as we have seen – Gage would also no doubt agree, Scott's critique addresses "the fact that romanticism is more concerned with the '*idea* supposed to be suggested,'[80] than with the beauty of individual elements or their beautiful combination."[81] Scott's argument also echoes the warnings of both Wharton and Jackson; the fact that a style or technique may alter over time does not account for the enduring properties present in the experience of architecture. It is in this vein that Scott argues that "Mass, Space, Line, and Coherence" are the general values "with which architecture properly deals."[82]

According to Scott, the mechanical fallacy arose in "the epoch of mechanical invention which followed … the close of the Renaissance tradition."[83] Of the emergent scientism of the Enlightenment, Scott writes that it was an "axiom of scientific method that, only in so far as

74 Ibid., vi.

75 Ibid., vii.

76 Wharton, "The Architecture of Humanism" (review), 305.

77 Respectively, Mitrović, "Apollo's Own," (2000); and, Macarthur, "Geoffrey Scott, the Baroque, and the Picturesque," in Leach, *The Baroque in Architectural Culture, 1880-1980* (2016).

78 Scott, *The Architecture of Humanism,* 51-52.

79 Ibid., 52.

80 Ibid., 55.

81 Mitrović, "Apollo's Own," 95.

82 Scott, *The Architecture of Humanism,* 56.

83 Ibid., 94.

phenomena could be so rendered, might any profitable results be expected."[84] It is, as Scott writes that,

> "the scientific view fails adequately to distinguish between fact and appearance, so here it fails to mark the relevant distinction between feeling and knowing. Forms impose their own aesthetic character on a duly sensitive attention, quite independently of what we may know, or not know, about them."[85]

In fact, Gage's connection to Scott is first suggested by an excerpt of the entire chapter on the "Mechanical Fallacy" in his edited volume on aesthetics. Gage writes of the timeliness of Scott's critique of "the scientific and mechanical narratives of the early twentieth century,"[86] and identifies the historiographic significance of Scott's contribution to architectural theory, writing that he was "among the first to challenge the value, in humanistic terms, of the conceptual foundations on which Modernism later largely relied."[87] Scott's critique of the mechanical fallacy also gains renewed currency when it is considered in relation to Gage's discussion of Louis Sullivan's influential axiom, "form ever follows function."[88] Gage explains how traditionally the axiom "was used to describe the importance of a building revealing its structural system (the form follows the function of the structure)." However, increasingly across the twentieth century, Gage suggests that it was "used to legitimize the design of a building that makes visible the various daily activities dictated by the program (the form follows the function of the program)."[89] For Scott, and also Gage, it is not the case that this axiom does not necessarily hold weight, it is the fact that programmatic requirements may change across time and, thus, that the criteria of programmatic response fails to account for the enduring qualities found in the experience of the architecture itself.

With his critique of the ethical fallacy, Scott sets his sights on Ruskin, as well as the thesis of his own earlier essay on national character. Scott locates the origins of the ethical fallacy in Plato's *Republic*, and of the ethical imperative in architecture writes that it was Ruskin who re-awakened it.[90] Ostensibly, Scott's dismantling of the ethical fallacy seeks to counter the moralizing charges of impiety, oppression, and insincerity levelled against the architecture of the Renaissance. In doing so, he admits of the complex relationship between ethics and aesthetics, and of the complicity of the ethical fallacy in both the romantic and the mechanical. It is, as Mitrović writes, that "in moral judgements about architecture" we may find "a confusion of aesthetic and ethical evaluation."[91] We might argue that this complexity is also illustrated in Gage's aforementioned critique of the subjugation of architectural value to the ethics of sustainability. Gage writes that "today, a building will exhibit its sustainable function with planted 'green' walls or dog-whistle surfacing materials like Bamboo."[92] Whilst Gage himself casts an ethical vote against the apparent insincerity – virtue signaling – of these "sustainable" gestures, he highlights the fact that in such cases the ethics of sustainability has come to overshadow the non-relational aesthetic value of the architecture itself. This is a nuanced position, though; both for Gage, who is clearly cognizant of the relationship between aesthetics and social and political discourse,[93] and for Scott, whose writings on this are more subtle and measured than in his dealings with the other fallacies. As Scott writes,

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84 Ibid., 94-95.

85 Ibid.*,* 115.

86 Gage, *Aesthetic Theory,* 179.

87 Ibid., 179.

88 Louis H. Sullivan, "The Tall Office Building Artistically Considered: I. II. III," *Lippincott's Monthly Magazine* 3 (1896), 403-409.

89 Gage, *Mark Foster Gage,* 35.

90 Scott, *The Architecture of Humanism,* 132.

91 Mitrović, "Apollo's Own," 95.

92 Gage, *Mark Foster Gage,* 35.

93 Gage, *Aesthetics Equals Politics*," 2019.

whilst "morality deepens the content of architectural experience … architecture in its turn can extend the scope of morality."[94]

Finally, the biological fallacy is, according to Scott, the misconception that developments in architecture adhere to a sequence of causal relations, with each subsequent gesture seen as growing inevitably from the last. "In such a view," Scott writes, the "most odious characteristics of an art become convenient evidences of hereditary and environment, by which every object can be duly set in a grand and luminous perspective."[95] In this fallacy, Scott seeks to address what he sees as the "penetrating … reach" of the "philosophy of evolution" into the understanding of architecture.[96] Scott presents a defense of the Baroque, against those who would claim that it represented the degeneration of the Renaissance,[97] and also, implicitly, a defense of the resuscitation of certain formal properties in classicism. This is, perhaps, where Scott's thesis most closely aligns with Wharton's and Jackson's axiom of "spirit" over "the letter." Scott writes that "decadence is a biological metaphor,"[98] that does not hold true in terms of architecture's present relationship to its past. This critique has enduring pertinence; in it we find not only a defense of the Baroque, but can arguably extend this critique to elucidate an understanding of the ornamental profusion, and anachronism found, for example, in Gage's current architectural practice, an aspect of his oeuvre that we have not yet discussed. As I have written elsewhere, his proposal for the Mali Museum of Modern Art in Peru appears to emerge from its landscape "as an artefact of forgotten and other-worldly technologies, alluding to the decadence of a never-to-have-existed civilization at its zenith."[99] Clearly, it does not make sense, for example, to discuss Gage's work as an iteration of indigenous Peruvian architecture, or as an inevitable step along the trajectory of computer-aided design, in any meaningful way. The formalism we find in Gage's work is not a "blind following of ancient example," but, rather, the complex interplay of plastic conditions.

Scott's "Constructive" Aesthetics of Architecture

The second, constructive part of *The Architecture of Humanism,* is comprised of the chapters "The Academic Tradition" and "Humanist Values." As mentioned, the requirement for brevity will not permit a discussion of these at length here, hence, our explanation will be limited to some brief comments. Scott draws respectively from the traditions of aesthetic formalism, as derived from his understanding of Classical and Renaissance architecture, and also the empathy-based aesthetics, *Einfühlung,* of Theodor Lipps. As Mitrović points out, "formalist and empathy-based aesthetic theories are normally regarded as opposing poles of nineteenth-century German aesthetics."[100] Indeed, Scott's synthesis of these two branches of aesthetic theory has been questioned by Reyner Banham.[101] However, Scott's synthesis should not, perhaps, be quite so surprising; clearly, the formal aesthetic properties of a building contribute towards one's empathic understanding of it. Indeed, British philosopher Nick Zangwill's proposal for a moderate formalism can be seen to both ameliorate and accommodate the tensions between formal and nonformal aesthetic properties, and even

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94 Scott, *The Architecture of Humanism,* 162-163.

95 Ibid., 169.

96 Ibid., 165.

97 Scott writes, to "Brunelleschi there was no Bramante; his architecture was not Bramante's unachieved, but his own fulfilled." Ibid., 176.

98 Ibid., 182.

99 Dibbs, "Anomalies, Speculations, and Object Orientations," 316. See also, Gage, *Mark Foster Gage,* 50-57.

100 Mitrović, "Apollo's Own," 96.

101 Banham, *Theory and Design in the First Machine Age*, 66-67.

aesthetic and nonaesthetic ones.[102] We can argue, then, that the distinction between formalist and empathy-based aesthetics is not necessarily a difference of kind, but, rather as Mitrović explains, "one of scope and emphasis." Formalism prioritizes the direct experience of the plastic and "nonconceptual," whilst empathy-based aesthetics focuses on the psychological processes aligned with sensory perception.[103] The concomitance of these aesthetic theories in Scott's writings is, perhaps, also less surprising in the light of his practical experience; designing and building various projects with Pinsent in Florence. As has been shown, Scott's awareness grew through his architectural work, of the relationship between architecture's formal properties, for example, the vaulting and designation of space in Villa Le Balze, and the affective capacity of those formal properties in creating the experience of "tranquillity" and "ease." In Scott's dismantling of the four architectural fallacies and the concomitance of these aesthetic theories, we can argue that he has defined the "spirit" of architectural aesthetics that both Jackson and Wharton mention in passing; the autonomy and enduring value in architecture itself expressed in the conjunction of formal and empathy-based aesthetics. Indeed, as we have seen in Gage's rallying call some hundred years after Scott, it is the formalist notion of the nonconceptual, and this same capacity to excite and elicit psychological response through sensation, that is again being revalorized today.

Conclusion

An understanding of the legacy of Geoffrey Scott's critique of the architectural fallacies and his theorization of architectural aesthetics remains an important and unfinished task for architectural historiography. This paper has argued for the timeliness of this task, in light of the current call for the reprioritization of aesthetics in architecture. Specifically, in Mark Foster Gage's critique of the modes of architectural understanding today, we have seen resonances that can be traced back to Scott's critique of the fallacies one hundred years earlier. Scott's prescience concerning the conceptual and relational foundations of twentieth-century modernism and critical theory has also been made apparent. Although this paper has focused on the critical components of both Scott's and Gage's respective aesthetic theories, we have also seen how both seek to illuminate formal and enduring properties in architecture itself; what has been referred to as non-relational or autonomous in the parlance of Gage or OOO, or as "spirit" in Wharton and Jackson, has been articulated by Scott in detail in his synthesis of formalist and empathy-based aesthetics. In terms of this legacy, we have seen how Cecil Pinsent's intellectual biography and his influence on Scott, particularly in terms of their architectural practice in Florence, contribute to a fuller understanding of the development of Scott's theorizations; and, subsequently, how the intellectual history of Scott's critique of the architectural fallacies and his aesthetics, elucidates the significance of Gage's contribution to the redetermination of aesthetics in architecture today.

Whilst we have begun to connect the distinct bodies of research pertaining to Scott and to Pinsent, the elaboration of this endeavor and its significance to architectural historiography remain the ambitions of a larger research project of which this current paper represents but one part. Detailed analysis of Pinsent's and Scott's built architecture; the development of Scott's architectural theorizations between 1914 and 1924; and the explicit significance of Scott's writings in terms of the development of the discipline of architectural history at the turn of the twentieth century remain largely uncharted intellectual territories.

At the time of writing this paper, the world has been shaken by crises and pandemic; in such a context it may be easy to misunderstand the study of aesthetics as an indulgence, or to overlook the relevance of Scott's aesthetic theory, written more than one-hundred years ago,

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102 See Nick Zangwill, *The Metaphysics of Beauty* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2001), 55-145.

103 Mitrović, "Apollo's Own," 96.

to present events. However, to do so is to forget the extent of aesthetics, with its purchase across sensation and experience. As Scott makes clear, aesthetics may offer a different kind of "knowledge" to the "facts" produced by increasingly scientific methods. The understandings garnered through aesthetics are often complex, indistinct and inarticulable; hence, they cannot be readily conceptualized nor quantified. In Scott's words, it is an understanding based more on "feeling" rather than "knowing." This does not make the study of aesthetics any less relevant, though. On the contrary, of the opportunities that aesthetics presents to architecture today, Gage writes that if "architects can imply complex realities through the design of sensual qualities … then there undeniably will be new forms of cultural engagement to *discover*."[104] Given the enduring pertinence of Scott's aesthetic theory*,* however, perhaps these aspirations should be thought of more in terms of *rediscovery*.

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104 Gage, *Mark Foster Gage,* 37 [my italics].

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